Journal of Mormon History Vol. 15, 1989

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On a warm July day in 1872, David Hyrum Smith, the youngest son of Emma and Joseph Smith, boarded a ferry to cross the Missouri River from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Omaha, Nebraska. The man was twenty-seven years old, almost six feet tall, thin as a rail, with dark brown hair and an engaging personality that occasionally fought to surmount what Winston Churchill called his “black dog,” a deep and scarifying depression. He possessed, however, a ready wit and a keen intelligence. He was at various times a fine and sensitive poet, a musician, a singer, a writer of doggerel, and a missionary. He crossed the river now because his brother, Joseph, who presided over the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, had allowed him to return to Utah to attempt once more to convert the Mormons to their true faith, to steal sheep, as it were, from Brigham Young. In one hand, he carried a large valise; in the other, a heavy lunch basket prepared by members of the RLDS Church anxious to contribute to his momentous trip. David Smith warmly embraced his good friend, a Brother J. C. Jensen; then, with some melancholy and foreboding, he boarded the train to Salt Lake City to win converts for his church from among the Mormons. "I felt as if the desert and strangers were before me.... A strange weird sunset filled me with conjecture in regard to the termination of the mission," he wrote.1 Pushing aside this premonition of tragedy, David literally rode into the sunset from Omaha as the last light blazed up in a

1 Valeen Tippetts Avery, immediate past president of the Mormon History Association, is director of the Center for Colorado Plateau Studies at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona.
wonderful golden display before dimming in the western horizon. As the heavy
engine moved westward along the steel-ribboned tracks, guided ever faithfully by
telegraph lines rising from the sea of prairie grasses, David sat alone in one of the
cars. Surely the Muse of history gazed down upon him with a sardonic smile, for
she knew his secret malady. It was not insanity; it was the same weakness that the
Nobel Prize winning poet Czeslaw Milosz diagnosed as the primary characteristic
of our present age. It was a refusal to remember, a refusal to allow the knowledge
of historical phenomena to permeate our being, to refuse to suffuse our living with
subtle reminders of the process by which we have come to be. It is our history
that gives us our cultural memory, and we learn history not in order to know how
to behave or to succeed, but rather to know who we are. The Muse of history is
gentle, learned, and unassuming, but when neglected and deserted she takes her
revenge upon those who scorn her.

The ancient Greeks accorded a sincere and due respect to that body of knowl-
edge we now term the liberal arts and sciences by honoring nine beautiful female
deities with the title “Muse,” a title indicating thoughtful intellectual skills. They
sculpted likenesses of them to adorn the temple of learning in Alexandria. Calliope
was “she of the beautiful voice”; Erato was “the lovely”; Urania blessed the as-
tronomers; and so forth. Clio, appropriately known as “the proclaimer,” became
the Muse of history. Clio never resigned her post throughout the centuries, and
she still reigns over those of us who call ourselves historians. She carries a heroic
trumpet, with which she proclaims events of the past, and a water clock called the
clepsydra with which she measures the passage of time. Her mother, of course, is
Mnemosyne, memory. The tempting Muse of history has been courted by writers
and scholars of Mormon history with only varying degrees of success. We are more
than familiar with the difficulties inherent in interpreting the tidings of another
heroic figure mounted on a temple who also carries a trumpet, and it should
come as no surprise to us that the Muse of Mormon history reveals her secrets
slowly and in conundrums.

Fidelity to the Muse is often painful; history accurately understood and recorded
is at best a difficult and capricious partner, one whose demands never cease and
whose companionship often grates at the truth of life. But if fidelity is difficult, the
terror created when the Muse is scorned is far worse, and she wreaks a vengeance
upon all individuals and institutions who would belittle or change or ignore her.

David Smith, youngest, brightest, and most sensitive son of Joseph and Emma
Smith, followed the siren song of both trumpets. He forgot, in his pursuit, to calculate
the level of jealousy inherent in Clio’s interest in him. He scorned her for comfort,
denied her for love of his parents, avoided her in preference to self-gratification,
and placed her offerings on the doorstep of acceptability. I am not insisting that
the vengeance Clio enacted was in honor of her mother she abducted his
memory and made of him a mad fool, for scientists and physicians can offer more
plausible tales and pleasing explanations for whatever mysterious malady struck
the man, but it is well for those of us who dabble in history to approach the task
with offerings to the Muse and promises to her discipline that we fully intend to
keep.
While the absolute importance of historical events is difficult to quantify, the birth of David Hyrum Smith occurred at a time when events of far-reaching significance thrust themselves upon the Mormon scene. Indeed, a beginning at birth is far too late in time to begin an analysis of David’s experience with history, for events preceding his birth, including the reconciliation of his parents which led to his conception, affected his life most profoundly. Early in 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois, Emma and Joseph Smith began to accommodate her insistence that plural marriage be removed from her family life. Away Hale (no relation to Emma) recorded that Emma loved Joseph and “would have laid her life down for him,” and if the term of Emma’s pregnancy was normal, within a short time of the decision to remove plural wives from Emma and Joseph Smith’s household, Emma became pregnant with the child who would become David. It is therefore my assumption that the presence of polygamy was in part responsible for David’s birth, and that his discovery of it later in his life made it equally in part responsible for some of the stress prompting his insanity. Five months into Emma Smith’s pregnancy, a mob murdered David’s father in Carthage, Illinois, thus denying the child the opportunity to see or know him. David’s knowledge of his father came to him through the combined memory of others. The process of recreating a father from memory proved that Joseph Smith was undeniably correct in one prophecy; his name was known and memory served him up as both good and evil to the troubled child who searched for him.

David Smith was born into a city torn by strife and dissension. Church authority was not strong enough to maintain order, and secular officials wrangled over how to dispose of the Mormon question. Beset by vigilantes, most Mormons fled Nauvoo in 1846, leaving the city to the ravages of angry neighbors who were determined to rid themselves of the Mormon influence. Before David was two, his mother fled up the Mississippi River to safety just as the shots signaling the war of Nauvoo echoed across the water.

The family returned the following year in 1847 and settled into the Mansion House, and Emma married again. Her husband, Lewis Bidamon, charmed his way into the family circle, but his contribution did not include an extraordinary strength of character. He became David’s real father, the man who reared him from infancy. His natural parent then became the mythic father. And all about him, his mother, his friends, his fellow church members, his neighbors, and his enemies began to interpret to David each his or her own collective memory of this mythic father. Through no particular responsibility of anyone, the character of Joseph Smith began to assume heroic proportions in the mind of this child.

After 1847, the atmosphere in Nauvoo abruptly changed. From a city whose very atmosphere crackled with tension and excitement, Nauvoo became a languid, sleepy river town; a backwater community without goal or purpose, somnolent, decaying; a city abandoned by the vision that had created it. Neither Icarians nor Germans nor river traffic affected the town much. When the Mormon wagons headed west, the charged atmosphere above Nauvoo followed them; sparked with energy and anticipation, the bright cumulus maintained its pace, dipped to follow the conestogas lumbering through the fords of the Platte, and lifted to follow the
wagons over South Pass. From 1847, periodic news of Mormon growth, expansion, wars with government and Indians, settlements, and polygamy reverberated across the Mississippi but only barely ruffled the tranquility of Nauvoo.

And David, who grew to become a sensitive, poetic, romantic, intellectual child, gradually realized that in some manner the events in Utah had some bearing on his own life. Simultaneously, members of his family also realized the same thing and exerted some influence over the occasions when history threatened to intrude into his life. In October 1856, George A. Smith visited Emma Smith in Nauvoo. He reported that Emma received him coldly; that David's two brothers, Frederick and Alexander, maintained an icy reserve; and that twelve-year-old David, curious and eager to meet new guests, especially those who had known his father, seemed to want to make his acquaintance. But the family repeatedly called him away. It is my conjecture that the underlying reason was that Emma Smith did not want her young son exposed so soon to the historical past, that Emma suspected that David's association with Clio would not be harmonious.

Within a month, Edmond Briggs and Samuel Gurley, two representatives of the loosely knit coalition of Mormons who had remained in the Midwest instead of going to Utah, called upon David's elder brother, Joseph Smith III, and invited him to become the leader of their church. When Joseph finally accepted in 1860, his acceptance speech outlined his position on the information available to him about his father. Joseph Smith III effectively followed a practice of selective history; when he accepted the presidency of the Reorganization, he affirmed his belief in his father's prophetic abilities; but he refused to accept the evidence of his father's polygamous marriages. Thus, he denied to himself and to his younger brothers the opportunity to understand and accept a most painful family history. "I have been told that my father taught such doctrines," he asserted in reference to plural marriages. "I have never believed it and never can believe it." Joseph's example of denial affected David, who, at sixteen years of age, now lost the opportunity to accept the difficulties of Mormon polygamous marriages at a period in his life when he perhaps could have better understood the issue and grown in understanding. Joseph had made his stand—he would not court Clio, and David followed suit.

His brother Joseph provided the most compelling example of proper belief and action for David, and David was indeed pleased and flattered when Joseph and Alexander included him in the triumvirate of leadership in the church founded by their father. The work inherent in furthering the fortunes of the Church offered David a wonderful stage upon which to develop his considerable talents. His family believed in him and invested in him their hopes for continuation of the familial prophetic vision. Had not the family in 1857 sat with David at dinner and informed a guest that his father had prophesied that his mantle of greatness would fall upon David, who would be as wise and powerful as the biblical David? Had not Charles Derry been impressed with his intelligence, kindness, and obedience, enough so to give him the honored name Sweet Singer of Israel? But if David were to maintain his place alongside his brothers, then he must not ask too many questions, and he must not assume the antagonist's role in learning more about the secular history of the Mormon movement. The mythic, spiritual history must suffice.
By 1863, David, age nineteen, joined his brother Joseph on a missionary journey through Iowa. The two Smith sons traveled together, visiting and organizing branches of the Church along the way. At one point, they stayed several days and nights with Ebenezer Robinson. Robinson had been a close friend of their father's, as well as co-editor of the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo with their uncle Don Carlos Smith. Robinson was a living oracle of the recent Mormon past. In 1891, he would publish a detailed history of events in Nauvoo, including specific references to polygamous marriages. Neither Joseph nor David ever referred to information given to them by Robinson, and my evaluation is that Robinson remained silent. But surely Robinson regarded the two young men with a mixture of curiosity, waiting for them to ask the proper questions in the proper manner, and wonderment at Joseph's flat refusal to countenance the idea that his mother had shared his father with other wives. This was an opportunity missed, a chance for historical education overlooked or ignored, and Robinson could have given them a historical education that would have allowed the two to question and evaluate the past together. To have talked with Robinson in 1863 would have provided David and Joseph information together and probably would have made them partners in looking at their past instead of forcing each of them to deal with it alone with such unhappy results. To ignore Ebenezer Robinson was a temporary denial of their past that forced each of them to contemplate the mystery alone, without the balance of reinforcement, humor, shared pain, and contemplative assessment.

But Joseph soon forced another encounter with their past. By 1869, when David was 24, Joseph sent him to Utah with Alexander to convert Mormons to the Reorganization. On his way to catch the train at Council Bluffs (David boarded the Union Pacific only a month after Leland Stanford pounded in the golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah), David again visited Ebenezer Robinson. One wonders again what Robinson thought as David informed him he was on his way to Utah. Apparently Robinson again remained silent, for he did not prepare David in any manner for the imminent encounter with Brigham Young.

Shortly after their arrival in Salt Lake City, David and Alexander Smith arranged to meet with Brigham Young. They intended to request permission to use the Tabernacle in order to preach the message of the Reorganization. The Mormon church leader kept them waiting on tenterhooks two hours. Then the two young men were ushered into a room to find some twenty men waiting for them, including John Taylor, George A. Smith, Daniel H. Wells, and Joseph F. Smith—men who undoubtedly had been hastily rounded up for this unusual meeting with Joseph's sons. Even before conversation began, the scene was set for sadness. The Mormons in Utah had long awaited Joseph's sons, but when they came they proclaimed a rival message. While the Smith men did indeed make their request, the true subject of the meeting became a dispute over church history. Alexander had preached vehemently against polygamy and now ascribed the source of his information to his mother, though in truth Emma had not discussed her participation in polygamy with her sons. Brigham knew that Emma knew a different side of Mormon history than her sons espoused. But Brigham also erred in many of his beliefs about past events involving Emma. Thus, the two sons on one side of the room and the twenty
or so Mormon leaders on the other side squared off, each quoting fabricated testimony from Emma Smith in order to uphold their notion of historical events crucial to Mormonism. David flatly told Brigham Young that the reputation built up by the Mormons in Utah for his father was “a name we his sons are ashamed to meet in good society,” and David announced it would be his and his brothers’ life work to “remove from our father’s name the stain you have heaped upon it.” The acrimonious tone of the meeting created an insurmountable barrier between these two forces, both anxious to do the will of Joseph Smith as each interpreted it. Ironically, as they all argued from a false position, a portrait of Joseph Smith, the only man who could give a reasonably accurate account of the disputed events, looked down upon them from its place of honor on a wall in Brigham Young’s office. Somewhere Clio must have laughed. Memory had served none of them well.

Thus, the battle lines in Utah were tightly drawn; the Mormons would continue to uphold plural marriage as a tenet of their faith. That the sons of Joseph had no idea of the extent to which their father practiced and promulgated plural marriage only fueled their determination to clear his name. Each side in the argument was forced into an extreme position by the very presence of the other. For example, the Mormons had tried to preserve Joseph Smith’s reputation unsullied as a modern example of prophetic rectitude. But his nephew Joseph F. Smith was forced to reply to Alexander Smith’s fiery rhetoric. Joseph F. Smith admitted in a public meeting that his own father and the church prophet denied plural marriage publicly while practicing it privately. “I cannot help the position this places my father and Joseph in as to their denials [of polygamous practices],” he stated, referring to occasions in Nauvoo at the time of David’s birth when polygamy had been refuted publicly by both his father and Joseph Smith. The newspaper at Corinne, the hell-on-wheels railroad town east of Ogden, could barely conceal a chortle. “In the presence of a large and excited audience, Joseph F. stood up to prove his own father a liar. And I must add that he succeeded in doing it,” wrote the reporter assigned to cover the incident. David chose a stance of bemused detachment in a letter written to the paper. After remarking that word had spread that he was switching his allegiance from his brother to Brigham, he stated, “This is the greatest city for rumors that ever I have visited,” and then invited the Mormons to “shake the harp of Zion until its harmonies shall drive away the spirit of bondage forever.” Whatever his private reservations may have been, David took at face value during this missionary trip the correctness of his purpose and the authenticity of his doctrine. Clearly he was right, and they were wrong. He saw himself as the exponent of virtue unquestioned, as pure and as direct as the forces of nature. As he himself described it, “There is something grand in the blowing of the north wind; wildly the great volumes of air sweep over the earth and water, singing its horse-she anthem in the tree tops and giving an idea of nature’s motive power, but the little ferry stems the tide and air, like—well, like [me] a Christian in adversity.”

David soon found that his difficulties were compounded by the entry of a third interest into the controversy between the Mormon churches. A group of liberals in Utah challenged Brigham Young’s theocratic and economic power. While this movement, termed the Godbeite rebellion, was essentially a political and economic
force, its members enjoyed a rather heady intellectual freedom. The Liberal Institute provided a forum for new ideas, and for undoubtedly the first time in his life those ideas countered David Smith's notions about intellectual and religious truths. Few people challenged David about his religious convictions in the Midwest, and those who did were ministers of other faiths anxious to debate biblical interpretations. Though many residents of Nauvoo were familiar with the city's painful historical events, for the most part they found peace through silence. A few gradually revealed their acceptance of polygamous doctrines and moved west. Their departure allowed their neighbors to vociferously condemn their actions and then drop the issue without further examination. David once commented to his mother, "Some of them by their uncanny tricks have disgraced themselves, and brought shame upon themselves even to leaving the country in deep disgrace."16

David's confrontation with history did not occur in the Midwest, however. It occurred when he was in Utah, and he could not draw support and comfort from his mother or his brothers because they had already determined their course of action. Joseph still refused to consider the most obvious evidence. His course of action was to eliminate the stigma of plural marriage from the Smith name, "The prestige of my father's name belongs to me; and it is now assured to me; hence it could not be wrested from me,"17 he stated flatly, leaving no room for David to question whether his brother erred. His mother Emma also refused by her reserve to open herself to any possible questioning and thus denied to David an interpretation or explanation of polygamy so crucial to his understanding. "Thank God there is no such disgrace attached to our family," he wrote his mother.18 Emma Smith did not elaborate, preferring to have David believe as he did. By her silence, Emma Smith at that point had succeeded in doing for David what Joseph had set out to do for himself, that is, clear his father's name.

But David's intuitive and collective memory knew differently. He had allowed himself to interview women in Utah who claimed to have been married to his father. His friendship with Amasa Lyman had placed him in close proximity to Lyman's plural wife Eliza Partridge, to whom his father had once been married. The earnest statements of the Mormons about his father's plural wives presented a growing mountain of evidence that the true history of his family was other than he had been led to believe. With deep sadness he wrote to a friend after his journey into the sunset ended, "I believe there was something wrong. I don't know it, but I believe it." Alone in Utah, designated representative of his church and his brother's leadership, avid preacher of a false message, David had the courage to admit, "I have prayed and suffered, and can suffer no longer and so I tell you what I think the truth is."19 David had been only three weeks in Utah.

The stress between what David knew of the historical past, what he was allowed to know by Joseph's intractable position, and the necessity to solve the problem presented by preaching one thing and knowing another became more and more difficult to reconcile. David turned inward to his creativity and wrote:

I turn unto my tasks with weary hands,
Grieving with sadness, knowing not the cause
Before my face a desert path expands,
I will not falter in the toil, nor pause;
Only, my spirit somehow understands
This mournful truth—I am not what I was.20

David constantly searched himself to determine if his moral stance was correct. Introspective, concerned always that his personal integrity be unimpeachable, David needed to bring Joseph to an understanding of the historical past and offered to exchange frank letters. Joseph imposed the condition of privacy, and David obliged. In the single most remarkable document left by David Smith as he veered toward insanity, he confronted Joseph. “Reason is our only guide,” he argued. “You accept such principles of religion as are consistent to you—I to me. All men select their churches by its guidance why not apply this test to the truths of religion?”21 Why not indeed. The answer that escaped David was that reason was not enough. Seven years earlier, in 1865, before David had been drawn into the world of conflicting claims, spiritualism, poverty, polygamy, and proselytizing, he had recognized reason’s limitations. He wrote:

Go from effect to cause and back again
And search and argue now with all your might
And in the end acknowledge for your pain
Reason is after all a feeble light,22

Though David had been forced to widen his view, he remained determined to maintain his faith—so much so that he confided to a friend, “The Bible is my guide and Christ my pattern. There is no religion for me except the gospel we believe.” And then, significantly, he added, “I know all men and all religions so well that no bridge catches me if Christ fails.”23

David Smith faced heavy burdens in the form of bitter strife between the two Mormon churches; a growing skepticism toward the efficacy of modern revelation; disillusionment stemming from his father’s participation in plural marriage, which he could not discuss with either Joseph or his mother; the tantalizing possibilities hinted at by participation in seances and spiritualism; the physically taxing task of maintaining his missionary work; the poverty facing his wife and child at home; and fear engendered by successive mysterious depressive illnesses.

Nevertheless, David plunged into a public lecture series at the Liberal Institute in Salt Lake City in the fall. Reporters from the Tribune covered his speeches. In November 1872, the paper reported that David’s popularity as a lecturer extended to all classes in society. “We predict a future for him unprecedented in the history of the L.D.S. Church,” the paper noted. “He is the only man that can in harmony with Mormon declaration be the successor of Brigham Young. Mr. Smith’s ideas are original and brilliant, his eloquence fluent and his views cosmopolitan.... All our esteemed young friend has to do is to mould the minds of others in harmony with his own inspiration. He has much of his father in him.”24 The paper continued to cover David’s speeches in a generally effusive tone throughout the month; then he was not mentioned. Information about events in his life during December and January is not now available. On February 6, 1873, the newspaper announced that David was seriously ill with brain fever, but that he was recovering and would
resume his lectures. But reports about a lecture never appeared, and in only a few weeks the paper exposed David to public ridicule by repeating rumors that he wanted to own the peep-stone his father had used to translate the Book of Mormon and that he had applied to the Utah church for baptism. "How's that David, eh?" asked the paper in derision. David Smith would struggle seriously with mental illness from this time until his commitment to the Illinois Asylum for the Insane four years later.

One of David's missionary companions, Josiah Ells, conducted David home to the Midwest in the springtime, about May 1873. To all who met him, it became painfully apparent that Joseph Smith's child of promise was not well in his mind. The recurrent malady plagued him with alternating episodes of coherence and confusion; but as he arrived home from his last sad mission to Utah, he returned to see his mother. As Emma approached to embrace him, David made his last coherent comment about his place in Mormon history. "Mother," he said with uncharacteristic abruptness, "why have you deceived us?"

The unrelenting Clio had found her revenge, and her vengeance fell on both David, who had refused to ask of the historical past, and on Emma, who had refused to divulge its accuracy. I know Emma Smith well. It was not her intent to deceive, but rather to protect her son from the pain of knowledge. If it were true that the absence of historical knowledge truly protects, then the only logical course would be to abolish historical investigation. If the absence of historical knowledge protects, then Clio's trumpet sounds a false note. Understanding history is difficult because while historical understanding has the virtue of giving a sense of cohesion to a particular community, it has the vice of dividing that community also. For many years, that divisive history separated the churches stemming from the Mormon tradition and fostered bitterness, frustration, and anger.

Our pursuit of Clio's domain during the twenty-three years of the existence of the Mormon History Association has shown to each of us both the unity and the disruption inherent in searching out our history. United in our collective memories of the Mormon past, we have nonetheless experienced the seduction of infidelity to the Muse. Knowing that the doing of history is time consuming and difficult, we agreed to believe that we, the most fortunate and blessed of historians, lived in an age when extraordinary documents appeared with such regularity that a fever pitch excitement about Mormon history would never abate. We demanded and received our annual dose of excitement, but the Muse, jealous of the glitz, enacted her vengeance.

Now we face again the sweet trustworthiness of the mundane. Quantum leaps having left us in mid-air, we have learned again to move ahead in solid increments. Sifting our evidence, measuring our deliberations, we have survived a destructive upheaval. We are free to drink again our heady brew in exuberant toast to our reconcilable relationship with our beloved Muse. In honor of Clio and Mnemosyne, Muse and Memory, we build together that body of historical literature that tells us once again who we are by defining who we were.
NOTES
4. Members of the Mormon Church will recognize this reference to the statues of the angel Moroni that appear on various temples and who is symbolic of the restoration of information and instruction pertinent to church doctrine.
5. Events leading up to the removal of Joseph's plural wives from the Mansion House are recounted by Emily Partridge Young, "Life of a Mormon Girl," n.d., p. 54, typescript, LDS Archives; Jane M. James, "The Life Sketch of Jane Elizabeth Manning James," p. 20, Wilford Wood papers, 1893, LDS Archives. Jane reported the leaving of the plural wives about the time she learned of their presence in the Smith home. Jane did not arrive in Nauvoo until late October 1843.
7. George A. Smith, Address Book and Journal, 1856-1857, November 1, 1856, LDS Archives. Many visitors came from Utah to see the Smith family: Joseph Fielding Smith in 1860, Hannah Tapfield King in 1855, John Bernhisel on several occasions, and so forth. George A. Smith was a relative, and his account of the family's controlling access to David best illustrates the case for the family's concern about the effects of too much contact.
8. The Amboy (Ill.) Times, April 12, 1860, reported Joseph Smith III's speech in full.
9. "Joe Smith's Family at Nauvoo," Christian Advocate and Journal (New York), February 4, 1858, vol. 23, no. 5. The reporter is not named, but the article elaborates on prophecies concerning David, that his father named him before his birth and knew he would be a son, that his father's followers believe him to be "a prophet and seer, (in embryo)."
10. Charles Derry Journal and Papers, 1862-1908, December 22, 1862, RLDS Library^Archives. I am indebted to his granddaughter, Norma Derry Hiles, for this information.
12. This account of the meeting between the sons of Joseph and Brigham Young was described extensively in several documents. All quotations are from Vida Smith, "Biography of Alexander Smith," Journal of History, vol. 5, 1912, pp. 259-65. Vesta Crawford papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, and Autumn Leaves 25:11 (November 1912, p. 507). The papers of Brigham Young, which may give another point of view, are now restricted in the LDS Archives.
13. This entire incident is reported by Elbert A. Smith, "David H. Smith in Utah," The Corinne, Utah Reporter, as reprinted in Autumn Leaves, 25:11, pp. 508-12.
14. Denials of plural marriage in Nauvoo were couched in code words to conceal its existence from the outside world. The Mormons referred to plural marriage as "the highest order," the "privileges," the "higher order of marriage," and so forth. Those not yet introduced to the practice of plural marriage, or those not members of the Church in Illinois, referred to plural marriage in denigrating terms, such as adultery, spiritual marriage, or fornication. When the Mormons used euphemisms to describe polygamy, they were publicly supporting plural marriage to those who recognized the code words and at the same time allowing the uninformed to believe that the Mormons denied the practice. Those who read Hyrum and Joseph Smith's denials, including David and Alexander Smith, were not aware that the Mormon leaders were publicly affirming plural marriage to their followers who were already involved at the same time as they denied its presence to the uninformed. See William Clayton's affidavit in Women's Exponent, vol. 15, page 10.
16. David H. Smith to Emma Smith Bidamon, January 23, 1872, Marcia Vogel Collection, LDS Archives.
18. David H. Smith to Emma Smith Bidamon, January 23, 1872, Marcia Vogel Collection, LDS Archives.
21. David H. Smith to Joseph Smith III. This letter is unsigned and undated, but the contents indicate its origin to be from David sometime in July or August, 1872.
25. Ibid, February 22, March 6, 1873.
Nearly thirty-five years ago, a bright, young graduate student published the lead article in a prestigious Eastern journal. The author, now known internationally, was David Brion Davis. The journal was *The New England Quarterly*. The essay proposed an alternate explanation of Latter-day Saints disclosed in its title, the “New England Origins of Mormonism.” Revisiting that article today provides an opportunity not only to test its claims against the current state of Mormon historiography but also to highlight certain developments in American religious history generally.

A generation ago, American church historians were in the midst of revising the then standard approach to Christian or, more accurately, Protestant history in the United States. William Warren Sweet, with his Turnerian approach to American religion, had dominated the second quarter of the twentieth century, and Davis was among many who were writing in the milieu of reaction against Sweet's synthesis. While debating the applicability of the frontier thesis seems almost medieval to historians today, it was still an issue in the 1950s. Davis set out to explicitly challenge the earlier view of Mormonism as the “perfect example of the inexorable magic of the frontier” and followed Whitney Cross's just-published argument that western New York, where Mormonism began, was not a frontier in the 1820s.

If Mormonism was not a frontier phenomenon, how were its origins to be
explained? Davis's answer was simple—by looking east to New England and back to the seventeenth century. He acknowledged that Biblicism and contemporary issues played a minor role in accounting for the Church's rise, "but most important, and this fact has been largely ignored," he remarked, "Mormonism was a link in the Puritan tradition." In nearly every way, he argued, the Saints "ran against the main stream of American thought" in the nineteenth century and instead represented an "anachronistic residue of seventeenth century New England." While similarities between the two groups had been noticed before—Emerson allegedly remarked that Mormonism was an afterclap of Puritanism—Davis's essay helped perpetuate the idea. His intriguing hypothesis invites reexamination today, particularly because in the ensuing thirty-five years such an immense amount of research has focused on both the Mormons and New England. How that research has modified earlier assumptions about the Mormons, the Puritans, and nineteenth-century Americans, and how it therefore affects the validity of Davis's argument, will become apparent as we reconsider the major correspondences he adduced—supposedly shared beliefs about "a close personal God," providential history, eschatology, and communitarianism.

"One of the chief aims of Mormon theology," wrote Davis, "was to redefine the nature of God, to recover the anthropocentric God of their forefathers." He outlined with sophistication and finesse the Mormon doctrine of an embodied deity, in whose physical as well as moral image humans were created. He noted the Mormon belief that the Godhead was one in purpose but not in substance and that the Saints charged trinitarian Christians with atheism for believing in an immaterial God. While few would have contested this analysis in the 1950s, subsequent research calls it into question on several fronts. First, earlier studies implicitly tended to view Mormon doctrine as a static unity. In one instance, Davis quoted an 1890s Mormon one moment and an 1850s Saint the next, and yet, in an article discussing Mormon origins, he omitted citations from the 1830s, the essential first decade. Such ahistoricalism has proven to be as misleading for Mormons as it has been for Puritans. Quoting Mormon apostle James Talmage to explain early Mormonism is like citing Cotton Mather in an attempt to establish the contours of Puritan orthodoxy during the period of the Great Migration.

Second, subsequent Mormon studies have demonstrated that the Saints in the 1830s held views of the Godhead much closer to those of their neighbors. Not until the 1840s did Joseph Smith clearly announce a distinctive LDS doctrine of God. Before that, the Saints had much in common with popular antitrinitarianism in antebellum America. To outsiders, Mormon views were paralleled in their unorthodoxy by those of Barton Stone's Christian Church, Alexander Campbell's Disciples of Christ, Hicksite Quakers, New Light Christians, and even the Universalists. One antebellum apologist seeking to stamp out all such "modern Arianism" cited several examples of these views: "[William] Kinkade has a chapter of fifteen pages to show that God has a body like man. [Jabez] Chadwick says he is 'prepared to defend' this sentiment; and Elder G. Fancher says, 'God has a body, eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c, just as we have'. ... Kinkade says, 'ears, hands, and eyes are part of an intelligent ruler, and if God has none of these he cannot hear, handle, nor
Similar arguments for a spiritually "corporeal deity" could have been, and occasionally were, parroted by Mormon writers in the 1830s. "A God without body or parts," wrote Mormon publicist Parley P. Pratt, "has neither eyes, ears, or mouth, and can neither see, hear, nor speak." 

As far as connecting with Puritanism, only a very loose correspondence could be adduced. Puritans certainly did not teach a corporeal theology, though they did believe in a close, interventionist God. Davis linked the two groups through his schematization of history, which suggested that in the intervening eighteenth century, "God was elevated to an inscrutable height" and "became a vague but ambient force or power," one who remained "distant and unaffected" by human affairs.

Thus, it seemed to be an echo of Puritanism when the Mormons "lowered God to a personal, supervising individual with body, parts, and passions."

Related to Davis's claim that the Mormons revived the Puritan doctrine of God was his contention that they also ran counter to their age by espousing a providential worldview. Given the providence-to-progress schematization of the first three centuries of American history popular a generation ago, it really is not surprising that he found "quite different from other nineteenth century theories" the Mormon notion that "God presided over the most minute happenings" and that "ordinary sequences of cause and effect were meaningful only in light of the overall system."

Since the 1950s, however, the methodological shift to concern for ordinary people rather than "elites" has greatly tempered our confidence in such all-encompassing paradigms of the "mind" of a people or an age. In a most revealing study that applied this perspective to antebellum America, Lewis Saum discovered that "the common people saw God ordering the cosmos and, directly or indirectly, all that was in it. Man's foremost obligation was to recognize that reality." He found that "no theme was more persuasive or philosophically more fundamental than the providential view" and that, among common folk, "the providential emphasis [was] on the personal and the immediate, not on the national and the historical." This, then, is just the opposite of what was commonly assumed in the 1950s, when Davis declared that it was "a seventeenth and not a nineteenth-century phenomenon for a group of mechanics and farmers to make their religion a part of everyday life, [and] to interpret daily happenings in light of their providential mission." Mormons, therefore, do not appear so atypical in this regard either.

Another commonplace among historians writing a generation ago was to emphasize the nineteenth century's ebullient optimism and sense of constant, inevitable progress. Thus, when Davis encountered the Saints' pessimistic evaluation of the society around them, he remarked that "in an age of self-congratulation, optimism, and progress, it was the ghost of another era who could write" such things. Recent research, however, has challenged assumptions about nineteenth-century optimism. Despite the grandiloquent rhetoric of Fourth of July orations or of certain newspapers, in the privacy of their personal jottings, a broad cross-section of Americans shared a more negative outlook. "Time and time again, when the mood of their age is under discussion," writes Saum, "Hawthorne and Melville—those 'Nay-sayers'...—appear [to modern interpreters] as idiosyncratic counterpoints to the dominant confidence and assertiveness. However out of step they may have
been with some optimism in higher circles, their dark brooding about fate and providence bore a powerful resemblance to the outlook of the common American.”

Then, too, historians of Christianity give ample evidence that alienation from “the world” and an effort to separate Christ from culture is present almost by definition in sectarian religion. In every era, including nineteenth century America, religious awakenings have produced rigorist groups who distance themselves from the mores of the dominant society. In this regard, Mormons are no more uniquely related to the Puritans than they are to any other sectarian manifestation in Christian history.

Coming at the problem from the angle of eschatology, Mormon pessimism now appears typical of apocalyptic movements. Apocalypticists view the world as corrupt beyond reform and assume that it is only going to get worse. It is so bad, in fact, that hope for its amelioration, gradual or otherwise, is felt to be misplaced. Only as supernatural judgments and cataclysm surrounding the Redeemer’s return transform the world can the new age be ushered in. Apocalypticism has turned up in Christian history at various times and places. While it was never the dominant view in nineteenth-century America, a number of recent studies demonstrate that Mormons did not stand alone in embracing an apocalyptic eschatology.

