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COVER: Abstraction of the window tracery, Salt Lake City Tenth Ward. Design by Warren Archer.

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Papers for consideration must be submitted in triplicate, typed and double-spaced throughout, including all quotations. A preferred length is twenty pages, but longer manuscripts may considered. Authors should follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 14th edition (see a recent edition of the Journal) and be prepared to submit accepted manuscripts in IBM-DOS format, WordPerfect, or ASCII. Send manuscripts to the Journal of Mormon History, Box 581068, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1068.
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LETTERS

The Journal of Mormon History welcomes comments on articles and book reviews, queries about Mormon history topics, additional information on subjects covered in the Journal, and ideas that will help us make future issues more interesting, stimulating, and valuable to readers. We will consider letters that are one or two typewritten, double-spaced pages; occasionally, a longer letter may be important enough to print as an exception to this policy. Because of limited space, we must reserve the right to select letters to be published and to edit them. Send letters to the Letters Editor, Journal of Mormon History, Box 581068, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1068.

RLDS Reaction to Change

I appreciated Pat Spillman’s article on changes in the RLDS Church (Fall 1994). My father attended the University of Chicago Divinity School in the mid-1920s in response to President Frederick M. Smith’s interest in enhancing ministerial education. Dad was a “true believer” in the RLDS Church and was very uncomfortable at the university. He couldn’t accept the view taught there that the first five books of the Bible had multiple authorship. He preferred to think that the two creation stories in Genesis were better explained by Joseph Smith’s New Translation.

Dad loved the Book of Mormon, which plainly teaches the virgin birth. One of Dad’s professors taught techniques of public prayer for ministers, but Dad suspected that the professor didn’t believe in the efficacy of prayer as he did.

Dad took as many ancient language courses as he could because they were noncontroversial, but he told my mother he wondered if they would ever help him in his ministry.

Dad remained faithful to the Church throughout his life, even though he did not approve of some of the changes described by Spillman. I, on the other hand, am one of the 1 percent who has formally withdrawn from the Church. I am now a Unitarian-Universalist.

James E. Elliott
Florissant, Missouri

Visions and Re-Visions

I enjoyed reading Michael Hicks’s “Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of ‘The Vision’” (Fall 1994), dealing with the poetic rendition of Doctrine and Covenants 76, most probably by W. W. Phelps. The fact that
Joseph Smith allowed it to be published without public complaint is extremely important. History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (5:302) for 1 March 1843 states that the New York Herald published a complimentary article which included the poetic “Vision” along with other Mormon poetry. The Prophet must have been aware of the broad publicity the piece was getting and probably approved that exposure. It shows that he felt one of the most important revelations from God in this dispensation was not diminished by poetic emendation. In fact, one could argue that he felt it improved, or at least expanded, the meanings of the original.

This case supports the concept that revelations are not finished when they land in the canon. They are at least open to expansion by poetic means. Once inspired poets or prophets begin this process, there is no end to it. Any revelation might be emended again and again by inspired poets or prophets. The very words of the Lord are not fixed in meaning that is forever the same. Continual revelation is a process of pouring down knowing on the Saints with new visions and re-visions.

Charles Randall Paul
Highland, Utah

Seasons in French
Reviewer and good friend Ken Baldridge has appropriately lamented the lack of certain scholarly apparatus such as footnotes, extended bibliography, and a personal name index in Seasons of Faith and Courage: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in French Polynesia, A Sesquicentennial History, 1843-1993 (Sandy, Utah: Yves Perrin, 1994), which I coauthored with Kathleen C. Perrin (reviewed in the Spring 1995 issue of the Journal of Mormon History).

I agree that such features are required of scholarly works and are useful for researchers and lay readers alike. May I share, perhaps in extenuation, a little of the book’s background.

The book had its genesis several years ago when Maria and I were guests of the mission in Tahiti. We stood before a packed stake house in Papeete and told the story of the coming of the first missionaries, the first Saints, and the successful planting of the Church and the gospel among those people. I knew that descendants of those first members were in the congregation. It was a shock to me to realize that this was likely the first time they had heard the story in any detail—that the only accounts were long out of print and were in English, not French.

What a void in a person’s life to be without that historical heritage for a grounding! I was impressed how much I depended on my own heritage, and what the historical heritage could mean to these peo-
ple. On the spot, Yves Perrin, the mission president, Kathleen, Maria, and I laid plans on the spot to provide a history of the Church in Tahiti in French for these wonderful Saints. The English edition was seen as a first step—first, because French is not the first language of either Kathleen or me, and second, because we hoped the English edition would help pay some of the printing costs.

Yves courageously took on the task of becoming a publisher. The manuscript was longer than we had originally envisioned. Money was hard to come by. "Angels" and creditors helped launch the project. So we made the hard decision to cut where we could: hence, no notes, abbreviated source references, and a subject index only. This decision also avoided offense to the many, many Saints whose names could not be in the book. In February 1995, the French edition, *Chronique de la Foi et du Courage* . . ., was printed in Papeete. (Copies of both the French and English edition are available from Yves R. Perrin, 1511 East Siesta Drive, Sandy, UT 84093, $25.00 each, which includes postage and handling.

I view the publication of *Seasons* in French as something of a landmark in the writing of our Church history. Relatively few histories of the Church have been written about locales outside the United States; and where they exist, the approach is often that of the mission as administered from Salt Lake City, rather than an account of how the Church functioned in that land with an emphasis on the gospel as the people experienced it. I think the ideal for local history is a "lives of the Saints"—of them, by them, of their total experience of the Church among them, hopefully based on their own sources, written from their perspective, and in their own language. The Saints abroad benefit little indeed from articles, monographs, theses, dissertations, and books written in English for Utahns. Within the limitations of our sources—most of which were created by Utah missionaries except for the oral histories and lived experience of the Perrins and current Tahitian members—that's what we tried to do in *Seasons*.

*S. George Ellsworth*  
Logan, Utah
Peace Initiative: 
Using the Mormons to 
Rethink Culture and Ethnicity 
in American History

Patricia Nelson Limerick

In the summer of 1994, a group called the Flight Safety Foundation issued a report on the relationship between pilots and flight attendants. This relationship is often troubled; in some cases, it has been dangerous. In one instance, the Foundation said, "the..."
captain reported over the public address system that he had a problem with the *right* engine. Although the attendants . . . could see that [the] fire [was in] the *left* engine, they did nothing as the pilot shut down the wrong engine.” “If the Engine’s Burning,” the *Washington Post* intelligently headlined this article, “Tell the Pilot.” But why on earth would someone *not* tell the pilot? Even though “cabin and flight deck crews share the same goals,” the report offered its explanation, “the two crews have evolved into distinct cultures.” Here is the most important thing to note in this parable from aviational ethnicity: the writers of the report took it for granted that living in a state of separate cultures meant living in a state of friction and hostility or, at the least, misunderstanding. Describing how these two cultures interact, the report said that pilots and flight attendants “sometimes show animosity toward one another, are often confused as to when to communicate problems, have little awareness of the other’s duties in an emergency and sometimes don’t even introduce themselves prior to a flight.”

The pilot says the right engine is on fire. The flight attendants know that it is the left engine that is on fire; but because of cultural differences, the flight attendants do not speak—even though everybody is on the *same airplane*. Whatever this story tells us about the risks we take when we fasten our seatbelts, it tells us something considerably more important about the urgent need for people in this nation to think about the operations of culture and ethnicity in our times.

The words “culture” and “ethnicity” appear everywhere in the United States today, and they appear in tones ranging from despair and anger to pride and celebration. Perhaps the cheeriest usages appear in the marketplace, where, for instance, the word “ethnic” in front of the word “restaurant” has a happy effect on both the appetite and the wallet. Mail-order catalogs of women’s clothing are also frequent and comfortable deployers of the word “ethnic.” One catalog describes a flowing gauze outfit as “inspired

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by ethnic influences”; a striped vest, another catalog says, offers “ethnic dash for any outfit.” “Ethnic” in the mail-order catalogs means embroidered, or brightly colored, or made of abundant, flowing material. “Ethnic,” contrary to the shading given the word in newspaper stories about Rwanda and Bosnia, does not necessarily refer to clothing that one would wear to battle. An “ethnic dash” is not necessarily a flight for life.

American undergraduates are similarly inclined to the breezy and colorful school of ethnicity and culture. Twenty years ago, a curious habit of mind seemed to take over the students. Repeatedly, in midterm and final exams, they would refer to various “lifestyles”—to the “lifestyle” of the Pequot Indians or the “lifestyle” of the Puritans. It did not help me, in my adjustment to the students’ fondness for this word, to hear a repeated radio advertisement for a furniture store. The store claimed to offer every kind of furniture you might want, whether, as the ad said, “your lifestyle is colonial or contemporary.” It is a wonderful and wild notion to think of someone in the late twentieth century choosing to have a “colonial” lifestyle, with a few stools, no chairs, a milk churn, a fireplace to cook on, a few pots and, if privileged, a spoon or two, with life punctuated by an occasional raid or war of conquest and with a general sense of subordination to a distant empire.

When the word “lifestyle” appeared frequently in history exams, it seemed that we were not doing all we could to help the students see the past as the people of that time saw it themselves. Then, over the years, “lifestyle” seems to have dropped away and “culture” has taken its place, with “culture” functioning as a synonym for “lifestyle.” The Plains Indians, for instance, many students writing exams will tell you, fought in the last half of the nineteenth century to “defend their culture” or to “preserve their culture.” There stand the Lakota at Little Big Horn, rallying to defend a concept that white anthropologists were barely starting to create, circulate, and popularize. With the word “culture” as their incantation, students ride through history on a kind of magic carpet of time travel, visiting far-off places made familiar and comfortable by the fact that every group has a culture and every culture is, in turn, rich and complex, separate and intact, and equally well defined and well defended.
One of the most significant events in the intellectual and social history of the last century was this: academics invented the concept of culture, and then completely lost control of it. On other occasions we may complain about the gap between the university and the world at large, but this is not one of those occasions. Every group these days has borrowed academic terminology and taken to talking self-consciously, and sometimes self-importantly, about their “culture.” In the last thirty years, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and cultural critics have written a great many articles and books trying to define the concepts of ethnicity and culture. To some degree this is a matter of scholars struggling with other scholars over the meaning of key terms of inquiry. But it certainly seems that there is another message to be heard in all these publications, a message of academics saying to the general public, “The word ‘culture’ is our word, not yours. You should have asked our permission (which we probably would not have given) before you took it; and if you’re not careful, you’re going to hurt yourselves with it.”

And, in truth, people have hurt themselves and hurt their neighbors with these words. “Culture” and “ethnicity” turn out to make very satisfactory verbal weapons. In 1969, the anthropologist Fredrik Barth wrote a very influential and instructive article arguing that the meaning of ethnicity lies more in its boundaries than in its core. Ethnicity, Barth said, is not a set of defined, consistent characteristics at the center of a group’s being; it is much more a matter of negotiations at the group’s edges, arrangements made when and where the group borders upon other groups.² Matters here have taken a remarkably ironic twist: the very word “ethnicity” can now function in public exchange as a boundary, the kind of boundary usually constructed of barbed wire and glass fragments. In many situations in the United States, statements about one’s culture or one’s ethnicity prove to be statements that carry an additional message, and that additional message says to outsiders, KEEP OUT.

In theory, historians should have a particular advantage in providing a kind of escort service across and over these discouraging boundaries. We should be able to provide perspective; we should be able to take the long view, the calm view, the "let's not fly off the handle" view. Historians should be able to provide a genuine social service in calm and reflective analysis of ethnicity and its workings.

But this is a service we have not yet performed. Sometimes we actually do engage in calm and reflective analysis, but we have a way of writing up the results in a literary style that shuts out lay people and nonspecialists. We have also bogged ourselves down in charges of political correctness on one side and charges of racism and insensitivity on the other. Most important, we have backed away from any vision of human common ground. We have, instead, divided the world into a set of experiences—Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Mormon, Muslim; male and female, heterosexual and homosexual; Indian, Anglo American, African American, Mexican American, Asian American. Of course these are consequential categories, but they are also categories that overlap, and categories that are themselves internally full of variation and conflict. Nonetheless, we set these categories off by themselves and sometimes draw the conclusion that no doors or openings connect them: men will never understand women's experiences; Anglo Americans will never understand Mexican American experiences; African Americans will never understand Korean American experiences, and so it goes.

For the best reasons, this prospect panics me. Of course, we will never understand each other fully; of course, parts of our experiences will always remain hidden from each other. But empathy and understanding still have the power to cross many of these borders. I take considerable inspiration from the words of Cornel West: "We simply cannot enter the twenty-first century," he writes, "at each other's throats." Whatever our ethnicity or religion, "we are at a critical crossroad in the history of this nation—and we either hang together by combating [the] forces that divide and degrade us or we hang separately." \(^3\)

To avoid the prospect of separate hangings, we will have to show considerable courage. And when we look for examples of courage, contemporary Mormon intellectuals should be high on that list. I believe I know something, from firsthand experience, about how it feels to be a historian in the midst of controversy, but there are a number of Mormon historians who know a lot more about this than I do. Reappraising and rethinking the history of the American West can sometimes make me feel that I have wandered into the midst of a battlefield; but I do not think there is any topic that can beat Mormon history for its power to prove the proposition that how we write and interpret history matters, and matters to people who may never set foot in a college or university history department.

Controversial changes in the writing of Mormon history, controversial changes in the writing of Western American history, controversial changes in the writing of national history: these changes are in many ways parallel and related. Reckoning with human diversity, with the economic underpinnings of social relationships, with gender, with the moral complexity of many actions that, in earlier versions of history, once seemed simple: that has been the pattern of change across the whole discipline of history. Mormon history and Western American history have thus undergone very similar processes of transformation. Indeed, when I was writing *The Legacy of Conquest*, I saw considerable common ground in the cause of Mormon history and Western American history. Mormon history is one of the most compelling, distinctive, and instructive components of regional history; yet under the terms of the old, frontier school of Western American history, Mormon history had to be dismissed and marginalized.

In his frontier thesis, Frederick Jackson Turner had argued that the frontier had created a uniquely self-reliant, individualistic American pioneer. The Mormons, with their tightly knit social bonds and communitarian behavior, did not do much to support Turner's argument. Turner thus reserved four words for Mormons in his 1893 essay, "The Significance of the Frontier," and it should tell you something about the relevance of the Turner thesis to Mormonism that two of those four words were "the" and "in." I refer to his brief reference to the location of the frontier in 1850, which makes a momentary mention of "the
settlements in Utah." In the same spirit, Turner's follower Ray Allen Billington told the story of Utah in his narrative books; but when it came time to write about the meaning of the frontier and the lessons of history, in *America's Frontier Heritage*, Billington followed Turner's lead and left the Mormons out. The Mormons would not fit the frontier thesis, so Turner and Billington stuck by the frontier thesis and dismissed the Mormons. It seemed to me ten years ago, and still seems to me now, a much wiser choice to stick by the Mormons and dismiss the frontier thesis.

I had and have a personal stake in seeing that the history of Utah and the Latter-day Saints gets proper attention. My father was born and raised in Brigham City as part of the Danish LDS community there. My mother was raised in Salt Lake City, and though she was a Congregationalist, her life in Utah seems similar to Wallace Stegner's experience—never a member but still very much involved in LDS youth activities, with many close friendships uninterrupted and undiminished by religious differences. My father left the Church and my parents moved to California before I was born, but the story-and-anecdote part of my heritage has a heavy Utah flavor to it.

In some ways, this background was the root of my conviction that the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had produced a kind of ethnicity. Over the years, Catholic friends would say, "Only a Catholic can really feel guilt," or others would make reference to the drivenness and workaholicness that come with immersion in the Protestant work ethic. I certainly thought I knew something about guilt and also about a devotion to work. Until I was in my twenties, I had never been in a Catholic Church, and I had only rarely been in Protestant churches. Where and how could I have picked up a Catholic sense of guilt or a

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Protestant work ethic? And if I hadn't picked those items up from the conventional sources, then whose sense of guilt and whose work ethic do I have?

I think you can guess my answer.

While I think that there is a phenomenon one can call Mormon ethnicity, I know these things are not simple. If I ever thought they were simple, I have had many fine opportunities to get over that presumption. Consider, for instance, the occasion fifteen years ago when I had in my Western American history course a Mexican American student from El Paso, a great supporter of Chicano rights. We were two-thirds of the way through the semester when this student came in to talk about his paper topic. I knew that he would want to write something about Spanish colonization of the Southwest or about discrimination against Mexican Americans in the twentieth century.

Instead, he said he would like to write about Mormonism. Mormonism?

This student was, in fact, fourth-generation LDS. His family had been converted by Utah families who fled to Mexico during the polygamy persecutions. My first impressions had been right: he was very much a Chicano activist and proud of his Mexican heritage, but he was also a devoted Latter-day Saint, persuaded that he and his family had found their rightful place as redeemed Lamanites.6

This young man's complex heritage and identity, as well as his justified anger at the treatment of Mexican American people in El Paso, remind us of how complicated matters of ethnicity can be, and also how controversial they are. This helps to explain the curious title of this essay, "Peace Initiative." Ethnic conflict is a very troubling element in the world today, and Bosnia and Rwanda are only the two most visible manifestations of that problem. Even though the United States is an enormous distance away from those two examples, ethnic friction is no small element of our current national experience.

6F. LaMond Tullis, Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987).
In the project of addressing that friction, the use of the idea of ethnicity will be a key factor in our success or failure. Ethnicity has become our central concept for categorizing the qualities or traits or actions that identify a group of people as a unit, the features that distinguish one group of people from another. “Distinguish” is, of course, by no means a synonym for “divide”; ethnic groups can be distinguished from each other and still be quite compatible, even collaborative and mutually respectful. Ethnicity also provides us with a vital area of overlap between the interests and concerns of historians and the interests and concerns of lay people. The idea of ethnicity makes everyone, at least momentarily, into a practicing historian. When you ask people what their ethnicity is, they engage themselves with history; they ask themselves questions about origin and causality; they place themselves in the context of the passage of time; they tie their personal identities into currents of change and continuity. Moreover, people asked to identify their ethnicity do not just report historical facts; they also clearly show themselves to be selectors, shapers, and interpreters of those facts.

Consider these examples from interviews by the sociologist Mary Waters speaking to Americans of European descent. Waters asked a nineteen-year-old college student named Bill Kerrigan how he would identify himself on a census form:

A: I would have put Irish.
Q: Why would you have answered that?
A: Well, my dad’s name is Kerrigan and my mom’s name is O’Leary. I do have some German in me, but if you figure it out, I am about 75 percent Irish, so I say I am Irish.
Q: You usually don’t say German when people ask?
A: No, no, I never say I am German. My dad just likes being Irish.
. . . I don’t know, I guess I just never think of myself as being German.
Q: So your dad’s father is the one who immigrated?
A: Yes. On this side it is Irish for generations. And then my grandmother’s name is Dubois, which is French, partly German, partly French, and then the rest of the family is all Irish.

As Mary Waters sums up, “In the course of a few questions, Bill labeled himself Irish, admitted to being part German but not
identifying with it, and then as an afterthought added that he was also part French.”

Or consider a forty-six-year-old Irish and Italian woman interviewed by Waters, who gives an even better demonstration of the way in which ethnicity makes regular people into interpretative historians.

Q: When you were growing up did you consider yourself ethnic?
A: Yes, I was very strongly Italian, because . . . whenever I was in a bad mood, that was the Irish in me. So I always related the Irish with the bad things and the Italian with all of the good things. . . . I thought all the Irish were hotheads and all the Italians had clean houses and good food.

The facts of this woman's origins say Irish and Italian, but her conditioning casts the Italian side as superior to the Irish. Thus, the inheritor of this legacy, showing a certain measure of self-esteem, settles on the characterization of Italian.

Here we have very literal case studies in the idea of the construction of ethnic identity, of Everywoman Her Own Historian, of Everyman His Own Historian. We have, as well, case studies in what is now established thinking about the idea of ethnicity: that ethnicity is much more a matter of construction, choice, consent, and interpretation, and much less a matter of literal inheritance, descent, and lineage. The people interviewed by Mary Waters had particularly open turf for choice. As what Waters calls “white ethnics,” they could, if they wanted, choose to claim no ethnicity at all: whenever they wanted, they could drop the whole package—Irish, Italian, French, German, Polish—and simply say “American.” You can choose nearly anything in America, the famed cultural pluralist Horace Kallen had said, but you cannot choose your grandfather. Now, as historian David Hollinger has observed, even that apparent knock-out punch of an aphorism needs some rethinking. If you cannot choose a grandfather entirely from scratch, you can certainly choose which of your various grandfather-options you will accent. To the people

8Ibid., 25.
interviewed by Mary Waters, the construction of ethnicity bordered on play: they could add or subtract, accent and deemphasize, the pieces and parts of their ethnic identity without significant social cost, and with such flexibility and freedom that they looked as if they had agreed to team up with recent cultural theorists and put on a demonstration of the fact that ethnicity is a matter of consent, far more than descent.9

Other Americans would have a harder time putting on such a demonstration. We reach now the arena of ethnicity in which choice and consent seem to be much reduced, the arena in which the construction of ethnic identity could hardly be called “play.” We come to the matter perhaps best summarized by the sociologist Robert Blauner in 1972: “Many of the ambiguities of American race relations,” Blauner said, “stem from the fact that two principles of social division, race and ethnicity, were compressed into one.” Or, as David Hollinger put it recently, “exactly where ethnicity ends and race begins has been much contested in our time.”10 We understand race to be a socially constructed concept itself, of no particular validity as a category of nature and biology. We understand that there are hundreds of possible ways to define, for instance, African American culture and identity. In a fair and just world, African American ethnicity would be just as much a matter of individual free choice as is Irish American ethnicity or Italian American ethnicity.

In the last few years, a veritable cascade of books has testified to exactly the opposite proposition: that, on the contrary, African Americans continue to have the category “black” imposed upon them, whether or not that is their preference. Cornel West’s Race Matters and Derrick Bell’s Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism are probably the most widely recognized of these books. Jonathan Kozol’s Savage Inequalities: Children

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in America's Schools and Alex Kotlowitz's There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America take unflinching looks at the intersection of race and poverty. If one prefers to take one's doses of despair in autobiographical form, Brent Staples, Parallel Time: Growing Up in Black and White, or Nathan McCall, Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America, make it clear how far away we are from a society that does not make blackness a penalty. You can read some of these books, and try to tell yourself that our dilemma is a matter of class lines, poverty, and the inherited injuries of slavery and segregation. With widened economic opportunity and with the passage of decades since the end of slavery and the end of legal segregation, you can begin to hope that the historically inherited categories of black and white have surrendered much of their rigidity. But then you read Ellis Cose’s The Rage of a Privileged Class, full of stories of the injuries and insults encountered by black professionals, managers, and executives, and differences of social class cease to be a sufficient explanation for white privilege and prejudice.11

Even though it is the most impersonal of all these books, Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal, by the white political scientist Andrew Hacker, may be the most disheartening. Hacker offers, for instance, a haunting statistical fact: white Americans will stay in a neighborhood as long as the percentage of black residents remains at 8 percent or under.12 The percentage of blacks in the American population is a little more than 12 percent, and so white Americans, even white Americans who say that they want to live in an integrated neighborhood, will begin


moving out before the percentage of blacks in the neighborhood even reaches the percentage of blacks in the general population.

In an often quoted observation, the novelist Ishmael Reed has remarked that if the black novelist Alex Haley had followed his father’s line of genealogy in the search for his own origins, then Haley’s book *Roots* would have been set in Ireland, not Africa. But Americans continue with their traditional, and very arbitrary, categorizations of African American descent. Any black heritage at all will identify a person as “black.” As the historian Barbara J. Fields put it, we hold on to a convention “that considers a white woman capable of giving birth to a black child but denies that a black woman can give birth to a white child.”

Repeatedly finding themselves picked up and placed into ethnic categories that might or might not fit them, people of color have had considerable reason to resent the privilege of choice that white Americans have over the matter of their ethnicity. And yet, in recent times, white Americans have had their moments of resentment, as well, moments in which our present constructions of ethnicity work equally well at denying the humanity and individuality of that group wearing the label “white American.” A few years ago, I was in Oakland, California, talking with a group of schoolteachers of every ethnic background. One white teacher reported this discouraging event: she was attending a panel discussion where the phrases “people of color” and “person of color” were used repeatedly. Thus, when an African American panelist wanted to refer to a white person, the phrase “person of color” was still hanging in the air, leading the speaker to refer to the white individual as a “non-person of color.” This newly coined phrase did not raise the spirits of the white people in the room.

Much of our language, and many of our characterizations, on this matter do seem to have come straight from the mind of Lewis Carroll. For researchers at Berkeley’s Diversity Project, “white”

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has become "a residual category meaning either not Black, not Asian, not Chicano/Latino, etc., . . . meaning 'without color.'" Even the guiltiest white liberals would hesitate before identifying themselves, when asked for their ethnicity, as "without color." And this sad definition of whites as colorless nonpersons comes with notable variations. In his 1981 book on Mexican Americans in El Paso, the historian Mario Garcia offered this definitional footnote: "In this study the term Mexican refers to all persons of Mexican descent but in particular [to] immigrants from Mexico. The term Mexican American refers to Mexicans born in the United States. . . . Finally, American or Anglo refers to all non-Mexicans, especially white citizens of the United States." As the adverb "especially" points out, by this definition, since they are non-Mexicans, African Americans get to be momentary honorary "Anglos." To Mormons in Utah, everyone who is not Mormon is Gentile; thus Jews are Gentiles. And now in El Paso, blacks are Anglos.\(^\text{14}\)

Mormons and Gentiles; Mexicans and Anglos; persons of color and non-persons of color; white Americans who think that enough, even too much, has been done to help black Americans recover from the injuries of the past, and black Americans who can provide everyday evidence that racial injuries only changed form and did not stop with Brown v. Board of Education; representatives of the culture of flight attendants who will not tell representatives of the culture of pilots which engine is on fire: Americans appear to have landed in the soup. Not in the melting pot. Just in a mess of disunited, fragmented, and clashing ethnicities and cultures.

One could go on and on with examples drawn from all sides and participating groups of the discouraging, divisive quality of many of our current public discussions of ethnicity in American history and life. Thus, I turn now to a hopeful paradox: as contested and controversial as the writing of Mormon history can be, we can talk about the idea of Mormon ethnicity in a comparatively calm and peaceful way. Then we can take the idea of

ethnicty we develop in a discussion of Mormonism and apply it to other examples of ethnicity in a way that may actually reduce the friction and polarization of the usual discussions in that turf.

Some readers may be puzzling over that remark: could she really think that a discussion of the terms of Mormon history will be calmer and less controversial than a discussion of, say, Mexican American history? I know the story of Leonard Arrington’s too-brief term of duty as Church Historian: I have read Lavina Fielding Anderson’s essay in Dialogue, “The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology”; I have read Paul Toscano’s impassioned The Sanctity of Dissent; I have followed, and admired, the career of D. Michael Quinn. I have kept track of press coverage of the disagreements between the General Authorities and Mormon intellectuals, and of the disciplinary action taken against historians and feminists. And yet I still think that a consideration of Mormon ethnicity provides a more tranquil and tractable way to approach the topic of ethnicity in the United States.15

Why? In part, because Mormon ethnicity allows scholars an arena for thinking about ethnicity as it applies to a group who, for most of their history, have had the white skin and European background of the American majority and whose distinctive consciousness was generated by events that occurred in the United States, not in the “old country.” In accenting the whiteness of Mormons, I may seem to be forgetting the Mexican American Mormons of El Paso and Juarez, the African American Mormons

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whose lives were much changed by the 1978 revelation admitting black men to the priesthood, and all the Mormon converts in Polynesia, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. But still the majority of Mormons, through the majority of the Church's history, have been of European ancestry.

When ethnicity is associated with a skin color other than white, ethnicity can become a category so much imposed from the outside that it becomes harder to distinguish the workings of the individual's choice and consciousness. The history of discrimination on the basis of race can heat discussions of ethnicity to the point where it is, in truth, painful to touch them. While we will return to that arena, the fact that the majority of Mormons have been white allows us, at least temporarily, to cool down the terms of discussion of ethnic identity. And the case study of Mormonism provides us with a crucial reminder that we must examine the category "white" carefully and critically: whiteness or Anglo-Americanness cannot remain the taken-for-granted definition of normality by which the peculiarity of the "other" cultures are measured. In their habits, beliefs, and customs, white people, heaven knows, can match any other group in the categories of peculiarity, eccentricity, and interest.

Moreover, Mormon ethnicity is not at the center of the disagreements between General Authorities and Mormon historians. It is also a topic on which we already have models of tranquil, uninjurious, reasoned, clarifying disagreement. In the fine collection of essays, *The Mormon Presence in Canada*, two scholars, Armand Mauss and Keith Parry, take opposite sides on this question. Parry argues for the existence of a Mormon ethnicity, and Mauss argues against it, and both writers preserve perfect equanimity and fairness of judgment.¹⁶ In fact, following very closely in Jan Shipps's footsteps, I will soon argue that the issue of Mormon ethnicity provides a kind of intellectual refuge from

present contention between the leadership and some of its members. Rather than taking us back into controversy, ethnicity provides a framework for thinking, calmly and reflectively, about the current dilemmas in the Church.

Let us try, now, to bring this theoretical framework into practice in a discussion of the origins and the shape of Mormon ethnicity in the last 165 years of history. I ask the forbearance of readers here because, for the next few pages, I will be restating some of the most familiar facts about LDS history and echoing a number of statements made better by other writers and analysts.

The building blocks of a Mormon ethnicity are not difficult to locate. From the very beginning of the Church, faith in a particular theology was accompanied by a striking willingness to follow Joseph Smith’s revelations and advice in day-to-day behavior. Membership in this church was also membership in a community with its own economic, social, and familial patterns. People who joined the Church were often cut off from family members who disapproved of their conversion, and geographically separated from their places of origin as well. Even before the murder of Joseph Smith and the Mormons’ departure from the Mississippi Valley, the conditions were close to ideal for the

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The creation of a community in which religious belief laid the foundations for a new world view, a new pattern of family organization, a new set of ambitions, a new combination of common bonds and obligations, a new definition of a separate peoplehood—all the components, in other words, of what we now call "ethnicity."

To this situation, already rich in possibilities for the creation of a culture or subculture, persecution and the migration to Utah provided the capstone. Framed in a forceful and compelling analogy to the persecution and exodus of the Israelites, the Mormon move to the Great Basin catalyzed the sense of a separate peoplehood. As a shared memory, full of the literal and direct testing of the spirit, this exodus was exactly the kind of event that would stay with a people forever, the kind of experience that would bind even those born too late to participate in it to a vision of the special identity that comes with a special history. Richard Bennett's book, *Mormons on the Missouri*, offers a particularly telling case study of the impact of migration in the formation of identity, as Winter Quarters provided the site for a crucial refining and testing of Mormon group purpose.18

Analogies to Israel went further than the exodus. As Jan Shipps has explained, by a "rhetorical construction of blood descent," Mormons became Abraham's descendants, even more explicitly defined as a chosen people. And a sense of kinship—a key component of ethnicity—came from other sources besides the vision of the Saints as the "seed of Abraham." Kinship came as well from the custom of adoption, in which adult Mormon men were sealed as sons to Church leaders, and from the proliferating ties created by plural marriage. Plural marriage thus added to the conditions of ethnicity in two ways: as another form of cultural distinctiveness, perhaps the best for dramatizing the Saints' separate status, and as a very effective way of making people into relatives, creating a wonderfully interwoven network of in-laws and kin.19

The idea—really the imperative—of the gathering of the Saints

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gave great force to the sense of peoplehood, while arrival in Deseret added place and geography to the forces supporting and sustaining ethnicity. As Promised Land, as Zion, the land just beyond the Rockies provided another foundation for identity; and the Saints invested enormous labor in making that land meet their standards for habitability, building towns and villages, homes and farms, that would add up to what many have called a characteristic Mormon landscape.  

The years of comparative isolation, with Mormons firmly the majority in most of Utah, southern Idaho, and northern Arizona, allowed group identity to become even more clearly defined. For instance, characteristic patterns of Mormon entertainment such as dancing and theater developed. In a time when Protestant Christians feared the danger and temptations of leisure and recreation, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, as R. Laurence Moore has pointed out, had a “clear advantage. . . . They had much less to fear in the matter of leisure because they retained effective control over what happened when Mormons socialized with other Mormons.” English, German, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian converts moved very quickly into this common culture. Scandinavian converts, William Mulder told us in Homeward to Zion, attended regular, English-speaking ward meetings but also had auxiliary Scandinavian meetings to ease their transition into both the language and the society.

Some elements of imported European ethnicity might linger. I have heard from my father that his parents’ old horse in Brigham City would stop plowing precisely at 3:30 p.m. and head for the house, demonstrating my Danish grandparents’ continued affection for the cultural concept of the coffee break. Thus, it was


22William Mulder, Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957). For another illuminating case study of the relation between European ethnicity and Mormonism, see Frederick Stewart Buchanan, A Good Time Coming: Mormon Letters to Scotland (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988).
particularly interesting for me to learn from Mulder that something a bit short of reverence for the Word of Wisdom was quite characteristic of Danish converts. And yet, with a few persistent variations in behavior, the blending of new immigrants into this new Mormon ethnicity seems to have proceeded with remarkable speed. Meanwhile, the practice of plural marriage and the federal government's mounting hostility to polygamy deepened the Mormon sense of distinctiveness and separateness, also providing an unusual historical legacy awaiting the reckoning of future generations of Saints.

The end of polygamy was a major and consequential moment in Mormon history, but Mormons soon found other ways to mark their boundaries and to define their separate identity. The distinctive elements of Mormon theology, endowments received in the temples, marriages sealed for time and eternity, the growing emphasis on the Word of Wisdom, the meetings and activities of the priesthood, the Relief Society, the Mutual, the Primary, the round of socials and games at the ward meeting houses, the quarterly stake conferences, the semi-annual general conferences, the missionary experience of young men (and, after a while, of young women as well), the proxy baptisms and sealings performed on behalf of one's dead kindred, tithing, the creation of the Church welfare system, fast offering funds dedicated to the care of the poor, family home evenings, large families taking part in those evenings, and, perhaps more than anything, the told and retold stories of Mormon history, made it very unlikely that Mormons would lose their distinctive ethnicity and disappear into a homogeneous, mainstream, American whole.

With considerably greater efficiency than I have shown, Leonard Arrington has summed up the case for regarding Mormons as both an ethnic group and a religious group. "Mormons," Arrington writes, "have (or at least used to have) a distinctive vocabulary, shared history, unique theological beliefs, definite in-group boundaries (prohibitions on the use of alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee), emphasis on in-group marriage, and a strong sense of peoplehood, which includes the 'brother' and 'sister' terminology." If one thinks back to the "white ethnics" interviewed by Mary Waters, it is clear that people who chose to identify themselves as Mormon in more than religion could bring
more clarity and concreteness to the project of identifying their ethnicity than could the people in Waters' examples.

It is, however, important to note Arrington's phrasing: "Mormons," the quotation begins, "have (or at least used to have)" these qualities of ethnicity (my emphasis). That "used to have" is the core of the problem. In the last thirty years, the Church has grown enormously and grown internationally. The Mormon diaspora of the twentieth century has weakened the ties between peoplehood and place considerably: the idea of a Zion or a promised land has to play a much diminished role in Mormon consciousness, when so many Mormons live so far from Utah. Moreover, many Mormons in the last few decades have ended up living in places where they are by no means a majority and where most of their working life is spent in the company of people who cannot—except, perhaps, by their indifference—reinforce any notion of Mormon identity. The Mormon story cannot any longer be the story of ethnicity by immersion that characterized the life of converts in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the spread of Mormonism into many nations and many cultures stretches the persuasive powers and influences of any one cultural system. Simply adjusting styles of greeting and personal friendship, ways of contracting marriages, or forms of expressing deference to accommodate all the world's cultures is a puzzle of the greatest magnitude.24

It does not take much in the way of predictive powers to guess that this situation would become fraught with considerable anxiety and tension. Thus it seems more than possible that, twenty or thirty years from now, historians of Mormonism might well adopt exactly the interpretative framework of ethnicity to explain the pattern of events in the Church in the last half of the twentieth century. I can, in other words, imagine scholarly articles or books that would put what are, to us, puzzling and unsettling recent events, into an explanatory framework in which


ethnicity was central. Historians of the future might write statements like the ones that I imagine in these next two paragraphs:

For a hundred and twenty-five years, Mormon religious belief was securely supported by Mormon cultural practice. To be a Mormon was as much a matter of ethnic self-definition as it was a matter of membership in a religious denomination, and those two dimensions of Mormonism reliably reinforced each other. Mormon ethnicity drew its strength from sources that did not require much in the way of official supervision or control: in the Saints' ties to the places of Utah, Idaho, and Arizona, in their well-rehearsed understanding of their common history, and in their complicated network of kinship and descent, the Mormons did not need Church strictures to find plenty of reminders of their peoplehood.

