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# Journal of Mormon History Vol. 3, 1976

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COVER: An early view of St. George, Utah, by an unknown photographer, looking southeasterly across town toward the Mormon temple. Visible in the foreground is the Washington County courthouse, completed in 1870. Courtesy Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION
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Tonight you see before you one who did not choose history, much less Mormon history, but who, through a long series of compromises and unexpected developments, is confronted with the prospect of delivering a presidential address to the Mormon History Association. Although I regard Utah's Dixie to be the ideal setting for my presidential remarks, I can make few personal claims on the country where we now find ourselves. Yet, I have read Karl Larson's *Red Hills of November* and "I Was Called to Dixie" with fascination and have doted on the words of Juanita Brooks. Too, my grandfather Levi Mathers Savage herded sheep where Kanab now stands and after being "broken up" there by the Indian wars of the mid-1860s withdrew to Toquerville to "let somebody else go into the borders."¹ And in 1934 when I was seven I even visited this country and met "the little grandmas," the Cooper sisters, who had followed their mother into wedlock with Levi Savage, Jr., my great-grandfather who pulled their handcart west with the ill-fated Willie company of 1856. Both the matrimonial yoking of mother and daughters to the same man and the handcart episode have been items of comfort to a family of limited achievement. So it is that I present myself this evening, an expert without expertise but nevertheless as one determined to talk about Mormon towns.

Somewhere in that determination lies a message. It is a simple message without sophistication or complexity. I would hope to communicate the idea that to understand the Mormon experience in the West one needs to understand Mormon towns and the people that made them. An ulterior motive is the hope

for a mild revision in a historiography that has given itself too whole-heartedly to the eternal youth of Joseph, to the great power of Brigham, and to forces and ideas that lie at the center of the church. Fundamentally mine is a democratic hope—the hope that somehow the real and the significant lies with humble and obscure people—the hope that finally Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" matters more than either the Gardens of Versailles or the thoughts of Karl Marx. Don Quixote-like I plan—for this evening at least—to abandon the real accoutrements of war, the computers and theories of social history, and in my tilting to indulge the rural setting of southern Utah, your patience, and most of all myself by talking about perceptions of Mormon towns that have grown through a lifetime.

As far as my early perception goes, Snowflake, Arizona, was the Mormon town. It lay at the center of all things. Outward from it in order of descending importance were the small valley on whose level floor it lay, the two-dozen towns and near towns that comprised the Little Colorado colony, and a set of regional influences that pushed or nudged at the town's character from Utah and Salt Lake City in the north, the Salt River Valley and Phoenix in the south, New Mexico and Albuquerque in the east, and somewhere out there to the west California and Los Angeles.

Snowflake was not only the center of the world but it sat right with the world and to my youthful eyes was perfect in its wholeness. The four-square of its grid pattern was firm and fully formed. One had a sense of being comfortably within the physical unit formed by its six north-south running streets, its nine east-west running streets, and its forty blocks. By contrast other towns struck me as being out of harmony. Neighboring Taylor—whose kids seemed hard-knuckled and a little more profane than Snowflake's God-fearing young—was scattered and split by a creek, the grid of its streets deformed and its capacity to give one a sense of being encompassed incomplete. Joe City's grid was overwhelmed by the dual thrust of the Santa Fe Railroad and Highway 66, which rushed east and west along its main street. In mountain towns to the south, the grid pattern never took at all or phased out into surrounding pines and homesteads. Mormon St. Johns, on the other hand, was only half a town, with Mexicans claiming the rest, while Mesa, in the Salt River Valley, seemed bound in blacktop and concrete, a small city with a different tempo and soul. How wonderful it was to live in the world's only perfect social unit.

As Snowflake was the center of all things, it was also timeless. Like the Roman Empire its past ran back forever. Yet, startlingly, my life marks halfway the timespan of this timeless town. When I was born, forty-nine years ago, Snowflake had been in existence forty-nine years. By some malevolent magic I have seen a period equal to eternity. Even worse the changes in the town since my youth dwarf the changes that had taken place before. Although I was utterly without capacity to see myself as a pioneer, the original character of the town survived in various ways.

Back Street, which opened into the fields on the east through four lanes, was subtly fecund. Along its shady course the relationships between life, village, water, and land were at their most vital and creative. Aridity and the terrible southwest winds were held somewhat at bay. A touch of canyon-bottom verdure was there. A mile beyond was Silver Creek, whose felicitous name did little to
obscure a silt content that some said make its water too thick to drink but not thick enough to walk on. Then, too, the north end of Back Street was the preserve of the Flakes, whose stature as founding fathers knew no equal and whose livestock interests spread themselves in a self-reliant busy cadence along the dirt road north (which we dignified with the name “highway”), stamping a quality of ranchiness and an element of the cow kingdom on the town.

Nerve center of church and business was Main Street. Along it were many of the town’s important homes, most of its eight or ten businesses, and the stake house, whose bell scheduled our lives. Granting the significance Main Street enjoyed as the highway through town and the focus of our religious and business doings, it nevertheless seemed less associated with essential rhythms than did Back Street. Perhaps this was my way of recognizing that for Snowflake life had begun at the waters of the creek and that life still reached me through the fields, the irrigation ditches, and Back Street.

Other streets lacked names. We lived everywhere, but the town spread out toward less important functions, and other streets probably deserved no names. But there were other means of demarcation—some physical and some social. The northeast slice of town related closely to the Flakes and Hunts, who had hailed originally from Beaver in Utah, tended to be Democratic in politics, and together with the Strattons, Willises, Ramseys, and other farming families articulated to the fields and possessed an observable clannishness in the way kids ran together, marriages formed, church lines evolved, and businesses affiliated. In the northwest quadrant of town were the Rogerses, the Ballards, and the numerous descendants of Jesse N. Smith, first stake president and in many ways first citizen. Somewhat less farm-oriented, this group was strong in the church and had close ties to Parowan in Utah, the Republican party, and to business. Their homes and activities reflected a relationship to the original road that once skirted the dry wash which formed the town’s west perimeter to cross onto one of the east-west running streets and make a right turn up Main Street. Socially, as in business and the church, these people were important.

The northeast and northwest portions of town lay below the hill, under irrigation, and had developed early. To the southwest was a modest elevation—hardly an incline at all by Utah standards. Along its brow had risen Snowflake’s educational edifices. Beyond the schools developed a late town of which I was part. It was without water, a lack made the more distressing by its rocky soil and its absolute exposure to the abrasive winds. Society on the hill lacked not only the tenure of the earlier groups but their cohesiveness, homogeneity, and importance. Teacher families lent some respectability as did second or third generation branches of downtown families. But poverty was more general, and meaningful association in the church hierarchy less common. A few Mexican and Black families also lived scattered on the hill or in conjunction with the Apache Railroad—the “tri-weekly,” we called it in mocking recognition of its irregular schedule, rather than in acknowledgement that it made three trips a week to the Santa Fe line. While most hill dwellers suffered some social disadvantages, the real tragedies were not Blacks and Mexicans but impoverished Mormon families. Without the lack of familiarity that tempered our hostility to outside minorities to protect them, these unfortunate Mormons suffered partial rejection by the adult society and cruel abuse from the young. Although the
youngsters in this excluded class persisted in school and church affairs, they did so in the face of unceasing persecution.

The town taught many things. Among them was an understanding of the social structure outlined above. Broader awarenesses of a similar kind were also learned—sometimes at a very early age. The kids I associated with in the lower grades of school spent endless hours speculating about God's location in heaven. Even earlier we became aware of our Mormonness. Indeed the earliest conception that I can remember dealing with had bearing on my relationship to God and society. The occasion was a windy spring day in Snowflake—there are no other kind—before I was five. I lay on my back watching great billowing clouds blowing briskly through a beautiful blue sky. Suddenly I was filled with the sublime beauty of the magic by which I, along with the righteous, would be caught into the heavens while the wicked were consumed with fire. Obviously, I had learned about the millennium and that I was sort of a blessed circle with a special dispensation on life.

I knew too that not all Mormons stood in the same relationship to the church. This was obvious in the pool hall which backed on my yard, as it was in the shocking spectacles of teenagers uproariously drunk wallowing in an irrigation ditch one Sunday afternoon. It was obvious as well in the sharp sense of colonialism we felt toward Utah. This expressed itself in several ways. First was a defensive certitude that Mormons “raised in the shadow of the temple” were more prone to question authority, to break the Word of Wisdom, and to other waywardliness. Second was an equally defensive determination to be true to the Little Colorado and Arizona. Third, paradoxically, was an acknowledgement of the unspoken call back to Utah that over the years had picked off more settlers than had remained and would in time lure me away as well.

Snowflake taught other things than the purely Mormon. The lesson of Los Angeles and its magic appeal was apparent in our youthful search for superlatives that often led from statements that something was as big as the world, then as big as the universe, and then, to subdue all argument, as big as Los Angeles. Snowflake taught of Hitler, of Max Schmeling, and of the Depression; and its experiences extended to Sodom and Gomorrah, incarnate in Holbrook and Winslow, railroad towns a few miles to the north. Also to be learned was a lesson about the American South. This we saw at McNary, a lumbering town with ties to Texas and Louisiana. As weekly peddlers during the summer, we visited first a humble cabin section in which several young Mormon families, including my sister and her husband, lived, letting them cream the best from the produce. Then down the town’s hierarchy we proceeded, from general superintendent, mill manager, yard bosses to woods foremen, and finally late in the afternoon, when only culls remained, to “Niggertown” down by the millpond.

Snowflake’s formal education system was good. At its top stood several men who provided a good deal more than the rudiments of liberal education and inspired young people to go on to professional training that could only take them away from Snowflake. They also instilled a strong feeling that the teaching role was worthwhile and unlike many others provided a good way of life that could be achieved without large financial investment. The classics were known
and within limits appreciated. More highly stressed was teaching with a moral message or some particular local angle. Few mixed these elements more successfully than did my own father, who in the 1930s wrote and directed eight or nine pageants that were produced by the graduating classes of the high school in a great natural sink with seating capacity for thousands, unbelievable acoustics, and almost unlimited potential to respond to horse opera and the other action themes Hollywood was then making popular. With night and spotlights to help, we saw Beowulf vanquish Grendel and his mother, the Knight of the Holy Grail unhorse the Black Knight, the explorations of Marcus de Niza, and the Arizona tragedy of Geronimo.

But there was much that Snowflake did not teach—at least not to the slow of learning like myself. The town was well past the zenith of its expression where the question of the Mormon mission of regeneration and Christ's earthly kingdom were concerned. A decade of building had begun in 1884 during which many substantial brick homes were built. Many of these remained, monuments to a generation that sensed clearly its mission in redeeming the earth and building the Kingdom. Architecture in the intervening period continued to express something of this spirit in public buildings but in homes showed more of poverty and imitation than of a vital sense of mission. By my generation's time, dynamic direction was not only missing in the town's buildings but missed many of us generally. Indeed boredom instead of involvement in good causes seemed often to be the town's message to youth, although I have since come to think a good foundation for motivation was laid. On the other hand we learned nothing of protest. Boredom and antisocial conduct were apparent in many ways, but protest against the status quo in the sense of recent decades was not part of our cultural heritage.

Some elements of worldly learning were deleted or postponed. For example, I first heard of homosexuality when I was seventeen from a returning serviceman who told me of an encounter he had in Los Angeles. Darwinism and the perils it held for my faith competely eluded me. Not only was I not threatened, I was totally unconscious that such ideas existed until, while I was filling a proselyting mission for the church, a Swede inquired how Mormons dealt with contradictions between organic evolution and Old Testament teaching. I suppose my ignorance was the best answer I could have given to his question.

It would please me to tarry longer in Snowflake's past, but my changing perceptions of Mormon towns make it necessary to turn attention increasingly from it. I was twenty before I sensed that my cultural heritage was lacking or inferior in any respect. My Snowflake-centered perceptions had survived unscathed for two years in the army during World War II. If San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Tokyo had anything to teach me about how the stars hung in my cultural firmament, it was latent and indirect. Phoenix shrank drastically between my leaving for war and my return. Snowflake was unchanged.

However, the opening days of my mission brought deep stirring in my understanding of my village origins. The incident that triggered this development occurred on South Temple Street across from the Church Office Building and the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City. Standing there one morning with my heart full of home and confusion, I was struck by the great number of fine automobiles that pulled up to discharge passengers. As one who had longed
profoundly for the freedom cars provided but found little outlet for his longing as he walked through the Depression’s hard times and World War II’s rationing, I was well prepared to see this contrast between Salt Lake City and Snowflake. Snowflake was poor, its people fettered. Relatively Salt Lake City was rich, its people free and strong. The center of my life had begun to shift. On my return from the mission field I capitulated to the cultural draw of Salt Lake City. I left the Little Colorado to study and to live elsewhere but by some perverse turn of compensating loyalty found myself bound in sentiment and scholarly interest.

A real milestone in my continuing affinity for rural Mormondom was meeting Professor Gregory Crampton at the University of Utah in 1963. Crampton was then involved in a Park Service study on southern Utah and writing *Standing Up Country* in which he chronicles the canyonlands in photos and a wonderfully readable account. Under his direction I undertook a thesis that was originally conceived as a consideration of Mormon colonization in the context of Frederick Jackson Turner’s argument that the American experience was the product of the frontier. However, I soon found I was too embroiled with local aspects of my past to follow that pattern and turned to the study of the Little Colorado colony that became my doctoral dissertation. As I was redoing that work for publication, several people encouraged me to conclude it with an indictment of a colonizing system that cost much in terms of human sacrifice and produced little in terms of the good life. This I could not do. My own experience in the Little Colorado community told me it had been worthwhile. The dignity of its people and their sense of quiet initiative told me they had not been the dupes of a callous Salt Lake City leadership. On the other hand, I was not prepared to make a statement that claimed any transcending significance for the village experience. Indeed it was not yet clear to me what it meant in Mormon history.

However, I had acquired a number of lesser insights. Perhaps the most important was a clearer understanding that while Mormon towns had much in common no two were identical. An examination of differences in natural conditions, time of settlement, and the influence of local communities and individuals promised much. To illustrate I might note that the Little Colorado community’s self-image included conceptions about its unparalleled achievements in education, theater, and music. A careful look at other localities suggested that many colonizing regions entertained similar traditions with equal or more justice and suggested that a more penetrating study would reveal significant and enlightening cultural differences. For example, Castle Valley—now Emery and Carbon counties—had a special affinity for drama. Who can dispute that Dixie raised extraordinary historians in LeRoy Hafen, Juanita Brooks, Karl Larson, and Nels Anderson. Were I pressed to identify the most distinctive cultural achievement of the Little Colorado I would probably cast my vote for journal keeping. Few if any regions produced a greater number of primary accounts than northern Arizona, and significantly journal keeping, which is a sober church-related business, reflects the sober church-related frame of mind that dominated the colony better than do music or drama or even education.

I came also to recognize such differing self-images as distinguished the mission community that colonized San Juan from the free lance settlement of
Moab in the years after 1880. While both were Mormon, their point of view was profoundly different. Moab looked outward, finding its prospects in promotion and development and its heroes among badmen, cowboys, and those who succeeded financially, while the San Juaners looked inwardly, placed great value upon the cooperative effort of the cattle pool, and built their myths around their trek through the Hole-in-the-Rock, finding their heroes in homegrown figures like Uncle Ben Perkins, the Welsh shotfire who blasted a passage across Glen Canyon, and Jens Nielsen, bishop at Bluff. As time has advanced, town character has been woven ever more intimately into Mormon society as loyalties to place of origin tied a mobile people together. What I am getting to here may be expressed by reverting again to Snowflake. Parowan and Beaver contributed heavily to its population and character during one generation and during the next all three contributed to new settlement elsewhere while at the same time feeding into and drawing from university communities at Provo and Logan and from Salt Lake City's business and professional structure.

Recently I have become convinced that the town not only stands at the center of the Mormon experience but that indeed, it long stood at the center of the church's entire experience and that studies which bypass life of everyday Mormons at the town level to focus upon the church hierarchy and upon Salt Lake City leave untilled Mormon history's most fertile seedbed. A few points are needed to illuminate this perspective. These are generalizations and possess most of the liabilities implicit in generalizations. They have taken form not as the product of extensive new research but as a result of my writing the Utah volume of the States and the Nation Series which is being published as a Bicentennial commemoration by W. W. Norton Company under funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. These points may be introduced in the following form: (1) the town represented the maximum practical expression of the Mormon withdrawal from the world; (2) in the face of widespread frustration town colonizing succeeded, thus signifying God's pleasure to a sign-watching people; (3) towns were the means of extending Mormon influence over a geographic region; (4) the system's real core was in southern Utah, one of America's most isolated natural provinces; and (5) the town landscape fortified nature in demarking a wide region as Mormon country. To elaborate, a summary history written from the perspective of the Mormon town follows.

On 24 July 1847, the Mormons arrived in Salt Lake Valley where they quickly established a self-governing community, developed irrigated farming, adopted practices of resource-utilization predicated upon stewardship and the public good rather than speculation and commerce, and instituted an economy of cooperating self-sufficiency. In their flight to Salt Lake Valley and in their response to the Great Basin environment, the Mormons carried their withdrawal from the mainstream of American development to its maximum practical expression. Having outrun the frontier generally, they were freed for the moment from social and political restraints and were face-to-face with an environment that required adaptation and innovation. Thus to the peculiarities of Mormon faith and the expulsion from the Midwest were added isolation and the Great Basin environment's incentive for departure from patterns that prevailed elsewhere. All told, the first years in Salt Lake City added up to an unprecedented withdrawal from American society.
However, Mormon isolationism began to yield at Salt Lake City almost at once. "Forty-niners" poured through the Mormon capital by the thousands, bringing opportunity for commerce and services. As the West opened and the Mormon controversy developed, other windfall opportunities continued to interject a more conventional economy and to reduce the degree Salt Lakers depended upon their own adjustment to the environment. This tendency was accelerated by the influences of territorial government which after 1850 grew in its capacity to govern as the Utah War brought an army of occupation and Congress slowly worked out a territorial system specifically suited to govern a people who were determined to govern themselves. As Salt Lake City Mormons resisted the federal government they entered into a variety of interactions with their "foes," adopting many of the enemy's ways as they, in effect, fought fire with fire. By a similar token the advent of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the opening of mines thereafter swept Salt Lake City as well as other Wasatch Front communities increasingly into the mainstream society and away from the "primitive" practices of withdrawal. Like it or not, the City of the Saints had become "a city of two peoples," its history more the story of an American conflict than of an escape from society.

Nevertheless, the process of withdrawal was renewed and perpetuated over a period of four decades or more in the village system of colonizing. The exodus from the world as well as the arrival in the new Zion were ritualized by sending colonies into what became the Mormon cultural region to establish upwards of five hundred villages by 1890. In almost all of these, the Salt Lake City experience was relived and people thrown on their own resources as they had been in the mother community during the half-dozen years after 1847.

By contrast, other efforts to extend the Mormon kingdom failed. The state of Deseret collapsed as its vast bounds came into conflict with pre-existing traditions and political interests. Home rule broke down over the issue of mixing church and state and over polygamy. New places of gathering in California, the Northwest, and Mexico proved unsuccessful. Industry, as undertaken in the Iron Mission, the beet sugar experiments of the 1850s and the Cotton Mission, proved ineffective. But the villages of withdrawal worked. In them Mormons were insulated from the world, yet they became the vehicle for extending the influence of the church as well as the agency for economic growth. Village life also provided an opportunity to "made the desert blossom as a rose," thus redeeming the kingdom in preparation for Christ's second coming.

In its topography and natural conditions, southern Utah lent itself to this ritualized retreat from the world. Its very situation insulated the towns that rose within it from outside influence. To the east lay the Colorado Plateau—America's last frontier, so forbidding it was largely unexplored until 1869 when John Wesley Powell finally penetrated its canyons. To the south the region was protected by the most awesome of America's natural barriers, the Grand Canyon, while to the west Nevada's deserts were only less imposing. Thus southern Utah was a Mormon province, its access controlled by Salt Lake City. Nowhere in southern Utah did mining or industrial development create a competing center.

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although the coal fields in Carbon County (which are technically in southeastern as contrasted to southern Utah) came near doing so. The result was that southern Utah’s towns were shut off from the world geographically. Moreover, they were protected from outside influences in what was essentially a filtering action as the concessions Salt Lake City made to the world were used to help guard the rural heartland against unwanted impact. To this end the church not only maintained close ecclesiastical contact but introduced its own educational system, created a cooperative merchandising institution, and built and attempted to control what for many years were southern Utah’s only communications and railroad systems. Thus while Salt Lake City met the world and yielded under its impact, the point of creative withdrawal was perpetuated by southern Utah towns in preparation for the momentarily expected time when Christ’s second advent would overturn all worldly systems and build on the beachhead so carefully developed and sustained.

The town landscape also placed a mark of territoriality upon Mormon Country. Completely unlike other physical forms with which westering America stamped the trans-Mississippi frontier, the landscape of the Mormon town represented an almost irrefutable claim. It was written in no book of statutes nor did any organic act give it dignity. Yet in a century where squatter’s rights and customary usage were articles of faith, the village landscape was deeply etched in the consciousness of men. Indeed the Mormon town was the backbone of the most widely applied and formally practiced system of squatter’s rights ever devised in America. In asserting its claim, the village landscape functioned at two levels. First its streets, ditches, homes, and small farms provided the means of holding individual parcels of land in areas not legally opened to settlement. Second, the village landscape marked the bounds of Mormon country as surely as state borders fixed legal boundaries. That the territorial claims of the village landscape were generally acknowledged and constituted a fact to be dealt with was suggested by the Utah Commission’s report in 1888 that “those who hold the valleys . . . hold Utah, and nature had fortified their position more strongly than it could be done by any Chinese wall or artificial defense.” If pushed to its logical conclusion, this line of reasoning would argue that southern Utah, where the village pattern of withdrawal stands in its most unadulterated form, is the heartland of Mormon culture rather than the more urbanized areas.

Although few town-dwelling Mormons of the nineteenth century were unaware that Salt Lake City had changed, their efforts to achieve similar “blessings” were muted if not completely stifled by the demands of “primitive” flight-oriented Mormonism. Change consequently came slowly. The country lagged behind surrounding areas in livestock development as Mormons continued to struggle with their village farm system. When a livestock boom did develop after 1885 it was modified by the village pattern and Mormon self-sufficiency. By 1900 Utah’s potential for farm village development had been reached and an out-migration was well underway to farming areas in surrounding states and to educational and business centers. Reclamation played little role until after the Depression in developing the region, although National

Parks and tourism were recognized as a means of development by 1920 and vigorously plied. As an industry that came and went, tourism was well-fitted to the change-resistant values which had governed village Mormondom's early colonization and to some degree continued to influence life until World War II. With self-sufficiency a passing phenomenon, rural Mormons were increasingly dependent upon livestock, particularly sheep and wool. As a result, they were subject to the fluctuations of outside markets as well as to disastrous environmental changes as ranges were denuded and watersheds eroded. Hard times early in the new century were only momentarily relieved by World War I. Depression came with something nearing finality in 1921. As a consequence, change that had once been avoided in the name of the kingdom was now impossible, and the ways of primitive, withdrawing Mormonism persisted until the 1940s. Thereafter defense industry, federal spending, reclamation projects, expanding tourism, uranium booms, and oil strikes acted to produce change in a quarter-century that far outpaced all previous developments.

Thus birth and youth at Snowflake and continuing interest in town life adds up to a strong conviction that much of what is meaningful in the western Mormon experience lies in villages and towns. To my mind, tomorrow's trip back to Salt Lake City along Highway 89 will pass through the true core of Mormon country. This judgment not only rejects Donald Meinig's conclusion that the Wasatch Front is the core of the Mormon region so effectively set forth in his outstanding essay on the Mormon cultural area,4 but argues that Mormon peculiarity peaked in southern Utah where the withdrawal from the world was re-enacted and protected for many decades after Salt Lake City yielded to practices that were of the world as well as in it.

Mormon Angles of Historical Vision: 
Some Maverick Reflections

William Mulder

As far as Mormon scholarship is concerned I am, as they would say in church, "inactive." I have contributed little except an occasional book review since Homeward to Zion appeared in 1957 and Among the Mormons in 1958. A chapter on the Scandinavians appears in the new ethnic history, The Peoples of Utah, which the Utah State Historical Society is publishing, but, except for some updating, it is derivative from earlier work. I confess to a small thrill of pleasure when I find myself footnoted or collected by other students of Mormon history both inside and outside the fold, but that is an unearned increment. I suppose something once said well stays said, but history itself moves on, the perspectives alter, and the stagnant historian may find himself an artifact. Unlike Roy Hafen, whose historical labors never cease, I am a Rip Van Winkle lost in slumber for twenty years (dreaming much of that time in far-off India), but awakening now to a changed scene at home. There may be jeremiads from the pulpit, as there have always been, but I find no loss of mastery among Mormon historians, who seem to have found the past usable, the present viable. Unlike the Puritan historians who found in the declension of the New England theocracy cause for lamentation, Mormon historians seem to have made the accommodation from kingdom to community, describing and accounting for a Mormonism that, if not of the world, is certainly in the world. They are putting their secular learning in the service of sacred history. As I remark in a recent review of Dean Jessee's fine collection of Brigham Young's letters to his sons,

The fiddles are tuning in Mormon historiography. Not only is there a great deal of activity as new histories are written and old classics revived; there is, more importantly, a new professionalism. Mormon scholars have come of age: they have learned the tools of their

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trade and have achieved a certain objectivity and composure in dealing with their extraordinary history. The amateurs and apologists are still around, but now, officially, if we are to judge from what has been happening in the Historical Department, the Church seems to favor the trained historian and an educated handling of its great storehouse of materials. A new spirit animates the original commission that 'There shall be a record kept among you,' and modern means are being put at its service.¹

I see a rapprochement, through this historical activity, of Mormonism's "two cultures," to borrow a phrase from C. P. Snow, who uses it to describe the dichotomy in our time between the sciences and the humanities. In Mormondom the dichotomy is between the critical and the uncritical believer, whom for our purposes we may describe as the intellectual and the layman, but the stand-off is not, at least not yet, institutionalized. The layman, given the nature of church leadership, may be found in high places and low, as may the intellectual. The extremes personified in the Hugh B. Browns and the Ezra Taft Bensons may be found throughout the membership. The mix in a given ward or stake, or quorum or council, resembles a marble cake more than a layer cake. The Mormon historian, we may assume, is a critical believer, an intellectual. He believes in the mind and its disciplines. As believer, he is a layman, a man of faith; as professional, he is an intellectual. His is the problem of religious intellectuals generally—to dare to follow where the mind leads, to prevent the indecision that comes when intellectually he is persuaded in one direction but drawn emotionally in another. If he is robust he may, like William James, "will to believe" and find pragmatic reasons for the utility of faith even when the premises are uncomfortable.

The Mormon historian, like historians everywhere, wants to know the truth and has faith that his research will move him closer to it. The contemporary Mormon historian, with all his professional advantages, relates, it seems to me, to his predecessors in the church not unlike the way Renaissance historians related to medieval historians. "Renaissance historians," Peter Gay tells us, were deeply in debt to their medieval precursors, but they were no longer medieval men, and, by the time of the late Renaissance, historical writing had become an unstable compound of piety and research, moralism and realism, Christianity and classicism. Medieval historians were for the most part credulous—Renaissance historians raised skeptical questions about the remote past. Medieval historians were subservient to theology—Renaissance historians asserted the independent dignity of their craft. . . . Medieval historians were helpless in the face of disfigured documents, inaccurate copies, and recent forgeries—Renaissance historians developed philology into a fine art, and cleaned, copied, borrowed and stole documents to restore the past in its integrity—at least some of the time; their favorite motto, Ad fontes!, was a historian's motto. Medieval historians were practically all ecclesiastics—Renaissance historians were often laymen; geographers, grammarians, lawyers, and statesmen, who broke the clerical monopoly. . . . Medieval historians, in sum, for all their biographies, all their chronicles, all their universal histories, were in their hearts unhistorical—Renaissance historians, whether they found in history a cyclical movement, or progress, or chaos, justified the course of history by, and within, the course of history.²

I have quoted at length to appreciate the parallel, but I would not push the


parallel too far. Modern Mormon and Renaissance historians part company at
the point where the Renaissance undermined Christian historiography.
Mormon historians feel a closer kinship with the scholars of the Reformation
who, equipped with the Greek and Latin and Hebrew the Renaissance had
taught them, reasserted the rule of Providence, a theology of history that
prevailed in colonial New England and left its mark on American histori-
ography, particularly on Mormonism, in many ways Puritanism's lineal
descendant. The Mormon historian joins that large company of Christian
historians who, however challenged by the techniques and skepticisms of secular
learning in successive centuries (the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Modern
Science), wrote within the grand design of world history seen as a series of gospel
dispensations in which God's purposes unfold as events in time. It is "faithful
history," as Richard Bushman calls it in a memorable essay, history written by
historians faithful to the a priori assumptions of revealed religion. The Mormon
angle of historical vision was the same, give or take a parochial or sectarian
emphasis, as William Bradford's and Cotton Mather's and Jonathan Edwards's,
all "faithful historians," as were Joseph Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith.
Substitute Restoration for Reformation and much of what applies to historical
writing by the reformers applies equally well to Mormon restorationists, with
the significant exception that the Reformation enjoyed a continuity with the
faith and learning of ages past that Mormonism denies itself. I have always
regretted that as a boy I did not discover Gibbon and the early church fathers
along with Essentials in Church History and The Great Apostasy, books which
wiped out whole centuries of human striving with an epithet and left me feeling
that history began in 1830.