As far as a correspondence with Puritanism on this point, the linkage is not precise. Though it should be acknowledged that an ethos of popular apocalypticism now seems more prevalent among first-generation New England Puritans than was previously supposed, Richard Cogley makes clear in his recent anatomy of seventeenth-century millenarianism that later terms like pre- and post-millennialism mask the variety of eschatological opinion then available and frustrate the possibility of drawing simple comparisons. He singles out contrasting views on the latter-day conversion of Jews and Gentiles, the Second Coming, the destruction of Antichrist, the Millennium, and the wrath of Satan, and suggests that the differing configurations of these variables discovered in the seventeenth century defy traditional typologies.

Thus, even if Mormons and some Puritans shared a belief in the pre-millennial advent of Christ, they differed on other matters. A single noteworthy divergence is that Latter-day Saints rarely mentioned the destruction of the Antichrist, a staple of seventeenth-century prophetic commentary. At most, then, a rather tenuous connection can be drawn between the Mormons and certain chiliast Puritans.

Yet a much more precise comparison can be made with various millenarian movements of the early nineteenth century. As only one example, and one that transcends regionalist bias as well, the Catholic Apostolic Church organized in England in 1832 may be cited. Popularly called Irvingites, the group preached an imminent Second Coming to cleanse a corrupt and apostate world, testified that the “latter rain” of spiritual gifts was being poured out among the elect, and declared that an authoritative church headed by twelve new apostles was needed. So striking were the similarities that Joseph Smith himself once remarked that the Irvingites “counterfeited the truth perhaps the nearest of any of our modern sectarians.”

And the apocalyptic evaluation of the age shared by the two groups played a prominent part in that resemblance. Early convert Joseph Fielding described his
state of mind prior to hearing the Mormon elders: "I had for some time been much interested in the subject of the Millennium, etc., which had been revived by Edward Irving, a Scotch minister in London, and partly from his writings etc., and partly by reading the Word of God, I was fully convinced that the Christian world as it is called was in a very different state to what it supposed." As J. F. C. Harrison and others have shown, such an outlook on either side of the Atlantic was not as uncommon as was assumed when Davis wrote "New England Origins." If one were seeking connections today, it would seem at least as plausible to explain the rise of Mormonism by pointing to the transatlantic renaissance of apocalyptic millenarianism that followed the French Revolution.

Yet for Davis, as for others before and since, perhaps the most tempting comparison between Puritans and Mormons was the notion that both built communitarian theocracies in the wilderness. Mormonism, argued Davis, arose in reaction to the "rising tide of liberalism and individualism" in the nineteenth century and emphasized that "the individual was subordinate to social and cosmic unity. All possible stress was placed on order, in an attempt to recover the order and certainty of a former era." Economic concerns were controlled collectively, and politics were directed by church leaders. "It is a fantastic spectacle," concluded Davis, "in the era of Jackson, of liberalizing religions, of individualistic society and competitive economics, a movement which represents the antithesis rises, fights its way across a continent, and comes into full fruition."

The perception that Mormonism was fundamentally countercultural in both aspiration and aspect and that its theocratic communitarianism was a prime example of such cultural deviance has continued to be popular among commentators. Yet, the stereotype invites closer scrutiny, as the "new Mormon history" illustrates the degree to which the real corresponded with the ideal. Even a cursory reading of recent scholarship pertaining to Mormon communitarianism reveals sufficient behavioral evidence to allow the view that at any given point in the nineteenth century, most Latter-day Saints seem to have imbibed the prevailing ethos of economic liberalism a little too fully to fit the description of being the "antithesis" to the age of Jackson. Just as recent studies of seventeenth-century New England village life have severely shaken the much-vaunted consensus that only a decade ago supposedly characterized Puritan life as communitarian, the Mormon record can also be read from a different angle that makes individualism and liberalism more apparent.

In the 1830s, for example, one is struck not by the abortive attempt to live the utopian Law of Consecration, but by the typically Jacksonian acquisitiveness displayed in Kirtland by mid-decade Mormons. In the 1840s, Joseph Smith seems to have been merely echoing the conventional wisdom when he sermonized against the "folly" of "the common stock principle," and Nauvoo, the "City of Joseph," certainly followed the contemporary midwestern pattern of boosterism and boom. As for the informal cooperation found among westering Mormons in the later 1840s and 1850s, such mutuality was not unheard of among other pioneers. In his magisterial study, *The Plains Across*, John Unruh notes that "the crucial role of cooperative assistance" provides one of the "key factors in understanding the antebellum
overland emigrations."\(^3\) In the 1860s, the Saints' program of community cooperatives looks at least as pragmatic as it does ideological. And in the 1870s, while we note that, in theory, the United Order movement was explicitly linked to the biblical communitarianism first attempted as the "Law of Consecration," the reality was that where Mormon congregations did not resist communalism altogether, most opted for a significantly less formal arrangement than was found in the legendary Orderville.\(^4\)

Even this brief review, then, points up problems in allowing communitarian rhetoric to represent behavioral reality. In addition, it can be argued that to talk of "Mormon" economics as if they were singular and uniform distorts more than it clarifies. Among nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, as Leonard Arrington notes, there were "many men with many minds," and none exemplify this better than the apostolic colleagues and successive prophets, Brigham Young and John Taylor. Young was a thoroughgoing communitarian and considered the communal "gospel plan" as the most "advanced" form of human association. Taylor, on the other hand, was an individualist and favored a legally incorporated form of cooperatism at best. Young was the champion of union; Taylor, the defender of liberty. After 1877, when Taylor acceded to the presidency, "the church increasingly gave its sanction to economic individualism restrained only by a proper respect for the rights and welfare of others."\(^5\)

Furthermore, a review of rank-and-file behavior suggests that almost from the beginning, it was probably the more mainstream "Taylor" stripe of Mormon rather than the communitarian visionary that predominated. Since the less communitarian majority cannot merely be discounted as "backsliders" or "apostates," it becomes necessary to soften the characterization of Mormonism as the "antithesis" of the age. LDS attitudes and behavior in the nineteenth century seem less countercultural, and communitarianism and theocracy more superficial, than Davis and others have assumed. Indeed, it may be that the oft romanticized theocratic communalism of the Saints was doomed from the start precisely because Mormons had always been too "American" at heart. For the ordinary Saint, Adam Smith and Joseph Smith may not have been antithetical after all.

Nor does it appear that the Puritans themselves were much more successful in their communitarianism. In a helpful recent assessment of more than two decades of "community studies," Darrett Rutman concludes that Kenneth Lockridge's account of Dedham as a "closed, corporate, Christian commonwealth," which stood for years as the archetypical New England town, can now be countered by studies of Puritan communities "where modern privatism and individualism are said to have prevailed from the start."\(^6\) Commenting on this striking historiographical inversion, Gary Nash suggested that "the seventeenth century 'peaceable kingdoms' filled with subsistence farmers who exuded Puritan piety and communal dedication were conceivably the true anomaly in New England. Living in backwater and backward-looking agricultural enclaves and fired with utopian religious zeal, they may have represented only the minority of English immigrants who came to New England in the first half of the seventeenth century."\(^7\) Paul Lucas's Valley of Discord, for example, argues that even Connecticut, that alleged bastion of communalism,
“emerged not as the tightly knit, carefully structured, harmonious society so often described by New England historians, but as one troubled by drift, dissension, and a search for both order and purpose.”

These rather startling reversals beckon one to step back and take stock of just how much understandings of “Puritanism” in general have changed since the days of Davis’s article. Just as the house that William Warren Sweet built began to be disassembled in the 1950s, so did the synthesis that Perry Miller created for Puritan New England begin to unravel. By 1970, as separate historiographical pieces by Michael McGiffert and David Hall demonstrated, there was little consensus left on exactly what “Puritanism” was or on what deserved the title “New England.”

McGiffert summarized then current expressions: “John M. Bumsted holds that there is no such animal as “New England” or “American” Puritanism as a monolithic intellectual, religious, or ecclesiastical entity; Sydney Ahlstrom refers to the ‘Puritan Mind’ and ‘Massachusetts Orthodoxy’ as ‘fallacious concretions;’ Kenneth Silverman sees only heterodoxy in Massachusetts — a welter of uncertainty among Puritans themselves regarding practically every religious, political, literary, and social notion entertained’ in seventeenth century New England.”

Only recently, in his historiographical update in the William and Mary Quarterly seventeen years later, was David Hall able to point out any discernible coherence in American Puritan studies. Gone, however, are the halcyon days when one could speak with sweeping generalizations about “New England” and “Puritanism.”

Then, too, the issue of exceptionalism — the notion that what Puritans or other early colonists created here was unique or distinctively “American” — affects this discussion. As T. H. Breen and David Allen have shown, “persistent localism” or the transplantation of English regional cultures is apparent in early New England. Even Perry Miller himself, against whom this point is most insistently urged, once declared that what one finds in seventeenth-century New England is one-tenth Puritanism and nine-tenths a culture common to all English people. Moreover, regional differences within America also seem less significant than they did in the past. Rutman’s review of the “little communities” reveals that generalizations once labeled “Puritan” and restricted to the northeastern region are actually “applicable to the whole Anglo-American coast.” If New England towns, the supposed counterpart of Mormon communities, have much in common with peasant villages all over Europe, as well as up and down the eastern American seaboard, whence the force of supposed Puritan-Mormon connections on this score?

Moreover, the attack on exceptionalism extends beyond home and garden to religion itself. Particularly in the past decade, it has been made clear that ideas expressed by builders of the Bay Colony belong to the wider context of Reformed thought. As Hall explains, “The new scholarship is vigorously opposed to exceptionalism.” Far from isolated provincials, “seventeenth century theologians were responsive to a complex past and present that included the creeds and confessions of Christianity, the systematics and polemics of Catholics and Protestant apologists, and that great storehouse of ideas, the Bible. According to this point of view, any seventeenth century text is situated in a multilayered field of reference.” The knowledge presently available of Reformed thought and piety in Switzerland, Scot-
land, and Holland causes statements about distinctive "New England" Puritanism to fall flat. If one is seeking them, theological connections to Mormonism can now be drawn just as readily across the Atlantic as across the Appalachians.

Of course, there were similarities, but the purpose of this article has been to suggest that there is more reason to comfortably situate Mormons within the nineteenth century than to view them as "anachronistic residue" of the seventeenth century. It is to say what Catherine Albanese and Stephen Stein recently said of the latest studies of Millerism, which is another movement traditionally viewed as antithetical to the age: "Above all," they wrote, "[such scholarship] establishes that Millerism is best understood not in terms of eccentricity, pathology, deviance, or deprivation—social, economic, psychological, or religious—but as representative of the religious outlook of nineteenth century America. As such, this volume takes its place alongside a growing body of literature that questions the adequacy of the notion of a religious mainstream surrounded by groups on the sectarian margin. Here the 'marginal' Millerites are shown to be participants in the cultural center of religious life in the mid-nineteenth century." 46

It is one of the ongoing felicities as well as frustrations of scholarly endeavor that the assumptions and interpretations of one generation can almost be completely stood on their head by the succeeding generation. In this case, few of the generalizations available to a young graduate student in the early 1950s remain intact in the late 1980s. The Mormons look less antithetical to antebellum culture and more unlike seventeenth-century Puritans than it once appeared, and New England itself seems less distinctive and more integrated into the larger transatlantic community. In the process of generating these perspectives, new methodologies have sensitized scholars to the differences between "elite" and "popular" culture and have forced restriction of overminted adjectives such as "Puritan," "New England," and even "Mormon." Scholars are also less sanguine today about creating intellectual pedigrees. Richard Bushman's prefatory remarks to his recent prize-winning study of Joseph Smith and early Mormonism reflect sentiments common among scholars of religion today. "In the first stages of composition," he wrote, "this book was titled 'The Origins of Mormonism'. The word 'Origins' was dropped when the actual complexities of identifying the sources of Mormon belief and experience bared themselves. An attempt to trace all the images, ideas, language, and emotional structure of a movement as elaborate as Mormonism became more evidently elusive and futile as the work went on." 47 It is no longer as simple as Carl Fish's old suggestion that the "rags" of one era's intellectuals reappear as the "robes" of the "common man" in the next.

Finally, and in conclusion, this study should have highlighted the impropriety of writing of Mormonism, or of any other religious movement for that matter, as if it were a static monolith. A plethora of primary sources makes it unnecessary and unwise to look at Mormonism ahistorically. Furthermore, a veritable avalanche of scholarly Mormon studies over the past generation beckons to be as closely scrutinized as have the latest developments in Puritan historiography. A period of greater access to church archives, professional organization and activism, new documentary discoveries, a rapidly proliferating body of practitioners, and the rise
of a number of new publication outlets have all combined to mark the years since Davis wrote as ones of explosive vitality for Mormon history. One would hardly be forgiven today for letting Thomas Wertenbaker stand as the definitive explication of Puritanism. Similarly, Mormon historiography has moved well beyond Fawn Brodie. Happily, there is evidence that generalists are taking cognizance of this revolution and are including its results in text bibliographies and course syllabi alike. For a church that in America today counts more communicants than either of the denominational descendants of the Puritans—the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians—and whose influence on the domestic scene is felt in areas ranging from music to politics, this is one correspondence that does seem appropriate.

NOTES
6. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 44.
13. Ibid., p. 159.
17. Ibid., p. 165.


28. Ibid., p. 164.


34. Arrington et al., Building the City of God, pp. 79-294.

35. Ibid., p. 311; see also pp. 151-54, 311-35.


The results of the "explosion" have yet to be comprehensively detailed, but a good place to start is with the sixty-three-page bibliography at the back of James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), which was nearly comprehensive at the time of publication. From that point on, readers should consult the "Mormon Bibliography" published annually in *BYU Studies* and "Among the Mormons: A Survey of Current Literature" published periodically in *Dialogue*.

The conflict between the Mormons and the old settlers of Hancock County, Illinois, whom the Latter-day Saints called Gentiles, during the 1840s has long held a fascination for historians. The Church's seven-year stay in frontier Illinois was one of the most bitter periods of Mormon history. During the few years of the Church's ascendancy at Nauvoo, it was wracked by internal dissension, external criticism, and—at times—devastating violence. Eventually, the movement's leaders—Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother Hyrum—were killed and the Church forced to withdraw from the state. Historians have been aided in their quest for understanding this conflict by an abundance of source materials. This institutional church encouraged its members to keep any records of historical significance and, as a result, the Mormons became diligent diarists. Many of these records have been preserved by the Latter-day Saint church in one of the finest archives of Western Americana in existence anywhere. Unfortunately, such is not the case with documents presenting the non-Mormon side of the conflict. Only a few people who opposed the Saints are known, and of those only a handful left records concerning the Hancock County conflict.¹

Without question, Thomas Coke Sharp was the premier anti-Mormon in Hancock County, Illinois, during the 1840s. As the editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, the only non-Mormon newspaper in the county at the time, he was an able and literate, albeit biased, observer of the entire affair. Sharp left an unfinished manuscript

¹ Roger D. Launius is command historian at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.
history of the Mormon conflict of 1845 that precipitated the Mormon exodus to Utah in 1846. The document was a spirited defense of the non-Mormons of the county, and a bitter condemnation of the Mormons. While one should not accept the argument Sharp made in his unfinished history without verification, the manuscript is an important expression of the non-Mormon perspective.

To gain a better appreciation of Sharp's manuscript, one should learn something about the man. Thomas C. Sharp was born the son of a prosperous Methodist minister in New Jersey early in 1813. Educated at Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, in August 1837 Sharp began eighteen months of study in the law office of Judge Reed at nearby Carlisle. Although he completed his training without difficulty and was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar in April 1840, he did not remain in the East. Like many ambitious young men of the period, he went west to seek fortune and influence in newer states. Although he briefly practiced law at Quincy, Illinois, in September 1840 he moved to Warsaw, in the southern part of Hancock County. When Sharp arrived in Warsaw, he found a prosperous river town of about 500 people, its residents believing that its prospects were bright and that it would soon rival its European namesake in both population and importance. Its docks on the Mississippi, strategically located at the southern reaches of the Des Moines Rapids, ensured its place in the antebellum river trade. Indeed, when Sharp arrived in Warsaw, its residents boasted about its "8 to 10 stores, 2 taverns, 2 steam mills, several warehouses, 1 printing plant, 1 lawyer, 2 physicians, and various kinds of mechanics." The prospects for growth, they believed, were great.

The only rival to Warsaw in the county was the Mormon community at Nauvoo, about 20 miles north on the river. The Latter-day Saints had come to Illinois in 1839, refugees from Missouri, and had been welcomed by the Illinois residents as sufferers for religion's sake. They founded Nauvoo— a name Joseph Smith, Jr., chose because he said it meant "beautiful place" in Hebrew. Starting as a few shanties in 1839, Nauvoo had become a community of almost 4,000 by 1842 and a city of approximately 10,000 by 1844. The state census of 1845 showed that nearly half of the 22,559 inhabitants of Hancock County resided in Nauvoo. Although initially welcomed by the citizens of Illinois, the Saints' religious, political, economic, and social divergences from the American mainstream quickly elicited opposition from some outside the movement. At least by 1840, anti-Mormon sentiment had begun to appear in Hancock County.

As a result, by the time Thomas C. Sharp arrived in Hancock County in September 1840, a year and a half after the Mormons began to settle at Nauvoo, a nascent anti-Mormon group was present. At first Sharp had little to do with these people. He began quietly practicing law without paying much attention to local political issues; but he had a hearing impairment which limited his courtroom abilities, and in November 1840 he and a partner purchased a newly established Warsaw newspaper, the Western World, from owner D. N. White as a different means of livelihood. Soon he changed the name of the publication to the Warsaw Signal, one of three newspapers in the county during the period and the only one under non-Mormon control. His position as newspaper editor immediately thrust Sharp into an arena of community leadership he had not experienced before. In
this capacity, he visited Nauvoo, at the invitation of Joseph Smith, on April 6, 1841, for the celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the Church’s organization and the laying of the cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple, an edifice that would soon become the symbol of Mormon strength and spirituality. The festivities included speeches, pomp and ceremony, and a display of military power by a Mormon militia that was the best trained and equipped of any in the state.5

Joseph Smith wanted to impress Thomas Sharp by inviting him to these activities; instead he terrified him.6 The ceremonies demonstrated the Mormon Church’s political, economic, and military might, and it turned Sharp into the most virulent anti-Mormon in the county. Sharp’s anti-Mormonism, like that of most others in the county who opposed the Church, was based on a fear of Mormon secular power.7 He was distressed by the easy passage of Nauvoo’s liberal city charter by the Illinois State Legislature in early 1841, creating a nearly autonomous city council, judiciary, and militia. Once returning to Warsaw, Sharp began to use the Signal as a voice of opposition to the closed, hierarchical, and theocratic community at Nauvoo. Fearing that the Saints held the balance of power in the county, Sharp editorialized not long after visiting Nauvoo: “We believe that they have the same rights as other religious bodies possess, and ought to be protected in the just and proper exercise of these rights.... On religious questions, it [the Signal] is and shall remain neutral, but it is bound to oppose the concentration of political power in a religious body, or in the hands of a few individuals.”8

Thereafter, Sharp became a stalker of the Prophet, using the Warsaw Signal to arouse anti-Mormon sentiment throughout the county. Through his tirades, the term Jack-Mormon came into common usage; it referred to anyone sympathetic to the Latter-day Saints. The labeling of an individual a “Jack-Mormon” was humiliating to those outside the Church, and most sought to avoid such a possibility by actively demonstrating their opposition to the Saints. Consequently, this served as a polarizing influence in Hancock County. Additionally, Sharp and William B. Smith, brother of Joseph Smith and editor of the Wasp, a Nauvoo newspaper, carried on a bitter feud that further polarized the sides within the county. For instance, Sharp commented in April 1842 that he had received a copy of the Wasp in the mail. “Had it been [named] a Pole Cat,” he wrote, “its name would have corresponded perfectly with the character of its content.” William Smith retorted with a glib “Well done Thom-ASS.”9

During the summer of 1841, Sharp led the efforts to organize an anti-Mormon political coalition within the county. His work did not result in a political organization capable of defeating Mormon-supported candidates, but Sharp was a force in Hancock County in awakening the population to the realities of block-voting politics. So intense was his anti-Mormonism that some feared Sharp would unintentionally excite mob action against the Mormons.10 For example, John Russell wrote to Thomas Gregg, another important resident of Warsaw, in August 1841 complaining about Sharp’s “war upon the Mormons in the Signal.”11 By the end of 1841, Sharp’s activities had become so radical that Joseph Smith remarked that he “devoted his entire time to slandering, to lying against and misrepresenting the Latter-day Saints.”12 In spite of his intense anti-Mormonism, or perhaps because of
it, Sharp experienced financial difficulties with the *Signal*. During the fall of 1842, he discontinued his newspaper and sold the press to Thomas Gregg, who launched the *Warsaw Message*, a newspaper that presented a non-Mormon perspective but without the virulence of Sharp. At that point, Sharp became a farmer, removing himself from the leadership of the anti-Mormon movement in the county.13

In February 1844, Sharp repurchased the press from Gregg and revived the *Warsaw Signal*. His eighteen-month hiatus from journalism had not muted his anti-Mormon feelings. If anything, they were more vindictive and violent. During his retirement, the Mormon-Gentile split in Hancock County had become even wider, and Sharp immediately renewed his quest in the *Signal* to rid the county of the Saints. Typical of his efforts was a famous call to arms given just before the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in June 1844: "War and extermination is inevitable! CITIZENS ARISE, ONE AND ALL!!! Can you stand by, and suffer such INFERNAL DEVILS! to rob men of their property and RIGHTS, without avenging them. We have no time for comment; every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE WITH POWDER AND BALL!!!" The next two weeks saw the assassination of the Smith brothers and an immediate release of the hysteria that Sharp had helped create.15

Thomas Sharp and four others were brought to trial for the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, but all were acquitted. Afterward, Sharp continued his anti-Mormon tirades until Brigham Young, accepting leadership of the majority of the Latter-day Saints, agreed in the fall of 1845 to remove his church headquarters from Hancock County. As a result, beginning in February 1846, Young's church started the now-famous westward trek to the Great Basin. Sharp wrote an important editorial in the November 21, 1846, edition of the *Signal* commenting on this event and concluding that since the Mormons were finally gone "we can get back to peace and quiet again."16 After the exodus of the Mormons, Sharp retired from journalism a second time. He remained in Warsaw thereafter, making a livelihood as an educator, lawyer, and much later as publisher of the *Carthage Gazette*. He also served the community in several capacities: as a delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1847; as a justice of the peace beginning in 1851; as the three-term mayor of Warsaw after 1853; and, starting in 1865, as a judge in Hancock County. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for Congress on the Republican ticket in 1856. In later years, Sharp regretted his advocacy of violence in ridding the county of the Mormon presence, but he never wavered in his belief that the religion practiced by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo was fundamentally divergent from the American mainstream and deserved opposition. He claimed he had been fighting to preserve the most cherished principles of the nation: religious, political, economic, and social liberty. He died at his home in Hancock County in 1894 at the age of 80.17

The record published below is one of the few non-Mormon documents describing the 1845 conflict in Hancock County that led to the decision of the Mormons to leave Illinois. Written by Thomas C. Sharp sometime after October 22, 1845, but probably before the middle of 1846 when he stopped publication of the *Warsaw Signal*, this unfinished history was intended as the definitive non-Mormon defense of the conflict. Sharp had intended to publish it in his newspaper. It consists of 12
**Chapter 1. Commencement of the Difficulties.**

On Tuesday evening, the 9th day of September, 1845, a meeting of Anti-Mormon citizens of Green Plains precinct, in Hancock County, was held at a School house near the residence of George Walker, Esq. and about eight miles southeasterly of Warsaw. While the meeting was in progress, it being after night, an attack was made upon the house, by firing guns into it; several balls are said to have entered the timber in various parts of the building, and passed near the persons of some of the inmates. By whom this attack was made, the writer of this has never been able to ascertain. It was reported the next day that the heart through the settlement, that the Mormons had attacked the meeting, and preparations were immediately made to take revenge. Accordingly, on Wednesday night, an attack was made on what is known as Morley's settlement, in the vicinity, and two or three houses burned. (To be continued.)

**Chapter 2. Murder of Franklin A. Lieut. Worrell.**

On Tuesday morning the 16th Sept. Lieut. Franklin A. Worrell, of Carthage, a merchant of Carthage, and a Lieutenant in the Company of Carthage Greys, started from his Carthage, in company with eight or ten other citizens of Carthage, intending to visit Warsaw and the Camp of the burners, in order to inform themselves of the real state of affairs. Mr. Worrell, with three or four others, was on horseback, with their guns strapped over their shoulders, while the remainder of the Company rode in a wagons. They were had reached a distance of about ten miles, when they horsemen, being a mile or more ahead of the wagons, saw a man at the distance some considerable distance, in a buggy, driving at a rapid rate, northwardly on the Nauvoo road, and crossing their route, at right angles. Not knowing the cause for such haste, and believing that it was some one through fear endeavoring to avoid them, or some one from the camp of the burners, with news, they immediately left the road and started in pursuit. Being on horseback, while the stranger was in a buggy, they gained on him; and on arriving near the Rail Road Shantee, they perceived that there were men in the bushes, and halted were reining up their horses to turn, when two shots were fired from the bushes party in the bushes. At the moment of firing, A moment before the firing, Mr. Worrell exclaimed — "It is Backenstos!" Backenstos (for it was he) was then some two or 300 yards off distance, in the bottom of the ravine, and his men were nearer, on the roadside in the bushes. On observing the fire, one of the party exclaimed, "There is a fire shot from the bushes!" "Yes," said Mr. Worrell, "and I have got it!" They then attempted to ride away, but had not proceeded more than a but a few paces, when the wounded man slid from his horse to the ground. One of the party now rode forward & beckoned to their companions in the wagons. On arriving at the place, Mr. W. was taken up into the wagon, & supported by his friends until he breathed his last, in great bodily pain. His bodily suffering was very great, during the short interval of half an hour which he lived; which he did in about half an hour in great bodily pain. His remains were carried to Warsaw, where he was interred the next day.

The party who were in company with Mr. W. saw quite a number of men in the bushes, not far off, and on the opposite side of the ravine, were; at the Shantee, were a number of wagons & horses, as if in encampment. They were a posse of Mormons whom the Sheriff had lying in ambush, for it is thought, for the purpose of intercepting those who might be passing to between Carthage & Warsaw, in order to gain intelligence of the movements of the Anti-Mormons.

In one of his proclamations, Backenstos says that being pursued by Worrell & his party, he called upon three travellers whom he overtook in the road, to assist him; and that one of
them fired upon the shot one of the assailants, as he was in the act of raising his gun to fire. It is said that the notorious Orin P. Rockwell was the man who fired the fatal shot. (To be continued.)

Chapter II

The Killing of Saml. McBratney

As a party of burners, and others about 12 or 15 in number, were riding along the road, leading through the Bear Creek settlement, on — day, the — of the September, — days after the murder of Lieut. Worrall, they were suddenly fell in with the Mormon Posse, under the Sheriff and General Bishop George Miller. As soon as they possee discovered them, they dashed forward among them, with weapon in hand, and fired. One man was shot; one but slightly, and not so badly injured but that he was able to make his escape. The other, Mr. Samuel McBratney, a young man, a then resident of Warsaw, but formerly of Marquette Co. was wounded with shot through the back, overtaken and killed. His body was not discovered & brought in till next day. The party scattered in every was closely direction over the prairie was pursued for three or four miles over the prairie, but the remainder succeeded in making their escape.

The massacre of McBratney, was one of the most atrocious acts ever perpetrated in a civilized community. When found the next day, he was lying on his back, his clothes torn open in front, and his body pierced through with a sword or knife, a sabre cut on the top of his head, and his throat pierced cut through from ear to ear. The grass was much trodden and beaten down, where the body lay, indicating that there had been a struggle.

From the position & circumstances in which the body was found, the presumption is strong that he was alive at the time the sword wounds were given. The cut on the top of the head, indicates that he was in a standing or sitting posture when it was given; and the stabs about the breast & throat seem to have been given while his arms were held out at length and his bosom torn open. The bullet rifle ball could not have killed him instantly: if so, what need of further cutting & slashing upon a body already dead.

When it is recollected that the duty of a Sheriff & his posse is to arrest & not to execute kill, offenders, this case seems doubly barbarous. Had McBratney been found in the very act of committing arson, the Sheriff would not have been justified in firing upon him, even, until he had been summoned to surrender, or an attempt made to take him; much less to butcher and a wounded and helpless man, after he was completely in their power. But they had no knowledge that McBratney had been engaged, or was intending to engage, in the burning. He was found on horseback, in away from any house or farm, and set upon in the manner above described. It is unnecessary to say what the law will do in Illinois, in such a case as this: Time will probably show. But of one thing is certain—in any State east of the Ohio, the dastardly perpetrators of such a deed would soon be made to dangle between earth & heaven, an [Written in left margin: "example to all Sheriffs and sheriffs posses:"

[End of first 4-page folio]

Chap. —. Back 1st. Proclamation.

On the 13th of Sept. Sheriff Backenstos issued a Proclamation, dated from the neighborhood of Green Plains at G[reen] Plains, and issued from printed at the office of the Nauvoo Neighbor. It gave a very exaggerated account of the number and doings of the mob, and concluded by calling upon all the law-abiding citizens as a posse comitatus, to aid him in suppressing the rioters and maintaining the supremacy of the Laws. This Proclamation contained a Postscript, in which he states that it is part of his policy to have the Morm citizens of Nauvoo remain quiet, until it be made manifest that the law & order citizens without the city shall fail of being able to restore peace: but that 2000 men will hold themselves in readiness to march to the scene of disturbances at a moment's warning.

On the 16th, the Sheriff issued a Proclamation No. 2, in which he details several attempts on the part of the "mobbers," to take him: but which, it seems, no person else ever heard of but himself. He then gives a false account of the affair on the prairie, in which Lieut. W. was killed, and ends by declaring that, as he had heretofore been unable to raise force bef out of Nauvoo, for the suppression of the rioters, he now calls upon all able-bodied man throughout the County, to come to his aid.

Previous to the date of this Proclamation he had been twice to Warsaw, to hold communication with E.A. Bedell & one or two others, who he supposed had knowledge of the doings & strength of the burners. He had been to W. on the evening of the 15th, and
remained till morning; and fearing, from some demonstrations made in the streets, that he was not quite safe, procured the engaged Mr. Samuel Fleming, whom he calls his "personal friend," to accompany him out of town. Mr. F. saw him safely to the distance of 3 or 4 miles, & then left him. Soon after leaving Mr. Fleming, he was seen by Lieut. Worrall & his company.

Chap. —— Driving out the Jack-Mormons

On the day of the murder of Lieut. Worrell, the citizens of Carthage, who were with him when he was shot, came went with the corpse to Warsaw. There were quite a number of citizens in town from various parts of the county, and when the murder was made known, the excitement became great. Most of the citizens & strangers were in the streets, standing about in squads, hearing & telling the news. Many demonstrations of anger, & some threatenings, were made towards E.A. Bedell, who was the only notorious Jack Mormon in town, and who had only the previous night harbored Backenstos, whose house had been made the headquarters of Backenstos & the having the supposed murderer. Not willing that the any personal violence should be done him to Bedell, several of the citizens, among whom was his step-father-in-law, Wm. Ayres, Esq., went to him & advised him to leave the town. His fears probably magnified the danger, and he left his house by a back door, & procured the assistance of some one to see him across the river in a canoe, to the Iowa shore, whence he made the best of his way to Nauvoo. The writer of this is fully of the opinion that no personal violence would have been offered him, had he remained at home; but those his one of two friends those who advised him to leave thought otherwise.

Since this occurrence, this Mr. B. had endeavored to create the impression that the men who notified him of his danger, headed a mob to drive him out of town — and that it was their design to thus gain possession of the post office and for the purpose of using it preventing the transmission of the mails!!! He had lately been appointed to the office, without the knowledge and against the wish of 19/20 of the citizens — and had been two years before selected a justice of the Peace, by becoming the.

On Monday night the 15th, inst.; some eight or 10 men, came to the houses of Ethil B. Rose, Treasurer & Assessor of the County, and Chauncey Robison, County Recorder, & School Commissioner, who is also P.M. at Carthage, and ordered them to leave the town, which they did. Rose had been elected Treasurer, & Robison School Comr at the last August Election Rose Robison & Backenstos had been elected to their respective offices in August last: and the former [possibly meaning Robison, the two names are marked for transposition on the manuscript] had first named had been a/ heretofore a good Anti-Mormon identified with the Anti Mormons; but had left them, and accepted office from the Mormons — thus rendering himself odious to the Old Citizens. On the appearance of Gen. Hardin in the county, these two men returned. Messrs. Bedell & Robison are among the oldest settlers in the county, and seem to take great credit from the fact especially the former to prove that all the Old Citizens are not Anti Mormons.