In the last four decades of the twentieth century, however, these well-settled conditions began to change. Membership in the Church expanded enormously: with the idea of a geographical gathering no longer tenable, there was simply no quick way to match conversion to the LDS Church with a parallel conversion to Mormon ethnicity. Feeling understandable concern about this course of events, the General Authorities undertook to standardize Mormon thought and practice; the Correlation Committee was only one part of a larger process of response to the overstretching and decline of Mormon ethnic identity. In the nineteenth century, as Stanley Kimball remarked in his biography of Heber C. Kimball, "speculative theology was practiced in the Church." Standardization of that theology came considerably later. Moreover, nineteenth-century Mormonism, as a group of women scholars argued in the collection of essays *Sisters in Spirit*, gave a considerably wider range of options to Mormon women; many activities, particularly in rituals of healing, which would later be confined to the practice of a male priesthood, were once open to women. Thus, in the 1980s and 1990s, when the Church tried to address the loss of Mormon ethnicity with a greater centralization of control over Mormon thought, this was neither a restoration of early Mormonism nor a return to tradition. It was, in fact, a campaign of standardization that, ironically, in the effort to hold Mormons more tightly together, retreated

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from the distinctive elements of Mormonism, accenting instead the Church's similarity to conventional Christianity. Profoundly disturbing to Mormon intellectuals, and perhaps especially to Mormon historians, this campaign for standardization was in fact an understandable response to unsettling change in the Church's position in the world at large.

What I cannot write is a third paragraph which says what happened next. But as to the existence of a Mormon cultural identity, something that looked like, functioned like, and was experienced like ethnicity—of that proposition, I feel quite certain.

Indeed, on some counts, this idea of Mormon ethnicity as a fading force, as a vestige and relic of a different time, is a puzzling one. If Mormon ethnicity is fading, why is the late twentieth century seeing such a remarkable and impressive flowering of Mormon literature? Anyone troubled by the prospect of a disappearing ethnic identity should read the Mormon creative writers—Mormon novelists, Mormon short-story writers, Mormon poets, and Mormon essayists.27 In their work, a clear cultural identity

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thrive, and thrives in a way identifiable to any reader. When, in other words, you pick up a collection with the subtitle “Contemporary Mormon Short Stories,” you do not become puzzled about why it would carry that subtitle. The common cultural elements, along with a familiar and distinctive vocabulary of wards, temples, stake presidents, bishops, missions, testimonies, Nephites, priesthood, Relief Society, and holidays on 6 April and 24 July, tell you that you are reading literature rooted in a particular ethnicity, although, of course, that literature also speaks to a broad set of human concerns. The groundedness of the short stories, the novels, and the essays persuade the reader that obituaries for Mormon ethnicity are decidedly premature.

Reading this literature causes one’s imagination to play with the prospect of what might happen if the Church spent less time enforcing intellectual conformity and more time distributing and discussing this rich Mormon literature and (if we truly are living in a post-literate, post-print age) translating it into plays, movies, and music videos. This technique would allow stories to do what stories have always done best: convey the real meaning and appeal of life within a particular cultural tradition.

There may be some who would argue that when an ethnicity becomes the basis of a thriving literary tradition, it is already on the ropes, already on its way to status as the property of a small group of self-conscious intellectuals and no longer just the lived reality of regular folk. And that takes us back to the lessons of Mormon ethnicity for all of American history.

We are living, in the late twentieth century, in very self-conscious times. When we use any of these terms for people of the past—*lifestyle, culture, or ethnicity*—we impose concepts that would have seemed peculiar and alien to them. Those terms are not, therefore, off-limits, but there is a huge question of consciousness and choice raised here. I do not think that Latter-day Saints of the nineteenth century thought of themselves as having an ethnicity, but I think we are still entitled to look at the sum of their thinking and behavior and to use the word *ethnicity* to describe the common patterns of their lives. Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, one could say, had an ethnicity precisely *because* they did not have to think in those terms. They thought in terms of being a chosen people, the seed of Abraham, but mostly they behaved
in ways that demonstrated their common habits and their shared world view. In the immediacy of that behavior, they never had to draw back to inquire whether they were or were not being certifiably "ethnic."

In truth, one can find something to envy in the unselfconsciousness of the past. The current theoretical literature on ethnicity so strongly stresses the role of choice, of consent, of construction that the idea of authenticity, of immediacy, of simply being who you are, without having to endure repeated bouts of strained and awkward self-definition, has moved out of our reach. It is a rare group today that can escape the curious and oddly nerve-wracking experience of researching, describing, defining, asserting, clarifying, recreating, and overhauling their identity. Not only does every group and every subgroup have to have these discussions, they also have to go forward with the results, standing before the public, before federal agencies, before academic audiences, explaining the process, method, and assumptions by which they arrived at their ethnic identity. It is a peculiar state of affairs, but it is a state of affairs made even more trying by the enormous emotional and psychological freight that the idea of ethnicity now has to carry.

Explaining what I mean by that reference to the "enormous emotional and psychological freight" permits me to respond, at long last, to a conversation Jan Shipps and I have had many times. This is the essence of the conversation: Jan says that one of the greatest weaknesses of the New Western History is its failure to reckon with religious history. I think about that and then agree that she is absolutely right. Western historians do pay attention to Spanish missionaries in the Southwest, or to Protestant and Jesuit missionaries in the Northwest. But you virtually have to be a missionary to catch our attention in explicitly religious terms; if you are just a regular old Westerner, we are a hundred times more likely to examine your economic and social behavior than your internal religious life. So Jan Shipps points out the failure of the New Western History to reckon with the wider meanings of faith: I agree completely with her; and then I rush on to the next task and do nothing to show that I have heard her.

This essay, however, provides the best opportunity I have ever had or am likely to have to show that I am paying attention
to Jan. Even without the stimulus of conversation with her, the preparation of this article would have left me mystified and bewildered by the assumption of secularity shared by many Western American historians, New or Old. In the spring of 1994, my colleague at the University of Colorado, Steven Epstein, gave a presentation with me at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I spoke on "New Directions in Western American History" and he spoke on "New Directions in Medieval History"; and to the astonishment of the audience, he persuaded them and me that there really are new directions in his well-established field. But one direction of inquiry, he suggested, remained both old and new. Medieval history was one field where no historian could ever neglect religious history: at every moment of medieval history, the historian is in the presence of faith, as well as the practical and material consequences of faith. I have thought frequently about that remark in reading Mormon history, because everything that Epstein said about medieval history is equally true of Mormon history.28

If one is not a Mormon historian, but one takes an excursion into this field, then one returns to one's own territory asking oneself a big question. If religious faith is an unavoidable and a central factor in Mormon history, then where did it go in Western American history in general? The notion of non-Mormon Westerners living in a fully secularized world, a world in which human consciousness inhabits a thoroughly and complacently material universe and never asks questions about the origins of life, the inescapability of death, and the purpose of existence, never asks those questions and never even stumbles over any answers: after a visit to Mormon history, this idea of a fully secularized modern American consciousness seems deeply improbable.

Religious belief is a well-established current in most phases of human history. It is hard to believe that, for many twentieth-

century Americans, it was a current that just stopped. If one holds this mystery in one’s mind and then turns back to the public discussion of ethnicity in our times, a curious but inescapable idea comes to mind. In the fervor, defensiveness, and ardor of contemporary assertions of ethnic identity, something more than a popularized social science seems to be at work. I am not saying that assertions of ethnic identity are the exact equivalent of assertions of religious belief. But I am saying that assertions of ethnic identity partake of much of the same mental, even spiritual, energy of assertions of religious belief. By defining and claiming an ethnic identity, individuals try to place themselves in larger currents of life, try to find a sense of destiny and purpose, and try to get out, at least momentarily, from under the burden of being isolated individuals responsible for their own self-definition and direction at every moment.

The effort to locate and to rest on an identity, grounded in a context bigger than the individual, structures the search for religious belief. The same effort structures the modern search for ethnicity. We have been in the habit of writing about definitions of ethnicity as if we were exploring the mental equivalent of a clubhouse or a political headquarters. And yet, when we explore modern ethnicity, we are in terrain quite a bit closer to a church. The Latter-day Saint movement, Dean May reminds us, “began with a clear purpose—to build an enclave of order, a refuge from the increasingly diverse and individualistic world that modern liberalism had spawned.” If the world created by liberalism was disorienting in the 1830s, the disorientation has by no means diminished over time, and the search for ethnic roots is surely a response to that persistent disorientation. May continues: “The words that Joseph Smith used to express concern over the distressing world he encountered—‘no small stir and division,’ ‘great confusion and bad feeling,’ ‘strife of words . . . and contest about opinions’—have not lost their resonance or relevance today.”

Our daily opportunities for disorientation explain the common response many of us have when we hear of an ethnicity that might

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be threatened, an identity that might be about to yield to geographical dispersal or to the homogenizing forces of the mass media and market. Even though we know how fruitful in friction and division ethnicity can be, when we hear of a fading ethnic identity, many of us respond with an instinctive, "Too bad!" and instantly hope that something can be done to stop this loss of distinctiveness. Our world remains unsettling and unmoored, and one cannot cheer when one familiar form of anchorage ceases to hold.

"Ethnicity is, above all, a form of commitment," Orlando Patterson wrote in his eccentric but thought-provoking Ethnic Chauvinism. "It is an ideology, or more properly, a faith: one that is often secular, but is also frequently a secular faith layered on a more profound religious faith."30 The advantage of studying Mormon history is that ethnicity and religion were never separable. The reminder thus offered to scholars in all fields of ethnicity is that they are required to proceed with care, respect, and an awareness of the dignity of the people they study. When they write about ethnicity, scholars are exploring turf close to the human soul. When Jan Shipps writes about Mormon people, we get one model of this combination of inquiry with respect. In Shipps, we see the model of the inquiry from outside, in which the inquirer admits both her distance and her difference from the people under study but still offers empathy and a recognition of universal human concerns.31 When Leonard Arrington writes about his own people, we get another model: the inquiry from inside that recognizes that one does one's own people no favor if one fudges on their behalf or offers them something less than a full reckoning with their past.32 Instead, writers like these offer

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31 Lawrence Foster and Mario DePillis also fit in this category. Lawrence Foster, "A Personal Odyssey: My Encounter with Mormon History," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 16, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 87-98, is a particularly telling reflection on this topic.

32 Others who have joined Arrington in this approach are too numerous to mention. See the already cited Quinn, The New Mormon History, and Beecher and Anderson, Sisters in Spirit.
some of the best examples we have of critical inquiry that never compromises the dignity of the people they are writing about but instead does them, or their descendants, the honor of believing that they are prepared to take their history seriously.

Mormonism, Susan Hendricks Swetnam concluded in her study of Mormon pioneer life-story writing in Idaho, “is a live culture, a culture facing difficult and integral challenges, rather than a homogenized set of unthinking conformists.” Mormon poet Marden J. Clark made a similar point in his memorable and moving poem, “Wasatch.” Clark traced the geological origins of the Wasatch Range in the movements of faults, tectonic plates, ancient seas, and rising mountains. “What refuge here,” Clark asked, “For us as we look up in awe / And love to these high peaks?” “Whose fault,” he asked at the end, “if now these plates again should stir?”

In human history, there is no “if” about it. The mountains remain, but the conditions change. The context alters. The refuge shifts. The plates stir. The changing patterns of Mormon ethnicity and the current struggles over Mormon identity simultaneously set Latter-day Saints apart and bind them to the rest of humanity. In our understanding of ethnicity, in our distinctive and parallel searches for refuge, we claim our common ground.

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33 Swetnam, Lives of the Saints, 120.
The only known photograph of Benjamin Winchester (1817-1901), ca. 1870. Courtesy of Eunice V. Eddy.
East of Nauvoo: Benjamin Winchester and the Early Mormon Church

David J. Whittaker

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Winchester never forgot the Church that somehow forgot him. Writing bitterly in 1889, he recalled many of the experiences that brought him into the Church, but he stressed mostly their negative side, soured by being excommunicated in 1844.¹ Yet his life represents a paradigm of individuals who, after

¹Benjamin Winchester, “Primitive Mormonism, Personal Narrative of It by Mr. Benjamin Winchester, An Early Convert and Church Elder,” Salt Lake Tribune, 22 September 1889, [2]. The article argued many of the same issues that William Smith, David Whitmer, and Ebenezer Robinson were saying in the 1880s: the early Mormon Church had become too temporal and authoritarian.
an intellectual and spiritual commitment to the Church, struggled with that commitment in an organizationally and doctrinally growing church but did not survive the succession crisis of 1844.

His life is important, first, because of his contributions to the early Mormon Church. Specifically he espoused and defended its doctrines in a variety of oral and written presentations. As a missionary he was instrumental in bringing upwards of eight hundred people into the Church. Second, a study of his life offers valuable insights into many aspects of the early Church, in particular, its early missionary work, the literature and the personnel of these proselyting thrusts, and the resulting stresses and strains of the Church's early growth. Finally a detailed study of his life offers a new perspective on a significant area of Church activity in Philadelphia and the East Coast that has been overshadowed by the Nauvoo experience. It is the purpose of this essay to examine these aspects of early Mormon history by focusing on Benjamin Winchester.

EARLY LIFE

Benjamin Winchester was born on 6 August 1817 at Lindy's Lane, Erie County, Pennsylvania. His parents, Stephen Winchester and Nancy Case Winchester, descended from New England stock. His father was evidently a farmer. The family converted to Mormonism in January 1833 when Benjamin was fifteen and later...
moved to Kirtland, Ohio. Stephen Winchester remained active in
the Mormon Church and died in 1873 in Salt Lake City.\(^5\)

Benjamin later wrote that because of prejudice against the
new church in the area, he first went only out of curiosity to hear
"these distinguished emissaries of his satanic majesty." By the time
of his baptism two months later, "instead of learning some new
fangled doctrine, as I expected, contrary to that taught by the
Savior and his apostles, I heard the very doctrine Christ com-
manded his disciples to go and preach."\(^6\)

The Winchesters left Pennsylvania for Kirtland in November
1833.\(^7\) In May 1834, Benjamin traveled in his father's company on

\(^5\)Stephen participated in Zion's Camp, then moved to northern Missouri.
Apostle David W. Patten, mortally wounded in the Battle of Crooked River in
October 1838, died in the Winchester home. *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*
(Nauvoo: Robinson and Smith, 1840), 46. Joseph Smith reportedly hid from mobs
in the Winchesters' Nauvoo home. Stephen, a good friend of Heber C. Kimball,
lived in Winter Quarters 1846-49, then lived in Salt Lake City until his death.

\(^6\)Evan M. Greene and John F. Boynton baptized the Winchester family. This
mission is described in the *Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints* (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper
clippings, 1830-present, hereafter cited as *Journal History*), 15 January 1833,
Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt
Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Evan M. Greene's journal,
*Book A*, LDS Church Archives, also covers this mission in great detail. On 27
January 1833, for instance, Boynton preached one and one-half hours on "the
subject of the priesthood and the prosperity of the church in the Apostles day"
while he himself spoke on Romans 3:1-3 (the Church coming out of the
wilderness). The "Brother Winchester" mentioned in Greene's journal is Stephen
Winchester, Benjamin's father. For reminiscences of this mission, but without
specific references to the Winchesters, see John F. Boynton and Evan M. Greene,
Letter to the Editor, Kirtland, Ohio, 13 April 1833, *The Evening and The Morning
Star* 1 (June 1833): 100. See also *Journal History*, 13 April 1833; and John
F. Boynton, Letter to Brethren in the Lord, 20 January 1834, Saco, Maine, *The
Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (February 1834): 134. According to Greene, a
branch of the Church was organized at the Elk Creek settlement on 21 March
1833. Stephen Winchester was ordained a teacher and with two other men was
assigned to "watch over the branch." Benjamin Winchester described his
conversion in his *The Origin of the Spaulding Story . . .* (Philadelphia: Brown,
Bicking and Guilpert [sic] Printers, 1840), 3-5.

\(^7\)Winchester, "Primitive Mormonism," recalled that he journeyed alone to
Kirtland in November 1833. If this was the case, his family soon followed because
the Zion's Camp march from Ohio to Missouri. After returning to Ohio, he attended the School of the Prophets during the winter of 1834-35. He was also present when the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was appointed on 14 February 1835 in Kirtland, Ohio. He was ordained a seventy in December 1836, and in February 1838, at age twenty, Benjamin was appointed to the First Quorum of Seventies. Little is known about his life during the

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9 According to Nathan B. Baldwin: "Our class consisted of Joseph Smith (who, in the absence of the teacher at other duties, took charge of the class), David W. Patten, Heber C. Kimball, Benjamin Winchester, Nathan B. Baldwin, and others that I do not now recollect." Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1967 printing), 431 (442 in 1888 ed.).

10 Evan M. Greene, Journal, as quoted in Journal History, 14 February 1835.

11 On 1 March 1835 Winchester received a special blessing in Kirtland: "You are a child. Your mind is yet tender, therefore you are not of mature age to go forth, but we secure unto you the holy ministry. You shall yet if faithful be ordained. You will live in a day of great howling and mourning among the nations. You shall have power to be a comforter of many and teach them the way of life." Kirtland Council Minute Book, holograph, LDS Church Archives; typescript, p. 183, Special Collections and Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. He was ordained an elder on 25 January 1836. Lyndon W. Cook and Milton V. Backman, Jr., eds., *Kirtland Elder's Quorum Record, 1836-41* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Press, 1985), 3. He was ordained a seventy on 20 December 1836 by Zebedee Coltrin and appointed 6 February 1838 to the First Quorum of Seventy to replace Harvey Stanley. "Record of the Seventy, 1835-1843," LDS Church Archives; see also Joseph Smith, et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 4th ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965 printing), 2:204. See also S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada,
next year, although his name appears on lists of licensed missionaries in early Church periodicals, and he signed the articles of agreement for the Kirtland Safety Society bank.12

EARLY MISSIONARY WORK

In the fall of 1837, Benjamin baptized twelve on a mission through Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.13 He worked longest in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Erastus Snow unexpectedly joined him in Pittsburgh in November, and they worked together periodically for the next several months.14 Their friendship endured even after Winchester’s excommunication. According to Snow’s report:

I left Ohio the last of January, 1838, with a view of proclaiming the fullness of the everlasting gospel to the inhabitants of the eastern country. I spent from three to four months time, preaching in Washington County, Maryland and Franklin, Bedford, and Huntington Counties, Pennsylvania during which time I preached from 80 to 100 times; held one debate; and several times defended the truth publicly, when attacked by the priests of the different denominations; baptized one,

__13__Benjamin Winchester, Report in "Minutes of a Conference of Elders and Members of the Church . . . held in West Township, Columbiana County, Ohio, 6 October 1837," _Elder's Journal_ 1 (October 1837): 15.

From early July to December 1838, Winchester preached near Hornerstown, Monmouth County, New Jersey. He obtained the use of a schoolhouse to preach in and was so successful that the various ministers who argued against him only increased interest in his message. "Thus I continued laboring and making the things of God plain to their understandings," he recalled, "some weeks preaching as often as ten or eleven times." It was probably during this time that Orson Pratt joined him, and they worked together for a short time. William I. Appleby recalled that both men delivered sermons in the school where Appleby was then teaching. One of Winchester's opponents was a Methodist minister, Josiah Ells, whom Winchester first debated, then baptized 1 October 1838. When a branch was organized at Hornerstown in December, the members established Ells as branch president. From February to April 1839, Winchester

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16 Benjamin Winchester, Letter to Robinson and Smith, 18 June 1839, 9-11.

17 Although Appleby's daily journal does not begin until 1839, an autobiography included details of Pratt's and Winchester's sermons. His account suggests an 1837 date; but based on additional sources, I date Winchester's stay as probably September or early October 1838. See Appleby's "Biography" [Autobiography], 2 vols. 1:27-29, LDS Church Archives. Winchester recalled that Orson Pratt came to New Jersey from New York City about the last of September. See *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839): 11.

continued preaching in New Jersey and was especially successful in Toms River where he had been invited to preach. On 9 May, as he reviewed his labors: "I find by looking over my Journal, that since I commenced laboring in the State of New Jersey which was chiefly confined to Monmouth, Burlington and Mercer counties, that I have preached 200 sermons, baptized 40 persons, visited the saints in the city of New York several times; and I feel myself authorized to say, that the work of the Lord is gaining ground in the region of country where I have been laboring."20

In May 1839 he went to Nauvoo where the Saints, expelled from Missouri, had relocated, stayed until 24 June, then left to "resum[e] my labors" in New Jersey.21 In August 1839, he spoke at two conferences in Monmouth County.22 At the second, "it was . . . thought best by the conference that I should come to [Philadelphia] and proclaim the fullness of the everlasting gospel

19 Winchester, Letter to Robinson and Smith, 11.
20 Ibid. This is his first reference to a journal, which seems no longer extant.
21 He refers to this visit in a letter to Erastus Snow, 12 November 1841, Nauvoo, Times and Seasons 3 (15 November 1841): 605, commenting that he was "completely astonished . . . at the improvements" made since his visit two years earlier. Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 10 February 1840, Philadelphia, Times and Seasons 1 (May 1840): 104.
22 The first conference, 9-10 August 1839, is described in "Conference Minutes" [Samuel James, Clerk] Times and Seasons 1 (January 1840): 44; and Walter W. Smith, "History of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Branch," Journal of History 11 (July 1918): 358-73 [to 1841]; 12 (January 1919): 111-18 [1842-43]; and 13 (October 1920): 509-30 [1844-1863] (hereafter cited as W. Smith with volume and page. This series is dependent on the manuscript minutes of the Philadelphia Branch in the possession of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Library-Archives, Independence (hereafter RLDS Church Library-Archives). The October 1920 issue also contains three biographical sketches: Asa Copeland (pp. 530-32); Peter Hess, Jr. (pp. 532-33); William Small (pp. 533-35), plus "Commissioners Hall of the Northern Liberties" (pp. 535-37). However, Smith misdates the first conference in 1838. According to Winchester's 1889 reminiscence, he was already stake president in Philadelphia then. Winchester, "Primitive Mormonism," 2. For the second conference, see John P. Greene, Letter to Don C. Smith and E. Robinson, Monmouth County, New Jersey, 10 September 1839, in Times and Seasons 1 (December 1839): 28; W. Smith 11:359-61, and Jacob Gibson, Journal, LDS Church Archives, [3].
to the inhabitants of the same." This call marked a turning point in his life. His successes there would both honor and plague him during the 1840s.

**BEGINNING OF THE PHILADELPHIA BRANCH**

Pennsylvania had not been among the earliest or most fruitful of the Mormon mission fields. Evan M. Greene, John F. Boynton, and Philastus Hurlburt, in 1833, were apparently the first to preach in Pennsylvania, followed by Orson Pratt in 1835, Erastus Snow in 1836, and Francis G. Bishop in 1837. Winchester had also preached there, probably in 1838; but after his call in August 1839, the history of his labor is the history of the Church in Philadelphia for the next few years.24 He described the beginning of the work in Philadelphia:

As soon as I had arrived here, I commenced enquiring for a house to preach in, but met with poor success the first two or three days. Indeed, I was ridiculed on almost evry [sic] occasion when I enquired for a house. (All of this in consequence of prejudice, and false reports). But my determination was still the same; and that was to proclaim the truth, to the inhabitants of this city. At length I obtained one of the commissioner's Hall's and published an appointment, in one of the news papers; and a crouded [sic] congregation attended the meeting, and I addressed the meeting, with the subject of the first principles of the gospel. I then made other appointments in the same place, and preached some 10, or 12 times and held one debate with one Dr. Bird, of the city: (a Presbyterian preacher,) which was the means of doing much good. —By this time there was quite an excitement, and the former prejudices of the people seemed to be in part removed. I then thought it best to hire a house by the year to preach in that I might

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23 Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 104.
have it under my own control. I did so: and have held 5, or 6 meetings, in it a week, ever since. So like Paul, at Rome, I preach in my own hired house. 25

Meetings continued through September in the Commissioner's Hall of Northern Liberties. 26 Assured of support by his converts, Winchester hired another hall located at the northeast corner of Seventh and Callowhill Streets and began holding meetings there on 16 October. 27 So many clamored to hear the gospel that in October he wrote to Church leaders in Nauvoo "soliciting help on the strongest terms." By April 1840, seven months later, 105 had been baptized. 28

During this time, Winchester was also associating with leaders of the Church. On 22 November 1839, he attended a conference in New York City, and Wilford Woodruff mentions his presence at an evening gathering at Parley Pratt's home four days earlier. 29 On 23 December, Joseph Smith presided over a conference in Philadelphia to organize the Philadelphia Branch, ordain Samuel Bennett an elder, and install him as branch president. Joseph Smith's visit lasted into January; and many other Church

25Benjamin Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 104. His "published appointment" appeared on 9 September 1839 in The Public Ledger and Daily Transcript: "Notice: There will be a meeting of the Latter Day Saints, or Mormons, this evening at early candle light, at Commissioners Hall, N. L. The meeting will be addressed by the Reverend B. Winchester," quoted in W. Smith, 11: 361. See also notices of meetings and lectures in The Public Ledger, published each Saturday, from 11 September through May 1840; "Directions to Persons Wishing to come to the Church . . . in New Jersey," signed "B. Winchester" in Joseph Smith Letterbooks, June 1839, LDS Church Archives, p. 48.


27See ibid., 11 (July 1918): 362.

28An abbreviated notice of his letter appeared in the Times and Seasons 1 (December 1839): 26, urging: "Some faithful elder would be doing their Master's business, if they would call and lend him assistance." For baptisms, see Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 104; W. Smith 11:363.

leaders attended a second conference on 13 January 1840. Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, and others came and went, several mentioning Winchester's work. Rigdon evidently proselyted in Philadelphia until early March. Winchester wrote enthusiastically in early February: "The Lord has prospered me, and made me to see the fruits of my labors. And I feel myself authorized to say that the work of the Lord is gaining ground in this city: and I trust that it will still roll on."

Winchester, age twenty-two, married Mary Hannah Stone that same month on 25 February presumably in New York City. She was born 22 February 1822 to Robert Stone and Maria Smith.

30 Winchester apparently acted as the clerk for the conference since he mentions that he would send the minutes on; the conference and especially Joseph Smith's talk on the coming forth of the Book of Mormon were "the means of doing much good," he said. Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 104; W. Smith 11:365-66.

31 The fact that the December conference was held on Joseph Smith's thirty-fourth birthday suggests that he was there. His own record indicates that he arrived in Philadelphia on 21 December, but that he was in and out of the city until 27 January 1840, when he left for Washington, D.C. History of the Church, 4:47, 49, 75, 77. See also Elder Lorenzo D. Barnes, Letter to Don Carlos Smith, 29 January 1840, Philadelphia, Journal History, 29 January 1840; Samuel James, Letter to Don Carlos Smith, [ca. January 1840], Times and Seasons 1 (January 1840): 44-45; Orson Pratt, Letter [extracts] to Sarah Pratt, 6 January 1840, Times and Seasons 1 (February 1840): 61; Parley P. Pratt, "Sketch of Travels in America, and Voyage to England," Millennial Star 1 (July 1840): 51; History of the Church 4:1, 10, 54; also Reuben Hedlock, "Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Reuben Hedlock," April 1840, Millennial Star 2 (October 1841): 91; and John Shiffert, "Site of Joseph Smith's 1839 Philadelphia Sermon Identified," Ensign 23 (May 1993): 101-2.


33 Winchester, Letter to "Dear Brother in the Lord," 104. Also in Journal History, 10 February 1840. Sixty-five people had been baptized by this date, but Lorenzo Barnes's letter three months later suggesting that there were "not less than 400" within sixty miles of Philadelphia seems speculative. Ibid. 1 (June 1840): 117. The Philadelphia Weekly Ledger, 25 January 1840, 3, reports Winchester baptizing eleven.
Stone, natives of England, and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Winchester apparently met her during one of his missionary trips to that area. Little is known about the quality of that relationship, but it was a long and fruitful marriage, the only one for both.  

After his marriage Winchester continued to labor in the Philadelphia area. In late March or early April, he replaced Samuel Bennett as presiding elder and transferred meetings to the Marshall Institute on Third Street on 5 April 1840. Erastus Snow worked with him for the month of April. By May the branch numbered 200. In early May Winchester visited friends in New Jersey, attending a lecture at Cream Ridge in Monmouth County by Reverend Henry Perkins. It was an anti-Mormon tirade to which Winchester responded with his first published work, *An Examination of a Lecture Delivered by the Rev. H. Perkins*, probably published by the end of May. It was a point-by-point rebuttal of the Reverend’s major arguments using biblical passages in defense of Mormonism. Winchester’s wit and education infuse the twelve-page work, and his missionary zeal is obvious in the concluding paragraph: “I am determined hereafter, that no man shall get up before a congregation in my presence, and lie so unaccountably about the truth of God; but that he shall hear of it again.”

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^Biographical History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa (N.p.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1891), 543. They had eight children: Savillion A., Americus, Benjamin, Jr., Josephine Marion, Frances Amelia, Orlando (died at seven months), Richard A. (died at seven years), and an unnamed baby. Mary died 28 March 1902.


^Benjamin Winchester, *An Examination of A Lecture Delivered by the Rev. H. Perkins, On the Religious Opinions and Faith of the Latter-Day Saints, and Some of His Most Prominent Errors and Misstatements Corrected*
This pamphlet contains the first published mention of the premortal existence of spirits in early Mormon pamphlet literature. Winchester surely learned this doctrine from Joseph Smith's visit a few months earlier. Other Mormon leaders who heard Joseph Smith speak during this period also published new ideas for the first time.\(^{39}\)

Back in Philadelphia, Winchester baptized Edison Whipple on 15 June, who was then sustained as his first counselor in April 1841.\(^{40}\) In late summer Winchester left for England, taking Mary with him. It is not clear whether this was a mission; although John Robinson replaced him as presiding elder on 18 October 1840, a month later the branch voted for Winchester to resume the office.\(^{41}\) At this point, the branch numbered close to 250 Saints.


\(^{40}\) Edison Whipple, Journal, 15 June 1840, 6 April 1841, LDS Church Archives.

\(^{41}\) Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Philadelphia, 1840-54, 18 October, 16 November 1841; "Minutes of a Conference of Elders and Members . . . Held in the City of Philadelphia, Saturday, October 17th, 1840," [Lorenzo Barnes, Clerk], *Times and Seasons* 2 (15 November 1840): 215-17; Benjamin Winchester, Letter to Samuel M. Reeve, 14 December 1840, RLDS
EARLY PUBLISHING VENTURES

Winchester next undertook two publishing ventures. His first project, a defense of the Book of Mormon, probably grew out of the increasing influence of the second printing of E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed*, first published in 1834 but reprinted in 1840 as *History of Mormonism*. Popular in both England and in the United States, Howe's naturalistic explanation of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon became the cornerstone of anti-Mormon writing.42

Shortly before Winchester arrived in England, Parley P. Pratt had begun publishing the *LDS Millennial Star*. Its effectiveness in defending the Mormon cause and commenting on its doctrines impressed Winchester, whose *Origin of the Spaulding Story* was a logical outcome of this influence.43 Seeing more clearly the

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43Parley P. Pratt's *Plain Facts, Showing the Falsehood and Folly of the Rev. C. S. Bush, Reply to His Tract Against the Latter-day Saints* (Manchester: W. R. Thomas Printer, 1840) was the inspiration for Winchester's *The Origins of*
power of the press in the development of the Church, Winchester returned to the United States and in Philadelphia published an exposé of the Spaulding theory with a short biography of Philastus Hurlburt, who had originally gathered E. D. Howe’s affidavits, whom Winchester knew personally.

Winchester’s second publishing venture was a newspaper like the *LDS Millennial Star*. The first issue of his *Gospel Reflector*, the first independent, unofficial periodical published in the Church, came out on 1 January 1841, printed by the same firm that had issued his *Origin of the Spaulding Story*. In his first

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the Spaulding Story Concerning the Manuscript Found: With a Short Biography of D. P. Hulbert [sic], . . . (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilpert [sic] Printers, 1840), probably published in November or early December. The pamphlet related Winchester’s conversion to Mormonism, gave a short biography of Hurlburt and his role in the origin of the Spaulding Theory, and made a case that the theory was “a base fabrication.” Another edition was published by George J. Adams in Bedford, England, as *Plain Facts, Shewing the Origin of Spaulding Story, Concerning the Manuscript Found, and Its Being Transformed into the Book of Mormon, with a Short History of Dr. P. Hulbert [sic] . . .* (Bedford, England: C. B. Merry, 1841). In this edition the preface was reworded and signed by George J. Adams on 15 June 1841. Other alterations included the deletion of about four pages of “Reflections” on Winchester’s persecutions of the Church and the addition of several pages of material on the Spaulding theory from several sources, plus one letter from Sidney Rigdon, 27 May 1839, Commerce (later Nauvoo) (which had appeared in P. P. Pratt, *Plain Facts*, 14-16), and a second from Orson Hyde. Hyde’s letter explains: “You were advised and directed by the Conference in Bedford to re-publish an edition of a certain tract written by Benjamin Winchester. . . .” Letter to George Adams, 7 June 1841, London. John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (New York: R. Carter; Philadelphia: W. J. and J. K. Simon, 1842), 259-65, mentions a “pamphlet,” which is Winchester’s tract. Clark was the rector of St. Andrew’s Church in Philadelphia. Winchester had earlier responded to attacks by Clark in *Gospel Reflector* 1 (1 January 1841): 18-20. In 1847 Dan Jones reprinted some of Winchester’s pamphlet in his Welsh tract, *A Review of the Lectures of the Rev. E. Roberts*, as noted in Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings from 1844 to 1866: A Historical Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, vol. 4, Specialized Monograph Series, 1988), 57-61.

![No copy of Winchester’s prospectus, issued in December 1840, has been found. It may have been merely handwritten and circulated among his early co-workers. The first issue of the *Gospel Reflector* mentions that Winchester planned to change some details of the periodical from those earlier advertised](image-url)
issue, he reports talking about this venture the year before with Joseph Smith, who told him that he “was at liberty to publish any thing of the kind that would further the cause of righteousness”—thus striking a delicate balance between an approved project and an official project.\textsuperscript{45} Winchester issued twelve numbers of twenty-four pages each, between 1 January and 15 June 1841.

Winchester planned to reprint Oliver Cowdery’s letters on Church history and extracts from the Doctrine and Covenants. He also cited, not the \textit{Millennial Star}, but Parley P. Pratt’s \textit{Voice of Warning}, an important doctrinal pamphlet first issued in 1837, as his model, and modestly said he would end the project “as soon as I publish all that I consider useful in a work of this kind.”\textsuperscript{46} But when the newspaper ceased publishing in June, it was mainly because of financial problems. In fact, he told Joseph Smith in September that he had not sold enough copies “to realize any benefit from the profit of them.”\textsuperscript{47} Still, the \textit{Reflector} had a far-reaching impact; many of its articles were reprinted in Church periodicals in New York, Nauvoo, and Liverpool, thus reaching a large audience. Its pages also made available to East Coast members items from other Church publications.\textsuperscript{48}
Winchester's desire to answer Mormon critics was a major motivation behind the Gospel Reflector: "As our enemies in this part of the country are engaged in spreading newspapers, pamphlets, and circulars, tracing the doctrine and characters of the above mentioned society, with the intention of stamping them with infamy and disgrace," Winchester wrote, the paper would "refute the publications that appear against us in the shape of arguments, and thus foil our enemies in their attempts."\(^49\) This helps explain the Reflector's defensive stance as well as that of Winchester's published works.