Besides the perspectives of revelation and Providence with their ready-made
patterns, Bushman offers a third for the religious historian: the history of
salvation, which rests on the doctrines of spiritual death at the Fall and spiritual
life through the light of Christ. Bushman finds his model in Reinhold Niebuhr's
Gifford lectures, "The Nature and Destiny of Man," which show incomplete
man striving for completion, a model which accords with the scriptural view of
the human situation and which seems to work for Bushman in his own studies of
religious and political thought in early eighteenth-century America. All three
perspectives, of course, are "faithful history." "The trouble with wishing to
write history as a Mormon," says Bushman, "is that you cannot improve as a
historian without improving as a man. The enlargement of moral insight,
spiritual commitment, and critical intelligence are all bound together." And he
concludes his conciliatory essay, bridging the sacred and the secular, with a
brilliant inversion of a Mormon axiom: "A man," he writes, "gains knowledge
no faster than he is saved." All research must lead to godliness. Indeed, without
the godliness, the research will be vain, if not in vain. That seems to be the
conclusion. The Mormon historian, in short, may enjoy a special grace. His
angle of historical vision, indeed, stresses vision. That puts unregenerate
scholars like me beyond the pale. Faithless historians cannot write faithful
history. But I am not disturbed.

3Richard L. Bushman, "Faithful History," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4
I agree with Carl Becker that we write inevitably from a bias. "The historian and his concepts are a part of the very process he would interpret. . . . He is not outside history as the chemist is outside chemistry." Tacitus wrote as a Roman republican, Gibbon as an eighteenth-century rationalist, George Bancroft as a Jacksonian democrat. Becker reminds us that "pure objectivity" is no more possible than the "pure reason" on which presumably it is based—"reason cut loose from will and emotion, from purpose and passion and desire, all these left behind, or non-existent, burned away perhaps with some methodological purifying flame." So let us acknowledge our bias, sacred or secular, as the leopard does his spots. The sacred historian sees divine purpose; the secular sees human purpose. Both provide conceptual frameworks. Who is to say one is more viable than the other? History itself may be seen as a witness alternately supporting now one, now the other view.

It is my own bias that history is neither revelation nor a science, but an art, a literary art. Facts do not speak for themselves. The historian must interpret past events and treat them imaginatively. He tries to arrive at general laws which reveal the grand design, the unity of history, and to explain the progress, the continuity. But it is not an exact science. At best, history, like the new physics, is able to establish only statistical probability. The behavior of individuals, as of atoms, is predictable only in the mass. In this sense history does not repeat itself; every event is unique. Purpose, progress, and design in history are only, as in biological evolution, emergent, not necessarily immanent or predestined. History is contingent, subjective, not absolute or prophetic. I am aware of certain traditional assumptions of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries which have influenced American historians, the Mormon historians among them. They have, in the main, been inspired by a faith in divinity and democracy, a faith supported in turn by providential, rationalistic, and romantic views of human events in the New World. The Mormon bias at least provides a magnificent conceptual framework and gives the historian artistically a great advantage. Teleology serves him the way a given form and thesis serve the creative writer: the poet chooses, let us say, a sonnet, an epic, a three-act play, or a novel, and says in effect "Unto this form I commend my spirit." The Mormon historian, as any religiously motivated historian must, chooses his conception of history as a divine script acted out on this planetary stage and says "Unto this form I commend my spirit." The mythic dimension gives the Mormon historian a familiar frame for his canvas, to change the figure, whether he is painting a mural or a miniature, and directs the angle of vision from whatever perspective—social, economic, cultural, intellectual—he chooses to describe Mormon life and institutions. His pictures, so framed, may be endlessly composed. It is as though history were a series of exhibits under the blue dome of heaven continuously present in the divine mind, with the historian left to describe them as he walks about that crystal enclosure.

Both thesis and design, for the believer, are divinely given and he writes his history within these limits. He accepts the givens of his faith like the net in tennis.

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5Ibid., p. 9
and plays his historical ball across that net, deriving his satisfactions from
skimming the net and scoring inside the court and suffering anxieties when he
does not. Court, net, and the rules determine the game. His skill as historian is
the skill of the player. He would never think of defying the rules or inventing a
new game. It would cease to be history as he sees it, as tennis would cease to be
tennis. Within the design as given there is still room for different interpretations
among the religious historians themselves, one seeing contingency where
another sees necessity. No historian, no matter how great his piety, I'm afraid,
will ever be fully privy to God's purposes.

Nowhere in Mormon record-keeping can we escape the teleological, the
didactic, the eschatological. Among the formal patterns within the larger frame
waiting for the faithful historian to discover and disclose are the patterns of
personal narrative which figure so prominently in Mormon history. Like the
Puritans of New England, the early Mormons were compulsive diarists. Both
indulged in a kind of spiritual bookkeeping. Awakened to a new life in the
gospel, but hardly changed from sinner to Latter-day Saint overnight, Mormon
converts were preoccupied, sometimes morbidly, with their salvation and
anxious about God's purposes. Anyone interested in what William James called
the varieties of religious experience finds such personal narrative fascinating,
despite often the trivia and repetition, or possibly because of them, because they
betray a pattern of concern and values significant to the behavioral scientist,
however disappointing to the historian, who would like more chronicle and less
introspection, more "life and times" in the flesh, less whining of the spirit.
Mormon diaries and autobiographies fall somewhere between St. Augustine and
Boswell: they abound in concrete, often unconsciously colorful detail about the
daily round at the same time they search the corners of the soul. As I observe in a
review of Manchester Mormons, William Clayton's journal for 1840-41 edited by
James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander, the eyewitness accounts of
Mormonism in the early years, in Joseph Smith's era, are particularly valuable.²
It is the pristine period of Primitive Mormonism before the schisms, as yet
unconditioned as Mormon memory would be by the exodus and the saga of
settlement in the West. It is a time when the Mormons, to paraphrase what
Edmund Burke once said of the Americans, were still in the gristle, not yet
hardened in the bone. What is the difference, the historian might well ask,
between pre-Pioneer, Pioneer, and post-Pioneer personal narrative? Has Joseph
Smith's own story served as prototype for all spiritual autobiography in the
church, and what features does his account, in turn, have in common with such
classic testaments as the Personal Narrative of Jonathan Edwards (described in
the literary histories as "a boy's search for God") and John Bunyan's Grace
Abounding, with both of which the young Joseph must have been familiar.
Parley P. Pratt and Peter Cartwright bear comparison, as do the forms of bearing
witness in the churches at the time. What are the stereotypes, the variants of the
"testimony," and what its influence as a literary form? What do conversion
experiences have in common and how did the convert establish the authenticity
of his experience? What are the rhythms of joy and perplexity? What family
resemblance with the remarkable providences the Puritans recorded in such

²Brigham Young University Studies 16 (Winter 1976): 290-93.

Such a study would have to include a chapter on the convert-immigrant, whose accounts form a distinctive pattern within the larger pattern of Mormon personal narrative, a chapter it was my hope to prepare for this session. Twenty-two years ago, in fact, I conceived a collection of Mormon immigrant letters and memoirs which I thought I would call *Through Immigrant Eyes: Utah History at the Grass Roots*. I got as far as an article for the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. I was at Duke University when it appeared in January 1954, where I received a letter from Virginia Sorensen, then at Edinboro, Pennsylvania, and whom at that time I knew only slightly, saying “Almost I have heard the call!” The article evoked memories of her Scandinavian heritage she had not realized she had and started her on the novel which became *Kingdom Come*, the first volume in a trilogy still underway about Danish Mormons. When that first volume appeared I told her how pleased I was to have served as Holinshed to her Shakespeare. It was an unexpected Mormon angle of historical vision. Now all these years later the title has reasserted itself unbidden. It has stuck because I thought then, as I am beginning to believe again, that we could produce a volume as rich as *Land of Their Choice*, Theodore Blegen’s collection on the Norwegian immigrants to the United States, and *Letters from the Promised Land*, Arnold Barton’s collection on the Swedish. In such a gathering we would have a collective autobiography of the Mormon convert-immigrant whose oft-told story seems ever fresh. In such a volume we touch life quickened as only the immigrant experience could quicken it—by memory of what was left behind (sometimes with relief, sometimes with longing), by present wonders and anxieties (founding a new home, finding a job), and by hope for the future. It is a volume for which I have an introduction and a conclusion (as so often with writing projects). As token, let me present them like one of those false books that adorn the libraries of the nouveau riche, all cover and no content. My affection for this “literature of the unlettered” remains as strong as it was then and should prove that a faithless historian can appreciate, if not write, faithful history.

This is how “Through Immigrant Eyes” begins:

Moses sent his twelve to spy out the land of promise, to see whether it was fat or lean; but the Old World has sent its millions to try the promise of America. There must have been excitement in the camp of Israel when two men came back from Canaan with a cluster of grapes so huge they bore it on a staff between them; but that Biblical tall tale dims beside the wonders reported from New Canaan, even when, in the words of a William Bradford, that report was set down “in a plaine style; with singuler regard unto the simple trueth in all things.” In the “good newes” from America the facts were always more marvelous than fiction, for the immigrant crossed more than an ocean and a continent—his traveling was, in John Ciardi’s phrase “... across the sprung longitudes of the mind/And the blood’s latitudes.”

From earliest voyager to latest refugee, the personal record of that odyssey holds an unfailing fascination, however much each newcomer’s experience seems a repetition of an old story. The constant renewing of this experience has in fact determined the course of United States history and
given it a characteristic literature, a literature so commonplace it is easily overlooked. The record of the inner and outer weathers of his transplanting as the immigrant himself observed it in his letters and diaries and memoirs begins with the very "roote and rise" of the nation, with the first arrivals, for the founders of Jamestown and Massachusetts Bay were immigrants, as were the settlers of New Netherlands and New Sweden—and as were the unwilling cargoes of every slave ship that reached the mainland. What the experience was for the Blacks can only be surmised; even had they been articulate they could not have written letters or kept journals—they came in chains.

The immigrant record represents a source of history still virtually unexplored, not only in Utah but in the United States at large. It is a hidden literature, a hidden history, hidden in a double, perhaps a triple sense. It is hidden first of all among grass roots; it is a literature of the unlettered, to use Theodore Blegen's term, a folk record, the simple utterance of plain people not likely to attract attention. Second, it is hidden in languages other than English; it is an American record in alien tongues, but it is inspired by the American scene, describing an American experience. And third, this record of the immigrant is hidden because it is not in readily available form, often physically inaccessible. Most of this writing can be found only in manuscript letters, journals, and memoirs still in private hands, subject to all the hazards of housecleaning, fires, removals, and indifferent treatment at the hands of a generation that knows not the grandfathers and consigns the yellowed pages to the rubbish heap. In America, it is slowly being gathered into local depositories, most importantly the state historical societies; in Utah, of course, so genealogically minded, in church archives; in Europe, in Scandinavia particularly, into archives devoted solely to emigrant materials, especially collections of letters from America. Some immigrant writing has been published: an occasional autobiography privately printed or an aspiring amateur's collection of verse and sketches in the old tongue; but the principal published voice of the non-English immigrant has been the foreign-language press; reading its columns has been compared to unpacking the culture of immigrant chests, the intangibles as well as the tangibles of that culture, because here was expressed and preserved the life of the mind. . . . This immigrant voice should be added to the varied carols Whitman heard nineteenth-century America singing because it is a voice as strong and melodious as the open-mouthed singing of his mechanics and masons, his woodcutters and carpenters, his mothers and young girls, and it is a voice, like the others, "singing what belongs to it and to none else."

In Mormon history this voice has been but faintly heard. Like Lanier's "ole Jim," the convert-immigrant has been like "a word dat somebody spoke and den done been forgotten." The histories devote a chapter to bringing him to Zion and then, having settled him and accounted for him in the statistics, abandon him, culturally speaking, to the anonymity of the melting pot. The reasons are not far to seek. They are to be found in part in the immigrant himself, in part in the philosophy and program of the latter-day gathering, and in part in an accident of history. To begin with, mother-tongue
surveys—that is, census accounts of what people report their mother tongue to be—show that in Utah the old language died out more quickly than in any other state; in Minnesota, for example, it was not uncommon to find third- and fourth-generation Scandinavians still giving the old speech as their mother tongue. This reflects the different character of Utah immigration. For the Mormon convert, the break with the Old World was a compound fracture: a break with the old church and with the old country, often with family and friends as expulsive forces of persecution and ostracism made him glad to get out. Besides, Europe was Babylon; Utah was Zion. The new church was an American church; Mormonizing was Americanizing; the kingdom was interested in unifying the brotherhood, not in perpetuating backward-glancing cultural differences. To be sure, the Mormon church was an hospitable foster mother who realized that the best way to care for the proselyte brought with so much labor from afar was to enable him to take care of himself—to allow him his native-language organizations auxiliary to ward association and to subsidize his newspapers—but these were concessions and strictly conceived as proselyting instruments. The old tongue was condoned only as an expedient mediator, a means of teaching the gospel and informing the immigrant of church affairs in a language he could understand until he learned English—the language, as one editor put it, in which it had pleased the Almighty to manifest His will in this last dispensation. Foreign-language activity among the Mormons was always temporary, very much alive with the first generation, but dying with it; only new and steady immigration gave it continuity. By contrast, in communities of Scandinavian and German Lutherans elsewhere in the United States, the church, the old establishment, performed an exactly opposite function: it strengthened ties with the homeland; it was a flame keeping warm the old language, the old faith, the old customs through religious services and newspapers and denominational schools in the mother tongue.

A final reason the immigrant as such has not been spotlighted in Utah is that here the two great themes of American history, the frontier and immigration, happen to run together. Mormon pioneering in the valleys and Mormon proselyting abroad, where conversion was practically synonymous with emigration, founded the state and peopled it. The pioneer was more than likely an immigrant, and every immigrant a pioneer. The story of the immigrant as such has simply been absorbed in the pioneer story, lost in the dust of the covered wagons. And perhaps because Yankee and Briton dominated the old-stock membership and provided the leadership which determined the pattern of settlement, Utah’s history, actually recorded in several tongues, has been told exclusively from the English-language sources. For all these reasons, Utah’s foreign-language record as a source of history and literature has suffered a singular obscurity.

The immigrant wrote and reminisced because, of all people, he had something to write about. Although he was an ordinary person, his was not an ordinary experience. He saw new scenes and felt the emotions these scenes awakened. Every decision became momentous, every act of greater consequence. It was experience heightened by constant comparison: all life
became a double scene, having a vital and immediate interest in the new, a lingering attachment to the old. It was all anticipation, all recollection, with the experience of the particular moment constantly weighed in the balance. Perhaps when this literature is finally translated, it will tell us no more than we already have been told of human joy and suffering in the pioneer journals; yet in a special way everything for the immigrant had a peculiar poignance because in all his experiencing he was cut off, a stranger in a strange world, in the way most acute to human beings—in language. Often unable to communicate what needed saying, he turned with special relief to his journal or his letters home. These became his confessional, his compensation. For the Mormon convert, his was a religious migration, a response to a call, an appointed gathering. History was an unfolding of God's will in which he played a part, and recorded God's wonder-working providences with the soul-searching of the Puritan diarists. He saw the hand of the Lord in everything. It was a kind of spiritual bookkeeping, a tidy accounting for the day of judgment. This frame of mind explains the pious and didactic spirit of so much of the journalizing and letter-writing. Yet the dominant impression, despite the introspection, is that the wounds of trouble and doubt healed quickly—the flesh was sound, the faith triumphant. It is as if the strong-faced portraits that used to hang on parlor walls should speak. The originals come to life and, if anything, seem less forbidding. The portraiture is warmly human. . . .

That is how I would introduce my phantom volume of Mormon convert-immigrant personal narratives. And this is how I would conclude:

Mormon convert-immigrant narrative, to paraphrase Willa Cather, "shines with bright incidents, slight, perhaps, but precious, as in life itself, where the great matters are often as worthless as astronomical distances, and the trifles dear as the heart's blood." The history of the Mormon convert-immigrant, as seen through their eyes, is full of significant trifles. To the extent their letters and memoirs are not translated and made known, the Mormon literary and historical heritage is by that much impoverished and diminished.

And now to conclude my maverick reflections:

I think I have been saying that there is room in Mormon historical writing for several angles of historical vision, certainly for at least a dual interpretation of "faithful history." The historian as believer must be faithful to his religious assumptions, his vision of man's life as a spiritual quest; the historian as skeptic must be faithful to his secular assumptions, his view of man's life as a striving not always so illuminated. Both assume the yoke and burden of their particular historical outlook: for the believer the yoke is easy and the burden light until his conscience begins to trouble him about significant silences and omissions and recalcitrant and opaque facts; for the skeptic, the yoke and burden are the challenge to remain well-tempered, creative rather than corrosive; a creative skepticism is not disbelief but the tension between multiple and equally magnetic possibilities of interpretation. "The chastity of the mind," said Santayana, "should not be yielded easily nor to the first comer."
Sacred and secular historian complement and correct each other, indeed may occasionally be found in the same person in schizophrenic combination: the so-called objective historian is too often only the archaeologist of facts, able to show us the discrete shards and fragments of the past in all their actuality, to be sure, but without a vitalizing vision that can command them, like Ezekiel’s dry bones, to come together. There is the possibility, of course, that the conceptualizing vision may be mistaken: the grander the design the more tragic the error. What the Puritan historians saw as the collapse of their city on a hill, the secular historians saw as the story of a rising people, the transformation of a parochial and eccentric commonwealth into a great nation. Perhaps choosing one’s angle of historical vision is, ultimately, as mysterious as choosing a wife: logic has little to do with it. The hope is that, once the choice has been made, we have the temperament to live with it, and in this there is no more guarantee for the faithful historian than for the maverick.
The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History

Dean C. Jessee

In recent years, improved methods of record keeping and the completion of a spacious archives building have made the vast collection of Latter-day Saint historical sources more readily available for research, and have added significant impetus to the renewed interest in Mormon history. In addition to providing the basis for new interpretations and insights, research in these sources has opened the door to a more detailed study of original documents and an understanding of the beginnings of the Latter-day Saint record-keeping process and the procedures by which its history has been packaged and transmitted to the present generation.

Because of its effect on the documentary foundation upon which history builds its case, textual analysis is as important to an understanding of the past as the gathering and selection of source material. A case in point is the History of the Church that bears Joseph Smith's name, a work that was the culmination of the earliest effort to write Mormon history. While this work remains the most important source of historical information on the life of Joseph Smith and Mormon beginnings, its reliability as a primary document has been questioned by some as students have compared the official edition of the History with earlier versions. Such a comparison reveals numerous alterations, discrepancies, editorial irregularities, and other variations that appear suspicious in an age of precise literary style and historical method. Upon identifying peculiarities in the text of the History, some have gone so far as to question not only the accuracy of the history, but the integrity of those who wrote it.

Important issues raised in recent years focusing upon Joseph Smith's character, his early religious experiences, and inspired writings authored by him are basically rooted in the question of the reliability of his History. Students of the

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History have seen the need to take a fresh look at its methodology from the vantage point of present standards of writing and research in an attempt to remove what they see as a "screen erected in front of the original documents." Since critical tests for reliability ultimately rest upon a consideration of textual origins, an important prerequisite to the study of Joseph Smith and Mormon beginnings is an understanding of the nature of the sources and the setting in which they were written.

Essential to the assessment of questions of reliability of early Mormon historical works is a consideration of nineteenth century American methods of historical writing and editing. If Joseph Smith's History does not measure up to present day demands of accuracy, it is only typical of much nineteenth century American historical writing. One reason for this is the change in historical methodology that has occurred in the years since Joseph's history was written. Not until after men like Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins University and John W. Burgess of Columbia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century made the teaching of history a specialized technique in the tradition of German scholarship did the profession in America develop its present canons of propriety in historical work. Imposing precise methods of historical research upon a new generation of young scholars, these men gave historical training in the universities a scientific base—redefining the scope of history and the nature of the historical method. Prior to their time, historical writing in America was characterized by much less critical standards. As new methods of historical procedure were introduced, scholars took a fresh look at what had previously been written. Their findings were not flattering. They noted that the message of original sources had been distorted by a rhetorical literary form, an inordinate cultural bias, and undependable editorial procedures.

For example, when Sidney Fisher examined histories of the American Revolution, from John Andrews's four-volume work published in 1786 to the writings of John Fiske in 1891, he observed that writers had overdramatized events, thereby describing "a revolution that never happened and never could happen," a revolution in which all virtue was on one side, and all vice on the other. Not untypical of that age were the editorial efforts of the talented author, editor, clergyman, and president of Harvard College Jared Sparks, a scholar regarded as "the first great compiler of national records." In 1837 Sparks edited in twelve volumes the Writings of George Washington. When his work was later compared with original manuscripts, it was found that he had unhesitatingly (though not maliciously) rewritten portions of letters, deleted or altered offensive passages, changed irregularities of style and awkward modes of expression, and by overly magnifying honorable qualities of the nation's first president produced a work that a later generation found to be not only inaccurate in its portrayal of

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Washington but unacceptable as a primary historical source. When Washington's original letters were later published side by side with Sparks's "improvements," the prevailing literary climate was such that the exposure was hardly noticed. In assessing Sparks's editorial labors, his biographer, Herbert B. Adams, observed that he adapted his work "to the then needs of the American people, and to the literary taste of the times in which he lived."

Another nineteenth century writer whose work achieved vast popularity, but was disqualified by later standards of accuracy, was the clergyman Mason Weems. It has been observed that Weems "constantly tinkered with, and amplified his text," and critics found his works to be "reckless in statement" and "indifferent to facts and research." However, his *Life of Washington*, published in 1800, passed through fifty-nine editions in a half century and became the second best seller in the United States.

A serious weakness of early American historical writing was an imprecise editorial method that tended to obscure authorship. One of the first histories of the American Revolution was written by William Gordon, an English Whig, who came to America in 1770 and published a four-volume history in 1788. When it was later discovered that Gordon had borrowed extensively, without editorial comment, from the *Annual Register*, a contemporary British publication that summarized political and diplomatic events as they affected England, his work was severely criticized. Commenting on Gordon's methods, Orin Libby wrote that the work "conceals one of the most complete plagiarisms on record. Instead of quoting from the *Annual Register*, Gordon copied it wholesale, varying the language so little that it can hardly be said it was done for conciseness." Libby also found that large segments of David Ramsay's study of the Revolution that appeared shortly after Gordon's had been taken from the *Annual Register* and from Gordon. Libby noted further that although both writers had "affirmed the impartiality and accuracy of their histories," they both had used other men's thoughts as their own and had changed indirect discourse to direct "as a means of imparting more life to the narration." Libby conceded, however, that both Gordon and Ramsay "lived in a generation of successfully plagiarized histories ... all of them more or less well received by an uncritical public." Historians of a later era who look back at Gordon's and Ramsay's generation recognize that "quotation marks were not so essential a part of nineteenth century scholarly decorum as they later became," but they would conclude with Libby that such works are "no longer authorities at first hand," and "must be severely tested before being taken for truth."

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In significant instances nineteenth century methods of editing have had an obscuring effect upon the understanding of men and events. One such case was the publication of James Madison's notes on the debates of the United States Constitutional Convention. After comparing the original Madison manuscripts with the debates of the Convention as edited and published by Henry D. Gilpin in 1840, Homer C. Hockett observed:

When the Journal, edited by Adams, was published, more than thirty years after the Convention, Madison compared his notes with it and detected certain errors in it. At the same time he changed his notes in numerous places where it seemed to him that the Journal was correct and his notes wrong. In other words, he trusted his memory, after the lapse of a generation, as a safe judge between the two records where they differed, and unfortunately, as critics have been able to demonstrate, in nearly every instance he substituted an erroneous reading for his own originally correct record. By this and other attempts at revision, previous to his death in 1836, Madison succeeded in corrupting his notes to a lamentable extent.

The significant point of Hockett's study was that when Henry Gilpin edited and published the Madison manuscripts in 1840, all of the changes "were embodied with the original text and printed in uniform type without a suggestion that the whole was not in the original notes." 9

In the case of the diary of Gideon Welles, the Secretary of Navy in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet, Howard K. Beale discovered that a great number of alterations had been incorporated into the publication, even though the preface assured the reader that it had in no way been "mutilated or revised." Beale found that Gideon Welles himself had made the alterations as he extensively revised the diary in his later years, and that the revisions were included, without editorial comment, in the text of the published diary by his son, Edgar, who edited the work. In concluding his study of what he regarded as "one of the most important single sources of American history," Beale recognized that the publication was a product of that "not long ago when the task of editing private writings . . . was taken to imply the duty of excision and amendment so as to bring the printed pages into accord with supposed proprieties." The real tragedy, however, was that a significant primary document had, in the editing, been stripped of its reliability, forcing those who would use the work at a later time to consult the original manuscript for verification.10

In his review of historical editing in the United States, L. H. Butterfield noted that editorial tampering was not uncommon in early years, that seldom were original texts left to speak for themselves. For example, in addition to the problem of inaccurate transcription and proofreading in Henry A. Washington's 1853-54 edition of the Jefferson papers, Butterfield observed that the work was made further unreliable by Washington's pro-slavery bias, which resulted in the deletion of certain passages and, in some cases, whole documents. Nathaniel Hawthorne's journals were found to have been re-written by his wife before

publication and Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* were altered to enhance his image as a "gentlemanly sage."  

If Sidney Fisher found the writing of history in nineteenth century America to be distorted in its portrayal of institutions and great men, and if Orin Libby saw a generation of plagiarized histories in which writers used other men's thoughts for their own, an age in which quotation marks were not so essential, and if the editorial procedures of Sparks, Gilpin, and Welles obscured the message of original documents, it should not seem strange that nineteenth century Mormon history bears some of the same characteristics. Latter-day Saint history was not written in a vacuum completely detached from the general literary and historical climate of its time. Furthermore, it bears marks of its own cultural setting that contain additional insight for the understanding of Mormon textual problems.

So primitive were some aspects of record keeping in nineteenth century America that much of the early Latter-day Saint experience was a pioneering effort. The years prior to 1876, when Melville Dewey published his library classification system, have been termed the "primal period" in the development of methods of preservation and classification of historical documents. As early as 1810 a Congressional committee found important national historical documents "in a state of great disorder and exposure; and in a situation neither safe nor honorable to the nation." Fires in 1814, 1833, and 1877 destroyed many valuable national records. And although the newly formed American Historical Association urged the establishment of a national archives in 1884, it was fifty years before an act of Congress finally gave birth to the Archives of the United States.  

Understandably, the historian Hubert H. Bancroft in 1884 wondered why the Mormons had a Historian's and Recorder's Office in the 1830s when other institutions, even a half century later, generally neglected such things. The answer given Bancroft was that the precedent had been set in an 1830 revelation to Joseph Smith and from that time record keeping among the Latter-day Saints had been a "duty imperative." Although Mormon record keeping was inaugurated by the 1830 revelation, details for carrying out that commandment were largely hammered out on the anvil of experience in the years that followed. That process has not only left a lasting mark upon the records, but continues to influence the understanding and interpretation of them.

The beginning of record keeping among the Latter-day Saints inevitably points to Joseph Smith. The marks of his personality and the circumstances that surrounded his effort to write a history of his life and the church he founded are permanently impressed upon the early records of the church. Once directed to do so, Joseph Smith struggled hard in an effort to hand down to posterity "a connected memorandum of events," but severe limitations and difficulties

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13 Franklin D. Richards, "Bibliography of Utah," July 1880, pp. 3-4, manuscript, Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. All manuscripts cited hereafter are in the Church Archives unless otherwise indicated.
hampered him. One of these was his lack of formal education and literary training. Joseph wrote that it took the exertions of all his father's family to sustain themselves, "therefore we were deprived of the benefit of an education," and added, "I was merely instructed in reading, writing and the ground rules of arithmetic, which constituted my whole literary acquirements." In the Prophet's extant correspondence one senses a concern for literary shortcoming. On one occasion, in the absence of his scribe, Sidney Rigdon, who was afflicted with sore eyes, Joseph wrote a friend in Canada, "I have thought that perhaps a few lines from me, though there may be a lack of fluency in address according to the literate of the age, may be received with a degree of satisfaction." Even to his wife he apologized for his literary failing: "I hope you will excuse . . . my inability in conveying my ideas in writing," he wrote from Indiana in 1832; and from Missouri seven years later he pled, "If you feel as I do you don't care for the imperfections of my writing, for my part a word of consolation from any source is cordially received." His reticence to write and the presence of technical literary imperfections in the documents he created are prominent characteristics of Joseph's surviving papers.

Another characteristic of the Prophet's literary experience was his willingness to overlook proper form in an effort to communicate main themes. Numerous of his publications, starting with the Book of Mormon, reveal an urgency to disseminate important ideas, even before obvious grammar and spelling errors had been corrected, a characteristic that encumbered many of his writings with insignificant distractions and necessitated almost immediate revision. It is true that Joseph Smith admonished William W. Phelps, who had been sent to Missouri to publish the revelations, "to be careful not to alter the sense of any of them for he that adds or diminishes to the prophecies must come under the condemnation written therein." On another occasion he remarked to the Saints, "There is no error in the revelations which I have taught." The records indicate, however, that such warnings did not preclude necessary revisions by proper authority, nor were they pronouncements that everything the Prophet would write would be unalterable. His views on textual revision and change are more completely understood when one notices the editorial procedures and textual evolution of documents he published. In 1834, when criticized for "glaring errors" that had appeared in a published revelation, Joseph wrote that, at least so far as he was concerned, shades of meaning and literary mechanics were not so significant as the general theme or message. "We

15Letters to Moses Nickerson, 19 November 1833; to Emma Smith, 6 June 1832, original in the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Ill.; and to Emma Smith, 21 March 1839.
17Letter of 31 July 1832.
did not think so much of the orthography [spelling], or the manner, as we did the subject matter, as the work of God means what it says."  