On the night of the 16th Sept. Backenstos, with a force of armed mounted men, entered Carthage, and took away his family, which, until that time, had remained there. It is supposed that the persons who came the evening previous, to warn away Robison & Rose, had also enquired for him; as in his 2nd 3d Proc. he gives as a reason for this movement, that some an armed mob had surrounded a me his house, and greatly terrified his wife. In his 3d Proc. Backenstos charges the citizens of Carthage with running about with fire brands, endeavoring to burn the town, in order to charge it upon the Mormons — as infamous a falsehood as was ever told.

On Friday evening the 19th about sundown, the Sheriff with a force of about 200 men, an armed force, took possession of Carthage. The following affidavit, made by Jason H. Sherman, Esq., a member of the Bar of that place, and who was in town at the time will serve to show the conduct of the Sheriff & his posse on that occasion. [Affidavit taken from Warsaw Signal of 22 October 1845 and pasted to the manuscript]

MR. SHERMAN'S AFFIDAVIT

Jason H. Sherman being duly sworn, deposes and says, that he is a citizen of Carthage, Hancock county, Ill.; that for several days previous to Friday, the 19th day of September last,
the citizens of said place had apprehended an attack upon the town by the Mormons; and having been repeatedly aroused from their beds at night by alarms of their approach, a large portion of them had hastily removed with their families from the country. — That on the evening of said day, a little after sunset, J.B. Backenstos entered town with about four hundred Mormon troops at the full speed of their horses. Their approach was not known to the citizens till they were seen entering town, when many of the former left their houses and fled to the prairie and to the fields. The troops were immediately in all the streets, and a guard stationed around the town to prevent others from escaping, and those who had fled were pursued, and as many as could be overtaken were brought back. An order was then passed round to bring the prisoners to head quarters. — The men were then forced from their houses, and driven altogether to the court house, while a guard of Mormons, armed with guns, pistols and bowie-knives, was left about their houses and families. We were kept at the door of the court house about half an hour, and until it was quite dark, crowded together, and surrounded by a great number of armed men, and prohibited with menacing gestures and display of weapons from moving from the spot. The court-room was then lighted up and we were taken into it, here we were detained about half an hour longer, surrounded by the same band of ruffians that had guarded us at the door, with pistols, drawn swords and naked bowie knives in their hands. At length Backenstos, who was styled General by his soldiers, came in and made a ranting speech, in which he extolled the bravery of his troops — said he was in pursuit of a greater number of criminals and scoundrels, whom he would pursue, and his successors after him, till they were taken, whether they remained here or took refuge in the surrounding counties — that many such, knowing their crimes, had fled from Carthage. He then came round and told most of us individually, that we were discharged, and provided escorts to take us through the guards to our houses. Some, however, were detained as prisoners till the next day, as he was not certain, he said, whether he had warrants against them or not, and he had not time then to examine his papers to see. The next morning Backenstos, under pretense of an order from the Governor for the public arms, sent round his soldiers in gangs of from five to ten, to search the houses of the citizens of the same, alleging that some were withheld and concealed. Nearly every dwelling house in town was searched breaking open of trunks and drawers in some instances, and rummaging and handing things about in a most indecent manner. They broke into the house of Thomas Morrison, Esq. the family being absent, and after searching it left the door and yard gate open.

About noon, Backenstos left town with all of his troops but about fifty, which he left garrisoned in the court house, to keep possession of the town, as he said, to prevent it. This being remonstrated against by myself and others, he declared with an oath he would make Carthage one of his posts — He gave this garrison or guard authority to press us into their ranks and fight with them if attacked; and told me on a subsequent occasion, that if an attempt was made by a force from this or the surrounding counties to retake the town, we should all be forced into his ranks, guns placed in our hands, and be compelled to fight. The garrison remained until the arrival of Gen. Hardin, on the 28th. During the first few days they treated us with a great deal of impudence and indignity; spying about our houses and going up to listen whenever they saw two or three of us conversing. When we went into the Post office, some of them would follow close at our heels with a drawn sword in his hand. Their treatment and behavior towards us was much less offensive after it was heard that the surrounding counties were taking notice of the subject, and that Gen. Hardin was on the march; but they kept almost exclusive possession of the court house, and committed continual depredations upon our property up to the time they were compelled to leave. Backenstos avowed his intention to himself and others, of bringing a larger number of Mormon families to reside in Carthage, thus to form a guard of residents that could be relied on, as he said, for its protection.

J.H. SHERMAN

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2d Oct. 1845.
D. GREENLEAF, P. J. P.
Probate J.P.

The following will serve as a sample of the style & manner of Backenstos' Proclamations,
as well as to give his version of this expedition the object and purposes of this expedition. It is *verba tión, et literatum*, from his 4th Proclamation [printed statement pasted to the manuscript, originally printed in Nauvoo Neighbor, September 21, 1845]

[It] then took up a line of march to Carthage, the county seat of Hancock, the residence of nearly all of the notorious Carthage Greys, and the head quarters of a band of the most infamous and villainous scoundrels that ever infested any community, who have, for the last two years abandoned labor and the ordinary avocations of good citizens; they are generally poor; a few have been trading upon borrowed capital, but they are selfish and will not even trust their own mob friends. Many of these have considerable large families—they must live and do live;—how, I would ask do such men get a living? men without means and with families, too, and who do nothing but brawl about grog shops, cursing and abusing better citizens than they can be; men who are openly upholding mob violence, aiding and abetting the extermination of the very best and oldest settlers in this county, forsooth they have the independence of differing with them in opinion. Did not the community in this and the surrounding counties already know the names of those heaven daring land pirates, I should give their names at full length. I entered the town of Carthage about the setting of the sun, as I had a large number of writs for the arrest of those accused of burning houses, barns and stacks of grain, I ordered my posse to surround the town and permit none to escape, but to bring every man to the Court House in order that I might arrest such persons as I had writs against, and detain such other persons in custody as are accused by respectable persons until writs could be procured, that they might be dealt with according to law. All those against whom I had writs fled before I could have them surrounded except one Anthony Barkman. [End of article.]

Backenstos claimed to have an order from Gov. Ford for the State arms in possession of the anti-Mormons. This is denied by some, and very generally disbelieved—but whether he had or not, the writer of this has never ascertained.41

On the 21st, Gov. Ford issued a Proclamation informing the people that an insurrection had broken out *this time* in Hancock County, "and no mistake;" and calling for 500 volunteers from Sangamon, and the adjoining counties—stating that further that Cols. Baker & Merriman42 had been volunteered to command them. On the receipt of this procl. it was met by a counter proc. by Sheriff B. who pronounced it a "base fraud upon the people," and "Evidently one of Sharp's latest acts of rascality and one of the last dying efforts to raise a mob." The reasons he gave for doubting its genuineness, are curious, and worthy of record. He says, "It is simply dated ‘Executive Dept. Springfield, Sept. 21st, 1845,’ and does not state whether it come from Springfield, Ohio, Ky., or any other state." [End of the second 4-page folio.]

Chapter ———

The Convention.

The Convention beforementioned [Not mentioned on the 8 pps. just transcribed] met at Carthage, the County seat of Hancock County, on the 1st day of October, and was in session two days. Delegates were in attendance from the Counties of Adams Pike, Marquette, Schuyler, Brown, McDonough, Henderson, Warren & Knox. They were men of the very first respectability in the counties they represented—possessed of sound minds and good hearts—and in whose bosoms patriotism appeared to be the ruling motive. They were taken about equally from each of the two political parties; and seemed resolved to do their duty to themselves and to their county, independent of all party considerations.

The convention was organized by the appointment of Isaac N. Morris, Esq., of Quincy, President; Colonel William Ross, of Pike, and General McAllen, of Warren, Vice P and John Kirk, Esq., of McDonough, Vice Presidents; and Alvah Wheeler, Esq., of Schuyler, and Wm. H. Bemenson, Esq. of Adams, Secretaries.43 Its deliberations were marked with deep feeling, coolness and prudence, and determination of purpose. Not a word or one act of any member of the convention indicated the prevalence of party feeling &c; but, on the contrary, great pains was taken, not only to guard against this, but to take away all grounds for the charge.

Its deliberations were listened to with deep attention, by a large audience of strangers & citizens of the county. Political demogogueism hid its head, and party hacks slunk away abashed. And, if we may judge from the respect with which the convention was regarded
by all the audience, not one soul was little enough, or one spirit mean enough, to say or believe that political aggrandizement had anything to do in the convention. Leading men of both political parties—men known throughout the State for their high character—were there laboring together as friends and brothers, in the hope of being able to effect some ultimate good, and put at rest forever, if possible, the disturbance, which has so long annoyed them and disgraced the State.

The preamble, resolutions, and reports, of the several committees, were well weighed and investigated, before they received the sanction of the body. What is most remarkable is, that nothing—preamble, resolution, or report but by a vote was passed, but by an entirely unanimous vote, although frequently eliciting animated discussion.

The preamble and resolutions were reported by Orville H. Browning, Esq., of Quincy. They are given below entire: [Pasted to the manuscript is the published account in the Warsaw Signal.]

WHEREAS, the county of Hancock, before the settlement therein of the community called Mormons, was as peaceable, orderly, well regulated, and law-abiding, as any county in the State; and no disturbances had ever occurred among the citizens of said county requiring the interposition of the authorities of the State, but they had deported themselves with a degree of propriety and order not inferior to that which has characterized the citizens of other counties; and whereas, since the Mormons have been settled in said county, difficulties and collisions have frequently arisen between them and the other citizens of said county of so serious and violent a character as to call for the interposition of an armed force under the authority of the State to quell and suppress the same; and whereas, from our long acquaintance with the old citizens of Hancock county, and our intimate knowledge of their honor, integrity, and strict observance of the laws of their country, and from our knowledge of the predatory disposition, and lawless course of the Mormons, we are thoroughly convinced that all the disturbances in the county, have grown out of the continual, and unceasing depredations of the Mormons upon the persons and property of the other citizens of Hancock, and the surrounding counties; and whereas, we are satisfied that no people, however quietly disposed, can live in the immediate neighborhood of the Mormons without being drawn into collision with them, and without a resort to arms for self protection; and whereas, we, as citizens of the State of Illinois, and as citizens of the counties immediately surrounding, and adjacent to the county of Hancock, are deeply interested in terminating the scenes of violence which have recently been enacted in said county, and in restoring peace and good order therein; and whereas, we believe the difficulties now existing in said county are above, and beyond, the reach of the laws, inasmuch as the laws can only be administered through the instrumentality of the officers, and juries of the county, and inasmuch as the officers of said county whose duty it is to select the juries are either Mormons, or under Mormon influence, having been elected by them; and whereas, no Mormon can be brought to justice in said county, for any offence, however great its enormity, inasmuch as they are banded and confederated together to sustain, protect, and defend each other, in all acts, however daring and lawless; and larceny, robbery, perjury, and murder, in their most aggravated forms, therefore go unpunished; and whereas, we are satisfied that peace, and harmony, can be restored to the county only by the separation of the Mormons and the other citizens of the county; and whereas, we are not willing to consent that the old citizens of the county, (who are among the best citizens of the State,) shall be driven out, and a community of thieves, robbers, and assassins retained in their stead; and whereas, the Mormons, have submitted to the citizens of Quincy, a proposition whereby they agree to remove from the State next Spring. Therefore,

Resolved, That it is the settled and deliberate conviction of this convention, that it is now too late to attempt the settlement of the difficulties in Hancock county upon any other basis than that of the removal of the Mormons from the State; and we therefore accept and respectfully recommend to the people of the surrounding counties to accept, the proposition made by the Mormons to remove from the State next Spring, and to wait with patience the time appointed for removal.

Resolved, That whilst we shall endeavor by all means in our power to prevent the occurrence of anything which might operate against their removal, and afford them any
ground of complaint, we shall expect equal good faith on their part, and if they do not comply with their own proposition, the consequences must abide with themselves: and we now solemnly pledge ourselves to be ready, at the appointed time, to act as the occasion may require.

Resolved, That we recommend to the people of the several counties represented in this convention, and to the people of the military tract generally, immediately to adopt a military organization, in order to provide for the preservation of peace in said counties: to act in relation to the affairs of Hancock county as future exigencies may require; and to carry out the views expressed in the preceding resolutions.

Resolved, That we expect, as an indispensible condition to the pacification of the county, that the old citizens be permitted to return to their homes unmolested by the present Sheriff, and the Mormons, for any thing alleged against them; and that any attempt on their part to arrest or prosecute such citizens for pretended offences, will, inevitably, lead to the renewal of the late disorders.

Resolved, That as the Mormons are banded together for their mutual protection, and are under the control of a few leaders, and beyond the reach of law, the whole body should be held responsible for all lawless acts against the persons, or property, of our citizens.

Resolved, That we utterly repudiate the impudent assertion so often, and so constantly put forth by the Mormons, that they are persecuted for righteousness sake. We do not believe them to be a persecuted people. We know that they are not; but that whatever grievances they may suffer are the necessary, and legitimate consequences of their illegal, wicked and dishonest acts.

Resolved, That this convention deem it proper to recommend that a small military force be stationed in Hancock county until next Spring, to prevent depredations on private property, and preserve the peace of said county; and that it be respectfully, yet earnestly, recommended to the execution of this State to furnish the same for the purposes above named.

[Then crossed out in the manuscript were 13 lines which summarized the resolutions of this convention. They were replaced by the clipping just transcribed. Handwritten text follows:]

A Committee was raised — of which Archibald Williams, Esq., of Quincy, was chairman — at the first session of the convention, to collect and receive affidavits from such of the citizens as might be present, in relation to the outrages and excesses to which they had been subjected, during the last few years, and also during the last late disturbances. The committee made the following report:

[Pasted to the manuscript is another clipping from the Warsaw Signal]

The committee appointed by the Convention to take evidence in relation to the depredations and outrages of the Mormons, upon the property and persons of the citizens of Hancock county, would respectfully report, that since the adjournment they have been busily engaged in preparing and receiving affidavits, and from the fact that their examination was confined to the persons who happened to be in town, it will readily occur to every one, that the investigation, being so limited, presents but a very small portion of the innumerable larcenies and depredations of the Mormons upon the property of the citizens of the county, but imperfect as it is, it discloses a system of plunder, savage barbarity, and disregard of the law, without any parallel in the history of any christian or civilized community. —A great number of theses and other outrages committed by the Mormons upon the persons and property of citizens of Hancock have been detailed to your committee, which are not presented here, the time being so short and the sufferers not present; nor is it necessary, in our belief, to present them all, in order to a just decision, the whole history of Hancock county since the settlement of the Mormons, is being a continued series of wrongs inflicted by them upon the old citizens of the county.

What is here given is a fair and average sample of the whole:

One class of cases relate to depredations upon property and shows that seven horses, one hundred and forty-one head of cattle, and a very large amount of other property has been stolen by them.

Another class relates to arrests made by Backenstos and his banditti, during their temporary, ascendancy in the county, and disclose the spirit of mormonism in its true light;
that men against whom no complaint was made were arrested in a ruffian like manner, in
the presence of their wives and children and hurried off without even permission to close
the doors of their shops or to get necessary clothing.48

Another class respects the abduction of Daubenhayer and Wilcox and raise a strong
presumption that the mormons have either killed them, or have kidnapped them and now
hold them in secret confinement.49

Others relate to the resistance of the mormons to the execution of legal process and
show that a mormon arrested upon a charge of perjury was forcibly released out of the
hands of the officer, by an hundred armed mormons, who declared that no more arrests
should be made in Nauvoo.50

Others show that when the owners of the stolen property went to Nauvoo to search
for it, they were threatened with violence and driven from the town, by bands or armed
men seeking their lives.51

And lastly others relate to the inhuman murder of M'Bratney, and shows that after he
was shot and wounded by them, he was surrounded, held down and butchered in a manner
most horrible and revolting, his head being cut with a sabre, his face gashed and mangled,
his throat cut from ear to ear, his clothes torn off and his body pierced through with a
sword stab, and then left exposed and unburied upon the open prairie, a prey to the wolves
and vultures.52

the evidence they have taken is direct and positive, and the balance circumstantial, but
raising a strong presumption of the truth of the facts stated in the affidavits, and warranting
the conclusion that their robberies and thefts are conducted upon an organized system
which is supported and sustained by their leaders, and that it is impossible for any respectable
community to live in peace with them. [End of published excerpt.]

A committee, of which Col. J.W. Singleton55 of Brown, was chairman, was appointed to
report a plan of Military Organization—who reported as follows: [Another excerpt from the
Warsaw Signal is pasted here.]

The committee on Military Organization made the following report:

The committee on Military Organization report to the Convention the following plan
of Organization.

The the counties of the Military Tract hold meetings in the several precincts on the 3d
Saturday of October instant—and organize into companies all persons who may volunteer
in support of the proceedings of this Convention—and that said companies elect their
officers—and they the Captains of such companies when organized, or hereafter to be
organized, report by the 1st day of November, to A. Jonas, Andrew Johnston, J.H. Holton,
E.J. Phillips and Jno. B. Schwindler, constituting a Military Committee at Quincy, Ill., the
number in their companies, number and kind of arms, and names of officers elected.54

That the Military Committee at Quincy, shall have full power and authority, after receiving
the report of Captains herein provided for, to appoint a time and place for the meeting of
all the Company officers, for the purpose of electing field officers, which time and place
shall be notified to the Captains of Companies, and the Captains of Companies shall notify
all other officers of their companies respectfully;—and that said Committee have full power
and authority to order all the reported force into the field by fixing on a point of rendezvous,
when in their judgment, such an emergency has arrived, as is contemplated by the resolutions
and proceedings of this convention. [End of clipping.]

The following resolution was then also unanimously adopted:

Resolved, by John H. Mitchell, Esq., of Warren county:55

Resolved, That should the Mormons [Attached is another clipping from the Warsaw
Signal.]

between this and their leaving in the spring, continue to commit depredation and
outrages upon the property or persons of the old citizens of Hancock, or other counties,
that we now give them fair notice, that we will hold ourselves ready at a moment's warning,
and pledge that our fellow citizens of the counties we represent will meet with us enmasse,
immediately upon such facts being made known to us; and march to Hancock to put a final
and summary end to such outrages.

The convention, then, after passing a resolution ordering 3000 copies of the proceedings

to be published, and taking a collection to defray the expenses of the same, adjourned, sine
die. [End of newspaper clipping.]

This convention is looked upon, on all sides, as forming an era in the history of Hancock
county. It furnishes conclusive evidence that the people of the surrounding counties are
awakening to the distracted state of affairs here; and are determined, if in their power, to put
an end to them. (to be continued.)

Chap.——


On Saturday the 28th Sept. Gen. Hardin with his small force of about 250 men, entered
Hancock county by the way of Augusta.* On Sunday he reached Carthage. On arriving at
the latter place, he found the Court House in possession of Sheriff Bachens[te]s posse of
about 40 Mormons. Without dismounting his men, he immediately surrounded the Court
House, & sent them a Message requiring them to give up all the state arms taken from the
citizens, and then to leave the town in half an hour. After a short consultation in the order
was complied with, & the town evacuated by the Mormons, after having been in their
possession ______ days. (See star above and insert follows)

*He immediately issued a proclamation, addressed to the citizens, enjoining upon them
to remain peaceable & obedient to the laws, and forbidding any bodies of armed men larger
than four in number. He also stated that he was clothed with full power by the Governor
to settle the Governor difficulties, in such way as he should deem best, — and that the Attorney
General of the State was sent with accompanied him as a legal advisor.

While Previous to reaching the county, he sent an express to Quincy, Ordering Capt.
Morgan's Rifle Company to meet him at Warsaw. On Sunday morning, this Co. to the number
of about 40, landed at that place; and on Monday morning joined the Commander in Chief
at Carthage. The whole force now amounted to about 300 men. During Monday, the Att.
Gen. was engaged in taking Depositions in relation to the abduction of Phineas Wilcox, and
the supposed murder of Andrew Daubenhager and in collecting all the information possible
in the two cases. [Written in right margin "Chapter ——— The Convention"]

Early on Tuesday morning, the 1st of Oct. the tents were struck, and the force took the
march towards Nauvoo, which they reached before noon. They encamped about 2 miles
below the city, near the Mississippi, and not far from where the Governor & his troops held
a similar were encamped last year. They remained at Nauvoo until noon of — day, and then
returned to Carthage.

While in Nauvoo, a very general search was made for Wilcox, and every endeavor made,
by which some cleue could be obtained of as to his fate. But all remained, and still remain
a mystery. — It was, indeed, ascertained by the Gen. & his staff, that he had been at or near
the Masonic Hall, in the custody of a guard; but what becamew of him afterwards, could
not be ascertained.

During this visit the Gen. & his staff held free communication with the Twelve, & other
heads of the Church. After his return to Carthage, the Gen. H. issued a Circular, embracing
the substance of the correspondence with the Mormons, & ac56

[Here the record ends at the bottom on the third 4-page folio. Only the first four pages
of the manuscript have been numbered.]

NOTES

1. The extensive holdings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Historical Department,
Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Historical Department) have been described in several
publications. One of the most useful of these is Davis Bitton, comp., A Guide to Mormon Diaries and

2. Sharp's unfinished history of the Mormon War is contained in the Thomas C. Sharp and Allied
Anti-Mormon Papers, located in the Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Library, Yale
University, New Haven, Connecticut. Microfilm copies of this document are also located in the Mormons in Illinois Microfilm Collection, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Ill., and the LDS Historical Department.


6. Norton Jacobs, a Latter-day Saint who tended Sharp’s horse during the ceremonies, had a different opinion. He believed that Sharp was envious of the Church’s greatness and power. See “Record of Norton Jacobs,” April 6, 1841, Mormon Collection, Huntington Library. There was also a report that Sharp’s anti-Mormonism stemmed from his involvement in a real-estate development venture at Warren, a few miles outside of Warsaw, that went broke because the Mormons failed to support it. If such was the case, evidence suggests that he had no money invested in this speculation but served only as a spokesman for the group. See *Nauvoo* (Ill.) *Neighbor* (1841), as quoted in Warren A. Jennings, “Thomas Sharp: Stalker of the Prophet,” paper presented at John Whitmer Historical Association Lecture Series, April 1973, Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.


11. John Russell to Thomas Gregg, August 17, 1841, Russell Family Papers.


Alvord, July 15, 1895, Joseph Smith Letterbook #7, both in Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

18. Green Plains Precinct was located about eight miles southeast of Warsaw, in Walker Township.

19. George Walker was an early resident of Hancock County, moving from Kentucky in 1833. He
settled on a farm about five miles southeast of Warsaw with his wife and four children. An ordained
Baptist minister, Walker, according to one county historian, was "a man of deep religious convictions
[and] of sterling integrity" (Gregg, History of Hancock County, pp. 350, 450, 971-72).

20. Morley's Settlement, presently Lima, Illinois, was located in Adams County 25 miles south of
Nauvoo. A Mormon agricultural outpost, the community was named for Isaac Morley, an early convert
to the Church, who headed the few families located there. This community gradually gained more
members and by October 1841 had over 400 members. See Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record
of Lorenzo Snow (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884), p. 75, Latter Day Saints' Millennial Star 26 (1864):
104.

21. Franklin A. Worrell was one of the leaders of the anti-Mormon movement in Hancock County.
A resident of Carthage, Worrell was a lieutenant in the Carthage Greys, the local militia unit. A detachment
commanded by Worrell was guarding the county jail on June 27, 1844, when a mob stormed the building
and cruelly murdered Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet, and his brother, Hyrum Smith. It was
generally believed by the Mormons that Worrell had conspired with the mob to allow them to overpower
his detachment without struggle and complete the murders. Because of this belief, Worrell was brought
to trial for the Smiths' murders during the summer of 1845; however, he and others charged with the
deaths were acquitted. As a result of these events, the Mormons hated Franklin A. Worrell. For a discussion
of Worrell's activities and death, see Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, passim; Harold L. Schindler, 
Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1966),
p. 140-44.

22. Carthage, Illinois, the county seat, was located in the center of Hancock County, about 15 miles
east of the Mississippi River.

23. The Rail Road Shanties were apparently located about five or six miles north of Warsaw on the
Nauvoo Road. Since there were no completed railroads in Hancock County during this period,
these shanties were possibly some that had been constructed to house workers on the Peoria-Nauvoo-
Carthage railroad that had been halted for lack of funds in 1839. See Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy,
p. 137.

24. Jacob B. Backenstos was the newly elected Sheriff of Hancock County who owed his office to
the Mormon vote. He was sympathetic with the Mormon plight, and some even thought he was a
member of the Church. It was certain, at least, that his brother, William Backenstos, had married a niece
of Joseph Smith. He acted courageously in trying to keep order in the county during 1844 and 1845;
however, in some instances he used poor judgment in dealing with non-Mormons. In 1846 when the
United States entered the war with Mexico, Backenstos enlisted in the army as a second lieutenant.
He was twice brevetted for gallantry in the field and marched to Oregon with a Mounted Rifle unit in
1849. He committed suicide there in 1857. (Daily Alta California (San Francisco), October 12, 1857,
p. 4, col. 2; Thomas Ford, The History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1850
(Chicago: C. S. Griggs and Co., 1951), p. 408; Smith, History of the Church, 4:13; Schindler, Orrin Porter
Rockwell, pp. 137, 144-45, 152-53, 156.

25. Sheriff Backenstos issued several proclamations bearing upon the Mormon situation. The first,
dated September 13, 1845, explained his reasons behind taking strong action against the anti-Mormons.
The second, printed on September 16, 1845, defended the murder of Franklin A. Worrell. These were
conveniently reprinted in B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of

26. Orrin Porter Rockwell (1813-1878) was an early convert to the Mormon movement. A cousin
of Joseph Smith, Jr., Rockwell was fiercely loyal to the prophet and served in Nauvoo as his bodyguard.
After the death of Smith, Rockwell assumed a similar position supporting Brigham Young. He was not
opposed to the use of force to ensure the welfare of the Church and was generally believed to have been
the Church's "hit man." Evidence suggests that in 1840 he attempted to assassinate Lilburn W. Boggs, ex-governor of Missouri, at Boggs's home in Independence, Missouri. Boggs was critically wounded in the shooting but eventually recovered; and Rockwell, who was in Independence at the
time, was charged with the crime. He was arrested and tried for attempted murder, but the evidence
was circumstantial at best. With the aid of an excellent attorney, Alexander Doniphan, Rockwell was
able to gain an acquittal. In Nauvoo, Rockwell rode with Sheriff Backenstos and other Mormon forces
combating anti-Mormon activities in the county. Eventually, he traveled with Brigham Young to the
Great Basin. His life has been described fairly and skillfully in Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell.
27. Samuel McBratney, or McBradney, was a young Warsaw resident invariably identified as an outrider with the anti-Mormon mobs. Brutally killed by unknown assailants, his murder served as a rallying cry for those in opposition to the Mormons. Smith, History of the Church, 7:462-66.

28. The Bear Creek Settlements were located in the central part of the county along the meandering Bear Creek, five miles south of Carthage. The most successful of these settlements was Basco, which grew to a population of several hundred.

29. George Miller (1794-1856) served as presiding bishop of the Mormon Church in Nauvoo, making him its chief financial officer. A longtime member of the movement, in 1846 he broke with Brigham Young and became a follower of James J. Strang, one of the claimants to the Church's leadership after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. See H. W. Milles, comp., "De Tal Palo Tal Astilla," Annual Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California, 10 (1917): 86-174.

30. Marquette County, no longer in existence, was located near the Illinois River in the central part of the state.

31. The Nauvoo Neighbor was the local newspaper in Nauvoo between 1843 and 1846. Owned by the Church, the paper during this period was edited by John Taylor, a member of the Mormon Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

32. Edward A. Bedell was quartermaster of the Warsaw militia and local justice of the peace. He was sympathetic to the Mormon cause and received rough treatment at the hands of anti-Mormons. Although Sharp refers to Bedell as "the only notorious Jack Mormon in Warsaw" and Thomas Barnes, a physician in Carthage, seconded the verdict, evidence suggests that he may not have been as favorable toward Mormonism as they thought. For instance, William Daniels, a key figure in the Mormon conflict in 1844 and 1845, had commented that Bedell had offered him $500 not to testify against the accused assassins of Joseph and Hyrum Smith during their trial in 1845. ("Minutes of Trial of Members of Mob Who Helped Kill Joseph Smith, the Prophet," p. 81, LDS Historical Department; George D. Watt, Manuscript Minutes, p. 99, LDS Historical Department; Keith Huntress, ed., The Murder of an American Prophet: Materials for Analysis (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962) p. 154.)

33. Samuel Fleming was the Warsaw constable, commonly considered one of the members of the mob that assassinated Joseph Smith, Jr. (Smith, History of the Church, 7:144.)

34. William Ayres apparently was a little-known resident of Warsaw who held no political office.

35. Ethel B. Rose was a relatively unknown resident of Warsaw until 1845 when he was elected county treasurer. He owed his political office to the backing of the Mormons. He won the election 2,233 to a scattered opposition that received only 53 votes. See Gregg, History of Hancock County, p. 450.

36. Chauncey Robinson was one of the leaders of the anti-Mormon contingent in Hancock County during the 1840s. Following a meeting of Warsaw citizens to plan action against the Latter-day Saints on June 13, 1844, for instance, Robinson was appointed one of a committee to carry a resolution to Governor Thomas Ford concerning the Mormon difficulties. (Smith, History of the Church, 6:462-66.)

37. Following the death of Frank Worrell in September 1845, the county was almost in a state of civil war. News of this turn of events reached Governor Ford at Jacksonville, where he was meeting with other state leaders. He determined to send a peace commission consisting of Judge Stephen A. Douglas, Attorney General T. A. McDougal, W. B. Warren, and Illinois Militia Brigadier General John J. Hardin with 400 troops to Hancock County and to take any steps necessary to restore order. On September 26, 1845, Hardin's forces crossed the Illinois River at Beardstown en route to Carthage. When he arrived in Hancock County, he moved quickly to ensure peaceful coexistence; on September 28, 1845, for instance, Hardin issued a proclamation prohibiting the gathering of more than four armed men anywhere in the county. At the same time, the other members of the commission urged the Mormons to leave the state. Brigham Young, the accepted Mormon leader, needed little urging. He had already offered to sell the Mormon property and depart the next spring. On October 2, Hardin wrote to the Mormon leaders that he had conferred with the non-Mormon leaders and learned that they were willing to accept the withdrawal. Hardin warned, however, that if the Saints showed any signs of dishonor in this arrangement, he would be powerless to stop their forceful expulsion. Governor Ford was delighted with this agreement, praising Hardin for negotiating a settlement that was acceptable to all. Meantime, Hardin virtually stopped violence in the county by chasing down Mormon and non-Mormon outriders. By the end of October Hardin's work was completed, and he withdrew his forces. Later, he served as an officer in the Mexican War and was killed at the battle of Buena Vista in February 1847. (Ford, History of Illinois, pp. 409-11; Thomas Ford to Jacob Backensos, September 21, 1845, Thomas Ford Papers, LDS Historical Department; "Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," September 22, 1845-October 3, 1845, LDS Historical Department; Josiah B. Conyers, A Brief History of the Leading Causes of the Hancock Mob, in the Year 1846 (St. Louis: Cauthen and Prescott, 1846), pp. 7-11, Henry
Launius: Anti-Mormonism in Illinois


38. Apparently Backenstos had received some threats against his life and feared for the safety of his family. Although his family had been unmolested until this time, on September 16 he and a small force went into Warsaw and removed his family to Nauvoo.

39. Jason H. Sherman was a Carthage, Illinois, lawyer and, according to Sheriff Backenstos, one of the members of the mob that murdered Joseph Smith. (Smith, History of the Church, 7:144.) Apparently Backenstos and his men held Carthage for several days, for when General Hardin arrived there with his force on September 28, 1845, he found Backenstos in control of the town and thirty armed men bivouacked in the courthouse. Hardin gave this unit less than half an hour to leave town. (Jacob Backenstos to John J. Hardin, September 29, 1845, John J. Hardin Collection.)

40. David Greenleaf, of Augusta, Illinois, in the eastern part of Hancock County, was elected probate judge in September 1845, in part by the Mormon vote. Not involved directly in the Mormon conflict, Greenleaf conducted his duties fairly toward both sides. (Smith, History of the Church, 6:35, 576.)

41. No evidence exists that Ford had given Backenstos permission to disarm the anti-Mormons. Such an order is especially unlikely because it would put one side at a disadvantage and because General Hardin was on route to Hancock County and empowered to return the region to peace by whatever means necessary.

42. Colonels Baker and Merriman were Whig politicians who had been involved in the Mormon conflict in Hancock County since 1844. They had assisted, for instance, in capturing Thomas Sharp and Levi Williams, two men indicted for the murder of Joseph Smith, who had crossed into Missouri to avoid trial. Governor Ford, Baker, and Merriman apprehended Sharp and Williams on October 1, 1844. Motivated largely by the desire for political favor, since that episode Baker and Merriman had been involved in the situation and helped bring about a settlement. (Gregg, History of Hancock County, pp. 327, 366, 755; Ford, History of Illinois, pp. 356-66.)

43. These men were all western Illinois leaders who, because of wealth and status, politics and ambition, took an interest in settling the Mormon question in Hancock County.