Although Winchester spent much of his time for the next six months on his paper, he continued as Philadelphia Branch leader and Church defender. In February 1841, in Frankfort, Pennsylvania, he spoke on the Second Coming and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. He then opened the

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\(^{49}\) *Gospel Reflector* 1 (1 January 1841): 1-2. Winchester received the support of the Philadelphia members for this project by a conference vote on 14 December 1840. Conference Minutes, *Gospel Reflector* 1 (1 January 1841): 23-24. The originals are in "Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Philadelphia, 1840-54," holograph in RLDS Library-Archives. A letter to Winchester from Erastus Snow dated December 1840 appears just before the conference minutes. The letter, which supports the venture, and the conference minutes, appearing as they did in the first issue, undoubtedly were strategically placed to suggest to readers the local and general support of this undertaking. No doubt the Gospel Reflector and Winchester's other works in Philadelphia were in response to the same conditions Edwin D. Woolley noted in a letter dated 17 June 1841 from Pennsylvania, that non-Mormon newspapers were refusing to publish their replies and thus "leaving us but a poor opportunity to correct the errors, or refute the falsehoods, although many are calling for reply from us if they are not true." Woolley also noted that "the public prints are at war with the Kingdom." See the full letter in *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 September 1841): 531. For a sample of the attacks see Adrian Van Brocklin Orr, *Mormonism Dissected, or Knavery "On Two Sticks," Exposed* (Bethania, Penn.: Reuben Chambers, 1841). Orr refers to the Gospel Reflector as the "Error Reflector" (p. 3). See also *Mormonism Unmasked* (Philadelphia: n.pub., 1840); and Julian Moses, *A Few Remarks in Reply to an Anonymous Scribbler, styling himself "One who hates imposture," but found to be an imposter himself and ashamed to tell his name* (Philadelphia: n.pub, 1841); copies in LDS Church Archives.
meeting to questions and comments from the audience. E. G. Lee arose and attacked the Mormons verbally for the failure of their Kirtland Bank. When Winchester tried to keep the discussion on religious matters, the meeting ended in confusion. Lee printed in the *Daily Chronicle* (Philadelphia) a summary of his case against the Mormons. Winchester wrote a response on 19 February 1841, but the *Daily Chronicle* refused to print it. Consequently, Winchester published it as a paid advertisement in the *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) on 23 February. In this letter, Winchester dealt with the major charges against Mormon leaders and contributed some first-hand information relating to the Kirtland Bank.50

About this same time, problems developed in the Philadelphia Branch. The branch minutes tell of a 15 March 1841 meeting held to resolve differences between Winchester and Almon Babbitt, without disclosing what the problems were. Furthermore, financial problems that continued to haunt Winchester were also emerging. On 6-7 April 1841, a special conference convened in Philadelphia to more extensively organize the Church there and to help solve its financial problems. The day before, on 5 April, the report of the financial committee, Jacob Baker, William Wharton, Jesse Price, William West, and J. B. Nicholson, revealed that as early as 1840 the branch had begun providing financial support for the presiding elder and had renewed that support after Winchester’s return from England. The

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report documented that the branch was using almost all the money it collected just to pay for Winchester's living expenses.51

During the following conference, Hyrum Smith presided and Winchester was appointed clerk. In a reorganization, Winchester was ordained to preside over the "spiritual affairs of the church in this place," with Edison Whipple and William Wharton as his assistant counselors.52 Jacob Syfrett was called as bishop to administer the Church's financial affairs in the city with Jesse Price and J. B. Nicholson as his counselors. Clearly, Winchester's office was more general than that of a bishop, but it is not clear what his authority was. On 24 May 1841, Joseph Smith eliminated most of the stakes in the Church; if Winchester had been considered the equivalent of a stake president, this action would have eliminated his position. And certainly the overlapping jurisdiction caused further problems.53

MISSION TO SALEM

In the summer of 1841, Erastus Snow and Winchester filled a special mission to Salem, Massachusetts, to "try to establish the Kingdom there."54 This call proved to be a turning point in both

51"Minutes of the Church," 5 April 1841, RLDS Library-Archives.
53Joseph Smith, "To the Saints Abroad," Times and Seasons 2 (1 June 1841): 434. Hyrum Smith probably intended Winchester to supervise missionary efforts while Syfrett handled the more temporal, local needs of the converts. Walter Smith, 11:373, noted that "the organization effected at this time put the work on a much firmer basis in Philadelphia, providing a permanent presidency of high priests [Winchester and counselors], and a bishop to care for the financial burdens, which had prior to this been borne by a committee of the brethren."
54Journal History, 16 August 1841; History of the Church 4:403. Joseph
men’s lives, positive in Erastus Snow’s case, negative in Winchester’s. Snow wrote: “In the summer of 1841, Elder Winchester and I received instructions from the First Presidency to go to Massachusetts and open up the gospel in Salem, Boston, and that region of the country. We went together and hired the Masonic Hall in Salem and commenced preaching, but Elder Winchester very soon returned to Philadelphia, leaving me to occupy the field alone.”

Snow had accepted the mission reluctantly because he was preparing to return to Nauvoo where family and property seemed to require his immediate attention. He finally drew between lots marked “Nauvoo” and “Salem.” Winchester, strapped by publishing debts and the costs of renting meeting space, also had reservations about this mission. Nevertheless, they reached Boston on 1 September, took the train twelve miles northeast to Salem two days later, rented a room in a boarding house for $3.50 per week, secured the Salem Masonic Hall for a public meeting, and published an eight-page pamphlet, An Address to the Citizens of Salem and Vicinity, which was reprinted twice during the next few months.

Smith had conducted an 1836 “treasure” hunting trip there, resulting in a revelation (D&C 111) directing his efforts to other “treasures in the city.” It is possible that the 1841 mission call to Snow and Winchester grew out of this episode. See David R. Proper, “Joseph Smith and Salem,” Essex Institute Historical Collections 100 (April 1964): 88-97; History of the Church 2:464-66; Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church 1:410-12. Hyrum Smith gave Erastus Snow a copy of Doctrine and Covenants 111 after Snow was called on this mission. Larson, Erastus Snow, 67.


57The first printing of 2,500 copies, dated 9 September 1841, was followed by Freeman Nickerson’s reprint four days later in Boston. Winchester had probably given Nickerson a copy as he passed through Boston. Winchester also sent Joseph Smith a copy when he wrote on 18 September, which was reprinted in the Times and Seasons 2 (15 October 1841): 574-76 and 3 (1 November [misdated on the title page as 15 November] 1841):578-84. See Andrew Jenson, Historical Record 6 (January 1887): 151, and LDS Biographical Encyclopedia
Winchester preached three times and returned to Philadelphia within the week. As late as February 1842, Snow expected him to return: "I have many calls for preaching and visiting people in all parts of the city and in the neighboring villages and need the assistance of Elder Winchester very much." But Winchester had changed his mind. On 18 September he wrote to Joseph Smith, complaining of asthma attacks triggered by the New England cold, stating his understanding that the Salem call was only temporary, and expressing frustration at his printing and rental debts. He hinted broadly: "There is much printing to do in Nauvoo, and as I am somewhat acquainted with that business perhaps you could get me a situation of that kind." He also complained that Apostle John Page, then staying in Philadelphia, was pretending poverty so he would not have to accompany Orson Hyde on their assigned mission to dedicate Palestine for the return of the Jews.

For his part, Page had doubts about Winchester's ability, which he was not hesitant to express. On the day that Winchester

1:108. This tract was heavily influenced by Parley P. Pratt, An Address by Judge Higbee and Parley P. Pratt... to the Citizens of Washington (Washington, D.C.: n.pub., 1840).

58Snow, Letter to Hyrum Smith and William Law, February 1842, Hyrum Smith Collection, LDS Church Archives; see also Snow, Letter, 10 October 1841, Northridge, Massachusetts, Times and Seasons 3 (15 November 1841): 602-4. On 7 September 1841, Snow and Winchester signed the register at the East India Marine Society, now the Peabody Museum. My thanks to Donald Q. Cannon for this information. By May 1842, the Salem Branch numbered seventy-nine; by September 1842, when John C. Bennett made some inroads with anti-Mormon lectures in the area, it numbered eighty-three; and by February 1843, it numbered 110 people. Larson, Erastus Snow, 71; Times and Seasons 3 (1 December 1842): 31-32; ibid. 4 (1 March 1843): 125.

had left for Salem, in fact, Page had written to Joseph Smith complaining that the Philadelphia branch needed

some efficient Elder or High Priest. . . . For at the present time there is a feeling existing in the hearts of some concerning Elder Benjamin Winchester that I think cannot be removed better than by changing the President. . . . My humble opinion is that Elder Winchester has not been wise in all things as he might have been, and I presume that the members of the same branch have not looked on the course and conduct of Elder Winchester in that charitable light as they might do. Elder Winchester is very sanguine and unyielding in his course of economy concerning matters and things in the Church. There are some of the members of the same propensity and those of that first class of respectability in the branch, so I think that all that is strictly necessary to be done is that the Branch have a new President. 60

Needless to say, the personal difficulties between Winchester and Page added to the growing dissension in the Philadelphia Branch. While firm evidence is lacking, it is possible that rumors of polygamy exacerbated the problems in Philadelphia.

TO NAUVOO

In October, Winchester went to Nauvoo. He described his trip and the city in a detailed letter to Erastus Snow from Nauvoo on 12 November 1841. 61 He does not, however, explain why he made the journey. On 31 October, he attended a council with the Twelve, suggesting that he was either summoned or was seeking guidance for the situation in Philadelphia. According to the minutes, Winchester “complained that he had been neglected and misrepresented by the Elders, and manifested a contentious spirit.” Joseph Smith gave “him a severe reproof, telling him of his folly and vanity, and showing him that the principles which he suffered to control him would lead him to destruction.” He was counseled to change his course, govern his disposition, and to quit “tale-bearing and slandering his brethren.” 62

Winchester’s reaction to this rebuke is not known, but he apparently helped edit the Times and Seasons from November

60 John E. Page, Letter to Joseph Smith, 1 September 1841, in Journal History.
1841 to January 1842. Although there is no mention in the *Times and Seasons* of Winchester’s connection with it, he recalled in 1889 that for a short time after the death of Don Carlos Smith, Joseph’s brother and editor until his death in August 1841, he helped edit the paper; furthermore, the paper reprinted a total of eight of Winchester’s articles from the *Gospel Reflector*; six appeared, one per issue, between 1 December 1841 and 15 February 1842.\(^6^3\) Gustavus Hills was appointed assistant editor in mid-January 1842, probably ending any professional hopes Winchester may have had there.\(^6^4\) Beginning in the fall of 1841, the Quorum of the Twelve had received enlarged administrative responsibilities, and making the *Times and Seasons* a more official organ was part of a larger pattern. Brigham Young acted as the Church’s agent in Robinson’s not entirely voluntary sale of the newspaper to the Church in February 1842.\(^6^5\)

This growing centralization of power may have been a source of further discontent for Winchester and contributed to his later backbiting against the Twelve and complaints about the situation in Pennsylvania. On 12 January 1842, the Quorum of the Twelve pronounced his “suspension” until he “made satisfaction for disobedience to the First Presidency.”\(^6^6\) He was simultaneously

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\(^6^3\) Don Carlos Smith died 7 August 1841. The last issue he edited was vol. 2, no. 19 (2 August 1841): 487-502. Succeeding Don Carlos Smith were Ebenezer Robinson and Robert B. Thompson. Thompson died on 27 August 1841, leaving Robinson as editor until Joseph Smith became editor in February 1842. Winchester, “Primitive Mormonism.”


preparing a Bible concordance, publishing an announcement and prospectus about the two- or three-hundred page project in the 15 January issue of the *Times and Seasons*. He gave his address as Philadelphia, indicating that he did not plan to remain in Nauvoo.

## CONTINUED PROBLEMS IN PHILADELPHIA

Winchester left Nauvoo at the end of January, but conflict in Philadelphia was probably inevitable. John Page had presided over the branch during Winchester’s absence and was so popular that the members wrote to leaders in Nauvoo on 30 January 1842, acknowledging its need for a leader and suggesting Page. In an attached note, Page added a glowing progress report of the work there, promised to come to Nauvoo in the summer “to receive my fate and your decision on my hearing and give an account of my stewardship and my mission,” complained that his enemies had “abused” him, and added, “B. Winchester is my enemy.”

Winchester continued writing and missionary work, and in

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68 He published this work, *A Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures and Concordance in Which the Synonymous Passages Are Arranged Together*, in late July or early August 1842. It was the third major scriptural aid published in the early Church and was probably influenced by Lorenzo D. Barnes’s *References: To Prove the Gospel in Its Fulness* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, 1841). The *Times and Seasons*, by then under Joseph Smith’s editorship, published a notice in the 15 September issue. “Winchester’s Concordance,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (15 September 1842): 923-24; John Taylor, Editorial comment on material from the *Baltimore Clipper*, ibid. 4 (1 December 1842): 28. Rather mystifyingly, Joseph Smith’s history notes on 19 April 1843 state: “By certificate of William Smith, of this date, we learn that Elder Benjamin Winchester has recently published a synopsis or concordance to the scriptures.” *History of the Church* 5:368.
69 On 30 January 1842, William Small, Jeremiah Cooper, Levick Sturges, and George Simon, Letter to “the presidents and the twelve of the church of Latter day saints,” 30 January 1842, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church Archives.
70 In a letter to Joseph Smith, 10 February 1842, Edward Hunter reports that Winchester “looked well and is in good spirits, he says several has [sic] lately
March the Pittsburgh Saints sent a petition to Nauvoo signed by twenty-three individuals asking for Page to be assigned to Pittsburgh. Joseph Smith's appended note said this request would be discussed at April conference in Nauvoo. The petition's first signer, Richard Savary, had sent a personal letter to Joseph Smith, 2 February 1842, thanking Page for convincing him of his errors, "relative to the divinity of the Bible." The conflict intensified in early April when Winchester insisted on moving the meetings to the Assembly Building on the southwest corner of Tenth and Chestnut streets in the southern part of the city. The Marshall Institute hall was in the northern part. This decision may reflect either a need for more space or an attempt to put some space between him and John Page. At least some of the Saints, presumably under Page's leadership, had held meetings there as early as January 1842. The conference, held on Chestnut Street, approved the decision but not unanimously. On 22 April a petition against the move signed by seventy-one was on its way to Nauvoo, asking in strong terms "that a church may be organized in the north part of the city of Philadelphia (in the part of the city where most of us reside) separate and distinct from any others." On 14 May 1842 Joseph Smith granted this petition, "and my doings were sanctioned by the Twelve who at the same time silenced Elder Benjamin Winchester for not following counsel."

Meetings were therefore held in both locations, a de facto split of the branch, from April until September. The disciplinary action may not reflect personal dislike or opposition to Winchester as much as the political reality that Page was an apostle and the Quorum of the Twelve was continuing to receive and consolidate its power. Winchester was ordered not to preach in church

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72 W. Smith 12:111.

73 Ibid., 12:112.

74 Journal History, 22 April 1842.

75 Ibid., 14 May 1842; History of the Church 5:8-9.
until he repented "for not obeying the instruction which he received from the Presidency when at Nauvoo." 76

He spent the next few weeks working on his synopsis and concordance, pausing in June 1842 to go to Boston with George J. Adams, a popular convert, actor, and powerful debater, where they held a two-week "public discussion" with Reverend George Montgomery West. 77 Winchester was restored "to his former fellowship and standing in the Church" in July but warned to relocate immediately and promised, "Then it will be well with him, if he will be faithful and true to the great cause." 78 But Winchester stayed in the Philadelphia area, an action which led him into greater difficulties with Church leaders.

On 14 September Winchester's first counselor, Edison Whipple, resigned to move to Nauvoo. 79 Leadership was in disarray given Page's presence but lack of local office, the existing bishopric, the first-silenced, then-restored Winchester, who was instructed to leave the city. Joseph Smith's two counselors, Hyrum Smith and William Law, arrived in Philadelphia to preside over a special conference on 15 October. It "annulled . . . all former organizations in Philadelphia," appointed Peter Hess as presiding elder, and voted to meet only at the Marshall Institute. 80

Extant records do not describe Winchester's role in this conference, but by November he was preaching in Baltimore, Maryland. One lecture, reported in the Baltimore Clipper and reprinted in the Times and Seasons, is important for several

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76 Times and Seasons 3 (16 May 1842): 798.

77 W. Smith 12:112; "Notice," Times and Seasons 3 (15 July 1842): 862; ibid., 3 (1 August 1842): 863-65; ibid., 3 (15 August 1842): 886. These accounts reprint the Bostonian's account, which does not mention Winchester. Winchester, Letter to the First Presidency, 8 August 1842, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, tells of the desire of the Philadelphia Branch to have Adams preach to them.

78 Ibid., 3 (15 July 1842): 862. This notice was signed by the First Presidency and eight members of the Quorum of the Twelve.


80 Ibid., 114. Thus Winchester's prior decisions were reversed and a new leader was placed in charge.
First, it shows that Winchester was still loyal to the Church. Second, he denied John C. Bennett's claims that the Mormons were "sanctioning a community of wives," a stand that must have mortified him when he learned the facts first-hand. Third, the Clipper reporter added that Winchester would deliver a series of lectures in a few weeks, suggesting that the move was quasi-permanent. The lecture also impressed the reporter, who stated, "We confess that Mr. Winchester changed our opinion of the sect." John Taylor, editor of the Times and Seasons, commented positively on Winchester's contribution to missionary work when he reprinted the article and, at Hyrum Smith's request, printed a notice about Winchester's Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures, noting that "it does credit to its author."

Unfortunately, Winchester returned to Philadelphia before the year ended where, once again, trouble erupted. In the summer he published a 168-page History of the Priesthood, a mission-


82 John Cook Bennett was a man of varied talents, many of which he used to the Church's benefit during the Nauvoo period. He was especially important in securing the charter for the city of Nauvoo. He was rewarded for these efforts by being elected the first Mayor of Nauvoo. His influence on Joseph Smith appears to have been great, but he eventually lost his standing through his immorality. He was excommunicated in May 1842. His influence as an enemy of the Church was considerable, mainly through his book The History of the Saints; or an Exposé of Joe Smith and the Mormons (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842). The book appeared in late September or early October 1842. His attacks on Mormonism were extensive, some of which were echoed by Thomas Sharp, editor of the Warsaw Signal, a vehement anti-Mormon newspaper in Illinois. Pages 217-57 contain the charges, with many examples, of polygamy among the Mormons. It was these allegations, more than anything else, that caused the Mormon missionaries such problems in the field, and it was to these charges that Winchester addressed himself. For a summary of Bennett's association with the Church, see Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church 2:47-50, 140-47; and more recently, Danel Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith," (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975), 218-60.

83 A History of the Priesthood from the Beginning of the World to the Present Time Written in Defense of the Doctrine and Position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and also a Brief Treatise Upon the
ary-oriented work that included detailed scriptural commentary and reworkings of some essays published in the Gospel Reflector. It presents concisely the main arguments of the early Church about the historicity of God's delegation of priesthood power and the existence of priesthood authority as a sign of the true church. Winchester interpreted priesthood as a spiritual, not temporal, power. This view is in keeping with his philosophy, argued as early as April 1841, that Mormonism was a spiritual, not a political, force. This view was increasingly at odds with developments at Nauvoo.

It is difficult to reconstruct fully what happened next, but on 16 February 1843, Peter Hess wrote Hyrum Smith an overview of the Philadelphia difficulties as he saw them. Hess reviewed the events of the October conference, describing increasing disagreements between George J. Adams and Winchester over Winchester's continued insistence on dealing harshly with "refractory" members who had been meeting at the Marshall Institute. Thus, he felt that the conference had failed to support Winchester's leadership between April and October. Winchester also made numerous charges of adultery, which later turned into accusations of polygamy and spread to include members in Boston and New York. Hess had opposed these recommendations, recalling that Hyrum Smith had counseled "mildness" in dealing with transgressors. Hess described members who had sustained him in his office

Fundamental Sentiments, Particularly Those Which Distinguish the Above Society from Others Now Extant (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, 1843). The copy in LDS Church Archives was owned by Joseph F. Smith, who seems to have used it throughout his life.

Winchester's was the first volume-length study to appear on the priesthood. John Taylor's The Government of God (1852) was less historical and more focused on the practical and theoretical application of priesthood. It was as if he was building upon the historical foundation laid by Winchester nine years before, although Taylor advocated the literal establishment of the kingdom of God, while Winchester discussed only its spiritual and scriptural dimensions.

Benjamin Winchester, "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream," Gospel Reflector 1 (1 April 1841): 192-200; and ibid. 1 (15 April 1841): 201-13. This was reprinted in the Times and Seasons 3 (1 December 1841): 607-14. He insisted that a literal kingdom would be established just before the Millennium, after all nature went to war against the Saints. See esp. pp. 613-14.
because they "thought that they could use me for a tool to effect their purposes." Adams had helped keep order; but after he left for Boston, a "secret spring" arose to challenge Adams's authority and to subvert his leadership, when Adams had been elected to preside at a conference in Philadelphia. Hess was convinced that if this "spring" could be removed, the Church would acquire "multitudes and multitudes." This "secret spring," Hess claimed, was absent from most all Church meetings, except he always managed to "thrust himself in where he is not wanted." Lest his metaphor had been too obscure, Hess wrote a postscript to Joseph Smith: "Brother Joseph in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Call home this secret spring. The two first letters of his name is [sic] Benjamin Winchester."86

Hess mentioned that other letters would confirm these facts. Although none seem extant, these Philadelphia reports were apparently on the agenda of a meeting with Joseph Smith and several apostles on 19 April 1843. Joseph commented, "You can never make anything out of Benjamin Winchester if you take him out of the channel he wants to be in."87 Meanwhile, before Church leaders could send instructions to Philadelphia, a special meeting was convened there on 21 April at Winchester's request to provide a forum in which to "set forth the difficulties that existed between Elder Hess and himself." The clerk, J. B. Nicholson, a councilor in the Philadelphia bishopric, was the son of a woman Winchester had apparently accused of immorality, which may account for a certain bias in the minutes.88

It is clear that Winchester was again out of favor with the Philadelphia leaders, but the exact problem is not clear. The complaints against him include Nicholson's accusation that Winchester had been spreading remarks that were "slandering" his mother, who lived in New York. George J. Adams, back from Boston, agreed with others that Winchester was guilty of "back-

86Peter Hess, Letter to Hyrum Smith, 16 February 1843; Hyrum Smith Collection, LDS Church Archives.
87Journal History, 19 April 1843; History of the Church 5:367.
88"A Council Meeting of the Official Members of the Church . . . in Philadelphia," LDS Church Archives; typescript in my possession.
biting and bickering.” He had also said that Sybbella Armstrong of Philadelphia had been seen publicly drunk. The witnesses against him failed to give any information that was not hearsay, Winchester strongly denied all charges, and the meeting adjourned to the next day in “some little confusion.” No record of a second meeting exists, and both women wrote to Joseph Smith in May “complaining of the slanderous conduct of Benjamin Winchester.” Joseph Smith immediately directed the Twelve to act upon the matter, then met with the apostles, Adams, and Winchester five days later on 27 May to investigate Winchester’s conduct.

**TRIAL IN NAUVOO**

About two months after the investigations in Nauvoo, Adams wrote to Peter Hess: “Winchester was entirely used up by Bro. Joseph and Bro. Young before the council of the Twelve and his license [was] taken from him. It was his last kick until he reformed. I never heard a man get such a scoring since the Lord made me as Winchester got at that time.”

According to Wilford Woodruff’s journal, Joseph Smith used Winchester’s trial to instruct the apostles further in their areas of jurisdiction and responsibility. The charges against Winchester were “improper conduct, slandering the Saints in Philadelphia, for rejecting the counsel of Hyrum, Joseph and the Twelve, and tearing to pieces the Saints instead of building them up.” During the proceedings Winchester was “refractory and out of order.”

The group heard several letters read, including Sybbella Armstrong’s complaint, then Winchester made a lengthy speech justifying himself. Adams gave testimony against Winchester, to

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89Journal History, 22 May 1843, 1; *History of the Church* 5:403.
90George J. Adams, Letter to Peter Hess, 7 July 1843, Springfield, Illinois, LDS Church Archives; Journal History, 7 July 1843, 3-4; Adams, Letter to William Smith, *The Prophet* 1 (12 October 1844): 3. Adams does not mention in any of these accounts that he confessed to adultery and, at the 27 May meeting, had been forgiven.
91Woodruff, 27 May 1843, 2:234-36; *History of the Church* 5:410-12; Quorum of the Twelve Minutes, 27 May 1843, LDS Church Archives.
92Woodruff, 27 May 1843, 2:234-36.
which Winchester again responded in his own defense. At this point, Joseph Smith stood up and "rebuked Elder Winchester in the sharpest manner; said he had a lying spirit and had lied about him, and told him of his many errors." Brigham Young, president of the Twelve, said that he had "made his mind up and that his decision was that Winchester should give up his license and cease preaching until he should reform." Hyrum Smith, who had made several pleas for mercy, now pointed out that Winchester had not yet had a chance to get witnesses for his side. After Winchester had asked for time to investigate the merits of Armstrong's letter, of which he had just learned the contents, Young suggested that the Nauvoo high council hear the matter. Joseph Smith instructed the Twelve that they were "to regulate the churches and elders abroad in all the world" while the high council concerned itself only with Nauvoo.

Hyrum still insisted that the trial be put off until the next day, but Young chastised Winchester severely. Apparently Winchester had been arguing that the Twelve had no authority over him in Philadelphia, but Young wished to make their jurisdiction plain. Winchester's later decision to work against Brigham Young as Joseph Smith's successor probably dates from this tongue-lashing. Joseph Smith then counseled that Winchester be silenced and that his license for preaching be taken from him, that he and his family move to Nauvoo, "and if he would not do that, let him go out of the church." The body unanimously accepted this counsel, and Winchester agreed not to preach. Joseph Smith then gave the Twelve further instructions on conducting an ecclesiastical court and, presumably using Winchester as an example, told the apostles that their most important responsibility was to "discern the

spirit by which either party was governed." Because contradictory statements had been made, he further instructed the Twelve to thoroughly investigate the church in Philadelphia.94 Two days later, the Twelve sent a special message to the Saints in Philadelphia, counseling in the strongest terms that these members gather without delay to Nauvoo.95

Winchester obediently went back to Philadelphia and prepared to move his family to Nauvoo. We have little information on his activities during this period, but Brigham Young traveled with Winchester and Heber C. Kimball in the Philadelphia area in August 1843,96 and he became involved with personal conflicts Apostle William Smith was having in New Jersey in the fall of 1843. According to a pamphlet Smith published in early 1844, Winchester told Smith that Abraham Burtis, the presiding elder in the branch at New Egypt, New Jersey, was planning to sue Smith for defamation of character, claiming that Smith had forged a letter purporting to be from a Dr. Lee that slandered his wife's morals. Smith gave Winchester Lee's letter, which convinced Burtis that the letter was valid. At a special conference on 18 October 1843 at New Egypt, Burtis was excommunicated for rejecting the authority of the Church, for circulating slanderous reports, and for unchristian-like conduct. Winchester's vote was negative, suggesting either hurt feelings about his own May trial in Nauvoo or possibly stronger ties to Burtis. Winchester had opened this area of New Jersey to missionary work in 1838, and Burtis may have been one of his converts. William Smith calls Burtis "a particular favorite of Bros. Winchester and [E.] Snow."97

94History of the Church 5:412.
95Journal History, 29 May 1843; History of the Church 5:413 (the date is incorrectly given as 20 May); "Special Message," Brigham Young for the Quorum of the Twelve, Times and Seasons 4 (15 June 1843): 232.
96Brigham Young, Letter to Mary Ann Angell Young, 17 August-2 September 1843, uncataloged manuscripts, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. This letter is printed in Brigham Young University Studies 32 (Summer 1992): 89-92.
97William Smith, Defence of Elder William Smith Against the Slanders of Abraham Burtis and Others; In Which Are Included Several Certificates and the Duties of Members in the Church of Christ, in Settling Difficulties One with
Eighteen forty-three was obviously a critical year for Benjamin Winchester. His commitment to the Church had reached both a high and a low point. His *History of the Priesthood* was in many ways his best work, but his trial had brought him rebuke and rejection from the very priesthood leaders whose authority his book had sought to legitimize.

**IN NAUVOO**

It is not clear how Winchester earned his living, but there is no immediate hint of dissatisfaction. He ran errands for Joseph Smith and helped form the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute, contributing more books than anyone but Joseph Smith and Jeremiah Hatch, Jr. He was elected its first president, and the minutes record a lively address he gave urging the establishment of its library “in a very energetic and conclusive manner.” He assured the group “that wealth[,] dignity nor fame was power but intelligence was power, for that alone could perpetuate our free institutions, for it was necessary in the tribunals of Justice, it was of the utmost importance in the halls of Legislation and above all most important in the sacred task.”

On 28 November 1843, he was one of 3,419 who signed the “Scroll Petition” for redress because of losses in Missouri.

When Joseph Smith declared his candidacy for U.S. president in February 1844, Winchester was among the 340 missionaries called to carry both Smith’s campaign views and the religious message throughout the country in April. He was obviously in full

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98 At the end of January, Joseph Smith sent Winchester to Warsaw to “preach the first principles of the gospel, get some lexicons, and return home.” Journal History, 31 January 1844; *History of the Church* 6:190; Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute, “Amount of Stock Received into the Library,” Ledger, and Minutes, 31 January 1844, [2], LDS Church Archives.

fellowship, for he was put in charge of a group of fourteen, and these instructions appeared at the bottom of the published minutes: "Elder B. Winchester is instructed to pass through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia, to visit the churches, hold conferences, and preside over them."\(^{100}\) His departure date from Nauvoo is not known; but by June he and Elder John Brown were in Noxubee County, Mississippi, with "special instructions for the saints."\(^{101}\) When he received word on 1 July of Joseph Smith's death, he left for Nauvoo.\(^{102}\)

The city was in a turmoil of grief and anxiety but also deeply divided on succession. Many individuals close to Joseph had questioned the growing secularism of his administration months before his death. Joseph Smith's involvement in land speculation, city government, military affairs, and even the quest for the American Presidency seemed evidence that the Church was becoming too worldly. Brigham Young, because of his position as leader of the powerful Quorum of the Twelve, established his claim as the rightful successor. But his strong personality and a dissatisfaction with some of his arguments and decisions led to numerous schisms during the next fifteen years.\(^{103}\)


\(^{102}\)Autobiography of John Brown, 47. Puzzlingly, *The Prophet*, a Mormon newspaper published in New York, reported that Winchester was in the South as late as 7 September 1844. See issues of 24 and 31 August, 3 and 7 September, [p. 3 of all issues].

Winchester was one who, in those critical months, withheld his support from Brigham Young and the Twelve. His reasons for doing so were mixed. In 1889 he recalled the growing secularism of the Church, the doctrine of plural marriage, and his dislike of William Smith as motives. Certainly Young’s semi-public tongue-lashing did not endear him to Winchester. However, for Winchester, the succession crisis had begun before 1844.

By moving to Nauvoo, Winchester had become aware of the then-secret practice of plural marriage. It is not known if plural marriage was actually being practiced as early as 1843 in Philadelphia, though Parley P. Pratt says Joseph Smith taught him and others in 1840 in Philadelphia the concepts of “eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes.” During the winter of 1843-44, Winchester later recalled, Hyrum Smith, “who had always been a particular friend,” attempted to explain the doctrine to him. When Winchester refused to believe that the practice was anything more than satanic, Joseph Smith summoned him and “explained it in as plausible a manner as he could and requested [him] to take a mission and go to the Southern cities saying that it was the command of the Lord.”

Although Winchester suggests that he was introduced to polygamy by the Smith brothers, rumors of the practice (and denials of it) had circulated since John C. Bennett had been excommunicated the year before. According to Winchester family descendants, Winchester’s parents had sheltered Joseph Smith when he was pursued by bounty hunters. There is a strong possibility that Joseph Smith married Benjamin’s sixteen-year-old sister, Nancy Mariah, in late 1843 or in early 1844. She was sealed vicariously to Joseph Smith on 3 February 1846 and to Heber C. Kimball for time. Benjamin’s repugnance for polygamy, ex-

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106 Sealing Records, Nauvoo Temple, Temple film #25163, pt. 4, pp. 513-14,
pressed in 1842, would only have been exacerbated by discovering his sister's marriage, if it occurred.

These developments help explain Winchester's actions and place his personal trials in the larger context of Church growth, both doctrinally and ecclesiastically. He was clearly on a collision course with the men who would become leaders of the Church after Joseph's death.

Initially, Winchester did not publicly take sides in the leadership controversy. In fact, he was probably not in Nauvoo for the final contest between Brigham Young and Sidney Rigdon on 8 August 1844, since *The Prophet* in New York published a warm notice:

Elder Bing. [sic] Winchester is in Philadelphia. We hope to lay before our readers, ere long, something from his able pen. Brother W. has written much during the last twelve years: his works have had a very extensive circulation—and his style is forcible and pleasant, they have been the means of throwing much light on a "dark and benighted world," and thousands are now rejoicing in the blessings of the Gospel, who owe their joy to the knowledge imparted by Brother Winchester's Tracts.\(^{107}\)

But by October, Winchester had allied himself with Sidney Rigdon, probably because Winchester despised plural marriage and there is ample evidence that Rigdon, too, fought its practice before Joseph Smith's death.\(^{108}\) The second issue was the priest-
hood claims of the Twelve as presented in the meetings held in Nauvoo in August 1844. Winchester's *History of the Priesthood* had not dealt with succession, except in the most general of terms, so his support of Rigdon was probably less doctrinal than personal. Winchester was not involved with Rigdon's losing struggle with the Twelve nor his excommunication in September 1844. In fact, it was not until Rigdon had launched an attack on the Twelve, their secular interests, and polygamy that he allied himself to Rigdon's cause, and then only briefly.

Winchester attended a conference in Philadelphia on 31 August and 1 September 1844 in which William Smith reproved Winchester for his past actions. Winchester, possibly still smarting over the Burtis episode, arose and expressed his candid feelings toward the Twelve. Among other things he accused the Twelve of slandering him, of forcing him to spend over four hundred dollars in going to and returning from Nauvoo the previous year, and of never explaining the reason why he had been suspended. For these reasons he stated that he would neither sustain the authorities in Nauvoo nor "go out to preach the gospel." When the time came to sustain the new authorities of the Church, Winchester refused to do so.

1971), 115-22; and more fully, Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 290-310, 368-73.
Three days later, Jedediah M. Grant, who had attended the conference, reported the conference to Brigham Young, adding that Winchester had turned against the Twelve because they had fought against him and his attacks on the "spiritual wife system." According to Grant, Winchester was traveling from house to house in Philadelphia, stirring up conversations about polygamy, while refusing to preach because he did not want to bring any female to her ruin, as he claimed other missionaries had.  

William Smith followed it up with a letter from New York urging Young to take immediate action, for Winchester "has taken a stand that will tend materially to the injury of the Cause in the East." He was drawing to him "a number of 'discontented' spirits" who were using their influence against the Twelve.  

On 25 September William A. Moon, a British convert, elder, and friend of Brigham Young, wrote Young a third report of Winchester's activities in Philadelphia:  

We . . . found the Saints in a very excited state in consequence of the course pursued by Elder Benj. Winchester, he having commenced a regular warfare against the remaining authorities of the Church. On marriage and accusing Winchester of attacking the apostles.  

Jedediah M. Grant, Letter to Brigham Young, 4 September 1844, Philadelphia, Brigham Young Collection; History of the Church 7:274. On 19 September 1844, several apostles met with Benjamin's father, Stephen, presumably to discuss Grant's letter which Brigham Young had just received. See On the Potter's Wheel, The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball, edited by Stanley B. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Signature Books and Smith Research Associates, 1987), 86. Heber C. Kimball was a close friend of Stephen Winchester. Information on Winchester's fight against plural marriage later appeared in John K. Sheen, Polygamy; or The Veil Lifted (York, Neb.: n.pub., October 1889), 7, 8, 22.  

William Smith, Letter to Brigham Young, 9 September 1844, New York, Brigham Young Collection. Two days earlier, The Prophet 1 (7 September 1844): 2, had published a request for Winchester "to forward the books purchased by us immediately, as we have a demand for them." Winchester had evidently taken orders for some of his books as he passed through New York on his way to Philadelphia. This notice suggests his works were still sought after and not yet banned. See also the references in the "diary" of J. M. Woolley, 13-18, for accounts of missionary work with Winchester, staying at his house, and purchasing his books (August-September 1844), Library of Congress, Collection of Mormon Diaries, microfilm copy in LDS Church Archives (Ms F 418 #8).
last Sabbath afternoon he delivered a public lecture against the character, course and conduct of the twelve. . . . He said an open attack had been made upon his moral character and he now intended to defend himself. He charges the Twelve with all manner of corruption and does not recognize their authority as men of God. . . . He charged them with living in open adultery and says that they not only believe but practice polygamy. I asked him privately for his opinion of Joseph at the time he fell. He said he hardly knew what to say of Joseph but was satisfied that had he lived to have had a trial, polygamy would have been sustained against him. He says all the talk about the wilderness is for no other purpose than to get out of the States and put in practice their hellish doctrines and when they get there, they will get to quarreling and fighting and break up. . . . He says Joseph was a liar betimes and that Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, John E. Page, and Wm. Smith are all liars and not only those that I have mentioned but a majority of the leading men of Nauvoo are equally corrupt.