A prominent characteristic of Joseph Smith's literary effort that complicates textual analysis was his dependence upon others to write for him. More than two dozen persons are known to have assisted the Prophet in a secretarial capacity during the final fourteen years of his life, the years of his intensive record-keeping activity. Of these scribes, nine left the Church and four others died while engaged in important writing assignments. Although beneficial in helping us to date manuscripts, the frequent turnover in scribes was disruptive of continuity in the record-keeping process, and complicates questions of authorship of Joseph Smith's writings.  

Also leaving their mark upon the early records of the church were the conditions which saw the Latter-day Saints moved or driven across two-thirds of the North American continent. Record keeping did not thrive in the violent world in which Joseph Smith lived. Unstable conditions caused by the persecution and driving of the Saints resulted in the loss of some records and affected the accuracy of many of those that were preserved. In 1834 Joseph wrote that if mistakes had crept into the publications of the church it was due to the "great afflictions" under which he and his associates labored. He mentioned the fatigue and anxiety of Oliver Cowdery who had been sent to New York to obtain a press and type and Cowdery's hauling them to Ohio in the midst of mobs "when . . . all the church in Kirtland had to lie every night for a long time upon our arms to keep off mobs . . . in order to save our lives and the press . . . and all this in the midst of every kind of confusion and calamity, . . . that the word of God might be printed and sent forth."  

Writing from Kirtland in 1832, the Prophet apologized for not sending copies of commandments and the Vision (Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants) to the church in Missouri. "I have much care and tribulation calculated to weigh down and destroy the mind," he wrote. Later, a question arose how a certain revelation that had been published and sent to Jackson County, Missouri, "came to be garbled by the printers." Joseph's answer was that the document had been stolen by "false brethren," and lest it should be altered and reach the notice of the wrong people, wisdom dictated that it should be published "in its own proper light." However, the haste to do so had produced error.  

When frequent mistakes appeared in church periodicals, the printer, Oliver Cowdery, explained that they could not be avoided because of the inexperienced help that was necessarily employed in the printing office, the lack of proof readers, and the incessant labor and other responsibilities that complicated the job of printing. In 1841 Joseph Smith wrote of delays in his...
correspondence due to long confinement from sickness and other problems, including a lawsuit that had cost him eleven hundred dollars in legal fees. That same year he reported that property losses in Missouri had reduced him to a state of poverty, from which he had been unable to extricate himself. And in a memorial to the high council in Nauvoo, Joseph asked for relief from the anxiety and trouble of his business transactions, and urged the council to appropriate funds for clerical help to assist him in his work.  

There was very little in the life of Joseph Smith and the movements of the Saints during the first half of the nineteenth century that contributed to continuity in the writing of church history. At almost every point where the effort to keep records and write history can be observed, the picture is one of adversity. Shortly before his death the Prophet summarized the issues that had complicated his literary efforts. He wrote of long imprisonments, vexatious and long continued lawsuits, the treachery of some of his clerks, the death of others, and the poverty of himself and brethren from continued plunder and driving. Early Mormon history, like other attempts to reconstruct the past, reflects the environment that produced it. Repeatedly in his history, Joseph Smith refers to the persecution, the intolerance, the almost universal antagonism of the press that had generally soured public opinion against him and his work, all of which created the framework and obviously colored his literary output. "I have been induced to write this history," he began in 1838, "to disabuse the public mind ... in relation both to myself and the church." Later, Church Historian Willard Richards, who continued the work after Joseph's death, explained that the history was written "so as not to raise a persecution against us." All evidence points to 1830 as the beginning year so far as Joseph Smith's effort to keep a record is concerned. There is no indication that he recorded events in his life, or that he was inclined to do so, prior to that year. The remaining fourteen years of his life, however, are characterized by an intense effort to preserve important historical documents and write a record of his own activities and events of church history, even though problems multiplied to hamper him.  

The shift in Joseph Smith's personal record-keeping interest coincided with a revelation dated 6 April 1830, the day the church was organized in Fayette, New York. Beginning with the injunction, "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you," this revelation marks the starting point of the Prophet's interest in record keeping. During the remainder of his life he spared no effort to carry out that charge.  


25Ibid., 4:470. Except for punctuation and capitalization, the reading here is the same as the manuscript of the History at C-1, p. 1260. However, the original source behind this part of the history has not been located.  


27Smith, History of the Church, 5:367. The original as recorded in Joseph Smith's Diary, 19 April 1843, by Willard Richards reads: 'The history is going out little by little in the papers and cutting its way, so that when it is completed it will not raise a persecution against us.'  

28Doctrine and Covenants, Section 21:1.
The impression that surfaces as one traces early Latter-day Saint record-keeping activity is one of trial and error, of searching for methods and procedures, complicated by the unsettled conditions in which the work progressed. The arduous effort that eventually produced Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* also left eight previous attempts to write the history, and an abundance of original source material. A study of these documents outlines the setting in which the work progressed, the procedures that governed its writing, and provides essential information for evaluating the accuracy of the *History*.

Following the 1830 revelation, Joseph Smith appointed his clerk, Oliver Cowdery, as Church Historian. Cowdery wrote the first history of the church, a work that covered events to 12 June 1831, a record that was apparently never obtained by the church. His talent needed elsewhere, Cowdery was succeeded as Church Historian by John Whitmer, who accepted the call reluctantly. Like his predecessor, Whitmer's tenure as historian was short-lived. Apparent laxity in the pursuit of his calling brought the admonition in 1832 to "remember the commandment to keep a history of the church and the gathering," and to "show himself approved" in the responsibility to which he had been called. When Whitmer's connection with the church was terminated in 1838, one of the charges brought against him was "withholding the records of the church . . . when called for by the clerk."^30^ Possibly disappointed with previous efforts to write a history, Joseph Smith's first personal involvement in the work can be dated between July and November 1832, when he commenced alternately writing and dictating an autobiography to his newly appointed clerk, Frederick G. Williams. Containing the only known account of Joseph Smith's First Vision written in his own hand, this work was concluded after six pages had been written. In its place Joseph Smith undertook what was evidently intended to be a more elaborate historical record. In November 1832 he commenced a daily diary containing detailed events of his life and a letter book in which was recorded important documents pertaining to the church.^31^ However, the continuation of these records was sporadic during the remainder of his life.

In 1834 a work was begun that gives the impression of the beginning of an imposing history. Written by Oliver Cowdery in a large 11 inch by 16 inch leather-bound book, this work was to have been introduced by a genealogy of the presidency of the church, followed by a day-by-day narrative. Headings for the "genealogy," followed by the title, "Chapter 1," and continuing numbered pages in the volume suggest a lofty intention, but two entries, 5 and 6 December 1834, mark the extent of actual writing in this document.^32^ In the same year the October issue of the church periodical *Messenger and Advocate* contained the beginning of yet another attempt to write a history. This

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^29^ John Whitmer, "The Book of John Whitmer," p. 25, original in the Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo.

^30^ Joseph Smith to Hyrum Smith, 31 July 1832; and Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:15.


time the format consisted of correspondence between two of the ablest writers in
the church, Oliver Cowdery and William W. Phelps. The introduction to the
first letter promised its readers that "Joseph Smith has offered to assist us,"
adding, "indeed, there are many items connected with the fore part of this subject
that render his labor indispensable. With his labor and with authentic
documents now in our possession, we hope to render this a pleasing and
agreeable narrative, well worth the examination and perusal of the Saints." Beginning in its first issue with an account of the 1829 priesthood restoration and
concluding a year later with a treatise on the Book of Mormon, this publication
did not present sequential history, nor did it complete the promised presentation
of "a full history of the church of the Latter Day Saints, and the most interesting
parts of its progress, to the present time." The series was discontinued in the fall
of 1835.33

The Cowdery-Phelps history published in the Messenger and Advocate formed the basis for still another effort to write a history in 1835-36, when it was
copied into the large book containing the Oliver Cowdery fragment of 1834. Following the handwritten copy of the Cowdery-Phelps articles, the format was
changed to a daily, third person, diary-style narrative, in an attempt to give more
detail of Joseph Smith’s life. The change in format was introduced with these
words:

Here the reader will observe that the narrative assumes a different form. The subject of it
becoming daily more and more noted, the writer deemed it proper to give a plain, simple,
yet faithful narration of every important item in his every day occurrences. Therefore, he
trusts, that to the man of God, no apology will be necessary for such a course especially
when he takes into consideration that he writes, not so much for the benefit of his
contemporaries as for that of posterity. The candid, reflecting mind will also realize how
highly we all estimate every species of intelligence or correct information we can obtain
relative to the ancient Prophets and Apostles, through whom the Most High
condescended to reveal himself to the children of men. Such revelations, therefore, as may
at any time be given through him will be inserted, and the characters of other men, from
their necessary connection with him will in some instances be plainly portrayed; but the
digression from the main thread of the narrative when short, will, the writer trusts,
constitute that pleasing variety, those lights and shades, that picture of human life on
which the eye rests with most pleasure. The ear and the mind of both reader and hearer,
will be relieved from that formal sameness, or tiresome monotony, that characterizes a
dull tale of no merit, and enable future generations, to duly appreciate the claims the
subject of this narrative may have had on his contemporaries for their implicit reliance on
what he taught them.34

In the handwriting of Warren Parrish and Warren Cowdery, the ensuing account
began with the entry of 22 September 1835 and continued until 18 January 1836,
when it also was discontinued.

An account of the arrival of Joseph Smith and his family in Missouri was the
starting point of another history-writing endeavor in 1837. Written by George
W. Robinson, the Church Recorder, under the title, “Scripторy Book of Joseph
Smith Jr. President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints in all the
World,” this work consists of a daily, third-person narrative containing

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33Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate 1 (October 1834) to 2 (November 1835).
documents and revelations of historical importance. Beginning with the arrival of Joseph Smith in Missouri on 13 March 1837, Robinson’s narrative ended with the entry of 10 September 1838, a little less than two months before Joseph Smith and other church leaders were imprisoned in the wake of difficulties that saw the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Missouri in the winter of 1838-39.\footnote{35\textsuperscript{35}}

The “Scriptory Book” contains reference to another history written while Joseph Smith was in Missouri. George Robinson notes that in April and May 1838 the First Presidency were engaged in “writing the history of the church,” and that each day’s writing was preceded with grammar lessons taught by Sidney Rigdon.\footnote{35\textsuperscript{36}} Although an original manuscript of this 1838 work of the Presidency has not been found, it evidently served as the basis for the beginning part of the History that was started the following year.

Contributive to the disconnected attempts to write the history in the years previous to 1839 were the problems that beset the church in its effort to permanently establish itself and the unfaithfulness of many of those who had been associated with Joseph Smith in a record-keeping capacity. By April 1839, when the Prophet arrived in Illinois from his Missouri confinement, the manuscript commenced the previous year was all that had been written of his history; to add further disappointment, key men who had assisted him with that work (Oliver Cowdery, Warren Cowdery, William W. Phelps, George W. Robinson, John Whitmer, and Warren Parrish) had left the church.

Starting afresh, less than two months after his arrival in Illinois, and one month after moving his family into a small log house near Commerce, Joseph Smith again began dictating his history, this time to a newly appointed clerk, James Mulholland. Using the narrative written the previous year as a beginning, the work begun by Joseph in June 1839 was eventually published as the official History of the Church.\footnote{35\textsuperscript{37}}

Although the Prophet’s historical labors after 1839 were not hampered so much by unfaithful clerks, other circumstances continued to deprive him of competent assistance and hinder the progress of his history writing. Not the least of these were time-consuming church responsibilities that included the settlement of the exiled Saints in Illinois. By 29 October 1839, when Joseph left Nauvoo for Washington, D. C., to present the Missouri grievances of his people to the federal government, only fifty-nine pages of the history, begun in June, had been written. Six days after his departure, his scribe Mulholland died. When the Prophet returned to Nauvoo in March 1840 he lamented the passing of his “faithful scribe,” and expressed disappointment that an adequate record of his Washington trip had not been kept. “I depended on Dr. Foster to keep my daily journal during this journey, but he has failed me.”\footnote{35\textsuperscript{38}}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[35\textsuperscript{35}] The volume containing the Robinson history was subsequently used for recording patriarchal blessings, and is filed as volume 9 in that series.
\item[35\textsuperscript{36}] Robinson, “Scriptory Book,” p. 37.
\item[35\textsuperscript{37}] The rationale for dating the beginning of the official History in 1839 instead of 1838, as internal evidence in the History suggests, is given in Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” pp. 450, 464.
\item[35\textsuperscript{38}] Smith, History of the Church, 4:89 reads the same as the manuscript of the history at C-1, p. 1023.
\end{footnotes}
Robert B. Thompson, who was appointed General Church Clerk on 3 October 1840, continued writing the history where Mulholland left off; but his untimely death on 27 August 1841 saw only sixteen pages added to the manuscript. By the time Willard Richards was appointed private secretary to Joseph Smith and General Church Clerk in December 1842, a mere 157 pages of a work that eventually numbered more than two thousand pages had been written.

Despite the numerous responsibilities and oppressive conditions that confronted Joseph Smith in Illinois, the progress of the history was of prime concern to him. When Richards, assisted by William W. Phelps, reported in 1843 that noise from a school class distracted them in the writing of the history, Joseph immediately ordered the caretaker of the school to “look out for another place as the history must continue and not be disturbed.”\(^\text{39}\) He remarked on another occasion that “the history must go ahead before anything else.”\(^\text{40}\) Few problems brought him greater anxiety than the writing of the history, which he regarded as “a very difficult task.”\(^\text{41}\)

After the arrival of Willard Richards and other talented clerks, such as William Clayton and Thomas Bullock, on the record-keeping scene in the early 1840s, Joseph Smith was assured that at least the raw materials for his history thereafter would be preserved for posterity. “For the last three years,” he noted shortly before his death, “I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said.”\(^\text{42}\)

On 1 March 1842, publication of the history in serial form commenced in the Nauvoo newspaper *Times and Seasons*. By 27 June 1844, the date of Joseph Smith’s death, the manuscript of the history had been completed only to 5 August 1838 and published to December 1831.

A problem that confronted those engaged on the history right from the beginning was the search for a format. The structure finally settled upon by Joseph Smith was a first person, daily narrative based upon diaries kept by himself and his clerks, with the insertion of pertinent information from church periodicals, minute and record books of church and civic organizations, letters and documents kept on file, and news of current world happenings. While in the Carthage Jail shortly before his death, the Prophet instructed Willard Richards, who was there with him, to continue the history.\(^\text{43}\) This Richards did, and for the

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\(^{39}\)Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:66. The manuscript diary kept by Willard Richards, from where this entry was compiled, reads as follows under date of 7 November 1843: “Richards and Phelps called at the Mansion and stated that the school disturbed the history and prevented its progress. Joseph said tell Mr. Cole he must look out for himself. Your reasons are good.”

\(^{40}\)Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:394. Except for the addition of “else,” this entry is the same as the Diary at 19 May 1843.

\(^{41}\)Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:66. These words are absent in Joseph’s Diary kept by Willard Richards at 7 November 1843. The final wording of the *History* here was under the direction of George A. Smith.

\(^{42}\)Joseph Smith Address, 26 May 1844, reported by Thomas Bullock; published in Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:409. The published entry reads the same as a manuscript draft in the hand of Leo Hawkins and Thomas Bullock. The original Bullock manuscript has not been located.

\(^{43}\)George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, 21 April 1856.
next decade he was the custodian of the records and the architect of the history.

After the death of Joseph Smith work on the history continued, even as the Saints prepared to leave Nauvoo for the Rocky Mountains. With the addition of 674 pages to the manuscript, nearly as much work was done on the history in the period between Joseph’s death and the departure of the Saints from Nauvoo as had been done in the preceding years. As preparations for leaving Illinois intensified, a closing scene, so far as the history was concerned, was a desperate gathering of source material. An epistle to the Saints in late 1845 urged

all those who have letters, or documents of any kind in their possession, which in any way relate to the History of the Church... to leave them with the Historian before tomorrow evening.

Every individual who may be in possession of any fact, circumstance, incident, event, or transaction which they wish recorded in the General History of the Church will report it in writing before tomorrow evening. The Historian wants all books, maps, charts, papers, documents, of every kind name and nature, and all information that may relate to, or have a bearing in any wise upon the History of the Church, before him, in his office, within twenty four hours.

Important items of History have frequently been presented at too late an hour to gain an insertion. Therefore I would say, that the documents now wanting, are for the years 43-4 and 5, but if any of the brethren have any items of valuable history of any date, they may hand them in, and they will be filed away for future use. 44

At the time the records of the church were packed at Nauvoo for the journey west on 4 February 1846, Willard Richards had compiled the history to 1 March 1843. In the years that followed, such was the disruptive effect of the exodus and the establishment of a new commonwealth in the west upon the history writing process that Richards was never able to complete the work to the death of Joseph Smith. Even though the serial publication of the history resumed in the Deseret News in Salt Lake City on 15 November 1851 and in the Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star in England the following April, using the portion of the history completed in Nauvoo prior to the exodus as the source, additional work on the manuscript did not resume until December 1853. At that time the historian Willard Richards dictated one line of history to his clerk, Thomas Bullock, but being ill was not able to continue. 45 Three months later, on 11 March 1854, Richards died, and with him went valuable information pertaining to closing scenes of Joseph Smith’s life.

When George A. Smith was appointed Church Historian in April 1854, he began his work on the history with the herculean tasks of salvaging data that bore the deteriorating marks of the exodus and of searching for additional information from widely scattered witnesses. At first, he found it necessary to revise and compare two years of back history which Willard Richards had compiled, “filling up numerous spaces which had been marked as omissions.” As work on the history continued, George A. lamented the sorry state of the source material. “It seems as though all the contrivances that the devil could invent had been brought to bear from the day of Joseph and Hyrum’s death to prevent their history being compiled. Many records are nearly obliterated by

44 Manuscript History of the Church, Brigham Young Period, 1844-1877, 16 November 1845.
time, damp, and dirt. Others lost; some half worked into mouse nests, and many
important events were never written except in the hearts of those who were
concerned." He added, "Joseph said it would be impossible for any man ever to
write his history. I am doing the best I can towards it." Writing to a cousin
during the inchworm progress on the history in the summer of 1855, George A.
reported, "I find it a long, tedious and difficult task, as his [Joseph Smith’s]
papers, many of them have been badly kept, and seriously damaged during our
migratory movements since his death." Later, he wrote of the emotional strain
that accompanied his efforts as he summarized his work in 1856: "The severe
application of thought to the principles of the history, the exercise of memory
&c., and my application of mind being in exercise both day and night, deprived
me of a great portion of necessary sleep." 46

When George A. Smith went to Washington, D.C., on territorial business
early in 1856, the burden of continuing the history fell upon the able Assistant
Church Historian Wilford Woodruff, who completed the work to Joseph
Smith’s death. A keen observer, Woodruff had kept a voluminous diary which
contained valuable contemporary information about Joseph Smith that was
recorded in no other place. Particularly difficult for Woodruff was the unraveling
of events during the last four days of the Prophet’s life, because, as he explained,
"Dr. Richards wrote but little, and that in detached sentences, expecting to make
it out himself, but died before doing it." In the midst of his effort to finish Joseph
Smith’s history, Woodruff wrote his colleague in the East, "We almost daily get
new statements from men who were directly or indirectly connected with the
scenes of the last four days of the lives of the Prophet and Patriarch," but, he
concluded, "many of these accounts are in direct opposition to each other." 47

In August 1856, twenty-six years after the task of writing a Church history
had begun, the work was completed to the death of Joseph Smith. Having
labored assiduously to overcome limitations that complicated their effort, and
after reading the entire manuscript in the hearing of the First Presidency of the
church and other witnesses to improve accuracy, the historians Smith and
Woodruff affixed their testimony to the work in these words:

The History of Joseph Smith is now before the world, and we are satisfied that a history
more correct in its details than this was never published. To have it strictly correct, the
greatest possible pains have been taken by the historians and clerks engaged in the work.
They were eye and ear witnesses to nearly all the transactions recorded in this history,
most of which were reported as they transpired, and, where they were not personally
present, they have had access to those who were.

Moreover, since the death of the Prophet Joseph, the history has been carefully
revised under the strict inspection of President Brigham Young, and approved of by him.

We, therefore, hereby bear our testimony to all the world, unto whom these words
shall come, that the History of Joseph Smith is true, and it is one of the most authentic
histories ever written. 48

If some of those who study Joseph Smith’s History of the Church today are less

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46Letters of Smith to Woodruff, 21 April 1856; to John L. Smith, 28 February 1855; to C. C.
Waller, 31 July 1855.
47Woodruff to John Bernhisel, 30 June 1856; and to George A. Smith, 30 June 1856.
48Deseret News 7 (20 January 1858): 363.
enthusiastic about its accuracy than George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff were, it is because they see the work from a different perspective. Considering the shift in literary and historical method that has occurred in the generations since the history was written, it is understandable that the work would not evoke the same degree of confidence today that it did to those who wrote it. Originally written, first published, and later re-edited at times when the church was undergoing intense criticism, the history's most glaring weaknesses are its outdated methodology and evidence of the emotional setting in which it was brought forth.

The format gives the impression that the history was written personally by Joseph Smith. A study of original documents, however, shows that much of its content was not the actual product of the Prophet's own mind, even though he was the architect of its form. And while it may appear trivial to distinguish the parts of Joseph Smith's writings actually authored by himself from those farmed out to his clerks, the biographer whose contact with the mind of his subject is indispensable finds this distinction of paramount importance. One notes a marked difference in style between those entries in the History that reflect Joseph Smith's own thought and those that are the creation of his scribes. Contrast, for example, the two following entries from the History, the first stemming from a portion of Joseph Smith's 1835 diary written by himself, and the second from his 1843 diary kept by Willard Richards:

Septembe [1835] | I was at home writing blessings for my most beloved brethren, but was hindered by a multitude of visitors. The Lord has blessed our souls this day, and may God grant to continue His mercies unto my house this night, for Christ's sake. This day my soul has desired the salvation of Brother Ezra Thayer. Also Brother Noah Packard came to my house and loaned the committee one thousand dollars to assist building the house of the Lord. Oh! may God bless him a hundred fold, even of the things of the earth, for this righteous act. My heart is full of desire today, to be blessed of the God of Abraham with prosperity, until I shall be able to pay all my debts, for it is the delight of my soul to be honest. O Lord, that thou knowest right well. Help me, and I will give to the poor.

Sunday 3. [December 1843] | I arrived at the assembly room about noon: found all present, except Hyrum and his wife. He had slipped and turned his knee-joint backward, and sprained the large muscle of his leg, and I had been ministering unto him. Emma had been unwell during the night. After the meeting was organized, William W. Phelps read my "Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys," which was dedicated by prayer after all had spoken upon it. We also prayed for Nathan Pratt, who was very sick, Hyrum, and others.49

To further complicate the question of authorship, since Joseph Smith's diary did not provide an unbroken narrative of his life, gaps were bridged by using other sources, changing indirect discourse to direct as if Joseph had done the writing himself. Not uncommon according to the editorial practices of the day, this method of supplying missing detail had the effect of providing a smooth-flowing, connected narrative of events. But by transferring other people's words and thoughts to Joseph Smith, this editorial method produced a distorting effect for those who would study his personality from his personal writings.

An example of such transfer of authorship is found in the 1834 account of the march of Zion's Camp recorded in the History. The following segment

49Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 2:281, and 6:98-99
depicts events shortly after a violent storm had dispersed groups of armed men who had harassed the progress of the Camp. Paralleled with the History account on the left, is the original source taken from Heber C. Kimball’s “journal and record” for 21 June 1834:

While camped here on Saturday the 21st, Colonel Sconce, with two leading men from Ray County, came to see us, desiring to know what our intentions were; ‘for,’ said he, ‘I see that there is an Almighty power that protects this people for I started from Richmond, Ray County, with a company of armed men, having a fixed determination to destroy you, but was kept back by the storm, and was not able to reach you.’ When he entered our camp he was seized with such a trembling that he was obliged to sit down to compose himself; and when he had made known the object of their visit, I arose, and, addressing them,
gave a relation of the sufferings of the Saints in Jackson county, and also of our persecutions generally, and what we had suffered by our enemies for our religion; and that we had come one thousand miles to assist our brethren, to bring them clothing, etc., and to reinstate them upon their own lands; and that we had no intention to molest or injure any people, but only to administer to the wants of our afflicted friends; and that the evil reports circulated about us were false, and got up by our enemies to procure our destruction. When I had closed a lengthy speech, the spirit of which melted them into compassion, they arose and offered me their hands, and said they would use their influence to allay the excitement which everywhere prevailed against us; and they

On the 21st, Colonel Searcy and two other leading men from Ray County, came to see us, desiring to know what our intentions were; for said he, ‘I see that there is an Almighty power that protects this people, for I started from Richmond, Ray county, with a company of armed men having a fixed determination to destroy you, but was kept back by the storm and was not able to reach you.’ When he came into the camp he was seized with such a trembling, that he was obliged to sit down in order to compose himself. When he desired to know what our intentions were, Brother Joseph arose and began to speak and the power of God rested upon him. He gave a relation of the sufferings of our people in Jackson county, and also of all our persecutions and what we had suffered by our enemies for our religion; and that we had come one thousand miles to assist our brethren, to bring them clothing, and to reinstate them upon their own lands; that we had no intentions to molest or injure any people, but only to administer to the wants of our afflicted brethren; and that the evil reports, which were circulated about us were false and were circulated by our enemies to get us destroyed. After he had got through and had spoke quite lengthy, the power of which melted them into compassion, they arose and offered him their hands, and said they would use their influence to allay the excitement which everywhere prevailed against us.
wept when they heard of our
afflictions and persecutions, and
learned that our intentions were good.
Accordingly they went forth
among the people,
and made unwavering exertions to
allay the excitement.\footnote{Ibid., 2:105-6.}

They accordingly went forth
and rode day and night to pacify the people;
and
they wept because they saw we were a
poor afflicted people, and our intentions
were pure.\footnote{"Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 February 1845): 804. The manuscript "Journal and Record of Heber Chase Kimball," pp. 35-36 reads the same, except that the Colonel's name is "Sconce."}

The impact of editorial liberties such as this upon the portrayal of Joseph Smith has been possibly to present distorted characteristics that may not have been typical of his personality. One may obtain impressions of boasting and egotism, or coarseness and ill-humor, when in effect these traits may not have been characteristic of Joseph Smith's personality at all, but of those who wrote the History under his direction or in his absence.

The editorial rules that governed the writing of Joseph Smith's history makes it impossible to determine, from either manuscript or published versions, the extent to which the Prophet personally authored given portions of the *History* without checking original documents and applying tests of handwriting and style analysis.

The question of authorship that confronts the reader of the portion of Joseph Smith's history compiled from his diaries also applies to his correspondence and addresses. Here also, the editorial procedure lacks clarity. "I wrote the following article," the Prophet is reported as writing in the published version of the *History*, preceding his February 1844 letter to Thomas Ford titled "Pacific Inuendo," while the original diary that serves as the basis for the published account reports that Joseph had assigned the Ford letter to William W. Phelps to answer.\footnote{Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:218-20. The Diary at 16 February 1844 states "directed him [Phelps] to write a communication on Gov. Ford's letter in the Warsaw Signal."}

The same is true of the proclamation to the citizens of Nauvoo dated 11 June 1844.\footnote{Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:449. The Diary, 11 June 1844, reads, "Instructed Bro. Phelps to write a proclamation to the citizens of Nauvoo to keep quiet."}

One problem that confronted George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff during the final stages of the history was editing Joseph Smith's discourses from surviving longhand summaries. Since shorthand had not been sufficiently mastered by church reporters during Joseph Smith's lifetime, none of the Prophet's extant speeches are verbatim reports. While the published *History* acknowledges that the Prophet's addresses are summaries reported by his clerks, it gives little indication of how complete the summaries are or what refinements were necessary to prepare them for publication. In many instances the published...
discourse closely parallels the original reported summary. For example, Joseph Smith's address of 14 May 1843 as published in the History follows Wilford Woodruff's original report of the discourse almost word for word.\textsuperscript{54} However, where more than one report was made of a sermon, the editors faced the task of dove-tailing differing reports together to make a single, cohesive summary. The Prophet's discourse of 7 April 1844 upon the death of King Follett, reported by Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, Thomas Bullock, and William Clayton, is a prime example of this. In the following extract from the discourse, the corresponding segment reported by each of the four clerks is compared with the final edited version as published in the History:

\textit{Wilford Woodruff}

\[1\]But meddle not with any man for his religion. Every government ought to permit every man to enjoy his religion.\textsuperscript{55}

\textit{Willard Richards}

\[4\]Every man has a right to be a false prophet as well as a true prophet.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{William Clayton}

\[?\]But no man is authorized to take away life in consequence of their religion.\textsuperscript{57} All laws and governments ought to tolerate whether right or wrong. \[?\]If I show that I have the truth of God & 99/100 are false teachers while they pretend to hold the keys of God & go to killing them because &c would it not deluge the world in blood\textsuperscript{257}

\textit{Thomas Bullock}

\[?\]There is no law in the heart of God that would allow any one to interfere with the rights of man. \[?\]Every man has a right to be a false as well as a true prophet. \[?\]If I show verily that I have the truth of God and shew that ninety nine of 100 are false prophets it would deluge the whole world with blood.\textsuperscript{58}

\textit{Published History}

\[1\]But meddle not with any man for his religion: all governments ought to permit every man to enjoy his religion unmolested. \[?\]No man is authorized to take away life in consequence of difference of religion, \[?\]which all laws and governments ought to tolerate and protect, right or wrong. \[?\]Every man has a natural, and, in our country, a constitutional right to be a false prophet, as well as a true prophet. \[?\]If I show verily, that I have the truth of God, and show that ninety-nine out of every hundred professing religious ministers are false teachers, having no authority, while they pretend to hold the keys of God's kingdom on earth, and was to kill them because they are false teachers, it would deluge the whole world with blood.\textsuperscript{59}

The difficulty of preparing Joseph Smith's discourses for inclusion in the history was complicated further where the original report of a discourse was made in brief notes, necessitating extensive editing at a later time to bridge ideas. An example is Joseph Smith's address of 21 May 1843, reported exclusively by Willard Richards. One part of this sermon was briefly summarized by Richards

\textsuperscript{54}Compare Joseph Smith, \textit{History of the Church}, 5:387-90 and Wilford Woodruff Diary, 14 May 1843.