44. Orville H. Browning (1806-1881) of Quincy was one of the finest attorneys in the state during the 1840s. He had served in various political offices in Kentucky and Illinois and was known as "perhaps the ablest speaker in the state. He had been involved in Mormon affairs off and on since the settlement of the Saints at Nauvoo in 1839, serving as Joseph Smith's counsel when he was arrested on old charges from Missouri in 1841. He also served as chief defense attorney for the men charged with murdering the prophet. As a politician, concerned citizen, and leading figure, he served in several public forums, of which this was one, addressing the Mormon question. His greatest years lay before him, however. In 1856 he was one of the founders of the Republican Party, and in 1860 he helped Abraham Lincoln gain its nomination for the presidency. He served in the United States Senate during the Civil War era, and in 1866 he was appointed secretary of the interior. A brief biography of Browning can be found in Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 83-84, 219.

45. The Illinois Military Tract consisted of all the counties lying between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers from their junction northward to the parallel of New Boston. It included the counties of Calhoun, Pike, Adams, Schuyler, Brown, Marquette, Hancock, Warren, McDonough, Henderson, Fulton, Peoria, and Knox and parts of Mercer, Henry, and Putnam counties. Surveyed in 1815, this area contained 207 townships with 5,360,000 acres, 3,500,000 of which had been appropriated for bounties to military veterans. See "A Descriptive, Statistical, and Historical Chart of Hancock County, Illinois," February 1, 1846, Broadsides in western Illinois University Library, Macomb.

46. Archibald Williams of Quincy was an attorney in western Illinois who was known for his careful research, homespun manner, and earnest reasoning. A member of the Whig Party, Williams was a local politician of some note, serving in the Illinois State Legislature and as a judge on several occasions. He became embroiled in the Mormon question in Hancock County following the death of Joseph Smith when he, along with Orville H. Browning and others, served as defense counsel for the accused assassins. He was a close friend of Abraham Lincoln, and in 1861 President Lincoln appointed Williams federal district judge of Kansas. Brief biographies of Williams can be found in Gregg, History of Hancock County, p. 414; Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 83-84, 218.

47. Undoubtedly, Hancock County during the mid-1840s was a haven for illegal operations. It was in such a turmoil over the Mormon conflict that Governor Ford remarked that "no one would be
convicted of any crime in Hancock," and this fact encouraged rabble on both sides of the issue to carry on illicit activities without fear of punishment. (Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 369.) Some robberies and other illegal operations were probably based in Nauvoo, particularly after its city charter was revoked and no legal organization was present to deter thugs. Some of the people involved were Mormons, others were not, but in virtually every instance the Saints were blamed for crimes committed against other residents of the county. Governor Ford summarized non-Mormon feelings when he wrote in his state history that the Mormons in Nauvoo, along with others, "salted forth and ravaged the country, stealing and plundering whatever was convenient to carry or drive away." (Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 469.) Many of the accusations, however, were unfounded. In October 1845, for instance, a Dr. Abisha Williams, living in Iowa Territory, himself under indictment for counterfeiting, swore out a writ against Brigham Young and the other members of the Mormon Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for the making of bogus money. This complaint was never resolved, for the authorities refused to serve the arrest warrants because they believed the complaint was malicious and they believed a lengthy trial would inhibit Mormon plans to leave the state. Eventually the charges were dropped. (Journal History, October 26-28, 1845, Pleyport Sperry to Anson Sperry, October 27, 1845, Mormon Collection, Chicago Historical Society; Thomas Ford to Jacob Backenstos, October 29, 1845, Thomas Ford Papers.)

48. This probably refers to the arbitrary tactics of Backenstos in occupying Carthage in late September 1845. General Hardin disapproved of this as well. When he arrived there on 28 September and found Backenstos and his men in the courthouse, he roughly ordered them from the town. (Jacob Backenstos to John J. Hardin, September 29, 1845, John J. Hardin Collection.)

49. Andrew Daubenhayer and Phineas Wilcox were anti-Mormons who mysteriously disappeared in Hancock County in September 1845. The residents generally believed that they had been kidnapped and probably murdered by the Mormons. The issue was so pertinent to the peaceful settlement of the conflict that on September 29, the day after his arrival in the county, Hardin and an entourage entered Nauvoo to search for the men. As they searched the stable of the Nauvoo Mansion, Joseph Smith's home in the city, Almon W. Babbit, a Mormon attorney known for his caustic demeanor, grumbled, "You must think we are fools to bury dead men in a stable when it is so easy to throw them in the Mississippi a few rods away." (Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:448.) Hardin's expedition found no trace of these men, but one outside observer commented bitterly a few months later that "Daubenhayer's body subsequently was found [in Nauvoo] with a musket ball through the back of his head" and that Wilcox "lies probably at the bottom of the Mississippi, 'food for catfish,' as the Mormon Prophet has often threatened should be the fate of those who opposed his power." (Proceedings of a Convention, *Field at Carthage, in Hancock County, Ill., on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 1st and 2nd, 1845* (Quincy: n.p., 1845), p. 9; Ford, *History of Illinois*, pp. 409-11; Journal History, September 30, 1845.)

50. The Saints by 1845 held the belief that they could not submit to legal authorities because they could not protect them adequately. By this time the Mormon Church had endured 15 years of strife with residents of all areas; and whether they deserved such treatment or not, the government had failed to intervene most of the time to assist them in their plight. They were driven from New York, Ohio, and violently from Missouri. In some instances legal authority had conspired with residents to expel them, as in the case of the infamous extermination order issued by Lilburn W. Boggs, governor of Missouri, on October 27, 1838. This history of injustice prompted a certain amount of paranoia when the Mormons founded Nauvoo and secured a liberal city charter that provided for an autonomous city government, an important judiciary, and a powerful militia to defend the Saints should similar circumstances arise again. Even these measures could not ensure Mormon equality, for the Church's two principal leaders, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, were murdered at Carthage while in the custody of state authorities. It should be no surprise that under these circumstances the Mormons were hesitant to submit to legal authority in 1845 and used every means possible to avoid arrest by a government official who might not be able to protect his prisoner. For a discussion of these issues, see Robert Bruce Flanders, "Dream and Nightmare: Nauvoo Revisited;" in F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards, eds., *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), pp. 141-66.

51. The heat of the situation in Hancock County in the fall of 1845 was such that Mormons entering Carthage and Warsaw and non-Mormons entering Nauvoo were invariably treated roughly. In some instances they may have been threatened, and in a few isolated cases violence may have resulted. In most examples, however, such activities did not occur. Without question, the Mormons wanted to discourage hostile visitors to the city and to do so organized a group of youths to intimidate them by following them about town whistling with imposing knives and whistling funeral dirges. For a description of this tactic, see Thurman Dean Moody, "Nauvoo's Whistling and Whittling Brigade," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 15 (1975): 480-90.

52. The legal authorities never discovered who murdered McBratney, and no arrests were made.

53. Colonel James W. Singleton was a militia commander from Brown County who had been
involved in the Mormon conflict since the death of Joseph Smith. He had commanded troops brought to Carthage by the governor in June 1844 and had continued military activities as necessary thereafter. (Times and Seasons (Nauvoo, Ill.), 5 (1844): 586.)

54. The Military Committee of Quincy was an ad hoc organization designed to mobilize militia and bring pressure to bear on government leaders to maintain order in Hancock County.

55. John H. Mitchell was a political leader from Warren County.

56. Beginning with this meeting, and during the weeks that followed, Hardin mediated the withdrawal of the Mormons from Nauvoo. After discovering that Brigham Young had already decided to lead the Saints from Illinois and had sent a proposal to the anti-Mormon leaders, Hardin began working toward acceptance of the plan by both parties. On October 1, 1845, Young wrote to Hardin explaining his plan in detail. At a meeting of non-Mormons in Hancock County held in Carthage on October 1-2, Hardin presented these ideas to the body. The leaders of the non-Mormon faction agreed to Young’s plan. It said, essentially, that the Mormons would be left alone during the winter of 1845-46, that during this period the membership would sell their property, and that when spring came the Mormons would leave the county en masse. Both parties agreed to end any violence against the other and not to prefer charges for past infractions. This agreement did not end the ill-will between the two groups, and occasionally during the winter violence erupted anew, but generally both sides adhered to their part of the bargain. In February 1846, the first Mormons crossed the frozen Mississippi River bound for the West. During the remainder of the year, most of the remaining Saints followed this party. With these events, the Mormon conflict in Hancock County died away, not to be renewed again. (Annette P. Hampshire, “The Triumph of Mobocracy in Hancock County, 1844-1846,” Western Illinois Regional Studies, 5 (1982): 17-35.)
Figure 1:
Alder/Sulser house, c. 1875, Midway. The front windows have been altered and the window on the side has been closed with brick. (Photograph by Thomas Carter.)

Figure 2:
Plan of the Alder/Sulser house. (Fieldwork by Keith Bennett and drawing by Thomas Carter.)
Houses with Two Fronts:  
The Evolution of Domestic Architectural Design  
in a Mormon Community

Keith Bennett and Thomas Carter

In the shadow of Mount Timpanogos, nestled against the eastern slope of the Wasatch range, lies the town of Midway, Utah. Midway is a secluded and well-preserved Mormon settlement known best as a summer resort. But it is also known for the fine Gothic Revival houses built there by the English architect John Watkins. While Watkins’s houses are worthy of celebration, their prominence has obscured another equally fascinating chapter in Midway’s architectural history, and this is the development of a distinctive nineteenth-century Mormon house type. Mixing features of both the older, and in Mormon Utah ubiquitous, hall-parlor form and the more fashionable cross-wing type, the new house—here simply called the corner house—emerged as a specific product of early Mormon town planning. Corner houses are not unique to Midway; in fact, they are found in nearly all Mormon western communities. But Midway provides a useful case study in the history of this important feature of Utah’s early vernacular architecture.

Vernacular architecture is often misunderstood. When vernacular is mentioned, the simple and unstylistic houses of the first pioneers come readily to mind. For many researchers, vernacular buildings are the kind of frontier structures quickly replaced as communities stabilize and builders begin again to emulate established

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Eastern conventions. Another definition of vernacular architecture, however, and one more useful to the historian's task of understanding the built environment, is closer to the one favored by linguists. Vernacular speech is generally considered the ordinary, everyday language of people. It is often colorful and highly localized, representing the adaptation of widespread usage patterns to the specific conditions of a region or area. Similarly, vernacular architecture may be viewed as the common buildings of a particular time and place—the buildings most people live in and use and buildings that are often localized versions of more standardized national types and styles.2

Historian Dell Upton writes, "Vernacular architecture is regional architecture. The vernacular buildings of any area display a mixture of indigenous forms and more broadly distributed folk and academic ones combined in a distinctive local manner."3 In this light, Mormon vernacular architecture, if we are to understand it at all, must be approached from the standpoint of the localization process. That is, how did Mormon designers adapt older and largely Eastern building ideas to the social and environmental conditions they found in the West? What is the "local architectural mixture" that identifies a Mormon vernacular building style? A full and comprehensive answer to these questions lies beyond the scope of this short paper, but Midway's early houses can provide a point of departure for this work by pointing out a fundamental and distinctive relationship that exists between early Mormon house design and town planning.

The habitat of the Mormon house is the Mormon town, and the tight gridiron city plan adopted by the Mormons in the West presented house carpenters with a set of unique design problems. Their solutions, worked out over several decades and visible in the creation of the distinctive corner house type, come a long way in establishing the ground rules for further architectural research in Utah and surrounding states.

The first European visitors to enter Heber Valley were probably frontier explorers and fur trappers. Until about 1852, these were the only people to inhabit the area, camping along the nearby Provo River.4 By 1857, however, Mormon settlers from Provo and American Fork saw the valley as an area of potential expansion. A road was constructed up the Provo Canyon the following year, and by July a survey was finished for Fort Heber.5

As Fort Heber grew in the early 1860s, Snake Creek on the west side of the valley was occupied by two groups of Mormon settlers, one farming land along the creek itself and another two miles upstream in what was called Mound City because of the numerous volcanic rock formations in the region. This volcanic crust, locally called "pot rock," was piled into fences and used principally as an early building material.6

The two settlements grew independently, with the lower Snake Creek group remaining the smaller of the two. By 1866, conflict with the nearby Ute-Shoshone peoples necessitated the unification of the two communities for mutual protection. A fort was essential, yet its precise location was, in the words of one local resident, "warmly disputed,"7 as each community wanted the fort built in its settlement. Since the population was not sufficient to warrant the construction of two forts,
compromise was necessary. Eventually the fort was built "midway" between the
two settlements, thus giving the town its name. The fort was composed of log
cabins arranged around the perimeter of a rectangular plaza. The cabins were
chinked with mud and roofed with logs and long branches.8

When no attack came in the first two years of the fort's existence, a town was
laid out and surveyed in 1867-68. The town plan followed the normal Mormon
gridiron pattern, with Main Street as the east-west axis and Center Street as the
north-south axis. The original plat consisted of about fourteen blocks divided into
individual lots. The fort, no longer required, became the public square for the new
town. Brick and pot-rock houses quickly replaced those of log and became more
permanent fixtures on the landscape.9

While appearing solid and simply styled, early Mormon houses nevertheless
displayed a healthy concern for prevailing fashion. Guided by the admonition of
LDS Church President Brigham Young to "build cities, adorn your habitations, make
gardens, orchards and vineyards, and render the earth so pleasant that when you
look upon your labors you may do so with pleasure, and that angels may delight
to come and visit your beautiful locations," Mormon families built attractive and
up-to-date dwellings.10 Utah's pioneer builders sought out the popular architecture
of their day, finding ways to adorn and beautify their houses instead of leaving
them as stark and harsh as their western surroundings. Great variety in the actual
houses exists, but the form that dominated the local building trade during the third
quarter of the nineteenth century was the detached horizontal block.11

Whether they came from the eastern United States, Great Britain, or Scandinavia,
the Mormon pioneers arrived in their new western home with a deep-seated
knowledge and understanding of a set of house types based on a square or rec-
tangular plan, symmetrically composed around a central front door. Such small,
geometric, horizontal block houses were found throughout the Western world
during the post-Medieval period as Renaissance-inspired preferences for formal
control and symmetry were imposed upon older peasant housing traditions. The
most common version in Utah was the hall-parlor house, a two-room rectangular
building, usually with a gable roof and one, one-and-a-half, or two full stories
(figures 1 and 2). The larger of the two rooms, the hall, was usually a combination
living room and kitchen, while the smaller room's original function as best room
or parlor was often superseded by the parents' need for a bedroom. The house
could be built with a rear kitchen appendage, in which case the larger front room
often became the best room. The hall-parlor house was built in all Mormon towns,
including Midway, and while its popularity is indisputable, the house nevertheless
possessed certain siting and orientation problems.12

Mormon town planning is a much heralded aspect of western frontier settle-
ment. The Latter-day Saints eschewed the traditional family farm in favor of a
nucleated form of village life. All Mormon dwellings were located within the bound-
aries of a gridiron plat. The towns were divided into large, square blocks, which
in turn were further subdivided into individual homestead lots, each containing a
house, a barn, and other agricultural buildings. Houses were generally placed at
the corner of the homestead lot nearest the intersection of the streets. Locating
The houses at the corners meant that small "crossroads" communities were established within the larger gridiron structure of the town, creating a sense of neighborhood but leaving the houses with no clear frontality, since they were equally visible from two angles (figure 3). Since the entire point of the detached block house, from an aesthetic perspective at least, was its self-contained frontal symmetry, the very fact of a house with potentially two principal facades must have been disconcerting. The visual ambiguity of the corner lot subverted the singularity of the symmetrical statement and detracted from the dwelling's overall effect. For house carpenters, who were also designers, the problem became one of reconciling the symmetrical aesthetic with the new corner location. And this they did, rather quickly. Within a decade of the town's settlement, changes had begun to appear in the older hall-parlor tradition. By the 1880s, a new house—one incorporating the hall-parlor plan into an essentially new format—had emerged. The change came as a response to the aesthetic demands of the house's corner location and, as we shall see, changes in architectural fashion. Four specific Midway houses are useful in understanding the evolution of the new corner house form.

The first is the Everice Bronson house, constructed around 1875. Bronson was a wealthy farmer who homesteaded a large plot of land south of the town. His house, however, was a modest one-and-a-half story example of the hall-parlor form (figures 4 and 5). On the main floor were two rooms, the parlor and the main bedroom, with a frame kitchen added to the rear several years later. The original staircase was located against the rear wall of the parlor but later moved to the kitchen. Upstairs were two attic bedrooms—crowded quarters for Everice, his wife Cynthia, and their thirteen children (twelve of whom lived in the house at one time).

The essence of the Bronson house design was symmetry. The front door, highlighted by a small gabled porch, was placed in the center of the principal facade, and a window with a pedimented head was present on either side. This
tripartite composition is typical of the hall-parlor house. The sides of the house were also treated symmetrically, having one centrally placed window on the lower floor and two evenly spaced upper ones on each end. The gabled roof ended in Greek Revival cornice returns.

Though located on a corner, the Bronson house had only one main facade, ably reflecting the aesthetic norm of the time. The design made no effort to respond to the side street. In fact, when Bronson added the kitchen door facing the main street, he ignored the more convenient side street and thereby reinforced the symmetrical frontality of the overall composition. Though recessed from the front porch itself, the side door soon became the main entrance to the house.

The second house, the William Van Wagoner house, is located in the heart of Midway across from the town square (figures 6 and 7) and gives a hint of the changes that were to follow. "Lime Kiln Will," as he was called, built the house in 1879 after he was married. The walls were made of the local pot rock but were soon thereafter covered with wooden drop siding. The white veneer gave the house a more "finished" appearance by disguising its rough-hewn rock identity. This
house also had a hall-parlor plan; the kitchen and what may have been an original parlor were located on the main floor, and there were two attic bedrooms, each with a large dormer window. Again, the staircase was placed against the back wall of the parlor.

As his family grew, so did Van Wagoner’s house. By 1890 a dining room, kitchen, and pantry had been added to the back, allowing the original rooms to be used as bedrooms. The staircase at this time was moved to the rear kitchen. The rear addition was brick, unsided but later painted red, and included a side porch that faced the side street. With the original front rooms now becoming bedrooms, the new side entry became the main entrance to the house. The curious thing is that, despite relocating the front door in the side wing, no special attempt was made to integrate the side wing into the overall design, to give it, that is, a treatment similar to that found on the old hall-parlor facade. It was, after all, brick rather than frame, and the contrasting materials clearly served to distinguish what was considered the “main” house from the conceptually diminished rear “addition.” The conflict between the two “fronts” in the Bronson house—the old hall-parlor...
front and the new side door front—suggests confusion within the tradition; on one hand there was the conservative urge to hold on to the older hall-parlor ideal and on the other the need for an innovative response to the corner location.

As builders like William Van Wagoner began to acknowledge the need for a house with a dual orientation, they found themselves equipped with only half the formula. The symmetrical hall-parlor form would do nicely for one side, but what about the other? How could the rear kitchen ell be combined with the side-facing gable to yield a complete idea? Interestingly enough, the answer to the designer's problem was there all the time, or at least it had been around since the late 1870s when John Watkins began building houses for William and George Bonner.

John Watkins was born in 1834 in the town of Maidstone, Kent, England. His father, Thomas, was a house builder, and it was this trade that John learned as a youth. He worked first in Maidstone and later in London before converting to the LDS Church in 1852. Watkins and his wife Margaret emigrated in 1856 and after a short stay in Provo joined the pioneer encampment at Midway. As the community grew in the 1860s, Watkins found himself in demand as a house builder, and, not surprisingly, his work often reflected the training and experience he had received in England. His own house, for example, was built in 1867 in the Gothic Revival style. It had a steeply pitched gable roof, multiple projecting gables and dormer windows, and fancy scroll-cut woodwork along the raking eaves. Also, in keeping with the precepts of the Gothic Revival style, it deviated from the older detached block house form. Watkins's house was composed of intersecting wings and was an attempt, as was the fashion of the time in England and in many parts of the United States (including, to some degree, Salt Lake City), to recreate the feeling of the English Medieval house. Such houses are often today referred to as cross-wing houses, because they generally consist of two wings crossing at right angles in either a "T" or "L" configuration.

John Watkins's house contained two front-facing wings, but the houses he constructed for the Bonner brothers, William and George, Jr., in 1877 were more typical expressions of the basic cross-wing form (figures 8 and 9). These houses articulated well the new aesthetic, one based on the delicate balancing of irregular parts rather than the strict symmetry of the horizontal block. In the cross-wing, the front projecting wing, usually containing some kind of decorative element such as a bay window or bargeboard, was played off against the side wing, which contained the front door and often a highly embellished porch. The result was a basically asymmetrical house but one that maintained a degree of decorum and balance. In addition to the five large Gothic Revival cross-wing houses John Watkins designed and built in Midway, there are several smaller examples of the type dating from the 1880s (figure 10). Yet the form itself—the front projecting gable and side wing—had its greatest impact on the design of the hall-parlor house, for in the cross-wing Midway's residents found the final piece to the corner-house puzzle.

The Attewall Wootton, Jr., house, located on a corner lot in the far eastern part of town, is one of the best Midway examples of the true corner-house (figures 11 and 12). It was built of brick in two stages around 1886-87. The similarity in materials and decorative features seems to indicate that the two building campaigns
could not have been far apart, yet enough time elapsed for the staircase to occupy two positions. When the new section was added, the staircase was moved from the front parlor to the kitchen.

The front is a one-and-a-half story, three-bay, hall-parlor section. The rear section, as expected, contains the kitchen, but in this case it is not simply a rear addition. It is, rather, a full-blown cross-wing house with both front projecting and side wings. The side elevation is now an integral part of a unified design that presents a symmetrical hall-parlor facade facing one street and an asymmetrical
cross-wing facade facing the other. The house has two principal elevations, each with its own fancy spindled porch and each representing a fashionable dwelling in its own right.

As in the Van Wagoner house, the hall-parlor door on the Wootton house is not used. In fact, there is no sidewalk leading to the porch, and a fence prohibits entry from this forgotten “front facade.” Yet, unlike the Bonner houses or Midway’s small cross-wing houses that have no door on the side of the projecting wing, the door—despite its disuse—is retained as an obvious reference to the older form. Wootton undoubtedly felt comfortable with the traditional hall-parlor form, even though it was spatially inadequate and required an addition almost immediately. He added the kitchen to the rear in the traditional way but in a manner that betrayed an appreciation for both the corner site and the fashionable cross-wing houses of his more affluent neighbors. He skillfully merged the visual qualities of the cross-wing house with the practical characteristics of the traditional hall-parlor form.

Our final house is instructive in charting the evolution of the corner-house—the John Alma Wootton house (figures 13 and 14). John Alma, Attewall Wootton’s younger brother, had his house built around 1890. Though similar to the others,
Figure 13:  
Front and side elevations of the John Alma Wootton house, c. 1890, Midway. (Drawing by Keith Bennett.)

Figure 14:  
Floor and site plans of the John Alma Wootton house. (Drawing by Keith Bennett.)

This house is historically important because of the fact that although it displays all the characteristics of the corner-house type—the full-blown hall-parlor and cross-wing facades—it does not occupy a corner location. The “side” or cross-wing entry faces the street, while the hall-parlor entry faces into the block. The John Alma Wootton house was built at one time, incorporating all the new features of the dual-facade house. It is worth noting that in this house the staircase bypassed its usual migration from front to rear wings and was built into the original kitchen. Thus, the house does not represent the conceptual combination of a hall-parlor and a back kitchen addition (disguised as a cross-wing) but was conceived, designed, and built as a corner house. That it was not built on a corner is significant, for its presence in the middle of the block signals the codification of the rules for combining the two ideas into a single, complete entity.

John Alma built a house just like his brother’s. It did not matter that it was not on a corner; it was the “right kind” of house to have. This last house strongly suggests that by 1890 the corner-house—the house with two fronts—was known to local residents, and it is this acceptance that signals the creation of a new, distinctively Mormon house type.

The small brick houses of Midway and other Utah towns are easily overlooked as we concentrate our attention on larger, more prestigious buildings like those
of John Watkins and his neighbors. But there is meaning nevertheless in these smaller buildings. If, as mentioned at the outset of this essay, we are to have some understanding of a Mormon architectural vernacular, then it is here we must begin, in small things like the corner-house. The development of this new dwelling type came slowly and methodically and combined both traditional and progressive elements. The Mormon town presented the house carpenter with a difficult siting problem: how to build houses with two fronts. His solution was as timid as it was ingenious. He turned logically to what he knew—the hall-parlor idea was well-known and comfortable, the cross-wing new and slightly dangerous. These he combined in a design that was dynamic enough to adapt both to the corner site and to fashion. The form became both traditional and innovative, simple and fancy, past yet present. It expressed the style and standards of Midway's Mormon residents.

NOTES
4. Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, no. 26, Wasatch County (Ogden, UT: Historical Records Survey, 1938).
6. Ibid., p. 22.

15. Interview with Ray Haueter, grandson of Everice Bronson, by Keith Bennett, February 24, 1985. Additional information about the house was obtained from the family records kept by Lorna Anderson Larsen, granddaughter of Everice Bronson.

16. The Van Wagoner house history was assembled from How Beautiful upon the Mountains, p. 802, and an interview of Clara Huber, current owner of the house, by Keith Bennett, July 20, 1985.


20. This information is drawn largely from an interview with Blain Van Wagoner (a son of William who was born in the house on March 12, 1906) by Keith Bennett, July 28, 1985.

21. This history was obtained in an interview with Burton Van Wagoner (who was born in the house on May 26, 1907) by Keith Bennett, July 13, 1985.
It was "a new point of departure," wrote John Beadle of the Mormon Reformation of 1856-1857, when Mormons lapsed into "a furious climax of unnatural and degrading obscenity." The result of this degradation, according to Beadle, was a series of murders that could be traced to the fervent rhetoric of Jedediah Grant, "a frothing fanatic, whom it is only charity to judge as of diseased mind."

Beadle's scathing denunciations, made over a century ago, were among the first of several virulent descriptions of a controversial and misunderstood era of Mormon history. Fortunately, less-jaundiced minds, both non-Mormon and Mormon, have corrected or modified the sensational conclusions of Beadle and others of similar stripe. Historians B. H. Roberts and Andrew Neff even had the temerity to point out benefits amid the bluster. They were right but provided little documentation to substantiate their claims. It is my contention that amid the anxiety and emotion of the Reformation lay a deliberate and measured dimension that has never been adequately explored. There was much more method than madness, more calmness than chaos, than has generally been supposed.

Unfortunately, few writers have attempted to place the Mormon Reformation in a meaningful historical context. Not surprisingly, the Reformation, like almost all events or movements, did not spontaneously burst forth on the historical landscape.

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but rather was a logical result of Mormon thinking and teaching that had begun some two decades earlier.

In the early nineteenth century, millennialism was an influential force among American churches. Expectedly, chiliastic notions were common in the church that Joseph Smith founded. Mormon millennialism, however, did not fit neatly into the structured divisions of American millennialism but rather “criss-crossed millennial patterns.” Mormons were premillennialistic—they expected Jesus Christ to come and usher in the millennium. Unlike most premillennialists though, Latter-day Saints believed that a literal kingdom would need to be established before Christ would come. Commensurate with the development of this kingdom would be the destruction or degeneration of other earthly kingdoms. The presiding leaders of the Mormon kingdom or kingdom of God would be Mormon priesthood leaders. These individuals would rule the earth in premillennial times, an era that would be characterized by various cataclysmic, apocalyptic events, all geared to prepare the earth for Christ’s coming.

The exact details of how the Saints were to gain political control have never been clear. It appears that by the 1850s, most church leaders were convinced they would become “empire leaders” through the “back door.” There would be no need to form armies, establish alliances, or take overt actions of any kind. Wickedness was increasing at a pace that would ensure divine intervention in the form of disaster and pestilence. Corrupt peoples and leaders would fall, chaos would reign, and the Saints would inherit governmental reins by default.

But the Saints believed that the Lord would not entrust rulership to a people that were not of one heart and one mind. “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine,” the Lord told Joseph Smith in 1831. However, early attempts to achieve unity in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois failed. The Saints were unable to solve internal disorders or live harmoniously with non-Mormon neighbors. With the epic move to the Great Basin, the threat of gentile interference was removed, giving hope to church leaders that the kind of unified society necessary to usher in the millennium could be molded.

But the optimism of the presiding authorities was soon tempered when unforeseen snags were encountered, ripping the fabric of Latter-day Saint society. The continued influx of gentiles, the difficulty of assimilating increasing numbers of immigrants, and the surfacing of apostates constituted three especially severe challenges.

Mormons, of course, were not opposed to all gentiles. Brigham Young’s policy was clear: All who were willing to subscribe to the Mormon way of life were welcome. Honesty, chastity, obedience, sobriety—these were among the cardinal virtues that inhabitants of Utah Territory must practice. Not surprisingly, not all gentiles felt as strongly as Brigham did about such standards. Some drank or caroused in the streets, which naturally irritated church leaders. Irritation turned to contempt when some of them abused the hospitable treatment they had received by “breaking through the bulwarks with women.” Wilford Woodruff recorded on February 4, 1855, that “some of the strongest preaching ever delivered to the saints was heard this day.” When Jedediah Grant, Brigham’s second counselor,
speak, "large guns were fired with red Hot balls [and] the Gentiles were told of their wickedness and corruptions, and abominations & strongly warned against attempting any further to traduce & corrupt the wives & daughters of the Latter-day Saints." Heber C. Kimball followed Grant at the pulpit and threatened to withdraw fellowship from any sister who consorted with gentiles, noting that "if he caught any man committing adultery with one of his daughters He would kill them both." Such rhetoric created a temporary stir, and Woodruff wrote the following day that "there is quite an excitement through the City today among the Gentiles.

The Saints, however, were never concerned about exterior threats as much as interior rumblings. Gentiles might be irritating, but bickering and apostate Mormons were regarded as pestiferous cancers that needed to be arrested and, if necessary, removed. Church leaders hoped that all immigrants to Zion were people of faith and testimony, but given the widespread emphasis on gathering, inevitably some would come for other than religious reasons.

By 1854, it was apparent that many "old-stock" Mormons were suspicious of the spiritual fiber of some newcomers. After all, the immigrants were Saints whose mettle had not been tested by the fires of persecution in Jackson County and Nauvoo. Brigham Young observed in the fall of 1854 that while the majority of the population came intending to serve the Lord, some were "actually trying to see how much evil they can commit and at the same time keep their standing among the Saints." Later he indicated that some converts embraced the gospel for "no other motive than to have the privilege of being removed from their oppressed conditions." They would "embrace any doctrine under heaven," reasoned Young, "if you will only take them from their present condition." In correspondence with Orson Pratt, European Mission president, Brigham expressed his determination to stop bringing over men and women to apostatize.

Mormon leaders, however, made a distinction between those who had been lulled into a lethargic spiritual state and those who publicly proclaimed their dissatisfaction with Mormonism. The former were potentially decent members who could be saved with stern preaching. The latter constituted scars and blemishes whose removal would bring about a desired community face-lift. The Saints, of course, had reason to be concerned with apostates. The majority of their difficulties in the past had been caused by dissidents and apostates, not gentiles. Apostle Parley P. Pratt spoke for the majority of church leaders when he warned apostates to keep their disenchantment to themselves. "People have the privilege of apostatizing from this Church," observed Pratt, "and of worshipping devils, snakes, toads, or geese, if they please, but only if they let their neighbors alone."

In an effort to curb apostasy, increase faith and devotion, and build unity, church leaders in the 1850s revived one former practice and introduced another. The first was a reintroduction of the law of consecration, which the Saints had tried unsuccessfully to establish in Missouri. The attempt to restore this economic system in Utah had both defensive and offensive purposes. While checking the worldliness of some Saints, it would also enable church leaders to solve more adequately the pressing financial burdens of the gathering and subsequent settlement of the
Ultimately, of course, it was hoped that the instigation of God’s economic law would bring about increased unity.

The new economic law was announced in April conference, 1854. Over the next eight years, hundreds deeded their property and belongings to the Church. Most members, however, did not. It would appear that the number of people so consecrating made up less than half of the seven thousand heads of families residing in Utah in 1858. Curiously, Brigham Young never seemed interested in carrying out the program fully. He always insisted it was voluntary, never bothered to give out stewardships, and, after 1855, never pressed the issue. Furthermore, consecration was never a major consideration during the Reformation of 1856-1857, the stress being placed instead on payment of tithes. This lack of emphasis on consecration was deliberate. Reformation missionaries, for example, were instructed by Apostle Franklin D. Richards to be cautious and circumspect when discussing it with church members:

There is a subject that has been alluded to tonight, [that is] consecration. It is one which I would like to see judiciously presented before the people. Do not crowd it on the people with a law which is imperative. I would just lay it before them, and let them be reminded of it. . . . Present it beautifully, and do not crowd it on the hearts of the people, and you will understand the measure of faith the people have in their hearts. Lay it before them, not by commandment, but by permission and you will see the workings of the spirit in them; it is . . . the best weathercock of their feelings and the faith that is among them. It will tell you another thing: It will not only tell you who are the first born, but it will show those that are not going to do the works of righteousness and are silently laying over till Spring opens to go off.

This seemingly casual approach of church leaders toward implementation of the economic law has puzzled historians. Arrington and May have postulated that possible entanglements over land titles might have made Brigham Young hesitant to apply the program with vigor. Perhaps too, as Franklin Richards implied, Brigham reinstituted the law of consecration to assess the willingness of the Saints to give their all for the kingdom. If indeed this was the case, he could not have been overly happy with the results.