Moon concluded that Winchester had “become disaffected with the Twelve and has sought in their absence in this underhanded way to vent his spleen and blast their characters and influence for the sake of revenge.”

Winchester’s success in Philadelphia (the branch now numbered 334) and long ecclesiastical care of its members may have made him feel responsible for undeceiving them, as he interpreted it. Regardless of his motives, he proved to be a threat to the leaders in Nauvoo. Even before Brigham Young received Moon’s letter, he convened a Church court on 26 September. Benjamin and Mary Winchester were excommunicated; Benjamin, in part, for “unchristian like conduct” and “slander the Church,” and “railing against, and speaking evil of the Twelve and others.” Mary’s offenses were the same, according to the published notice. Brigham Young’s talk at the general conference on 6 October

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114 Journal History, 25 September 1844. Moon notes that he is writing at Jedediah Grant’s request. See also Grant’s letter to Newell K. Whitney, 11 October 1844, Philadelphia, for a report on the situation in the Philadelphia branch and Winchester’s opposition to the Quorum of the Twelve and the Nauvoo Temple. Holograph in Newell K. Whitney Collection, Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

115 Journal History, 26 September 1844; History of the Church 7:275; “Notice,” [Willard Richards, Clerk], Times and Seasons 5 (1 October 1844): 670; ibid., 5 (1 November 1844): 701, for the number of members in Philadelphia.
1844 dealt, in part, with "Anti-Christ" who attacked the character of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders.\(^{116}\)

The 12 October issue of *The Prophet* published a letter from George Adams attacking Winchester, beginning a cycle of increasingly spiteful and slanderous reports. Adams warned the Church in the East against Winchester, but called Winchester "this giant of an Anti-Mormon," insisted his disobedience had begun in 1840 when Joseph Smith visited the Philadelphia conference (the date when Parley P. Pratt said he first learned about celestial marriage), claimed that Joseph and Hyrum Smith just before their martyrdom had said Winchester "was rotten at heart, would apostatize, and injure the church as much as he could," and accused him of staying with the Church as long as he did so that he could "dispose of a lot of old books he had on hand."\(^{117}\) Such vituperation suggests that Winchester had begun to include Adams in his public charges of immorality. Winchester must have replied, though it has not been preserved, for Adams sued Winchester for slander in November.\(^{118}\)

Also on 12 October, Winchester conducted a conference in Pittsburgh "to distinctly ascertain the minds of the members of the church in this place, relative to the heretical doctrines taught and practiced in Nauvoo, by the Quorum of the Twelve and some of their associates, and also the claims of S. Rigdon."\(^{119}\) After

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\(^{116}\)"October Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 October 1844): 682-84; B. H. Roberts identifies Winchester as one of those whom Young was talking about. *Comprehensive History of the Church* 2:454-55, esp. note 16. See also Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, 88.

\(^{117}\)George J. Adams, Letter, *The Prophet* 1 (12 October 1844): [3]. The letter accused Winchester of lying and slander and threatened to sue Winchester for libel. Adams said Winchester was like a crow—one who loves filth and only searches out the stinking rumors about the Twelve.

\(^{118}\)Notice, *The Prophet* 1 (2 November 1844): 2; William Smith, Letter, 1 November 1844, Bordentown, New Jersey, ibid. 1 (23 November 1844): 2-3; and William Smith, Letter to Brigham Young, 16 October 1844, holograph in Brigham Young Collection, where Smith chides Winchester as an elder running about "without restraint" and calling George Adams a "true friend." Adams sued Winchester for slander, asking damages of $5,000. According to William Smith, Winchester was under a $2,500 bond by 1 November.

\(^{119}\)The minutes of this conference were published in the first issue of Sidney
several speeches, the conference voted to send four messengers to the eastern branches to “set before them the true state of the church.” Winchester, one of the four, issued on 15 October a general letter to “all the members,” arguing the validity of Sidney Rigdon’s claims to leadership and denouncing the Twelve whom, he claimed, feared that Rigdon would bring them to “an account, or in other words, to justice for teaching and practicing the doctrine of polygamy.” Winchester promised “to publish, as soon as possible, a work in which I shall cancel [sic] the claims of Elder Rigdon at length, and expose the advocates of the ‘Spiritual Wife System’ by referring you to facts and evidence of the most undoubted authority.”

The promised work never appeared, probably because Winchester soon grew disillusioned with the Rigdon faction. Several of his Pennsylvania converts followed him to Rigdon’s camp, and Winchester seems to have contributed his preaching abilities to the initial thrust of Rigdon’s group. However, he remained only long enough to vent his dislike of polygamy.

William Smith visited Philadelphia in late October and, irritated by Winchester’s preaching, composed a letter that must rank as one of the most libelous in the early Church. He accused Winchester of being a “wanton falsifier and base calumniator,” who, although he has not “stole a horse, or slept with bad women,” has done far worse, and concluded with a charge that Winchester “was more or less engaged in Law infraction at Nauvoo.” This statement was tantamount to accusing him of plotting Joseph’s death; and Winchester, who had been in the South

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**Rigdon’s Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate** (Pittsburgh) 1 (15 October 1844): 11-12.


121 William Smith, Letter, 1 November 1844, Bordentown, New Jersey, *The Prophet* 1 (23 November 1844): 2-3. Smith, Letter to Brigham Young, 16 October 1844, Brigham Young Collection, identified the “Winchesterites” as discontented spirits who were stirring up trouble for the Twelve in the East.
on a mission at the time of Joseph's death, sued William for slander in December and sued Jedediah M. Grant in Philadelphia and Samuel Brannan in New York for circulating and selling *The Prophet*, which published Smith's letter.\(^{122}\)

William Smith, who was facing a prison term if he was found guilty, wrote at least twice to Brigham Young trying to find evidence to substantiate his charges he had made against Winchester. The first letter asserted that his article was published to defend "myself and our cause." He sent Young a copy of his published letter and insisted that there was evidence that Winchester was involved in a house-to-house "pettifogging" of the Twelve and Joseph Smith just before the latter's death. He then requested Young "to learn what the Bretherin [sic] know of this subject and put it into the form of affidavits and send [them] to New York."\(^{123}\)

Two days after Smith wrote to Brigham Young, he "corrected" his charges, insisting that his original statement had been misprinted, claiming that he said he believed Winchester had been engaged with the William and Wilson Law faction who had published the *Nauvoo Expositor* and then apologizing: "A small mistake sometimes makes trouble and it is not my intention to charge any person wrongfully."\(^{124}\)

This suit was still pending in March 1845 when William Smith again wrote to Brigham Young, asserting that he was the main target of Rigdonism because he was the "principle [sic] means of Saving the Eastern Churches." Winchester had an "apostate spirit" and Smith needed help from Nauvoo or otherwise he would go to prison for "telling the truth about B. Winchester."\(^{125}\)

\(^{122}\)Notice, [Samuel Brannan], *The Prophet* 1 (23 December 1844): 2. Grant also wrote the same year *A Collection of Facts Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon in the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, 1844).

\(^{123}\)William Smith, Letter to Brigham Young, 26 December 1844, Bordentown, New Jersey, and Samuel Brannan, Letters to Brigham Young, 22 July 1845, both in Brigham Young Collection.

On his way to England on 3 December 1844, Wilford Woodruff wrote a letter to Brigham Young from Philadelphia, warning Young that Adams and Smith were working for their own benefit, gratifying their own "propensities," and using for their own purposes money collected to build the temple in Nauvoo. Further, William Smith was sending missionaries out to collect money to help pay for his lawsuits. However, in spite of the "Winchester friction," Elder Jedediah M. Grant had "saved the Church in Philadelphia."126

While all of this was happening, Winchester took every opportunity to attack the doctrine and practice of plural marriage. One episode concerned the case of John Hardy, president of the Boston Branch from February 1843 to 7 October 1844 when he resigned and accused Smith, Adams, and Brannan of practicing plural marriage. He was right127 but was excommunicated by summer 1845, possibly because Smith had backed down publicly from his original stand and possibly Samuel Brannan had settled a $300 bill he owed Winchester for books sold to Reuben Hedlock in England. Winchester, Letter to Parley P. Pratt, 14 January 1845, Parley P. Pratt Collection, LDS Church Archives; Brannan, Letter to Brigham Young, 22 July and 29 August 1845, Brigham Young Collection; Brannan, Letter to Heber C. Kimball, 31 October 1845, Heber C. Kimball Collection, LDS Church Archives. My thanks to Will Bagley for calling the Brannan letters to my attention.

125 William Smith, Letter, March 1848 [1845], Philadelphia, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives. Because the lower courts were nonreporting courts, records are not extant either of the case or verdict. Presumably it was settled by summer 1845, possibly because Smith had backed down publicly from his original stand and possibly Samuel Brannan had settled a $300 bill he owed Winchester for books sold to Reuben Hedlock in England. Winchester, Letter to Parley P. Pratt, 14 January 1845, Parley P. Pratt Collection, LDS Church Archives; Brannan, Letter to Brigham Young, 22 July and 29 August 1845, Brigham Young Collection; Brannan, Letter to Heber C. Kimball, 31 October 1845, Heber C. Kimball Collection, LDS Church Archives. My thanks to Will Bagley for calling the Brannan letters to my attention.

126 Wilford Woodruff, Letters to Brigham Young, 3 December 1844, Philadelphia, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives. Within a year both Adams and Smith were excommunicated. Woodruff also told Young that The Prophet needed to be brought under firmer control, but Young had already sent Parley P. Pratt to take control of the eastern Church by 2 December. Jedediah M. Grant added his personal testimony to Woodruff's letter.

127 For Adams, see Charlotte Haven, Letter, 8 September 1843, quoted in Among the Mormons: Historical Accounts by Contemporary Observers, edited by William Mulder and R. Russell Mortensen (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 126-27. For Smith, see Complainant's Abstract of Pleading and Evidence in the Circuit Court of the United States, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, at Kansas City, Missouri (Lamoni, Ia.: Herald Publishing House, 1893), 380-83. I have used the photo-reprint made by Modern Microfilm, Salt Lake City, 1965, with the title Temple Lot Case. William Smith reportedly married Mary Ann
cated for slander. He then prepared and printed a twelve-page pamphlet defending his position and continuing the attack on Smith and Adams. Included in the pamphlet was a letter from Winchester commending Hardy in November for his public position.

On 13 November Rigdon and Winchester held their first conference in New York City attended by about twenty. Two days later Winchester addressed another sparse assembly. Rigdon West in the fall of 1843 after his first wife's death, then married Mary Jones and Priscilla Morgridge as plural wives after June 1844. Woodruff's comments about Smith's and Adams's "proclivities" may also refer to the accusations of immorality, adultery, or unauthorized plural marriage, in Pratt, Autobiography, 337-38, and Testimony of Sarah Ellsworth, taken by James Strang, 23 April 1847, Item 181 in Strang Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University. This collection also includes a number of letters implicating Adams. Item #17, Resolutions of the Boston Branch (Strangite), 1 February 1847, and Item #360, Alden Hale, Letter to James J. Strang, 2 December 1846. Smith taught polygamy as late as 1851 but later repudiated it. Alma Blair, "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Moderate Mormons," in McKiernan, Blair, and Edwards, The Restoration Movement, 228, note 22.

John Hardy, History of the Trials of Elder John Hardy Before the Church of Latter Day Saints in Boston, For Slander, in Saying that G. J. Adams, S. Brannan and Wm. Smith, were Licentious Characters (Boston: Conway and Company, [November or December] 1844), copy in LDS Church Archives. Winchester's letter (p. 11) is dated 13 November 1844, New York. Hardy continued his charges against Adams. See "Resolutions of the Boston Branch [Strangite]," 1 February 1847, James J. Strang Letterbook, Beinecke Library, Yale University. Hardy's original trial is summarized in The Prophet 1 (2 November 1844): [2], which reprinted the minutes of the 22 October 1844 Boston Conference, for slander against William Smith and Samuel Brannan.


Meeting of the Mormons last evening," from the New York Herald, The
was deemphasizing himself as the "guardian" of the Church and, in January 1845, accused Joseph Smith of being a fallen prophet, primarily because of his espousal of polygamy. After that point, Rigdon and Winchester concentrated their efforts in Pennsylvania where both he and Winchester had numerous contacts. Approximately 40 percent of the Philadelphia Branch were excommunicated between September 1844 and 1847, most for rejecting apostolic succession. A number of Philadelphia converts signed a broadside publicly supporting Sidney Rigdon, then also gave their support to James J. Strang, and finally rejected him as his own polygamy became public.  

In December William Smith belittled Winchester for saying he supported Rigdon because Rigdon "advocates the principles of virtue and righteousness," then editorialized on the faults of both men in such a way as to encourage a split between them. In early 1845, Rigdon's supporters published an editorial commending Winchester for his courage in standing up to Smith's attacks. Meanwhile, Parley P. Pratt took over The Prophet and issued strict guidelines for publishing. His main concerns were with those works which were often erroneous and wasteful of money needed for the temple. To bring some order to the print chaos, only those authorized by the Twelve were to be in the publishing business, and only Nauvoo, Liverpool, and New York were authorized as "emporiums of light, truth and news." Pratt specifically banned

Prophet 1 (16 November 1844): 2. Winchester claimed that Joseph Smith had a vision ten days before his death and that, because of transgression, Smith lost his calling.


133 LDS Messenger and Advocate (Pittsburgh) 1 (January 1845): 73.

134 Pratt, "Regulations for the Publishing Department of the Latter Day Saints in the East," The Prophet 1 (4 January 1845): 2; Times and Seasons 6 (15 January
Winchester's works: "Let the books, tracts, periodicals, pamphlets, etc. of Mr. B. Winchester and others no longer be patronized by the saints." This ban acknowledged the influence of Winchester's books in the East and struck directly at an important source of income for Winchester. (Pratt also partially supported himself through his publications.) Winchester's works were advertised in Rigdon's newspaper throughout 1845; and acting as a "traveling agent" for the new *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Winchester managed to make a little money. But he was forced into other employment by the end of 1845.

In early April Rigdon held his organizational conference in Pittsburgh. Winchester, among those listed as "absentee," was named an apostle in the new church. When Nauvoo rumored that Winchester was no longer supporting Rigdon, Winchester immediately penned a letter saying that he remained convinced that "if there is any truth in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants; the friends of Elder Rigdon have the whole of that truth." In July Winchester wrote a report of successful proselyting meetings on Rigdon's behalf in Philadelphia, but apparently his second thoughts about Rigdon began that month. Winchester's bitter enemy, George J. Adams, excommunicated by the Nauvoo leaders in 1845 for immorality,
was welcomed with open arms by many of Rigdon's followers.\textsuperscript{139} Rigdon failed to provide strong leadership, and the group fragmented.\textsuperscript{140}

In addition to Rigdon's fierce attacks on plural marriage, he led his church to help in establishing a literal Kingdom of God in Pennsylvania. This establishment of a temporal kingdom, combined with other doubts, surely pushed Winchester to reconsider his commitments. The minutes of Rigdon's 6-8 October conference in Philadelphia reveal Winchester's growing disillusionment.\textsuperscript{141} By 9 December 1845, Rigdon's grand council was hearing charges of transgression against Winchester and Richard Savary; while procedural problems prevented specific action, by 13 December Winchester had withdrawn from the Rigdonites.\textsuperscript{142} The twenty-eight-year-old Winchester must also have faced serious questions about providing for his growing family.

The remainder of Winchester's life lacks detailed documen-


\textsuperscript{140} Jedediah M. Grant sarcastically notes the infighting in Rigdon's camp at a meeting in Philadelphia on 27 July, specifically Winchester's refusal to have anyone put their "foot on his neck." Grant, Letter to Samuel Brannan, 29 July 1845, Philadelphia, New York Messenger 2 (2 August 1845): 38.

\textsuperscript{141} Messenger and Advocate of the Church of Christ 2 (Pittsburgh) 2 (November 1845): 392-99.

tation. He briefly supported the claims of David Whitmer, moved his family from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in 1845, and opened a cigar shop. One of the last references to him in a Church periodical occurred when George B. Wallace, an early East Coast convert and later president of the Salt Lake Stake, said Winchester told him in November 1845 that “if it had not been for William Smith, he should have been in the church to this day.” Samuel Brannan commented in February 1846 that he “should not be surprised” if Winchester “crossed the mountains with the Saints.”

In October 1850 Winchester’s old friend, Erastus Snow, visited him. “He had lost the spirit of the fullness of the gospel and his mind was very dark,” wrote Snow, “yet he received me very gladly and listened very attentively to my council and exhortation. I pray my God to wake him from his stupor, for I have loved him, and do love him still, notwithstanding his sins.”

**THE IOWA YEARS**

After nine years in Pittsburgh, Winchester moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, in the spring of 1854, established a home, then brought his family from Pittsburgh that fall. His move to Iowa, for whatever reason, could not have come at a better time. Iowa’s non-Indian population had mushroomed...
from about fifty people in 1832 to over 600,000 by the 1850s. The Mormons had founded a way-station there in 1847 (Kanesville) but now were gone. Iowa had been made a territory in 1838 and a state in 1846. Council Bluffs, situated on its western edge, was an outfitting point for western travelers with a population of about 1,500.

Winchester became a successful brickmaker, greatly aided by a fire that had destroyed half the town in October 1853 with a second fire in 1854 demolishing the newly built wooden replacements. Brick was thus a popular building material, and Winchester retained this profession for the rest of his working life. It is not known where he learned this trade.  

His first business contract, in the summer of 1854, was mostly in Omaha, Nebraska, just across the Missouri River from Council Bluffs. Also in 1854, the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company, which wanted the territorial capitol in Omaha, employed Winchester “to make brick for a building which was to be offered to the authorities for a capitol. . . . In a short time [he] had several thousand brick set in a kiln ready for burning. [But] lacking lumber for shed to protect the kiln from the weather he covered it with canvas. One night the canvas was stolen and a hard rain [came] at the same time and [the] brick kiln was reduced to a shapeless mass of clay.”

Winchester sold his yards to the Ferry Company, though he still supplied the brick from his kilns in Council Bluffs. By his retirement in 1887, his brick yards had become one of the largest in the state, a testimony not only to the growth of western Iowa but also to his organizational abilities. Besides brickmaking, he was noted as “a pretty extensive farmer and  

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150 Field and Reed, History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa, 1:17.
Stephen Winchester (1795-1873), Benjamin's father, about 1870. Unknown photographer. Courtesy Photoarchives, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.
fruit grower, and takes an interested part in every improve-
ment, looking to the improvement of those branches of trade.”\textsuperscript{151}

Winchester described himself as “an active and zealous
Democrat.” He served two years as a city councilman and ran
unsuccessfully in the 1850s for the state legislature.\textsuperscript{152} The
Democrats were the minority party; but in 1856 he told Frank-
lin D. Richards at Florence, Nebraska, that he lost partly be-
cause it came out during the election that he was a Mor-
mon.\textsuperscript{153} Iowa had particular reasons for anti-Mormon senti-
ment. In 1848 the Mormon vote in Kanesville (Council Bluffs)
had been challenged; and Lysander W. Babbitt, editor of the
Council Bluffs Bugle, nominated on the Democratic ticket for
lieutenant governor in 1856, had to defend himself against
charges of being a Mormon.\textsuperscript{154} Various Mormon off-shoots also
settled in Iowa in the 1850s, although they usually had amica-
ble relations with their neighbors.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{151}History and Directory of Pottawattamie County, Iowa, 1880-1881
(n.p., n.d.), 155, 393. Early business and residential directories at the Council
Bluffs Public Library contain information on Winchester’s business activities and,
occasionally, biographical information.

\textsuperscript{152}Biographical History of Pottawattamie County (1891), 543; Horace E.
Deemer, “The Part of Iowa Men in the Organization of Nebraska,” Annals of Iowa
9 (October 1909): 161-85. Winchester is mentioned on p. 174. One source says
that Winchester “represented Pottawattamie County in the Iowa Legislature one
term.” See Hawley and Co.’s City and County Directory of Pottawattamie
County for 1880-81 (Council Bluffs: Nonpareil Steam Printing Co., 1880), 155.
There is no known relationship to Sheldon G. Winchester (born 17 July 1830)
who was also active in Iowa politics. The United States Biographical Dictionary
and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self-Made Men (New York: American

\textsuperscript{153}Minutes of a meeting at the Historian’s Office 2 October 1856, Journal
History, 2 October 1856.

\textsuperscript{154}See particularly Iowa Contested Election, Speech of Hon. S. Leffler, of
Iowa, in the House of Representatives, June 27, 1850, on the Report of the
Committee of Elections, in Iowa Contested Election Case (Washington, D.C.: n.pub., 1850); Morton M. Rosenberg, Iowa on the Eve of the Civil War (Norman:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 197; J. Keith Melville, Conflict and
Compromise: The Mormons in Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Politics
Information on the remainder of Winchester's life is sketchy. The Zion's Camp roll of 12 October 1864 notes that Benjamin Winchester had become a "spiritualist"; and Winchester, on a trip to Salt Lake City in 1871, perhaps to visit his father, called on Amasa Lyman, an apostle excommunicated, among other things, for spiritualism. Winchester retired in 1887, wrote a biographical sketch two years later for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, died at Council Bluffs on 25 January 1901, and was buried in its Walnut Hills Cemetery.\(^{156}\)

**CONCLUSION**

Winchester's early life and contributions to the early Mormon Church are the story of attraction to a dynamic system upon which he lavished the creative energy of his young manhood. In his 1889 recollections, he calls that relationship with the tolerance of a man remembering youthful enthusiasms: "I was young, and like many other youthful religious enthusiasts I was induced to believe that many things which seem[ed] to be wrong and absurd would come out right, and with many misgivings about what seemed to me foolish and absurd, I kept on hoping that the

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\(^{155}\) Charles Blancer Thompson moved his group of followers, Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion, to Monoma County in the 1850s and made a communal settlement called Preparation. In October 1858, Thompson's disgruntled followers chased him out of the town. Dale Morgan, "A Bibliography of the Dispersion," 114-15; Constant R. Marks, "Monoma County Mormons," *Annals of Iowa*, 3rd series, 7 (April 1906): 321-46. Francis Gladden Bishop led another group of former Mormons to the Little Sioux River in 1854. Alpheus Cutler started the westward trek but tarried in Fremont County where, in September 1853, he organized his own church. Several groups claimed loyalty to Sidney Rigdon, and Daryl Chase, "Sidney Rigdon—Early Mormon Leader" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1931), 156, suggests Rigdon sent colonies to Iowa in 1854. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 417-20, shows that Rigdon sent colonists to Attica, Iowa, in 1865 as a place of refuge for his followers. No information has been found to suggest that Winchester's move in 1854 was more than coincidence.

\(^{156}\) *Zion's Camp Folder,* [compiled by Thomas Bullock], LDS Church Archives; Amasa M. Lyman, Journal, 24 March 1871, 25:[139], LDS Church Archives; Davis Bitton, "Mormonism's Encounter with Spiritualism," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1975): 39-50; *Biographical History of Pottawattamie County* (1891), 543; Winchester, "Primitive Mormonism."
outcome would justify the faith I had reposed in the concern."  

Time dulled and even deadened the enthusiasm that had once motivated and inspired him. On another level, without knowing it, he became fixed on (and against) particular doctrines and practices, unable to evolve at the same speed the Church was changing. Faced with the reality of polygamy, a growing temporal kingdom, and the concentration of authority, Winchester had to make agonizing decisions that, in the end, severed him from the very organization that had given focus and meaning to his life.

Winchester's life provides a good case study of the early freelance missionary who survived at first by individualism and strong will. Such leaders were essential to the early survival of the Church. But when the growing organization moved through the stage of centralized power, they were unable to adjust. Winchester argued that the Church's new authoritarianism was wrong, but his very success as a missionary and writer had helped create the need for increased structure to fellowship, gather, and communicate with those who had received his message of salvation. He was, then, both an innocent victim and a guilty participant in the process of creating a system that both attracted and repelled his loyalties.

Winchester's story also suggests important areas for future investigation. First, we are accustomed to telling the story of the Church in terms of Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo. However, the Philadelphia branch identifies the importance of early Mormon urban history and suggests the importance of investigating New York and Boston as well. Much more work needs to be done

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159 See Stanley B. Kimball, "The Saints and St. Louis, 1831-57: An Oasis of
on the impact of these eastern congregations and their shifting
loyalties from Nauvoo (Quorum of the Twelve), to Pittsburgh
(Rigdon), to Wisconsin (Strang), to Kirtland (Whitmer and McLel-
lin), to Plano, Illinois (RLDS).

Second, the whole spectrum of the early Mormon mind
needs further investigation, especially through the unofficial press
and those individuals who contributed the hundreds of tracts,
broadsides, almanacs, hymnals, books, and pamphlets to the early
Church. Who wrote what and why, and who read what? Parley
Pratt's January 1845 attempt to regulate publishing in the Church
suggests the key role of the press in the succession crisis.

Third, the progress and development of Church organization
and doctrine were complex forces that produced predictable
stresses on early defenders of the faith. The often unpublicized
changes in early Church organization were bound to create dilem-
mas for leaders far removed from Church headquarters. Commu-
nication difficulties compounded the problem, as did strong and,
in a few cases, flawed personalities. Benjamin Winchester made
a number of choices at turning points; but he was also something
of a victim of nineteenth-century forces. As a result, this devoted
missionary, gifted writer, and energetic leader became someone
marked forever by the Church, yet forgotten by it.

Late in life Franklin Snyder Richards, LDS Church general counsel for over fifty years and president of the Ensign Stake high priests, told his quorum: "I believe that when we come to this earth each of us has a mission to fill and work to do, which will develop and be made manifest to us as we go along, if we will seek for the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord."1

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1"Address Delivered by President Franklin S. Richards to the High Priest Quorum of Ensign Stake," 13 November 1932 (hereafter cited as Richards, "Ensign Stake Address"), Historical Department Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), Salt Lake City.
Richards's mission was to defend his community and its traditions during one of the most intense periods of government prosecutions of a religious minority in our nation's history. He served with dignity and distinction. Richards is one of the most visible lawyers to emerge from Mormonism and may be the first in the nation to specialize in First Amendment freedom of religion issues. Because he never held high Church office, was not polygamous, and kept a relatively low profile, little has been written about him by historians of the Mormon experience.

Richards benefited greatly from the influence of remarkable parents and his equally remarkable wife, Emily Sophia Tanner Richards, but this article concentrates on his legal career. Richards's talents benefited the LDS Church, and his initiatives greatly influenced Mormon institutions as they exist today. Regrettably, I am aware of no diary and very few personal papers, making it impossible to reconstruct Richards's personal feelings about the often cataclysmic events he helped to shape.

This article relies primarily on Richards's autobiographical accounts in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Archives, a large body of his professional letters in the Utah State Historical Society Archives, Utah Territorial and U.S. Supreme Court records, the diaries of a few contemporaries, and print media accounts published during his life. According to some published histories, Richards's father, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, frequently commented on his son's activities in his journal, housed in the LDS Church Archives; however, my 1993 request to see them was denied.

2 Historian Stephen Cresswell, Mormons & Moonshiners, Cowboys & Klansmen: Federal Law Enforcement in the South & West, 1870-1893 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 129-30, 132, wrote that the anti-Mormon campaigns of the last century "were aimed at crushing unwanted, un-American diversity and what was seen as 'theocracy' in Utah Territory," adding, "The national government by its actions had made certain that unwanted diversity would be kept out of the Union." For a short history of the anti-Mormon legal campaign, see Ken Driggs, "The Mormon Church-State Confrontation in Nineteenth Century America," Journal of Church and State 30 (Spring 1988): 173-89.
PARENTS AND EARLY LIFE

Delivered on 20 June 1849 in Salt Lake City, Richards was a true Mormon "blue blood" and one of the first Mormon children born in Utah. His father was Franklin D. Richards, ordained an apostle that same year at age twenty-seven by Heber C. Kimball, first counselor in the First Presidency. The second counselor was Willard C. Richards, Franklin D.'s uncle. Franklin D. Richards was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve for fifty years. Four times he was called as president of the European Mission. He became president of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1898 but died the next year.  

Franklin S.'s mother, Jane Snyder Richards, was the first of her husband's eleven wives; but she remained his primary relationship all their lives. Later in life she would recall her initial strong rejection of plural marriage followed by acceptance as part of her commitment to Mormonism. As her husband rose rapidly in the LDS hierarchy, he was away from her more and more on successive missions to Europe, for other Church responsibilities, and as he tried to spread his time among his many households. Jane became active in the Relief Society, participated in national women's organizations, and was intensely involved with her six children. In 1877 Brigham Young called her as president of the Weber Stake Relief Society, the first stake Relief Society organized in the Church. She served for thirty-eight years, being released in 1908 only because of her advanced age. From 1888 to 1901 she served as first counselor to Zina D. H. Young in the general Relief Society presidency. Jane passionately supported women's suffrage and was personally acquainted with Belva S. Lockwood, Susan B. Anthony, and other national suffrage leaders. At her funeral in 1912, many prominent Churchmen spoke, all of them recognizing her lifelong service to the poor and destitute. Apostle David O. MacKay observed, "That is the tribute we pay to Sister


Richards—she went about doing good.” Franklin S. Richards was sixty-three when his mother died.5

Both parents were early supporters of women’s suffrage and forged links with eastern suffrage leaders to benefit the movement in Utah. During his ministry, Apostle Richards strongly encouraged Mormon women to be active in public affairs, even though some men disapproved. Franklin S. and Emily warmly embraced the same views.6

Franklin S. Richards was born during a period of extreme hardship and famine. An 1883 biographical article in Tullidge’s Quarterly Magazine observed, “This famine impoverished the constitution of the child [Richards] before his birth, which is the cause of his tendency to physical exhaustion under the constant application of his professional life, he being organically of a highly nervous temperament.”7 In 1881 his mother recalled that one week after his birth “we were drenched with rain, which caused me to be so ill that my life was despaired of. President Willard Richards came and administered to me, and blessed me and my little son, he said we should live, and from that moment I began to recover.” Both parents recalled that Richards had “hardly ever known a day’s health” and that “on account of delicate health he was not able to go to school until he was about nine years old and then only attended part time.”8

5Lawrence Foster, Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 183-96; West, Franklin D. Richards, 258-69.
His youth also included four years as a messenger, then as an engrossing clerk in the Legislative Assembly, and as an aide-de-camp under his father in the Utah militia. Richards was bright and quickly made the leap from student to teacher. In 1866, at age seventeen, he was certified as a territorial school teacher. At the time, all that was required of territorial teachers was basic literacy. He taught between 75 and 150 Salt Lake City students for three years. While still teaching school at age twenty, Richards married eighteen-year-old Emily, with whom he had gone to school. She had been born 13 May 1850 in South Cottonwood in Salt Lake Valley to Nathan Tanner and Rachel Winter Smith Tanner; Franklin D. performed the marriage. Franklin S. then taught an additional year in Weber County.  

**LEGAL STUDIES**

In 1868 Franklin D. Richards was elected probate judge in Weber County shortly after returning from his fourth mission to England. He and Jane established a household in Ogden. Franklin S. and Emily remained in Salt Lake City until Church President Brigham Young asked if he would serve as clerk of the Weber County probate court. Franklin S. recalled:

He said it would afford me an excellent opportunity for me to become a lawyer. I replied that I did not want to be a lawyer and had already commenced to study medicine under Doctor W. F. Anderson. He asked me if I did not want to follow the Profession in which I could do the most good, and when I replied in the affirmative he said, "Then you will be a lawyer, because the time will come when the Latter-day Saints will need lawyers of their own to defend them in the Courts and strive with fearless inspiration to maintain their constitutional rights." So my destiny was changed from the medical to the legal profession. I was greatly disappointed but did not complain.

It is important to appreciate the legal atmosphere Richards entered as a Mormon lawyer. After the Mormons arrived in Utah in 1847, they organized a State of Deseret and petitioned Congress

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9Biographical Sketches; also "Franklin D. Richards," 456, and Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 2.
10Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 3.
for statehood. The pioneers were frustrated by a combination of conflicting national political concerns and the nation's suspicion of Mormons, receiving only territorial status in 1850.\(^{11}\) This difference in status was important because states were free to elect their own governments and enact their own laws, including those which regulated religious organizations and marriage. Territories had no such power. Congress made all decisions of any consequence. Congress could grant some local autonomy, but it could just as easily take it away—and in Utah, it frequently did. Territorial officers were appointed by the President, not elected. While Brigham Young was a logical appointment as territorial governor in 1850, the relations with Washington, D.C., soon soured. After the Utah Mormon War of 1857-58, presidential appointments were mainly Gentiles hostile to Latter-day Saint interests. The Mormon conflict with national culture was the indisputable reason why statehood did not come until 1896.\(^{12}\)

The Mormons' first public acknowledgment of polygamy came in 1852. The Joseph Smith revelation on plural marriage was later canonized in 1876, thus formally placing the principle in Mormon scripture.\(^{13}\) On 8 July 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, an ineffective effort to suppress polygamy, disincorporate the LDS Church,\(^{14}\) and limit its holdings to $50,000. In 1874 the Poland Act gutted the territorial probate courts of their unusually broad jurisdiction, a device Mormons had used to isolate themselves from the hostile federal court system.\(^{15}\)

\(^{11}\)An Act to Establish a Territorial Government for Utah, Ch. 51, 9 Stat. 453, Thirty-First Congress (1850).


\(^{14}\)An Act to Punish and Prevent the Practice of Polygamy in the Territories of the United States and Other Places, and Disapproving and Annulling Certain
The Civil War and Reconstruction gave Mormon society some breathing room. In 1879, however, the U.S. Supreme Court held that Mormon polygamist George Reynolds, a volunteer defendant in an orchestrated test case that began in 1874, was not protected from Morrill Act prosecution by the First Amendment religious free exercise clause. But *Reynolds v. United States* still did not bring Mormon capitulation.16

In 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes characterized this gap between law and practice as the result of “peculiar difficulties attending its enforcement,” calling the law “a dead letter in the Territory of Utah.” He advocated withholding “the rights and privileges of citizenship in the territories of the United States” as a prosecutorial club, and he opposed Utah statehood until the issue was resolved. In 1880 he again urged Congress to take forceful actions against the Mormons.17

In 1882 Congress passed the infamous Edmunds Act. It created a new crime—the misdemeanor of “unlawful cohabitation”—set up the Utah Commission modeled after Civil War reconstruction to take charge of many of the territory’s affairs, disfranchised a substantial portion of Mormons, and made it possible to remove them almost entirely from juries.18

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18 An Act to Amend Section Fifty-Three Hundred and Fifty-Two of the Revised Statutes of the United States, in Reference to Bigamy, and for Other Purposes. Ch. 47, 22 Stat. 30, Forty-Seventh Congress (1882); David Buice, "A Stench in the
Frustrated that Mormons continued to resist, Congress passed the most draconian law of all, the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. It stripped Utah women of the right to vote, which they had won from the territorial legislature in 1870, disincorporated the LDS Church, and ordered escheated to the federal government all holdings in excess of $50,000. This threat extended to the temples as well as to the Church’s extensive purely economic holdings.19

Brigham Young did not have to call upon prophetic powers to see that, in this increasingly hostile legal environment, Mormons were going to need lawyers of their own to survive. His urging a promising young man to study law made complete sense. Consequently, Franklin S. and Emily Richards followed Franklin D. and Jane Richards to Weber County. In June 1869 he was appointed clerk of the probate court, serving until 1877, and was later elected recorder as well. He began to train for his new calling and career, “attending to my office work during the day and studying law at night.” At the time there was no lawyer in residence in Ogden.20

In these decades after the Civil War, a lawyer rarely was educated in an academic setting but rather undertook individual study or worked under the supervision of a member of the bar. In September 1873 Richards was admitted to practice in the local probate court, which at that time had jurisdiction over criminal matters, and quickly established a fine reputation as a lawyer. On the very day of his admission, he successfully prosecuted a rape case. A week later, he successfully defended a man charged with murder.21

In June 1874 he was examined by two prominent non-Mormon lawyers, Judge Frank Tilford and J. C. Hemingray, both of


20Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 3; Andrew Jenson, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia (1936, reprint Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1971), 4:56.