\textsuperscript{55}Woodruff Diary, 7 April 1844.

\textsuperscript{56}Joseph Smith Diary, 7 April 1844, kept by Willard Richards.

\textsuperscript{57}Clayton report of 7 April 1844 Joseph Smith discourse, manuscript.

\textsuperscript{58}Bullock report of 7 April 1844 Joseph Smith discourse, manuscript.

\textsuperscript{59}Joseph Smith, \textit{History of the Church}, 6:304.
Jessee: Joseph Smith's History

with the notation, "rough stone rolling down hill," but was fleshed out to read:

I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty, who will give me dominion over all and every one of them, when their refuge of lies shall fail, and their hiding place shall be destroyed, while these smooth-polished stones with which I come in contact became marred.

The task of preparing Joseph Smith's discourses for publication was particularly difficult in the later stages of the history when it became necessary to reconstruct word sequences more than a decade after they were spoken, from notes that in some instances were very brief. In summarizing his work on this crucial phase of the history, George A. Smith wrote, "I have filled up all the reports of sermons by Prest. Joseph Smith and others from minutes or sketches taken at the time in long hand . . . which was an immense labor, requiring the deepest thought and the closest application, as there were mostly only two or three words (about half written) to a sentence." But he assured his reader that "the greatest care has been taken to convey the ideas in the prophet's style as near as possible; and in no case has the sentiment been varied that I know of; as I heard the most of his discourses myself, was on the most intimate terms with him, have retained a most vivid recollection of his teachings, and was well acquainted with his principles and motives."

In addition to George A. Smith's own careful editorial work, which he felt was enhanced by an 1831 revelation that promised the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to those who functioned in the office of church historian, was the additional verification that came from reading the finished compilation of each discourse in the hearing of members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, some of whom had also heard the original addresses. But while these measures no doubt guaranteed the doctrinal accuracy of Joseph Smith's discourses, they obviously would not reflect his personality as accurately as a verbatim report would have done.

Much of the criticism that has been raised against Joseph Smith's History has come from the comparison of the current edition with previous published versions of the work. A comparison of the History edited by Brigham H. Roberts and published by the church beginning in 1902 with previous printings in the Times and Seasons, the Millennial Star, and the Deseret News, reveals numerous textual alterations and changes that are clearly the effort of a later generation to cope with textual problems of the History. Most of these are insignificant changes in word or sentence structure necessitated by evolving literary usage or oversights due to clerical error. The omission of Joseph Smith's phrase at the beginning of the history, speaking of the churches of his day, ("for at this time it

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60 Joseph Smith Diary, 21 May 1843, kept by Willard Richards.
61 Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 5:401-5.
62 Smith to Woodruff, 21 April 1856.
63 Doctrine and Covenants, Section 47:4.
had never entered into my heart that all were wrong," which contradicts an earlier statement of the Prophet, ("who of all these parties were right? or, are they all wrong together;") and the substitution of the name "Moroni" for "Nephi" as the angel who addressed Joseph Smith about the golden plates, are typical of this type of editorial revision. In other instances Roberts sought to make a more judicious balance in detail respecting individuals not central to the theme of the history when he omitted extensive biographical data on the lives of Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Edward Partridge, and Orson Hyde.

More important are changes that clearly affect meaning and more realistically raise questions of intent. Among these are efforts to delete portions of the text that later evidence showed to be obvious products of the emotional setting in which the history was written. One notes, for example, the following description of events shortly after the murder of Joseph Smith. It is recorded in the original manuscript, the *Millennial Star* and *Deseret News* versions of the *History*, but was deleted from the 1902 edition:

He [Joseph Smith] fell partly on his right shoulder and back, his neck and head reaching the ground a little before his feet, and he rolled instantly on his face. From this position he was taken by a man who was barefoot and bareheaded, and having no coat, his pants rolled up above his knees, and his shirt sleeves above his elbows. He set Joseph against the south side of the well curb, which was situated a few feet from the jail, when Col. Levi Williams ordered four men to shoot him. They stood about eight feet from the curb, and fired simultaneously. A slight cringe of the body was all the indication of pain visible when the balls struck him, and he fell on his face.

The ruffian who set him against the well curb now gathered a bowie-knife for the purpose of severing his head from his body. He raised the knife, and was in the attitude of striking, when a light, so sudden and powerful, burst from the heavens upon the bloody scene (passing its vivid chain between Joseph and his murderers), that they were struck with terror. This light, in its appearance and potency, baffles all powers of description. The arm of the ruffian that held the knife fell powerless, the muskets of the four who fired fell to the ground, and they all stood like marble statues, not having the power to move a single limb of their bodies.

The retreat of the mob was as hurried and disorderly as it possibly could have been. Col. Williams hallowed to some who had just commenced their retreat to come back and help to carry off the four men who fired, and who were still paralyzed. They came and carried them away by main strength to the baggage waggons, when they fled towards Warsaw.

Roberts noted that this statement was based upon the unreliable testimony of one William Daniels as published in Nauvoo shortly after the death of the Prophet. "It was inevitable, perhaps, that something miraculous should be alleged as connected with the death of Joseph Smith; that both myth and legend, those parasites of truth, should attach themselves to the Prophet's career." But he

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64 "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 April 1842): 748; (15 March 1842): 727; and (15 April 1842): 753.

65 Ibid., 1 May 1843): 177-78; (15 May 1843): 193-94; (1 June 1843): 209-10; (15 August 1843): 289, contains biographical data on Sidney Rigdon; ibid., 1 November 1843): 368-69, contains biographical data on Edward Partridge; and ibid 5(1 April 1844): 481-82, contains data on Orson Hyde, all of which, although omitted from the main text, was summarized in the descriptive notes of the Roberts edition of the *History*.

concluded that the Daniels statement was “wholly apocryphal, and the great, determining facts of ‘Mormonism’ rest on no such questionable” evidence.\textsuperscript{67}

In re-editing the \textit{History} for publication in 1902, Roberts deleted other items that were regarded by the standards of his time as insignificant, outdated, in poor taste, or undignified, such as a reference to Joseph hitting a mobber in the nose, a rebuke of President Martin Van Buren, phrenology charts of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Joseph’s argument in support of repeal of a Nauvoo City hog ordinance, and his giving money to replenish a whiskey supply of his rescuers in 1843.\textsuperscript{68}

In a memorandum addressed by Roberts to President Joseph F. Smith with respect to the editorial work on the \textit{History}, his rationale for deleting questionable items was set forth, indicating something of the distance that separated Roberts’s view of the Mormon past from that of his predecessors. Proposing that Joseph Smith’s definition of the word “Mormon” be left out of the \textit{History},\textsuperscript{69} Roberts reasoned:

The definition is most likely worked out by W. W. Phelps and accepted by the Prophet, perhaps in a good humored way, being influenced to accept it from the idea of Mormonism being “more good” than a corrupted Christianity. It is pedantic, offensively so, and starts from inaccurate premises. “Bible,” does not mean “good,” either in its widest sense or any other sense. It is derived from “biblie”—“the books,” and by no manner of torture can be twisted to mean “good.” This is the false premise from which the definer starts, and he reaches unwarranted conclusions. The treatise leaves the Prophet open to ridicule which need not be perpetuated. It should be left out.\textsuperscript{70}

Suggesting a poem by Eliza R. Snow on Joseph Smith’s arrest at Dixon, Illinois, be deleted, Roberts observed that the arrest story had been related twice before in the history, and besides “the verses are merest doggerel, and add nothing to the narrative, either of beauty or fact. It should be omitted by all means. All that jingles is not poetry.”\textsuperscript{71}

Roberts also questioned the propriety of including the question and answer, “Can a branch of the Church make by-laws on the principle of expediency which are not specified in any revelation? Answer, Yes, if they wish they may make laws to stick their fingers in their eyes.”\textsuperscript{72} He reasoned, “It is thought that the illustration following shall at least be omitted, and perhaps the whole question and answer. The illustration to the answer is certainly undignified for Apostles and ought not to be reproduced in the history.”\textsuperscript{73}


\textsuperscript{73}Brigham H. Roberts, “Items of Church History to be Referred to President Joseph F. Smith,” p. 1.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid. The poem is in \textit{Millennial Star} 21 (5 November 1859): 714. Compare Joseph Smith, \textit{History of the Church}, 5:500.

\textsuperscript{75}Brigham H. Roberts, “Items of Church History,” p. 2.
Publishing the history in the age of the Smoot trial and the era of the “muckrakers,” when criticism against the church knew no bounds, Roberts noticed instances of poor taste, ill humor, and indignity in the pages of the history, perhaps more so than would have been the case had he labored in a less emotional atmosphere. But although he recognized and corrected many problems that stemmed from the editorial procedure that had governed the earlier writing of the history, a procedure that attributed words and actions to Joseph Smith that were technically not his, Roberts failed to come to grips with the whole problem of methodology. In so failing, he not only transmitted the archaic editorial style of his nineteenth century predecessors to the next generation, but guaranteed that any future assessment of the history would be even more harsh than his own.

To restate the question raised at the beginning of this study: How reliable is the Joseph Smith History as a primary historical source? The answer is clearly rooted in the issue of textual origins. While this paper has merely surveyed the broad outlines of the setting in which the History was written, touching upon characteristics of nineteenth century literary and historical procedure, the impact of Joseph Smith’s personality, and the conditions under which he and his associates labored to produce the History, perhaps enough has been written here to suggest, as Julian Boyd has aptly observed, that since everything the historian writes is conditioned by the documentary foundation upon which his labor rests, it is at his own peril that he ignores original sources or leaves control of this foundation to others not bound by his commitment, or trained in his discipline.74

Joseph Smith’s History was lauded for its accuracy by those who produced it. Indeed, alongside contemporary American efforts to edit and publish the writings of prominent men, the History compares very well. However, as more exacting procedures of literary and historical craftsmanship have developed and additional sources have been discovered, the standards for assessing reliability and accuracy have shifted. From our present viewpoint the major weakness of the History is its out-dated editorial method that distorts the promise made in its format of preserving a personally written record of Joseph Smith. As a compilation of primary historical sources the Joseph Smith History will continue to be a most important source of information on the life of the Mormon prophet and early Latter-day Saint history. But none who use it seriously can afford to ignore the original documents upon which it is based.

The failure of writers to come to grips with the methodology of the History has distorted interpretations based upon it. Since personal expression is an important key to the understanding of personality, it is essential for the biographer to distinguish the autograph writings of his subject from those assigned out to secretaries. This is especially true where understanding rests so exclusively upon written documents as in the case of Joseph Smith. His dependence upon others to write for him, coupled with the imprecise editorial procedures of his day, have guaranteed a contradictory image of him in the pages of his History. And this is precisely where the historical understanding of the

74Butterfield and Boyd, Historical Editing in the United States, p. 34.
Prophet has faltered. To attempt a study of Joseph Smith without removing the editorial screen that distorts the view of him is to undertake a stately dance on a highly polished floor. In failing to grasp the editorial mechanics of the History, hagiologists and debunkers alike have stumbled badly in their comprehension of Joseph Smith. Mormon writers in lauding his greatness have not adequately perceived the religious nature of the Prophet reflected in the pages of his holograph writings. On the other hand, critics have not only failed in their interpretation of Joseph Smith, but have misread the shifting images and textual problems of his History as a malicious Mormon attempt to tamper with their past. Fawn Brodie, in what has become the most widely read biography of the Prophet to date, observed that "there are few men . . . who have written so much and told so little about themselves. To search in his six-volume autobiography for the inner springs of his character is to come away baffled." Frustrated by her failure to understand the changing images that emerged from the pages of Joseph's History, she concluded that his prophetic claims were "an evolutionary process," and that "when he chose to write of this evolution in his History of the Church he distorted the past in the interest of promoting his public image as a gifted young prophet." But charges of wilful distortion of Joseph's history are no substitute for informed textual analysis. Too many of the original sources have been preserved that reveal the methods of the writing process of Joseph's History for that.

From the complicated world of editing Shakespeare, Fredson Bowers has argued that one of the fundamental principles for the historical editor is to know everything he possibly can about the documents upon which his work is to be based, their relationship to one another, and, so far as can be determined, their history back to the author's autograph manuscripts. There is no document of Mormon history that is more complicated in its methodology and the details of its origin than Joseph Smith's History. Some of the historical issues raised in recent years are nourished by a failure to understand the documentary foundation of this important historical source. Such issues as the absence of pre-1830 sources detailing Joseph Smith's earliest religious experiences, the late start on his official history, discrepancies in accounts of his First Vision, and questions of change and alteration of early texts, all ultimately hinge upon the understanding of textual origins.

The distinction between the distortion of history that comes from the wilful manipulation of texts, and the distortion that stems from the natural limitations of the historical process is often difficult to detect. In both instances the problem is one of understanding the documentary base upon which historical inquiry rests. The alteration of history is a dangerous business, but what makes it doubly dangerous is the way in which historical writing conveys a false sense of finality, when inherent limitations combine to assure us that whatever is written by the historians of one generation will inevitably be revised or refined by those of another. The haphazard way in which the raw material of history originates and

is transmitted from one age to another, the problems of understanding and interpreting it, and the methods by which it is packaged and sent forth, have a limiting effect upon one's view of the past. Everything we know about the past, notes the English philosopher W. H. Walsh, is actually a function of the evidence at present available to us and our present skill in interpreting it. In a sense we view the past through tinted spectacles that cannot be removed. If, as Hans Meyerhoff has written, "the only safe generalization about history is . . . that it is being, and always will be, rewritten," possibly our most enduring contribution would be a careful structuring of the documentary foundation that will serve as the basis for our generation's view of the past.77

People speak to each other about tragic reality through many forms: through painting and sculpture, through ritual and folklore, through literature and theatre, and through history. If it is written well, history can function as potently as either fiction or drama to capture our imagination, to arouse our emotions, to cause us to identify and project and to live vicariously in the scene portrayed by the historian. Juanita Brooks is widely known and respected as a historian of southwestern Utah. But it seems to me, particularly considering two of her works, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* and *John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat*, that she is a tragedian as well. Everything we know about this quiet little woman as a historian, a teacher, a wife, a Mormon, a lifetime resident of Utah’s Dixie suggests that there is a profound emotional bond between herself and the people of whom she writes. Her purposes as a historian are means to an end. More elemental are her purposes as a tragedian, as one who has used history to express the tragic emotion of her region and her church.

Tragedy in art or ritual may best be defined by reference to tragedy in actual life. In actuality tragedy means intolerable loss and intense suffering. The death of a loved one, failing health, the deterioration of our social status, the loss of any incalculable value can be tragic and can subject us to grief, terror, despair, or other painful emotion. The term *tragedy* also properly describes art or ritual which depicts such loss and arouses such emotion. This seems to me to be a sufficient generic definition. However, the most estimable and attractive tragedy does more than confront us with tragic fact: it provides some kind of recovery as well. We do not seek out tragic art and ritual simply to increase our suffering. We do so because they tend to relieve our accumulated burden of tragic emotion.

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This relief may take many forms. Aristotle called it catharsis; later critics have disputatiously defined other qualities. Common to them all are the encouragement and enhancement of life. This is the paradoxical function of Juanita Brooks in her history of the Mountain Meadows Massacre and in her biography of John D. Lee. Through them she brings about a Mormon confrontation with tragic fact; but in that very process she also brings healing and recovery.

There are those who may argue that Brooks’s works have no relevance of a tragic sort to Mormonism because, as some assert, “no genuinely Christian tragedy can exist.”1 In the words of the modern Mormon prophet Spencer W. Kimball, life is not tragic because it is “an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future.”2 I would remark, however, that if belief in eternal life comforts Christians in certain tragic moments, it can never entirely obviate the instinctive grief, horror, and despair to which all human beings are susceptible. In some instances, Christian belief magnifies tragic emotion, as in the case, for example, of a person who feels unforgiven for a grievous sin. Christianity has developed a rich tragic tradition, which for the most part centers upon the death of Christ. The Mass is in some degree a tragic ritual, and there are innumerable examples of tragic Christian art, of which I cite Rembrandt’s Descent from the Cross and Bach’s Saint Matthew Passion. When we view Rembrandt’s Christ, all too human and so palpably dead, and when we hear the undercurrent of grief in Bach’s music, we know that centuries of Christians have sought relief from tragic emotion in the contemplation that God himself suffered and died.

Mormonism has a nascent tragic tradition. The monthly testimony meeting has evolved into a partially tragic ritual. Testimonies begun as a declaration of faith often end in weeping, as Mormons seek recovery by sharing with their fellows the suffering to which their domestic lives are subject. The Mormon sacrament, as the celebration of the Lord’s Last Supper is called, retains touches of the tragic emotion of the Mass. But the collective tragic feeling of Mormonism does not relate strongly to the death of Christ. Mormon art rarely depicts Christ in agony or death, and traditional art depicting these themes is alien to most Mormons. Rather the tragic themes which Mormons recognize most readily have to do with the persecutions and privations of the church’s frontier experience. The tragic losses inflicted upon the early church by its enemies and by the wilderness find an abundant expression in folklore, sermons, novels, paintings, and many other forms. Indignation over the stark injustice of the expulsions from Missouri and Illinois pervades B. H. Roberts’s A Comprehensive History of the Church, written almost eighty years after those events. Grief arising from the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, which Joseph Fielding Smith calls “the greatest sorrow” in all the history of the Mormons,3 has found eloquent expression in

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Clinton Larson’s poetic drama, “The Mantle of the Prophet.” The countless graves that dot the Mormon trail from the Susquehanna to the Gila are tragically celebrated by Avard Fairbanks’s statue “Tragedy at Winter Quarters,” which depicts a pioneer couple looking down upon the grave of their child.

There are, however, some tragic themes from the frontier era which Mormons cannot accept readily. One is the portrayal of polygamy as severe deprivation for Mormon women, which we see, for example, in Maureen Whipple’s novel, Giant Joshua. Even more difficult is the saga of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. The massacre has been easy to recognize as a tragedy for those who were slaughtered, but hard to accept as a Mormon tragedy. The affair has been inaccessible as a Mormon tragedy because Mormons have imputed it to renegades from whom the church can properly be dissociated. From Charles W. Penrose to Joseph Fielding Smith, official Mormon interpreters have denounced the massacre as “a crime for which there can be no apology or excuse, a thing treacherous and damnable in the extreme.” The resistance to ascribing the massacre to responsible Mormons continues: only a year or so ago, a friend of mine, asking a clerk at Deseret Book for a copy of Juanita Brooks’s history of the massacre, was told, “It’s in fiction where it belongs.” However, because of Brooks’s work, the conclusion is inevitable that good Mormons were involved in the massacre and that the causes of the massacre are deep within the character of frontier Mormonism. For Mormons, Brooks raises a stark confrontation with tragic fact.

The pivotal event of The Mountain Meadows Massacre is that moment in September 1857 when about 50 Mormon men of the Iron County militia, aided by several hundred Indians, slaughtered between 90 and 120 immigrants traveling from Arkansas and Missouri to California. By a deceitful promise of safe conduct, which John D. Lee carried to the immigrants, the Mormons lured them from their defenses and launched a treacherous assault in which individuals of the militia each shot a male immigrant while the Indians killed the women and older children with knives and hatchets. Only a few small children were spared. The massacre is similarly the pivotal event of John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat. From Lee’s conversion in 1838 until the massacre, Lee’s life was on the rise, and his progress and the progress of the Latter-day Saint church were inseparable. He was in the Missouri persecutions, he built and fought at Nauvoo, he suffered with the Saints at Winter Quarters, he built homes in the Salt Lake valley, he went by mission call to Iron County and built again at New Harmony, where for a period he presided over wives, children, hired hands, houses and fields, a man of prominence and property and an intimate to Brigham Young. Following the massacre, his fortunes declined. His neighbors inflicted contumilies upon him, he went into exile in the barren places along the Colorado, he suffered the overwhelming indignity of an unexpected, arbitrary excommunication, and finally, twenty years after the massacre, singled out from among all those involved, he died before a firing squad at Mountain Meadows.

The most obvious tragedy with which these books confront us is of course that of the immigrant party. The simple details which Brooks gives of the

Ibid., p. 418
massacre work upon our imagination, and as we read we are struck by circumstances that heighten our tragic emotion: the deceived faith that the common bond of civilization would win the immigrants the protection of the Mormons against the Indians; the horror of the women and older children who had time to understand their plight before the Indians reached them from their place of hiding; the gaping throats and smashed skulls; the Mormons' appropriation of the immigrants' property, including the clothes from their dead bodies; the trauma of the little children instantly orphaned in a world where there is rarely an adequate replacement for the love of a parent. And to these are added such poignant touches as the shocked comment of William H. Dame, commander-in-chief of the militia, as he reviewed the scene of the massacre for the first time: "I did not know there were so many of them"; or the frantic plea of Rachael Hamblin, who in trying to comfort the surviving children at her ranch, told them that "if they would be quiet for a few minutes she would say a prayer for them all."

For Brooks, there is another tragedy too. In both books, the scapegoating of Lee is treated as an accumulation of mistaken responses to the massacre that itself amounts to a new and distinct tragedy. In the portrayal Brooks makes, Lee emerges as a man with both failings and virtues in notable proportions. Lee was a man of abrasive, egotistical personality who demanded deference from his subordinates. He accepted too literally the rhetoric of vengeance which Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and a host of lesser church leaders preached. He was too confident of the prayerful process by which the high council at Cedar City arrived at its decision to exterminate the immigrants. He wrote in his journal, following his last trial: "I declared my innocence of doing any thing designedly wrong; what we done was by the mutual consent & council of the high counsellors, Presidents, Bishops & leading Men, who Prayed over the Matter & diligently Sought the Mind & will of the Spirit of Truth to direct the affair." But in the perspective of his entire life, his virtues outweigh his failings. He was energetic and unfailingly resourceful. He had a magnetic personal charm that attracted seventeen wives to him. He worked tirelessly to feed and clothe dozens of dependents. He abandoned old comforts and went unflinchingly into new deserts and wild places to build again and again. He had a gift for healing and he used it generously. He was unwaveringly loyal to Brigham Young and the church. Even in his final trial, Brooks says, Lee "did not make the public confession that would have spared him," maintaining to the end his life-long ideal of personal sacrifice for the good of the church.

In a rough and homespun way, Lee is a tragic hero of the sort defined by Aristotle, a basically good and admirable man brought to suffering by a flaw in his own character. There is no question that Lee took a prominent part in the massacre and that afterward he seemed less repentant than others. But there is no

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7Ibid., p. 295.
8Ibid., p. 366.
question, either, of the injustice of singling him out as the person most responsible for the massacre. As Brooks makes her telling points—that more than fifty Mormons participated in the massacre, some of whom were Lee's ecclesiastical and military superiors; that Brigham Young knew of and disguised the facts of the massacre for years before Lee’s excommunication; that Lee's conviction was cooperatively agreed upon by the federal prosecution and leaders of the Mormon church—we respond with a vicarious sense of rejection and bitterness. We feel the special anguish Lee must have felt as the people with whom he had so passionately identified sacrificed him for their own safety and in the process remembered him, not as one of themselves, but as a villain.

There is one more tragic dimension to the Mountain Meadows Massacre. In exonerating Lee, Brooks has indicted the church. Whatever human failings were responsible for the massacre, they were the failings of an entire people, not simply of an individual or a region. Lee was a representative Mormon, and Brooks’s biography is one of the very best books a person can read to sense the complete character of early Mormonism. The massacre was not a tragedy simply for the immigrants or for John D. Lee; it was, and is, a Mormon tragedy.

It is a Mormon tragedy because Mormons have always been people of conscience. The imperative of perfection has been a major doctrine, and it has worked unceasingly upon Mormon hearts. In the millennial exuberance of their beginnings, Mormons took on the name of saints, with explicit reference to the saints of the primitive Christian church. The idea of the restoration of the gospel after nearly eighteen centuries of apostasy; the renewed sense of intimacy with God which came from the presence of living prophets and apostles; the expectation of the speedy advent of the Lord all awakened Mormons to a sense of moral superiority and laid a stern injunction upon them to maintain that moral superiority.

For this reason we may infer that the men of the Iron County militia rode away from Mountain Meadows with the fire of damnation in their hearts. The grievances, the anxieties, the doctrines that led them to the Meadows, Brooks says, now “looked inadequate and flimsy indeed.” I think that their minds circled feverishly among irrepressible images of blood and horror and that they were seized by profound longings for the day before, for the previous year, for any time and place that would erase the massacre from the record of reality. Without knowing it, mute and inarticulate frontiersmen that they were, they were mourning the loss of their innocence. Their special place in God’s favor seemed gone. Their special pride in their moral superiority was shattered. They rode toward Cedar City under an alien sky and across an earth that no longer seemed the warm habitation of Christian people.

Undoubtedly the intensity of their anguish abated with time, but the evidence is that they did not cope very well with their tragic experience, and their horror and self-revulsion sifted into the hearts of their loved ones and neighbors. Brooks tells us that a “pall of darkness” lowered over Cedar City and that the population of the town diminished by over half within two years of the massacre. To relieve their suffering, people waxed indignant over this or that

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9 Mountain Meadows Massacre, p. 59.
10 John Doyle Lee, p. 225.
person who seemed more responsible than others, and in the end, their collective
guilt fell on John D. Lee. Because of their inability to confront directly their own
loss of innocence, they had gone on as a people to commit yet another injustice.

The tragedy of lost innocence is not over. Mormons still are hard put to
confront the massacre. If good Mormons committed the massacre, if prayerful
leaders ordered it, if apostles and a prophet knew about it and later sacrificed
John D. Lee, then the sainthood of even the modern church seems tainted. Where
is the moral superiority of Mormonism, where is the assurance that God has
made Mormons his new chosen people? For many Mormons, these are
intolerable questions and they arouse intolerable emotions.

After the tragic confrontation comes the recovery. At least this is so if the
tragedy we encounter is the work of an effective tragedian, one who, though
dealing with the facts of destruction, wishes finally to heal rather than to destroy.
Juanita Brooks is such a tragedian. Throughout her books are events, characters,
and interpretations that bring us, particularly if we are Mormon readers, to
resignation and acceptance and, in addition, to a paradoxical pleasure, to a
feeling that our lives are somehow augmented and more significant for our
having read Brooks's account of the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Brooks leads us from grief and disillusionment by conditioning our
sympathy for those who committed the massacre and for those who made a
scapegoat of John D. Lee. Our sympathy goes to all of them because, if, as I said,
they shared John D. Lee's failings, they also shared his virtues. As a people they
were capable of the kind of courage demonstrated by Emma Lee, who, alone with
her children in the barren remoteness of the Colorado crossing, prepared the
materials for her parturition, sent her children outdoors, and gave birth to a
baby. In later years, she became a midwife and allowed no extreme of weather or
distance to keep her from a woman in labor, as if to compensate for the unhealed
loneliness of her own ordeal.

Our sympathy also goes to these people because we come to understand the
reason for their violence. Brooks explains the anxiety and vengeance in the hearts
of the people of Iron County by citing the persecutions and provocations which
they and their fellow Mormons had undergone—the Haun's Mill massacre, the
martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the threatening march of Johnston's army toward
Utah, the insolence and truculence of the immigrants. It helps, too, to know that
the violence of frontier Mormons was not an invention of their own. They were
heirs to centuries of frontier warfare. The idea Mormons had that God condoned
violence was not unreasonable in light of the logic to which the frontier had
conditioned them. Our sympathies are further attached to those who committed
the massacre by the knowledge that they were their own most severe judges. They
had learned in the presence of the slaughtered immigrants that there was a gross
incongruity between godliness and violence. Knowing all of this, we forgive
them, and in that forgiveness, we experience a release of tension. The catharsis
which Aristotle thought to be the single great effect of tragic drama has occurred:
we have accepted our ancestors, we have forgiven them, and in so doing, we
forgive and accept ourselves. Our own guilts and trespasses, our own
inadequacies and imperfections suddenly seem more tolerable, and we think that
perhaps we are not so unworthy after all.
Tragedy is a strange kind of art and ritual. It is like a dark metal surrounding a luminous stone and setting it into relief. The vicarious loss of value that we experience in tragedy enhances that value in our feelings in such a way that we paradoxically seem to possess it even more completely and intimately than ever before. The suffering to which the Mormons came because of their part in the tragedy at Mountain Meadows intensifies our appreciation for two great values. The first is the heroism of those Mormon people. In myth and fiction heroes often are nothing except heroes: they have no lesser traits of character to distract from the superlative attainment that their heroism implies. This is not the heroism of the early Mormons. Their unpolished, half-primitive character, when revealed by historians, often proves offensive to their more cultivated descendents. But they nonetheless possessed a heroic quality, the will to endure and survive, the impulse that sustained Rachael Hamblin as she tried to comfort orphaned children, or Emma Lee as she saw her child into this world without aid, or John D. Lee as he submitted with dignity to the humiliations of his final years.