The organization of a home missionary program in October 1855 was another effort to bring unity and stability to the kingdom. Utah territory was divided into six districts, each presided over by an apostle who in turn was assisted by five or six missionaries. Missionaries were told to preach “the spiritual things of the Kingdom of God, stirring up the people to repentance and a remembrance of their first love, without finding fault with the Saints.”

The reinstitution of the law of consecration and the sending of home missionaries to preach reform and repentance were symptomatic of Brigham’s concern with cracks and blemishes in Zion long before the actual Reformation began in the fall of 1856. That concern was intensified even further when a series of natural disasters struck the Latter-day Saint community in the middle 1850s, bringing hardship, anxiety, and concern.

The first major calamity was a grasshopper plague. On April 30, 1855, Brigham Young noted that “grasshoppers have made their appearance and are doing extensive damage.” They were “like snowflakes in a storm,” wrote Apostle George A. Smith, “occasionally fill[ing] the air over this city, as far as the eye can reach.”
Accompanying the grasshopper invasion was a severe drought. The winter of 1854-55 had been unusually mild with little moisture. The drought continued through the summer, and by August had replaced the departing hoppers as the most worrisome enemy.34 Expectedly, the insects and dry conditions had a devastating effect on crop production.35

The drought was followed by a severe winter. In an effort to find more suitable grazing, it was decided to move many cattle, including most of the church herd, northward to Cache Valley. Biting snow and extreme cold soon proved this to be an unwise decision, and the loss in stock was extensive. Brigham estimated that two-thirds of all church stock had perished, while Wilford Woodruff recorded that only five hundred cattle remained from a herd of twenty-six hundred. The southern counties fared somewhat better, but they too suffered considerably.36

Not surprisingly, church members were short of food that winter and subsequent spring. Sego bulbs, thistle roots, and pigweed greens became regular fare for many.37 Others lived on salt and potatoes.38 Poverty was widespread, and begging and hoarding became habitual with some.39 Some Saints resorted to entering neighboring fields to glean. While incensed at unauthorized pilfering, Brigham recognized the need for conserving every morsel, and he instructed grain owners to permit gleaners to follow the rakers and binders, "thus opening an effectual way in which the poor will be able to materially contribute to their own support."40

For a time, Young even considered sending a wagon train to the Northwest to bring back loads of dried salmon.41

Money was next to useless and would not buy flour or meal. "Dollars and cents do not count now, in these times," asserted Heber C. Kimball, "for they are the tightest that I have ever seen in the Territory of Utah."42 Public works programs were suspended, and workers were disbanded and told to raise grain for themselves.43 "Many persons," observed Brigham Young, "are reduced to the necessity of living almost entirely upon roots and we expect until blessed with another harvest, to be more or less pinched for provisions. Myself as well as nearly everybody," added Brigham, "have rationed their families to a half pound each per day and by frequent fastings save considerable amounts even from this allowance, to give to the poor. I pray Heaven that we may have a plentiful harvest. We understand the prospect is for a large emigration this season."44

Throughout the difficult period of 1855-56, the response of church leaders to hardship and suffering was both predictable and consistent. Like Old Testament prophets, they reasoned that modern Israel's problems were rooted in disobedience and unrighteousness.45 It became necessary, then, to decipher just what God had in mind when he allowed the Saints to be afflicted. Gentile conflicts, assimilation problems, difficulties with apostates, and especially natural disasters, all implied that the Lord was not happy with the atmosphere in Mormondom.46 A psalm composed by W. G. Mills and read some six weeks after the Reformation actually began reflected the prevailing attitude toward the difficult times. The initial portion of Mills's psalm told how the Lord had blessed the Saints when they first arrived in their mountain retreat. Then the people forgot their covenants and the Lord reacted accordingly.
He sent the little grasshoppers like a flying and devouring army upon their fields; and they cut off their wheat and fruit; he sent the deep snows, and nipping frosts, which destroyed their cattle; for He remembers Zion.

Yet he left enough in the land; that they might live and consider Him; that they might see His hand of providence, and turn to Him; for He remembers Zion.

He blessed the parched land again, and drove away the devouring insects; for He loves His people; but they neglect His prophets' counsels; whom He hath ordained to remember Zion.

So He instructs His servants Brigham, Heber, and Jedediah; and gives them the sword of truth; and they command the people to reform from their evil and filthy ways; for He remembers Zion.

Repent, reform, and renew your covenants; is the cry of God to His people: let every quorum and every Saint in the church obey the words; for He remembers Zion.

He will have a pure and holy people on this land; and make them obedient to His laws; they must have the Holy ghost in their hearts to serve Him; for He remembers Zion.

Humble yourselves, therefore, oh, ye Saints of the Lord; and come with contrite hearts before Him: that His servants may bless you in His name; for He remembers Zion.

Then will your praises be accepted of Him, and ye will grow in strength and power; until His enemies are subdued: and you will gain eternal lives, and full salvation from your Father; He loves and remembers Zion.47

Expectedly, church leaders, convinced that natural disasters and resultant hardships were divine reminders that all was not well in Zion, preached reform with vigor. By spring of 1856, ominous threats were rolling regularly from the lips of the First Presidency. On March 2, Brigham observed that “instead of... smooth, beautiful, sweet... silk-velvet-lipped preaching,” the people needed sermons like peals of thunder. “The time is coming,” Young said, “when justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet; when we shall take the old broad sword and ask, ‘Are you for God?’ and if you are not heartily on the Lord’s side you will be hewn down.”48 Counselor Jedediah Grant expanded on Brigham’s theme: “I not only wish but pray, in the name of Israel’s god, that the time was come in which to unsheath the sword, like Moroni of old, and to cleanse the inside of the platter, and we would not wait for decision of grand or traverse juries, but we would walk into you and completely use up every curse who will not do right.”49

The biting invective of Young and Grant suggests that sin and wrongdoing abounded in Utah Territory in the 1850s. It did not. Mormon society was upright and moral. Some months after the Reformation commenced, Elder David Calder described the atmosphere that prevailed among the Saints in the fall of 1856:

When this reformation commenced, there was not a distillery, brewery, grog shop, gambling saloon or house of ill-fame in the Territory; no rowdism, incendiarism, prostitution, homicides, suicides, infanticides, forgeries or murders, no practice for doctors, lawyers, police or magistrates; no balls or theatrical performances among the people. One would suppose that such a community had nothing to repent of and no place for reform; and Utah might be called the seat of perfection in morals. “You may ask: “What then is the condition of the people that they require reform?” They have been so much persecuted and driven from their comfortable homes so often, and have had to labor so excessively hard to build up a home in this far-distant and barren country, that they measurably became wearied and fell asleep, and thereby neglected the performance of many important duties tending to hasten on the time when the Lord will more fully acknowledge His people before the eyes of all nations. It therefore became necessary for them to arise and shake off their lethargy, and no more rest, until the kingdom of this world became the kingdom of the Lord.”50

Despite their reproaches, church leaders also recognized they were dealing
with principled people. Amid the censure in the spring of 1856, Brigham Young conceded that the Saints were not unlike those of Enoch's time and that most were willing to build up the kingdom. Even Jedediah Grant admitted some months later that the Saints were the best people on earth. The problem was that while Saints were good, they were not good enough. While they were not unlike Enoch's people, they were not completely like them, either. As Jedediah put it on one occasion, there was still "some alloy in them which we hate."

II

Convinced that good Saints could and must become better, church leaders continued preaching reform, and by mid-1856, reform impulses were felt with regularity in the Mormon kingdom. These impulses reflected both Brigham Young's concern with helping Saints purify their lives and his frustration that greater progress was not being made. On August 30, 1857, some four months after the Reformation ended, Brigham described how his anxiety about the laxity of many Saints resulted in the beginning of a reform movement:

I thank my Father in heaven, yes my soul says glory, hallelujah, praise the name of Israel's God, for the blessings I enjoy at the present time. One year ago this very day, and previous to that time, my soul was pained within me. No tongue could tell, it could not be portrayed before the people the feelings that I had; I could not tell them, and I did not know but that, if I should come out in the presence of the people and try to speak my feelings, they would call me crazy. However, I tried to make the people understand my feelings, but no tongue could tell them; and I actually believe that I would have lived but a little time in this existence, had not God waked up the people. I wanted to take up my valise and go throughout the Territory crying, is there a man in this Territory for God?

If you want to know how I felt, I cannot tell you better than by describing my feelings in the way that I am now doing. One day I told a number of the brethren how I felt, as well as I could, and br. Jedediah M. Grant partook of the Spirit that was in me and walked out like a man — like a giant — and like an angel — and he scattered the fire of the Almighty among the people. But what was the result, so far as he was concerned? he went beyond his strength, and it cost him his life.

Jedediah Grant's role in the Reformation is well-known. On September 7, 1856, at a prayer circle meeting, Brigham announced that it was his wish that Heber C. Kimball, Jedediah Grant, and the Twelve go among the people and preach the gospel. Acting on these instructions, and likely anxious about how best to fulfill them, Jedediah journeyed north to Kaysville to conduct a four-day conference. He was accompanied by Joseph Young of the first Council of Seventy and home missionaries D. D. Hunt, Gilbert Clements, Thomas Grover, and William Willes. On Saturday, September 13, the first day of the conference, Grant announced that he came with his brethren under the counsel of President Brigham Young to deliver a discourse on faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins. While Grant's traveling companions spoke on a variety of topics, Brigham's counselor confined his remarks to repentance and reform. On the next day, Sunday, in the morning session, Grant "delivered a soul-stirring address on the text of Br. Brigham, "Saints, live your religion!" Church members were urged to hold sacred their covenants and tidy up both themselves and their physical surroundings. Those that were not willing to do right were encouraged to leave the territory. In the Sunday
afternoon session, Grant called upon the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. He also advised the teachers in each district of the ward to report to the bishop at least once a month the standing of members. After other speakers had elaborated on Grant's remarks, Grant concluded the meeting by calling for a manifestation of support as to whether the Saints were willing to renew their covenants through rebaptism. It was unanimously given.⁵⁷

The following day the first of several mass baptisms of Mormon settlements took place. All together, nearly five hundred Saints were immersed under Grant's direction, with approximately eighty, including the bishop and his counselors, being baptized by Grant himself. On this occasion, the sick were administered to and children blessed. After the service, Grant counseled the bishop "to follow a systematic course to sustain the home missionaries who stood in need of assistance."⁵⁸

There followed one more day of sermonizing. On this day, Tuesday, both Grant and Joseph Young spoke. Jedediah then called on the twelve teachers of the ward to pray and speak. The teachers were followed by the home missionaries, who were asked to bless the people, "which they did in the name of the Lord.... Every heart was made glad and the people were deeply affected by the power of God."⁵⁹

The first Reformation conference had been a success. While it is clear that Brigham Young sent Grant north to preach repentance and reform, it is also clear that Jedediah felt great latitude in carrying out Young's instructions. One day after the Kaysville conference, Grant said that while Brigham instructed him to tell Kaysville inhabitants to live their religion, "when he got there he felt like baptizing and confirming them anew into the church."⁶⁰ Grant also indicated that a remark made by Joseph Young caused him to take the direction he did.

This makes me think of a circumstance that occurred when we went to Kaysville to preach the reformation, under the direction of bother Brigham. There was a dark and dull spirit there which was not very congenial to our natures, and brother Joseph Young felt life in him, he was full of the Spirit. After staying a couple of days, he said to me, "Brother Grant, they feel cold, and I guess we had better go to Farmington, preach there, and go home." After a while I said to him, "Do you know how I feel about it? In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I will never leave this land, until this people surrender. I will hang the flag of the Lord Jesus Christ on their doors, and there shall be a siege of forty days. Then let every man storm the castle, and rule against the bulwarks of hell, and let every Elder throw the arrows of God almighty through the sinner, and pierce their livers, and penetrate their vitals, until the banner of Christ shall wave triumphantly over Israel. Shall we give up, and let the wicked and ungodly overcome us? No, in the name and by the power of God we will overcome them. We will cleanse the inside of the platter and have Israel saved, through the name of Jesus Christ, and by the power of his word."⁶¹

Probably by design, on the same Sunday Grant was initiating reform in Kaysville, Brigham was rebuking the Saints in Salt Lake City for lying, stealing, swearing, committing adultery, and quarreling with husbands and wives and children. Wilford Woodruff recorded that "it was one of the strongest addresses...ever delivered to this Church" and that Young's "voice and words were like the thundering of Mount Sinai."⁶²

But the peals of thunder were just beginning. "There are sins that men commit," Brigham told the Saints a week later, "for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world, or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt upon
the ground, that the smoke there of might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins.”63

Jedediah Grant followed Young at the pulpit and continued in the same tone. Grant advised abject sinners to consult with the president, ask for a committee to attend to their cases, and select a location where their blood might be shed. For such hardened wrong-doers, water would simply not do, as “their sins are too deep a dye.”64

The seemingly harsh and unqualified utterances made by Young and Grant on blood atonement have furnished fodder for generations of anti-Mormon writers bent on describing how freely blood flowed in lawless Utah.65 To Mormon apologists, they have caused bewilderment and occasional concern. While references to blood atonement can be found both before and after the Reformation, those made in September 1856 are among the most pointed and oft-referred to.

Why did Brigham Young make such declarations? Did he believe in blood atonement? What did he have in mind when he urged Saints to practice it?66 In all likelihood, not nearly so much as some have concluded. While Brigham probably entertained a theoretical notion of an ideal future theocratic society that would require individuals to atone for grievous sin, he clearly recognized that such a practice would be illegal according to existing statutes. Furthermore, it is doubtful that Young, characteristically patient and forgiving with regard to foibles of most church members, ever envisioned that such a penalty would be meted out to anyone excepting, perhaps, a hard-bitten apostate who had betrayed Mormonism’s ideals.67

Indeed, Brigham Young’s motive in preaching blood atonement during the Reformation was not theological—it was practical. The Mormon prophet was not above using hyperbole or incendiary talk to bring about desired results. If biting invective would improve the people, Brigham would use it.68 The blood atonement statements were likely designed to frighten church members into conforming with Latter-day Saint principles. To Saints with good intentions, they were calculated to cause alarm, introspection, and ultimately repentance. For those who refused to comply with Mormon standards, it was hoped such ominous threats would hasten their departure from the Territory.69

In truth, issuing stern preachments from the pulpit became Brigham Young’s major role in the early weeks of the reformation. To other church leaders was given the task of carrying out reform procedures in wards and branches. Jedediah Grant seemed to be everywhere. On occasion, he joined with Brigham in hurling thunderbolts from the pulpit. More often, he could could be found preaching reform in Mormon settlements.

Jedediah’s encounters with Latter-day Saint congregations were always stirring and eventful. Following the successful reform meetings in Kaysville, he moved to Farmington, where 445 people were rebaptized.70 In late September and early October, Grant held conferences in Centerville, where, because some individuals needed “time to prepare their minds,” rebaptism was postponed for three days.71 At Bountiful, rebaptism was postponed indefinitely as the people “were as cold as
As Jedediah Grant concluded his tour of the northern settlements, John Young began preaching and teaching at settlements south of Salt Lake City. Starting in Spanish Fork in Utah County in the last of September, Young and his assigned group of home missionaries held conferences successively at Jordan Mill, Lake City (American Fork), Pleasant Grove, and Union. These meetings, like Grant's, were somewhat spontaneous and lacked specific focus. Occasionally, speaking and singing in tongues and prophesyings were reported. More predictable were the stirring sermons, public confessions, and rebaptisms. It was hoped that rebaptism, a symbolic act that remitted sin and renewed covenants, would provide a significant fellowshipping experience.

In fact, rebaptism was a relatively common practice among Mormons throughout the nineteenth century. It became a binding directive during the Reformation. Brigham himself set the precedent. On October 2, 1856, just after Heber C. Kimball had dedicated the new baptismal font, the First Presidency baptized and confirmed each other. Three days later at the close of the Sunday conference session, Young and Kimball went down to the font and baptized members of their own families. Later Apostle Lorenzo Snow and other leaders received the ordinance. On October 6, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, recently returned from the British Isles, baptized many of the elders who had served under him and who likewise had just come back to Zion. Richards also baptized their families. Finally, on October 8 and 9, thirty-six ecclesiastical leaders, most of them bishops, were rebaptized.

All lay members were expected to follow the example of their leaders and be rebaptized. It soon became evident, however, that a mass rebaptism of church members in the valley would not bring about desired reform and that more systematic procedures would have to be adopted to ensure lasting changes. With this in mind, church leaders on November 9 warned the Saints not to partake of the sacrament unless they had made proper repentance and restitution. Later, Brigham observed that “many will go into the waters of baptism ... who are guilty of the most heinous crimes in the sight of both God and Man.” “We want the guilty,” asserted the Mormon leader, “to confess their sins, and repent of all their wickedness before they go into the waters of baptism.”

Thus, the revivalistic spirit, the hurried confession and rebaptism, gradually gave way to a less spontaneous, more directed reform. Some weeks would elapse before this more judicious and reasoned spirit would prevail, but the steps leading to it are discernible by early November of 1856. This new sense of order and direction was brought about by preaching the importance of systematic reform to priesthood leaders and then eliciting their support, by training a cadre of select home missionaries to teach the people, and by providing a checklist of questions to help missionaries (and sometimes bishops and teachers) determine how far individuals had lapsed.

The high priests quorum started its refinement program in early October. President John Young rejoiced that the time had come when the dividing line would be drawn, when “the sinner in Zion shall fear and tremble.” Four weeks later,
Brigham Young told quorum members that if they “were now to be weighed in
the scales, the weight would fall quick.”

The presidencies of the seventies received some especially stern preaching.
According to Jedediah Grant, “President Young was asked if it would not be well
to send the Presidents of Seventies out thro’ the Territories with Home Missionaries.
He said, No! They would preach the people to sleep and then to hell.”

Apparently bishops were also in a spiritual coma. At a special bishops and
lesser priesthood meeting on September 30, Grant inquired pointedly if the bishops
and their counselors attended to their prayers, family and private. He also inquired
how many washed themselves once a week in pure water all over. When the majority
of those present responded negatively to Grant’s questions, Jedediah asserted him-
self. The bishops must, said Grant, repent and purify themselves, and then go out
and purify the whole city. “If the Bishops do not do this,” Jedediah warned, “they
shall be removed from their place, and the Marshall shall receive orders to send
Policemen round to wash the Bishops and people and cleanse every house, for
the wrath of God burns against us.”

Home missionaries became the key reformational organization. They had been
organized a year earlier to preach reform to the lethargic Saints, and in the fall of
1856 they became an organization with considerable clout. Those who were chosen
to be home missionaries were generally the most capable and devoted young men
in the kingdom. Many of the home missionaries that served during the Reformation
had recently returned from overseas missions, and Young, seeing their spiritual
strength reflected in October conference addresses, proposed that they “go and
strengthen their brethren throughout the Territory of Utah.”

Before strengthening their brethren, however, the missionaries had to be
strengthened themselves. On October 27, they met to be instructed by Jedediah
Grant. Grant announced that they would be directed in their work by Wilford
Woodruff and Franklin D. Richards of the Twelve and then informed them as to
what course they should pursue. They were to assume that the people had not
heard missionaries before and were told to prepare for battle. They were instructed
to “wake up the bishops and all presiding officers, and then the people,” a pattern
that became typical during the Reformation. Finally, Grant asked them to find out
about the people and know what they were doing. On November 3, the mis-
sionaries met for further instruction. According to John Powell, Brigham Young
locked the doors after the opening song and prayer and announced that he was
going “to question the brethren, and... charged them in the name of Jesus Christ
to answer the truth.” To “those who cover up their sins,” said Brigham, “the curse
of God shall be upon them.” Though it was a “soul-searching” time, apparently
all were deemed worthy. The next day, the missionaries were assigned their
various fields of labor throughout the city, each of the twenty wards being assigned
two missionaries.

To enable both missionaries and church members to assess what areas of
gospel living Saints were deficient in, a catechism was provided. The origins of
the catechism are hazy, but it appears that its roots can be traced to Grant’s initial
reformation journey to the northern settlements. On that occasion, Grant asked...
two or three fundamental questions, such as, “Are you having both private and family prayers?” and “Are you washing yourself regularly?” In September, at the special bishops’ meeting, he asked bishops these same questions. Alarmed that many said they did not wash regularly, Grant formulated more questions about cleanliness. About five weeks later, the list of questions, by this time numbering twelve or thirteen, was used to examine the newly called home missionaries, apostles, seventies, bishops and counselors, and teachers. Within a few days, additional questions were added, the copy was sent to the printer’s, and the printed copies were placed in the hands of home missionaries, bishops, and teachers. By this time there were twenty-seven questions:

Have you committed murder, by shedding innocent blood, or consenting thereto?
Have you betrayed your brethren or sisters in anything?
Have you committed adultery, by having any connection with a woman that was not your wife or a man that was not your husband?
Have you taken and made use of property not your own, without the consent of the owner?
Have you cut hay where you had no right to or turned your animals into another person’s grain or field, without his knowledge and consent?
Have you lied about or maliciously misrepresented any person or thing?
Have you borrowed anything that you have not returned, or paid for?
Have you borne false witness against your neighbor?
Have you taken the name of the Deity in vain?
Have you coveted anything not your own?
Have you been intoxicated with strong drink?
Have you found lost property and not returned it to the owner, or used all diligence to do so?
Have you branded an animal that you did not know to be your own?
Have you taken another’s horse or mule from the range and rode it without the owner’s consent?
Have you fulfilled your promises in paying your debts, or run into debt without prospect of paying?
Have you taken water to irrigate with, when it belonged to another person at the time you used it?
Do you pay your tithing promptly?
Do you teach your family the gospel of salvation?
Do you speak against your brethren, or against any principle taught us in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Book of Doctrine and Covenants, Revelations given through Joseph Smith the Prophet and the presidency of the Church as now organized?
Do you pray in your family night and morning and attend to secret prayer?
Do you wash your body and have your family do so as often as health and cleanliness require and circumstances will permit?
Do you labor six days and rest, or go to the house of worship, on the seventh?
Do you and your family attend Ward meetings?
Do you preside over your household as a servant of God, and is your family subject to you?
Have you labored diligently and earned faithfully the wages paid you by your employers?
Do you oppress the hireling in his wages?
Have you taken up and converted any stray animal to your own use, or in any manner appropriated one to your benefit without accounting therefore to the proper authorities?

It would appear that the earliest questions were concerned with specific acts of wrongdoing. Many of the later questions dealt with sins of omission. The broad range of questions appears to have been deliberate, pointing out to even the most diligent of Saints that his life was in need of reforming.
Now that the home missionaries, bishops, and teachers were armed with a questionnaire, they renewed their efforts to revitalize their fellow Saints. The plan was similar throughout the twenty wards in the Salt Lake area. Home missionaries would generally contact the bishop, meet with his congregation, and announce that they would be working with the ward for an indefinite time to remove the cobwebs of lethargy. Often, the home missionaries would catechize the bishop and his counselors, then the teachers, before starting on the membership. Expectedly, there was some variation from ward to ward. Occasionally the home missionaries assigned much of the catechizing responsibility to the teachers, while in at least one of the wards the bishop preferred to assume the burden. Teachers were asked to contact families on their assigned blocks at least once every two weeks, and report meetings were held two or three times a month to allow teachers and bishops to evaluate the spiritual status of those under their jurisdiction with the home missionaries. Missionaries in turn met regularly with elders Woodruff and Richards to report on the wards and receive further instruction. In early December, the bishops began to meet with the missionaries, a move that was probably engendered to unify reform efforts as well as alleviate some of the bishop-missionary authority conflicts that had cropped up.

While missionaries and local leaders were given to understand that the catechism should serve as a reasonably comprehensive index to proper behavior, they also understood that it did not cover all areas of concern to church leaders. Perhaps the most notable example had to do with the practice of plural marriage. While the doctrine was not mentioned among checklist questions, it was made known through home missionaries, bishops, and teachers that most members had been slack in obeying it. Church members were informed that a monogamist, though worthy, would not inherit the highest chambers of heaven. Those coveted places, as the fifth verse of a noted Reformation song made plain, were reserved for the plurally married:

Now sisters, list to what I say
With trials this world is rife,
You can't expect to miss them all,
Help husband get a wife!
Now, this advice I freely give,
If exalted you would be,
Remember that your husband must
Be blessed with more than thee.
Then, O, let us say,
God bless the wife that strives
And aids her husband all she can
To obtain a dozen wives.

The consequences of this advocacy of polygamy were almost immediate. By December 1856, correspondence sent to Brigham Young included numerous requests from bishops in behalf of men in their wards to marry plural wives. In most letters, the bishop attested to the worthiness of the petitioners to assume this role, and often the prospective wife's father indicated that he approved of the marriage. In nearly all cases, Brigham granted permission.
Polygamy, of course, had been practiced by Mormons for many years, but it was never a popular doctrine among either sex. The comparatively positive response of both men and women to the “plural marriage decrees” of the Reformation, then, can be viewed as a valid indicator of just how far church members were willing to adjust their lives to follow their leaders and thereby increase their level of righteousness.

III

As with any reform movement, there were problems, excesses, and improprieties. One minor challenge that faced the church leaders was solving occasional authority conflicts between home missionaries and bishops. As early as November 23, Wilford Woodruff lamented that there should be a question between missionaries and bishops as to which was the biggest. Some of the potential conflicts were alleviated when it was decided in early December to have missionaries and bishops meet together, but there was still some friction throughout January. As late as January 20, 1857, Orson Hyde answered the frequently raised question of how far a missionary’s jurisdiction extended by telling assembled bishops and missionaries that “the spirit of God will teach you in every particular instance, just how far your authority extends.”

A more serious problem had to do with the irritation and resentment caused by some overzealous home missionaries and teachers. Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter knew of “many instances when teachers without wisdom or the spirit of God, have gone into families and raised a spirit of opposition and rebellion.” “Some teachers,” observed Hunter, “go for no other purpose than to find out iniquity.” Wilford Woodruff warned missionaries, bishops, and teachers that “when you knock the people in the head in order to wake them, do not... pound them until you kill them.” “It is not necessary,” added Woodruff, “to jump or shout and stomp off 50+ worth of shoe leather in order to get the people to wake up or reform but it is a straight forward business matter.”

The administration of the catechism was a particularly sensitive problem. It would appear that initially, at least in some instances, it was administered publicly, and the confession that followed was likewise public. Most often, however, teachers and home missionaries went to individual homes and catechized families as units. This naturally led to embarrassing moments. In his autobiography, James Allen Browning wrote of “scathing investigations” that were humiliating:

How well I remember them coming to our house. There was no one at home but Tom Owen and me. They asked if I desired to be questioned in a separate room. I said no, and smiling at Tom I asked him if he did. Poor boy, he was but 16, he looked as guileless as a child, and said no. They then proceeded with me. It began, have you committed murder, ditto, ditto —adultery? ditto-ditto, robbery? —spoken slander of your neighbor? — Broken down your neighbor’s fences? —Brought your children up in principles of righteousness, etc. It was over a foot in length! Blessed were those who could answer in innocence. But I do believe many in those times were frightened into paying and confessing sins they never committed. It was a fearful time for all. Whether it did good or was instituted by the spirit of God is not for me to judge. I leave an open verdict in my heart of hearts. Only I know it was a fearful ordeal, and fear is a slavish passion and is not begotten by the spirit of God. 
King's discomfiting experience was not singular, and church leaders quickly moved to curb abuses. Heber C. Kimball stressed the importance of trimming "up the Wards in a gentle manner, without making such an ungodly stink," without "exposing the brethren as Ham did his father Noah." Two weeks later, Wilford Woodruff told missionaries to catechize family members separately to preserve family harmony.

It was hoped that catechismal checkups and verbal admonitions of home missionaries would provide sufficient inducement for all to mend their ways. However, as the Reformation progressed, it became clear to church leaders that not all would reform and that community purity would never become a reality until all polluting elements were removed. Thus, getting rid of incorrigibles came to be nearly as important as purifying those who were earnest in their desire to do better. "It is rather warm for the wicked," Brigham wrote to George Q. Cannon in January of 1857, "and we expect when Spring comes there will be a scattering out of such as cannot abide righteousness and the purifying influences of the Spirit of God. Let them go, it is better for us to have them leave now in times of peace than to have them fail us in times of trouble when peradventure their treachery might cost some of us our lives. We hope the fire will continue to burn and grow hotter until wickedness and iniquity shall be consumed and truth triumph over the whole earth."

In their pulpit pronouncements, church leaders gave recalcitrants every incentive to leave the Territory. On January 11, 1857, Heber C. Kimball observed that males who violated Mormon women "are worthy of death, and they will get it." "That time is near by and God has spoken from the heavens," Kimball continued, "and when certain things are about right we shall make a public example of those characters." A month later, Brigham told assembled Saints that "the time has been in Israel under the law of God... that if a man was found guilty of adultery, he must have his blood shed, and that time is near at hand."

The tough talk was rarely translated into action, however. While Brigham Young and others threatened destruction upon the enemies of the Church, there is no evidence that any of the enemies were destroyed. It would appear though, that some harassment was resorted to when verbal threats were ineffective. While there is no evidence that so-called Danites existed in Utah Territory, it seems apparent that locally organized "trouble-shooting" groups help maintain order in some locales. It is interesting that Brigham maintained an amiable association with Bill Hickman, a ruffian of questionable character. On one occasion in 1860, Mayor Abraham Smoot questioned the propriety of such a relationship: "Mayor Smoot had a conversation with the President about Wm. A. Hickman, observing people see him come in and out of the office, and that leads them to suppose he is sanctioned in all he does by the President. He also observed that dogs were necessary to take care of the flock, but if the Shepherd's dogs hurt the sheep it would be time to remove them." Brigham responded that "Hickman was in the hands of the Lord and he believed he was interested in this Latter-day work."

It would be easy to exaggerate the amount of violence in Utah Territory, however. In an age and a land where violence was commonplace, Salt Lake City
and its environs had conspicuously little. Certainly accusations that hundreds of individuals had to flee Utah during the Reformation are suspect. That some might have thought their lives to be in jeopardy is understandable. Undoubtedly, not everyone knew that Brigham's threats were generally deliberate ploys to pressure dissenters into leaving the territory. "The fire of the reformation is burning many out who flee from the Territory, afraid of their lives," wrote Hosea Stout. "The wicked flee when no one pursues," Stout affirmed, "and so with an apostate Mormon; he always believes his life is in danger and flees accordingly."116

But while hundreds of disenchanted Mormons eventually left the Territory, church leaders and missionaries were able to arouse or inspire the majority of church members to reform. Two major methods used to bring this about, verbal scourgings and checklist visits of missionaries, have been discussed and are well-known dimensions of the Reformation era. What is less known is that other means, more subtle but still ever-present, were also deployed by the presiding leaders of the Church to hasten improvement.

One such inducement was the frequently given warning that if the people did not reform, they would be left without their leaders and lose the higher (Melchizedek) priesthood. Brigham Young made it known that the sins and lethargic ways of the Saints had been an inexorable burden on him, one that could not be borne much longer. Jedediah Grant had sensed this and died of fatigue in trying to share the burden of responsibility.117 Fortunately, the improvement in community morals and righteousness as a result of the Reformation had alleviated much of the burden.118 Any future deviation, however, could result in the Saints being stripped of their leadership and priesthood.119 On December 28, 1856, Wilford Woodruff told assembled Saints at the Tabernacle that "the First Presidency... have retired from our midst because the people will not do as they are told—that is they withdrew themselves from the people for the present."120 The members were warned that the higher priesthood would depart into the wilderness among either the Lamanites or the Ten Tribes, and the Saints would be left with the Aaronic (lower) Priesthood and the law of carnal commandments.121 The absence of Brigham Young from all public services in December and January was probably intended to cause the Saints to ponder the potentiality of such an occurrence.

Undoubtedly the biggest incentive to reform was provided by the declaration that the Reformation was to be a time of mercy and forgiveness, a period when nearly all former sins could be remitted. While this concept runs counter to the prevailing image of the Reformation, it was, in fact, a dominant theme.

It was on November 9, 1856, at a meeting of seventies, that Brigham Young first announced that all sins would be forgiven. According to Wilford Woodruff, President Young "promised the people in the name of Jesus Christ if they would repent and turn from their sins from that hour all their sins should be forgiven them and not remembered against them no more forever either on Earth or in Heaven."122

Brigham's message that the Reformation was a time of mercy was conveyed to ecclesiastical leaders throughout the Territory. Bishop Tarleton Lewis of Parowan was instructed to tell his congregation that "all manner of sin, save it be the sin
against the Holy Ghost," was forgiven.125 "I do not wish to know the names nor the errors of them who are called Saints," Brigham wrote to Bishop Philo Farnsworth in April 1857. "Let it suffice that they [sins] confess and forsake their sins, and live nearer to the Lord than they have hitherto done." On October 29, 1856, Young received a letter from stake president Isaac Haight of Cedar City. A local man had just seen Haight and confessed to a sexual indiscretion with a young woman he later married. Previous to this, he had taken out his endowments. Haight indicated that the individual was sorry and was willing to do anything to make amends for his sin and obtain forgiveness, even to having his own blood shed. Haight wondered what course of action should be taken. Brigham replied: "This time in the name of the Lord remission and pardon, even of Adultery, are promised to all that truly repent, confess, forsake their sins, and make restitution, when necessary, then ever after live their religion, be on the Lord's side and do right. To all such people you may bless and encourage in their journey through life."125

While stressing that the Reformation was a time of mercy, church leaders also made it plain that this was temporary, that future sins would not be pardoned so easily. Franklin D. Richards charged home missionaries with the responsibility of making people aware of this.