Salt Lake City, for admission to both U.S. District Court and the Territorial Supreme Court. Chief Justice James B. McKean of the Utah Supreme Court thought this promotion rather rapid for a young lawyer, but Tilford assured him that Richards “would do honor to the Bar of any Court.” Immediately after he was admitted to the bar, Richards was appointed prosecuting attorney for Weber County and attorney for Ogden City.

In spring 1877 Richards went to St. George with the apostles for general conference and the dedication of Utah’s first temple. While there, he received an unexpected mission call and went to Europe where he served under Joseph F. Smith, the European Mission president. Richards traveled both with missionary companions and alone. At first he visited London, Paris, several cities in Switzerland, and Italy. He returned to England and served in the London Conference where he was a missionary companion to Abraham O. Smoot, Jr., and Lorenzo D. Young, a son of Brigham Young. It was there that they received word of the death of the great prophet-colonizer. Richards, released early from his mission for ill health, returned to Utah with President Smith and Apostle Orson Pratt. The Tullidge’s article noted that “Elder F. S. Richards was in a feeble condition of body when he started on his mission, but it was thought that the change of air and scenery might prove beneficial. However, the climate of England did not suit him.”

GENERAL COUNSEL FOR THE CHURCH

Upon his return, Richards joined the law firm of Sheeks and Rawlins, which in the spring of 1878 represented the executors of the very tangled Brigham Young estate. His work there “brought Mr. Richards into great prominence in all the legal

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22Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 4; “List of Utah Attorneys,” Utah Reports 1 (1875-77): 377-78; Utah Territory had three U.S. District Courts, each with a judge appointed by the U.S. President. These three judges then sat together as the Territorial Supreme Court.

23Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 4; Biographical Sketches; and “Franklin S. Richards,” 459-60.
business of the Church." That summer he formed a partnership with Rufus K. Williams, a former chief justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court. On 16 June 1879, the new firm of Richards and Williams signed an agreement to represent the LDS Church in a variety of matters for $2,000 a year. Richards was thirty. A few months later, beginning 1 January 1880, the Church retained him as general counsel, a position he held until his death in 1934. His place in the Mormon political elite was assured with his induction into the Church's Council of Fifty on 10 April 1880.

In the fall of 1880, Richards and his partner successfully defended before the Utah Supreme Court an action in which the plaintiffs sought to overturn women's suffrage, granted in 1870. The next year Richards, due to poor health, withdrew from the firm. He traveled to San Francisco in the spring of 1881, gaining admission to the California bar while there.

When the polygamy prosecutions began in the 1880s, Richards visited the Philadelphia home of Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a Gentile who had done great service to Mormons for many years. Richards recalled that they spent several hours in conversation, after which Kane surprised him by announcing that John

24 "Franklin S. Richards," 461.
25 Handwritten "Agreement" between President John Taylor and the law firm of Richards and Williams, 16 June 1879, LDS Archives. Richards and Williams agreed "to look after and attend to all current business, drafting and executing Deeds, Conveyances, Power of Attorney, and all such legal documents in behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." They were paid $2,000 and up to $200 in expenses per year. Apostle Franklin D. Richards witnessed the agreement. By 1895 Richards's salary was $3,000, "payable in provisions, produce, etc., at the general tithing stores." George F. Gibbs, Secretary to the First Presidency, Letter to Franklin S. Richards, 21 March 1895, LDS Church Archives.
26 D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," BYU Studies 20 (Winter 1980): 163-97. According to Quinn, John Taylor had revived the Council of Fifty in early 1880; but it acted primarily as a rubber stamp for First Presidency political decisions (173-74). Richards's public roles on behalf of the Church would have been entirely consistent with such a role for the council. Quinn also notes that Heber J. Grant, then president of the Church, recorded in his 1932 diary that he and Richards were its only surviving members (191).
27 "Franklin S. Richards," 460-61.
Taylor, then president of the Church, had asked Kane to “size me up, and see if I was a fit person to have charge of the legal affairs of the church in the impending crisis.” Kane gave his complete approval but advised Richards “to overcome my natural feeling of reluctance and timidity,” to “cultivate push and cheek.”

With the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882, the Church through Richards established a team of trusted lawyers to defend individual Mormons against the newly created misdemeanor crime of unlawful cohabitation. Richards took charge of cases in the Salt Lake City area, his brother Charles C. Richards defended those from the federal court district of Ogden north, and Judge Samuel R. Thurman had responsibility for the Provo south district. Richards later recalled that at various times he was assisted in Salt Lake City by C. W. Bennett, R. Harkness, Moses Kirkpatrick, Ben Sheeks, and J. L. Rawlins. Richards recalled that local attorneys “were also retained in each Judicial District to try cases arising within their Districts,” among them the men listed above. “Whenever practicable I took part in these trials, but most of my time was occupied in briefing and arguing cases before the Supreme Court of the United States, and in the performance of other duties at Washington.”

29Under modern ethical standards, such an arrangement would be considered a potential conflict of interest. Richards's fee and that of the other defense attorneys were apparently paid by the LDS Church, but his clients in court were individual defendants. The institutional interests of the Church in some instances may have been markedly different from those of individual defendants, a topic that probably deserves more study. See James B. Allen, “‘Good Guys’ v. ‘Bad Guys’: Rudger Clawson, John Sharp, and Civil Disobedience in Nineteenth-Century Utah,” Utah Historical Quarterly 48 (Spring 1980): 148-74. The materials I reviewed suggest that Richards was consistently responsive to the Church's interests, but nothing found demonstrates that any clients were opposed to this arrangement. High-profile defendants often were high-ranking Church figures. I have not located any materials indicating disclosure of such a conflict with clients, but it is hard to imagine that they did not know who provided them with counsel. State and territorial legal ethics on this point in the late nineteenth century probably differed from those of our own time.
30Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 5. Note also “List of Attorneys,” 377-78. Of the men listed in this paragraph besides his brother Charles C. Richards, I have
That same year, 1882, the Church-sponsored People’s party nominated Richards to fill the non-voting Congressional seat which George Q. Cannon had held until the Edmunds Act forced his withdrawal; but Richards declined. It is likely that he sensed other demands would soon fall on him.

**THE RUDGER Clawson AND ANGUS CANNON CASES**

Federal prosecutors were slow to take full advantage of the new powers granted them by law; but in the fall of 1884, they charged Mormon folk hero and future apostle Rudger Clawson and Mormon lawyer LeGrande Young with adultery. In January 1885, they charged Angus Munn Cannon, president of Salt Lake Stake and a brother of Apostle and First Presidency member George Q. Cannon, with unlawful cohabitation. Richards defended all three men.

Clawson was convicted, and appeals to the United States Supreme Court followed. Richards wrote the briefs, but the Church made the politically astute decision to retain former U.S. Attorney General Isaac Wayne McVeagh for the oral argument. While the case was pending, George Q. Cannon wrote to Richards: “There is so much prejudice upon our question that it is a difficult thing to get men to look at any feature of a case of that kind without prejudice.”

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34 George Q. Cannon, Letter to Franklin S. Richards, 23 January 1885,
After Richards twice organized appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court, Clawson had to serve four years, the longest sentence handed down to any polygamy defendant.\textsuperscript{35} One historian has noted that this case "cleared the way for numerous, vigorous prosecutions of polygamists" because it upheld the "exclusion of Mormons from the grand jury and the summoning of a petit jury by open venire."\textsuperscript{36}

As Clawson became a symbol of Mormon resistance, the conviction of Cannon had even worse implications for Richards and his clients. Cannon was charged with unlawful cohabitation, a crime that was proscribed, but not defined, by statute:

> That if any male person, in a territory or other place over which the United States have exclusive jurisdiction, hereafter cohabits with more than one woman, he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than three hundred dollars, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or by both said punishments, in the discretion of the court.\textsuperscript{37}

Richards defended the case with the argument that the crime of cohabitation required proof of sexual intercourse, an element of similar crimes as defined by the states. Cannon had continued to reside with his four wives in the same large home. He testified that, after the passage of the Edmunds Act, he limited his physical relations to one wife. She was not, however, his first, or legally recognized, wife.\textsuperscript{38} Prosecutors argued that it was enough that a

\textsuperscript{35}Clawson v. United States, 113 U.S. 143, 5 S.Ct. 393, 28 L.Ed. 957 (1885); Clawson v. United States, 114 U.S. 477, 5 S.Ct. 949, 29 L.Ed. 179 (1885).

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Cresswell, Mormons & Moonshiners}, 101-2. An "open venire" refers to those situations where the U.S. Marshal was allowed to summon a juror pool, or venire, from any jurors he deemed appropriate as opposed to working from a list of names previously designated by the court. In Utah Territory with LDS defendants, this practice resulted in Gentile-dominated venires with little or no Mormon representation and not at all reflecting the actual population. See \textit{People v. Hampton}, 9 P. 508 (Utah Terr. 1886).

\textsuperscript{37}Edmunds Act, sec. 3.

\textsuperscript{38}In 1858 Cannon married sisters Sarah Maria Mousely and Ann Amanda Mousely in a single ceremony, later recalling that his was "the first plural marriage
man hold out more than one woman to the world as his wife, with or without a physical relationship.

District Judge Charles Zane adopted the prosecutor's definition and Angus Cannon was convicted. Defiantly, Cannon announced before sentence was pronounced:

I cannot state what I will do in the future. I love the country. I love its institutions, and I became a citizen. When I did so I had no idea that a statute would be passed making my faith and religion a crime, but having made that allegiance, I can only say that I have used the utmost of my power to honor my God, my family and my country. In eating with my children day to day, and showing impartiality in meeting with them around the board with the mother who was wont to wait upon them, I was unconscious of any crime. I did not think I would be made a criminal for that. My record is before my country; the conscience of my heart is visible to the God who created me and rectitude that has marked my life and conduct with this people bears me up to receive such a sentence as your honor shall see fit to impose upon me. 39

Zane gave Cannon the maximum sentence, a decision the Utah Supreme Court later affirmed. 40

The First Presidency instructed Richards to try to negotiate a way out of the prosecutions; but when that failed, they hoped for vindication in the U.S. Supreme Court. As that appeal progressed in the fall of 1885, President John Taylor and his first counselor, George Q. Cannon, wrote Richards: "We are greatly

39Evans and Cannon, 210-11; C. C. Goodwin, ed., History of the Bench and Bar of Utah (Salt Lake City: Interstate Press Assoc., 1913), 59.

40United States v. Cannon, 4 Ut. 222, 7 P. 369 (Utah Terr. 1885).
obliged to you for the kind and diligent interest you have taken in trying to bring about a settlement upon some fair basis of the law suit. We believe you have done all in your power to accomplish the objects we have had in view. We suppose now, that there is nothing left but to fight the suit through." By September 1885 Cannon had been convicted at trial and the conviction affirmed by the Territorial Supreme Court. Richards then left for Washington, D.C., to supervise the appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In mid-December 1885, the Court affirmed Cannon's conviction, rejecting Richards's argument that sexual intercourse was required to convict under the statute. The opinion stated:

The [trial] Court properly charged the jury that the defendant was to be found guilty if he lived in the same house with the two women, and ate at their respective tables one-third of his time or thereabouts, and held them out to the world, by his language and conduct, or both, as his wives; and that it was not necessary it should be shown that he and the two women, or either of them, occupied the same bed or slept in the same room, or that he had sexual intercourse with either of them.

This interpretation is deductible from the language of the statute through out. It refers wholly to the relations between men and women founded on the existence of actual marriages or the holding out of their existence.

With the Cannon and Clawson cases, the federal government had begun to seriously push for convictions. On 31 December 1885, Apostle John Henry Smith recorded in his journal, "This is the last day of the year 1885 which is one of the most memorable years in the history of the Church. Persecution has been hot, at least fifty of our brethren having been incarcerated in prison [for polygamy]."

By late 1886 Richards and his clients were bitter about the federal prosecutions yet proud of their refusal to fold. In a long

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41 John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, Letter to Franklin S. Richards, 11 September 1885, Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, LDS Church Archives.


43 Jean Bickmore White, ed., Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Press, 1990), 145.
Christmas Day letter to Joseph F. Smith, Richards described U.S. Attorney William H. Dickson as “exceedingly arrogant in his conduct of these cases, owing, doubtless, to the fact that the Court had always adopted his suggestion as the law on all points.” Richards noted that he found it necessary to respond before judges and juries “in the most scathing terms” and scoffed that Dickson had bragged that once he won the Cannon case “sixty days would witness the solution of the Mormon problem and a surrender of the Church. When, however, Brother Cannon received his sentence without a murmur, and was cheerfully followed by others to the penitentiary, they began to think he had made a mistake in his calculations, and extended the time six months.”

**THE LORENZO SNOW CASE**

In spite of a steady stream of convictions, Mormons remained defiant. Encouraged by U.S. District Court Judge Charles Zane, prosecutors in 1885 came up with a legal theory called “segregation,” under which polygamous defendants were prosecuted on multiple misdemeanor counts with consecutive sentences. Prosecutors divided the period during which a man lived with plural wives into separate counts for each year of the relationship, or each month, or week, or day, depending on their whim. Under this scheme a misdemeanor crime with a maximum sentence of six months could possibly result in life imprisonment.

Apostle and future Church president Lorenzo Snow became the test case. In *United States v. Snow*, each count was for six months or more. He was convicted in a series of three trials in December 1885 and January 1886. Richards defended each case,

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44Franklin S. Richards, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, 25 December 1886; typescript copy in the Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, 1886-1890, Utah Historical Society Archives. This collection consists of about 200 photo copies of what appear to be letterbook originals and modern typescript copies of other letters. The Historical Society was unable to provide me with any information as to how they came to possess the collection, but the content of the letters is entirely consistent with my research in other sources.

arguing that the first conviction and sentence barred further prosecutions, an objection to the "segregation" theory. The Utah Territorial Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the district court in 1886, employing some of the harshest language ever directed at a Mormon defendant: "It appears from the evidence that the defendant is 72-years old, and has married nine wives, and that seven of those wives are still living. To the first he was married in his youth. As his passion for one wife became satiated and dulled by the appearance of a younger and fresher, or possibly a more attractive one, he would marry again, until his marriages had been repeated nine times."\(^{46}\)

Richards appealed the convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court, retaining a friendly Gentile, George T. Curtis, to assist. The Court ducked ruling on Richards's objections to the "segregation" theory by holding that it lacked jurisdiction, even though the government had not raised that as a defense.

Undeterred, Richards next petitioned under habeas corpus, arguing that Snow was held under an illegal sentence. This time a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court found the stacked sentences illegal and ordered Snow's release.\(^{47}\)

Within hours of receiving word of the decision, Richards took steps to secure the release of other Mormons held under the segregation theory. But he succeeded in releasing Snow and Nicholas H. Groesbeck, convicted on 22 May 1886 under the same legal theory, only after a hostile confrontation with U.S. Marshals Frank H. Dyer and Arthur Pratt, who initially refused to be governed by In Re Snow.\(^{48}\) The two were released from prison on 8 February 1887.

In 1932 Richards explained that In Re Snow changed the Church's approach to cohabitation prosecutions:

The decision of the Supreme Court rejecting the segregation scheme caused a change of policy. Men who had been in hiding,

\(^{46}\)Judge Charles Zane, opinion, United States v. Snow, 4 Utah 280, 9 P. 501, 503 (Utah Terr. 1886); see related opinions at United States v. Snow, 4 Utah 295, 9 P. 686; 4 Utah 313, 9 P. 697 (Utah Terr. 1886).

\(^{47}\)In Re Snow, 120 U.S. 274, 7 S.Ct. 556, 30 L.Ed. 658 (1887).

\(^{48}\)"How He Treats 'Mormons'," Deseret News, 9 February 1887, 3.
because they were unwilling to incur the results of numerous prosecutions, came forward and pleaded guilty to one offense and paid the penalty. They were glad to terminate the trying condition of constant fear and apprehension, under which they had been obliged to live, and realized that after their terms of imprisonment expired they would come forth free men, without having made any promises. Hence they were ready and willing to accept the counsel and follow the example of their leaders in pursuing this course.  

Among the Church defendants whose prosecutions were impacted by this change was my great-grandfather, Apollos G. Driggs. Serving as bishop of Sugar House Ward outside Salt Lake City and married to four wives, he was prosecuted in November 1886 before In Re Snow and vigorously denied any polygamous relationships. But in February 1887, after In Re Snow, he again appeared in federal court, pled guilty, and accepted his six-month prison sentence.  

Part of Richards's legal work for the Church between 1882 and 1890 involved negotiating with and lobbying government officials in Washington, D.C., where, as he characterized it, "considerable missionary work was done." In 1932, he reminisced:

Elder Charles W. Penrose and I had repeated personal interviews with Presidents Arthur, Cleveland and Harrison, and the members of their Cabinets, as well as with the senators and leading congressmen, in which we told them of the outrageous rulings of the courts and pled for the rights of the people. We testified to their loyalty and desire to be law abiding. We also explained to them, as far as circumstances would permit, the principles of the Gospel.

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49 Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 14.
52 Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 29.
Apostle Joseph F. Smith often joined them, with the whole lobbying party staying in a house together.

In an 1888 letter to Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, Richards reported that he and Penrose had “with a very few exceptions . . . been well received and listened to with respectful attention” by members of Congress. “I have made it a rule to speak to the point and be careful not to bore men with irrelevant matters. In every instance we have been able to impart information which was entirely new to our hearers.” He lamented:

The ignorance of leading men on our question seems incredible. The other evening I interviewed an old member of the judiciary committees who actually believed that the Church owned a considerable portion of the land in Utah and that it was apportioned by the authorities to the people. He also supposed that tithing was a tax upon the members of the Church, which became a lien upon their land or other property, and that its payment was enforced by summary process. This congressman entertained many other notions about our beliefs and practices which were so fallacious and absurd as those which I have enumerated.53

Richards operated on a policy of honesty with members of Congress if asked directly, but he sometimes tried to sidestep direct questions. Continued plural marriage, supposed Mormon disloyalty, and economic cooperation seemed to be the most troublesome topics. In another 1888 letter to Woodruff and Cannon regarding Utah statehood, he described his appearance before a Congressional committee which included members hostile to Mormons:

When we first received notice of the hearing and it was decided that I should open the discussion, and endeavor to draw the fire of the hostile members of the committee, I approached the task with fear and trembling because it seemed almost certain that questions would be asked which could not be answered without apparent evasion, and anything like an attempt at concealment was sure to injure our cause. So at first I felt quite apprehensive but as I studied and prayed about it

53Franklin S. Richards, Letter to Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, 25 May 1888; typescript copy of original, Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, 1886-1890, Utah Historical Society Archives. Emphasis in original.
the light came and I saw how to head off the questions we most dreaded.\textsuperscript{54}

On 3 May 1886, Richards was the main spokesman for a delegation of Mormons and their lobbyists during an audience with Democratic President Grover Cleveland, Attorney General Augustus Hill Garland, and other members of the President's cabinet. A retained non-Mormon lobbyist, George Ticknor Curtis, had arranged the meeting and introduced Richards saying, "I have never met a gentleman who was more conscientious in his statements." Richards outlined the cases against Angus Cannon and Lorenzo Snow, complaining that Mormons were put in the position of having the law rewritten as fast as they tried to conform their conduct to it. He expressed the view that Mormon men were being convicted of unlawful cohabitation on evidence that merely established that they financially supported wives and children, which Richards found especially outrageous. In what was apparently a frank exchange, Cleveland was sympathetic but made no promises.\textsuperscript{55}

**PROPERTY SEIZURES AND THE MANIFESTO**

Meanwhile, in Utah, a provision of the Edmunds-Tucker Act directing the U.S. Attorney to seize the assets of the Church became even more threatening to Mormon society.\textsuperscript{56} During 1887 Richards and his associate LeGrande Young had worked feverishly with Church leaders to avoid forfeiture of Church holdings with some eventual success. Apostle John Henry Smith records four

\textsuperscript{54}Franklin S. Richards, Letter to Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, 22 March 1888, photocopy of typescript, Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, 1886-1890, Utah Historical Society Archives. See also Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 368-70.

\textsuperscript{55}Franklin S. Richards, "Interview of Prominent Officials by Franklin S. Richards and Charles W. Penrose, 1885-1893," n.d., original in LDS Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{56}The Edmunds-Tucker Act, sec. 13, directed the U.S. Attorney General to initiate forfeiture and escheatment proceedings on Church-owned properties which exceeded the $50,000 cap specified by the 1862 Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act. Sec. 17 disincorporated the LDS Church, repealing the 1851 incorporation enacted by the territorial legislature.
long days of discussion on the matter with Richards, Young, and several Church leaders on 21-24 March 1887 in which the group "tried every way to cut and contrive a way to keep our property."57

Richards had sensed this threat coming and urged the Church to take steps to frustrate it:

Before the passage of the Edmunds Law in 1882, I became convinced that eventually a law would be passed by Congress escheating the Church property, so I advised the First Presidency to have corporations created under the Territorial statute, and have the real estate situated in the different settlements conveyed to these corporations. I suggested that there be a corporation organized in each ward, one for each stake, and a number of other corporations to hold title to property in Salt Lake City for scientific, educational, and recreational purposes.58

As part of this strategy, Richards urged in 1888 that the Relief Society be incorporated as a legal entity. In 1889 President Wilford Woodruff and his counselors urged the move on the Relief Society presidency. (It had not then been legally organized in any form.) Zina D. H. Young, the Relief Society president, strongly resisted the incorporation; but her counselor, Jane S. Richards, Richards's mother, greatly favored it.59

The tactic worked. Federal prosecutors wanted to seize properties so conveyed by the Church; but according to Richards, the U.S. Solicitor General in charge of the litigation decided that the Edmunds-Tucker Act could not reach most of them. In the cases that followed, federal officers did not take over any Relief Society or local corporation holdings.60

57White, Church, State, and Politics, 165-66, 179-80, 205.
58Franklin S. Richards, "Church Corporations and Land Titles," 2 November 1931, typescript, LDS Church Archives.
59Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 144-46.
60See the following reported property seizure cases: The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, et al. v. United States, 136 U.S. 1, 10 S.Ct. 972, 34 L.Ed. 478 (1890); 140 U.S. 665, 11 S.Ct. 884, 35 L.Ed. 592 (1891); 150 U.S. 145, 14 S.Ct. 44, 37 L.Ed. 1033 (1893). In the lower courts, see United States v. Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 5 Utah 362, 15 P. 473 (Utah Terr. 1887); 5 Utah 394, 16 P. 723 (Utah Terr. 1888); 5 Utah 534, 18 P. 35 (Utah Terr. 1888); 6 Utah 9, 21 P. 506 (Utah Terr.
Richards later recalled that "the Solicitor General complimented me on my foresight."  

Other factors contributed to Mormon success in this area. A new U.S. Attorney in Utah, George Peters, wanted to move quickly to seize Church property because he believed—correctly—that Mormon leaders had scattered and hidden property. Peters found it difficult to gather evidence because, as he put it, "the Mormons had run off all the witnesses."  

But significant seizures did occur. Soon after the U.S. District Court appointed U.S. Marshal Frank H. Dyer as receiver of these properties, Mormon officials were evicted not only from their economic properties but also from some they considered purely religious. In 1887 Apostle Wilford Woodruff, who would soon become president and prophet, wrote a friend: "Well lightening has just struck; Dyer the marshal came and turned us all out. . . . They demand our Money, our Bank Notes, but miss much—as they are on the warpath they must find those if they can. I don't know where the End is but it must come to an end sometime—there is no road without a turne [sic]." 

It is my personal conviction that the 1890 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the seizure cases, *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day [sic] Saints, et al. v. United States*, was the major event which brought about the Manifesto. In that case the Supreme Court approved that provision of the Edmunds-Tucker Act which directed federal prosecutors to seize Church holdings with a total value in excess of $50,000. Richards

1889); 6 Utah 9, 21 P. 516 (Utah Terr. 1889); 6 Utah 9, 21 P. 519 (Utah 1889); 6 Utah 9, 21 P. 523 (Utah Terr. 1889); 6 Utah 9, 21 P. 524 (Utah Terr. 1889); 8 Utah 310, 31 P. 436 (Utah Terr. 1892); United States v. Tithing Yard and Offices, 9 Utah 273, 34 P. 55 (Utah Terr. 1893); United States v. Gardo House and Historian's Office, 9 Utah 285, 34 P. 59 (Utah Terr. 1893); United States v. Church Coal Lands et al., 9 Utah 288, 34 P. 60 (Utah Terr. 1893); and United States v. Church Farm, et al., 9 Utah 289, 34 P. 60 (Utah Terr. 1893).

61Richards, "Church Corporations."


63As quoted in Cresswell, *Mormons and Moonshiners*, 104.

64*Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, et al. v. United States*, 136 U.S. 1, 10 S.Ct. 972, 34 L.Ed. 478 (1890).
probably advised President Woodruff that there was a possibility
the temples and other sacred buildings could fall into federal
control, and that the Church's already precarious financial base
was in real danger of being destroyed. Although explicit documen-
tation is lacking, I further believe that Richards played a significant
role in Wilford Woodruff's decision to diffuse the situation with
the Manifesto.

As a monogamist, Richards was not personally hampered by
the Raid, as the all-out federal prosecution of male polygamists
was termed, but the situation made it difficult for him to confer
with his clients. He recalled:

President Cannon would come into the city during the night, and
meeting me at some place that was thought to be secure, would hear
my report and give his instructions. He was usually able to advise me
off hand, but sometimes he deemed it best for me to see President
Taylor myself, and in such rare instances I met them in some remote
place, and spent a few hours with them in the middle of the night.
During those dark days of persecution and sorrow George Q. Cannon
was the man to whom we looked for guidance and inspiration. 65

Richards likely urged Woodruff toward the Manifesto. As he
explained later:

When it was found that the criminal prosecutions and escheating
of church property failed to secure this submission of the church,
Senator Cullom and Congressman Struble presented bills in Congress
providing that no person living in plural marriage or being a member
of any religious organization that sanctioned the practice of polygamy
should vote, serve as a juror or hold office in Utah. A law to that affect
had been passed by the Legislature of Idaho, and, after a vigorous
contest before the Supreme Court of the United States, had been
declared constitutional. . . . 66

The imminent danger of these bills passing Congress was the
immediate cause of the issuance of the Manifesto, advising the people
to obey the law. I was in the President's Office on the morning of
September 25th, 1890, when President Wilford Woodruff came in and
stated that the Lord had made manifest to him, after much prayer and

65 Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 15.
66 This case was Davis v. Beason, 133 U.S. 333, 10 S.Ct. 299, 33 L.Ed. 637
(1890).
supplication, that our people must submit to the law, inasmuch as they had exhausted every legal means of showing its unconstitutionality.67

One-time Utah U.S. Senator Frank J. Cannon, a son of George Q. Cannon, recalled that the Manifesto came after Woodruff heard from Richards, then in Washington, D.C., “that our last legal defense had fallen.” Cannon wrote that the prophet “had consulted with the Church’s attorney, Mr. Franklin S. Richards; and while I trusted the President’s unworldly faith, I trusted more the sagacity of his more worldly advisers.”68

In summing up a history of the Utah polygamy prosecutions, one historian has noted a trait common to the United States attorneys of the 1880s was “their invariable tendency to underestimate the tenacity of the Mormon Church and the loyalty of polygamous Mormons to their plural families.”69 The same could certainly have been said of Richards’s tenacity.

WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE AND UTAH STATEHOOD

During the 1890s, the nature of Richards’s legal practice changed. With the Manifesto, polygamy prosecutions dropped sharply, but the need for lobbying Washington continued as Utah pressed toward statehood. In 1894 Congress passed the Utah Statehood Enabling Act,70 authorizing a territorial convention to draw up a proposed constitution. Richards, at age forty-five, was a delegate from the Fourth Precinct of Salt Lake City and a major player at the convention. John Henry Smith, the convention president, appointed him to the committees that drafted language on the legislature, mines and mining, and “ordinance.” The latter concerned those constitutional provisions Congress required in

69Cresswell, Mormons and Moonshiners, 123.
70An Act to Enable the People of Utah to Form a Constitution and State Government, and to Be Admitted into the Union on an Equal Footing with the Original States. Ch. 138, 28 Stat. 107, Fifty-Third Congress (1894).
exchange for statehood, an especially delicate matter since Section 3 of the Enabling Act required "that perfect toleration of religious sentiment shall be secured, and that no inhabitant of said state shall ever be molested in person or property on account of his or her mode of religious worship; Provided, that polygamous or plural marriage are forever prohibited."

Richards proved to be one of the most active delegates throughout the sixty-six day convention. He was looked upon as a leader on matters involving real property, water rights, railroads, and corporations, as well as on the state bill of rights. Surprisingly enough, it was not polygamy but women's suffrage that became the most explosive issue at the convention. Congress had stripped Mormon women of the vote in 1887; but by 1895, they were organized in large numbers and had strengthened alliances with the national women's movement. Richards became a leader of suffrage forces inside the convention; his wife, as vice president of the 35,000-member Suffrage Association of Utah, was a leader outside.

During the emotional five-day debate—28 March to 3 April 1895—Richards was the leading advocate of suffrage, attacking the fears of the anti-Mormons and urging the convention toward granting suffrage as the morally correct action. B. H. Roberts, a popular LDS General Authority and polygamist, led the opposition, which included non-Mormons who feared that votes for women would continue Mormon political domination in the state. Roberts, who considered himself a pragmatist on this question, worried that Congress would refuse Utah admission to the union if the proposed state constitution allowed female suffrage. But the most common theme in Roberts's oratory was that the rough and tumble of politics would somehow rob women of their virtue. "Women of Utah, be content to reign over the empire of domestic life, and it will bring more joy to your hearts than all the success you could have in casting your ballots at the polls," he told the convention.71

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Richards, however, fervently argued:

Equal suffrage should be provided in the Constitution, because it is just and right, and because it is in the highest and best sense expedient. I know that a majority of the members of this convention concur with me in this belief. I have no doubt that a majority of the people of Utah entertain this same view, and so I feel assured that it will be incorporated in the organic law. The constitution will be adopted by the people; our State will be admitted into the Union; equal suffrage will prove the brightest and purest ray of Utah's star; it will shine forever in the immortal galaxy, as a beacon light on the tops of mountains beckoning our sister states and territories upward and onward to the higher plane of civilization, and the fuller measure of civil and religious liberty.

Richards's position carried 75 to 14 with 17 not voting.

Article IV, Section 1, of the original State Constitution provided, "The rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex."

**RICHARDS'S ROLE AFTER STATEHOOD**

After Utah achieved statehood, Richards, along with LeGrande Young, continued to be involved with the Utah legislature on behalf of Church interests.

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72"Organic law" is defined as "the fundamental law, or constitution, of a state or nation . . . which defines and establishes the organization of its government." Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, rev. 4th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1968).


74On 31 January 1901, Apostle Rudger Clawson recorded that Apostles John Henry Smith and Anthon H. Lund were appointed as a committee with Richards
Richards also continued to represent Church leaders in individual actions, some of which concerned "the principle." The specifics of the compromises that had brought the Manifesto and Utah statehood were not uniformly agreed upon by Mormons and their opponents, not even within the Mormon community. New plural marriages were solemnized in the United States and foreign countries. Pre-Manifesto plural families continued to cohabit, and children by these marriages were not uncommon. Mormon opponents in the press and political world quickly seized both the rumor and reality of continued plural marriage.\textsuperscript{75}

For example, on 25 July 1899, Apostle Heber J. Grant was charged with unlawful cohabitation under a Utah state statute that took the place of the Edmunds-Tucker Act. Richards quietly negotiated a guilty plea and accompanied Grant on a surprise appearance in Salt Lake City's Third District Court on 8 September 1899. In less than five minutes, Richards entered the plea, the judge imposed a $100 fine, and Grant promptly wrote out a check.\textsuperscript{76}

In a 13 April 1896 article in the \textit{Salt Lake Tribune}, a Republican legislator alleged that the LDS Church had formed a steering committee to influence legislation on polygamy. Richards refused to be interviewed by the \textit{Tribune}:

He had nothing to say on the subject, but conveyed the idea that he had no knowledge of any such committee if it existed. Talking further, Mr. Richards said he personally had been consulted by the governor on two or three occasions in reference to certain bills, but

\textsuperscript{75}There is a growing body of excellent scholarship on this conflict. See especially D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 18 (Spring 1985): 9-105; and Hardy, \textit{Solemn Covenant}.

\textsuperscript{76}"Heber J. Grant Appears in Court," \textit{Deseret News}, 8 September 1899, 2; "Confession By Grant," \textit{Salt Lake Tribune}, 9 September 1899, 2. Grant was prosecuted under Utah Penal Code, section 4209. It was enacted by the Territorial Assembly in 1892 and carried over into statehood.
that was not extraordinary, because every governor for the past twelve years had asked his views on some pending legislation during their term of office.\textsuperscript{77}

In 1904 Apostle Reed Smoot was selected by the legislature for the U.S. Senate as a Republican. His election again precipitated a crisis as Protestant ministers in Salt Lake City, women's groups, and others accused the Church of allowing covert polygamy. A Senate subcommittee conducted lengthy hearings on whether Smoot should be seated or expelled. Richards was assigned by Church leaders to assist Smoot and worked closely with those seeking to have Smoot seated.\textsuperscript{78}

President Joseph F. Smith was the first witness to testify at the hearings on 2 March 1904. Richards, who accompanied him as counsel, later recalled:

During the investigation of Senator Reed Smoot's case, commencing in 1904 and ending in 1907, I was present at Washington during the several hearings before the Senate Committee, and acted as attorney for President Joseph F. Smith and others, who appeared in the case. In connection with the Senator's Counsel, I examined practically all the witnesses before they testified.\textsuperscript{79}

Smith's evasive testimony, however, apparently caused Smoot more harm than good, and the pressures continued to mount.\textsuperscript{80}

Apostles John W. Taylor and Mathias Cowley, supporters of post-Manifesto polygamy and the subjects of much hostile publicity, refused to honor congressional subpoenas after considerable consultation with other Church leaders. When President Smith made Richards aware of this, Richards in mid-April 1904 "urged


\textsuperscript{78}White, \textit{Church, State, and Politics}, 568, 580.

\textsuperscript{79}Richards, "Ensign Stake Address," 33.

\textsuperscript{80}Hardy, \textit{Solemn Covenant}, 252-53.
Prest. Smith to not present J.W. Taylor's or Cowley's name to Conference, to make any explanation he desired, and if they did not come and take the full responsibility of their conduct [involving new plural marriages] to cut them off of the quorum, and if necessary, to excommunicate them.  

Richards agreed with Smoot that some announcement ought to be made about polygamy at the April 1904 general conference of the Church. What followed from President Smith came to be known as the "Second Manifesto," which was the beginning of the end of officially sanctioned plural marriage in the Church.

Perhaps even more important than the sensational death throes of polygamy was Richards's much quieter role in the Church's economic ventures in the Great Basin. His leading role in the polygamy cases obscures the fact that he was recognized as one of Utah's leading commercial lawyers whose client list included many Gentiles.

In 1864 Lorenzo Snow had founded the Brigham City Cooperative which was, for almost a quarter of a century, Mormonism's most successful collective. By the 1880s the Cooperative began having difficulties as a result of the changing economy, the advent of the transcontinental railroad, and the loss of leadership resulting from the polygamy campaigns. Activities were scaled back. By November 1895 it passed into receivership and creditors lined up to recover what they could. As creditors closed in, Richards represented Church interests. In a suit by the Grant Soap Company, one of the Cooperative's creditors, Richards encountered,

82Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 252, 259.
84Receivership is when the courts appoint an individual to receive the assets of the business entity, review the claims of legitimate creditors, and pay some portion of the debts.
probably not for the first time, a lawyer named A. Theodore Schroeder.