The other great value intensified by the tragedy of the massacre is innocence. Innocence is harmony and reconciliation between the individual and moral authority. It is a universal human necessity, even among those unconscious of their need. The world had gone awry for the militiamen of Iron County because they no longer were at one with moral authority. As we contemplate their anguished self-rejection, and ourselves feel sympathy, forgiveness, and grief, we experience profoundly the value of innocence. Our sharpened appreciation for a great human value illuminates, uplifts, pleases. We have undergone the transmutation by which tragic loss, vicariously experienced, produces affirmation and recovery.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre and John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat have become Mormon classics with a continuing effect upon Mormon culture. One effect has been the act by which the General Authorities of the church posthumously restored John D. Lee to his former membership and status. Another effect is the inspiration which fellow historians have drawn from Juanita Brooks. The reverence in which many Mormon historians hold Brooks is not due to their assumption that she has given a definitive treatment to the massacre; it is entirely possible that later historians, privy to new sources, will add facts and improve upon explanations of moot points. Their admiration is due, rather, to the spirit with which Brooks approaches her subject. The role of the Mormon historian has long been tense. In matters far beyond the Mountain Meadows Massacre, historians have found evidence that comes into conflict with the image of the church as the repository of sainthood and moral superiority. Because she has unflinchingly confronted painful aspects of Mormon history in a mood of reconciliation and recovery, Brooks has become a mentor to a generation of Mormon historians who wish to be loyal to both their church and their profession.

Furthermore, Brooks's history of the massacre and her biography of Lee are read by increasing numbers of Mormons who are not professional historians. The result will be the addition of the Mountain Meadows Massacre to the growing tradition of Mormon tragedy. Tragedy is, as I have said, a strange sort of art and ritual. We need a certain portion of it in our lives, because in its own way
it is as vital to our well-being as the art and ritual of devotion, love, and triumph. It is vital because the pain of tragic loss is best coped with through recognition and expression rather than through repression and denial. Because of the work of Juanita Brooks, more and more Mormons will be able to recognize and speak of the tragedy that occurred to Mormons at Mountain Meadows. More and more of her readers will respond to her realistic concept of sainthood, the sainthood of those for whom, like John D. Lee, perfection is a struggle to achieve rather than the achievement itself. There will be more and more who can accept human frailty in prophets and apostles, knowing that if God has chosen to work through human beings, he has thereby chosen to work through imperfect means. No longer denied, the saga of the Mountain Meadows Massacre will work in Mormon hearts the paradoxical alchemy whereby affirmation and relief arise from pain and despair.
Edward Tullidge: Historian of the Mormon Commonwealth

Ronald W. Walker

During the last several decades scholars have suggested that Mormonism, more than a religion, has been a variant and distinctive form of American culture. Their conclusions had an unrecognized precedent. Edward William Tullidge, the Mormons' rebel historian of the nineteenth century grasped and utilized a similar concept in his five major historical works and in his numerous essays. Mercurial and inconsistent in much of his other endeavor, Tullidge steadfastly focused upon the Mormon subculture throughout most of his life, driven by his aspiration to create for the Saints a native historiography and literature. His professional dreams often exceeded his reach, but in their pursuit he influenced the subsequent writing of Mormon history and even contributed to the founding of the Latter-day Saint cultural tradition.¹

I

Tullidge's heritage and early life were indicators of things to come. Born on 30 September 1829 in Weymouth, Dorset, England, Tullidge believed his ancestry to be Celtic. In maturity he frequently affirmed his intuitive and

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revolutionary nature, an inheritance he felt flowing from his forebears. His parents, John Elliott Tullidge and Elizabeth Jane Dawes, were each raised in middle class comfort, and if they were unable to provide similar economic circumstances for their five children, they did leave them a cultural legacy. His Eton-educated father pursued a respectable if relatively obscure musical career as a tenor soloist, a conductor of local choir groups, and a composer of hymns and program music.2

Tullidge's early environment was religious as well as cultural. His grandfather had been an early and loyal convert to Methodism, and "Wesleyan parents, Sunday schools, and churches" characterized the boy's religious education. Years following his conversion to Mormonism, so indelible was his early training, he styled his new faith as Wesleyan Baptist "with a few peculiarities."3 When twelve he was apprenticed to his cousins Henry, Joseph, and William Bowring as a coach painter. Seven years later he heeded William's preachments and example by adopting Mormonism. At the age of twenty the enthusiastic convert commenced, by his own reckoning, sixteen years of missionary activity. For several years he returned home only to secure new clothing and to renew his strength. During one of these short visits he converted his two sisters and his brother. All his immediate family eventually gathered to Zion, where his father was baptized. While she immigrated, his mother never accepted the faith.4

His ministry, however, was by no means continuous. When the president of the Bedfordshire conference visited Tullidge at Buckingham in March 1852, he discovered that Tullidge had abandoned his mission and Mormonism. "His mind had become poisoned against every form of religion, denied the existence of a God, and really blasphemously raved defiance to such if he really did exist," the presiding elder recorded in his journal. "If God should curse or otherwise punish him for disbelieving Mormonism," Tullidge allegedly declared, "yea if he were consumed in hell by . . . [God] he would then rise up and damn him." At his own request Tullidge was excommunicated.5 The intensity of his language may have been an early manifestation of the emotional distress which would periodically afflict Tullidge in later years.

Then, as in later life, after oscillating erratically, he returned to his original position with renewed force and intensity. "We have read the deist and the atheist," he subsequently wrote, "and fell through infidelity into faith again."6 His personal antidote for Deism was the warm embrace of the Mormon theocracy. First as a vigorous contributor and then in 1856 as an assistant editor

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2"John Elliott Tullidge," Mormon Biography Collection, Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives). In England the family name was spelled both "Tulledge" and "Tullidge."
5"Diary of Job Smith: A Pioneer of Nauvoo, Illinois and Utah," p. 29, photocopy of typewritten pages; and "An Extract From the Private Journal of Job Smith," both in the Job Smith Papers, Church Archives.
of the *Millennial Star*, Tullidge proclaimed in the English church organ the virtues of a literal Kingdom of God. He argued that Deism embraced the "absurd notion" that God had retired from an active participation in earthly affairs—and other religious sects were removed from the heresy only by degrees. The aim and scope of true religion, he suggested, "are to solve the social problem." Proper faith must "define the relation of man to man, and of man to God; to give the main motives of all actions, and to be the teacher of Art, Science, and Philosophy; in short, it is a Theocracy."\(^7\)

There was in his enthusiasm for the Mormon kingdom a blend of personal aspiration. The experiment in godly government would require an epic chronicler. In a letter to Brigham Young in early 1858, Tullidge revealed his work on a fifteen-thousand-line poetical biography of Joseph Smith, "The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century," excerpts of which already had been printed in the *Millennial Star*. But this was only a prelude to his more ambitious project, a forty-thousand-line poem, "The Empire Founders." Comparing his design with those of Homer and Milton, he promised the church president that his epic would be "three times as extensive and more complicated than any poetic work yet undertaken." Brigham Young himself would be "the chief hero" of the last third of the work. His letter's conclusion suggested how extensive his self-appointed cultural mission was. "After years of ploding [?] labour, anxiety and discouragement on my part in behalf of the mission of Music in the Church I have the satisfaction of presenting the Church with a Psalmody of its own composed by my Father." The new hymnal was enclosed.\(^8\)

But within months the pendulum of Tullidge's emotions and commitments once again began to swing. The immediate cause was the so-called Mormon War, the confrontation in 1857-58 between the United States and the Utah Saints. It was the "vast design of Mormon empire-founding which first charmed me in youth," he later confessed, "but from the time I saw Utah drifting into a collision with the United States ... yearly my mind has undergone radical changes."\(^9\) Tullidge's deepening intellectual collaboration with E. L. T. Harrison was probably a catalyst in his transformation. Harrison had converted to Mormonism despite his youthful skepticism of Christian literalism.\(^10\) By the close of the decade Tullidge's editorial position on the *Millennial Star* allowed the two elders to fill the magazine with what Tullidge described as "Protestant heresies." But their heresy in retrospect seems largely in the eye of the beholder. For while Tullidge shunned any kind of doctrinal exposition and minimized Mormonism's claim to a unique mission, neither his nor Harrison's articles were explicitly heterodox.\(^11\)

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\(^8\)Tullidge to Young, 19 February 1858, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives (Tullidge's grammar and capitalization).

\(^9\)"The Kingdom of God vs. the United States," *Mormon Tribune*, 19 February 1870, p. 58.


However, Tullidge's immigration to Utah in 1861 at first rekindled former enthusiasms. Immediately he recommenced his correspondence with President Young. "I earnestly desire to enter your service," he wrote without any preparatory introduction.

I have set my heart upon this thing for years. To be entirely in your hands, and to have my life directed by you, have been one great aim of my ambition. I shall never rest until I am in your hands, nor be satisfied until I am engaged in your service. I can work at the shoemaking, I care not in what form I am employed, within my capabilities, so that I am set to work by you.

The letter, which closed as abruptly as it commenced, apparently failed to elicit the desired response, for in his next appeal Tullidge proceeded more directly to the point. He commended Brigham for recognizing the value of the legitimate drama, but noted that as "yet our people have no national drama; and in fact, properly speaking, no national literature." Now he explicitly declared his ambition:

Allow me here, brother Brigham, to speak of myself. From the time I came into the Church, I fervently desired to live to see the Saints a great nation, and ranking in the first class of civilized society. To desire to see this was in me also a desire to help work it out. To be numbered among the workers out of Zion's social and national greatness, became my ambition. Although then but a Simple Mormon boy, I realized the fact that no nation could rank high in civilization without a national literature. I chose [sic] that part as my particular sphere; . . . to become one of the workers out of our civilization and national destiny.

The letter ended as his first entreaty commenced, with a submissiveness which seemed to exceed the customary reverence to be paid "the Lord's prophet." "Unless you direct me," he concluded, "I care not if I never [sic] again take up pen in a literary capacity but make shoemaking which I now use merely to gain a livelihood, as the proper vocation of my life."12

Tullidge's early years in Utah were a personal disappointment. Not only did Brigham fail to become his patron, but opportunities to fill his literary aspiration on the frontier were limited. In addition to his shoemaking, successively he wrote for the Deseret News, tried his fortune as a merchant, apparently as a job printer, and offered to edit family diaries for fee.13 But whenever possible he returned to the irresistible theme which dominated him. In late 1862 he commenced a series of Seventy Lectures on such topics as the art of composition, ancient and modern literature, and the "universality of Mormonism." By June 1863 he was again petitioning President Young, this time for his approval to establish a literary school on the art of composition and to publish a "Deseret Literary Manuscript Magazine." Autobiographically he wrote: "Those whose instincts are for literary labour, if they are true to their own

(16 October 1858): 672. Asa Calkin, British Mission president and editor of the Millennial Star, apparently gave Tullidge a free hand in the magazine's management.

12Tullidge to Young, 1861, and Tullidge to Young, 25 November 1861, Brigham Young Papers (Tullidge's grammar, emphasis, and capitalization). His migration is recorded in the "Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 23 April 1861, p. 3, Church Archives (hereafter cited "Journal History").

13"Journal History," 8 May 1863, pp. 1-2, and 22 January 1870, p. 2; Tullidge to Young, 25 November 1861, Brigham Young Papers.
natures, . . . are craving to become workers in erecting a glorious fabric of national literature." But again Brigham withheld his approval.14

While Tullidge's aspiration to create a national literature for the Saints continued, increasingly his commitment to Mormonism became less orthodox. Following his arrival in Salt Lake, he was initiated into the Mormon endowment. Less than a year later he was called as a seventy and became one of the seven presidents of his priesthood quorum.15 But these manifestations of devotion concealed the turmoil within him. In 1869 he confessed an "unbelief of eight years." Together with Harrison, who joined him in virtually all his early Utah endeavors, Tullidge struggled vainly to retain his faith. "We were settling down into a philosophic state of religion, anchoring faith in the Divine Mission of the World, rather than in the mission of any special prophet." Paradoxically he also claimed to have "never doubted" the mission of Joseph Smith, the Saints' founding prophet, "though for years I have doubted nearly everything else in Mormonism." When missionaries representing the claims of Joseph Smith's sons proselyted in Utah in 1864, only narrowly did he fail to embrace their cause. According to his own account written years later, Joseph Smith appeared in a dream and counseled delay.16

If the author temporarily rejected the entreaties of the "Josephite" missionaries, they did stir him sufficiently to commence a long-delayed publishing project. In October 1864 Tullidge and Harrison joined as co-editors of the *Peep O'Day*, apparently the first literary magazine to be printed in the intermountain west. The disaffected Mormon merchants, John Chislett and two of the Walker brothers—Fred and Sharp—secretly provided the financial backing. The magazine was printed on the presses of the *Union Vedette*, the anti-Mormon organ of Camp Douglas and the California Volunteers, although its banner advertised its place of publication to be "the twentieth ward." The editors disingenuously explained that while the paper was edited in the ward it was printed "where we best can be served." The sleight of hand was typical of several of Tullidge's subsequent publishing efforts.17

Tullidge regarded the *Peep O'Day* as a radical effort toward "social revolution."18 What seemed to distress him the most was the power accorded to President Young and his willingness to exercise it to preserve the unique and exclusive commonwealth. He now saw this as a barrier to the universal, civilizing mission of Mormonism. "The world had grown old," he wrote, and the civilizations of the past, each of which had heaved its tides of progress into its

14Tullidge to Young, June 1863, Brigham Young Papers (capitalization his); "Journal History," quoting the *Deseret News*, 5 December 1862, 16 December 1862, 2 March 1864, and 30 March 1864.

15Andrew Jenson, *Church Chronology* (Salt Lake City: By the Author, 1899), p. 68; Edward William Tullidge Family Group Sheet, Archives Division, Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

16See Tullidge's, "The Oracles Speak," *The Utah Magazine* 3 (18 December 1869): 521; his "Joseph Smith and His Work," ibid., 3 (27 November 1869): 474; and his *The Life of Joseph the Prophet* (Plano, Ill.: The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1880), pp. 687-88.


successor, had reached the period where the universal civilization begins, theologically
denominated the "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. . . . The history of the world
shows that, incarnated in every new civilization, is the soul of a new religious
inspiration. . . . The point of Joseph's mission is Christianity reborn to become the soul
of the new civilization of millennial glory—again is it breathed into a new created world.
Such in brief is our view of Mormonism.19

Mormonism would midwife a new universal civilization! Upon its wave rode the
world's hope for a new culture. Thus Tullidge now discarded the Mormon
kingdom for the same reason he had earlier embraced it. His maturer thought
regarded it as a hindrance, rather than an assistance, to Mormonism's civilizing
mission. Because the Utah Saints refused to surrender their theocratic beliefs, the
Reorganized faction of the movement might have to fulfill the promised destiny.

The aftermath of the Peep O'Day venture proved tragic. While the
artistically edited magazine was intended to herald a grand and universal
civilization, it suspended after only five issues for want of paper and proper
business management.20 Tullidge resumed an earlier work, the revising of the
Wilford Woodruff journals into a narrative history. Despite expending eighteen-
months' labor, he left the task uncompleted to work on his drama, Eleanor
DeVere. But under the pressure of composition and burdened by personal
disappointment, he began to lose control. "We came home in the evening,"
Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on 13 March 1866, "and found Brother
Edward Tullidge raving mad. . . . Of late he had been drinking very hard and
writing theatrical plays. He now imagines himself the Great Bridegroom and
many other foolish things." Along with other members of his family, Tullidge
had been living at the Woodruff home, and the apostle took a special interest in
his illness. On several occasions he restored Tullidge to temporary lucidity by
rebuking "the devils." But the illness lasted well over a month, and, in Tullidge's
own words, "nearly sent me to the grave."21

The instability of Tullidge's family life must have contributed to upsetting
his delicate balance. The author later wrote that he had feared his cousin, Jane
Bowring, from boyhood because of her "dominant, almost demonic spirit." But
upon her conversion to Mormonism, because of his self-confessed "love of family
and Mormons," he had married her. Marred by the mental distress of both
spouses, the unhappy union had produced no children, leaving Tullidge with
an "aching void." He had also married Eliza Kingsford Bowring, the wife of his
deceased cousin, William, apparently to provide her a home. Ten years his senior
and past childbearing upon their "sealing," she had been the friend of Edward's
mother. Both marriages ended in divorce.22

19Peep O'Day 1 (27 October 1864):24-25, emphasis his. Also see ibid., 1(4 November 1864):41-42.
20Unable to secure paper at Camp Douglas, Tullidge petitioned President Young for the use of
the Deseret News press. Brigham refused, citing the press of business. George Q. Cannon to Tullidge,
7 December 1864, Letter Books, Brigham Young Papers.
21Wilford Woodruff, "Journal," 13-16 and 17 March 1866, Church Archives; Tullidge to Young,
September 1866, Brigham Young Papers.
22Tullidge to Young, 14 May 1867, Brigham Young Papers; Young to Tullidge, 25 June 1867,
Letter Books, Brigham Young Papers; and John Elliott Tullidge Family Group Sheet, LDS
Genealogical Society. The latter has Tullidge also sealed to Lucy Bell. Since neither Tullidge nor
Young mention this marriage in their correspondence, it is likely that this sealing was a posthumous
one.
Upon his restoration to health, Tullidge departed for New York City with renewed fervor. He believed that he had been miraculously reclaimed from his illness but, perhaps more important, he thought that Brigham had finally extended his approval. Feeling that his breakdown had resulted from his inability to secure Brigham’s “endorsement and approbation,” he now was overwhelmed. “I am out [here] now with your fellowship and blessing,” he enthusiastically wrote his leader.

When I have referred to the parting words and blessings you gave me I have been answered even in New York, “My Dear Ned do not think that Brigham Young is too sweet upon you.” I have been told this and something like it too often. I will believe it no more. You said “Go with my full fellowship and blessing.” I have come and will trust in it.

Tullidge translated Brigham’s general blessing into a directive for a vigorous journalistic mission for his reacquired faith. Within two years following his departure from Salt Lake, he had published at least six favorable if not propagandistic articles in the widely circulated periodicals, the *Galaxy* and the *Phrenological Journal*.

Always most contented when in the fervor of a cause, he appeared to have been most genuinely happy during the months he spent in the East. In letters to his church mentor in Utah, he itemized his hopes and feelings. “It really seems that Providence has thrown me down here alone with a mission,” he wrote. Setting aside the meaning and purpose of the *Peep O’Day*, he inquired whether he and Harrison could inaugurate a New York church paper. In another letter he renounced his professional career and pleaded that the church president would allow him to “labor much in the ministry while my young manhood lasts. I have found all the happiness of my life in laboring in God’s service.”

To prove his point, he voluntarily embarked upon a four-month missionary tour from Philadelphia through Nauvoo to St. Louis, returning to New York early in 1867. Recognizing and commending his service, President Young nonetheless gently cautioned Tullidge against too great expectations of success. Orson Pratt was more pointed. For “the sake of ... health and immediate [financial] means,” the Mormon apostle urged Tullidge to resume his shoe-making and to pursue his literary labors at a more leisurely pace, a course which the author himself apparently believed to be wise.

But by the fall of 1868 Tullidge was again recharting his course. He had returned to Utah and had been given temporary charge of the *Utah Magazine*. While Tullidge had been in the East, Harrison had once more established a literary magazine for the territory, assisted by the prosperous and intellectual merchant William S. Godbe. Harrison and Godbe now planned a several-

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23 Tullidge to Young, 2 September 1866, Brigham Young Papers.
24 Tullidge to Young, 2 September 1866, and Tullidge to Young, 18 October 1866, Brigham Young Papers. Also see Tullidge to Young, 23 October 1866, and Tullidge to Young, 14 May 1867, Brigham Young Papers.
25 L. D. Rudd to Orson Pratt, 6 February 1867, and L. D. Rudd to F. D. Richards, 21 September 1867, in “Journal History,” quoting the *Millennial Star*, 6 February 1867 and 21 September 1867.
26 Young to Tullidge, 25 June 1867, Letter Books, Brigham Young Papers. The letter was warm and affectionate.
27 Tullidge to Young, 14 May 1867, Brigham Young Papers.
months-long trip to New York and requested Tullidge to edit the magazine in their absence. Tullidge's editorials offered timely aid for the beleaguered economic policies of Brigham Young. While the church leader welcomed the soon-to-be-completed transcontinental railroad, he also feared that some of its results could endanger Deseret's culture and economy. Therefore Young pursued energetic counter-measures, which included a wage reduction policy to make local manufacturing competitive with eastern products and the organization of Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution to turn the Saints from trading with non-Mormon merchants. Tullidge's support of Brigham's policies was unequivocal:

He is no father of political systems, no prophet of new dispensations, but he is the parent of social constitutions; he shall rank in history among the founders of empires. He must then take up this great problem of the age—aye, the crowning problem of all the ages! He must work out in his lifetime a grand Commonwealth for Israel that will take in all our social and commercial activities and interests. . . . I say Brigham Young must do it or he will die with an unaccomplished mission. That was his mission from the beginning—his special mission, all his past works prove it. He has been the father of social institutions, the father of state, and he must complete his work.28

Yet if Tullidge were willing to proclaim his allegiance to the social and economic Zion, on other questions his prose breathed the spirit of the defunct Peep O'Day. Certainly the fire of a proselyting missionary was gone. "I hold a universalian not a special faith," he declared. "I am not fairly orthodox. I know it. I cannot in conscience deny this even to myself." While he bore witness of the importance of Mormonism's founding prophet, clearly he rejected his religion's claim to be the repository of all truth. "God has a broader circle for His august movements than our little Utah," he wrote.29 At best Tullidge seemed willing to concede to Mormonism only an economic and social mission.

Toward the end of November 1868 Tullidge's health apparently suffered a relapse. In a letter intended to circulate among church leaders throughout the territory, Brigham Young noted that the writer had "become worn down in mind and body" due to his mental activity. "I have advised him to travel through the settlements to recruit his health; and desire the bishops to give him opportunity to preach as he may desire and to treat him kindly in his travels." But the English elder refused his leader's invitation. Instead he became a party to the Godbeite conspiracy.30

Tullidge's illness may well have been the result of his personal struggle of allegiance. The journey of Harrison and Godbe to New York, more than for purposes of business or recreation, was an attempt to resolve their long-standing skepticism concerning the doctrines and policies of their church. During a three week period in New York, they experienced a series of fifty seances which confirmed their doubts and instructed them to reform Mormonism into a species


30Young to the Bishops and Brethren in the Settlements, Salt Lake City, 25 November 1868, Letter Books, Brigham Young Papers. The letter was intended as a letter of introduction for Tullidge, but according to the index of the Letter Book, it was "not used."
of nineteenth century spiritualism. Upon their return to Utah, Harrison and Godbe privately gathered around themselves a trusted circle of friends, Tullidge becoming one of the first to be called to the cause. But they concealed their spiritualism from even their disciples. Harrison and Godbe at first disclaimed primarily against Brigham Young's economic policies. Impulsive and a self-confessed revolutionary, Tullidge found the lure irresistible. He joined the conspiracy, he said, as a means of returning to "pure Mormonism." 31

During the initial stages of the Godbeite movement, Tullidge played a central role. He personally recruited T. B. H. Stenhouse, at that time editor of the Salt Lake Telegraph, and his wife Fanny. Both would subsequently write important exposes of their former faith. 32 As the Utah Magazine was transformed from a narrowly literary magazine into an organ of protest, Tullidge's pen was active. His series, "The World's History Illustrated in Its Great Characters," obliquely struck at Mormonism's traditional view of history. When the writers of the magazine were arraigned before the School of the Prophets on 16 October 1869, Tullidge was one of seven temporarily disfellowshiped pending a hearing. The following week Brigham unexpectedly dismissed the charges against him, but the effect was only to delay the inevitable but painful result. At the formal church trial of Harrison and Godbe, Tullidge emotionally pled for the friends to recant. "My own heart never yearned so much towards Brigham as on the trial in question," he explained. 33 Though yearning for "the great man who has so long been to us in the position of a father," Tullidge's principles took precedence over his emotions. Two days following the excommunication of Harrison and Godbe, he resigned his membership in a letter to Brigham Young intended for publication. "For years I have tried to shun the issue of this day," he confessed, "for theoretically I have been a believer in republican institutions and not in a temporal theocracy." 34

His excommunication intensified his activity. He anonymously wrote the influential New York Herald to announce the Godbeite program. While the schism had previously been reported in the national press, Tullidge's letter—describing the dissidents as intellectual progressives desiring cooperation with the American nation—helped mold Eastern opinion in the Godbeites' favor. His journalistic service was as great locally. In the Utah Magazine and subsequently in its successor, the Mormon Tribune, where he served as the assistant editor, his essays buttressed the movement. "That revelations had been given to my friends, Elias and William, from the realms of the other life I have long known," he testified. "It was no speculation, no uncertain dream, no fancy, not even a second-handed knowledge." 35 His labors were recognized by his appointment as


34Tullidge to Young, 27 October 1869, Brigham Young Papers, emphasis his.

35"Is the Manifesto of God?" The Utah Magazine 3 (4 December 1869): 489-91.
one of the presidents of the First Council of Seventy and subsequently as a member of the Salt Lake Stake Presidency of the new Godbeite Church of Zion.\(^{36}\)

However, by the early months of 1870 Tullidge's enthusiasm had waned. His articles in the *Mormon Tribune* appeared less frequently, and his attention increasingly centered in the composition of his drama, *Cromwell*. His activity signalized more than a shift of professional interest. Tullidge's early attraction to Godbeitism in part had been because of his emotional attachment to the name of Joseph III. Like many of the New Movement leaders, he had vainly hoped that the son of Joseph Smith might be persuaded to lead the Church of Zion.\(^{37}\) Even more disenchanting, the commitment of Harrison and Godbe to spiritualism became increasingly obvious. Tullidge, who had earlier rejected spiritualism as anti-Christ,\(^{38}\) at first sought to reconcile his antipathy with the movement. The importance of the revelations of Harrison and Godbe, he argued, lay in their substance and not their source. But within several months such an accommodation no longer was possible. The mediumistic spiritualism of Andrew Jackson Davis, he wrote in thinly veiled prose, "more often destroys religious faith than creates it."\(^{39}\) Several weeks later, at a public meeting of the Church of Zion, he dramatically charged Harrison and Godbe with betraying the original aims of the movement. But these events took their toll, for Tullidge apparently had resumed his heavy drinking.\(^{40}\)

Tullidge's angry challenge by no means ended his association with the New Movement. He did, however, sever his relations with both the Church of Zion and the *Mormon Tribune* and depart for the East. Claiming that he had been offered ten thousand dollars for his *Cromwell*, he explained that he contemplated "literary efforts in various directions."\(^{41}\) He managed to place pro-Godbeite articles in both *Harper's* and the *Phrenological Journal*, and for a short time he wrote for the New York *World*. But by July 1871 he was again in Utah and speaking before the Godbeite Liberal Institute, and soon thereafter became the associate editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*.\(^{42}\)

During the height of his Godbeite advocacy, Tullidge treated Brigham Young in uncomplimentary terms. Both in eastern periodicals and locally in political discussions, he described the Mormon leader as a domineering papal

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\(^{36}\)Tullidge to Young, 14 May 1867, Brigham Young Papers.


potentate of the American West. Yet as Godbeitism declined, Brigham’s influence again compelled him. At first he anonymously warned the churchman of the machinations of the McKean conspiracy and sought to shield him in the Tribune. Later he wrote Brigham a long self-justifying apology. “Edward Tullidge,” he commenced, “has ever been your friend and brother.” He maintained that he had reluctantly supported the New Movement to convince Eastern opinion that the Mormons themselves would liberalize their regime and thus to prevent harsh federal intervention. He now longed “above everything in life” to see the Godbeites united once again with Brigham. “I cannot come around alone nor let them know fully what I am doing,” he concluded, “but with a word of approbation and blessing from you I know what we can soon work out.” But his resurgent sympathies were difficult to conceal. Unable philosophically and emotionally to support the increasingly strident Tribune, by late summer 1873 he lost his editorial position.

With the exception of a final aberration late in the 1870s, Tullidge had ended his religious odyssey. Whatever his private religious beliefs, and these remained carefully concealed, he was by sympathy and culture a Mormon. That he would return to the culture of his youth was inevitable. Even though his interest in religion had flickered, his ambitions had been less easy to extinguish. He must have realized, if only subconsciously, that the epic writer of Mormonism could not be removed from his material and audience.

During the 1870s Tullidge embarked upon his long-cherished but delayed ambition of creating an epic Mormon historiography. His approach was biographical, with Brigham Young his first subject. “I shall write a Book that the world will not readily let die,” he promised the church leader as he again pleaded for approval and support. If Tullidge’s later recollections were correct, President Young readily granted him access to the historical materials of the church. “Edward has had it hard enough,” he remembered the church president commenting to his counselor, George A. Smith. “I want to make his fortune.” Instead, the project nearly cost him his life. “Fighting” with his themes and characters, he threw himself into “brain fever” for three weeks, and once more he only narrowly escaped with his life. “In one thing at least I am a Mormon,” he related after his experience. “I am hard to kill.” The completed manuscript, Life of Brigham Young: or, Utah and Her Founders, was published in 1876.

Two other biographical epics followed in close succession. His Women of Mormondom (1877) consisted primarily of autobiographies of prominent Mormon women tied loosely together by his epic prose. Not only did the book

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43See, for example, “The Reformation in Utah,” pp. 602-10; and History of Salt Lake, p. 508, quoting the Salt Lake Herald.

44Tullidge to Young, December 1872, emphasis his; and Tullidge to Young, 11 August 1874, Brigham Young Papers.

45Tullidge to Young, 11 August 1874, Brigham Young Papers.

46Tullidge to President Woodruff and the Twelve, 11 July 1890, Wilford Woodruff Papers, Church Archives; and ”Journal History,” 1 September 1874, p. 1.

give expression to his long-standing feminism, but it was designed to counter Fanny Stenhouse’s "Tell It All." "I have resolved to kill [her book]." he wrote, "not because she wars against her polygamic life with Stenhouse, which is very natural, nor against Brigham Young, which is also very natural with us Apostates, but because she has blasphemed against her sisters and the religious system that I have worshiped." The Life of Joseph the Prophet (1878) concluded the sequence. Tullidge claimed that Brigham Young himself had commissioned the biography, with George A. Smith "on his death-bed" solemnly charging him concerning it.