I do not think you will see this kingdom settle back and go to sleep; if it does we may take our knapsacks and go into the wilderness. The Lord will not wait upon this people any longer—if they go to sleep again, you will see judgement laid to the line, and justice will walk up and mercy will stand right back.... If you see a man that will confess his sins, he should feel the impression upon him that that must be the last time; if he does not, he will inherit sorrow unto himself, and will not get off as easily as he has.... Give them to understand if they are ever catechized hereafter it will be from the winter of 1856-57, and if they commit sins hereafter they will be brought to judgment, and it will be laid to the line and there will not be the mercy that is now shown.126

The Reformation, then, became a watershed as far as forgiveness of sins was concerned. For those who confessed their transgressions and expressed a willingness to do better, there was no court action, no period of probation or suspension. Rarely, the Saints were told, had God been so merciful. As Lorenzo Brown was given to understand: "It appears that we have the privilege of our sins being forgiven inasmuch as we make restitution to those we have injured and then renew our covenants before God.... Our sins are looked upon as the sins of ignorance, and the God of Heaven in His infinite goodness is pleased to pass by them without an atonement, but from this time forward all sins have to be atoned for."127

There was still another factor that became a stimulus for reform. It was the ever-growing belief that the Reformation was a prelude to an event or events of millennial significance. This belief was not widespread in the early stages of reform. But as enthusiasm and emotion increased, and as a majority of Saints became more diligent in their religious practices, the notion that the Reformation was a preparatory period for events of a portentous nature gained currency. "It is a momentous time in Israel," said Wilford Woodruff, "and it is necessary for this reformation in order to have the people prepared for the great things of God which are coming upon the earth."128

There were, then, a variety of motivations that prompted Latter-day Saints to repent. Spirited declarations from church leaders and checklist meetings with
missionaries touched many responsive chords. The threatened loss of priesthood leadership, the promised absolution of sins, and the conviction that cataclysmic events were comparatively near were additional incentives to alter life-styles.

It was a time of excitement and introspection, and nearly every Saint was affected. From apostle to lay member, church members became aware of areas of spiritual barrenness and sensed an urgent need to repent. Apostles Hyde, Woodruff, and Snow even offered to surrender their apostleships if Brigham could find more qualified men. John Brown of Utah County noted that he met with his family, talked candidly of faults and shortcomings, and covenanted from that time forth to live a more upright life. Perhaps a typical reaction was that of Benjamin F. Johnson. “In my own heart,” he declared, “when lit by the candle of the Lord I found more of evil than I wished to carry, and I laid all down at the feet of the Lord... and in the waters of baptism and repentance sought to live a higher and more perfect life.”

There were many evidences of spiritual renewal. Church attendance increased dramatically, and often people had to be turned away from meetings. Tithing and free-will offerings increased significantly. The correspondence to Brigham Young included a significant number of inquiries about individual sins, and there was a virtual deluge of letters asking for permission to marry plural wives. Indeed, matrimony became such a brisk business that Brigham spent much of his time administering endowments and marrying couples (often plurally).

There was a marked improvement in community morale. It was clear to everyone, from church leader to lay member, that a vigorous new spirit prevailed in Zion. On numerous occasions, Brigham Young expressed approval with the collective improvement of the Saints, even noting as early as late November that “if this people continue to do their duty as well as they are doing it there will not be three years before we shall have the administration of Angels in our midst.”

David Fulmer, a member of the Salt Lake Fifth Ward, contrasted the difference the reform had made:

Since a spirit of reformation has commenced the anger of the Lord is turned from us but if we had not reformed it would have been worse with us as a people. The crop last year according to Bishop Hunter’s calculation... was 15 percent under an average crop. This year they will be about 100 percent over an average.... When Bro. Brigham comes to the stand there is no scourging and whipping as it used to be but he is full of blessings for the people which is a manifestation of the Lord is pleased with us. I never saw such a time as the present since I came into the Church. There is no law suits nor high councils; if anything is the matter the Teachers or Bishops are able to settle it.

Fulmer was not exaggerating. Many home missionaries in early January reported that the people in their assigned ward were living harmoniously and were ready for rebaptism. In the first week in February, Brigham dramatically returned to public life, an obvious signal that he was pleased with the efforts of the Saints. On February 10, 1857, all home missionaries announced that nearly everyone in their wards was ready for rebaptism. For most, that ordinance took place in early March. Many Saints regarded their rebaptism as a solemn occasion, a time of thankfulness and spiritual renewal. Richard Ballantyne penned this account of his rebaptism:
I was baptized by Bishop Edward Hunter for the remission of my sins, and the renewal of my covenant with God, to serve Him to the end of my days. . . . I am thankful to thee, O God for this privilege and I determine to serve Thee with greater integrity and more wisdom. . . . And may the Lord my God now help me when I go out, and when I come into my house, that I may henceforth be a child of God, walking in all His Commandments and ordinances blameless, that I may serve Him while here in the flesh without blamed by the aid of the Holy Spirit, that I may behold His face in the world of Glory.

The sacrament was restored in April, approximately one month after the rebaptism of the Saints. For most Mormons, participation in this ordinance had been prohibited since mid-November. Elder Thomas Jeremy, pleased that he could once again take part in communion, thanked God for this kindness. "I pray . . . to my Heavenly father," Jeremy wrote, "that He may bless me and my family that we may ever be worthy of partaking of this most holy ordinance acceptably."

It was also in April that apostates and gentiles started leaving Salt Lake Valley. In late December 1856, Brigham Young told home missionaries "that the Gentiles and Apostates must leave us in the spring or he would remove them on chips." Apparently enough left that Brigham did not have to worry about their removal. In July 1857, Young noted in a letter to George Q. Cannon that the territory had taken on a new look. "The way Lawyers, loafers, special pleaders, apostates, officials, and filth has been cast out," Brigham affirmed, "is a caution to all sinners, that here they would be in the wrong place."

It would be unfair, however, to assume that all who departed were community blemishes. Elias Smith observed that many of the apostates left hurriedly, before their nearest neighbors even knew that they were disenchant with Mormonism. "A curious spirit seems to actuate them," said Smith, "and I am not sure but some leave without knowing where they are going nor what for."

One disenchanted church member told David Candland he was leaving because "the reformation had developed more than they ever thought of." With the rebaptism of the Saints, the restoration of the sacrament, and the exiting of apostates and undesirables, the Reformation as an organized movement came to an end in Salt Lake City and nearby locales. Significant improvement had taken place spiritually and physically. Church leaders had expressed satisfaction with the improved spiritual tone of the community, and the abundant snowfall and favorable crop outlook suggested to many that God too was pleased.

What is the legacy of the Mormon Reformation of 1856-57? Certainly this was not the only time that church leaders decided to institute a reform movement among the Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century. Among others, there was a general reform at Nauvoo in 1842, some stirring of reform in 1874 when Brigham Young instigated united orders, a major priesthood reorganization in 1877, and a comparatively minor reform impulse in 1883-84 under President John Taylor.

But the Reformation of 1856-57 was distinctive because it was carried out with a fervor and earnestness not found in any other Mormon reform movement. To a degree, this fervor can be attributed to the charisma and magnetism of Jedediah Morgan Grant. Of more consequence than any single personality, however, were
two related factors involving space and time. For the first time in their history, the Saints were segregated from the outside world and insulated against interference and reprisal. For the first time, they could reveal and practice controversial doctrines openly. For the first time, they could determine their own direction and proceed at their own pace.

To church leaders, the direction was evident. They were convinced that their destiny was to build an earthly kingdom in preparation for Christ's second advent. But the pace, at least in the minds of the First Presidency in the mid 1850s, had been unacceptably slow. That pace was quickened by both the rhetoric and results of the Mormon Reformation, and by February and March of 1857 an eagerness of spirit permeated Mormon communities. Convinced that the "vail of darkness [had been] rolled back," some began "to know and realize that the day of our redemption draws near."149 "Let us be faithful, keep our covenants, and press onward until [Christ] shall come," said Daniel Wells.150 Believing that "important events and duties transpire quite as fast as we are prepared for them," Wells had earlier warned Saints not to be sidetracked from godly pursuits with the approaching planting season.151 According to Wilford Woodruff, they were not. Writing in July 1857, Woodruff noted that "the spirit of the Reformation lives in their [the Saints'] hearts, and brings forth fruit in their lives, and therefore President Young frequently of late has said this is a 'God blessed people.' "152

Confident they were doing God's will, the Saints were almost defiant when they learned in July that a United States Army division was marching to Utah. Periodically throughout the 1850s, federal officials in Utah had registered complaints over alleged civil disorders. Perhaps the most influential of these reports was one sent by Judge William Drummond in March 1857. Among other things, Drummond charged the Church with murder, harassment of federal officers, slander of the federal government, disregard of the laws, and destruction of court records. Unwisely acting on the allegations, President James Buchanan sent military troops to Utah to install a new governor and restore order. With Reformation zeal still burning brightly, some Saints read a cosmic meaning into the event, assuming it was Satan's last mighty effort to destroy the kingdom.153 Buoyed up by Reformation successes, church leaders expressed little fear of the army as long as the Saints remained righteous. "The greater its numbers, the greater and more complete its overthrow," Orson Hyde said in October. "If the Red Sea be not the trap in which the enemy will be caught," predicted Hyde, "there will be a snow of hail storm, a whirlwind, an earthquake, fire from above or from beneath, or the sword of the Lord and of Brigham."154 Earlier Heber C. Kimball had assured church members, "There will not be much fighting for us to do if we live our religion."155

The Saints did not have to do much fighting, but not because the soldiers were deterred. Realizing that the army would come and that a military encounter would be futile, church members adopted a scorched-earth policy. Between the end of March and mid May 1858, thirty thousand Saints moved south to the vicinity of Provo. Only a selected number of men remained behind to take care of crops and, if necessary, to burn homes if the army decided to occupy them. The soldiers entered Salt Lake City on June 26, 1858. Leaving all Mormon property alone, they
marched to Cedar Valley and erected a permanent base. On June 30, two weeks after the peace agreement, Brigham Young told bedraggled Saints to return home. It had been a difficult time, and the physical hardships were compounded by frustration and bewilderment.

It is in the months immediately following the return of the Saints to their homes that one senses a waning of Reformation enthusiasm and anticipation. Seemingly, the events surrounding the coming of the army, the interruptions, confusions, and disappointments, caused many church members to lose their former fervor. On November 1, 1858, Jesse Little, second counselor to Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter, fumed that the bishops were “dead! dead! dead!” Two weeks later, it was noted that “a spirit seemed to be manifest now, to try to defeat the sayings of those [who] preside over them.” In April 1859, Edward Hunter said, “I never saw such a time as this, when nearly every person either finds fault with, or feels disposed to do so, with the authorities that preside over them.” The following month, Bishop Hardy reported that many Saints were leaving Utah because they could not make a decent living. In July 1859, the gloomy Hunter complained that “not more than one in five attend to their prayers.”

Although Hunter had a propensity for accentuating despair, he was not the only one to lament the overall lack of commitment among Saints in Zion. Brigham Young’s assessment of the benefits of the Reformation, given in November 1858, denoted similar disenchantment:

Do you think I feel like preaching to such a people? I have preached to them until they are almost preached to death, and I do not feel like preaching much more to them. You know how I felt some two or three years ago this fall or the latter part of the summer. I felt as tho’ I could not live without taking my valise in my hand and walking through this Territory to find out if there was a man for God, for it seemed to me as tho’ the whole people had gone astray. I related my feelings to a few, and they started out. Jedediah fell a victim to that spirit, he took it from me, and he labored until he went into his grave, to find among all the people who had forsaken their homes and their all in foreign countries to come to this place [who] were still for Christ and none else. We had a reformation, and what is the result? I will tell you by relating an anecdote. It was asked an Elder in one of the settlements if the reformation had reached them; “Yes,” he replied, “and thank God it is all over.” That is the almost universal feeling now. Unless some men are held by the collar, or by the hair of the head they will go to hell—they will not cleave to the Lord with all their hearts.

Allowing for the possibility that Brigham Young was engaging in hyperbole when he downplayed the effectuality of the Reformation, his assessment is nevertheless insightful. It may be that both critics and apologists have claimed too much for the Reformation. Certainly the reform impulse was on the whole more structured, less spontaneous, and more restrained than has been generally believed. Conversely, it appears that far from being a spiritual watershed, its impact for many was of short duration and minimal consequence.

That is not to say that there were not positive and perhaps lasting benefits from the Reformation of 1856-57. Scores of accounts in diaries and journals attest to the “spiritual rejuvenation” that many received during the reform. The historian has entered a subjective realm when he attempts to assess the genuineness or duration of such experiences. Suffice it to say that many individuals noted a “marked increase
of the Spirit of God among them."163 For such people, the Reformation was a significant, even pivotal, time.

But there were also deleterious effects. There was a rash of divorces, a likely result of too many Saints entering into hasty marriages. "I was obedient but not wise," wrote Peter Madsen in his journal. "I married a girl but she did it more of fright than of love; for that reason it could not last long—only about 9 months [and] then she was divorced in 1858."164

Misplaced Reformation fervor also resulted in people leaving Mormon country who could have contributed to building the kingdom had they been treated more deftly. Elder Jacob Gates, while acknowledging the positive merits of the Reformation, regretted that all Saints had not followed the "worthy examples set by leaders" and been "more merciful and kind to the human family." "I tell you," Gates said, "we should learn to deal with people with a gentle hand whom we know to be tender, such as new converts to the faith that they may have time to learn and grow strong in the knowledge of God."165

Perhaps the most damaging Reformation legacy was the grist it provided anti-Mormon writers. It might be argued that with the exception of polygamy, the doctrine of blood atonement has resulted in more malignment and misunderstanding than any other church tenet. In actuality, it was a belief that influenced the course of capital punishment legislation in Utah, but outside of this it was largely hypothetical.166 But people act and react according to what they believe to be true, and undoubtedly hundreds or perhaps thousands of Americans and Europeans, fed a diet of lurid tales about exotic marriage customs, tyrannical leadership, and holy murders, came to regard Latter-day Saints as a despicable, if not dangerous, lot. To whatever extent unfounded Reformation tales of horror and violence enhanced this negative image was unfortunate.

What, then, should be made of the Reformation? To suggest that the Reformation was less influential than its detractors or advocates have claimed is not to disclaim its importance. Indeed, it was a peak time in a pivotal period of Mormon history—a period of intense optimism and nationalism. The relative isolation of Utah Territory in the 1850s provided opportunities to focus on internal concerns and individual regeneration as church leaders sought to create what sociologist Thomas O'Dea called a "near nation."167 The unbridled rhetoric of Brigham and others reflected their unconcern with the opinions of gentiles and their confidence that they were pursuing a proper course. That confidence was shaken with the return of church members from the South and the military occupation of the territory. National fires rekindled again in the early 1860s, but when the Civil War failed to lead to the consummation of all things, a re-reading of historical processes was made necessary.

Brigham Young remained adamant that God's designs would never be canceled but conceded that they might be postponed.168 Realizing that gentile intrusion might be a reality for some time, church leaders began to exhibit a spirit of conciliation. Emphasis was given to temple building and temple work. The Relief Society was reorganized after a suspension of some twenty years, and retrenchment societies were founded. In short, Reformation fervor and feelings of immediacy gave way to compromise and long-term planning. A course of accommodation had begun.
It was gradual—certainly it was imperceptible to nineteenth-century Saints—but it had begun.

NOTES


4. Space limitations necessitate my dealing with the Reformation primarily in and around church headquarters at Salt Lake City, where worship styles have always reflected more closely the ideal patterns envisioned by General Authorities. Certainly there was a more capricious and less orderly course of reform in outlying church units, which lacked adequate and regular supervision. I have discussed the Reformation movement in outlying Mormon villages and missions in my dissertation. All topics discussed in this article are treated in greater detail in that work. See Paul H. Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation” (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1981).


7. Reinwand, p. 22.

8. Reinwand maintained that while Mormons were basically premillennialistic, aspects of postmillennialism and amillennialism can be found in their theology. See Reinwand, pp. 33-34, 46. Thomas G. Alexander, in an important article on Mormon millennialism, rejected Reinwand's categorizations, claiming that the combination of atypical premillennialistic concepts and fundamental premillennialistic notions resulted in a “unique brand of Mormon premillennialism.” See Thomas G. Alexander, “Wilford Woodruff and the Changing Nature of Mormon Religious Experience,” *Church History* 45 (March 1976): 135-40.


11. In an insightful study of Mormonism, historian Jan Shipps observed that the movement of the pioneers westward to a new land was an event of sacred importance. It was, according to Shipps, “nothing less than starting at the beginning to people a holy land and build God’s Kingdom.” See Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 122.
12. Brigham Young to Joseph Young, December 1, 1854, Brigham Young Letterbooks, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Cited hereafter as Letterbooks and Church Archives.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Woodruff Journal, February 5, 1855. See also entry for July 8, 1855.


20. Ibid.

21. Brigham Young to Orson Pratt, August 30, 1855, Letterbooks.

22. Parley P. Pratt sermon, March 27, 1855, JD 1:85-86.

23. An excellent account of this effort is in Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, Building the City of God (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), pp. 15-40.

24. Ibid., pp. 71-75.

25. It is difficult to overemphasize the importance church leaders placed on unity. Heber C. Kimball asserted: "If all the Saints would do as well as they know, the Holy Ghost would rest upon the Elders of Israel in ten-fold power; it would be but a few years until the end should come." Heber C. Kimball sermon, October 7, 1854, Deseret News, October 12, 1854.

26. Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, p. 75.

27. Ibid., pp. 75-78.

28. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, January 27, 1857 (Ms. in Church Archives). This entry is misdated in the Manuscript History; appearing under January 27, 1856.

29. Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, p. 77. Economic unity was a paramount goal of Brigham Young throughout his administration. See Leonard J. Arrington, Brigham Young: American Moses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 376-77. Nevertheless, it is clear that Young did not approach this economic venture of the 1850s with the intensity and vigor that characterized his United Order movement of the 1870s.

30. The appointments and assigned districts were listed in the Deseret News, October 17, 1855. The historical antecedents of the home missionary movement of 1855 are discussed in A. Glen Humphries, "Missionaries to the Saints," BYU Studies (Autumn 1976), pp. 74-77.


32. Brigham Young to John Taylor, April 30, 1855, Letterbooks.

33. George A. Smith to Editor of The Mormon, June 20, 1855, In The Mormon, August 11, 1855.

34. Brigham Young to John Taylor, July 25, 1855, Letterbooks; Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, July 30, 1855, Letterbooks; George A. Smith to Editor of Millennial Star, July 31, 1855, in Millennial Star 17 (October 1855): 651.

35. Ibid.


39. Minutes of Presiding Bishop's Meetings with Bishops, 1851-1862, November 6, 1855; January 8, 1856; February 12, 1856; March 11, 1856; Ms. Church Archives. Cited hereafter as PBMB. Brigham Young sermon, June 15, 1856, JD 3:40-42. Young even accused some bishops of hoarding.


43. Ibid.
44. Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, April 3, 1856, Letterbooks.

45. Numerous writers and historians have noted the Old Testament orientation of nineteenth-century Mormons. Two of the most insightful analyses of the "Israel connection" are: Melodie Moench, "Nineteenth-Century Mormons: The New Israel," Dialogue, 12 (Spring 1979): 42-56, and Jan Shipps, Mormonism The Story of a New Religious Tradition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 119-24. There are also interesting parallels between the Mormon Reformation and the Puritan jeremiads of the seventeenth century. Perry Miller noted in his classic study of Puritan society, Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), that Puritan leaders came to discover that their kingdom had gone sour. In venting their frustration, they "would take up some verse of Isaiah or Jeremiah, set up the doctrine that God avenges the iniquities of a chosen people," list the deficiencies of what had become a sodomistic society, and then indicate that recent degenerative practices should be added to the list. Sacvan Bercovitch, in The American Jeremiad (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978), criticized Miller for ignoring the "pervasive theme of affirmation and exultation" which characterized jeremiads. Bercovitch noted that the "purpose of their jeremiads was to direct an imperiled people of God toward the fulfillment of their destiny, to guide them individually toward salvation, and collectively toward the American city of God."

46. Sociologists Gordon and Gary Shepherd observed that Mormonism's sectarian stance regarding its divine origins intensified the conviction that God's hand was present in all that happened. See Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), p. 80. Certainly Brigham Young was inclined to read God's hand in historical events. For instance, he felt that the Walker War of 1853 was a necessary means of chastening the people. See Brigham Young sermon, July 31, 1853, JD 1:168. Brigham also believed that the Lord would temper the elements if the Saints were deserving. Shortly after entering the Valley, he stated that "God... will temper the elements for the good of His Saints; He will rebuke the frost, and the sterility of the soil, and the land shall become fruitful." James S. Brown, Life of a Pioneer (Salt Lake City, 1900), pp. 121-22.

47. Deseret News, November 5, 1856.


52. Jedediah M. Grant sermon, November 2, 1856, JD 4:72.

53. Ibid.

54. Brigham Young sermon, August 30, 1857, JD 5:167-68.

55. In a recent documentary study, Dr. Gene Sessions has given Jedediah Grant a new look. The threatening sermons and fervent warnings are still there, of course, but there were calmer times. Sessions found that interspersed among Grant's seemingly unyielding statements on blood atonement were tightly knit apologetical tracts and that underneath his calloused veneer was a man of some sensitivity. See Gene A. Sessions, Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

56. Woodruff Journal, September 7, 1856.

57. Deseret News, September 24, 1856.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Deseret News, October 1, 1856.

61. Jedediah M. Grant Sermon, November 2, 1856, JD 4:74.

62. Woodruff Journal, September 14, 1856.

63. Brigham Young Sermon, September 21, 1856, JD 4:52-57.

64. Jedediah M. Grant Sermon, September 21, 1856, JD 4:49. See also Woodruff Journal, September 21, 1856.

65. See references under note 2.

66. Defining blood atonement is no easy task. For some vitriolic anti-Mormon writers, the term has become a "catch-all," an illogical but convenient means of explaining why any killing was committed in Utah Territory. This is an unfortunate and serious oversimplification. Certainly, there is no question
that on occasion, Mormons resorted to extra-legal measures to punish or kill seducers: (See Kenneth L. Cannon's perceptive essay, "Mountain Common Law: The Extralegal Punishment of Seducers in Early Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly, 51 (Fall 1983): 308-27.) While hardly justifiable, the motivation for such deeds was rooted not in any conception of blood atonement but rather an acceptance of mountain justice.

Perhaps the most common conception of blood atonement holds that those who commit serious sin can obtain full remission only by shedding their blood. Theoretically, this would include (1) church members who would voluntarily have their blood shed and (2) apostates who naturally would be unwilling to have their blood shed. I have seen no hard evidence that anyone, be it remorseful sinner or bitter apostate, was "blood atoned" during the Reformation.

67. At the same time Young was publicly telling Saints that some were deserving death, he was privately instructing Mormon stake and ward leaders to show mercy to repentant Saints who had committed heinous sins. I have given examples of such instruction in section III. Interestingly, biographer Leonard J. Arrington concluded that Brigham was nonviolent, suggesting that his "verbal ferocity masked a tender, soft-hearted person who was ashamed to admit his compassion out of fear that people would think him weak and cowardly." See Arrington, Brigham Young, p. 407.


69. I am not attempting to justify Brigham Young's rhetorical devices. Obviously there were those who could not easily make a distinction between rhetoric and reality. As I have indicated earlier, Saints who lived in rural areas away from the stabilizing influence of Wilford Woodruff and other church leaders were especially prone to fanaticism. Certainly Juanita Brooks's contention that the Reformation aggravated existing tension in southern Utah and her implication that it was one of many factors that contributed to the war hysteria that resulted in the Mountain Meadows Massacre cannot be dismissed. See Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 13.

70. Deseret News, October 1, 1856.
71. Deseret News, October 8, 1856.
72. Deseret News, October 8, 1856. PBMB, October 7, 1856. On November 1, a group of home missionaries held a special conference at Bountiful at which between two and three hundred were rebaptized. See Deseret News, November 19, 1856.
73. Deseret News, October 22, 29, 1856; November 12, 1856.
74. Ibid.
76. Woodruff Journal, October 2, 1856.
77. Ibid., October 5, 1856.
78. Ibid., October 6, 1856; Manuscript History of Brigham Young, pp. 865-68. Woodruff recorded that some sixty-five were rebaptized and confirmed on this occasion.
79. Woodruff Journal, October 9, 1856; PBMB, October 8, 9, 1856.
80. Heber C. Kimball sermon, November 9, 1856, JD 4:80-82. The sacrament was completely withdrawn from all communicants about this time.
81. Brigham Young to Welcome Chapman, November 13, 1856, Letterbooks.
82. Salt Lake Stake High Priest Quorum Minutes, 1848-1860, October 6, 1856, Ms., Church Archives.
83. Ibid., November 1, 1856.
84. Woodruff Journal, October 7, 1856.
85. PBMB, September 30, 1856.
86. Minutes of General Conference, October 7, 1856, Manuscript History of Brigham Young, p. 768.
87. Woodruff Journal, October 27, 1856.
88. John Powell Autobiography, November 3, 1856, Ms., Church Archives.
89. Woodruff Journal, November 3, 1856.
90. Ibid., November 4, 1856.
91. Latter-day Saints were but one of many nineteenth-century denominations who used cate-

92. Deseret News, September 24, 1856; PBMB, September 25, 1856.
93. PBMB, September 30, 1856.
94. Woodruff Journal, November 4, 1856.
95. "Questions to be Asked the Latter-day Saints," 1856, Ms., Church Archives.
96. PBMB, November 23, 1856.
97. I am piecing this information together from many sources.
98. Woodruff Journal, December 8, 1856.
100. Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, Ms., Church Archives. See also Nelson Wheeler Whipple Journal, p. 116, Church Archives; Benjamin F. Johnson Autobiography, p. 198, Church Archives.
101. Stan Ivins noted that during the Reformation, "plural marriages skyrocketed to a height not before approached and never again to be reached." He estimated there were sixty-five percent more plural marriages during 1856 and 1857 than in any other two years of the practice. See Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," reprinted in Utah Historical Quarterly 35 (Fall 1967): 312.
102. Manuscript history of Brigham Young, November 24, 1856.
103. PBMB, January 20, 1857.
104. PBMB, November 23, 1856.
105. Woodruff Journal, December 7, 1856.
106. Home Missionary-Bishop's Meeting Minutes, December 14, 1856, Ms., Church Archives.
108. Hannah Tapfield King Journal, pp. 142-43, typescript, Church Archives.
110. Manuscript History of the Church, January 27, 1857.
111. Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, January 7, 1857, Letterbooks.
113. Brigham Young sermon, February 8, 1857, JD 4:2219.
114. Arrington called such groups "minute men." See Arrington, Brigham Young, p. 250.
115. Brigham Young's Office Journal, April 3, 1860, Ms., Church Archives.
118. James Martineau Journal, December 30, 1856.
120. Richard Ballantyne Journal, December 28, 1856, Ms., Church Archives; Woodruff Journal, December 28, 1856.
121. Ibid.; see also William Gibson Journal, December 8, 1856, Salt Lake City Fifth Ward Teachers Meetings Minutes, Ms., Church Archives, December 9, 1856.
122. Woodruff Journal, November 9, 1856.
123. Brigham Young to Tarleton Lewis, April 9, 1857, Letterbooks.
124. Brigham Young to Philo Farnsworth, April 4, 1857, Letterbooks.
125. Brigham Young to Isaac Haight, March 5, 1857, Letterbooks. Mormon historian Gustive O. Larsen referred to a possible blood atonement incident in "The Mormon Reformation," Utah Historical Quarterly, 26 (January 1958): 62. Larsen noted that according to a "verbally reported" account, a Mr. Johnson of Cedar City was found guilty of adultery with his stepdaughter and was sentenced to death.
by a bishop's court to atone for his sin. The eyewitness claimed Johnson was in full agreement with the verdict and went to his grave confident that his sin had been atoned for and his salvation secured. In view of Brigham Young's explicit instructions to Isaac Haight to forgive everyone, including adulterers, such an act would have had to have been performed without Haight's knowledge or permission—an unlikely event.

126. Manuscript History of the Church, January 27, 1857.
127. Lorenzo Brown Diary, April 6, 7, 1857, typescript, Church Archives.
129. Woodruff Journal, December 29, 1856.
132. Journal History, February 22, 1857; Elias Smith Diary, December 28, 1856, Ms., Church Archives.
There was also a tremendous increase in the number of church-related meetings during the Reformation. George Goddard attended over forty meetings in the month of March 1857. See George Goddard Diary, Ms., Church Archives.
133. Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, January 30, 1857, Letterbooks; Brigham Young to Smith, Richards, and Partridge, January 31, 1857, Letterbooks.
134. Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, numerous entries from December 1856 through May 1857.
135. PBMB, November 25, 1856.
136. Salt Lake Fifth Ward Fellowship Meeting Minutes, June 28, 1857, Ms., Church Archives.
138. Wilford Woodruff to the Editor of The Mormon, February 4, 1857, The Mormon, May 2, 1857. Woodruff recorded that "the appearance of... Brigham Young in the Tabernacle after an absence of two months created a sensation throughout the vast assembly."
140. Richard Ballantyne Journal, March 3, 1857. The baptismal prayer included the following phrase: "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ I baptize you for the renewal of your covenant and remission of your sins." Virtually everyone who was eight years of age and older who wished to be identified with the Church was rebaptized.
141. Thomas Evans Jeremy Diary, vol. 3, April 5, 1857, Ms., Church Archives.
142. Ibid.
143. Winslow Parr Diary, pp. 25-27, typescript, Church Archives Joshua Midgley Diary, April 15, 1857, Ms., Church Archives; Elias Smith Diary, April 15-17, 1857; John Pulsipher Journal, p. 55, typescript, Church Archives. Also see numerous letters in Brigham Young Letterbooks.
146. Elias Smith Diary, 15-17, 1857.
148. Brigham Young to Elias Smith, July 4, 1857, Brigham Young Letterbooks; Wilford Woodruff to Editor of Millennial Star, September 12, 1857, Millennial Star, November 28, 1857. Woodruff wrote of the crop successes as follows: "We have reaped the largest crops this season ever known in these valleys: The Tithing Office begins to receive new Tithing, having 11,000 bushels of last year's wheat on hand. Peaches are becoming very plentiful; and Doctor Willard's family yesterday carried in 100 apples as their Tithing apples. The currants were a mammoth crop this season. Brother Hemanway brought me a specimen which were larger than cherries, and of a very fine flavour. We have much cause to be grateful to our Heavenly Father for His abundant goodness to us as a people this season. The elements have conspired to favour us. We have had several excellent showers this summer; and hay lots, on which two or three tons of hay were cut last season, have produced this season ten and twelve tons."
151. Ibid.; Daniel H. Wells Sermon, February 22, 1857, JD 4:234. It is more than coincidence that the Reformation took place during the winter and ended in early spring. During the spring and
summer, agrarian pursuits would have made it impractical to push rigorous reform, hold daily meetings, and so on.


157. PBMB, November 11, 1858.

158. Ibid., November 26, 1858.

159. Ibid., April 28, 1859.

160. Ibid., May 12, 1859.

161. Ibid., July 21, 1859. Bishop Edwin D. Woolley of the Salt Lake Thirteenth Ward “found it impossible to get up meetings” after the return from the south. See PBMB, July 7, 1859. It is clear that the move of Latter-day Saints southward and their subsequent return was an event of historical consequence.

162. Brigham Young sermon, November 13, 1858, Unpublished Speech File, Church Archives.

163. Joseph Young sermon, March 1, 1857, *Deseret News*, March 11, 1857. There are numerous examples of individual spiritual awakenings in many of the journals and diaries I have cited in this article.

164. Peter Madsen Autobiography, entry under 1857, Ms., Church Archives.


Leaders in the LDS Women's Peace Movement, 1902-1915. Alice Merrill Horne (upper left). Emily Tanner Richards (upper right). Emmeline B. Wells (lower left). Ruth May Fox (lower right). These women were all skilled writers and public speakers and served as officers of the National Woman's Relief Society and the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association.
Modern Lysistratas: 
Mormon Women in the International Peace 
Movement, 1899-1939

Leonard J. Arrington

About the end of the fifth century B.C., Aristophanes, greatest of all the Greek writers of comedy, wrote "Lysistrata," which suggested that the way to avoid wars was to turn over control of the government to women. And in many cultures, women have been among the most determined advocates of peace.

Although there had been grass-roots stirrings of pacifists during much of American history, Mormon women did not join with their non-Mormon sisters in an international womanly enterprise until 1888, when the National Woman Suffrage Association, in which Mormons had been active, met with seventy-seven other women's organizations, including the LDS Women's Relief Society and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, to form the National Council of Women. That Council and its constituent members, in turn, gave recognition and encouragement to other groups. One of these, a product of the bellicose patriotism that accompanied the Spanish-American War, was the American Mothers Congress. At least four Mormon women were in attendance at this congress, held in Washington, D.C., in May 1898. They were: Hannah Sorenson, a native of Denmark, resident midwife in Elsinore, Utah, and the author of What Women Should Know, a book on obstetrics, physiology, hygiene, and the moral training of children; Augusta

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Winters Grant, a resident of Salt Lake City, teacher and plural wife of Apostle Heber J. Grant; Harriet ("Hattie") Bennion Harker, also of Salt Lake City, an author and mother of four; and Delia Winters Booth of Provo, sister of Augusta Grant and plural wife of John E. Booth of Provo. All of these women were active advocates of woman suffrage; all were later named to general boards of the Church’s Relief Society or Young Ladies’ M.I.A.