A University of Wisconsin law school graduate, Schroeder came to Utah in 1889 feeling sympathetic to the Mormons. However, he rapidly became their bitter opponent, eventually making a living as something of a professional anti-Mormon. He published books, went on the lecture circuit, and was even retained by the Congressional committee whose investigation led to the expulsion of Utah Congressman-elect and polygamist B. H. Roberts in 1900.86

During depositions for the Grant Soap Company case, Schroeder implied that Lorenzo Snow took advantage of his Church position to better support his plural families at the expense of the cooperative and its creditors. Richards patiently rebutted this implication through a variety of witnesses, including President Snow, Lorenzo Snow, Jr., and Apostle Rudger Clawson.87

Apostle Clawson’s diaries record Richards’s presence when the First Presidency and apostles met to consider the fates of electric power companies, water rights disputes, banks, and slander litigation with the anti-Mormon Salt Lake Tribune.88

What was considered successful legal talent in Richards’s lifetime was very different from today, so neither he nor his contemporaries should be measured by modern standards. United States law recognized almost no individual liberties even in criminal prosecutions. The law was overwhelmingly concerned with economic and business matters. Women and minority attorneys were extremely rare. Oratory in court was a much bigger factor than it is today when few lawyers ever set foot in a courtroom. In Richards’s day, the lawyer was more advocate, champion, and fixer than today’s crafters of legal documents who are the modern

87The State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison has many of Schroeder’s papers including his files in this law suit.
88Larson, A Ministry of Meetings, 68, 93, 189, 243.
The idea of a formal legal education was only coming into vogue late in Richards's professional life.

In his day a lawyer had to be able to speak forcefully and convincingly; he had to know the power centers in his community, both personal and institutional, and to be able to speak directly to them. Richards accomplished that and became very skilled within the standards of his time. His peers regarded him as the embodiment of integrity. His Church cases were often on the cutting edge of the law, urging individual freedoms and rights to a court system largely unwilling to consider such concepts. No doubt this added to his sometimes evident frustration. His lifelong championing of women's political rights, in easy alliance with his even more motivated wife, suggests he would have been viewed as a progressive and a reformer. Certainly he was one of the most prominent members of the Utah bar.

**Restructuring the Church**

Perhaps Richards's most enduring contributions to the Church were virtually invisible but have continued to affect its institutional structure to the present. They concerned the legal structure of the Church and the manner of holding title to property. For most of the nineteenth century, these had been vexing questions.

Joseph Smith freely mixed Church holdings with his personal property. Beginning in February 1841, he began to separate his personal properties from those held as trustee-in-trust of the Church, but this process was not complete at his death. With his murder in 1844 came a protracted struggle over his estate between creditors, his widow Emma Smith, and the Church which cannot be said to have found a satisfactory resolution for any of the three. In Utah, Brigham Young also

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mixed Church and personal holdings, sometimes as "trustee-in-trust" and sometimes without any declaration of intent. This was partly an effort to avoid the $50,000 cap on Church real property holdings under the Morrill Act. The situation was complicated by the Church’s intensive involvement in the economic life of the Great Basin. With Young’s death in 1877, the lengthy and embittering probate battles began again. Because Richards first served the Church in that legal conflict, he was aware of the potential for trouble.90

When Richards first became counsel for the LDS Church in 1879, President John Taylor held most property as trustee-in-trust. The stratagem during the 1880s of putting many holdings in the name of local trustees and dummy owners had resulted in a legal tangle. True ownership was almost impossible to determine with any certainty, and the Church could not always assert authority over local membership.

Around 1899 Richards dedicated himself to straightening out the muddle, calling it "some of the most important work of my life." He wished to create a "corporate sole" entity for the Church, which would hold perpetual title without regard to which individuals held office. In his 1932 talk he described the new entity:

A corporate sole is an officer endowed by law with corporate powers and perpetual succession. While the officer lives and continues to hold the office, he is the corporation sole and it functions through him, but when he dies or ceases to hold the office the corporation still continues to exist, and titles vested in it are not affected by his death or removal,—they still remain in the corporation. When a successor is appointed the corporation functions through him, while he holds office, and so on ad infinitum.91


90Leonard J. Arrington, “The Settlement of the Brigham Young Estate, 1877-1879,” Pacific Historical Review 21 (February 1952): 1-20; Young et al. v. Cannon et al., 2 Utah 560 (Utah Terr. 1879). The Church also retained Richards to handle the estate of President John Taylor in 1887. See L. John Nuttall, Diaries, 31 August 1887, typescript copy, Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

91Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 34-35.
Because the Church had holdings in a number of states and foreign countries, the first task was to get a variety of legislatures to enact statutes providing for corporate soles. Richards devoted nearly thirty years to this effort, lobbying state legislatures just as he had Congress. Idaho in 1899 and Utah in 1901 were the first to enact statutes.\(^2\)

For almost a decade after 1899, Richards and LeGrand Young supervised the organization of all Church holdings and the various forms of title with which they were held. In 1916 the Corporation of the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was created as the corporate sole holding title to ward meeting houses all over the world.\(^3\) In 1923 the Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was created to hold title to the general funds, temples, educational institutions, and other properties used exclusively for religious purposes.\(^4\) Heber J. Grant was the first Church president to operate under this new structure. Non-religious properties—the money-making investments of the Church—were structured in more traditional ways.

Thomas Alexander has observed that “administrative modernization was not completed until the 1970s, when the president of the church withdrew from active involvement in church-owned businesses and the Twelve ceased to administer church departments.”\(^5\) Nonetheless, Richards essentially devised the legal structure that the Church uses today.

But his professional career was by no means limited to representing LDS Church interests. His list of clients included railroads and commercial, banking, and mining interests. It is likely that his role as general counsel for the Church drew many

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\(^2\) Richards, “Church Corporations.”

\(^3\) Charles W. Nibley was then Presiding Bishop. This structure continues to the present. Ken Driggs, telephone conversation with Wilford W. Kirton, Jr., general counsel for the LDS Church, 6 June 1995. For other refinements of the Presiding Bishop’s Office during this period, see Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 105-6.

\(^4\) Richards, “Church Corporations.”

\(^5\) Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 119.
to his office who wished to employ his influence. Perhaps no other Utah lawyer of his time enjoyed a more prominent clientele. In addition to the many Mormon cases he took before the U.S. Supreme Court, he took seven cases to Washington, D.C., that were unrelated to any Mormon interest.96

**PERSONAL LIFE**

From all indications, Franklin and Emily shared an emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually intimate marriage although, in the absence of personal papers, it is the public record of their mutually supportive efforts for political and civic betterment that can be most clearly traced. One close friend, Alice L. Reynolds, credited Richards with making his Emily’s successes possible:

Franklin S. Richards and Emily S. Richards stood side by side. They were lovers always; everything she said bore evidence of the fact that he was giving her not only the material support to carry on, but that encouragement which is often necessary to keep up the real drive of the soul. I saw her at the age of sixty-nine beam at the reception of his letters and telegrams as a young girl beams over letters from her first lover. Franklin S. Richards was always a fitting companion for his wife.97

They seem to have been of one mind on both Church and political matters. Both were committed to women’s suffrage and political rights, to advancing the Democratic Party in Utah after the disbanding of the Church-dominated People’s Party,98 and to

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96 Richards was attorney of record in the following non-Mormon U.S. Supreme Court cases: *Fenton v. Salt Lake County*, 136 U.S. 636 (1890), cert. denied; *Eldredge v. United States*, 145 U.S. 636 (1892); *Hamer v. Ogden City*, 163 U.S. 689 (1896), cert. denied, in a case where his brother Charles C. Richards joined him as counsel of record; *Jones v. Brim*, 165 U.S. 180 (1897); *Kinney v. Columbia Savings and Loan Assoc.*, 191 U.S. 78 (1903); *Michigan Trust Co. v. Ferry*, 220 U.S. 610 (1910), cert. denied; and *Michigan Trust Co. v. Ferry*, 228 U.S. 346 (1913). A 1914 directory of prominent Utah men included Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution, the American Smelting and Refining Company, “and other large business concerns in Utah” among his clients. See *Men of Affairs in the State of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Press Club of Utah, 1914).

97 In *Memoriam Emily Sophia Tanner Richards*, pamphlet, n.p., 1930, 29-30; photocopy in my possession.

promoting a positive image of LDS people in the nation. Each strongly influenced and supported the other.

Franklin and Emily had moved from Ogden back to Salt Lake City, I assume about 1880, and in 1889 built a new two-story brick home at 175 A Street in the fashionable Avenues district. Both Franklin and Emily would die in this house. Emily bore three sons, Franklin Dewey in 1870, Joseph Tanner in 1871, and William Snyder in 1874. The couple adopted two daughters, Wealthy Lucille (Jensen), born in 1878, and Emily (Beeson), born in 1888. One son, "Willie," died just days before his first birthday. The two surviving sons, Franklin and Joseph, both became lawyers.

In 1879 Emily became president of the Retrenchment Association of Ogden City, an organization which later evolved into the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (MIA). When the family moved to Salt Lake City, she served in the central organization of the Relief Society under President Eliza R. Snow. When the Society incorporated in 1892, she became a member of the Board of Directors. Emily remained on the board for over thirty years and strongly promoted suffrage efforts there. She established strong personal links with the national suffrage movement and with women like Susan B. Anthony, who came to Utah to lobby the cause during the 1895 Constitutional Convention.

A moment of personal triumph for Emily came in 1888 when she represented Utah, the Relief Society, the Primary Association, and the YLMIA at a national suffrage meeting in Washington, D.C., presided over by Susan B. Anthony. It was during the height of the federal pressure against polygamy and Utah women had few sympathizers. Speaking three years after her death, Franklin S.

\[\text{Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; photocopy in my possession.}\]

\[99\text{Karl T. Haglund and Philip F. Notarianni, \textit{The Avenues of Salt Lake City} (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1980), 115. The house is now divided into apartments.}\]

\[100\text{Jenson, \textit{LDS Biographical Encyclopedia}, 4:56.}\]

proudly and lovingly described this event: “It was at a time when prejudice against the people of Utah was at its highest pitch, and it required considerable courage to represent the Mormon people . . . in the Capitol City where only the hostile side of the question was being given publicity.” Newspapers “bristl[ed] with denunciations of Utah institutions.” Susan B. Anthony walked to the rear of the stage and, “with her arm around [Emily], conducted her to the rostrum” where her “dignity, grace, and charming appearance [won] every heart.” Proudly Franklin quoted a Washington newspaper account of his wife as “a delicate, refined lady, trembling slightly under the scrutinizing gaze of the multitude, yet reserved, self-possessed, dignified, and as pure and sweet as an angel. Her appearance was a powerful antithesis to their preconceived impressions, and the change of feeling in the audience was almost instantaneous.”

Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widstoe assigned Emily third place among Mormon women in the women’s rights movement: “Following [Eliza R. Snow] in the leadership of the suffrage forces was that other indomitable pioneer, poetess, leader and editor, President Emmeline B. Wells, who was assisted by that no less able patriot, Mrs. Emily S. Richards. These two conducted suffrage affairs in this state for many years.”

When Utah held its first election as a state, Democratic party leaders approached Emily as to whether she wished “the honor of being the first woman to be elected to a State Senate. She declined but aided in the election of her party’s candidate, Mattie Paul Hughes Cannon, who had that honor, to the Senate of the State of Utah.”

When Utah granted suffrage to its women, Emily promptly turned her energies to the national suffrage movement. On 27 January 1896, only days after Utah’s admission as a state with

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104 In Memoriam, 33.
voting women, Emily told the National Women’s Suffrage Convention in Washington, D.C.: “It may be said of Utah that with her contentions on religion and her progressive attitude on suffrage rights, she has developed more independence, liberty, and equality than perhaps any other State in the Federal Union.” Incorporation of suffrage in the state constitution was important, she told the convention, because “it cannot be revoked without the women vote for their own disfranchisement. As they constitute nearly half the voting population, it is not likely that the present order of things will be reversed.”

Also in 1896 she was an alternate delegate to the Chicago Democratic Convention, which nominated William Jennings Bryan for president. She later organized the Utah State Council of Women to push for ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted national women’s suffrage when it was ratified in 1920. Emily led the Utah delegation attending the Washington, D.C., celebration. She also helped organize the Utah League of Women Voters but declined the presidency when it was offered to her.

In 1904 the Church assigned Emily, Ida Smoot Dusenberry, and Alice Merrill Horne to attend the Berlin meetings of the International Council of Women, a peace organization with a Utah following, especially within the Relief Society. Emily and other Church women gained valuable international connections at such meetings.

Emily was also a director of many Utah charitable institutions. She was president of the Board of Lady Managers at the 1893 World’s Fair, was deeply involved during World War I with the Red Cross (ward Relief Societies were organized as local chapters of the Red Cross), then helped organize the Utah chapter at the war’s end.

Emily and Franklin provided comfort to each other during

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the two sorrowful episodes of their life: first the death of baby Willie, and second, Joseph’s unexpected death at age thirty-eight in Salt Lake City in 1909. Joseph had joined his father in Washington in the late 1880s to assist in the U.S. Supreme Court cases there and then, after attending law school at the University of Michigan, had gone into partnership with him.\(^{108}\)

The devastated sixty-year-old Richards later recalled: “On the morning after Joseph’s passing, I felt so weak and prostrate and was so discouraged, that I told my wife I would never be able to go to the office again.” But a rejuvenating spiritual visitation occurred, a “miracle” he called it, during which “I could feel Joseph telling me that I would be able to do all that was necessary and that he would help me.” In what was his first public mention of the experience, he said, “I could not mention the subject to anyone, without shedding tears of gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the marvelous manifestation of His mercy and power.”\(^{109}\)

Emily died on 19 August 1929 at the age of seventy-nine, two months after her husband’s eightieth birthday. He mourned her loss deeply. “When the Lord took my beloved wife and companion... it seemed to me as though the light and joy of life had gone out of the world,” he told the Ensign Stake high priests three years later, “but, through the sustaining help of the Spirit of the Lord, I have struggled along and been consoled by an abiding hope and assurance of a joyful reunion, when my work is finished here upon the earth.”\(^{110}\)

Church President Heber J. Grant spoke at her funeral, along with several other prominent persons. He told the mourners “of all my near and dear friends I know of no couple, husband and wife, that during the fifty years of my acquaintance seemed to be more like one than they were.”\(^{111}\)

\(^{108}\)Franklin S. Richards, Letter to Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon, 22 March 1888, Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, 1886-1890, Utah State Historical Society.

\(^{109}\)Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 33-34.

\(^{110}\)Ibid., 38-39.

\(^{111}\)In Memoriam, 51.
It is no accident that Richards turned to his faith at moments of personal sorrow. All available evidence indicates that he was deeply committed to Mormonism, living its precepts and defending it from a hostile world. His letters to Church leaders often refer to his calling upon prayer and inspiration to guide his professional efforts.\(^{112}\) He had absolute faith in the callings of his ecclesiastical superiors. In addition to devoting his professional talents to the service of the Church, Richards served on the Weber and Ensign Stake high councils and for several years was president of the Ensign Stake high priests quorum.\(^{113}\)

When Wilford Woodruff was sustained as president of the Church in April 1889, Richards wrote his support to the new First Presidency:

> While feeling assured that you will be guided by the wisdom and intelligence of the [Holy] Spirit, I shall always be ready to render you whatever aid and support I can, in the important positions to which you have been called. It would have afforded me great pleasure to have been present at the conference and had the privilege of hearing the instructions given, as well as the pleasure of voting for you, but it is a consolation to know that my absence was in the line of duty.\(^{114}\)

As Richards concluded his address to the Ensign Stake high priests, he reflected on his legal career, which had begun by accepting a prophet’s counsel:

> While actively engaged in the Government Crusade—beginning with [the] “Edmunds Act” in 1882, and ending with the restoration of

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\(^{112}\)L. John Nuttall, secretary to the First Presidency, records that Richards was “set apart for his labors at Washington D.C. before the U S Supreme Court in the W E Bassett case by Prests Geo. Q. Cannon (mouth) Jos F. Smith & apostle John Henry Smith, he starts tomorrow morning.” Nuttall, Diary, 17 November 1890. Nuttall refers to the case of *Bassett v. United States*, 137 U.S. 496, 11 S.Ct. 165, 34 L.Ed. 2d 763 (1890), which Richards defended with his brother, Charles C. Richards. Richards secured a win for the Church on the question of whether a first and lawful wife could be forced to testify against her husband in a polygamy prosecution.

\(^{113}\)Richards, “Ensign Stake Address,” 40-41.

\(^{114}\)Franklin S. Richards, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, 13 April 1889, Franklin S. Richards Correspondence Collection, Utah State Historical Society.
the Church property in 1892—I often thought of the remark made by President Young, when he told me about the fearless inspiration which an attorney should have in representing the Saints, and I sometimes wondered how nearly my efforts had come to meeting the requirements which he had in mind, but I always had the satisfaction of knowing that I had prayerfully and diligently tried to do my best.

During that period I tried many important cases in the courts and made arguments before congressional committees. While so doing I was intimately associated with some of the ablest lawyers in the country. Through the blessing of the Lord I had been equal to every occasion, and was sometimes surprised at the respectful, and almost deferential, treatment of my illustrious colleagues. Considering my limited education, legal and otherwise, I was at times amazed at my clear comprehension of important legal points, and my ability to cope with the distinguished lawyers who were opposed to me; for all of which I gave praise to the Lord, realizing that without divine help I could not have done the things that had been required and accomplished.115

CONCLUSION

Richards died of a heart attack in Salt Lake City on 4 September 1934 at age eighty-five. He was the oldest member of the Utah bar still actively practicing law. Over two thousand attended the funeral where he was eulogized by his brother George F. Richards and Anthony Ivins, both of them apostles, by Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon, and by Chief Justice D. N. Straup of the Utah Supreme Court, among others. The ten pallbearers were all grandsons and nephews, including Frank L. West, his father's biographer.

The historically anti-Mormon Salt Lake Tribune editorialized, "He was a fair minded, clean living, patriotic citizen, a constant, tolerant churchman; a kind, considerate neighbor; a conscientious lawyer of the finest type, and a man whose place will not be easy to fill in this community."116

The Deseret News also editorialized on his passing:

In the prime of his manhood he was the earnest and eloquent

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advocate before the supreme court [sic] of the United States in those vexing questions that formed the undertone of Utah history for the decade of the eighties. For many years there was no litigation before the courts or legislation before Congress affecting the interests of the people of Utah that did not call for the generous expenditures of the unusual talents of Franklin S. Richards. During those days he was a well known personality in the national capital.

To his profession he added luster, to his friends he offered a rare willingness to serve and unchangeable affection, to his Church he gave unstinted service and childlike faith, rather than violate the code of his profession, fail a friend, or desert the cause of his religion, he would have any time or place without hesitation preferred to yield his life.\textsuperscript{117}

In 1912 Joseph F. Smith spoke at the funeral of Richards's mother, Jane Snyder Richards, praising the children she had raised. Had Smith been living to speak at Richards's funeral, he no doubt would have restated his sentiments:

I have been associated for a great many years with Franklin S. [and his brother Charles C.] and I have always had the deepest regard and love for them, especially for Franklin, who has been a staunch and faithful defender of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has had the honor of standing for their rights before the highest courts of the nation, and has defended them with ability and with the spirit of love and devotion that no one could feel except he were one of them and deeply interested in their welfare.\textsuperscript{118}

Franklin S. Richards's intriguing role at the storm center of politics and law in Mormonism for fifty years was an important one, but he was not a major force in shaping the LDS Church of his time. He was a believer whose fervent desire was to serve the Church as Church leaders evaluated those needs. He did not shape policy as much as he implemented the decisions of others. If his professional papers are an accurate reflection, as I believe they are, Richards saw the decisions of Church leaders as inspired and deferred to them completely. His faith in the gospel, the Church,

\textsuperscript{117}Franklin Snyder Richards, "Deseret News, 8 September 1934, 4. See also "Pioneer Utah Attorney Dies," Deseret News, 7 September 1934; "Final Tribute Paid at Rites of S. L. Leader," Deseret News, 10 September 1934, 7; "Death Takes Noted State Bar Member," Salt Lake Tribune, 8 September 1934, 30; and "Tribute Given S. L. Attorney," Salt Lake Tribune, 10 September 1934, 14.

\textsuperscript{118}West, Franklin D. Richards, 267-68.
and its leadership was complete and unswerving; his defense of all three in the courts shaped his professional life.

His life presents many questions. As a Mormon blue blood, he was a logical candidate for plural marriage; but despite his staunch public and legal support of plural marriage and its practitioners, he may not have been a private supporter. There are scattered indications that he urged Church leaders to renounce public support for plural marriage long before the Manifesto of 1890. If any personal papers ever become available, they promise to answer some of these puzzles.\(^{119}\) Certainly worthy of deeper study is his role in shaping the commercial, investment, and legal institutions of the Church. And finally, Emily T. Richards deserves fuller investigation, not only for a deeper look into their marriage but also for her accomplishments and influence on Mormon society in her own right.

\(^{119}\) I am perplexed by the absence of journals because it was such a common practice with Mormons of his era and because his father, whom he obviously loved and respected, was a consistent and detailed diarist. However, no documents I have encountered even suggest that he ever kept diaries.
Creating Female Community: Relief Society in Cache Valley, Utah, 1868-1900

Carol Cornwall Madsen

Mary Ann Weston Maughan was not the first white woman to view Cache Valley, Utah, but she was the first to leave a recorded impression. "Oh, what a beautiful valley," she exclaimed after traveling down the steep and unmarked trail leading out of Sardine Canyon. Its beauty was in stark contrast to the desert valley she had just left. Peter and Mary Ann Maughan and their children had answered Mormon leader Brigham Young's call to settle the northern Utah valley in the fall of 1856 with six other families, all leaving their homes in Tooele County near the Great Salt Lake, and most of them "glad of the chance" to go.¹ The Maughans

¹Kate B. Carter, ed., "Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan," Our Pioneer
would live out their lives in the new settlement, he as presiding bishop of the Mormon settlers and she as a midwife and first LDS Relief Society president. They survived the hazards of settlement and generated a line of prominent Cache Valley residents.

Creating a new community had an unmistakable leveling impact on its settlers. For all who traveled to the valley, the immediate goal was fundamental—survival. Cache Valley presented formidable challenges to those who would call it home: freezing winters, yearly grasshopper plagues, Indian raids, and waves of deadly diseases. Yet the immigrants streamed into the region after 1858, some from other parts of Utah and the United States but the majority from Scandinavia, Switzerland, Italy, and the British Isles, all eager to claim a portion of the fertile valley.

Wrestling with the new land was daunting. “It was a scramble of the severest kind for a mere existence,” remembered Charles W. Nibley, whose family was among the early settlers. “How to begin at the very beginning of things and make the earth produce your food and shelter was such a new experience and such a severe one that the older folks never forgot it.” In time, however, there was also joy in the struggle, in watching the earth yield to the careful nurturing of those who tended it. “We have had a long, heavy winter here,” wrote Smithfield settler Susan Kent Green in 1874, “and I begin to feel almost impatient for the

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2As presiding bishop, Peter Maughan was senior bishop of all the bishops who presided over the various wards or congregations in Cache Valley, holding his position until his death in 1871. He did not hold the same authority as the “presiding elder,” Apostle Ezra T. Benson, who served in that position in Cache Valley until the reorganization of stakes in 1877 when both the offices of “presiding bishop and presiding elder” were replaced by the single office of stake president. See William G. Hartley, “The Priesthood Reorganization of 1877: Brigham Young’s Last Achievement,” BYU Studies 20 (Fall 1979): 3-36.

3Ricks, “Before Settlement,” 44. The 1880 census shows that nearly 66 percent of the settlers were foreign born.

snow and frost to quit the earth, and let the sun warm and prepare it for the labors of the husbandman and the reception of seeds and plants. You know I must have my little flower-garden if there is the least chance for such a thing, wherever I am."5

Life in Cache Valley usually began in a dugout, a rough log cabin set atop a three-feet deep foundation with a dirt floor and roof and a chimney on one side. With the eventual addition of a second room, glass windows, and a wood floor, Elizabeth Fife of Providence managed to raise eighteen children in one of these cabins.6 When the Nibley family's dugout was finally completed, the children remember their mother saying that "no queen who ever entered her palace was ever more happy or proud of shelter ... than she was."7 Any form of shelter was welcome during those early years; but for the most part, these were temporary dwellings, as log, frame, and stone houses soon replaced them.

Women conducted their centuries-old tasks within those shelters, their work following the cycle of the seasons. A missed planting signaled empty cupboards and a missed shearing meant warm sheep and cold people. Ephraim Bergesen, one of the "colorful and capable settlers in Cornish," never remembered seeing his mother or sisters in bed. "They were up in the morning before any of us," he remembered, "and the last to bed. All summer they knitted socks for all of us boys for winter. When my mother died, she did not look natural because she didn't have any knitting in her hands."8

For Mormons, community transcended the individualism characteristic of many western frontier ventures. Their cooperative pattern emerged from a strongly internalized group identity and shared mission which defined and linked the concepts of

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5Susan Kent Greene, "Letter," Woman's Exponent 2 (1 April 1874): 166.
6Providence History Committee, Providence and Her People (Providence, Utah: Keith W. Watkins and Sons, Inc., 1974), 24.
7Nibley, Reminiscences, 30.
8Marybelle Pike, "Cache Valley's West Side," talk delivered to Cache Valley Historical Society, 23 March 1955, typescript copy, 51, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).
stewardship and community in a creative partnership. When the Relief Society was organized in Cache Valley twelve years after settlement,\(^9\) it institutionalized the cooperative efforts and sense of accountability of women to the community, its resources, and its inhabitants already evident in the development of the villages that dotted the valley. Through its organizational framework and communication network it facilitated communal work, gave its members a broader range of social experience than domesticity offered, and redefined concepts of public and private space for women. It also tested its symbiotic relationship with the Mormon ecclesiastical structure in Cache Valley while forging a distinct ecclesiastical identity of its own.\(^10\) For Cache Valley Relief Society women, the sense of spiritual and social kinship and group solidarity that grew out of their organization became the propelling force for community action.

The story of the Relief Society in Cache Valley also demonstrates the strength of religious commitment in women's lives and the social power of organized womanhood in the nineteenth century. Early in the century, the motive force of religious faith had begun to move women out of the isolation of their individual homes into a collective moral consciousness and public activity reflecting their sense of social responsibility. The evangelical zeal emanating from the revivalist movement during this period generated many of the nation's earliest female volunteer societies and accounted for the strong moral thrust that propelled women into social action or, as they characterized it, Christian service. Organizing into various types of associations, these early female volunteers gained their first experience in social activism.\(^11\) The goal was not only to meliorate want but to redeem lives.

\(^9\)The LDS Relief Society was originally organized in 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois, then was reestablished in Utah in 1868, with units in each of the ecclesiastical branches (wards, stakes) throughout the Church. Deseret News, 18 and 22 April 1868.


\(^11\)Several studies have examined the development of women's organizations and their impact on women's status and social participation. See, for example,
Though organizational work may have been a vehicle for some women to attain public prominence and facilitate personal agendas, neither individual ambition nor public assertiveness appeared to be an incentive for the social work of Cache Valley women in its developing years. Brigham Young's pronouncement of 1864 is a better indication of their motivation: "Everything that pertains to men, their feelings, their faith, their affections, their desires, and every act of their lives, belong [to the Kingdom] that they may be ruled by it spiritually and temporally." The inclusiveness of that mandate enabled women to formulate a natural synthesis of their domestic and social tasks and blurred the boundaries between the private and the public. In many other settings women faced the eternal conflict between familial and social claims, but that tension was mitigated in early Mormonism. All were to serve the kingdom. When the Salt Lake Stake Relief Society president, Mary Isabella H. Horne, visited Cache Valley in 1892, she reminded the members that Joseph Smith "taught us that we were a partner of the Priesthood after which our church was organized & it was not complete until we occupied our position as a society." Though Bishop Maughan, like some others, did not fully comprehend "the extent of the design of the Relief Society" at the outset, he later conceded that since it had been organized by Joseph Smith, it was undoubtedly a "stepping stone to a greater work of the Sisters of the Church."

That a well-ordered course of kingdom-building depended


13 Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, 21 April 1892, 103, LDS Church Archives.

14 Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book A, 18 May 1869, LDS Church Archives.
upon a gendered division of labor was a basic assumption among early Mormon women. Though adjunct to the larger religious group, the Relief Society developed in its members a distinct female consciousness through the specific social tasks it formulated, administered, and implemented along with those generated by Church leaders. Bound by common purposes, Relief Society women coalesced into a cohesive female network. Like other benevolent organizations, it was a vehicle for transforming individual commitment into cooperative action toward the achievement of religious and social aims. While this woman-centered domain fostered deep and enduring personal commitments and relationships, its effectiveness within the religious community came primarily from a consciousness of the power of union, of a strong group association, and of mutual commitment to the collective religious enterprise. 

Mary Ann Maughan was appointed the first “presiding officer” of the Relief Society in Cache Valley. As head of a group of satellite branches, she was responsible to the general presidency of the Relief Society headquartered in Salt Lake City. She thus had a dual agenda: to implement the programs originating on the general level and to promote the work that the local societies identified for themselves. Often the two merged, as local needs generated cooperative action.

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15 Until 1970 membership in Relief Society was voluntary and many women elected not to join. But like polygamy, the Relief Society was a defining factor in the lives of all LDS women and even nonparticipants shared its identifying features.

16 As president of the First Ward Relief Society, she and her counselors acted as a stake Relief Society presidency, supervising the work of all the wards in Cache Valley that comprised the Cache Valley Stake. By 1878 there were twenty-four wards, eleven of them created that year, with a total Church membership of over twelve thousand. It took two weeks to traverse the fifty miles from north to south necessary to visit all of the wards. Mary Ann Weston Maughan, who served from 1868 to 1874, was followed by Elizabeth Benson (1874-86), Adeline Hatch Barber (1886-97), and Lucy Smith Cardon (1897-1920).

17 The first Stake Relief Society was not organized until 1877, when stakes were reorganized throughout the Church. Jane Richards of Weber Stake in Ogden became the first stake Relief Society president in the Church.
theria, typhoid, and smallpox made seasonal sweeps through the valley and presented a persistent challenge to the community's well-being. The response to the crisis was two-fold: to implement simultaneously the power of faith healing and any available medical skills. Apostle Ezra T. Benson noted at a Stake Relief Society meeting in Logan, "The sisters who have been ordained have the power to rebuke diseases and . . . all could have the same power if [they] would exercise faith." He counseled "every Mother in Israel to be the physician of her family" and "to administer to her children when no Elders were present." Knowing women's long-time reliance on natural remedies, he also suggested that the Relief Society presidents "obtain the medical herbs that grow here, and keep them for sale at a low rate."18

Herbal medicine, or the botanical method of healing, had earlier been taught and endorsed by the Council of Health in Salt Lake City organized in 1848 by Willard Richards, an herbal doctor. Women, particularly, displayed "an increased desire for the promotion of health," he found, as they eagerly learned techniques of midwifery and nursing in order "to nurse each other," a policy of the council. "Women, who desire a doctor, instead of a female nurse, . . . and the doctor who delights in nursing women, instead of instructing them how to nurse themselves and each other," the council cautioned, "are possessed of an adulterous spirit."19 This philosophy promoted a female medical practice in early Utah.

After the death of Willard Richards in 1854, women of the council in Salt Lake City engaged Dr. William France to continue instruction in midwifery. He also taught a general course in "the management of women during pregnancy" and another in the treatment of children's ailments.20 While Salt Lake City residents had access to this kind of trained medical help, those in rural towns did not. Thus the general Relief Society leadership and local societies coordinated their efforts to

18Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book A, 18 June 1868, 2 August 1869, 2 August 1870.


address the problem. In 1873 Eliza R. Snow, head of all the Relief Societies, inaugurated a medical program in which two or three women from each ward throughout the Church were invited to Salt Lake City to train in hygiene, nursing, and midwifery, supported by their local societies.

It took little time to appreciate the effectiveness of such cooperation in Cache Valley. "Services of doctors were difficult to obtain," one Relief Society president remembered, "so we attended to the sick many times providing home remedies." But the advent of trained midwives and nurses brought professional expertise to meet Cache Valley's pressing medical needs. In 1887 Emma Liljenquist of Hyrum was one of the selected women who left their families and enrolled in a six months course in Salt Lake City. "It made my heart ache when I had to leave my babies," she remembered, "but I had been called by the Church to perform this service, and I felt that it was a special calling." While there was no ideological conflict in Emma's decision to be a midwife, the dual demand on her time and energy taxed her commitment to both home and community needs, a commonly felt sentiment among midwives.

The medical training program of the Relief Society gave a new dimension to the volunteer societies of Cache Valley: the professionalization of benevolence. In eastern states women were already providing medical assistance and social service as trained professionals rather than volunteer workers. Benevolence had become a paid profession. Applying scientific techniques for addressing the escalating social problems in large cities, profes-

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21 In 1868 Brigham Young appointed Eliza R. Snow to organize Relief Societies throughout the Church, which she did with the help of Zina D. H. Young. Although she was not officially set apart as president, with two counselors, until 1880, she presided over all the Relief Societies throughout the territory and generated or administered many of their Church-wide activities.

22 Bertha Spring Gessel, "My Association with the Relief Society," 1956, typescript copy in my possession.


24 Claire Noall has collected the experiences of many female doctors and midwives in early Utah in Guardians of the Hearth (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1974).
sional women performed many of the same tasks as their volunteer sisters. Compassionate service had been transformed into an academic field in which individuals were now trained to address personal and social needs.25

In Cache Valley professional and volunteer service visibly merged when trained midwives served simultaneously as Relief Society presidents. Mary Ann Maughan was one of them, her diary recounting almost daily visits to the sick in her dual capacity, but making no distinction about which hat she wore for any particular visit. Susannah Jolly Smith was another. She served twenty-one years as Hyrum Ward Relief Society president, while delivering hundreds of babies, making burial clothes, acting as "undertaker for hundreds," and serving as a temple worker. Mary Ross Henderson of Logan also did joint service as midwife and Relief Society president during the early years of settlement, but her patients often ignored the distinction between her compassionate and professional service. Those who could paid her $2.50 for her nursing care, but few were able, she discovered. More often than not, her medical treatment was considered a benevolent act. She regularly canvassed her married children and neighbors to obtain spare clothing and goods and "filled her cellar with fruit every year and hardly used a quart herself," her granddaughter noted, "giving it all away to her patients."26

The annual epidemics taxed the medical resources of the

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25The "broad reach of municipal housekeeping" and social service is evident in the listing of social needs addressed by women's groups in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Appendix of Scott, Natural Allies, 185-89. As some women moved into professional social work they could no longer identify wholly with the more traditional volunteer societies. Yet they were often unpaid for their work, blurring one of the major distinctions between volunteer and professional service. This transformation created a rift in the general Relief Society board in 1919. A number of board members put in writing their objections to the "modern charity methods" employed by trained workers in World War I and adopted by the general Relief Society in its social welfare program. They lamented the passing of "personalism" in charity work. See "Objections to Modern Charity Methods," c. 1919, typescript, Relief Society Executive Papers, LDS Church Archives.

26Catherine A. Wakley, "History of Mary Ross Henderson"; typescript copy in my possession.
mother-physicians, sometimes beyond even the power of faith to alleviate. When Jane Baxter Gunnell's baby daughter contracted diphtheria in 1877, she "fumigated her two sons" and sent them to live with a companion wife while she remained in quarantine with her baby. "I didn't have much to doctor her with," she wrote, so "I prayed for two days and nights, but it wasn't to be. She died in my arms as I rocked her watching the sun coming up over the horizon."\(^{27}\)

The bonding that often occurs between patient and caregiver gained intensity when women repeatedly exchanged roles. Historian Suzanne Lebsock has identified this affective mode of benevolence and the intimate relationships it engendered as "personalism."\(^{28}\) It reflects the strong emotional attachment that often developed from women's outreach to one another. As one woman explained, "As soon as Mary Henderson put her hand on me, I felt better." Of Mary Benson another woman wrote, "It always seemed like an angel of mercy had come. When she stepped on the porch everything seemed all right."\(^{29}\)

Even as they applied their skills to heal the ailing Saints of Cache Valley, Relief Society women were challenged to exercise their creative benevolence to clothe and feed them. "Many are needful in the Valley," President Mary Ann Maughan announced shortly after the Relief Society was organized, "so hurry with the


\(^{29}\)Wakley, "History of Mary Ross Henderson"; Mary Benson Larson, #74, Joel Ricks Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.
quilts."\(^{30}\) Four years later the need had not subsided. "We have not much means on hand," Relief Society secretary Libbie Benson recorded in 1873, "as we always manage to distribute our quilts and other articles as fast as we get them made."\(^{31}\) Besides the ubiquituous quilts, members also made burial clothing, infants' outfits, and carpets and drapes for newly constructed chapels and for the Logan Temple at their monthly sewing meetings.