Subsequent church leaders were less enthusiastic. In the preface to his Life of Brigham Young, Tullidge had identified himself as an apostate, "innocent of the spirit of Mormon propagandism." Yet in Utah he proclaimed himself a rebaptized Mormon. In an interview with the author in December 1877, John Taylor, now leading the church as president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, accused him of a breach of integrity. "When in the East," Taylor charged, "you are an apostate, because it is expected your book will sell better ... Here you are a Saint, because to be a Saint pays better." Thereupon he denied Tullidge access to the historical materials of the church. The preface to the Life of Joseph the Prophet angered church leaders even more. In an effort to assume an official sanction which he in fact did not possess, Tullidge without authorization had credited Eliza R. Snow and Joseph F. Smith with having read and revised the manuscript. Accordingly Taylor issued a statement which printed the text of his previous interview with Tullidge and disassociated the church from his writing.

Censured in Utah, the Life of Joseph Smith found an important friend elsewhere. Joseph Smith III wrote Tullidge in May 1879, expressing his general approval of the volume. Recognizing an opportunity, Tullidge travelled east to inform Smith of his intention to sell the volume’s copyright, whereupon the Reorganization purchased the manuscript. Apparently Tullidge’s professional success renewed his religious interest. During the fall of 1879 he was received into membership by the Reorganized branch of Mormonism, ordained an elder, preached throughout their congregations, clerked at a semi-annual conference, and became RLDS historian.

His primary task, however, lay in transforming the Life of Joseph the Prophet into a Reorganite history. The second edition which appeared in 1880 proclaimed its new allegiance by periodically denouncing Mormon polygamy and theocracy as dreadful, its priesthood as selfish, and Brigham Young as an

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48 Ibid. For example of his feminism: "‘A woman’s sphere is her family.’ Another cant proverb. Shame on those who thus limit her, shame on their honesty, shame on their intellect. Let the truth be boldly spoken,—a woman’s sphere is the unlimited world." Edward W. Tullidge, "Woman and Her Sphere," The Utah Magazine 3 (26 June 1869): 119.
49 Tullidge, The Life of Joseph the Prophet (New York; Tullidge and Crandall, 1878), preface.
untruthful usurper.\textsuperscript{52} But where possible the original publishing plates were used and clearly too much of the original edition remained to please many "Josephites." The book "purports to be a history of Joseph, the Seer, but Salt Lake and its institutions is the great theme dwelt upon in the book," wrote Reorganite apostle W. H. Kelley in a blistering twenty-four page attack which officials refused to publish in the church organ. "Brigham looms up as the 'big injun' of the whole narrative." Church President Joseph Smith III believed that much of the opposition to the book stemmed, not from its uncertain tone, but from Tullidge's "unsavory reputation" and his "failure to reform himself." His allusions were apparently directed to Tullidge's continued heavy drinking.\textsuperscript{53}

Tullidge's experience with the Reorganization was brief. After only several months in the Midwest, he returned to Utah in October 1879 as part of an RLDS mission. For a moment visions of great movements and revolution possessed him. In a letter to United States President Rutherford B. Hayes, Tullidge called upon the nation to appoint Joseph Smith III as governor of Utah. "History repeats itself," he promised Hayes, "more thoroughly in its form and more pronounced in its expression." As the Godbeite movement had revolutionized Utah society ten years earlier, now a promised "invasion from the Monogamic Church under Joseph Smith" would complete the destruction of "Polygamic Theocracy." Soon there would be two hundred missionaries in the territory, he argued, and with Smith as Governor, twenty to fifty thousand Utah Mormons would petition for the abolition of polygamy. There is no evidence that the government considered the request seriously.\textsuperscript{54}

Unaware perhaps of the extent of his fleeting Reorganite activity, Utahns welcomed the return of their man of letters. In October 1880 leading Mormons supported the reading of his play, \textit{Elizabeth}, and assisted his most recent enterprise, \textit{Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine}. The literary and historical journal received support from non-Mormons and Mormons alike and ran to three volumes during the next five years.\textsuperscript{55} Tullidge approached the \textit{History of Salt Lake City} in a similar spirit. Securing the support of an impressive cross-section of its citizenry, he persuaded the Salt Lake municipal council to authorize him to write a history of the city. The agreement granted him a $1500 commission—later expanded to $2500 when the manuscript proved much longer than anticipated—and subjected the entire work to a revision committee.\textsuperscript{56} Despite its massive bulk of over eleven hundred pages, Tullidge completed the task within three years. The result was more than an history of an inter-mountain city; it was

\textsuperscript{52}See \textit{Life of Joseph the Prophet} (1880), pp. 536-37, 565-67, 569, 614-15, 657. The accusations were usually conveyed by inference.

\textsuperscript{53}Kelly to the Editor of the \textit{Saints' Herald}, 27 February 1881, W. H. Kelley Papers, Department of History, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

\textsuperscript{54}Tullidge to Rutherford B. Hayes, 19 October 1879, Letters Received Regarding Polygamy, United States Interior Department, microfilm copy at the Utah State Historical Society.

\textsuperscript{55}P. W. Woodruff, Louisa F. Wells, Emmeline Wells, Eliza R. Snow, and Zina D. H. Young were among those supporting the reading; "Journal History," 11 October 1880, p. 2, quoting the \textit{Deseret Evening News}. The pro-Mormon Salt Lake \textit{Herald} consistently expressed its approval of Tullidge's magazine; see "Journal History," 19 August 1880, p. 4; 17 August 1882, p. 5; 25 March 1883, p. 2; 10 July 1883, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{56}For a listing of those supporting Tullidge, see his \textit{History of Salt Lake City}, pp. 891-92; for the terms of the agreement, "Journal History," 1 May 1883, p. 3, quoting the \textit{Deseret Evening News}. 
a chronicle of Mormonism in early Utah. Three years later, in 1889, he published his fifth and final historical survey with the undecorous title, *Tullidge's Histories, Volume II: Containing the History of All the Northern, Eastern and Western Counties of Utah; Also the Counties of Southern Idaho.* Meant as a continuation of his Salt Lake history, the work closed his historical labor.

III

Tullidge's historical labors become more intelligible by comprehending his view of history. His debt to Thomas Carlyle's *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* was unmistakable. "In striking down the massive consolidations of ages," he wrote in a virtual restatement of Carlyle, "destiny must raise up individuals as mighty battering-rams." These heroic figures, in Tullidge's view, became the determinators of history. They achieved influence, not because of personal virtue or even providential direction, but as a result of their own ambition and genius. "Tell us not that he was a hypocrite," he wrote of Cromwell, whom he regarded as Europe's greatest man. "It is a fool's explanation. Rather tell us that he was the inspired 'Captain of the Lord's host,' even if moved by no higher inspiration than that of his own mighty soul."57

Tullidge identified these hero figures in some of the dramas he authored: *Elizabeth, Cromwell,* and *Napoleon;* in essays dealing with Mohammed and William of Orange; and, most significantly, when apprising his historical writing and his attitude toward Mormonism, in his historical biographies of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

Beholding Mormonism through the eyes of Carlyle's heroic theory, Tullidge saw Joseph Smith and Brigham Young as two of history's "men of destiny." Joseph was a "master spirit" comparable to Mohammed. His successor was described as a "modern Moses" who was "Napoleonic."58 Their claims to a special religious mission, in Tullidge's view, seemed secondary to their clear social consequence. Under their leadership the Mormon people had been transformed into "not a sect; nor a mere community of church-builders; but religious empire founders."59 The Mormon commonwealth became a rare turning point. Thus Tullidge's continuing attraction to the religious fancy of his youth by no means reflected a personal orthodoxy. His heroes were those of sociology and not theology. Symptomatic, "Mormonism" in his writings became "Mormondom," with the sceptre and not the cross as its image.60

Tullidge's heroic narratives were filled with laud and vindication. In part this was because he understood that a professional writer must never betray his audience. Accordingly none of his work ever intentionally violated the trust of its official or unofficial sponsor, whether Mormonism, the Reorganization, or the

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57"Oliver Cromwell—His Life and Character," *The Utah Magazine* 2 (20 February 1869 and 6 March 1869): 257, 281.
58Such phrases punctuated much of Tullidge's writing. See, for instance, his *Life of Brigham Young; or, Utah and Her Founders* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1876), pp. 1-9, 15, 31, 45.
59Ibid., p. 4.
local communities of Utah. Revealingly the *History of Salt Lake City*, usually massive in its detail, failed to chronicle the excesses of the Mormon Reformation of 1856 or the tragedy at Mountain Meadows. But the obsequious quality of his narratives also reflected his conception of the Hero. He clearly failed to comprehend what the Greeks fully appreciated: heroes are only fallible men who rise above their natural tendency for human error. Consequently his works on Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were not so much biographies as eulogies, while his treatment of the women of Mormondom found them collectively without a flaw.

His propensity for adoration and his embrace of positive virtues were not the only manifestations of his epic historiography. Unwilling to allow his epics to speak for themselves, he adorned them with a peculiar prose. In *The Women of Mormondom*, his expression became extreme:

> The women who did their full half in founding Mormondom, comprehended, as much as did their prototypes who came up out of Egypt, the significance of the name of Israel. Out of Egypt the seed of promise, to become a peculiar people, a holy nation, with a distinctive God and a distinctive destiny. Out of modern Babylon, to repeat the same Hebraic drama in the latter age. A Mormon i liad in every view; and the sisters understanding it fully. Indeed perhaps they have best understood it. Their very experience quickened their comprehension. The cross and the crown of thorns quicken the conception of a crucifixion. The Mormon women have borne the cross and worn the crown of thorns for a full lifetime; not in their religion, but in their experience. Their strange destiny and the divine warfare incarnated in their lives, gave them an experience matchless in its character and unparalleled in its sacrifices.61

His exaggerated language, his inverted and awkward syntax, the shifting of tenses, his repeated use of the exclamation and the imperative, the reliance upon movement and action rather than characterization, were obviously attempts to instill an epic intensity. Too often the effect was an artificiality that suggested a discrepancy between conviction and expression.

Ironically Tullidge failed to possess the prime requisite for his cherished epic history. He seemed incapable of sustaining a narrative to its climax. Instead he substituted quotation for narrative, piling source upon source. Probably in none of his works did his original writing exceed the material which he quoted, and even his limited narrative prose was frequently expropriated from previous composition—sentences, paragraphs, and even chapters being called upon for double and sometimes triple duty. Consequently, his history was too derivative and distended, without proper analysis and synthesis. But his reliance upon quotation also possessed a virtue. Tullidge’s books frequently were the first to present previously unpublished sources. His *History of Salt Lake City*, for example, offered the largest collection of Mormon source documents ever collected within a single volume. Drawing upon pioneer journals, government documents, newspapers, and even pioneer hymns, it published the early city charter, territorial laws, debates, and even the transcript of the Brigham Young-Perry Brocchus correspondence. Unfortunately, however, Tullidge’s books were published before the paraphernalia of modern scholarship became mandatory. Consequently, his quoting at times was imprecise, his citations were virtually

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impossible to trace, and since he provided no index in any of his books, the accessibility of his sources was limited.

Tullidge's historical writing faithfully reflected his historical philosophy, filled with epic upheaval, revolutionary social consequence, and the founding of empires. The result occasionally was distortion. Given Mormonism's frontier phase, it was understandable that he emphasized her temporalities, but his focus overlooked the church's theological content and her spiritual potential. Similarly his essays on Godbeitism cast the movement in his own image. Although they became the standard historical treatment, their stress upon social and political consequences concealed the Godbeites' spiritualism and their disdain for traditional Mormon theology.\(^{62}\)

The History of Salt Lake City was unquestionably Tullidge's most valuable work. It possessed the advantage of his previous labor, with large portions of its text being drawn from his earlier histories, particularly the Life of Brigham Young, which supplied much of the first quarter of the volume. But the book had a broader perspective than its predecessors. To be sure his history again was a saga, with Brigham Young dominating much of the narrative. But now the encomiums were spread more uniformly. Even Salt Lake's merchants received heroic treatment, their "stirring romance . . . almost as romantic as the commerce of Arabia, whose mammoth caravans . . . have given subject and narrative to the most gorgeous romances in the whole range of literature."\(^{63}\) Applause for Gentile and Mormon alike provided an equipoise of judgment and contributed to making Tullidge's Salt Lake history his most balanced.

Even the text's bulk had its advantages. Tullidge's biographical sketches, complete with excellent steel-plate portraits, remain an important contribution, particularly for the secondary figures of early Utah. If the author too often paused to lavish detail upon local minutia, he was equally generous in providing facts on more significant questions. His treatment of the development of Utah commerce and mining, Salt Lake journalism, the Utah theatre, the Godbeite and Liberal party movements— and literally a score of less significant events— made the book one of the most important source-books in early nineteenth century Utah. Clearly he understood what many nineteenth century historians did not, that history was more than a political chronicle.

Nor was the History of Salt Lake City lacking in perception. One hundred years of additional historical perspective have confirmed many of its judgments. Always compelled by the Mormon theocracy, Tullidge preceeded many modern historians who have seen the church's temporal aspirations to be the source of its Gentile frictions. His treatment of the causes and conduct of the Utah War was perceptively balanced and free from acrimony. He was most certainly correct in emphasizing the role of commerce, mining, and European immigration in shaping the eventual profile of Mormon and Salt Lake society. Of course subsequent research has not justified all his observation, as, for example, his


\(^{63}\) History of Salt Lake City, p. 378.
assertion that the Utah Expedition involved a proto-Confederate conspiracy. While Tullidge’s strengths lay in collecting, preserving, and weighing information, clearly his historical judgment made him more than an antiquarian.

Tullidge struggled with his sense of mission to the end of his life. The *Western Galaxy*, his last publishing venture, perished in 1888 after only four monthly issues. In turn his history of northern Utah and southern Idaho was a financial catastrophe. While rich in local history and biography, the volume was Tullidge’s most disjointed and possessed virtually no narrative unity. It had the misfortune to be marketed simultaneously with H. H. Bancroft’s popular *History of Utah*. But even Tullidge’s *History of Salt Lake City* had not proven successful. Two thousand copies were printed, but by 1890 only six hundred had been sold, with the Mormon church and Tullidge’s “Godbe and Walker party friends” each purchasing one hundred of the three hundred copies sold within the territory. He had once again married, with Susanah Ferguson, an accomplished and attractive British emigrant, bearing his ten children. Now he feared for their support. For years he had resolved never to dispose of the publishing rights to the *Life of Brigham Young*, insuring, he hoped, the support of his wife and children in case of his death or “disability.” But in August 1888, in an attempt to save his house from foreclosure, he reluctantly offered the rights to John W. Young, the son of Brigham, who disappointed Tullidge by declining. Finally the historian turned to the Mormon leadership. No longer the humble supplicant before Brigham, he now requested what seemed his due. He recalled to President Woodruff and the Twelve Apostles his “constant” service of forty-two years:

I ought [not] to have been forced (as I have been) to sell my house from over the heads of my wife and children to redeem the mortgage incurred in the publication of my histories and that magazine—the Western Galaxy—which if successful would have given to Mormon Utah a laurel crown. This had been the ambition of a lifetime [sic], but I am nearly well cured of that ambition. All I look for now is, at least as an author, to close my life labor not unworthily, and to secure my wife and children from want and among the class to which my family belong.

In response the church purchased a hundred of his unsold histories, but apparently refused his request that it sponsor his financially troubled history of northern Utah and southern Idaho. Toward the end, his financial difficulties

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64 On Mormon temporal aspirations, see ibid., pp. 8, 138, 141; the Utah war, pp. 121-252; immigration, pp. 97-102, 646-69; commerce, 378-91; mining, 697-708; and proto-Confederate conspiracy, p. 248.

65 “Journal History,” 18 March 1902, p. 5, quoting the *Salt Lake Herald*; Edward William Tullidge Family Group Sheet, LDS Genealogical Society. Even this marriage was shrouded in tragedy. The first five children of Edward and Susanah died either in childbirth or infancy.

66 Tullidge to John W. Young, 29 August 1888, John W. Young Papers, Church Archives.

67 Tullidge to President Woodruff and the Twelve, 1 February 1890? [sic], Woodruff Papers.

68 Tullidge to Woodruff and the Twelve, 11 July 1890, Woodruff Papers. He addressed yet another request to the church authorities on which favorable action was apparently taken. Its nature
must have interacted with his alcoholism. When Joseph Smith III visited Utah he despairied that "the church or religion could effect a reclamation." 69

On 22 May 1894, the day following his death, Tullidge's obituary appeared in the Deseret News. It praised his literary ability and noted with local pride that "some of his writings will compare favorably with those of the best writers of the country." It also focused upon his Godbeite endeavor, an emphasis which has often been repeated but probably without justification. 70 Rather the dominant theme of his life was provided by his historical perspectives. Institutional religion interested him only to the degree that it fostered culture and social consequence; Mormon culture and not Mormon religion compelled him. Within his chosen domain, his historical writing not only chronicled events but became a primary source and a personal memoir.

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70 Deseret Evening News, 22 May 1894.
Joseph Smith: The Verdict of Depth Psychology

T. L. Brink

Any attempt to evaluate a historical figure is plagued by numerous disabilities, usually in the form of inadequate or inaccurate documentation. A special problem is encountered when we investigate the lives of the founders of religious groups. This is true whether we are talking about Muhammad, the Buddha, or the canonized Roman Catholic saints. Joseph Smith is no exception to this rule. The accounts written by the followers of great religious leaders present a figure who is larger than life. On the other side of the coin, the enemies of the new found sect always seek to detract from the personality of the founder. Therefore, there is some justification in being suspicious of the praise of followers and the scorn of apostates.¹

One way around the inherent biases of observers is the historian's use of various psychological perspectives. Psychology is a science, and therefore pledges itself to follow the objectivity of a scientific Weltanschauung. Psychology seeks to find the facts, interpret them according to theories which have been verified experimentally or clinically, and render an unbiased diagnosis. Any perspective we choose has inherent limitations. This is likewise true of a psychological perspective.

Scientific psychology has its own set of terms and concepts with which it operates. Such terms as angel and inspired translation are not among them. Whether or not such things exist, psychology cannot tell us. It can neither prove nor disprove the existence of the supernatural. Therefore, psychology must use

¹As a practicing Roman Catholic, I do not accept the religious claims made by Joseph Smith. However, I protest the way in which the Mormon prophet's name has been vilified by yellow journalists and pamphleteering apostates. My purpose in this brief article is to describe Joseph Smith as a man who was of sound mind and sincere religious conviction.
the term *symbol* when speaking of the golden plates; *projection* when referring to the visit of the angel Moroni; and *fantasy* when speaking of a process of inspired translation. This substitution of terms should not imply a lack of literal truth to Joseph Smith’s claims, but only concedes an inherent limitation of psychology.

Psychology is a science of many branches. Some train rats to run mazes and others survey the attitudes of the masses. The author does not intend to review each of these branches in order to search for the potential relevance for our discussion of Joseph Smith. The investigations will be confined to depth psychology, that branch which postulates the existence of the unconscious elements in the human psyche. Not all of the branches of psychology accept the significance, or even the validity of the theory of the unconscious. However, one thing is for sure: since Freud, no branch of psychology has been able to ignore the theory of the unconscious.

Two of the most famous psychological studies of Joseph Smith must be labeled pre-Freudian. I. W. Riley’s turn-of-the-century Yale dissertation was an artful blend of scholarship and contemporary psychological theory. It renders a diagnosis of the Prophet based on a nineteenth century understanding of epilepsy and para-psychology. It is interesting to study as intellectual history, but no contemporary psychologist could take Riley’s arguments seriously today. In 1980 Bernard DeVoto sought to portray Joseph Smith as a paranoiac. Although DeVoto believed himself to have been a Freudian, his study of Joseph Smith exhibits no use of psychoanalytic theory. DeVoto, who was a man of letters, seems to have used a simpler method in making his diagnosis. It appears that he read a textbook on abnormal psychology. The most likely candidate would be Kraepelin’s. The psychiatry texts of fifty years ago were extraordinary in their ability to categorize and list the symptoms of each type of mental disease. Some of the characteristics of paranoia struck DeVoto as being similar to his own (inaccurately perceived) image of Joseph Smith. On this basis, DeVoto rendered his diagnosis. If we turn to a more modern text on paranoia, we shall see that Joseph Smith does not fit the description of the paranoiac. The Prophet did not have delusions of persecution. His persecutors were real. Nor did he imagine that his persecutors had the power to control his thoughts and feelings (a distinguishing mark of paranoia).

Let us conduct our investigation of Joseph Smith by examining five schools of depth psychology.

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4 For DeVoto’s own description of how he arrived at his diagnosis, see his *Letters*, pp. 277-78.

5 One of the best is by David W. Swanson, Philip J. Bohnert, and A. Jackson Smith, *The Paranoid* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).
Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is the Vienna-based school of depth psychology founded by Sigmund Freud. The master himself never had anything to say about Joseph Smith or Mormonism, but he did write several books on religion. Freud, although proud of his Jewish heritage, considered himself an atheist. He regarded religion as something little better than superstition or neurosis. Both neurosis and religion were to be considered products of infantile fantasy life. Freud collaborated on a posthumously published psychological study of Woodrow Wilson in which the famed psychoanalyst wrote, "I do not know how to avoid the conclusion that a man who is capable of taking the illusions of religion so literally and is so sure of a special intimacy with the Almighty is unfitted for relations with ordinary children of men." It is not to be doubted that Freud would have reached a similar verdict on Joseph Smith.

An early student of Mormonism who became a disciple of Freud was Theodore Schroeder. He had studied primitive religion and concluded that all religion was nothing more than the diversion of sexual energy. Schroeder found Mormonism to be a prime example of this pattern, although he did not relate it specifically to anything within the life of its founder.

One psychoanalytic concept which might be relevant here would be the Don Juan complex. The Don Juan is interested only in securing the trust of a woman, and having sexually conquered her, he loses all interest in her. In psychoanalytic terms, such a perverted personality is plagued by the aim of incorporation, narcissistic needs, and sadistic impulses. Before we can ascribe such traits to Joseph Smith we should ask if his practice of plural marriage fits this pattern. Did he lose all interest in a woman after he had won her? Although he consistently moved on and collected more wives, he never seems to have lost interest in Emma, his first, or any of the others for that matter. Furthermore, we would have a hard time establishing the existence of such things as infantile incorporative aims, exaggerated narcissistic needs, or sadism in Joseph Smith on the basis of the evidence we possess.

Fawn McKay Brodie has argued that the psychoanalytic conception of the impostor is perhaps the best description of the Prophet. Brodie’s thesis is that he began his Book of Mormon activities as a deliberate imposture but gradually

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11The most comprehensive work on this theory was offered by Otto Fenichel, Psychoanalytic Theory of Neuroses (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945).
became convinced of the genuineness of his prophetic calling. The theory of the psychopathic impostor and swindler has been developed by various psychoanalytic criminologists. Can the theory really be applied to the Prophet? I find five difficulties with this:

1) Pathological lying seems to first show itself during childhood, not adolescence or young adulthood. If Joseph had not been a trusty boy, how could he have succeeded in convincing his own family of his stories about the angel and the golden plates? Even Brodie must concede that the Smiths were thoroughly convinced of Joseph’s veracity.

2) Brodie’s idea that a conscious plot for swindle could begin with a low level of credence and develop into a higher one knows no clinical confirmation. Psychoanalytic criminologists disagree as to the level to which impostors, swindlers, and morbid liars believe their own stories. Some argue that the psychopaths can always tell the difference. Others contend that they have such poorly formed identities and only fleeting contacts with reality that the line between truth and falsehood is forever obscured. However, there is not a single case study in which the psychopath started out with a completely rational plot for deception, which he understood to be merely such, and later succeeded in “fooling himself.”

3) These types of psychopaths exhibit a characteristic pattern of sexual abnormalities. Apparently they have little heterosexual drive. They engage in relations rarely and generally live nomadic and celibate lives. Many clinical studies of impostors reveal problems with potency. Furthermore, impostors usually have feminine features and mannerisms and exhibit some confusion as to their sexual identity. This pattern cannot, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, be applied to Joseph Smith. We have no reason to doubt his potency. He sired at least five sons who reached manhood, and at least three other children who died in infancy. The Prophet did have fair skin, blue eyes, and long lashes, but was unmistakably masculine in his mannerisms. He was a very manly fellow with a husky build and was a champion wrestler.

4) A psychopath would have been incapable of providing the kind of leadership exhibited by Joseph Smith. Their thinking is so clouded by exaggerated fantasies that it lacks coherence, stability, and capacity to profit from experience or sustain one’s efforts. No objective examination of the accomplishments of the Mormon leader could accept such a description of his thoughts or actions.

5) These types of psychopaths do not direct themselves toward accomplishment but to narcissistic gratification. The impostor does not aim at making

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rational gains, for partly out of masochism and partly out of an inner compulsion, he often throws away these things just at the moment when things are going well. The impostor exhibits a pathological cycle and must constantly start a different scheme with different victims, perhaps out of a need to take revenge against parental figures, perhaps out of a need to prove himself that others can find him a lovable person. If Joseph Smith had been nothing but an impostor, he would have left the foundering sect long before the Kirtland debacle (and he certainly would not have stuck out his role in Missouri). A true psychopathic impostor would have changed his name and tried a new gimmick in another part of the country.

In conclusion, we might say that no one has attempted to thoroughly and consistently study Joseph Smith from a psychoanalytic perspective. It would also appear that the attempt to label the Prophet in terms of a Don Juan complex or that of a psychopathic impostor does not correspond with a fair reading of the data.

**Ego Psychology**

The psychoanalytic tradition has been modified and expanded by many of the loyal followers of Freud. They have viewed themselves as furthering the efforts begun by their mentor. This new movement among psychoanalytic theorists has usually been referred to as Ego Psychology. In Freud's structural model of the human psyche, all the energy came only from the unconscious and biological instincts (the id). The ego is the conscious, rational part of the psyche that must reconcile the demands of these instincts with the conditions present in external reality. In Freud's conception of the relationship between these two components of the mind, the ego, since it had no energy of its own, had the very precarious position of riding herd on the instinctual forces of the id. The ego had to be constantly on its guard so that the forces of the id would not gain a foothold anywhere. Later psychoanalytic thinkers found this model of the ego and its relations with the id to be untenable. Gradually the theory arose that the ego itself must have independent energies and needs with respect to the environment which it encounters. Specifically, Ego Psychologists have attempted to account for such phenomena as play and artistic creativity as manifestations of ego instincts and energies, rather than the mere diversion (sublimation) of the id's forces.14

The concept of a more independent ego has changed the Ego Psychologist's opinion about the relations of the ego and the id. Freud believed that whenever the ego failed in its ability to control the forces of the id, the result would be a regression to the id's form of primary process thinking, which deals in wishes and fantasies. Freud believed that such regression could only damage the ego's control of the psyche. Later Ego Psychologists have given us a model of a much more durable ego which has enough independent energy to hold its own against the id. As a result, the ego does not have to be so fearful of the ingestions of primary process thinking. For example, ordinary day-dreams are a typical form of primary process thinking. For a person with a weak ego (e.g., a schizophrenic)

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such activity might well lead to a loss of contact with reality. However, for most normal individuals day-dreaming is an enjoyable and perfectly harmless activity. Their egos remain in complete control of the situation, and should an external necessity arise, they can easily terminate primary process thinking.

Some Ego Psychologists have gone one step further with respect to the ego's relationship to primary process thinking. They have insisted that such types of thinking could serve to inspire the ego to heights of creativity. The work of the artist and poets was to be described as a kind of adaptive regression, or regression-in-service-of-the-ego.\(^{15}\) This adaptive regression is to be distinguished from regression proper, which is a sign of loss of ego control and the return to more infantile patterns in dealing with the environment. In adaptive regression the ego remains in full control during the influx of primary process thinking and emerges unscathed from the experience. Therefore, this new conception of regression-in-service-of-the-ego allowed Ego Psychologists to conceive of the creative person (e.g., the artist, the inventor) as a healthy individual, and not merely the victim of one pathological complex or another.

If we applied this perspective to Joseph Smith, it would free us from the necessity of seeing him from a pathological perspective. We could use Ego Psychology to view him as a creative individual rather than as an impostor or morbid liar. We would no longer have to view his inspired writings as the result of uncontrolled regression into fantasy life. We would yet have to conceive of the Prophet's inspiration as being due to primary process thinking. (Ego Psychology has no other way of conceiving of the process of inspiration.) Therefore, Ego Psychology cannot comment upon the religious truth of Joseph Smith's prophetic works, but it can serve to remove the pathological stigma. According to Ego Psychology, Joseph Smith must be considered as a healthy, creative individual who effectively utilized adaptive regression.

**Analytical Psychology**

Yet a greater deviation from Freud is to be found in the works of Carl Jung, whom the master had considered to be his star pupil. Freud had devised his theories through his clinical work with hysterical and neurotic patients. Jung had similar clinical experience, analyzing over more than sixty-seven thousand dreams during his career. The difference was that Jung had an early interest in anthropology, mythology, and comparative religion. Knowledge from these fields assisted Jung in the formulations of his psychological theory. Freud, on the other hand, only started to investigate anthropology and religion after his psychological theories had more or less crystallized. It should come as no surprise that, as a result, he sought to explain religion, art, and even civilization itself on the basis of repression and sublimation of sexual instincts. Jung's different approach left him with a healthy respect, even with a deep reverence, for the manifestations of religion in whatever part of the world. Whereas no serious contemporary anthropologist or scholar in the field of comparative religion can

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give any serious weight to Freud, Jung is regarded as offering theories which are generally useful (though usually they must be somewhat modified).