Delegates to the Mothers Congress listened to addresses on war and peace, sang peace songs, heard sentimental poetry, and raised funds to sponsor campaigns in their own states and localities. A Peace Flag, made of three stripes of white, purple, and yellow satin, was conspicuous on the stage. In the centerpiece was a shield-shaped piece of white satin bearing a dove and olive branch. Within the shield were clasped hands, below which was a ribbon scroll on which were the words “Pro Concordia Labor” — “We Work for Peace.”

Mothers and leaders in other nations were also alarmed by the obvious signs of preparation for war. Observing the enormous investment of European nations in military armaments and standing armies in 1898, Czar Nicholas II of Russia called a conference of the great powers at The Hague, Netherlands, land of Grotius and Erasmus, to consider ways to curtail armaments and maintain peace. The summons cited "the longing for general pacification... especially pronounced in the consciences of civilized nations." The German Kaiser thought the idea sheer nonsense, and when he was informed that Americans were praying every Sunday in their churches for a successful outcome of the peace conference, he exclaimed, "May heaven forgive these hypocritical pharisees," referring no doubt to the recent Spanish-American War and the conflict with the Filipinos still being waged.

The French also had no intention of weakening their armed forces; they insisted that there must be no limitations on the independence of nations to act in their own best interests. Nevertheless, public opinion in Europe supported the Czar’s proposal. Leading women in Europe held a Universal Peace Demonstration in eighteen countries on May 18, 1899, the evening preceding the Hague Conference. Undertaken by an international committee of women, national and local councils of women made arrangements for such a meeting. American women were a part of the movement; some 163 meetings were held in twenty-one different states, attended by 73,961 women. In Utah, meetings were sponsored by the Women’s Relief Society and Young Ladies’ M.I.A. Emmeline B. Wells was in charge of the Relief Society participation, and Elmina S. Taylor represented the Y.L.M.I.A. They reported “an enthusiastic demonstration in favor of peace and arbitration.” Mrs. Wells sent a cablegram to the peace headquarters at The Hague reporting the demonstrations in Utah and received “a grateful reply.”

Although the International Peace Conference failed to reduce armaments, the delegates did establish a Permanent Court of Arbitration to which disputants might submit issues they were unable to resolve. The conference did little toward settling the vital issues that inevitably led to World War I.

Nevertheless, the women resolved to keep the importance of peace before world public opinion. On May 18, 1901, simultaneously with the opening of the
Court of International Arbitration at The Hague, another demonstration was sponsored in order to show "that women's zeal for peace...is excited to greater ardor."

Shortly after the May demonstrations, in July, the president of the two-million member International Council of Women, May Wright Sewall, made a visit to Utah. Mrs. Sewall had visited with Zina Huntington Young, the president of the Relief Societies, as early as 1882, at a National Suffrage Convention in Omaha. She had also previously met Jane S. Richards, Emily Tanner Richards, M. Isabella Horne, and Emmeline B. Wells, all leading Mormon women.

Mrs. Sewall arrived in Salt Lake City on Friday afternoon, July 2, 1901, and was met by a committee of women in carriages. She was then escorted to the Gardo House, Utah's most elegant mansion, built originally as a kind of White House for the president of the Church. There she and other leading Mormon women were entertained by Elizabeth Ann Claridge McCune, an English-born Mormon socialite and wife of Alfred W. McCune, a mining tycoon. Mrs. McCune, mother of nine, was a member of the general board of the Y.L.M.I.A., attended the International Congress of Women in London in 1899, and was a patron of the International Council of Women.

That evening, Mrs. Sewall was given a reception by Ann M. Cannon, a leading literary figure and teacher, at the George M. Cannon home in Forest Dale, in South Salt Lake. There she met many young people of Salt Lake City and environs, and President Joseph F. Smith, Apostle Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Stake President Angus M. Cannon, and Charles W. Penrose, editor of the Deseret News.

Saturday morning, Mrs. Sewall attended an organ recital in the Tabernacle and then was conveyed in the car of Minnie J. Snow, wife of President Lorenzo Snow, to the Saltair Pavilion on Great Salt Lake, where she and fifty Utah women attended a banquet in her honor. Toastmaster for the occasion was Augusta Winters Grant. There was an address of welcome by Ann M. Cannon, a talk on the "International Council of Women" by Emmeline B. Wells, and a talk by Minnie J. Snow on "Music in Utah." These were followed by a "Whistling" by Maud Mary Snow, daughter-in-law of President Lorenzo Snow, whose skill in making harmonious sounds was much admired. Mrs. Sewall then responded with a tactful and eloquent address on women's role in civilization. In the evening, the party went to the Pavilion dancing hall, where they were entertained by a band and by "fancy dancing" in costume by a young granddaughter of President Lorenzo Snow. Later in the afternoon, Mrs. Sewall and the entire party went bathing in the Great Salt Lake and watched the splendid setting sun on the lake.

Sunday afternoon, Mrs. Sewall spoke to an "immense" congregation in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, in a program that also featured the Tabernacle Choir and Organ. In her address, on the "New Internationalism," which was published in the August issue of the Exponent, she contended that the "old" internationalism of military conquest and competitive commerce was being replaced, under women's influence, by a new internationalism of cooperation and humanity. She concluded: "In the pursuit of this new internationalism, we shall not learn to love our countries less because we are learning to love the world more, but we shall learn that humanity is a larger word than patriotism, that the love of humanity, of that humanity which
includes all the children of God, is the only satisfactory evidence of the love of
God."

Mrs. Sewall's address was followed by a doctrinal sermon by Apostle James E.
Talmage, who, at the beginning of his talk, said Mrs. Sewall's words appealed to
him "with great force," for he "recognized in her sentiments many things analogous
to the principles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." 

Sunday evening, Mrs. Sewall was at the home of Mrs. Wells, in a pleasant
association that caused "Aunt Em" ever afterward to refer to it as a "red letter day"
in her life.

Monday morning, Mrs. Sewall went driving with President Angus Cannon and
called upon President Snow and Minnie. At three in the afternoon, she was guest
of honor at an elegant reception given by Emily Tanner Richards. About three
hundred persons attended the soirée, at the end of which Mrs. Sewall gave a ten-
minute talk on the International Council of Women. In the evening, she lectured
to a large group in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square on "Current Tendencies
in Education." In this talk, she stressed the importance of manual and technical
training of the young and emphasized that young women deserved equal training
with young men.

Tuesday morning, Mrs. Sewall was driven around Salt Lake City and visited
places and persons of special interest, including the new McCune Mansion and the
Bee Hive House. In the afternoon, she spoke at a parlor meeting at the handsome
Brigham Street home of Julia Farnsworth, another member of the Relief Society
general board. Again, despite the heat, they spent two hours discussing interna-
tionalism and the International Council of Women. Later in the afternoon, a tea
party was given for her at the residence of General and Mrs. John Q. Cannon at
the Cannon Farm home that had been the residence of the late President George
Q. Cannon.

Wednesday morning, Mrs. Sewall took the train to Provo, where she was the
special guest of Susa Young Gates. Once more, there were several receptions.
Wednesday afternoon, she spoke in the Provo Tabernacle on "The Open Mind."
In the evening, a banquet was given in her honor by the Brigham Young Academy,
which within three years would become Brigham Young University. The next day,
she left for Topeka, Kansas.

The details of this visit are given at some length because Mrs. Sewall was the
single most important personality in the international women's peace movement
in the early years of the twentieth century, and this visit portended Mormon in-
volvement in her enterprises until America declared war in 1917.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1844, May Wright Sewall attended North-
western University and eventually became principal of a classical school for girls
in Indianapolis. Interested primarily in higher education and equal rights for
women, Mrs. Sewall attended conventions, gave lectures, became a leader of the
national suffrage movement, and was elected president of the National Council of
Women in 1897, and later of the International Council of Women, 1899-1904. Fluent
in German and French as well as in English, she headed the World's Congress of
Representative Women, held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition in
Chicago in May 1893. An active member of the American Peace Society, she persuaded the National Council of Women and the International Council to adopt peace programs. In 1915, she presided over the International Conference of Women Workers to Promote Permanent Peace held in connection with the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. She was described as a “powerful, dominant, and queenly personality” who inspired both “tender and loyal friendships and vivid aversions.” Always a supporter of Mormon women at a time when Mormon women were not always well-treated and respected, she and her causes, in turn, were loyally supported by them. Her letters, reports, and talks were liberally reported in the Woman’s Exponent. Her book *Women, World War and Permanent Peace* (1915) was well received in Mormon Country.

A year after her visit to Utah, Mrs. Sewall, as president of the International Congress of Women, urged women around the world to organize another demonstration for peace, to be held May 15, 1902. Bathsheba W. Smith, who succeeded Zina Young as president of the National Woman’s Relief Society, appointed Alice Merrill Horne, an energetic member of her general board, to be chairman of the National Council Peace and Arbitration Committee. Elmina S. Taylor, president of the Young Ladies’ M.I.A., appointed Christine Smoot Taylor to join Horne and Annie Taylor Hyde of the Utah International Peace Committee as chairman of the State Peace Demonstration of Utah. The call for meetings in Utah was signed not only by the general presidencies of the Relief Society, Y.L.M.I.A., and Primary Association, but also by prominent non-LDS women in the state—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.

The following resolution was to be read and approved at these meetings:

*Resolved, That American women assemble on May 15, 1902, for the purpose of considering the fruits of war and the fruits of peace, and hold a demonstration in behalf of peace and arbitration. They commit themselves to adopting as their own that ideal of loving brotherhood which can be realized only by the cessation of international hostilities. They repudiate war as a means of settling international difficulties, as they repudiate the duel as a means of settling personal animosities. They accept as a corollary of the universal fatherhood of God the universal brotherhood of man.*

They send greeting to women of other countries who this day may be assembled to attest similar convictions. They rejoice that women throughout the world are beginning to feel their responsibility for human conditions outside of the home as well as within its sacred walls. They ask all women everywhere to adopt as their own the task assumed by the International Council of Women, which is “the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.”

The various local meetings, they instructed, should feature talks that would call attention to the financial and human costs of war and the inevitable moral and spiritual deterioration it causes. Ministers and bishops were invited to give sermons on the subject in all church gatherings on May 11, the Sunday preceding the demonstration. Teachers and principals of schools were invited to devote “morning talks” to the subject in their schools the morning of May 15. Young Ladies’ M.I.A. and Primaries, as well as LDS Relief Societies, were invited to sponsor talks at their regular meetings preceding May 15.

The presidents of the Relief Society and Y.L.M.I.A. in each ward, whether in Utah, Western United States, Canada, or Mexico, were expected to organize a committee, consisting of women of different religious faiths, to hold a peace dem-
onstration in a suitable ward hall or house. Records should be kept of each meeting and forwarded to the chairman of the state committee, Alice Merrill Horne. Suggested topics for talks were: The Hague Conference, The Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man, Moral Deterioration Incident to War, and The Spiritual Aspect of War. Peace poems and songs were to be interspersed between talks. In schools, eighth-grade pupils were to be assigned to write papers on any of the subjects given; lower grades to recite peace poems and sing peace songs.

City decorations were to be erected suitable to the theme. There were even instructions on how to make and hang the peace flag. The following peace sentiments appropriate for the preparation of posters and banners on peace were circulated:

"The pen is mightier than the sword."
"Take away the sword! States can be saved without it." — Richelieu

"Peace hath her victories.
No less renowned than war." — Milton

"Where discord roars, Peace shall the tumult still." — J. Dunbar Hylton

"A happier gift than heaven's own fire
Is heaven's sweet gift of peace." — Arthur J. Lochport

Loyalty, Peace and Arbitration:

"A time will come when the science of destruction will bend before the arts of peace."

"How lovely are the messengers that preach us the Gospel of Peace."

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men."

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"Provoke not your children to wrath."

"Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace."

"And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."

"The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

To make sure that these meetings were well-attended, the Deseret News for
the evening of the day before carried notices of all the meetingplaces and of the programs planned for each; it urged: "Let us all do what we can to hasten the advent of peace and righteousness."^20

That there is no doubt the movement was sincerely supported by the Church is the follow-up editorial in the *Young Woman's Journal*, apparently written by Susa Young Gates, sometimes denominated "The Thirteenth Apostle":

Our Gospel is a gospel of peace, the subject therefore is essentially one calculated to enlist the sympathy of the entire community, and it would seem especially fitting that the women should devote their efforts to this noble cause. The thought that throughout the civilized world there is a subject of common interest, is in itself inspiring; and when one reflects that this same subject is one of vital importance to each individual no less than to humanity at large, the inspiration is strong indeed.

The thought was expressed by one speaker that if the movement had begun with the individual and had then extended to the family, to the community, to the nation and thence to the world at large, the assurance of success would perhaps have been greater, but though the results will be less speedy by the method adopted we may in the end confidently look for the desired results.

We are frequently told that the Divine plans are worked out according to natural principles; this being accepted as true may we not hope that this movement is but a beginning that shall end in the reign of universal Peace?^21

The response to these plans was reported to be "hearty and generous." There was a large increase in attendance over that in previous years, several thousand in Salt Lake City alone. The programs were reported to be intelligent and interesting. At the various gatherings, one in each LDS ward; one at the University of Utah, LDS University, and many grade schools; and one in many non-LDS churches, prominent speakers delivered stirring talks favoring universal peace. There were also appropriate musical numbers, and the reading of poetry. Resolutions favoring peace were adopted — unanimously, according to the report. Meeting rooms were decorated with the peace flag of yellow, purple, and white. Purple and white lilacs and sunflowers carried out the colors of the flag. Among the speakers were LDS apostles, members of the First Presidency, presidents of auxiliaries, congressmen, ministers of other faiths, and civic officers.^22

Newspapers of the next few days carried reports from towns and cities throughout the region assuring that they had also held peace meetings. In addition to meetings in each town in Cache Valley, for example, a mammoth meeting was held in Logan Tabernacle with addresses by two Mormon bishops, one stake president, one Protestant minister, and one professor at the Utah Agricultural College. There was a separate meeting of students and faculty at the Brigham Young College in Logan. The program in Heber Tabernacle was attended by three hundred. And so on. That the meetings provoked thought is indicated by the number of original "peace poems" submitted to the *Woman's Exponent*.^24

Similar peace demonstrations in each ward continued in the years that followed. Alice Merrill Horne reported to the National Peace Committee that there were 138 separate meetings in Utah on May 18, 1903, with 15,374 persons present. Some 827 persons spoke, sang, or read poetry at these meetings, which were held under the joint sponsorship of the Relief Societies and Young Ladies M.I.A, in Mormon wards in every western state and in Canada and Mexico. Approximately two-thirds of those attending were women. The reports from the various localities show the
presence of brass bands, glee clubs, choruses, quartettes, and vocal soloists. Along
with the peace flag and colors, the decorations included the sego lily—"symbol of
peace and purity"—which had been gathered from the mountains for placement
in chapels and tabernacles.25

In April and May 1904, four Mormon women were set apart by the First
Presidency of the Church to serve as delegates to the convention of the International
Congress of Women, held in Berlin, Germany, in June. One day of that convention
was conducted by the International Peace Committee. Chairman of the Peace Demo-
stration Committee of the National Women's Relief Society, Alice Merrill Horne,
represented the Relief Society in those meetings, and her report was well received.26
One of the resolutions of that group involved the solemn obligation of those
attending to continue their valiant efforts to promote peace.

The four thousand delegates, whether at one of the many receptions, or in
their formal business sessions, must have presented an unforgettable sight. There
were English women in tailor-made suits, South Africans in business-like suits,
Hungarians wearing what one American called "bed gowns," French in black and
white, Germans in richly decorated formals, a Swede in plum-colored satin trimmed
with loose-fitting fringe, and a Turk in a harem skirt with green lace stockings and
white slippers. The majority felt compelled to take the short, mincing steps required
when wearing hobble skirts. Some wore jewelry and crimped their hair, but there
was not much frivolity. The German president, sturdy of figure and strong of feature,
in loose, hanging black ceremonial robes with a heavy gold chain suspended from
her neck, appeared like a mother superior, friendly, commanding, far-visioned,
exhorting to reform and picturing dreams and visions. Reverend Anna Shaw, an
American clergyperson, spoke with wit and moving eloquence. Many thought the
conference a sure harbinger of world peace.27

The grandest moment in the conference came when the eighty-four-year-old
grand lady of suffrage, Susan B. Anthony, was introduced. In her black dress and
traditional red shawl, with her white hair smoothly combed over her regal head,
she was a veritable woman statesman. There was a deafening standing ovation that
roared, and continued to roar, through the Beethoven Concert Hall. Mormon
women would have joined enthusiastically in the applause, for Miss Anthony and
Elizabeth Cady Stanton had been in Salt Lake City as early as 1871, shortly after the
opening of women suffrage in Utah, and had lectured in the Old Tabernacle. Ever
gracious except when baited by anti-suffragists, Miss Anthony had always received
Mormon women in a manner that won their love and admiration.28

One Latter-day Saint woman was sure that the improved status of women in
the world was a result of "the light and knowledge that came with the introduction
of the Gospel." Many intelligent spirits were appointed to come to earth, she wrote
"to illumine the dark places and to lift the burden of tradition and false doctrine,
which so long has hung like a dense cloud over our race." These women of the
National and International Councils "have labored with untiring energy and won-
derful intelligence to accomplish good for mankind."29

Because of the Congress, the 1904 Demonstration for Peace was held, not on
May 18, as in previous years, but on October 8, as a sequel to the Thirteenth Annual
International Peace Congress, which met in Boston during the first week of October. May Wright Sewall, whose term as president of the International Congress of Women had expired with the close of the Berlin Congress, continued as Chairman of the Committee on Peace and Arbitration for the National Council of Women of the United States and, indeed, continued to champion peace and arbitration in the world until her death in 1920.30

Clergymen were asked to devote their service on Sunday, October 2, to some phase of the general subject of peace and arbitration. The cooperation of the press was asked in giving publicity to the Sunday sermons and to the demonstration and meetings on Saturday. Those attending demonstrations and meetings were asked to approve resolutions of sympathy for women in other countries. In particular, they were asked to approve the four resolutions of the Berlin Congress:31

1. Approving the preparation of a bibliography and popular reader in English, French, and German that would be distributed widely and form the basis for classroom instruction and public talks.

2. Approving the organization of a committee in each country to inspect the histories being taught in the schools and recommend only those that “will instil nobler ideas of patriotism and which will reduce military achievement to its proper place and give to the achievements of Science, Art, and Industry their rightful recognition.”

3. Use of the Peace Tri-color of royal purple, white, and golden yellow as an emblem and symbol in all meetings.

4. Making use of “the distinguished workers for peace” in other countries who might be visiting in the United States.

As might be expected, there was a resounding response in Mormondom to the call for demonstrations in October. The Salt Lake meeting, in particular, was held in Barratt Hall on the campus of LDS University on Wednesday, October 5, not Saturday, October 8, as recommended by Mrs. Sewall, under the supervision of the officers of the National Women’s Relief Society and the Young Ladies M.I.A. For the Relief Society, Emily Tanner Richards was now chairman, replacing Alice Merrill Horne. Leading the Y.L.M.I.A. efforts was Ruth May Fox, replacing Christine Smoot Taylor. Richards, who was fifty-four at the time, was head of the Utah Women Suffrage Association and an organizer for the national association. She had been in attendance at many of the meetings of the National Council since their formation in 1888, and she had been one of the official delegates at the Berlin conference. Ruth May Fox, a convert-immigrant from England, mother of twelve, had been active in the Y.L.M.I.A. and was a special friend of Martha Horne Tingeys’ who, because of the declining health of President Elmina Taylor, would shortly become president of the Y.L.M.I.A. with Ruth May Fox as first counselor. Mrs. Fox, who was fifty-one in 1904, continued as a peace advocate until her death, at the age of 104, in 1958.

Barratt Hall was decorated with flowers and the peace colors, and three handsome peace flags as well as the Stars and Stripes were displayed. Utah’s young governor, Heber M. Wells, presided at the meeting, which was attended primarily by women. The opening prayer was uttered by a local Protestant minister, a Mormon male quartet sang “Flag Without a Stain,” and, after a brief statement, the governor introduced, as principal speaker, Major Richard W. Young, grandson of Brigham,
graduate of West Point, Captain of the Utah Light Artillery Regiment in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, and first president of the newly created Ensign Stake. In making the introduction, Governor Wells said that although Major Young was a man of war, he was also, paradoxical as it might seem, emphatically in favor of peace. In his address, published in full in the *Deseret News*, Major Young urged the women to "Persist in your noble determination to arouse the consciousness of mankind to the enormity of war, that our children or our children's children, at least when they become rulers of nations and the moulders of public sentiment, shall stand for peace."

Commenting on the role of the press in inflaming the passions of the people, he added: "Would not the question of war or peace be discussed in more temperate language if there were written upon our statute books a law requiring that those statesmen and educators who cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war should constitute the initial force that should be thrown against the enemy? Thus would the punishment be made to fit the crime." The major's address was "enthusiastically received and heartily applauded."

After a musical number, Mrs. Emmeline B. Wells read the peace resolutions, the question was put by Governor Wells, and the vote in favor was unanimous. The resolution pledged the women of Salt Lake City to assemble annually in behalf of peace and arbitration and asked women everywhere to adopt as their own "the task assumed by the International Council of Women, which is the application of the golden rule to society, custom, and laws."

On the stand with other dignitaries from church and state was C. V. Gerretsen of Amsterdam, Holland, who had attended the Interparliamentary Peace Congress in St. Louis in September. He spoke briefly on the Interparliamentary Peace Union League.

Gerretsen was followed by Mrs. C. F. Wilcox, who read Kipling's "Recessional." The final address was given by Reverend W. H. Fish, the Salt Lake Unitarian minister, who graphically described the ravages of war in countries he had visited.

Pleased with the demonstrations in Salt Lake City and elsewhere in the state, Emmeline Wells editorialized in the *Woman's Exponent*:

Women in an organized capacity are bringing to bear their utmost influence in favor of this higher ideal of true civilization, instead of encouraging war and bloodshed, and assuredly with the combined influence of the best elements of society waging a moral and spiritual warfare against taking up arms, and fighting for commercial interests, or "right of way" that can be better obtained by pacific measures there will soon be a cleaner and purer and more loving method of meeting one's country's foes than shooting on sight and showing no mercy.

Peace demonstrations continued to be held, perhaps with less fanfare, each May in the years that followed.

In April 1907, the National American Arbitration and Peace Congress was held in New York City. Utah's governor, John C. Cutler, appointed several delegates to represent the state there. That convention, well-publicized in the media, inspired representatives of the Relief Society and Young Ladies M.I.A. to redouble their peace efforts. An additional interest was added when Governor Cutler organized a Utah Peace Society. This was done in a public meeting held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle
Among those who supported and participated in the international peace movement were Bathsheba W. Smith (upper left), president of the National Woman's Relief Society; Minnie J. Snow (upper right), teacher, musician, and wife of President Lorenzo Snow; Elizabeth Claridge McCune (lower left), wealthy and charming patron of the National and the International Council of Women; and Augusta Winters Grant (lower right), popular schoolteacher, delegate to women's conventions, and wife of President Heber J. Grant.
on Sunday afternoon, May 19, 1907. To the congregation of several thousand the governor declared: "I do not need to tell you that Utah and its people stand for peace, and that war is abhorrent to them. . . . If there is a place on earth where the proper occasion will be welcomed for turning swords into plow shares and spears into pruning hooks, that place is Utah. . . . I ask that you give the peace movement in general and especially to what is done here today your cordial sanction and support."37

The governor was followed by Ruth May Fox, who made an effective appeal and closed with, "Let us teach our children the love of peace and not of strife." Rev. Benjamin Young, pastor of the First Methodist Church, paid tribute to Congress in forwarding the peace movement, and to Theodore Roosevelt, who, he said, "had done more for universal peace than any man in this age." (In 1905 Roosevelt arranged negotiations to end the Russo-Japanese War, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.) Apostle Henry Smith followed, expressing the hope of all "that the day may come when the children of men may sense their responsibilities to posterity and the race, to be caring and kind to their fellows, and when evidence of hate, of war, and of vile desires shall be banished forever."

After some music — "The Flag Without a Stain" — the peace resolutions approved in New York in April were voted upon. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. The governor then appointed a committee of seven to form the society.38

That evening, "conjoint" sessions of the Relief Societies and Young Ladies associations met in all the stakes and missions of the state to show support for the newly appointed peace committee.39 An editorial in the Deseret News the next day lauded the women for their efforts to promote "the happiness of mankind."40

These efforts of thousands of women throughout the world undoubtedly helped prepare the way for a second international peace and arbitration conference, originally proposed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 and later supported by Nicholas II. The conference opened in the "Old Hall of Knights" in The Hague, on June 15, 1907, with the representatives of forty-seven nations in attendance. It adjourned on October 18, 1907, after drawing up treaties regulating the conduct of war, the treatment of prisoners, and the rights of neutrals. Although a cornerstone was laid for a Temple for Peace, thanks to a timely gift of $1.5 million by Andrew Carnegie, no steps were taken to reduce military expenses or to advance compulsory arbitration.41 Clearly, Europe was a gigantic bomb that might explode at any time, as it did in 1914.

Meanwhile, urged on by the International Committee on Peace and Arbitration, Mormon Relief Societies continued to hold impressive peace demonstrations each May. As an example, the peace meetings held Sunday evening, May 15, 1910, are reported in detail for the twelve wards in North Weber Stake. The programs began with singing "The Star Spangled Banner," "America," "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," or the "Red, White, and Blue," or, in some wards, all of them. This was followed by peace poems, some of them original with members of the ward; piano solos; recitations of "Let There Be Peace"; talks on the "Hague Court and Arbitration"; and vocal solos, such as "Just Before the Battle, Mother," "The Prince of Peace," or the "Peace Rallying Song." The number who attended these meetings were: Far
West, 83; Harrisville, 79; Lynne, 60; Ogden Third Ward, 200; Ogden Tenth Ward, 77; Taylor Ward, 88; West Weber, 72; Marriott, 100; Plain City, 142; Slaterville, 55; Wilson, 121; and Warren, 40. Each ward adopted the resolutions proposed by the state committee.

The most exciting event in Utah after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 occurred on June 1, 1915, when a peace play was produced in Salt Lake City at the very time when many Americans were clamoring for the nation to abandon its neutral status and take measures to retaliate against Germany. On May 7, 1915, the British steamer Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine off Ireland. Almost 1,200 people were drowned, including 128 Americans. Six days later, on May 13, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan reluctantly signed a note drafted by President Woodrow Wilson protesting the sinking, demanding reparations for the lost U.S. lives, and ordering an end to unrestricted submarine warfare. Two weeks later, on May 28, Germany replied that the sinking was justified, since the Lusitania was armed. Although it was not armed, it was later learned, the Lusitania did carry munitions cargo. On June 7, Secretary Bryan refused to sign a second Wilson Lusitania note demanding German promises, because he feared it would lead to U.S. involvement in the war. President Wilson accepted Bryan’s resignation and sent on the note. On July 21, a third Lusitania note was dispatched, warning Germany that future acts in violation of U.S. rights would be considered “deliberately unfriendly.” The United States was clearly on the road to war.

Anticipating incidents of this type that might ignite war fever, May Wright Sewall and other national peace leaders induced the Chicago Little Theater Company, a group that had attained fame for its presentations of Greek tragedies and high-class dramas, to produce and perform in the principal theaters of the country Gilbert Murray’s new English translation of what they regarded as “the world’s greatest peace play,” not “Lysistrata,” as it turns out, but “The Trojan Women,” “The Trojan Women,” or “Troades,” written by Euripides about 415 B.C. and first produced at the Theater of Dionysus on the Acropolis in Athens, portrayed the misfortunes of the women of Troy after the sack of the city by the Greeks. The horrors of war were pictured in bold strokes—the Trojan women suffered sorrow after sorrow, with scarcely any hope.43 The initial performance at the Blackstone Theatre in Chicago on April 28, under the auspices of the Women’s Peace Party, elicited a thoughtful commentary by William L. Chenery of the Chicago Herald. Chenery’s description of the opening night appeared in many newspapers around the country, including the Salt Lake Tribune. An excerpt follows:

Woman’s age-old hunger for the peace of the world was expressed in a beautiful and solemn manner.... The overmastering beauty of the old Attic tragedy, highly skilful acting of the anonymous actors [they had volunteered to perform the play] swept over the audience, freeing pent-up emotions. Many broke down and wept.

Just before the curtain was raised Jane Addams [of Hull House] walked to the edge of the stage, and in a brief opening speech said, “The women of the Peace Party hope to be able to present the cause of peace more graphically and in a more beautiful form than ever before. They want to present peace more as an appeal. Thousands of women of neutral countries are one in sympathy with their sisters of the war-ridden countries. Never before have women been so well organized....
"We do not think that we can settle the war. We do not think that by raising our hands the armies will cease slaughter... We do think it is fitting that women should meet and take counsel to see what may be done. So for us it is a solemn moment."  

Immediately after their Chicago performance, accompanied by Jane Addams, the players left for The Hague to perform in an atmosphere of tragic tenseness for the delegates to the International Congress of Women. Financed by the Carnegie Peace Foundation, the actors began a twenty-week tour of leading theaters in the United States. Their afternoon and evening productions in Salt Lake City, coincidentally on June 1, the birthday of Brigham Young, were a part of that tour. 

Thanks to the efforts of Utah’s Peace Society, the Salt Lake performances of “The Trojan Women” were well-advertised. The performance was endorsed by the First Presidency of the LDS Church; by Governor William Spry, who was also chairman of the Peace Committee for Utah; and by a host of important public and religious figures. In an editorial carrying the endorsements, the Deseret News said “The Trojan Women” was a powerful play for preaching peace, for “making war on war.” Governor Spry sent letters to all pastors in Salt Lake City strongly commending the production and suggesting they endorse it publicly before their congregations. The First Presidency made the same request of the bishops of the various wards: “The movement has a worthy object and we heartily approve of it,” they asserted. Principals of the schools were also asked to recommend it. 

The play, under the direction of Granville Barker, was produced in the Utah Theater, which was at that time under the direction of Maud May Babcock, leading professor of drama in Utah (and the Church). There were twenty-one players in the cast. Less attention was paid to the scenery and accessories than to the presentation of a single artistic impression. The presentation had a particular poignancy since the war was almost at the nation’s elbow. The lamentations of the wives and mothers and children of the war-stricken offered a telling depiction, even if in a mythological frame, of what the attenders had been reading in their newspapers about the atrocities in Belgium. 

Unfortunately, Salt Lake City was hit by a terrible snowstorm the afternoon of June 1, and so few ventured out to see the afternoon performance. The evening performance was better attended, but people were still reluctant to leave their homes. One would gather that the public was not eager to hear the powerful message the players came to present. Despite the advertising and the unparalleled endorsements, the audience was disappointingly small. Although the storm explained the meager audience in the afternoon, more were expected in the evening. The public seemed to have been surfeited with stories of war horrors by the newspapers, magazines, motion picture shows, and lecturers. 

When the United States declared war in the spring of 1917, the First Presidency of the Church urged support of the war, and the women’s auxiliaries loyally acquiesced. After the end of hostilities, in November 1918, there seems to have been no systematic effort to revive the peace movement until the 1930s, when a series of articles in the Church’s Improvement Era recalled the International Congress of Women and their earlier efforts to promote peace and arbitration. The series seems to have been prompted by the meeting of the International Congress of
Women in the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago in 1933-1934, and the publication of Inez Haynes Irwin’s exciting book, *Angels and Amazons: A Hundred Years of American Women*. Mormon women were at the Women’s Congress in Chicago, and, in fact, Amy Brown Lyman, first counselor to the president of the national Women’s Relief Society, was elected third vice-president. Others attending the congress, representing the Relief Societies and Young Ladies M.I.A., included Louise Y. Robison, Julia A. Child, Julia F. Lund, Mary C. Kimball, Ruth May Fox, and Clarissa A. Beesley. Sadly, these meetings, just as those in the early years of the century before World War I, proved to be only harbingers of another war of destruction. Latter-day Saints, however, could take some satisfaction in the timely efforts of women of their own faith to support programs of peace and enlightenment in the hope of bringing the blessing of peace to all the Lord’s children.

NOTES


19. Ibid., p. 98.


27. See a description of one such conference in Woman’s Exponent 40 (July 1911): 1-2.


34. “Speakers Talk Favoring Peace,” Salt Lake Herald, October 6, 1904.


37. The meeting is reported in the Deseret Evening News, May 20, 1907.

38. The seven were: Reverend Benjamin Young, pastor of the First Methodist Church; Elder John Henry Smith, LDS apostle; Reverend Benjamin Brewster, St. Mark’s Cathedral; Mrs. Emily Tanner Richards, LDS Relief Society; Kate Bridewell Anderson, not identified; Reverend P. A. Simpkin, pastor of Phillips Congregational Church; J. M. Sjodahl, editor of the Deseret News. Deseret News, May 20, 1907.