"Visiting," the planned calls of benevolent workers on members of the community, was established early in the history of women's volunteer groups as the principal means of ascertaining community and individual needs and collecting donations to meet them. In the Mormon Relief Society the "visiting teachers," as they were called, were expected to discover the needy, render personal service as indicated, and sew the quilts and clothing to be distributed. They were also admonished to teach the needy the tools of self-sufficiency. It was an arduous responsibility. Susanna Parkinson Nielsen of the Franklin Ward remembered the years her mother served as a visiting teacher. "Many a time," she recalled, "I'd get up in the morning and I wouldn't know anything about it and she'd say, 'Well, I've been out all night. I just got home.' [Then] she'd fix our breakfast." Caring for the dead was also one of her tasks as a visiting teacher. She taught Susanna the process of washing the body, placing cold cloths over the face and fifty-cent pieces on the eyes, keeping the cloths cold and damp continually until burial. Susanna remembered that her mother did not want an undertaker for herself when she died. In death she preferred the services of the Relief Society women who would give her the kind of personal care they had given her in life.\(^{32}\) For centuries, these traditions bound women together while also linking gen-

\(^{30}\)Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book A, 1 February 1869, LDS Church Archives.

\(^{31}\)Relief Society Report, Logan, 6 December 1872, in Woman's Exponent 1 (1 January 1873): 114.

erations in the perpetuation of these personalized, female rituals.

It was in the process of benevolence—the human acts of assessment and amelioration, of seeing and doing—more than in the results of their efforts that the essence of female personalism emerged and acquired meaning. Though institutional in design, benevolent service was individual in execution, a binding act for giver and receiver. At a stake Relief Society meeting in Logan, Martha Needham claimed to have “done as much washing and anointing as anyone in this Stake.”33 She knew the compelling power of such intimate and spiritual relationship with the women she served and declared that “she wanted to spend the rest of her life in doing good to others and blessing and confirming them.”34

Though the LDS Relief Society was an integral part of the LDS Church, membership was entirely voluntary and not always sufficient in each individual society to meet all of the needs of ward members. “It is quite difficult to find sisters willing to sit up at night with the sick,” reported Logan Third Ward president Clara Larsen, “but we do the best we can to fill requirements.”35 But that was not a universal situation. Christina Liljenquist, Hyrum Ward Relief Society president, was happy to report in 1872:

> Our society is in a healthy condition; we have endeavored to do all in our power to comfort and bless the poor, the widows, the fatherless and the sick. . . . Although the outside world may number us with the “poor, oppressed women of Utah,” we experience great pleasure in saying, we have lived in the States and in the old world, but prefer living in, and enjoying the glorious liberties of Utah and her “Mormon” institutions. 36

She concluded her report with an appropriate paean to their benevolent service:

33The Relief Society encouraged members to “wash and anoint” one another as they prepared for childbirth, invoking spiritual aid as nineteenth-century women underwent this often life-threatening experience.

34Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, 5 March 1910.


36The practice of plural marriage brought Mormon women almost universal condemnation as well as pity.
The widow's heart shall share our joy  
The orphan and oppressed  
Shall see we love the sweet employ  
To succor the distressed.

Christina added a postscript, however, which reflected a widespread feeling among women: "And thus maintain woman's legitimate rights." In a period when the "woman question" evoked a national debate, many women reasserted their allegiance to the traditional forms of women's public participation. Christina would not have been comfortable with the militancy of the "perfectionist" or moral reform societies that arose in antebellum America nor the aggressive tactics of the post Civil War social purity movement. She would likely have also been uncomfortable in the more demanding activism of the women's rights advocates. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, these three types of women's volunteer movements followed distinct trajectories with minimal overlapping membership.

37 "Relief Society Report, Hyrum, 9 October 1872," in Woman's Exponent 1 (1 November 1872): 82.


39 Two years after writing her poem, Christina Liljenquist acknowledged the right of franchise Utah women had enjoyed for four years but asserted the premier importance of their housewifely responsibilities. The women of the Hyrum Ward Relief Society, she noted, "were not only capable of intelligently exercising the right of franchise that had been conferred on them, but also of filling woman's mission on earth, as Mothers, Wives and Daughters." "Relief Society Reports," Woman's Exponent 3 (1 June 1874): 2.

40 Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change, Rochester, New York, 1822-1872 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), delineates the different
The Mormon Relief Society, however, conflated the objectives of all three.

In the nineteenth century, the range of Relief Society social activism could fit the personal proclivities of virtually all of its members. Benevolence was its *raison d'etre*, but, as Eliza R. Snow continually stressed, the society was also designed "to save souls." "Nowhere else is woman called to save souls," she repeatedly exclaimed.\(^{41}\) "Our souls need food as much as our bodies... We possess the germs to become goddesses in eternity."\(^{42}\) The spiritual component of benevolence could be "enormously engaging," as Anne Scott has observed, often providing a stronger motivation for benevolent work than bringing purpose or order into one's own life.\(^{43}\) Many women in early nineteenth-century America made redeeming the fallen and protecting the innocent their primary work of benevolence. They organized reform societies to enforce their moral standards and aggressively sought out transgressors. During this same period Joseph Smith also expressed the need to "save souls." Paralleling its work of compassion, he announced, was the Relief Society's equally important mission "to correct the morals and strengthen the virtues of the community." He instructed the members to reform those who had been led astray "and by kindness sanctify and cleanse [them] from all types of antebellum volunteer societies as benevolent, perfectionist, and ultraist, referring to the more radical women's rights movement. See also Anne M. Boylan, "Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women's Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797-1840," *Journal of American History* 71, no. 3 (December 1984): 497-523. Both authors, along with Ann Scott in *Natural Allies*, emphasize the distinctive social philosophies and agendas of the membership of the different types of associations. For additional analyses of women's volunteer work, see Kathleen D. McCarthy, ed., *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980); and Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality and Politics in the Northeastern United States, 1820-1885* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).

\(^{41}\)Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 6 September 1873, LDS Church Archives.

\(^{42}\)Hyrum Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 1870-79; 1878-93; 25 October 1877, LDS Church Archives.

\(^{43}\)Scott, *Natural Allies*, 182.
unrighteousness."

Armed with this investment of moral authority, Relief Society members in Nauvoo added moral caretaking to their compassionate service.

In a place as remote and religiously uniform as Cache Valley, Utah, in the nineteenth century, this Relief Society commitment appeared to have required less public attention. Evil influences were seen to emanate from the worldliness of "Babylon" and had not yet found their way to the isolated settlements in northern Utah. "We have but very little of the outside influence among us here," Clarkston's Relief Society president, Mary Griffin, proudly announced, finding "nothing to hinder us from living our religion, and being a happy people." Women remained as the moral watchdogs of Mormon society, however, through their maternal responsibility of training their children. Scarcely a meeting was held or a sermon given by visiting leaders from Salt Lake City, especially Eliza R. Snow, in which mothers were not charged to teach their children the principles of truth and virtue to keep Zion morally pure.

If moral reform was not a pressing issue for Cache Valley women, woman suffrage became so. When Christina Liljenquist equated women's "legitimate rights" with benevolent service, she already possessed a political right that headed the agenda of politically minded volunteer societies—the vote. The Utah legislature had extended suffrage to women in 1870, two years before Christina's declaration. Having attained this political right without any concerted or overt agitation on their part, most Relief Society women likely agreed with Eliza R.

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44 Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 17 March 1842, LDS Church Archives.

45 "Relief Society Reports," Woman's Exponent 7 (1 June 1878): 6.

46 Relief Society minutes and reports indicate the initial ambivalence and even opposition of many women toward woman suffrage during this period. As they recognized its part in sustaining the principles and objectives of the Church, they tended to become more supportive and their attendance at the polls increased. Though Lola Van Wagonen has argued, in "In Their Own Behalf: The Politicization of Mormon Women and the 1870 Franchise," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 24 (Winter 1991): 31-43, that the public activity of Mormon women directed by the newly reorganized Relief Society politicized them toward
Snow's contention that women were given the vote only when "God put it in the hearts of the brethren to give us that right." Woman suffrage, she consistently argued, remembering the uprootings of the past, was granted to ensure the stability of the Church. Thus she encouraged women to learn the political process and even commissioned one Relief Society worker to "preach woman's rights if she wished" as she visited the settlements. She was, however, unalterably opposed to engaging any further in the woman's rights movement, which she felt would result in "a war of the sexes," the thought of which "created an involuntary shudder." Without her endorsement, it is unlikely that many LDS women viewed the political consciousness, resulting in a "demand" for the vote in 1870, it should be remembered that such a demand represented the political sophistication of primarily a few influential Salt Lake City women expressed mainly among themselves. While their "social duties" may indeed have prepared many otherwise politically naive women for a stronger public voice, the majority of women in 1870 did not necessarily perceive suffrage as a natural outgrowth of such public activism nor as an avenue to personal political independence. This civil right, as utilized by Church members, corresponded to the principle of common consent in the Church by which all members voted to sustain or reject proposed Church leaders and policies. That the suggestion to demand it of the governor and to send representatives to Washington was made in the same meeting in which plans were laid to publicly denounce proposed anti-polygamy legislation and to assert their religious rights suggests this initial linkage. Not until after woman suffrage in Utah was revoked by the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887 did Mormon women become overt campaigners in their own behalf by initiating a campaign to restore woman suffrage at statehood. At that time they employed not only the tactics but the rhetoric of the national suffragists.

47Senior and Junior Cooperative Retrenchment Association Minutes, 8 August 1874, LDS Church Archives. See also Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Woman Suffrage," Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 4:1572; Weber Stake Relief Society, Minutes, 1879-1888, 6 February 1879, LDS Archives.

48See Salt Lake Stake Retrenchment Association Minutes, 1871-75, 19 July 1873; Weber Stake Relief Society, Minutes, 1879-88, 6 February 1879; Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 19 February 1870, all in LDS Church Archives; Eliza R. Snow, "Celebration of the Twenty-Fourth at Ogden," Deseret News Weekly, 26 July 1871. See also Jill Mulvay Derr, "Eliza R. Snow and the Woman Question," BYU Studies 16 (Winter 1976): 250-64, from which some of these quotes were taken.
vote at that time as a step toward greater political involvement.49

When woman suffrage in Utah was revoked by the anti-polygamy Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887 (the same year that marked the death of Eliza R. Snow), its political value to women, rather than to the Church, fueled the drive to regain it. A Territorial Woman Suffrage Association, organized in 1889, utilized the efficient Relief Society network to facilitate its efforts to organize in every county. By 1891 there were seventeen county associations with numerous auxiliary branches numbering 1,500 members.50

The Cache Valley association was organized in December 1889 in the Logan LDS Tabernacle. Many of its seventy-eight members were leaders and workers in the women-headed organizations. Jane Hyde Molen, president of the Cache Valley Stake Primary Association, and Adeline Hatch Barber, president of the Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, were both members.51 Several men, most of them local Church leaders, also attended the initial meeting. Territorial suffrage officers, many of whom were also stake and general Relief Society leaders, visited suffrage associations as diligently as they visited the Relief Societies,52 and there was often little difference between a suffrage and a Relief Society meeting. The Relief Society conducted classes in civil government to meet Territorial President Sarah M. Kimball's charge to help women understand their "present degree of helpless dependence,

49There were, of course, notable exceptions. It is instructive to note that unlike Wyoming's woman suffrage statute, passed two months earlier, Utah's did not grant women the right to hold public office.
50"Utah Woman Suffrage Association," Woman's Exponent 19 (1 April 1891): 147.
51"Woman Suffrage Association of Cache County," Woman's Exponent 18 (1 January 1890): 120.
52Sarah M. Kimball, president of the Territorial Woman Suffrage Association, Lula Greene Richards, former editor of the Woman's Exponent, and Jane S. Richards, President of the Weber Stake Relief Society, were among the number. See, for example, "Woman Suffrage Association at Logan," Woman's Exponent 19 (15 September 1890): 54; Hyrum Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 19 May 1891, 256-57.
and to intelligently assert their selfhood in a manner that will enable them to labor more effectively for the general good of humanity." In 1891 Jane Richards, Weber Stake Relief Society president and fervent suffragist, encouraged the Cache Valley women to attend suffrage meetings and "to study the principles of suffrage and embrace it and make it a pleasure to take the papers on the subject."  

Three years later Apostle Moses Thatcher of Cache Valley optimistically predicted that "there [were] girls in this valley, who would yet stand in the halls at Washington D.C. and speak in defense of Utah. . . . The day of woman's bondage [is] over." When victory was finally achieved in 1895 and woman suffrage became part of the new Utah state constitution, Charles O. Card, a former stake president in Cache Valley, congratulated the women and noted that he "had heard the sisters pray for their rights and believed it was in answer to this prayer." Religious duty had quietly transformed itself into a constitutional right.

But suffrage was not a universal cause of Cache Valley Relief Society sisters. Most women found the work of benevolence more compatible with their concepts of public service than politics. As their charitable work increased along with a growing population, it gathered up the willing hands of the newly organized Primaries and Young Women's associations, moving Card as stake president to say, "The Relief Society, the Young Ladies M.I.A., and the Primaries are all so closely connected that I could not tell where one begins and the other ends. They are all Sisters of Charity." The younger associations had absorbed the work of the mother organization in raising money and participating in charitable and community projects, strengthening women's influence in the community.

54 Hyrum Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 19 May 1891, 256-57.
55 Cache Valley Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, 20 July 1894, LDS Church Archives.
56 Cache Valley Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, April 1895.
57 Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, 20 October 1890.
Even as the breadth of public work and the extensive administrative duties of women’s associations created a new model of American womanhood—the organization woman—so, too, did the Relief Society help to create the archetypal Mormon woman, sometimes designated “Mother in Israel.”

In fulfilling the mission of the organization, the model Relief Society woman demonstrated her commitment to the kingdom, her selflessness, and her faith. The exemplar of Mormon womanhood was the “Mother of Mothers in Israel,” Eliza R. Snow. Highly regarded by members, she provided a feminine feature to the male visage of Church leadership. Because of her enormous influence, both her life and her consistent, almost formulaic sermons established a pattern by which these first generation converts of disparate backgrounds could shape their lives to fit the LDS image. She made many visits to Cache Valley before her death in 1887, her admonitions carefully recorded by diligent secretaries. “We have not all been taught alike,” she told the mixture of European and American converts, but “we want to raise a generation that will know and see alike.”

Whatever they had been before, these women and their children were now to be Latter-day Saints, identifiable by a shared acceptance of a unique set of beliefs and practices. “We have cove-


60 Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 1868-1891, 7 May 1879.

61 Their distinctiveness was not only religious but cultural. It was defined by clearly marked boundaries separating the Zion they were building from the
nanted to become Gods,” Eliza reminded her sisters, “and it is important to know what we are here for.”

Commitment to these lofty goals would make Mormon womanhood distinctive, she assured them. She had outlined its cardinal virtues as early as 1857: submission, faith, constancy, and service. With each of her visits, Cache Valley women saw the embodiment of these virtues. And she was explicit in asserting that the Relief Society was the primary facilitator of their development in the women of the Church.

Her counsel to Relief Society women featured several key themes which identified women’s obligation to the Church and the role of the Relief Society: the importance of honoring and practicing the principle of plural marriage; the necessity of fulfilling “social duties” by supporting home industries; the unique founding and purposes of the Relief Society; and the responsibility of mothers to raise a righteous posterity. Eliza R. Snow exemplified the loyal plural wife (to both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young) and yielded no ground to complainers. Her position on home industries was similarly nonnegotiable, as she encouraged, or cajoled when necessary, the women to engage in some form of this economic enterprise.

Babylon they had renounced, both geographically and ideologically. An interesting perspective on the creation of Mormon “ethnicity” is Patricia Nelson Limerick, “Peace Initiative: Using the Mormons to Rethink Ethnicity in American Life,” Tanner Lecture, Mormon History Association Annual Meeting, this volume.


64Eliza R. Snow’s stature in the Church is evident in the Clarkston Ward Relief Society report of an 1878 visit. Despite the morning hour of the meeting, “nearly all the brethren and sisters in the settlement were present.” Snow’s concern at running into the dinner hour was unnecessary, according to the report, for the audience “was being fed the words of eternal life.” See “Relief Society Reports,” Woman’s Exponent 7 (1 June 1878): 6.

In compliance, women saved grain, dispensing it as they perceived a need. They defined their stewardship when grain distributed by the Relief Society required no repayment but grain loaned to the bishops for the same purpose was to be paid back with interest.\textsuperscript{66} They also spun silk. Doubtful that the climate in Cache Valley was conducive to the growth of the requisite mulberry trees, the women nevertheless “promised to obey counsel and leave the result with the Lord.”\textsuperscript{67} Expert spinner Susanna Cardon guided the silk industry in Cache Valley for fifteen years.\textsuperscript{68} Women were also instructed to make their own straw hats rather than buying fancy bonnets from the states. Hyrum Ward organized a braiding school and a straw hat making project for one summer, while the stake Relief Society president, Elizabeth Benson, engaged a teacher from Brigham City to teach straw plaiting to willing “scholars.”\textsuperscript{69} Bishop Samuel Roskelley of Smithfield urged the sisters to complete at least one hat for themselves to wear during Brigham Young’s visit to Cache Valley in 1869 “to show their willingness to support home industries.”\textsuperscript{70} A decade later Eliza R. Snow was delighted to find that most of the women in her audience were wearing straw hats. “She blessed the sisters for their willingness to obey counsel.”\textsuperscript{71} Her mission was to spread the gospel of home industries. “It is just as important as temples,” she insisted, and charged the sisters “to try and make it a success. . . . I believe that if we would wear more home made articals [sic], we would have more of the spirit of God.”\textsuperscript{72}
Local societies engaged not only in some form of home industry but attended to local needs as well. An 1880 report of the Hyrum Ward Relief Society demonstrates its wide range of social activity. Through fairs, bazaars, the sale of "Sunday eggs," and other inventive fund-raising efforts, it managed to raise $639 to build its own Relief Society house and granary. It also assisted in providing carpet, a clock, and other miscellaneous items for the Hyrum Ward meeting house. It donated money and goods to the sick and poor and helped to outfit and maintain several missionaries. It contributed to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund which assisted immigrating converts, and helped support a community library, the Logan Woolen Factory, and the Sunday School. It made contributions toward the public debt and over several years gave $558 to the Logan Temple. At the time of the report it had accumulated nearly 400 bushels of wheat which had been loaned out to the bishop, to be paid back after harvest.  

Several wards also took on the task of providing tuition for indigent school children. Visiting teacher Jemima Garnet of the Smithfield Ward reported that "with regard to schooling children she was willing to do her part" and was happy when the society donated "a linsey quilt to pay a school bill." The Relief Society collected enough money to pay a term's tuition for five children and was reminded that the school bills could be paid "with Relief Society, Minutes.  

73 "Relief Society Reports," Woman's Exponent 9 (1 June 1880): 6. Brigham Young had assigned the Relief Society, under the direction of Emmeline B. Wells, to store grain in 1875. It is instructive to note that until 1872 married women in Utah did not have the legal right to own or convey property. The large sums of money and construction of halls and granaries supervised by women of the Relief Society undoubtedly helped to precipitate passage of a Married Person's Property Act, which gave married women an independent legal identity by allowing them to own property and by extension enabling them to control the funds of their associations. Lori Ginzberg analyzes this legal anomaly that affected women's societies throughout the country in The Business of Benevolence, 48-53. By noting this step in the revocation of the common law doctrine of coverture, Susa Young Gates suggests its importance to Mormon women: "Early on Utah women were given equal property rights with men. They could sue and be sued and buy and sell independently." See Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, Women of the "Mormon" Church (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1926), 8.
Society work” in the absence of currency. Such flexibility emphasized their commitment to education and discouraged families from patronizing the free parochial schools that were making an appearance in Cache Valley.74 These cooperative ventures taught women the social power of their networks.

The gendered delineation of tasks facilitated if not assured a generally compatible working relationship between the Relief Society and the Church. But differences in perception and performance were inevitable. Though Eliza R. Snow usually demonstrated a congenial and deferential relationship with the brethren, occasionally her commitment to her mission elicited an uncharacteristic assertiveness. She clearly demonstrated this quality during a visit to Cache Valley in 1879. Relief Society members, it seems, had been buying individual shares in the dividend-paying local co-op store managed by the brethren instead of buying and donating shares in the Relief Society store. If the Relief Society members desired to “put their means where it will bring a dividend,” she chided the women, “let them put it into the Coop store of the Brethren,” but, she confidently asserted, “I believe all the sisters will be willing to turn their shares into the Relief Society.” That all the women present voted to sustain her pointed counsel demonstrates the strength of her authority. But tension developed when one of the attending brethren disagreed with Snow and affirmed the value of individual investments. She quickly retorted that “the Relief Society knows no individual interest” and recalled the advice of “Brother Brigham” to run their own store because the brethren “will run it with speculation.” Mary Isabella Horne, who had accompanied Eliza R. Snow, then noted that a Relief Society store in Salt Lake City, which had cleared over $500 in six months, lost $1200 when “the brethren interfered.” When the brethren took it over a second time from the women, she added, the whole venture failed. When the good brother continued to disagree with Eliza’s instructions to the sisters, she overruled his objections and settled the matter by

74Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 7 November, 7 December, 1874. See also “Relief Society Reports,” Woman’s Exponent 1 (15 August 1872): 42.
forcibly declaring: “The Relief Societies will have but one store in one place while I preside.”

The tenaciously held financial independence of the Relief Society gave it a large measure of autonomy and a pivotal place in the economy of the community. But the women’s self-reliance sometimes tended to make priesthood leaders indifferent to those occasions requiring male help, such as “setting out the mulberry trees,” providing time and means for them to attend their meetings, or building their granaries. “We are accredited with great persuasive powers,” Eliza reminded the sisters, and when needed, she advised, “we can use them on the Brethren,” a female technique of long tradition.

The Relief Society provided LDS women a channel through which they could fulfill a myriad of “social duties,” all of which defined their stewardship in the Church and in their communities. Nothing in their writings, either personal or organizational, suggests that they felt they were adjunct participants in that process. They perceived their work as essential and uniquely female. When the needs were so great, the tasks so clearly drawn, the laborers so few, and the results so immediate, Relief Society did not have to justify its existence or repeatedly define its mission; nor did its members need to assert the legitimacy of their actions. If there were problems of appropriateness or stewardship, they usually resulted from the overlapping responsibilities of the bishop’s role as shepherd of his congregation and the Relief Society’s commitment to compassionate service. Clearly, the women’s sense of female community was strongly correlated with their social action.

Though the Relief Society was only one of women’s many charitable institutions throughout the century, Eliza impressed on the women that it was unique in its founding and function. “The Relief Society is at the head of all womanhood upon the earth,” she firmly declared. Reminding them that “it is not a begging

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75 “Minutes of a Shareholders’ Meeting of the Relief Society,” 9 July 1879, Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 1868-1891.

76 Smithfield Ward, Cache Stake Relief Society, Minutes, 1868-78, 12 May 1878; see also Cache Valley Stake Relief Society, Minutes, Book B, 18 May 1898.
institution . . . but a school to improve and cultivate our minds,” she was sure it was “already becoming a power in the land.” Convinced of its universal significance, she claimed that “we are laying the foundation for the salvation of all women, and if you are faithful you will be over all women. . . . Let us live up to the missions we took upon ourselves before we came here.”

With faith in the messianic mission of the Church and commitment to its millennial message, Eliza R. Snow had no doubts regarding the superior claims of Mormonism. The millennial role of LDS women and the spiritual power derived from restored ecclesiastical authority, she consistently argued, gave LDS women a transcendent status. But their work, she noted, must always be done with “a unity of heart and feeling.” “Let us be one,” was her frequent plea. Much good, she promised, “can be accomplished by a concert of action.”

In life Eliza served as a powerful rallying point for that unity; and in death her memory, her instructions, and her example continued to bind Mormon women in cords of commitment and cooperation. The limitless boundaries of their field of service, Eliza’s expansive definition of their share of kingdom-building, her call for concerted action, and the image-building power of her rhetoric established the parameters of the Mormon woman and her sphere.

The meetings and objectives of the Relief Society were formal expressions of the emotional ties and relationships which flourished within this woman’s world. The long tenure of officers within the valley and frequent visits of general leaders from Salt

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77Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, “Minutes of a Special Meeting Held in the School House, 12 May 1878”; also Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 26 October 1885.

78Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 6 September 1873. In her plea for unity she was echoing Joseph Smith’s admonition to the first Relief Society in Nauvoo: “All must act in concert or nothing can be done.” Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 30 March 1842.

79Mendon Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 23 October 1877, LDS Church Archives; Smithfield Ward Relief Society, Minutes, 6 September 1873, 5 September 1881; Cache Stake Relief Society, Minutes, 5 December 1876.
Lake City, for example, not only provided focus and continuity to their work but also moved many official associations into intimate companionships. One can only wonder at the conversations between Jane Molen, Cache Stake Primary president, and Zina D. H. Young, counselor in the general Relief Society presidency, as they traveled together in Jane’s horse-drawn buggy, conducting Primary conferences from one end of Cache Valley to the other. Evidence of their friendship emerged during their visit to Samaria, Idaho. The bishop’s wife, who had just given birth, asked Jane to name the child. “I named the baby Zina,” Jane noted, “after my dear friend who was with us.”

Zina returned the favor later at a meeting with Jane’s stake Primary officers when she interrupted her talk to say “a few words for the women who had no children in this life,” which included Jane Molen. They were “not to feel bad,” she said, “as there would be plenty of children in the next world who would love them just as though they were their own mothers.”

Though the doctrine might have been shaky, the intent was not. The half-yearly rounds of the valley together, the overnight stays in the sisters’ homes, and the work that engaged their common interest created affection and social kinship.

The informal social patterns of nineteenth-century women also nourished such relationships. The frequent and often celebratory gatherings, marking a birthday or anniversary, offered repeated opportunities to build this social cohesiveness. These


81Cache Stake Primary Association Minutes, Book A, 1882-1912, 8 June 1889, 44.

gatherings often took the form of spiritual meetings, where women renewed their own and their friends' spirituality by invoking gifts of the spirit. A gathering of the "Temple Sisters" at the home of Zina Card in Logan, Utah, one summer evening in 1884 was typical. The women spoke in tongues, interpreted, and blessed one another. "The spirit of the Lord was made manifest in many ways," Jane Molen noted. "It was a day long to be remembered."  

Seventy of "the Temple Sisters and Relief Society Sisters" (with eighteen men) commemorated Mary Ann Maughan's seventy-seventh birthday by acting as proxies in the Logan Temple for her kindred dead. As Emmeline Wells expressed many years later about her own Relief Society associates, "I loved them as much as if bound by kindred ties, closer, perhaps, because our faith and work were so in tune with our everyday life." The merging of the social and the spiritual that held LDS women together in sacred, shared experience reflected the transparent boundaries between the temporal and the eternal, the private and the public, in those early years of Church history.

Through both their informal and organized webs of relationships, Cache Valley women found that their overlapping networks of affiliation became a cohesive bond in the community as well as in the Relief Society. These networks proved to be a significant factor in shaping the community and determining its quality of life. Before the institutionalization of health and social welfare, women provided these services, clearly evident in the public work of Cache Valley women. Moreover, their philanthropic interests resulted in schools, scholarships, libraries, lectures, and other civic improvements. The Relief Society

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83 Jane Molen, Diary, 18 August 1883, 26, LDS Church Archives. When the Logan Temple was completed, women, as officiators, were drawn into another form of collective service, creating an overlapping "kinship" with members of the Relief Society and other social and religious female networks.


85 "Mothers in Israel," Relief Society Magazine 2 (February 1916): 68.
facilitated the reach and continuity of these community undertakings.86

Through their engagement in the benevolent, economic, and political features of their communities, LDS women demonstrated their social agency and a uniquely female pattern of social activity. The emergence of women's voluntary movements throughout the century, from benevolence to feminism, initiated what historians have designated as a "separatist" tradition of public activism. Female association both generated and nurtured this tradition. Usually outside the established institutional channels, women formulated their own social philosophy and created their own networks and methods of social influence. They transformed the moral authority and spiritual superiority that society granted them into social power of measurable significance. Their assertiveness and self-confidence derived from the strength of their female coalitions which supported and validated their work.

The LDS Relief Society, like its secular and religious counterparts, has experienced a diminution of its original social commitments. The institutions that many of these women's groups helped establish have ironically robbed them of their former objectives and diminished the personalism of their formative years. Moreover, it was the distinctiveness of women's work that gave it a unique social value. As the work of the early benevolent and reform societies, not to mention the suffrage associations, merged with larger social and government programs and institutions, the separatist tradition lost force and visibility.87

The persistence of the Relief Society as both a social and religious entity, however, bespeaks women's efforts to maintain a female tradition and to sustain the spirit, if not the social power, of community among women. While today individual women can find a variety of outlets for their volunteer or professional im-

86 The popularity of women's secular clubs during this period brought numerous women throughout the country into municipal work, focusing their efforts on establishing musical organizations, libraries, playgrounds, theaters, and numerous other programs to enrich community life. The Relief Society was central in providing these civic benefits during its early years.

pulses, women of an earlier time, with its narrower range of experience and possibility, found female community, as embodied in their own associations, an energizing and a liberating force.
Moses Smith:
Wisconsin’s First Mormon

David L. Clark

INTRODUCTION

On a bitterly cold 15 December 1835, Moses Smith, a Mormon from New York, with his companion, William Whiting, made jackknife claims for land in southeastern Wisconsin, in what is today the small city of Burlington.¹ The Native Americans had agreed to leave this part of Wisconsin beginning in 1836. Thus,

¹A jackknife claim was made by carving one’s name and date on trees that bordered a section of land. Such a claim would hold land for up to thirty days, after which some evidence of improvement, usually a hastily constructed shanty of sorts, was necessary. See Obituary of Moses Smith, Gospel Herald (Voree, Wis.), 14 June 1849, 53. I assume that James Strang, Smith’s brother-in-law, wrote this obituary since he was the editor and apparently the principal contributor. The paper, which was produced irregularly from 1846 to 1850, is numbered consecutively from the first issue. See also Lemuel Smith, Letter to the Editor, Burlington Standard, 28 December 1872, typescript in Burlington Historical Society Library, not paginated; C. E. Dyer, “Address to Old Settlers Society,” 22 February 1871, 17-25, Burlington Historical Society Library; and H. A. Wood, Burlington, Its History, Growth, and Progress (Burlington, Wis.: Howard A. Wood, 1908), 18. Wood misdates Smith’s jackknife claim.
Western Racine and eastern Walworth counties in southeast Wisconsin, including Moses Smith's original claim and first cabin. In 1992, the State Historical Society erected a marker to commemorate the first Mormons in Wisconsin as part of the Wisconsin Mormon Sesquicentennial year, proclaimed by Governor Tommy Thompson. Voree was the center of James J. Strang's church before his move to Beaver Island, Michigan.
in anticipation of acquiring former Indian land, the first serious settlers began arriving in the summer of 1835. This availability of land also inspired an 1836 discussion among Mormon leaders in Missouri of moving the Church to Wisconsin.²

Inclement weather with temperatures below zero forced Smith and Whiting to leave their jackknife claim without completing their work. Being caught in a storm away from shelter was life-threatening, and even inside a log cabin with a blazing fire, the temperature could still be close to freezing against the walls. Apparently Moses Smith was a rugged individualist, thriving under stressful conditions, but smart enough to respect Wisconsin weather. When the weather moderated, Smith returned on 27 December. With the help of William Whitney, B. C. Perce (Smith's brother-in-law), and Smith's brother Lemuel, Moses Smith constructed a claim-holding shanty on a bend of the Fox River on the east side in Burlington's present Wehmhoff-Jucker Park.³

Sometime during the winter or early spring of 1836, Smith constructed a log cabin on his claim. Today, a State Historical Marker stands in Echo Veterans Memorial Park across the river from the site of the Smith cabin to commemorate the first Mormon in Wisconsin. Smith was the first among thirty-six families to claim land in the area that was to become Burlington. According to Land Office records, Moses Smith eventually bought 160 acres for $1.25 an acre.⁴ This purchase included almost 25 percent of present-day downtown Burlington.

Smith had come to Wisconsin with his brother-in-law Benjamin C. Perce, also a Mormon convert. Smith's brother Lemuel, not a Church member, evidently came at approximately the same

²Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedia of the Church (Salt Lake City, Andrew Jenson History Co., 1941), 958.
⁴His claim included the NW1/4 of section 32, T3N, R19E. Local Office Tract Book, 30 October 1838, 53:39, receipt no. 900, Wisconsin State Historical Library, Madison.
Moses Smith’s Cabin
time. Another brother, Aaron, a Church member, probably came later.5

SMITH'S EARLY YEARS

Moses Smith was born in Bennington County, Vermont, on 23 March 1800. Apparently, he was reared as a frontiersman; and at nineteen, he and Aaron explored much of the wilderness of western New York and Ohio.6 These experiences apparently made a deep impression on Moses Smith, who seemed to seek out and thrive on frontier life. In 1825, he married Lydia Perce of New York, and they settled in Medina County, Ohio, just south of Kirtland. In 1829, he moved farther west into Seneca County, Ohio. There, in 1832, he converted to Mormonism.7 During the next two years he worked at various trades and proselyted in western New York and in Canada. No other details are known concerning his younger years.

In 1835, he moved his family to Racine, Wisconsin, on Lake Michigan, where he and his brother-in-law, Benjamin Perce, intended to farm. When the Native Americans left the area and the first large tracts of good farm land became available late in 1835, Smith and Perce moved to what is now Walworth County, and there (and in adjacent Racine County), in December, began to make homes. After the worst of the winter of 1835-36, Smith's wife, Lydia, and brother Aaron joined the growing community. Smith is credited as Burlington's original settler and, as far as we know, he was Wisconsin's first significant Mormon. During 1836, the growth of the small Mormon group continued when Smith's parents, possibly also Latter-day Saints, moved to Burlington from New York.

5The History of Racine and Kenosha Counties, Wisconsin (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879), 472.
6Most of the information on Smith's early life comes from his obituary in the Gospel Herald, 14 June 1849, 53-55.
7Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830-present), 19 August 1832, LDS Church Archives. Smith was baptized in Michigan County, Ohio, by Elder John Smith.
MOSES SMITH IN WISCONSIN

Smith and Samuel C. Vaughn built a dam and mill site on Burlington’s White River; and in 1837 Smith planted and harvested the first grain in the area. He also erected several grain mills. Not wanting to neglect his new religion, Smith wrote a letter to Church headquarters in Kirtland requesting that missionaries be sent to Wisconsin to strengthen the group of Mormons in the area, who by then included himself, Lydia, their child, Aaron, Ben Perce and his family, perhaps Moses’ parents, and probably others. Other Wisconsin groups were sending the same kind of requests for missionaries to Protestant churches during this time period.

Moses Smith was a community builder. He contributed to every public undertaking, hosted traveling Church members, and supported the poor from his own means. He was appointed the first postmaster in Burlington, and although described as mild mannered, almost shy, he was considered a man of “enterprise, integrity, and benevolence” by relatives and friends. When no missionaries arrived, probably because of the Church’s difficulties in Kirtland and Missouri, Smith preached what little he knew of the gospel and organized Mormonism’s first congregation in Wisconsin, reportedly a branch of about a hundred. In late 1837 or

8Dyer, “Address to Old Settlers,” 25; Stone, Racine, 106.
9Journal History, 28 May 1837.
11Obituary of Moses Smith, 53; Lemuel Smith, Letter to the Editor; Dyer, “Address to Old Settlers,” 25.
12Gospel Herald, 14 June 1849. Journal History, 2 August 1841, mistakenly reports that Elisha Groves organized an LDS branch in Vienna, Dane County, Wisconsin, around 1841, an error repeated in Deseret News 1993-1994 Church Almanac, 184. Groves served one of the earliest missions in northern Illinois and Wisconsin, beginning on 12 May 1840. He organized a branch of twenty in Stephenson County, Illinois (no date recorded), approximately five miles from the mills on the Pecatonica River and forty miles east of Galena, Illinois, which is called the Vienna Branch in a letter from Amasa Lyman, “Letter to Brothers Smith and Thompson,” Times and Seasons, 2 August 1841, 181-82. No community named Vienna is known in Stephenson County or Illinois nor did Groves’s known
early 1838, Moses and Aaron Smith went to Kirtland, arriving simultaneously with the disarray caused by the collapse of the Kirtland Anti-Banking Society when most leaders, including Joseph Smith, had left or were preparing to leave for Missouri. At a conference presided over by Joseph Smith, Sr., Moses and Aaron proposed the question of who should preside over the missionary work in the Wisconsin area of the Michigan Territory. Moses, in honest humility like that of the biblical Moses, urged that his brother was better qualified and far worthier, while Aaron insisted that his brother was the man for the job.