Jung has offered one of the most complex models of the psyche ever conceived. For our purposes, we could offer the following simplified statement: Jung went in the same direction as the Ego Psychologists, but much, much further. Jung viewed the ego as a psychic organ of creativity. In his later writings he was more interested in studying artists, poets, and great religious leaders than he was in presenting case studies of patients. Jung replaced the concept of the id with that of the collective unconscious. The unconscious, for Freud, had been a repository of personal guilt feelings and forbidden wishes. Jung failed to see how the biological instincts of the id or the guilt feelings about such instincts could account for artistic and religious inspiration. Jung offered the concept of the collective unconscious, which was roughly equivalent to the inherited creative capacities of the human race. The task of the individual's psychic development was two-fold. He had to make his ego strong and flexible enough to deal with the collective unconscious. Second, he had to find some way to tap the vast reservoir of creative energies within the collective unconscious.

Jung found the key to this process in the symbol. The idea of the golden plates, the Jewish ancestors of the Amerinds, and the urim and thummim are, from a Jungian perspective, symbols, and have a psychic reality. Whether or not they also have a physical reality is a question which Analytical Psychology can not answer. Freud also had spoken extensively of symbols, but for him they were little more than signs of the existence of a given psychic disorder. For Jung, the symbol was not a sign of the disease, but a means for the maintenance of health. The right symbol could bring the psychic energy of the collective unconscious to consciousness, and yet prevent the ego from being overwhelmed by it. Jung's system of psychotherapy tries to get patients to learn to find appropriate symbols in their own dreams and then how to make effective use of those symbols. Jung believed that religion had a function similar to that of psychotherapy, for religion also tried to get individuals to make use of symbols. Jung often remarked that a good percentage of his patients, especially the older ones, had developed psychological problems simply because they had lost contact with their religious traditions.

Jung himself never commented on Joseph Smith or Mormonism. However, a Jungian perspective on Joseph Smith is very elucidating. Like psychoanalysis and Ego Psychology, Analytical Psychology can not admit the possibility of divine intervention in the inspiration of the Prophet. A Jungian may agree with the Latter-day Saint that Joseph Smith's writings do contain powerful religious symbols, but the Jungian would have to argue that the symbols originated in the collective unconscious and became known to Joseph Smith through other means: possibly his daytime fantasy-life, but most likely in nocturnal dreams.¹⁶

¹⁶Joseph Smith took his nocturnal dreams (and also those of this followers) very seriously. See Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: by the Church, 1902-1932), 5:210, 254-55, 301, 306; 6:194-95, 461–62, 593, 609–10. The accounts of the visions of his grandfather Mack and of Joseph Smith, Sr., indicate that these visions were nocturnal dreams. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: O. Pratt, 1858), and Solomon Mack, *A Narrative of the Life of Solomon Mack* (Windsor, Vt.: the Author, 1812).
However, the Jungian does not attach an over-riding importance to how a person gets the symbol, but to what it can do for the creative individual and his community. There can be no doubt that the symbols discovered by Joseph Smith served to motivate him and that he was sincere in his role as prophet (or, in other words, that he believed in their psychic reality). Likewise, there can be no doubt that the symbols to be found in Mormonism also had, and still have, psychic reality for millions of its followers. This is to be explained, from the Jungian perspective, by the fact that symbols coming from the collective unconscious have a collective appeal.

A further aspect of the perspective of Analytical Psychology is that it can explain the various charges of money-digging which have shrouded the early career of Joseph Smith. Anti-Mormon writers have a long tradition of depicting young Joseph Smith as a backwoods confidence man who duped his subscribers by looking at a stone in his hat and pretending to locate buried treasures. Most anti-Mormon authors have regarded this past as sufficient proof that Joseph Smith was never a sincere prophet either, but only modified his swindle gimmick by substituting “urim and thummim” for seer stone, and golden plates for buried treasure. I do not intend within the confines of this article to review the entire debate on whether or not Joseph Smith was actually a scrying money-digger as his foes charge. My purpose is to suggest a new interpretation of such activity.

In medieval times alchemists were frequently accused of being impostors who claimed the ability to use a "philosopher's stone" in changing lead into gold, while their real motive was to swindle greedy monarchs and patrons. Jung thoroughly investigated the medieval hermetic tradition and concluded two things about the alchemists. First, he found that they were sincere in their belief that their profession was involved in the accumulation and transmission of a special type of knowledge. In other words, their chief concern was not obtaining patrons through chicanery. Second, Jung believed that the special type of knowledge which the alchemists tried to acquire and preserve was not scientific, but spiritual. Jung found alchemical writings to be symbolic expressions of psychic phenomena. Jung concluded that the alchemists' laboratory activities were really a complicated form of spiritual exercises by which they sought to experience the unconscious and transform themselves rather than the substances with which they worked. The gold which the alchemists sought was but a symbol of spiritual perfection which they hoped to achieve in themselves. From this perspective we may say that even if Joseph Smith had engaged in money-digging as a youth, this in no way proves him to have been an impostor. The technique of using a magic stone in order to obtain gold can be seen as a spiritual quest for perfection. Therefore, from a Jungian perspective, a young money-digger is not necessarily a swindler in the making. He may be a prophet in the making.

IndividuaL Psychology

Alfred Adler was the first of Freud's students to break away, calling his new

school Individual Psychology. Adler has been much less influential in modern psychology—when Adler’s influence is compared to that of Freud, Ego Psychology, or Jung—because Adler has been remembered for his simplistic theory of the inferiority complex. His initial understanding of how physical handicaps lead to an inferiority complex was simplistic and largely inaccurate. Adler himself came to realize this and greatly modified his theories in his later writings. He talked less about organic defects as a cause of inferiority feeling and began to consider other causes such as parental and sibling relations during the early years of childhood. Later he revamped his whole theory to say that everyone strives for a feeling of superiority, significance, and perfection. People differ only in their manner (life-style) of striving for importance. Each person is unique and fashions his own life-style; hence the term, Individual Psychology.

Adler drew a distinction between healthy striving and neurotic striving. The former is motivated by Gemeinschaftsgefühl (communal feeling or social interest). It seeks to attain the feeling of superiority through realistic achievement and accomplishment and contribution toward the welfare of others. Three areas in which social interest should manifest itself are work, friendship, and family. Neurotic striving, on the other hand, involves a life-style built on Ichgebundenheit (self-boundedness). Such an individual seeks to get a feeling of importance in sham ways, not by achieving something of value to society. The neurotic usually has an over-inflated image of his own importance which he tries to present to himself and others. Some people actually go insane because they have come to believe so strongly in their illusory importance (e.g., "I am Napoleon").

Adler felt that religion was basically an aid for healthy striving inasmuch as it called upon man to turn away from his self-boundedness. From totemism to Christianity, Adler believed that all true religion had taught social interest. The commandment to “love thy neighbor” was merely the most refined form of this message. However, neurotics could also abuse religion and pervert it to bolster their life-styles. One example would be the recluse who believes that he is a saint and the rest of humanity is just too sinful to deal with. Another example would be the fatalistic sects which claim that human progress is impossible because God has willed human misery or because the apocalypse will come any day now. Adler also criticized individuals who strove for superiority by claiming some special power to foretell the future or to speak directly for God.

How would Joseph Smith measure up to these Adlerian standards? Adler himself never commented upon Joseph Smith or Mormonism. Clearly, an Adlerian would be bothered by Joseph Smith’s role as prophet and also by some of the accounts of his bragging and swaggering style given by apostates and sectarians who visited him, not to mention the diagnoses of megalomania given by later anti-Mormon authors. Another thing which Adlerians would find distressing would be the doctrine of plural marriage, for Adler was always a hearty advocate of monogamy and considered every deviation from it to represent a selfish, non-committal attitude.

However, if we objectively examine Joseph Smith’s life in the three areas of social interest, we come out with a picture of healthy striving. In his career as religious and communal leader it is clear that Joseph Smith sought much more than his selfish interests. He sought to build a religious and social organization
which would endure both the lean years of persecution and the fat years of success. He succeeded. As we have seen, an impostor has neither the motivation nor the capacity to effect such a realistic achievement. In his relations with friends he also exhibited social interest rather than self-boundedness. He was a sincerely friendly man who liked to be with people. None of his detractors has been able to argue otherwise. In his family life, Joseph Smith’s own records and those of the people closest to him indicate that he sincerely loved Emma and his children. Therefore, we cannot view the institution of plural marriage as something which reflects the failure of Joseph Smith to express social interest with respect to his family. Plural marriage was only proclaimed and practiced after Joseph Smith had developed his theory of the Celestial Order and the eternality of the family. I interpret Joseph Smith’s institution of plural marriage and also his penchant for adopting children as an indication of his broadening social interest with respect to the family relationship.

Erik Erikson

Erik Erikson also studied under Freud and was later influenced by the theories of Ego Psychology. Erikson has offered an eight-stage theory of personality development which stretches from infancy to old age. The first five stages closely parallel those developed by Freud. However, Erikson deletes such basic Freudian concepts as the Oedipus Complex. Whereas Freud always wanted to relate adult personality to childhood factors, Erikson granted adult motives a greater autonomy. Erikson also allows the possibility of the individual overcoming an old problem in each new phase that he enters. Like Adler, Erikson is more interested in how the developing individual relates to social forces and defines health in terms of the individual’s ability to relate himself to these social forces. Like Jung, Erikson views religion as a positive force in human development, a factor which can help an individual meet the life-tasks of a given phase of development. The first four of Erikson’s phases involve the first dozen years or so of life. In my opinion, the documentation of Joseph Smith’s childhood is inadequate to permit any responsible conclusions to be drawn on how well he passed through these stages of development. The Prophet did not live long enough to make it to Erikson’s final phase of development. Therefore, only three stages would be relevant: adolescence, young adulthood, and middle adulthood.

Adolescence is the time when the child gets the body of an adult and society tells him to “grow up,” i.e., learn to function within adult social roles. When confronted by all these possible roles, there is a danger that the adolescent will experience an identity diffusion. The task of adolescence is to establish a firm identity and learn the virtue of fidelity, which is loyalty to the things to which we have committed ourselves. In his study of Martin Luther, Erikson concluded that

19In this respect, Erikson parallels Gordon Allport. Howard J. Booth, a member of the Reorganized Latter Day Saint church, has offered a psychological study of Joseph Smith from an Allportian perspective. The conclusion is that the Prophet’s “propriate striving” was to build God’s kingdom on earth. See Booth’s “An Image of Joseph Smith,” Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action 1 (March 1970): 5-14.
religious concerns could help an individual to resolve the conflicts of adolescence, establish an identity, and learn fidelity. \(^{20}\) It could be argued that Joseph Smith exhibits a similar pattern. The issue in his vision at age fourteen was clearly a question of fidelity: which sect to join. Young Joseph resolved this issue by refusing to join any of them, but by being loyal to God's word. The later vision of Moroni was another hearkening to remain faithful to this relationship which Joseph had established.

Young adulthood covers the late teens and early twenties. The chief social event during this period is usually matrimony. The task of young adults is to lose and find themselves in a loving relationship with another person. If this intimacy cannot be attained there is a danger of isolation. Joseph Smith did enter into matrimony during this period of his life. However, I think that the same types of issues were involved in his decision, at age twenty-four, to establish a church. This decision was a turning away from isolation toward intimacy in the sense of establishing a tight-knit religious community which could endure great persecution and three major removals in less than a decade.

Middle adulthood covers the late twenties and the next two decades. The life-tasks during this phase involve fostering the future through one's career and child-rearing. The task is to avoid stagnation by seeking generativity through an ever-widening care for the rest of humanity. In his study of Gandhi, Erikson showed how a man in this phase did not find fulfillment in his role as a father and successful lawyer. \(^{21}\) In order to feel sufficiently generative, Gandhi had to widen his sphere of concern to cover the deepest yearnings of the Indian people. These were the forces which impelled Gandhi to become the religious and political leader of India. Perhaps Joseph Smith also suffered a generativity crisis during this phase. His first three children died in infancy. He reacted to this by adopting children. As we have indicated, both adoption and his theories of celestial marriage reflect broadening social interest.

Whatever our stance vis-a-vis the Mormon religion, there is no basis in theory or fact to doubt the basic sanity or religious sincerity of Joseph Smith. The theories of Riley, DeVoto, and Brodie are unacceptable because they unfairly portray Joseph Smith pathologically, as an epileptic, paranoid, or psychopath. None of these diagnoses can be substantiated with depth psychology.

What kind of a picture of the Prophet do these different schools of depth psychology paint? Freud set out to portray religion in an unfavorable light. Therefore, psychoanalytic studies of religious leaders depict them pathologically. What is significant for the study of Joseph Smith is that the data of his life do not fit such pathological complexes. The contributions of Ego Psychology and Jung show that Joseph Smith's inspired writings must not be viewed pathologically, but as a creative relationship with unconscious forces. The perspectives of Adler and Erikson show that Joseph Smith was well-adjusted in his interpersonal development. All of these schools of depth psychology reinforce the picture of Joseph Smith as a mentally healthy individual and recognize the important and positive role which religion played in his personality development.


MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION
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(Continued from page 2)

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Sources of Marriner S. Eccles’s Economic Thought

Dean L. May

In 1951, when New Deal historian Basil Rauch reviewed Marriner S. Eccles’s memoir for the New Republic, he expressed wonderment that a Mormon banker could have arrived independently at economic ideas supporting an antirecessionary policy of deficit spending. Rauch was disappointed that the book “does little to help us understand how Saul became Paul. We are asked to believe that a forty-year-old Mormon banker was converted to compensatory economic theory by naked-eye observation and experience without benefit of Keynes.”1 The comment points to a fundamental and important lacuna in the memoir. Eccles and his collaborator, Sydney Hyman, neatly avoided any indication of the possible sources of Eccles’s insights into the economics of depression.

It is likely that Eccles had read works by popular economists William Trufant Foster and Waddill Catchings before he gave full articulation to his own philosophy of deficit spending in speeches he made in 1932. He was also no doubt influenced by his meetings in the early 1930s with Paul H. Douglas, one of the earliest American economists to begin developing a rationale for deficit spending and with Stuart Chase, a popular columnist who espoused such views. Eccles had become aware of John Maynard Keynes by October 1933 and enthusiastically welcomed Keynes’s support of increased government spending during the British economist’s visit to the United States in 1934. The following year Eccles chose to take with him from the Treasury to the Federal Reserve, Lauchlin Currie, who had attended lectures by Keynes at the London School of Economics in the early 1920s.9

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2Eccles’s first public reference to Foster and Catchings was in his testimony reported in U.S.,
Eccles drew from all of these sources for support and defense of his views on fiscal policy after he began to speak to national audiences in 1933. Over the years, however, he departed little from the philosophy he had already enunciated in 1932, and there is no evidence that he relied heavily, either early or late in his public career, on any single economic theorist. He could probably have said of any of the above figures as he later said of Keynes, "We came out at about the same place in economic thought and policy by very different roads." Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was close to the mark when he concluded that "the main influence on Eccles was undoubtedly his own sharp and probing intelligence working on a varied business experience." But Schlesinger apparently did not notice that Eccles's business experience had taken place within a unique environment which very possibly led him to insights he might otherwise have missed and freed him from inhibitions which worked powerfully to prevent the vast majority of other American businessmen from coming to similar conclusions.

Eccles himself maintained that the career of his father, pioneer industrialist David Eccles, had "governed my own conduct from the time of his death in 1912 to a memorable day in 1930." At that time, distressed by the Depression, the younger Eccles "became disenchanted of ... [his father's] simple faith," beginning, as he put it, "my search for a body of ideas and practices more suited to an economy that had outgrown the frontier." The double meaning in this phrase is obvious. It seems likely that Eccles's estrangement from the Mormon church had caused him to underestimate the influence upon his own thought of his provincial Mormon background. One suspects that the ideas of the elder Eccles continued to be influential far longer than the son remembered and, indeed, that Eccles's most distinctive insights derived in part from his family's Mormon pioneer heritage.

The effects of church policies on the economic environment which nurtured David Eccles's spectacular success were not mentioned in the reminiscences of his son. But it is well known that the economic and social ideology of Mormon leadership in the nineteenth century attenuated the ruggedness of individualism characteristic of other frontier settlements. In the territory of Utah a centralized planning authority, the Mormon church hierarchy, imposed a degree of order upon the settlement process which contrasted sharply with the anarchic character of other frontier communities.  


Eccles to H.F. Byrd, 11 June 1942, "Correspondence," M.S. Eccles File (Federal Reserve), Eccles Papers.


Eccles, Beckoning Frontiers, p. ix.
May:  Marriner S. Eccles

For nearly half a century thousands of Mormons responded obediently to calls from Brigham Young and his successors to cooperate in founding new, remote settlements and launching enterprises needed for economic self-sufficiency such as the culture and processing of cotton, sugar beets, and silk. Many new converts, coming as immigrants, arrived destitute in Utah. Under Young’s leadership the church assumed the responsibility of caring for the annual tide of immigrants, most arriving in the fall, too late to commence planting on their own. Shunning direct relief, Young offered the able-bodied Saints jobs on public works projects—temples, churches, city walls, and canals.6

In assuming these responsibilities, church leaders helped develop two distinctive attitudes among the Mormons regarding the role of the central authority in the temporal affairs of the people. Many faithful Mormons came to believe that the church had a right and duty to plan and direct the economic development of the region even when this went against the immediate interests of individuals. They also came to expect the church to provide the needy with jobs and the basic necessities of life. These ideas continued to be of influence among Mormons long after the death of Brigham Young. The accommodation made by Mormon church leaders after the turn of the century to the laissez-faire values of American business was more apparent than real, the fundamentally communal ideals of Mormon group life continuing with little alteration.

Mormon businessmen in their secular economic pursuits and in their management of church-owned enterprises became models of Hoover capitalism. However, they did not change the fundamental propositions within the church community that the church was responsible for the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of its people and that it was appropriate for the church to give advice in secular matters, using the priesthood authority and organizational structure to plan and direct various programs of community betterment. In fact, the most successful and significant embodiment of these ideals is of relatively recent origin—the church welfare program, begun in 1936—a cooperative system of farming, ranching, and manufacturing enterprises, operating in all parts of the United States with central direction and coordination at Welfare Square in Salt Lake City. The fundamental aim of the welfare program is to provide the church with the means to assure that Latter-day Saints suffering from poverty or other calamity will not lack essential food, clothing, or shelter. Those capable of working are provided jobs in exchange for the provision of their basic necessities.

Marriner’s father, David, grew up in this tradition. He was faithful to the Mormon church throughout his life, advancing to the office of seventy in the Mormons’ lay priesthood. Following the counsel of church leaders, he took a second wife, Marriner’s mother, in what the Mormons called plural marriage, at a time when federal officials were zealously imprisoning polygamous Mormons. Several of his children, Marriner among them, fulfilled two-year missions for the church with his help and encouragement. The elder Eccles did not attend church

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regularly and did not accept offices in the church. He did accept civic responsibilities at the suggestion of church leaders, holding the office of alderman and then mayor of the city of Ogden as the church-supported Peoples Party’s candidate. His children were on familiar terms with the president of the church, staying in the home of President Joseph F. Smith’s first wife, “Aunt Julina,” when they visited Salt Lake City. Eccles himself had frequent association with top church officials. He tithed throughout his life and made substantial commitments of his wealth to sustain church enterprises even when they did not, in his judgment, appear promising.

Two of Eccles’s enterprises, beet sugar factories in Ogden and Logan, were founded by him as community projects in keeping with the church leaders’ wish to encourage cooperation in founding local industries. Most of his fortune was built, however, through individual entrepreneurial ventures fully in the spirit of his contemporaries, the Rockefellers and the Carnegies. Once asked to fulfill a preaching mission for the church, he respectfully declined, arguing that he was of more worth as a provider of jobs than he would be as a missionary. Ecclesiastical leaders recognized the importance of that contribution. David O. McKay, who became the ninth president of the church, speaking at Eccles’s funeral, acknowledged that “a man who can produce a million dollars and at the same time contribute a million dollars to the wealth of the community is a public benefactor. Such a man was David Eccles.”

Successful as a capitalist, Eccles nonetheless retained a sense of obligation to ideals and interests greater than his own. He could not help noting that room was found for his own freewheeling entrepreneurial endeavor to exist and grow amongst the various cooperative and communal experiments of the Mormons and even in an economic environment where church leaders were attempting to provide central planning for balanced economic growth. The boy Marriner grew up believing, like his father, that freedom of enterprise was a powerful agent of economic development. Yet he could hardly escape noticing as well that a degree of central planning and control did not cause the flower to wither and fade.

Another distinctive aspect of David Eccles’s experience in early Utah is significant for its possible influence upon Marriner. The developing Utah economy provided an excellent opportunity for perceptive observers to gain a macroeconomic perspective on the dynamics of economic growth and development. In a manner close to the “desert island” example which economists are fond of using in illustrating their basic concepts, the isolated, burgeoning Utah economy simplified and clarified fundamental economic processes. It was clear that homes for a rapidly-growing population could not be built without a local lumber industry. But timber required roads and railways into the mountains, and the developing of power resources through coal mining or heavy construction in the building of dams and waterways. Machinery and equipment must be acquired, either from the East or through the founding of native basic industries. Capital was necessary for purchase of machinery abroad.

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3 Arrington, *David Eccles*, p. 136; *Ogden Evening Standard*, 7 December 1912.
and for the development of manufacturing at home. Banking and financial enterprises were needed to minimize the grudging dependence upon eastern money markets. Problems raised by the constantly adverse regional balance of payments tuned the keen observer to notice the effects of monetary dependence and government subsidy on economic development.

The Eccles family enterprises included nearly all the industries essential to a new economy—lumber, transportation, mining, heavy construction, utilities, insurance, livestock, and sugar. An Eccles could not move in one of his enterprises without being made aware that such action affected the others. Young Marriner, bright and acute in observing things going on about him, would readily have gained a sense of the interrelatedness of economic events and decisions which other businessmen with fewer diversified interests in a more developed economy could easily miss. Marriner’s family and religious background provided fertile soil for his later development of rationale recommending government action to stimulate the sluggish national economy of the 1930s.

How, then, does this background relate to the distinctive features of Eccles’s economic thought? There is no reason to question the essential correctness of Eccles’s contention that the main lines of his economic analysis were “based on naked-eye observations and experience in the intermountain region.”\textsuperscript{10} Asked by a New York Times reporter to explain how he arrived at his unorthodox views, he revealed his anti-intellectual bias, commenting that “when affairs are going well, only the theorists philosophize, but when they go badly, practical people must do some thinking.”\textsuperscript{11} A close examination of the development of Eccles’s economic thought as revealed in his speeches between 1928 and 1933 supports his contention that his exposure to other writers on economic problems of the 1930s was minimal, serving primarily to confirm and clarify an analysis he had already made independently.

Eccles decided earlier than most observers that the Depression was not a cyclical downturn which, if allowed to run its course, automatically created the conditions for subsequent recovery. Attempting to account for the catastrophe of a depression that would not go away, he concluded that “‘underconsumption’ was the fundamental problem, a condition which had been brought about by our world industrial machinery being thrown out of balance on account of the failure to stabilize the price level.”\textsuperscript{12} It was particularly important, he maintained, for policy makers to realize that “the end of production is consumption and not money, and whenever our capital accumulations reach a point where our production is beyond the ability of our great mass to consume goods, not because of lack of desire, but because of lack of purchasing power, we have a depression.” Prospects for profits were so small that even record low interest rates would not draw out investment. Abundant credit was being used only to refinance old debts, not to launch new enterprises. Industrialists would not begin activity “until you create employment giving buying power to the

\textsuperscript{10} Eccles, Beckoning Frontiers, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{11} New York Times, 25 November 1934, Sec. VIII, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{12} Bank management conference address, 26 March 1931, Salt Lake City, in “Addresses June 1925-5/8/36,” M.S. Eccles File (Federal Reserve), Eccles Papers.
consumer." Only one agency could do this, Eccles concluded, "and that is the government." Five billion dollars used to create employment, he suggested, would raise price levels, start purchasing by people who will spend nearly all their income, and restore confidence throughout the nation. The cost could be more than repaid with taxes from the newly-generated income.

Eccles scoffed at the folly of attempting, in depression, to balance the budget. "Now [that the budget] is practically balanced," he wrote in 1932, taking Hoover at his word, "we should look for a period of prosperity, I suppose. Would it not be better to consider means of reviving business, and then we may find that the budget is already balanced, and that we have an excess... The matter of economy is negative, the matter of spending is positive, and we have been doing the negative thing rather than the positive." The crucial question, he maintained, was the level of national income, not the size of the deficit. Any hope for permanent adjustment must depend ultimately upon "fundamental economic plans" which will determine "the flow of money," and once established "will of necessity center in the distribution of purchasing power and in the allocation of income between investment and expenditure." To accomplish this Eccles recommended, in addition to greatly increased levels of government spending, an altered tax structure, with heavy taxes on upper income brackets and on undistributed corporate surpluses. He rejected the argument of many that everything possible to initiate useful, well-planned, and efficiently run public spending projects had been done. Recommending the "expansion of social services of all kinds," he continued:

No matter how luxurious the services this kind of spending money may provide for the people, it cannot justly be called extravagant. The more surplus income is spent, the more market there will be for business, the more men will be actively employed, the more wealth will be created, the larger will be the national income.

Finally, he held out a rhapsodic vision of the utopian world he thought government spending would make possible.

If and when society shall again obtain to a state of high productivity it will be found that the educational and cultural activities of life occupy the central place. Slum districts will be eliminated; parks and playgrounds will be increased; public health services will be extended; our entire population will enjoy the benefits of modern housing; and we will have learned to treat criminals and mentally defectives more scientifically. We will have more and better schools; education for children and adults will grow in quality and extent; there will be a growing demand for the cultural things of life; the art of living, the art of using leisure time, will be developed beyond our capacity now to foresee.

This set of ideas, with its focus upon national income and its suggestion that deficit spending would raise the national income to a point where the budget would automatically come into balance, was not common in 1932 when Eccles had completed the formulation of his analysis. There were a few economists and publicists developing theories grounded in views very similar to Eccles's, including Keynes, Foster, Catchings, Paul Douglas, Jacob Viner, Lauchlin...

13Quotes from Eccles's speech before Utah State Bankers Association convention, 17 June 1932, in "Addresses June 1925-5 8 36." M.S. Eccles File (Federal Reserve), Eccles Papers.
14Address before Utah Education Association, 27 October 1933, in ibid.
Currie, and Stuart Chase. Eccles was not an economist, however. Indeed, he had no academic training beyond a rudimentary high school level. His work and life since the age of twenty-two had been devoted to the practical problems of making a success of his family’s business enterprises. While there was a handful of economists following lines of thought similar to Eccles’s, the number of banker-businessmen moving in that direction was few indeed.

Eccles’s achievement, I would suggest, depended primarily upon his ability to break out of prevailing modes of analyzing the economic scene. He found it possible to ignore problems thought by others to be of great importance and focus upon problems hitherto considered relatively insignificant. He took apart the intricate web of economic events and put it back together in a way which was both novel and instructive for formulating policy. His synthesis permitted him to see the various segments of the economy as aggregate forces whose interrelatedness was all-important, each bearing a functional relationship to the whole. Eccles’s provincial heritage and the Eccles family situation helped him in this task. It permitted him, as historians John Clive and Bernard Bailyn suggested in reference to provincials of another epoch, to “shake the mind from the roots of habit and tradition,” and led him to “the interstices of common thought where were found new views and new approaches to the old.”

A closer look at specific aspects of Eccles’s analysis, with particular attention to how his background favored these views, will illustrate the accomplishment.

Eccles’s starting point was his realization that the Depression, unlike earlier depressions, would not correct itself. He was making this point at the same time President Hoover’s advisors were preparing budget estimates on the presumption that recovery would come in 1931. The advantage of hindsight suggests to subsequent observers that Hoover was being particularly obtuse, if not misleading (as Roosevelt charged) in projecting so early a recovery. But inference from past experience and widely-accepted economic doctrine supported Hoover’s view fully. The most recent depression of 1920-21 had passed within a year. Business-cycle theory, at which American economists excelled, assured businessmen and policy makers that a descent invariably created the conditions for a subsequent ascent. There was no reason to believe that this would not happen in 1931. Eccles did not indicate why he came earlier than most to believe spontaneous recovery would not occur as usual, but two explanations seem plausible. First, the economy of Eccles’s home state, based primarily upon livestock, agriculture, and mining, had not experienced the prosperity enjoyed by more industrialized areas after the depression of 1920-21. This fact would tend to encourage a certain amount of skepticism concerning the prospects of an early recovery from the later depression. The inferences Eccles drew from the 1920-21 experience would not be the same as those most policy makers and economists, living in the more industrialized East, had drawn. Second, Eccles had not been exposed to the tide of opinion led by professional economists which


emphasized the cyclical nature of economic fluctuations. Those who followed the latest doctrine of the experts did not question that economic movements were cyclical in nature and that recovery could be expected soon. Eccles was not as fully in touch with the teachings of economic theories as were bankers in the East. He accordingly began to search on his own for an effective means of stimulating the economy.

By 1932 Eccles was arguing that positive government intervention provided the only possible hope of recovery. "The government, if it is worthy of the support, the loyalty, and the patriotism of its citizens," he said, "must so regulate . . . the economic structure as to give men who are able and worthy and willing to work the opportunity to work and to guarantee them sustenance for their families and protection against want and destitution." This proposal seems commonplace today. It seemed much less so at the time, however, even in the desperate conditions of 1932. Virtually everyone accepted the idea that government intervention of limited scope and duration was desirable. But once needed correctives were achieved, through cooperative efforts of business and government, through restructuring of price and income mechanisms, or through monetary pump-priming, it was assumed that the government could withdraw and that America could go back to business as usual. Rare was the banker-industrialist who would have proposed government regulation of the economy and federal guarantees against want. But Eccles represented a people still close to their nineteenth-century traditions, a group not sharing the normal American aversion to such proposals. Eccles was only transferring to secular government responsibilities which church government in Utah had undertaken for decades as a matter of course.