41. “Holland and the Cause of Peace,” Woman’s Exponent 35 (September 1907): 20; and May Wright Sewall, Woman, World War and Permanent Peace (1915).


45. Deseret Evening News, May 28, 29; June 1, 2, 1915; Salt Lake Tribune, June 6, 1915.

From the Age of Science to an Age of Uncertainty: History and Mormon Studies in the Twentieth Century

by Henry Warner Bowden

Those of us who analyze historical writings use questions few other historians incorporate in their work. Instead of focusing on the *prima-facie* aspects of a finished volume, we ask why someone thought such a topic was important in the first place, why the subject matter was defined one way rather than another, which methods of inquiry were employed, and what interpretation was placed on the evidence. Students of historiography also take a longer view to chart trends among historians as one set of paradigms succeeds another. We are able to discern which ideas about investigative procedure and interpretive theory are in vogue at particular times and how they give place to others. Using written histories as primary documents, we add a chapter to intellectual history that chronicles varying perceptions of the past. Each school of thought teaches us something about the cultural nexus that fostered it. No history is definitive, because changing conditions create a need to revise knowledge about the past. Studying histories in successive ages gives us valuable information about the climates of opinion that affected scholars living under their influence.

This point of view is already well established among those who belong to the Mormon History Association. James B. Allen, for example, pointed out that history written by contemporaries is a key to understanding any particular present, and

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that "as conditions change the questions society and its historians ask of the present also change.... History thus becomes an ever-changing thing as the historians of every generation interpret and reinterpret for the time in which they write." It strikes me that this is a natural and inevitable consequence of human affairs, and that one need not be saddened, as is Richard L. Bushman, who finds it "disconcerting to observe the oscillation in historical fashion and to recognize how one's own times affect the view of the past." A calmer and wiser voice is that of Thomas G. Alexander, who observed that "as conditions change, new questions will undoubtedly arise crying for satisfactory answers, and many old questions will have to be asked again since the answers satisfactory to one group of people may be found incomplete by another."

Without belaboring this obvious point, I propose to demarcate the historiographical parameters that have emerged through twentieth-century scholarly experience. One justification for doing so is premised on the thought that the unexamined life is not worth living. All of us as historians can benefit from understanding what our intellectual milieu is like and how it developed to its present state. So the following overview describes the origins and fundamental characteristics of the context in which most historians work today. I hope that providing this general framework will stimulate members of the Mormon History Association to reflect on their own historical efforts and to identify themselves in reference to it, either agreeing with or dissenting from predominant canons. I do not suggest that these attitudes and procedures used by most historians are normative. All they do is delineate the limits observed by those in the mainstream of American scholarship. Mormon historians, as is the case with all others, may then affirm those general standards, reject them in favor of some other approach, or develop combinations of both shared rubrics and their own scholarly preferences that they consider appropriate to a specific field of study.

In the early decades of this century there were two competing views about history, two versions of what constituted proper approach and acceptable content. Church historians were particularly strong on one side, holding that "Church and History [were]... so closely united,... respect and love towards the first, may be said to be essentially the same with a proper sense of what is comprised in the other." People in this frame of reference were convinced that a "proper point of observation" was necessary in order to understand how the Church and other historical experience fit together. So it was axiomatic that "a right conception of the Church [was]... the conducting genius of the church historian." Those who sought an adequate understanding of the past had to begin by accepting a priori conceptions based on theological definitions of the subject matter. They affirmed contemporary standards of accuracy and honesty, but their confessional orientation committed them to the fundamental objective of depicting God's activity in human settings. Historians of this sort said that sympathetic union with one's subject was crucial to true understanding; "an unbeliever could produce only a repulsive caricature or at best a lifeless statue." As one representative spokesman insisted, "The recognition of God in history is the first principle of all sound philosophy
of history... He who denies the hand of Providence in the affairs of the world and the church is intellectually or spiritually blind."

Alongside this conception, other scholars supported notions of history derived from science instead of theology. This alternative view sought to eliminate prior assumptions and unsupported speculation, to clear the air of all biases in order to get at the bare facts of each case. The keys to accurate and undistorted history were empirical observation and explanations limited to natural causation. By staying with tangible, observable facts, by describing events "as they actually happened," this school of thought purported to make history as much a science in the humanities as other studies were sciences of physical data. Scientific historians favored inductive reasoning from secular evidence and scorned metaphysical speculation, especially any interpolation of providential activity in mundane settings. Speaking about God in history required the historian to act as a prophet, but scientific historians believed that "what seems to be providential in history is but the reflex of the mind that contemplates it." The differences between secular and sacred history, between empirical naturalism and theological preconceptions, were clear as this century began. As time elapsed, more and more historians chose the scientific model, while history associated with faith received less and less support.

By 1920 scientific ideology dominated American historical scholarship, and an index of that triumph is the way church historians adjusted to empirical procedures and humanistic explanations. Advocates of less ambitious ideas about the craft held that it could no longer serve theological predilections. Strict attention to the limits of human investigation precluded any concern about religious consequences. This modified view declared that proper church history did not "rest upon emotion or dogma or propagandist bases, but, so far as possible, upon purely historical considerations." The study of religious persons or groups was "nothing more or less than one chapter in that continuous record of human affairs to which we give the name of history in general." Historical narratives that invoked supernatural agents exceeded proper procedures; anything constructed to serve higher ends violated the rules and was guilty of "trimming the plain human record to suit [its] own fancy." Churches were seen as earthly institutions whose evidence was open to the same methods of critical inquiry as used with other topics. By not relying on supernatural factors, church historians shared the constricted but solid means of understanding the past where "no glamor of antiquity, no weight of tradition, no presumptions as to good intentions can cover violation of those rules laid down by modern science as the unshakable foundations of historical certainty."

But how could this kind of church history read evidence with secular eyes when documents themselves referred to supernatural occurrences? One could not accept them at face value because science precluded such reality. One could not deny them and write history after ruling out part of the record. This form of church history mediated between the two extremes, distinguishing between human belief in providential events and divine activity itself. Bearing in mind the limits of method and perception, the argument ran thus:

Historical evidence concerns only such things as are perceptible to human powers and can be recorded by human means. Miracles—all miracles—are excluded from the historian's function,
because no human evidence can establish the fact of miracle. Yet the fact of belief in miracle is as obvious a human phenomenon within Christianity as in every other religion. As such the historian is bound to deal with it, never for a moment with the object of proving or disproving the alleged miracle, but only to set the effects of this belief in their right place in the record he is trying to interpret. 9

So where beliefs in the superhuman were authenticated facts in historical records, they could be used as human factors that affected cultural surroundings. The supernatural itself was a subject for metaphysics, not history, because its intangible quality placed it beyond any hope of documentation or verification through commonly accepted means of observation.

This modified view of church history illustrates how thoroughly scientific ideals replaced theological ones in historical scholarship. In the vast majority of cases of those who studied religious phenomena, by the 1920s they had adopted the secular standards of humanistic inquiry. Strict attention to observable evidence, explanations and interpretations restricted to natural possibilities, procedures, and results differing in no way from other historical endeavors — these characteristics indicated how completely science had come to define truth on the basis of a single standard.

Then that standard collapsed under devastating criticism. Some people had expressed some misgivings about scientific ideals in earlier years, but the attack did not reach crisis proportions until the 1930s. Carl Becker was probably the most trenchant critic of the way historical investigation had been equated with scientific procedure. Most professional historians assumed that data existed objectively and that historians could read evidence without distorting biases. But Becker maintained that actual practice belied the ideal. Everyone, he said, brought preconceptions to the evidence they studied, and these biases were shaped by contemporary culture. Historical narratives did not put forth self-evident truths because each account was "an imaginative creation, a personal possession which each of us ... fashions out of his individual experience." Historians could not observe events with neutral eyes; patterns were not inherent in the facts themselves; their significance did not manifest itself to a disinterested chronicler. In Becker's estimation, no historian "stuck to the facts"; rather, "the facts stuck to him, if he has any ideas to attract them." In opposition to the model of detached observation, he argued that "complete detachment would produce few histories, and none worthwhile; for the really detached mind is a dead mind." Rejecting the scientific ideal, he noted that "all historical writing, even the most honest, is unconsciously subjective, since every age is bound, in spite of itself, to make the dead perform whatever tricks it finds necessary for its own peace of mind." 10

Charles A. Beard voiced similar reservations about "that noble dream" wherein facts contained inherent meaning and dispassionate observers could perceive truth without intervening predispositions. In addition to the impact Becker had already made, Beard's influence effectively terminated the ideal of scientific objectivity and inaugurated the modern period of historiography that we still occupy. Enumerated in succinct propositions, Beard's dissection of moribund science exposed five false assumptions: (1) that the past exists independently outside human minds; (2) that historians can know this past and describe it "with strict impartiality, somewhat as
a mirror reflects any object to which it is held up”; (3) that historians can divest themselves of all religious, political, social, economic, and moral interests; (4) that events possess inherent meaning that impartial historians can accurately portray; and (5) that observers are able to perceive causal relationships and historical significance through purely rational effort.

After burying this debris, Beard suggested that there are three levels of historical reality. As past actuality, history comprises everything that has occurred. Much on that level has been lost, but recorded history embraces all traceable affirmations of those occurrences. When historians reconstruct the past, their tertiary form of history constitutes a select portion of what the fragmentary record discloses. Every investigator arranges and interprets material according to ideas absorbed from an acculturated perspective. The historian’s effort is thus “an act of faith,” and “his faith is at bottom a conviction that something true can be known about the movement of history and his conviction is a subjective decision, not a purely objective discovery.”

Many responses to this barrage of criticism filled the pages of professional journals in the 1930s. The residual consensus was that historical investigation did in fact harbor elements of subjectivity, relativity, and indeterminism. Historians thereafter strove to be as honest as possible about their preconceptions and still to be as accurate as possible while treating materials in their chosen field. So the age of science ended around 1935 when historiographical ideals based on Baconian empiricism collapsed. This was a boon in that intellectual tyranny based on a single standard ceased, and historians could work with personally constructed methods that made sense to them. It was a bane in that nothing replaced the old orthodoxy with another overarching perspective to which practitioners might conform. The modern period enjoys freedom of choice, but its options entail feelings of uncertainty. Historians now approach a variety of subjects in different ways, and they no longer think there is a single mode of operation for everyone to follow. Relativity allows any history to claim legitimacy, but this raises the question of complete relativism where hopes for general historical validity are sacrificed to special interest groups who sponsor competing studies. The modern period has no canon, and professional historians in general are not certain as to which method or interpretive perspective is the proper one to follow—or whether there ought to be one at all.

The modern period of historiography is an age of uncertainty wherein scholars acknowledge that every investigation contains some subjective elements. Candor about one’s own approach begets tolerance toward others, and in this more self-consciously open context church historians have pursued their work without having to justify it according to an arbitrary, external rubric. They use their own frames of reference when probing for causal explanations, and they employ priorities of their own choosing when piecing together an intelligible sequence of events. Modern students of both secular and religious topics have reassessed the nature of historical understanding. Recognizing their relative insights, they now affirm what the old historiographical model had deplored: “Historical facts... gain their meaning when by order, and selection and interpretation they are related to a frame of reference.... Without relation to some theory the fact is an isolated entity
with dubious value and little meaning. " The rest of contemporary scholarship is best understood in light of how historians select, order, and give meaning to data by relating them to frames of reference which for various reasons they find compelling.

In light of these major developments, one can postulate that the modern historiographical period began around 1935, and we are still in it. For church historians, students of religious phenomena, or historians of a people identified by religious affirmations, our current intellectual atmosphere has two negative characteristics: any history derived from a priori theological assumptions is still suspect, and the ideal of history based on scientific models of detached objectivity is dead. Modern historians use mundane procedures of humanistic inquiry, and they know that the results of their work are relative to subjective proclivities and different angles of vision. A third, more positive characteristic of the new era is that, in the absence of one standard for all historical studies, scholars are free to investigate topics from a variety of deliberately chosen, finite perspectives. Each line of historical inquiry is considered useful and productive when the questions asked and answers formulated resonate with people who share the same frame of reference, with those who have the same concerns about a segment of the past. Modern historians thus work in a context of natural explanation, subjective insights relative to differing perspectives, and professional modesty that no longer dreams of absolute truth or definitive treatment of a topic.

In trying to place Mormon historical efforts in this larger framework, one notion worth considering is that they comprise in 150 years a microcosm of Christian historiography spread through two millennia. Accepting the helpful guidelines laid out by James Allen and Thomas Alexander, we can isolate four types of writing. The first phase was polemic, full of exposes and apologetics, attacks and defense. Vigorous tractates published by Mormons and anti-Mormons in the nineteenth century correspond to a long list of earlier writings that stretched from Origen's Contra Celsum to the Protestant Magdeburg Centuries and on to Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana. Succeeding this period of special pleading came venerative scholars who combined pious attitudes about their subject with careful attempts to describe it accurately. B. H. Roberts embodied this frame of mind among Mormons, and his volumes resemble those produced by other church historians such as J. L. Mosheim, T. Mommsen, and P. Schaff. Then progressive scholars appeared who interpreted materials from secular cultural standards and argued for adaption to social change. S. W. Taylor, M. Warenki, and L. B. Andrew have treated Mormonism in this way, producing studies that parallel others in the larger field authored by A. C. McGiffert and S. J. Case. Fourthly, in the explosion of historical scholarship of the past 35 years, Mormon historians have conducted their investigations in much the same way as fellow historians of other religious phenomena. We can place the names of J. Brooks, L. J. Arrington, K. Hansen, and D. Bitton alongside those of R. T. Handy, H. F. May, M. E. Marty, and S. E. Ahlstrom because all of them belong to, and operate within, the setting of modern historical scholarship.

It is not my purpose to dwell on this telescoping of Christian historiography
and the evolution of Mormon writings that repeated similar contours in less than a tenth of the time. I think it will be more helpful to look at broad schools of thought generated in the twentieth century to see what interests church historians have pursued and to suggest where significant Mormon studies fit these patterns.

Once scientific ideology relaxed its grip, some church historians once again raised the old argument that their subject contained spiritual qualities that set it apart from other phenomena. These advocates valued past ecclesiastical experience for its religious importance, not its cultural function. Churches had a sacred core where researchers were enjoined to identify “the Holy Community entrusted with the means of salvation.” Anyone who wished to understand religious events in their deepest sense had to get beneath surface realities and “tell the story against the background of ultimate meanings.” One supporter said the proper historian “stands on the boundary between symbol and fact, between myth and history, because the events with which he deals are transfigured by the Holy.” Knowing that interpretations of meaning in historical evidence always included preconceptions, he found it legitimate to “clothe a concrete, historical event in a vesture woven by the religious imagination.” Of course it was important to investigate exactly what happened in situations, “but we have, too, to recognize how these incidents themselves reveal something to us of God, and in consequence are more than events, because they are the medium of revelation.” This school of thought saw church history as a solemn task of describing events with scrupulous care in order to see in them the hand of God at work.

Another church historian called for a return to theological priorities by pointing out deficiencies in what he called “positivistic” interpretations. Instead of those empty views, nothing less than “the Christian vision of history” could supply insight into the direction and meaning of human experience. A proper orientation in investigators made their writings superior to mere secularists because ultimately they sought to answer the question “How much of this [evidence] belongs to the story of God’s redemption of mankind?” Concrete data blended with a renewed appreciation of churches as representatives of transcendent reality, and church historians were again enabled to “trace the actualization of the Gospel in human history.”

It is important to note that very few modern scholars responded favorably to such pleas for reinstating “high” church history. The argument for a history that enhanced theology made sense to those concerned with building neo-orthodox systems, but practicing historians paid it little heed. Interestingly enough, one can find a similar call to exalted history in recent Mormon thought, with the same general response.

William Mulder has afforded us some useful descriptions of people in the modern period who want to put “their secular learning in the service of sacred history.” This type of Mormon historian stands within a long Christian tradition of those who perceived “within the grand design of world history . . . a series of gospel dispensations in which God’s purposes unfold as events in time.” This mythic dimension, derived from theological commitment, directs the angle of vision with which investigators read evidence and report findings. Historians who acknowledge
the guiding influence of *a priori* assumptions about revealed religion can produce writings faithful to some thesis and design already furnished. "The Mormon historian, as any religiously motivated historian must, chooses his conception of history as a divine script acted out on this planetary stage."  

In addition to the eclectic portrait Mulder sketched, other Mormon historians have alluded to their work with a concern to integrate theology with their more mundane pursuits. Richard Bushman pointed to belief in God as a guide, though not a simple one, to relevant history. He held that God enters history in various ways, and that "our faith certainly compels us to search for Him as best we can." Bushman recommended various interpretive structures that put God to the forefront. Of these, he noted, "the most obvious subject for Mormon historians is the history of the Church, the story of God's revelation to his people and the implementation of His will in the earth."  

Others have struck this note almost as an afterthought. Leonard J. Arrington discussed the feasibility of different viewpoints in Mormon history and then tacked on this benediction: "May the images conveyed by our historians help us to continue the restoration of the Gospel of the Master, and may they assist in the building of the Kingdom of God on earth."  

Thomas Alexander steered between the Scylla of secular reductionism and the Charybdis of theologically dominated history, but he too included the notion that historians should "interpret God and his actions," even while doing so in indirect ways.  

These few "high" church invocations aside, most acute Mormon scholars today have echoed attitudes about our craft as a humanistic field. They have thought through for themselves the collective wisdom that accrues to the modern historiographical period. To begin with, they have noted how misleading the scientific model is. One of the best practitioners concluded that "objectivity was impossible since all historians must continue to look with their eyes, interpret with their brains, and understand from the context of their own experience." He asserted that absolute detachment was both impossible and undesirable: "It is impossible because all individuals carry a set of cultural baggage which inevitably colors their perspective. It is undesirable since, if historians are to understand the experiences and motivations of actors in times past, they must exercise creative imagination and intuition." The study of human experience has no parallel with positivistic natural sciences; it focuses rather on products of the human mind, and this requires "creative imagination and intuition for their interpretation."  

Given our present situation where choices have to be made, Mormon scholars are aware of this need. As one outstanding historian noted, making self-conscious decisions about one's perspective is important because "given the multitude of facts, historians by picking and choosing can make quite different and plausible stories" about the same material. Indeed, "more important than how you answer a question is what question you ask in the first place. Not until you decide [what] you want to know ... do you even bother to look at all the facts on those subjects stored away in the archives." Another agrees, adding that "the criteria for including evidence are, by their very nature, subjective." Historians will perceive their materials and fashion their hypotheses on the basis of what they consider relevant to various topics. And they will "naturally seek to answer those questions most im-
important to them and those who share their world view.” Modern Mormon scholars have also recognized that, even though subjectivity is inevitable, it does not mean one historical narrative is as good as another. Professionals and laymen alike recognize that the best histories “include evidence that we perceive as relevant and that try to answer questions important to us.” Such works are the product of balanced perspective, “a judicious and intuitive weighing of the products of the minds of people in times past,” a viewpoint that allows one “to come to reasonable interpretations of their thought.”

In their musings about the opportunities and limits of historical inquiry, many Mormon scholars have begun to put some distance between theological interests and their professional responsibilities. As one observer noted, this opens the field to serious studies based on different viewpoints. “Not only do Latter-day Saints have the framework within which to understand their past as an existentialist history rather than as a branch of dogmatics and polemics, but interested people who are not Latter-day Saints and who do not share Mormon faith assumptions also have the opportunity to discover Mormon history as a legitimate rather than an aberrant phenomenon in American culture.” This achievement within Mormon circles is similar to that of other religious scholars in the modern period because it has moved away from the need “to struggle with the a priori issue of the legitimacy of... faith assumptions.” The mutual interests of students of a human past “replaces mutual anxiety over dogma.”

One of the reasons for finessing the question of dogma and for desensitizing the issue of “faithful history” is that Mormon historians acknowledge with their gentile colleagues that research methods yield modest results. As Melvin T. Smith reminded us, “History as a discipline is a finite study of human beings.” This does not mean that humans are confined to finite realms, but that the ways we have of investigating them are limited to finite procedures. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton concur: “The tools of secular scholarship are crude and inadequate instruments for measuring mystical theophanies.” Marvin Hill also knows that the historian’s vantage point and methods of inquiry have restricted applicability. One might want to use tangible historical evidence to verify whether or not Joseph Smith was really a prophet of God. But Hill does not think “that question can be finally answered by historians who deal with human artifacts. The historian has no sources written with the finger of God to prove that Joseph Smith was called to his divine mission, nor does he have any human sources to prove conclusively that he was not.” That is all the historian can do, given the limits of his mundane approach. One’s answer to the ultimate or cosmic question will “depend entirely upon the [religious] assumptions he brings to it... upon personal predilection, not historical evidence.”

Mormon historians recognize that our commonly accepted tools and methods cannot answer all questions put to them about the past. But they do not despair, any more than do church historians in other circles, that religion is irrelevant in history. Whatever the ultimate truth of religious affirmations, people made them. Though historians cannot verify intangibles, they can determine that human beings did orient their lives around such ideas and values. Beliefs existed in persons, and,
whether true or false, historians can observe their effect on human activity. One close student of Mormon history described the middle ground by means of a concrete example: "I am not much disposed to believe that Joseph actually spoke through Brigham. However, there is no question that at an early date the belief was disseminated among the Mormon people that this thing actually had happened, and this was the reason the belief merited inclusion in the essay on history. I am sure you will grant me the commonplace... that it is not things themselves but what people believe about things and how they react to things that shape... development in society."25

Perhaps William Mulder put it best in his plea that Mormon historiography allow for writings from several angles of vision. There is a legitimacy, he said, in history written without religious assumptions. This genre could hold faith temporarily in abeyance and still "remain well-tempered, creative rather than corrosive." His summation was that "a creative skepticism is not disbelief but the tension between multiple and equally magnetic possibilities of interpretation."26

This seems much the same kind of observation as made by Leonard Arrington, who declared that critical history is "a private and not a Church venture. Although this history is intended to imbue the written record with meaning and significance, the Church cannot afford to place its official stamp of approval on any 'private' interpretation of the past. Interpretations are influenced by styles and ideas of the times, not to say the personalities and experiences of the historians... [And the forthright investigator] ought to be free to suggest interpretations without placing his faith and loyalty on the line."27

Or the same scholar again, this time in 1965, the year when Dialogue began publication and the Mormon History Association was founded: "The Mormon religion and its history are subject to discussion, if not to argument, and... any particular feature of Mormon life is fair game for detached examination and clarification.... The details of Mormon history and culture can be studied in human or naturalistic terms—indeed, must be so studied—and without thus rejecting the divinity of the Church's origin and work."28

Focusing on these ideas about historical scholarship has brought us to the point of seeing how much "the New Mormon History" fits the larger intellectual context of which it forms a part. Mormon historians resemble most of their colleagues when they emphasize humanistic interests instead of evangelical ones, treating LDS experience as part of human life instead of vindicating faith assumptions about God in history.29 They fit the general framework of modern historiography when they relax with a "warts and all" attitude about reporting, a comfortable acceptance of human complexity that "includes the failures as well as the achievements, the weaknesses as well as the strengths, the individual failings as well as the heroism and self-sacrifice" of those germane to the story.30 This healthy outlook welcomes findings from a number of perspectives: "studies in which the social, cultural, political, and economic history are woven together to prove the lives of the LDS people." The New Mormon History is very much like other facets of church history in affirming that "secular and spiritual motivation coexist in human affairs and that a sympathetic but critical evaluation of the Mormon past, using
techniques derived from historical, humanistic, social-scientific, and religious perspectives could help in understanding what [is] at base a religious movement.”

Over the course of this century, historians have hammered out standard procedures for accomplishing their work. Most of them have stopped trying to locate God in mundane evidence, but this does not represent the complete triumph of secularism over theology, of this-worldly concerns over transcendental ones. Several scholars continue to integrate religious sensitivity with what they study. But now, instead of using faith to direct the means of research and reporting, they apply religious insights as reflective comments on the work after it is produced. This latter-day blending of theology and history does not use documentary materials to verify providential action. It uses the results of secular investigation as a solid basis on which to discuss further meaning that might be seen in the record. It does not manage evidence or impose unnatural causation on human events. With this self-imposed rigor, however, it keeps alive a legitimate dimension of the historian’s task that is worth taking seriously. The end result is not ideologically dominated history. For historians of this sort, whose subjective perceptions are every bit as complex as the topics they study, their work rests on critical scholarship and offers comments about meaning and direction in human life. Some historians employ this additional dimension; others decline the option. But whether we do or not, I suggest that we can now recognize where the option fits in the minds of our colleagues and how it is congruent with modern rubrics in our profession.

In addition to “high” church history, the modern period has seen three other distinctive emphases. One popular school of thought underlined the importance of churches by highlighting their impact on the culture around them. As a subtle form of apologetics, its great strength lay in using massive accumulations of data to show that churches influenced social values. Instead of agreeing that environments imposed characteristics on people, this viewpoint held that organized groups, especially religious ones, influenced behavior and modified the environment in which people lived. Churches worth studying were “those which came to power and influence as a consequence of their successful coping with” challenges around them. The best way to understand Christianity was not to focus on revelation or parochial details but to “include every phase of the impact of that faith upon mankind.” Historians of this sort demonstrated how individual lives had been transformed, political systems reformed, public health improved, and standards of living upgraded. All of them subsumed a genre that wrote appreciatively of Christianity as a beneficial force in advancing human endeavors.

In my own reading of Mormon studies, I see a great many publications that fit within this broad framework. As with other works that initially led me to propose this category, they fit imperfectly and overlap with other frames of reference. I do not mean to imply that they belong here and nowhere else. But of all the many pertinent titles, I believe that Leonard Arrington’s Great Basin Kingdom is relevant here because his study of economic institutions and church policies demonstrated the impact LDS people had on a particular region of the country. Robert Flanders’s Nauvoo also concentrated on the influence that religion had on a geographical and chronological segment of society. And in his sociological interpretation of adaptation
processes, Gordon Shepherd's *Kingdom Transformed* shed light on historical settings. His concepts of group identity, social solidarity, and organizational commitment help historians understand more fully what took place in the subject matter they investigate.34

Another type of church history appeared at mid-century when many historians began emphasizing consensus rather than conflict in their interpretive viewpoint. Perhaps dismayed by competing ideologies and global violence, they constructed a past where institutions were stable and basic values persisted across the generations. Some church historians did this by highlighting perennial themes such as pacifism, freedom of speech, and religious toleration, urging their worth as antidotes to "secular paganism." Others spoke to present-day needs by isolating what needed to be done instead of extolling timeless virtues. One scholar of this sort thought American society suffered from a split personality: part of its tradition drew on cosmopolitan attitudes that viewed all religions as equal; the other part still discriminated among confessions and indulged in sectarian particularism. The result was a malaise of "bifurcated minds" with which people tried to be good citizens and good church members for different reasons. So this historian hoped he would contribute to consensus by helping contemporary thinkers face up to an inherited inconsistency and resolve it to society's current benefit.35

A great many Mormon histories fit this framework where shared values are emphasized. The interesting variable here is that some publications stress traditions held inside the group, showing how they have sustained corporate survival in the face of external threats. Other publications seek out a consensus between Mormon values and characteristics in the larger context of American culture. The "insider" kind of emphasis on common bonds can be seen in the textbook overview by James Allen and Glen Leonard. Another inclusive treatment by Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton contains elements of singing the Lord's song in a strange land, while at the same time it touches on adjustments to the broader cultural environment. Before either of these eclectic tomes appeared, Marvin Hill and James Allen edited a small volume of interpretive essays along this line. Regarding the larger American setting, one should never forget William Mulder's little gem on Mormonism and the western historical tradition. It is also worth pointing out that studies of Mormons in transition continue to appear. A recent one in this category is Thomas Alexander's account of persistent LDS cohesion as its people become more fully integrated with the mainstream culture.36

A fourth and final emphasis in modern church historiography comes from a preference many scholars have for focusing on ideas. A great many church historians fit this category, possibly because they have always regarded doctrine as central to religious affairs. Some of them pursue "intellectual history," which treats ideas as a major cause behind human activity. Others incline to "history of ideas," which discusses systems of thought with only secondary interest in their pragmatic value. Intellectual historians point out how ideas have "notably affected the course of history, molding the beliefs and behavior of generations of mankind." For them, truly effective Christian intellectuals were those concerned about practical matters, not those who embroidered the theological sleeves of ritual and polity. And because
of that practical concern, Western civilization has made notable improvements in political theory, natural science, and liberty of conscience. Historians of ideas maintain that “the speculations of serious and competent...thinkers have an intrinsic worth that has nothing to do with their direct impact upon politics or programs.” For them, the primary objective is to define and classify the fundamental concepts of a historical group. Their findings do apply to ecclesiastical organization and social relationships, but this comes only after the whole system of metaphysics and natural order has been worked out. The basic focus is not on “chronology so much as structure, nor [on] the morphology so much as the anatomy of pertinent thinking.”

Mormon studies include many publications that feature the importance of ideas, but I shall mention only two authors as exemplars of the separable approaches mentioned above. Klaus Hansen’s *Quest for Empire* can be seen as a long disquisition on how the idea of a political Kingdom of God was an important key to understanding the Mormon past. Similarly, his later study *Mormonism and the American Experience* concentrates on interaction with cultural influences and the ideas that are relevant to such a crucial exchange. His observations about intellectual development regarding race, death, economics and politics, and sexuality and marriage open the way to further investigation of these elemental topics. As far as a historian of ideas is concerned, I suggest that Jan Shipps fills that niche. Her patient researches in Mormon primary sources prompts me to liken her to Perry Miller, who labored similarly among Puritan materials. Her profound and empathetic volume, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*, can be said to have done for Mormon studies what Miller’s *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* did for Puritans. Another parallel worth mentioning is that each of them was an “outsider” who shed much appreciated light on a subject at some remove from their personal convictions. One cannot help observing too that Miller wrote a sequel to his first volume of *The New England Mind*, and so we may entertain the hope that Shipps will do the same.

There is one more facet of Mormon studies that I must not omit, though it fits none of my prefabricated categories. In 1972 Hill and Allen remarked that there were “very few adequate biographies of Mormon leaders in Utah.” Since then a score of tremendously informative biographies have appeared. These include books about men and women in both centuries, about those on center stage as well as those less centrally placed, disclosing the trials of discipleship as well as Mormon enigmas. This energetic outpouring evinces the same rigor and sophistication that we have seen at work in all other phases of modern historiography.

So now I hope we have a better grasp of trends that have shaped our present scholarly setting. Most of us use one or a combination of perspectives that feature the theological rectitude of religious groups, their social effectiveness, their retention of consensus, and their intellectual vigor. These four categories did not emerge in any logical order or progressive sequence during the twentieth century. They have overlapped in appearance and can be blended according to each scholar’s preference. Having moved from a single standard regnant in the Age of Science, our guild now enjoys a rich variety of procedures and possible interpretations. We
are stimulated to further inquiry without having to worry about allegiance to either religious or secular orthodoxy. But now we are in an Age of Uncertainty where historians are reconciled to never achieving absolute truth, nor appealing to more than a limited number of readers. Freedom carries with it the perplexing clamor of diverse historical interpretations. Still, we are bold to pursue our task, which now self-consciously recognizes the importance of critical judgment alongside painstaking method as we search the past for contemporary relevance.

NOTES
9. Ibid., pp. 61-63.
19. Ibid., pp. 32, 38, 42.
28. As cited in Moses Rischin, "The New Mormon History," The American West 6 (March 1969): 69. An arresting spatial metaphor expressing the same idea can be found in Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. xix. There Anderson symbolized the point by saying that, as a historian, he worked in the basement of the St. George Temple where records were kept in a vault, he did not venture to the upper floors where sacred ordinances were performed.
29. See Flanders, "Reflections," pp. 34, 37.
32. See Henry W. Bowden, "Ends and Means in Church History," Church History 54 (March 1985): 74-88, for a more detailed consideration of where theology continues to apply in modern historical studies.
Tanner Lectures on Mormon History

The Mormon History Association is grateful to Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner for funding the Tanner Lectures on Mormon History. Mr. Tanner has given the Association an endowment, from which the interest will be used each year to pay for the annual Tanner lecture.

Mormon History Association Endowment Fund

The Mormon History Association invites contributions to a special endowment fund to further the Association's goal of promoting the understanding of Mormon history and scholarly research and publication in the field. Tax-deductible donations to the fund are invested in a trust fund established at Zion's First National Bank in Salt Lake City. Interest from the account helps defray publication costs of the *Journal of Mormon History*. For further information, contact Susan L. Fales, executive secretary of MHA.
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Future Conferences of MHA

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Mormon History Association will be celebrated at its annual meeting on the Hawaii campus of the Brigham Young University, Laie, Hawaii, June 10-17, 1990. All members and friends of the Mormon History Association are invited to attend. The theme of the conference is "Mormonism in the Pacific." The introduction of Mormonism to the lands of the Pacific is a fascinating and challenging chapter of its history. Proposals for papers should be sent to Program Chair, Martha Bradley, 4611 Belmore Way, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117 by September 1, 1989. Several grants-in-aid in the form of one-way and round-trip tickets to Hawaii are available to scholars without institutional financial support. Proposals for grants-in-aid must be clearly marked as such. Papers by those seeking grants must be completed by January 1990 so that winners can be selected in time to make conference arrangements.

The 1991 conference will be held in San Bernardino, California.