Eccles rejected the idea that balancing of the budget would promote recovery, arguing that the fiscal accounts would balance only when the depression, the main cause for the imbalance, had been corrected. In the meantime, the drive to balance the budget could only prevent the government from taking action which could promote recovery. In taking this position, as in others, Eccles's ability to escape the entrapment of old ideas was as essential as his ability to come up with new ones. His escape on the budget balancing question was relatively easy, compared with the difficulties Hoover, Roosevelt, or Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau experienced in that regard. Eccles had been distant and uninvolved in the 1920s when the reform movement which had attached crucial importance to a balanced budget was instituted. Old dogmas tended less to obstruct him because he had never learned the catechism of the old faith. He could look away from the budget figures to what seemed to him more important indicators of national well-being.

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The critical problem, in Eccles's estimation, was the drastic drop in national income. Eccles's explanation of this calamity centered upon maldistribution of income, a circumstance which prevented consumption from keeping pace with production. His analysis of these problems was enhanced by a macroeconomic vision of the workings of the economy. While other bankers were concerned with keeping their institutions solvent, Eccles was noticing that such actions had the aggregate effect of assuring that most banks would ultimately fail. "By forcing the liquidation of loans and securities to meet the demands of depositors," Eccles proposed, "were we not helping to drive prices down and making it increasingly difficult for our debtors to pay back what they had borrowed from us?" As an owner of lumber mills, Eccles was painfully aware that production could be resumed only when demand increased. As an owner of banks, he noticed that the drastic decline in values impeded repayment of debts contracted before the decline. Eccles's business interests were notably diverse and of commanding importance in a relatively undeveloped region. A sense of the need for an appropriate relationship between savings and investment comes readily to members of a growing, provincial community unhappily dependent upon capital from abroad. The effect of bank policies on the lumber industry and the effect of lumber on construction were all amplified as matters of personal concern, leading Eccles to the macroeconomic vision which permitted his insight into the workings of aggregate components of wage and credit structure. He saw interrelatedness where many businessmen saw only the problems of the particular sector with which they were concerned.

How then did deficit spending come to occupy so important a place among Eccles's recommendations for stimulating recovery? Eccles's macroeconomic view made it evident that in its effect on the economy, government spending was no different from private spending. It was essential to keep the spending stream flowing and if private spending dried up under depression conditions, only government spending could supplant it.

"The assumption of spontaneous revival through new investment has always rested on the fallacious belief that people and banks will not indefinitely hold money in idleness," Eccles wrote in 1933. "The only escape from depression must be by increased spending. In the absence of new fields for investment in a world already glutted with unsalable products, the only way to increase spending is for the Government to spend." The government, he maintained, could borrow idle funds and spend without concern for profits, a course that would spell disaster to a private firm. Eccles later saw his conversion to deficit spending as a rejection of his father's outmoded system of values, especially his father's devotion to thrift. "The difficulty," he said, "is that we were not sufficiently extravagant as a nation." But if thrift can be properly seen as avoidance of waste, then Eccles did not depart even in this regard as far as he thought from the important values of

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21 Utah State Bankers Convention speech, 17 June 1932, in ibid.
his father’s life. The great crime of the Depression, from his point of view, was the waste caused by idle productive facilities. He would willingly encourage the vice of public extravagance if it would eliminate the enormously greater waste caused by idle resources. He was simply choosing the only apparent means of eliminating the greater waste. The thrift and industry commended to him by his father were still cardinal virtues.

Eccles nonetheless retained a profound respect for the enormous productive capabilities of the liberal capitalism which had been the source of his father’s wealth, telling National Resources Committee Chairman Frederic A. Delano that it was “the system we want to preserve.” Businessmen not possessed of the alternative visions available to Eccles felt there was no room for compromise, that government encroachment upon the prerogatives of private business might irreparably damage the productive capacity of that system. Eccles was acutely aware of “the difficulty of keeping the private economy going concurrently with the introduction of large elements of public control.” But early in the ’30s he became convinced that in compensatory fiscal policies he had found the best means of overcoming that difficulty.

It is, of course, obvious that many persons not sharing Eccles’s background came to similar conclusions and that many who shared his background came to different conclusions. No one would contend that only a Mormon industrialist could have been permitted access to Eccles’s vision or that all Mormon industrialists would have shared it. It must be remembered, however, that the great variety of enterprises Eccles controlled in the mountain West made him very nearly *sui generis* among westerners, among Mormons, and even among Mormon industrialists. Perhaps his singular position, plus his unusual sharing of the vantage points of these groups, favored so distinctive an accomplishment in the development of economic thought.

Basil Rauch’s comment on Eccles’s memoir raises another point worth noting. His implication that commitment to compensatory fiscal policy is unlikely without exposure to Keynes is not uncommon among historians and economists who have written on the development of fiscal policy. The historian John Morton Blum spoke with obvious relief of a moment when “at last the insights of Keynesian theory . . . [penetrated] both the academic world and some councils of government.” Recently, however, another point of view has gained currency. In commenting on a set of papers by prominent economists which implied that the evolution of fiscal policy in America had been primarily the work of Keynes’s disciples, Leon H. Keyserling contended that “the inbred insularity of the academicians first divorced them from much influence upon what was done . . . and later led them to do the wrong things when their influence increased.” He concluded, “With all due respect to Keynes, I have been unable to discover much evidence that the New Deal would have been greatly different if he had never lived, and if a so-called school of economics had not taken on his name.” Those familiar with Keynes and who, today, could not be,

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will notice that he, like Eccles, concluded that aggregate supply and demand need not find an equilibrium at a level of full employment. The "multiplier" concept which Keynes borrowed from R. F. Kahn, the "propensity to consume," and the "liquidity preference" all are part of Eccles's system, sufficiently well-formulated to lead to similar policy conclusions. Keynes was important to New Dealers, but not as an influence upon policy. Nor was he of decisive importance in forming the new economic ideology New Dealers were moving towards, a movement greatly accelerated by their experience with the recession of 1937. He was important, however, in providing an external theoretical justification for that ideology after it was well on its way to becoming accepted by a preponderance of New Dealers.

Our discussion thus far has centered upon the origins of Eccles's economic thought. Equally important in considering his influence upon public policy was his position among Roosevelt's many advisors on economic policy, and the circumstances which aided or hindered him in the crucial matter of access to the president. Eccles's background influenced his efficacy as economic advisor as it did his thinking on economic questions. Particularly important, as the sharp recession of 1937 began to cause a frantic reexamination of administration policies, was the struggle between Eccles as chairman of the board of governors of the Federal Reserve System and Henry Morgenthau, Jr., secretary of the treasury. Late in 1936 Eccles had prepared a memo for Roosevelt urging caution in the drive then being spearheaded by Morgenthau to balance the budget. Morgenthau responded by confiding to his staff his fear that if he did not "dynamite" Eccles's argument, he might "find that Eccles will become the President's fiscal advisor."24

Certainly in any such competition, Morgenthau held important strategic advantages. Getting the attention of the president was much easier for Morgenthau than it was for Eccles. The Morgenthau's long friendship with the Roosevelts and the Hudson Valley gentleman tradition in which both families were steeped gave Morgenthau advantages which the westerner could not even approximate. Morgenthau had been brought into the Treasury with a jovial "We'll have fun doing it together."25 He and FDR had a standing appointment for lunch each Monday. There were indeed times when, as Morgenthau had told his staff in October 1937, the president was consulting him "on everything"—when he was with the president "almost constantly."26

Eccles rarely was extended such privileges. There is a particularly striking anecdote in Eccles's memoirs which underscores the frustration of an advisor on important policy matters who did not enjoy the advantage of being included in the president's inner circle. In late 1939, Eccles arrived at the White House for a coveted luncheon appointment to discuss several matters of importance to the

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25Morgenthau's account of his call to the Treasury Department on 13 November 1933 is in Blum, Years of Crisis, p. 73.

Federal Reserve. Upon arriving, the Federal Reserve chairman was told that the president was behind in his appointment schedule. Eccles was asked to wait until a conference with Senator William G. McAdoo of California was ended. Twenty minutes later Eccles was ushered in, but the senator refused to take the president's hint that he was about to sit down for lunch. McAdoo finally left, but as the luncheon ended, the president summoned his Scotty, Fala, throwing the ball for her to retrieve for several minutes. Finally, the relaxation over, he turned to Eccles to talk business. But just as the conversation began they were interrupted again when the president noted that Fala had committed an egregious social error on the carpet in the president's office. Then and there the dog was taught the error of his ways, as Eccles put it, "under the general supervision of the President of the United States." Finally, one and one-half hours after Eccles's arrival, the two turned again to business, only to be interrupted momentarily by the announcement that the president's next visitor had arrived. Eccles was ushered out without getting a chance to discuss the matter bringing him to the White House.

"A few minutes with Roosevelt was a prize sought by all," Eccles recalled. "To gain it and exploit it took as much advance planning as if the objective was a D-day landing. And when at last an appointment was set, a host of distractions often cut across what was discussed and what was to be decided." The Morgenthau diaries make it clear that Morgenthau seldom underwent the trials in gaining access to the president which were for others, by Eccles's account, a common experience. Certainly insofar as influence upon the president was a function of time spent with him, Eccles worked at a distinct disadvantage.

There were three reasons why Eccles was less successful than Morgenthau in gaining access to the president. His background, as we have seen, was markedly dissimilar, preventing him from achieving the relaxed familiarity which characterized the group closest to the president. His relationship to FDR's inner circle is suggested in the metaphor which dominates his memoir. A "Joseph in Egypt," he was never quite comfortable with those he had come to serve. His personality was brusque compared with the genteel style to which Roosevelt had been bred; at times it was even abrasive. Eccles had little patience with small talk. He was a man who, when there was business to be done, resented anything that might distract from expeditious consideration of the matter at hand. He would have found it difficult to understand a suggestion from the president with regard to public office that they would "have fun doing it together." He would have thought it flippant to approach a formidable responsibility in such an off-hand manner. It was simply not his style. He was infuriated by the Fala incident until his colleagues William Clayton and Elliot Thurston pointed out the humor in the situation.

Eccles worked under another disadvantage as well, stemming from the particular governmental office which he held. Morgenthau, as secretary of the treasury, was a top-ranking administration official and thus could legitimately act as spokesman for government policy. Eccles, though appointed by the
president, was chairman of an independent regulatory commission in which decisions and policy were, in theory at least, to be determined by the seven-man board of governors. After appointment to the board chairmanship in 1934, Eccles felt the need to be circumspect in his public utterances. On the one hand, he had to avoid conveying the impression that his own opinions represented those of the entire board. On the other hand, he found it necessary to prevent any suggestion that he was spokesperson for the administration—a role which might compromise the cherished independence of the Federal Reserve System. Though Eccles still managed to speak his mind when he felt circumstances warranted, his situation nonetheless imposed real constraints. In the spring of 1935, presidential secretary Steve Early complained of Eccles’s reticence to speak out since his appointment to the Federal Reserve Board. “We are under attack with our best gun silence,” he told Marvin McIntyre. Eccles rejected Frederic A. Delano’s 1936 suggestion that he publish his Wharton School address in the Federal Reserve Bulletin with the explanation “that it would be inadvisable to print talks of this character in the Bulletin, since it would almost certainly be misunderstood and we would be accused of using the Bulletin for partisan political purposes which would, of course, do more harm than good.”

Eccles managed, despite such handicaps, to develop a following of persons with similar views on administration fiscal policies. Paradoxically, the provincial background which diminished his effectiveness in approaching the president may have enhanced his influence upon other New Dealers, contributing to the dissemination as well as to the formulation of the ideas he promoted. Forward-looking ideas assume an uncommon quality when voiced by a provincial from whom such ideas are not expected. The fact that Eccles was from Utah and a Mormon always was included in accounts of his views on deficit spending. In drawing attention to the anomaly of such ideas coming from such a man, commentators unavoidably emphasized the uniqueness of the ideas themselves. Even Eccles’s impatience with the usages that serve in polite society to smooth the edges of social and intellectual discourse may have given him some advantage in Washington. In speeches, he employed a directness which imparted an uncommon force to what he said. His speeches were particularly effective in attracting the attention of like-minded New Dealers and New Deal partisans. In November 1935 he addressed a hostile convention of the American Banking Association in New Orleans, speaking extemporaneously from notes he had prepared after arriving in New Orleans. The speech prompted Stuart Chase to write, “I thought it was the most admirable summary of the Administration’s policy and the actual results achieved which I have yet seen.” The secretary of Aubrey Williams, assistant to Harry Hopkins, wrote that Williams was “very anxious to obtain a copy of Mr. Eccles’s speech.” Frederick A. Delano, of the National Resources Committee, requested twenty-five to fifty copies to send to friends, suggesting the speech be made into a pamphlet. George T. Ross, then an

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29Steven Early to Marvin McIntyre, Memo of 13 December 1935, in File 90, Miscellaneous Memos, Roosevelt Library.
employee of the NRA, wrote that after rereading the speech several times, he had come to the conclusion that it represents a philosophy which alone can justify our governmental program. . . . Frankly, your speech contains the only definite, logical, and comprehensive answer I have seen to three-fourths of the attacks on the Government's spending program—and a clear explanation as to why it was necessary.

Among the many congratulatory letters were notes from Secretary Wallace, Attorney General Homer Cummings, W. I. Myers of the Farm Credit Administration, Paul Appleby of the Department of Agriculture, and Representative T. Alan Goldsborough. Myers and Appleby requested extra copies to send to friends. Thus, between 1933 and 1937 Eccles cultivated a small but significant group of friends and admirers both inside and outside of the administration—persons who were predisposed to support his contention when the recession of 1937 struck, that a stepped-up spending program was a vital necessity.

The recession was a critical event in Eccles's career. It raised anew the complex and difficult questions confronting policy makers throughout the decade. How can the government provide greater social benefits for its citizens, promote recovery, institute changes to minimize the extremes of future cyclical fluctuations, and yet not interfere with the fundamental workings of the system, nor frighten the business community? “The government,” Eccles maintained, . . . can spend money, because the government has the power of taxation and power to create money and does not have to depend on the profit motive. The only escape from a depression must be by increased spending. We must depend upon the government to save what we have of a price, profit, and credit system.

Eccles had arrived in Washington in 1933 with arguments to justify New Deal deficit financing and to show “how the increased production and employment that the policy would create was the only way a depression could be ended and a budget balanced.” Though he had presented these arguments to New Deal officials since 1933 and to the public on every justifiable occasion, it took a Roosevelt recession to move them into the mainstream of New Deal thought. By that time his ideas, supported by other practical men of like mind and by a growing group of professional economists, provided the most convincing justification for a resumption of spending policies forced by circumstances upon a reluctant president.

Though Eccles, for reasons of his own, had little to say concerning the sources of his economic philosophy, it seems altogether likely that his provincial Mormon background helped shape and strengthen his attachment to the distinctive insights he gained in seeking to come to terms with the Depression. Unusual aspects of his particular regional and family background exerted a

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31 Eccles to J. I. H. Herbert, 20 December 1935; Stuart Chase to Eccles, 22 May 1936; Dorothy Keller to Eccles, 18 December 1935; Fredric A. Delano to Eccles, 18 December 1935; George T. Ross to Eccles, 30 November 1935; Delano to Eccles, 22 May 1936; W. I. Myers to Eccles, 16 May 1936; Herbert Gaston to Eccles, 16 May 1936; Lippman to Eccles, 17 May 1936; and others; all in “Addresses June 1925–5 8–36,” M.S. Eccles File (Federal Reserve), Eccles Papers.

32 Utah Education Association address, 27 October 1933, in ibid.
discernible influence upon the development of ideas he promoted in Washington with a missionary zeal for over a decade. It is perhaps significant that David Eccles’s portrait still dominates the Salt Lake City office of his son, Marriner, occupying a conspicuous place over the fireplace. The small bronze bust of FDR sits on the mantlepiece below.
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THE "PROPHET PUZZLE" ASSEMBLED; OR, HOW TO TREAT OUR HISTORICAL DIPLOPIA TOWARD JOSEPH SMITH

Commenting with considerable insight upon the historiography of Joseph Smith, Jan Shipps in a recent article in the *Journal of Mormon History* (1974) characterized it as in a "schizophrenic state." Referring to what she called the "prophet puzzle," Shipps said,

What we have in Mormon historiography is two Josephs: the one who started out digging for money and when he was unsuccessful, turned to propheteering, and the one who had visions and dreamed dreams, restored the church, and revealed the Will of the Lord to a sinful world. While the shading has varied, the portraits have pretty much remained constant; the differences are differences of degree, not kind.

With some qualifications, I would agree with Shipps that there have been two major kinds of study of Joseph Smith, the one scholarly, secular, dealing with his gold digging, his communitarianism, his political career and empire building; the other (starting from religious premises and usually divorcing Smith from his historical context) dealing with his spiritual life, his visions, his prophecies, his doctrines as formulated in his published works.

The bifurcation in approaches to Joseph Smith, the prophet, goes back to the first writers in the nineteenth century, Alexander Campbell, E. D. Howe, and George Q. Cannon. It carries through today to Fawn Brodie, Klaus Hansen, Richard Anderson, and Hyrum Andrus.

Implicit in what the first group in both centuries has said about Joseph Smith is the assumption that something is wrong with Joseph Smith's prophetic posture because he dug for gold, practiced polygamy, and mixed in politics and
empire building. In this perspective, the preoccupations of Smith seem too worldly to take his claim of spiritual experiences seriously.

The second group has also shared many of these assumptions because they have tended to deny that Joseph was a money digger, that he practiced polygamy for any other than spiritual reasons, that he sought power through politics, or desired empire. The denial has often been implicit rather than explicit, an unwillingness on the part of many Mormon writers to deal with any of the worldly aspects of Joseph's career.

Can the two viewpoints be reconciled? Perhaps these perspectives can never be fully fused until non-Mormons are converted to the Mormon gospel, or Mormons accept the prevailing secular world view. Yet, I believe there is room for a deeper understanding of Joseph Smith as prophet and religious leader, and Mormonism as a religion, which will help us to see how some of Joseph Smith's worldliness fits an authentic prophetic mold. Heretofore, students of Mormonism have largely neglected the findings of sociologists and anthropologists of religion. Yet their insights hold great promise for helping us to solve some of the prophet puzzle.

As I have suggested in an article in the 1975 issue of the Journal of Mormon History, the insights of students of religion like Erwin R. Goodenough of Yale enable us to relate Joseph Smith's quest for empire to a religious purpose, a quest for social refuge. Goodenough, who defined religion as a quest for security, would have recognized that the search for a social haven by political and economic means could have a religious purpose.

Some help is also available to us in the work of Norman Cohn, a medievalist, whose classic study In Pursuit of the Millennium (1957) relates the rise of radical messianic groups in the middle ages to substantial social stress and social change. Cohn shows how in the Rhine valley from A.D. 1000 to 1600 a tradition of revolutionary chiliasm flourished and one millennialist movement after another appeared. Cohn traces the career of claimants to the prophetic mantle like Tanchelm, who about A.D. 1110 led a revolt in Flanders which spread to Antwerp and Utrecht. Tanchelm preached in the field as a prophet and claimed to be God incarnate. Thirty years later Eudes de l'Etoile, or Odo, called himself the son of God and chose twelve apostles. Cohn argues that the growth of the textile industry in Flanders disrupted the peasant's life style and his sense of social status and security. Living on the border of starvation, envious of the wealthier classes, the peasants were glad to follow any prophetic leader who offered them hope of a more secure future. Obviously, Mormons were never as radical nor militant as some of these groups, but the point about the relationship between social change and millennialism is of considerable importance since millennialism was such a central part of early Mormon thought.

The works of social anthropologists like Anthony F. C. Wallace, Peter Worsley, and Kenelm Burridge, who have studied what are known as the Cargo Cults in New Guinea, Melanesia, and Polynesia, are also insightful. Wallace has characterized these millenarian movements as "revitalization movements," a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture." Worsley in 1957 in The Trumpet Shall Sound characterized millenarist cults as mediums through which subjugated and oppressed natives seek release from poverty, exploitation, and economic
uncertainty. Such groups, termed Cargo Cults because they valued western material goods but not western values, gather around a prophet who promises divine intervention to save them from their plight. The Milne Bay prophet, Tokeriu, emerged in New Guinea in 1893 following an oppressive British administration. Tokeriu said the southeast wind would come to destroy the whites and natives who did not join his cult. Tokeriu, significantly, blended native and English values, discarding his western clothing but promising that he would soon have a steamship larger than that of the British. Such cults are quasi-political, and become either full-fledged political movements, or become frustrated and passive. Worsley sees them after World War II manifesting an incipient nationalism. Those who recall Thomas F. O'Dea's generalization that the Mormon kingdom constituted an incipient nationalism may find Worsley's observation significant.

Worsley noted that most of the leaders of these movements have occasions of "sexual excess," but denied that such were sexually motivated: "It becomes clear that we are not dealing with unbridled lust or with ascetic perversion. We are dealing with the deliberate . . . overthrow of the cramping bonds of the past, not in order to throw overboard all morality, but in order to create a new brotherhood with a completely new morality." Historians who have affirmed that Mormon polygamy grew out of Joseph Smith's excessive sexual drives need to read Worsley.

Perhaps more provocative and insightful is the study by Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth* (1969), which could have significant impact upon the study of Joseph Smith. Burridge's starting point is the statement by two earlier anthropologists, Chinnery and Haddon, that "an awakening of religious activity is a frequent characteristic of periods of social unrest. The weakening or disruptions of the old social order may stimulate new ideas, and these may give rise to religious movements that strive to sanction social and political aspirations." Burridge takes an expansive view of what constitutes the religious:

Meditating on the infinite may be a religious activity, so may writing a cheque, eating corpses, copulating, listening to a thumping sermon of hell fire, examining one's conscience, painting a picture, growing a beard, licking leprous sores, tying the body into knots, a dogged faith in rationality—there is no human activity which cannot assume religious significance.

Burridge indicates that a new millenarian movement marks the initiation of a new world order.

The hypothesis that millenary activities predicate a new culture or social order coming into being . . . is a fair one. Certainly it is more scientific to regard these activities as new-cultures-in-the-making, or as attempts to make a new kind of society or moral community, rather than as oddities, diseases in the body social, or troublesome nuisances to efficient administration—though of course they may be all of these as well. Finally, of course, a millenarian movement is a new religion in the making. New assumptions are being ordered into what may become a new orthodoxy.

These insights are immensely important if we hope to understand early Mormonism on its own terms, to fully perceive what the Saints thought they were doing. Shaping a new social order, one that challenged capitalism as well as democracy as the average American practiced it, that shunned federalism and
fused power in the hands of a prophet-politician, that advanced a new revelation and scripture as well as priesthood authority, Mormons did not need to seek empire to bring violent reaction by other Americans. Nor is it necessary in this context to distinguish between Joseph Smith's role as prophet and profiteer to explain the worldliness yet religious nature of his personality and movement.

Burridge shows that the acquisition of money was of critical importance to many of the Cargo Cults. In Melanesia and Polynesia two economic systems were at war—a simple, undifferentiated, self sufficient, agrarian economy was juxtaposed to a more complex, class structured, and highly specialized society where tasks were assigned according to skills and where money was a key to goods and status.

While Palmyra, New York, was not a Polynesian island, yet enormous economic and social changes were underway there. In the 1820s Palmyra became linked to the Erie Canal, and farmers who had been self sufficient lost their economic independence. There was much concern among those who became Mormons that class differences were emerging, that the churches were being filled with the elite in fancy clothes and with fancier social airs, and that ministers who were for hire cared nothing about their flock. The Book of Mormon denounced such people. Even in New York the Mormons began experimenting with having all things in common, that is, sharing their material wealth. Under Mormon communitarianism competitive capitalism with its resulting social rankings was replaced with a system in which property was shared more equally and its acquisition was no measure of a man's worth. In Zion loyalty to the group, service, staying power, and spiritual outlook counted more than education or wealth.

In Burridge's context Joseph Smith's early experiences with money digging may have been one mystical means of acquiring money (and status) which the family sorely needed, hence part of their religious quest, rather than cunning chicanery as some historians have assumed. When Joseph Smith, Sr., told his son that he wished he would find more spiritual uses of the seer-stone he was only expressing the essentially religious outlook of the entire family.

Burridge agrees with Worsley that immorality is not the issue where sexual innovation occurs. He suggests that where women constitute an underprivileged class and their status is heavily dependent upon their relationship to a prophet, they can only realize their aspirations for status by becoming his wife or the wife of a rich and important man who has influence through him. Those who know something about how polygamy evolved as an institution among the Mormons, of the many wives had by key Mormon leaders, may want to reflect upon this insight. Burridge explains his thesis when he says "on the whole . . . the sexual attractiveness of male prophets is to be accounted for less in the amatory skills of the prophet, and more in the conditions of being a woman."

There are many insights to be had from Burridge, but I like especially his attitude toward prophets and their movements which seems more detached and objective than many of those now prevailing with regard to Joseph Smith. He says, "If we are confronted with evidence of a divine revelation, we cannot think it irrelevant or irrational or fantasy or wishful thinking. We must take it seriously and try to account for what actually occurs. Even if our private
assumptions do not admit of such a thing as divine revelations, we must admit that for others it does exist."

While in the last thirty years historians have made much progress toward a less moralistic and a more tolerant and insightful attitude toward Joseph Smith and his movement, the works of Burridge and others suggest that continued reexamination is needed. Only when the tradition-bound views of the past are reconsidered in the context of anthropological insights will the prevailing diplopia be cured and the dual images of Joseph Smith as prophet and profiteer be focused into one.

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**A Thread of Tragedy—But Not the Whole Cloth**

Levi Peterson's paper on the tragic elements in Juanita Brooks's John D. Lee and Mountain Meadows Massacre books is exciting in concept and development. I see only one problem with it: in order to put not only John D. Lee but also much of the Mormon experience under the rubric, Dr. Peterson provides so loose a definition of tragedy that much of the sentimental literature of the age also qualifies. He terms as tragic, events and circumstances which, however "poignant" and "traumatic" they might be, carry few of the elements associated with tragedy in its highest and most ennobling sense.

Dr. Peterson's definition of tragedy includes two concepts, only the first of which, he says, is necessary to qualify a piece for inclusion in the category. "Intolerable loss and intense suffering" defines for him the tragic event, but the best tragedy, he goes on, includes a second characteristic, that of "recovery." _Oedipus Rex_, one must agree, certainly fits the definition, as does _Hamlet_. But so do a score of other works which we would agree are not tragic. _Tess of the d'Urbervilles_, for instance, or _The Grapes of Wrath_. Or practically any soap opera, to a greater or lesser degree. The response stirred in the sensitive soul by these sad tales is not, it seems to me, catharsis, as much as it is sympathy, or empathy induced by identification.

In the Mormon experience mentioned in Dr. Peterson's paper I find more of the superficial response. Mormon testimonies, however weepy they become, indicate more a sentimental tradition than a tragic thrust. Mormon repetitions of our sorrows in Missouri, in Illinois, and on the trail west are a folk ritual leading more towards an epic re-creation than to tragic awareness. Even the "greatest sorrow" of the Mormon experience, the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, may be told as high tragedy only if the teller interprets that event as the absolute and awesome end to a great and moral life, tragic only if death is the final judgment and the promise of immortal life a cruel hoax.
In response to Dr. Peterson’s disavowal of the assertion that "there is no Christian tragedy," let me remind him that the pieces which he cites as being both Christian and tragic all conclude with the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus, ending before the resurrection can apply Christian affirmation to the message. To experience tragedy in the Christian context, the believer must experience a “willing suspension of ... belief,” for in the promise of the resurrection is the rebuttal to the horror of crucifixion. Aristotle’s tragic components, pity and fear, are swallowed up in Christian faith. Just so, in the Mormon application of the term “martyrdom” to the murder of Joseph Smith is found the doctrinal assurance that his death was not a tragic end to this life but a glorious promise for the next.

Having attempted thus to weed out of the Mormon experience those responses which, I maintain, are not tragic, let me now approve Dr. Peterson’s singling out one which, at least in Juanita Brooks’s treatment of it, seems to belong to the tragic tradition. Her John D. Lee, as Dr. Peterson demonstrates, fits the archetype of the tragic hero in the most rigorous sense of the term, given the milieu in which he played his part. Even in his death he approaches the resolution characteristic of the tragic hero: reconciled to the gods, he accepts his fate calmly. One merges in memory Lee’s pronouncement, “I am ready to die. I trust in God. I have no fear,” with his posing, sitting on his own coffin, for the memorial photograph. The stance is characteristic of the tragic hero: a stated acceptance of one’s fate, and at the same moment, an implied beating of the fates at their own game. (Only in the second edition revised is the ending weakened, and then only in a postscript reporting that Church officials nearly a century later had given authorization for “the re-instatement to membership and former blessings” of John D. Lee. The reminder that it might still matter, that the course is still being run, denies the finality of the reconciliation of the death scene.) But the other actors and acted-upon in the story have no such larger-than-life proportions as Lee does. The massacre itself is not tragic; it is grotesque. Its perpetrators are not heroes, nor even villains; they are a common humanity, as Brooks sees them, caught up in an ignoble passion. Its victims are not sacrifices to the gods; they are the embodiment of the fears of the times, the unwitting scapegoats of a people fearful of renewed persecution. And we for whom Dr. Peterson sees the tragedy continuing are no more than the chorus of the Greek archetypes: responding in ignorance, bending with every wisp of evidence, trying to disassociate ourselves from the guilt which John D. Lee could not carry with him to his grave. Such a position is not tragic; it is merely pathetic.

There is, as Dr. Peterson says, a tragic thread in Mormon history, a thread strong enough to be pulled out from the cloth and examined minutely by such sensitive writers as Juanita Brooks. But it must be identified on its own, and not confused with the rest of the warp and woof of the Mormon experience, before we can with certainty say what is and what is not tragedy in the Mormon past.

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