The Conference were [sic] embarrassed by the earnestness with which each insisted that his brother was wiser and more worthy than himself. The end was that the old Patriarch, Joseph Smith, testified that they were both called of God to the high priesthood, and they were ordained by the unanimous voice of the Conference, and sent home to preside over all the churches in the vast region north-west of Lake Michigan, a mission they faithfully performed.\(^{13}\)

No information is available on how the two brothers shared the joined responsibility of being presiding elders nor how their efforts flourished. It was a short-lived arrangement in any case. By 1840 Moses Smith had moved to Illinois.

**MOSES SMITH IN ILLINOIS**

Moses Smith's name appears in the 1840 census for the township of Spring Prairie, just west of Burlington; but other reports indicate that in 1839 he and his family left his land, probably in the care of his brother Aaron, and moved to Walnut Grove, Knox County, Illinois, on the route taken by Mormons traveling between Kirtland and Missouri and approximately sixty miles northeast from Nauvoo.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\)Obituary of Moses Smith, 53.

\(^{14}\)(No author or editor), *History of Knox County, Illinois* (Chicago: C. Chapman and Co., 1878), 501; A. J. Perry, *History of Knox County, Illinois* (N.p.: travels include a Vienna. A village called Lena, which may have been founded in the 1840s, is in the correct location; and perhaps the newspaper misread Lyman's handwriting. However, the branch was certainly in Illinois, not Wisconsin; the Journal History's reference to a branch in Vienna, Dane County, Wisconsin, was a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century erroneous addition.
In June 1839, he attended a Church conference in Quincy, Illinois, where he was assigned to a committee with John and George Beckstead, Robert Burton, and Zebedee Coltrin to investigate charges that some elders in Kirtland had been “knocking down one another.”  

Between October 1838 and May 1839, some five thousand Mormon refugees from Missouri had arrived in the area around Quincy. Smith may have desired closer association with Church headquarters or may have wanted to help the impoverished Saints. He built a frame house in Walnut Grove in 1840, helped establish a congregation of at least a hundred in Knox County, and then apparently sold his Knox County holdings to give Joseph Smith several thousand dollars toward purchasing the Nauvoo land. Moses summoned Aaron, who had evidently been taking care of the family business in Wisconsin, to this new center of activity. A 1912 history of Knox County suggests that Smith and the congregation planned to build a temple in Walnut Grove. This suggestion seems highly improbable, unless “temple” could refer to a meetinghouse.

At some point between early 1842 and July 1843, Moses, Lydia, and children Sarah and Cooley moved to Nauvoo and opened a mercantile store on the corner of Young and Rich streets. Moses also bought and sold other lots on Mulholland

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15Journal History, 1 June 1839.


17History of Knox County, Illinois, 501; Perry, History of Knox County, Illinois, 433. Smith is also listed in the 1840 census for Walnut Grove (Knox County Genealogical Society Quarterly, 4, no. 4 (1941): 4. See also Obituary of Moses Smith, 54, and Seegmiller, “The Mormon Succession Crisis,” which reports that the Samuel Burton family, Canadian converts, joined the Walnut Grove group where Smith befriended them and performed their daughter’s wedding. In 1847, he tried to convert part of the family to the Strang movement. For information on the sale of Moses Smith’s property, see Moses Smith Notes, Nauvoo Historical Microfilms, Visitors Center, Nauvoo, Illinois.

18Perry, History of Knox County, 433.
Street, owned eighty acres of farm land approximately twenty miles east of Nauvoo, participated in Church and business activities, and performed two marriages, one on 25 May 1842 and the other on 16 March 1843.\(^{19}\) On Friday, 10 February 1843, Nauvoo Sheriff John Parker brought Oliver Olney and Newell Nurse to Joseph Smith at the mayor's court, where the two were charged with stealing goods from Moses Smith's store the month before. Olney pleaded guilty but offered two defenses: first, that he had not had any new clothing for two to three years; and second, that he had been visited by the "Ancient of Days" at least three times and been given a special mission to the four quarters of the world. Although there was sympathy for poverty, there was little for new prophets. Nurse, whose defense is not recorded, was released, but Olney was bound over for trial with a bond set at five thousand dollars and disfellowshipped in March.\(^{20}\)

Perhaps because of Moses Smith's prior Wisconsin connections, he was sent to the "Pineries" mission, a logging operation (1841-44) near Black River Falls in Wisconsin headed by Bishop George Miller.\(^{21}\) In the fall of 1843, Moses Smith, with a group of six, joined Miller at La Crosse. When the group got lost in the roadless wilderness, Smith assumed leadership and led his colleagues safely to the lumber camp. During one week of this adventure, the group survived by eating a dog that had followed them from La Crosse.\(^{22}\)

After a few months, Moses Smith left Black River Falls in February 1844 alone and returned to Nauvoo, snowshoeing some two hundred miles of the total distance. He arrived just in time to

\(^{19}\)Moses Smith Notes, Nauvoo Historical Microfilms.


\(^{22}\)Obituary of Moses Smith, 54. Miller relates a slightly different version that casts himself as the hero of this winter trek. See *Correspondence of Bishop George Miller*, a compilation of 1855 letters he wrote to the *Northern Islander*, James J. Strang's newspaper in St. James, Beaver Island, Michigan, compiled and distributed by Wingfield Watson, Burlington, in 1916.
participate in the baptism of James J. Strang, who had married Lydia Perce Smith’s sister, Mary Strang, a recent settler in Burlington, had come to Nauvoo to learn more about Mormonism and was converted and baptized by Joseph Smith. Strang then returned to Burlington, announcing that he was to assist in the building of the Church in Wisconsin.23

Rather than returning to Wisconsin, Moses Smith volunteered to join a group of twenty-five preparing to explore northwest Texas, New Mexico, and upper California, convert Indians, and establish settlements, on assignment from Joseph Smith.24 However, Joseph Smith then called a number of missionaries to concentrate on furthering his campaign as a candidate for U.S. President. James Emmett, who was supposed to have led the Texas exploration, was reassigned to campaign in Ohio. During the spring of 1844, Moses Smith was sent to Michigan on a separate, probably political missionary task.25

Smith’s early summer activities of 1844 in Michigan may have included organizing various meetings in the southern part of the state.26 He was in Florence, Michigan, at a Church meeting on 5 August when Strang told him that Joseph Smith had been killed in Illinois in June.27 Strang had traveled to Michigan from Wisconsin to announce to Moses Smith that he, James Jesse Strang, had received both a revelation appointing him as the new prophet and also a letter from Joseph Smith telling Strang that he should be his replacement. Strang further announced that Wisconsin, specifically the area around Burlington, was to be the new gathering place for the Saints. Strang’s purported letter instructed: “... and

24Obituary of Moses Smith, 54; Journal History, 29 February 1844.
26Hilda F. Browne, Michigan Mormons, 1831-1952 (n.p., 1985), 20; copy in Family History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
27Journal History, 5 August 1844.
I command my servant Moses Smith that he go unto the saints with whom he is acquainted and unto many people and command them in my name to go unto my city of Voree and gain inheritance therein for he hath left all for my sake and I will add to him many fold if he is faithful for he knows the land and can testify unto them that it is good."28

Moses Smith left no contemporary account of his feelings, but we know he was a devoted follower of the prophet Joseph Smith and can imagine that he was bewildered, confused, and uncertain about the claims of his charismatic brother-in-law. Others at the meeting expressed similar uncertainty, and the conclusion of the conference was to send Moses Smith and Norton Jacob, another elder, to Nauvoo and explain to the Saints the details of James Strang’s claim of succession.29 Strang, unknown in Nauvoo, returned to Burlington.

The larger confusion of the succession crises has been treated in greater detail elsewhere. Stake President William Marks, Bishop George Miller, Sidney Rigdon, and Brigham Young all made claims and proposed solutions. In the midst of the confusion, Apostle Lyman Wight, an associate of George Miller in the Wisconsin lumbering concern, led a group of Saints to La Crosse, where they prepared for the trip to Texas which Joseph Smith had approved earlier that year. James Emmett decided to reorganize his group and carry out the Indian mission Joseph Smith had also approved before his death. By August when Moses arrived in Nauvoo to describe Strang’s claims, a large number of Church members had accepted Young’s succession interpretation. The Nauvoo group discarded Strang’s claims as another in the series they had recently heard.

We have few details on Moses Smith’s stay in Nauvoo, but he no doubt spoke to friends and neighbors and probably to some Church leaders as well. These conversations convinced him to follow Brigham Young instead. It is not clear how Smith informed Strang of his decision; but on 25 October 1844 from Burlington,

28Strang published this letter in the Voree Herald 1, no. 1 (January 1846): 1; date marked 18 June 1844 in Nauvoo.
29Journal History, 5 August 1844; Obituary of Moses Smith, 54.
Strang wrote Smith in Nauvoo a lengthy and rambling letter. From this letter it appears that Moses had written to an individual named Nathan Stowell, presumably a Wisconsin Mormon, telling him that he had decided to follow Young and that he did not believe Strang's claim of leadership was valid. In response, Strang chided Smith for his decision, complained that Smith was not treating him well, reminded Smith that he was supposed to help build up the Church in Wisconsin, and argued that his own claim to Church leadership was a valid appointment from God and the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said:

I understand you are following [Young], supporting his claims. I pray God that your heart may be enlightened, for until you turn back and obey God's commands, calamities will not cease to come upon you. You have received a command of God. What but bitterness can you expect, if you disobey. Disobedience and ungratefulness of children, is the most apt punishment for disobedience and ungratefulness to God. If you say why did not the Church receive the revelation if it is genuine? I answer, if they had received it, they would have escaped the calamities predicted in it, and the revelation itself would have failed. Nor is the common voice against it [or] any evidence of its falsity under any circumstances. The voice of the people is not the voice of God.  

Strang's letter did not change Smith's mind. He decided to stay with the body of the Church in Nauvoo and, as a sign of his commitment, resumed the Indian mission with James Emmett that he had agreed to the year before. Strang continued gathering Saints who were unconvinced of the claims of Brigham Young, hoping to create a new central stake of the Church in his new town of Voree, near Burlington. (He claimed that the name Voree was a Hebrew name given to him by the Prophet Joseph Smith.) Within a few months, he had a congregation numbering several hundred.

30James J. Strang, Letter to Moses Smith, 25 October 1844, Historical Department Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as LDS Archives).

31I agree with Klaus Hansen that Strang was a greater threat to Brigham Young than is generally acknowledged. Hansen, Quest for Empire (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), 94-104. Within three years, those joining
MOSES SMITH AND JAMES EMMETT

At the beginning of the winter of 1844-45, Smith with his family and several others of the Indian Mission group finally left for the West into Iowa under the leadership of James Emmett. In the midst of the confusion surrounding the succession crisis, the group apparently left Nauvoo without the enthusiastic endorsement of Brigham Young.

As they headed across Iowa, Smith’s daughter gave birth to a child shortly after leaving Nauvoo. It was winter. Supplies ran short, and they had inadequate clothing and no shelter, not even a tent. The group unraveled under the strain. An inept leader, James Emmett made several decisions with which Smith disagreed. Their subject is not reported but likely involved communal property. Smith, fearing for his grandchild’s life, decided to return to Nauvoo. Because the group had earlier agreed to hold all property in common, Emmett refused to let them take much more than their clothing. When they were some distance from the nearest town, and Smith was forced to seek help from friendly Iowa Indians, for whom he worked for a few days before returning with his family to Nauvoo.

On 27 February 1845, at a meeting of the governing Council of the Twelve, Moses Smith reported his negative experience with the Emmett expedition. Based on this report, the Twelve unanimously agreed to send Apostle Amasa Lyman to Iowa to evaluate the Emmett group. Lyman, accompanied by Daniel Spender, left

Strang included Joseph Smith’s brother, William, a former apostle; John E. Page, also an apostle; William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake; George A. Miller, presiding bishop of Nauvoo; and John C. Bennett, former mayor of Nauvoo. See also Van Noord, *King of Beaver Island*, 335.

^2Obituary of Moses Smith, 54.


^34History of the Church, 7:377-38.
almost immediately, and on 15 March, they returned to Nauvoo. Emmett’s group was camped approximately 150 miles west of Nauvoo on the Iowa River. Lyman reported that Emmett’s company was living in the wilderness “to get their endowments.” After some discussion, Brigham Young agreed that Emmett’s actions were those of a “fanatic,” and the Quorum of the Twelve disfellowshipped Emmett. Those of his group who remained together got as far as northwestern Iowa where they stopped. On 4 August, Emmett admitted his error in leading the company “contrary to counsel” and requested that his priesthood be restored.\(^{35}\) The Emmett group survived for two years in Iowa and South Dakota, but in 1846 rejoined the main body of the Church in Winter Quarters, Nebraska.\(^ {36}\)

**SMITH’S RETURN TO WISCONSIN**

Disillusioned by the Emmett mission and perhaps still experiencing some confusion about Strang’s claims, Smith sold his Nauvoo property in 1845 and returned to Burlington. This decision was a critical point in Moses Smith’s relationship with the main body of the LDS Church. A few months later, Smith affiliated himself with the growing Strang group. His reasons for doing so are not clear. He had certainly experienced the calamities that Strang had forecast. In Burlington, Smith was surely influenced by Strang’s charismatic personality. But we cannot say whether he really believed Strang’s claim to leadership, or if he simply decided to see what would happen. Smith returned to Nauvoo in January 1846 and asked permission from unidentified leaders to address the Saints in the nearly completed temple. When he described what he would say, they refused. However, a week later, because of Smith’s good reputation and long dedicated service to the Church, he was given the desired favor and talked with at least

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\(^{35}\) *History of the Church*, 7:434.

limited conviction in favor of James Strang's claim. Church leaders warned him that he was putting himself in an awkward position and, shortly after he returned to Wisconsin, excommunicated him.

On 6 April 1846, Moses was ordained an apostle in the Strang version of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. One of his first assignments was to proselyte among Mormons in Michigan and Ohio who were still undecided about which claimant to follow. According to Smith's obituary, he was partially responsible for temporarily securing the Kirtland Temple for the Strang group.

Smith pursued these activities for a little over a year, but then returned to Voree. Aaron Smith, an early advocate of Strang, had now developed strong second thoughts, apparently because Strang defended John C. Bennett against widely believed charges of immorality. Moses soon aligned himself with Aaron against Strang. Moses apparently attempted to reason with Strang or find some grounds of reconciliation, but their differences were too sharp.

Aaron left Strang's church in July and eventually experimented with his own "Church of Christ," based on LDS scriptures, the Bible, and the concept of Jesus as King. Strang had not had himself crowned king at this point, but Aaron probably knew that he would. This church survived for a few years among a few former Strangites but eventually disintegrated; at some unidentified point, Aaron briefly affiliated with what would become the Reorganized Church, but in 1854 was sustained as a counselor to Henry Deam in yet another Mormon congregation that eventually became part of the Reorganized Church.

Moses Smith went another direction altogether. Despite his sincerity, the level of confusion generated by the claims of his brother-in-law and his brother made him decide to terminate

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37 Obituary of Moses Smith, 54. I have not been able to find any sources reporting his speech.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Shields, Divergent Paths of the Restoration, 48, 75.
active participation with any gathering. As far as we know, his affiliation with Strang was his final association with any organized religion. He and his family moved to the logging country of northwestern Wisconsin, near modern Eau Claire. Only two years later, he died on 15 May 1849 and was buried in the Lake Pepin area of northwestern Wisconsin. He was forty-nine; no cause of death has been preserved.

Moses Smith cared for the poor, sold his goods for the Church, organized the Church's first branch in Wisconsin, organized an additional branch in Illinois, helped build Nauvoo, and remained faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ as he understood it. He gave his allegiance to Joseph Smith, but, bewildered by succession claims, transferred it to Brigham Young, then to Strang, and finally abandoned all forms of organized religion. If Smith had not been Strang's brother-in-law and if he had not seen his family nearly perish on the Emmett missionary venture, he probably would have followed Brigham Young and his life story would have had another chapter on the harsh Utah frontier. As matters stand, Moses Smith, Wisconsin's first Mormon, has been virtually forgotten in Mormon history.

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41 Obituary of Moses Smith, 55. I have been able to find no other material on Moses Smith except for the references noted in this paper and Strang's newspaper reports. I have been unable to find any living descendants of Aaron Smith; descendants of Lemuel Smith, a non-Mormon brother, living in Wisconsin and Florida, have no further information about Moses or his family.
The Martin Handcart Disaster:  
The London Participants

*Lynne Watkins Jorgensen*

Two of the most famous journeys along the Mormon Trail from Liverpool to the Salt Lake Valley had their beginnings in London, England, in the tiny Theobalds Road Branch, founded by Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow in 1841. The first trek, in 1853, was the lyrical and romantic journey of the Miller Cooley Wagon Train, evocatively sketched by London artist Frederick Piercy;¹ the second, in 1856, was the ill-starred Edward Martin Handcart Company,² one of the most tragic events in Mormon history.

LYNNE WATKINS JORGENSEN recently retired from the Family History Library where she was a consultant in the U.S./Canada Department. She taught many of the patron classes specializing in U.S. and LDS research and taught history and religion for the BYU Center. She is an accredited genealogist with an M.A. in history from BYU. Portions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, May 1992, in St. George, Utah.


Wallace Stegner chose these two trips as extreme examples of Mormon trail crossings in his book, *The Gathering of Zion*, alluding only briefly to the effect one may have had upon the other. While this paper focuses on specific individuals from the London Conference who prepared and participated in the ill-fated journey, it will also explore the impact that Piercy's original trip may have had in determining the choices of those involved.

In spite of a continuing fascination with the handcart companies, the story of the Martin Handcart Company has never been completely told, nor can it be. It did not fit easily into the heroic tales that motivated pioneers and built faith. One historian suggested that "one of the reasons our records are scant is that Brother Brigham soon tired of hearing about the heroic survivors of his grand experiment. And so while the Nauvoo Legion had its annual reunions and parades, it was not until after the death of Brigham that the survivors of this experiment were able to publicly announce a reunion."

Other leaders of the Church in Utah and in London were equally silent. Many of the leaders knew the handcart partici-


4William L. Knecht, "Oh, Say What Is Truth! Wonders at Their Hands," August 1990, vi; copy in my possession. This manuscript details the story of the Martin Handcart Company.

5This paper relies heavily on primary documentation from the London Conference which is found by date in the Manuscript History of the Units of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, British Mission, London Conference (hereafter cited as Manuscript History, London Conference), LR 5006, vol. 1, 1837-60, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
pants personally and had put pressure on these converts to come to Zion even if they had to walk halfway across America pulling small handcarts. Dan W. Jones, one of the men who went to the rescue, wrote, “The Elders who had just returned from England having many dear friends with these companies, suffered great anxiety, some of them feeling more or less the responsibility resting upon them for allowing these people to start so late in the season across the plains.”

Adding to the silence was the fact that women and children who survived the deaths of their fathers and brothers were scattered among the Saints at the command of a genuinely shocked Brigham Young who urged Mormons in the valley to take the handcart victims into their homes. In the resulting breakup of families, widows and older daughters became polygamous wives, their histories lost in the daily trauma of staying alive on the frontier. For example, eight-year-old Martin Handcart survivor Jane Griffiths later reported that “my father and mother were taken to one place, my sister and I each to another. I did not see my father again. He died the next day.”

Jane stayed in one house for three weeks, then was taken in by Brother Mulliner who had heard that she was to be sent to “the poor house in Provo.” He responded, “Never as long as I have a home.” He brought her in a wheelbarrow. She was bedridden all

Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). This record, which is filled with information concerning preparations for the journey, contains no references to the disastrous results.

6Daniel W. Jones, Forty Years Among the Indians (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor’s Office, 1890), 64. This Daniel Jones is not the famous Welsh missionary.

7In a speech delivered in the Tabernacle on 30 November 1856, Brigham Young told the assembly, “When those persons [the Martin Handcart survivors] arrive I do not want to see them put into houses by themselves; I want to have them distributed in the city among the families that have good comfortable houses.” “Editorial,” Deseret News, Weekly Edition 10 December 1856, 2; FHL film 26,527. He also admonished the citizens not to overfeed the survivors. One young survivor complained that he was almost starved to death a second time because the household in which he was placed followed these instructions scrupulously.
winter, not walking until the following March. She was next taken to the home of a friend of her late father.

He said he would keep me I went there on my 9th birthday. Mother would carry me as far as she could then put me down in the snow and we would cry a while and then go on. I did not stay there long, they told me I would have to hunt another place. I did not know where to go and I was on the woodpile crying when Brother William Keddington came along and wanted to know what was the matter. When I told him he said, "You come along with me and you shall have a piece of bread as long as I have one to break." He afterward married my stepmother and I had a home with them as long as I wanted one.  

Fifty years after the Martin Handcart trek, survivor Josiah Rogerson, the self-designated "handcart historian" writing from 45 Richards Street (Deseret Press), sent Western Union telegraphs to survivors and other interested persons in a belated attempt to collect information about the disaster. In his telegraph he explained that "the Journal of our Captain, the late Edward Martin, that contained all these names in full, has unintentionally been consigned to the flames." When Rogerson finally began to write his history, he claimed, "This is the first time the story of the handcart expedition has been written from beginning to end so far as I know. It was not done before partly for the reason that for years after the journey was made, nobody wished to say or hear much about it."  

—The above example can be read in Rebecca Cornwall Bartholomew and Leonard Arrington, Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1982), 35, 53.  

Josiah Rogerson, Papers, MS 6103, 19 March 1908, LDS Church Archives. These are loose papers including correspondence and writings pertaining to Rogerson's compilation for a history of the Martin Handcart Company. They are unnumbered and many pages are duplicates. Papers collected between 1895 and 1914.  

Ibid. Telegram to the "President or Secretary of the Handcart Association of 1856." This is the second unnumbered page in the collection dated 19 March 1908. This information was telegraphed to others. Although Rogerson spent years trying to garner support for the project, he received little response and no financial support. Linda Haslam, historian in the LDS Church Historical Department, concluded that Rogerson's fruitless efforts to publish the Edward Martin Handcart story is yet another sad note in Mormon history. Linda Haslam,
LYNNE WATKINS JORGENSEN / THE MARTIN HANDCART DISASTER

LONDON: SIX BRANCH PRESIDENTS

LeRoy and Ann Hafen, who were working with primary documents about the handcart company, stated firmly that “most of these . . . emigrants [from England] were poor Saints who had elected to go by handcart.” The implication is that they were marginal, poor, and probably ill-educated. On the contrary, this group included six previously unidentified London Conference branch presidents with their wives and children, plus at least fifty other members of the conference. They were respectable, middle-class families who had joined the Church during the Woodruff/Snow period; some had been active in the Church for up to fifteen years. The six branch presidents and the family members who made the trek were: (1) William L. S. Binder, age twenty-four,


11Hafen and Hafen, Handcarts to Zion, 91; emphasis mine.


13Historians P. A. M. Taylor and Ronald Walker both suggest that the occupational roles of British converts, which could be judged roughly as middle class in the 1840s and 1850s, steadily declined until, by the 1860s, the middle class was less than 10 percent of the total convert population. London conversions reflected the same pattern. See Taylor, Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 150-51; and Walker, “Cradling Mormonism,” BYU Studies 27 (Winter 1987): 29.

14See chaps. 1, 2, 5, and appendix 5:157 in Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, “The First London Mormons, 1840-45” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1988) which identify many of the Martin Company participants as being long-time Church members, including the Benjamin Beer family, the John Watkins family, the Samuel George Read family, the John and Sarah Rodwell family, John and James Shorten, the John Jaques family, and the Loader family, plus all of the London branch presidents and their families.
a bread and biscuit maker, and his wife, Eliza Crump Binder; (2) David Blair, forty-six, a professional soldier, Deborah Blair, and three children; (3) James Godson Bleak, twenty-seven, trained as a clerk and a jeweler, Elizabeth Moore Bleak, and their four children; (4) Robert Clifton, Sr., fifty-one, an innkeeper, Mary M. Blanchard Clifton, and four children; (5) John Griffiths, forty-six, a boilermaker, his second wife, Elizabeth Webb Griffiths, and four of his children by his first marriage; and (6) Henry Augustus Squires, thirty-one, trained for the clergy and as a merchant, Sarah Catlin Squires, and four children (a fifth was born on the trek).  

This essay will describe the responsibilities and attitudes of these six presidents. While it is true that some members of the handcart companies were too poor to buy adequate equipment or supplies, the records indicate that these six made the handcart choice as a matter of faith and to set a proper example. They were neither poor, ignorant, nor incompetent, though it was true that neither their experience nor their equipment was adequate to the rigors imposed on them by the journey.

LONDON 1840S: A MESSAGE FROM AMERICA

“London is the hardest place I have ever visited for establishing the gospel. It is full of everything but righteousness,” wrote Wilford Woodruff with indignation on 2 September 1840.  

15I identified occupations for London members from the 1841 and 1851 censuses, LDS membership records, personal histories, London Conference records, descendant family group records, autobiographies, and memoirs. All items identified by film number are in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City. Both Jorgensen, “First London Mormons,” 43; and James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, Men with a Mission 1837-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992), 205-35, indicate that the London members were not the poorest members of the population. Many of them were Irvingite converts, who were generally individuals of means and influence. Massimo Introvigne, “The Concept of Apostleship in Mormonism, ‘Irvingism,’ and the New Apostolic Church,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, Quincy, Illinois, May 1993, p. 8; photocopy in my possession.

Woodruff would neither believe nor accept the slow response the Mormon missionaries received in the teeming metropolis after major successes in rural villages throughout the British Isles. George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, and Heber C. Kimball opened the London area for proselyting in August 1840. Smith left after just twenty-two days, having become dangerously ill in the polluted environment. Kimball also left for other parts of England. Brigham Young joined Wilford Woodruff in London for eleven days of sightseeing in December and then he also left. Woodruff remained in London until the missionaries were recalled to Nauvoo in February 1841. By 6 October 1840, these master missionaries gathered only eleven new members, which compared dismaly with other English conferences where members joined by the hundreds.

In May 1841 Lorenzo Snow, who replaced the original missionary apostles, reported only sixty-three members, "infants in the kingdom," who were his responsibility in that "seat of Satan" dominated by "the powers of darkness." One of these "infants" was John Griffiths, a Welshman baptized by John Taylor, who

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19John Griffiths was born 7 July 1810 in Bonzar Cnyn, Wales. His wife, Margaret Griffiths, was born 25 August 1810 also in Bonzar Cnyn. They were both baptized 30 January 1840 by John Taylor. Margaret died giving birth to twins on 7 July 1853. Griffiths married Elizabeth Webb in February 1856, three months before they left England. Only four of his fourteen children (Margaret, sixteen; John, twelve; Jane, eight; and Herbert, six) were alive to accompany them on the Martin Handcart journey. Woolwich Branch records, Film 87,039, and Deptford
had moved from Liverpool to eastern London, filled with faith and zealously. On 14 February 1841, the relieved American missionaries, Wilford Woodruff and Heber C. Kimball, chose Griffiths as first president of the Woolwich Branch of the London Conference.20

On 14 May 1841, Snow reported that Woolwich had only six members though “every means in their power has been employed to get a door open for preaching: yet in consequence of ... unhallowed influences it has been without success. President Griffiths is ... in good standing and strong in the faith.”21 Later Snow told Heber C. Kimball, “This little branch . . . you left in Woolwich still continues . . . strong in faith, and rejoicing in the midst of persecution. They have stood like a rock in the midst of Dashing waves, unharmed and unmoved.”22

By 1842, Lorenzo Snow had made two of his most dependable and zealous converts: David Blair, a member of Queen Branch records, Film 86,994. Griffiths became president of the Woolwich Branch when he was thirty, then served as president of the Woolwich and Deptford Branches alternately until he left for Utah in 1856. See the excellent name index (items listed by date) to the Manuscript History, London Conference, 1837-60, vol. 1, MS 11401 LR 5006. Biographical information for all six branch presidents is derived from LDS membership records, censuses, personal histories, London Conference records, descendant family group records, autobiographies, and memoirs.

20Manuscript History, London Conference, 14 January 1841, LR 5006, vol. 1 (locate by dates, not pages). Woolwich, an east-end suburb of London, was a major ship-building center on the Thames. Griffiths was both a boilermaker and an engineer. See also Jorgensen, “First London Mormons," 36.

21Times and Seasons, 2:510.


23David Blair, a professional soldier, was born 5 May 1810 in Scotland. His wife, Deborah Jane (surname not known), was born 11 October 1816 in Berkshire. Blair was baptized 8 May 1842 by an Elder Lewzey. Deborah was baptized 14 September 1842 by Lorenzo Snow. They had at least three children: Deborah, Elizabeth, and David. David Blair was a member of the Marylebone, Theobalds Road, Somerstown, and Chelsea Branches. On 7 December 1851 at age forty-one, he became president of the Windsor Branch and served until he left for Utah in 1856. Marylebone Branch records, Film 87,018; Theobalds Road Branch records, Film 87,036; Somerstown Branch records, Film 87,032; Chelsea Branch records, Film 86,991; Manuscript History, London Conference, LR5006,
Victoria's elite Life Guard; and Robert Clifton, Sr., who founded and then became president of at least four London branches. Blair's and Clifton's names first appeared on the membership rolls of the Theobalds Road Branch where they began illustrious careers as missionaries. From this branch came solid and stable priesthood leaders who fanned out from the center of the city to proselyte and lead branches all over London. Many were nonconformists, and the message of the American missionaries struck a responsive chord in those with anti-establishment and dissenting sentiments against a state church and professional clergy. Nonconformist ministers were usually lay members with solid occupations, primarily educated in a church Sunday School. It was a heady beginning for Mormonism in London. Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, Samuel Richards, and Orson Spencer visited the Theobalds Road Branch. Thomas Ambrose Poulter bragged that the branch was always filled with "pretty girls and smart elders."

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24 Robert Clifton was born 3 March 1805 in Norfolkshire and baptized 21 July 1842 by James Albion. Mary Matilda Blanchard Clifton was born in Southwark, London, and baptized in November 1841 by Lorenzo Snow. Four of their children accompanied them on the Martin Handcart trek: Rebecca, twenty-one; Robert, Jr., twenty; Sophia, thirteen; and Anne, six. Marylebone Branch records, Film 87,018; Theobalds Road Branch records, Film 87,036; Whitechapel Branch records, Film 87,038; Stoke Newington Branch Records, Film 87,001; Hackney Branch records, Film 87,001; Tottenham Branch records, Film 87,036; and Haggestone Branch records, Film 87,001; Manuscript History, London Conference, 1837-60. Clifton, a member of the Marylebone, Theobalds Road, Whitechapel, and Stoke Newington Branches, served as president of the Hackney, Tottenham, and Haggestone Branches, beginning at age forty-four. He was released to emigrate to Utah on 13 April 1856. Whitechapel Branch records indicate that Clifton went to America briefly in 1844 with several other London converts.


26 John Paternoster Squires, "Notes to the Descendants of Thomas Squires by His Son," typescript, FHL book Q 929.273 Sq58s or FHL film 1036774, item 11, commented in 1849 on "the glorious impression" Orson Pratt made on him.

27"The Life of Thomas Ambrose Poulter from his Diary, Federal Writer's
One of the most successful members of the Theobalds Road Branch was Frederick Piercy, at eighteen a student at the Royal Academy of Arts. His activities resulted in several baptisms. He served successively as the records clerk and financial clerk, then served in the French Mission with Apostle John Taylor in 1850.²⁸ Piercy traveled to Utah and back in 1853 and produced sketches of the completed journey depicting a pleasant expedition and describing the trip enthusiastically. These sketches, as engravings, were published in fifteen installments beginning June 1854 in *An Illustrated Route from Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley*. It was printed in Liverpool by Samuel W. Richards, editor of the *Millennial Star*, with travel notes and a history by James Linforth, an 1842 Liverpool convert who contributed frequently to the *Millennial Star*. It was distributed at the centrally located Latter-day Saints' Book Depot in London which served thirty LDS branches within a seven-or-eight-mile radius.²⁹

**LONDON 1850S: THE PROCESSION OF PRESIDENTS**

In May 1851, all of England celebrated when Queen Victoria opened the Grand Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park. On the second to the fourth of June, a much smaller celebration marked the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in London. Among those who planned the gala were Eli B. Kelsey, president of the London Conference, John Griffiths, a branch president for eleven years, and Robert Clifton, Sr., who was almost as senior. A junior member of the committee was Henry Augustus Squires, trained

²⁸London Conference membership records, FHL Film 87,014; LeCheminant, "Entitled to be Called an Artist," 49-65; and Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, "John Hyde, Jr., Mormon Renegade," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 120-44. Piercy was John Hyde, Jr.'s, brother-in-law.

²⁹LeCheminant, "Entitled to be Called an Artist," 56; Manuscript History, London Conference, 7 May 1855, 7 July 1855. The London members were generally well read, several were employed in printing, and John Jaques and James Godson Bleak eventually became Mormon historians and editors.
for the clergy and already presiding elder of Cold Ash Common (23 December 1849). 30

The gala was a statement of permanence and triumph for the young church, designed to attract and inspire the public. Guests included leaders from America and members from both the British Isles and Europe. The Church rented the Literary and Scientific Institution, a hall which seated 4,000 people, for its celebration on 2 June 1851 which began with a grand procession. 31

To the historian's eye, knowing the disastrous 1856 handcart expedition, the "Grand Procession" provided in its structure an ominous parallel to the beginning march to the Salt Lake Valley. In the gaslit hall, a formal procession marched in state around the overflowing room where the General Authorities and guests were seated. 32 First to appear were twenty-four

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30 Henry Augustus Squires, third of four brothers to join the Church, was born 22 February 1825 in Welwyn, Hertford, and baptized in the Marylebone Branch in London by Moses Martin on 8 August 1847. His wife, Sarah Minnie Catlin Squires, was born 16 November 1826 in Welwyn and was baptized 22 August 1847 by Henry Savage. Henry and Sarah had eleven daughters and one son. Four daughters (Sarah, eight; Mary Emily, seven; Catherine Harriet, four; and Clara Annie, three) accompanied their parents on the Martin Handcart trek. A fifth, Echo, was born in Echo Canyon. Squires, a former Baptist minister and merchant, was a member of the Marylebone and St. Albans branches, became president of St. Albans Branch and Cold Ash Common, and was a traveling elder and missionary in Hertfordshire and Luton, Bedfordshire, as well as in the London Conference. He converted his fourth brother, James. Henry and a plural wife, Emma Caroline Slade Squires, became the parents of four sons and one daughter, and Squires prospered as a Salt Lake City merchant. Marylebone Branch records; and St. Albans Branch records, Film 87,030; Manuscript History, London Conference, 1837-60; John Paternoster Squires, "Notes," and "HAS #1." (Squires added three pages about his brother, Henry Augustus Squires, to his own history, paginated as HAS #1, HAS #2, HAS #3.)


32 A London-style festival parade or procession became very popular in Utah particularly on the Fourth and Twenty-fourth of July. A typical procession featured young women carrying banners identifying them as "Zion's Daughters," young men bearing globes and banners proclaiming "Bulwark," priesthood leaders including the General Authorities, female members, and groups from each of the working groups within the Salt Lake Valley such as appropriately costumed tailors, bakers, masons, blacksmiths, clerks, mechanics, and agriculturists. See P.
young ladies dressed in flowing white muslin capes, their hair adorned in blue ribbons. They were followed by twelve branch presidents each carrying a long wooden walking staff, then twenty-four young men with blue scarves. A second procession followed of “Twelve Apostles” or “Fathers in Israel,” all gray-bearded men carrying staffs. Next came twelve young men wearing large blue scarves, with Bibles in their right hands and Book of Mormons in their left, and finally twelve young women, “taller and better-looking than the former,” dressed in white muslin, with blue scarves upon their heads crowned by a coronet of roses, each carrying a bouquet of flowers. They marched with the same fervor and joy which was evident when they began their trek pushing handcarts—the proud “staffs” now walking sticks. The assembly arose to salute the procession, then with fervor and longing, sang:

See on yonder distant mountain
Zion’s standard wide unfurled
Far above Missouri’s fountain
Lo! it waves o’er all the world.33

For a brief moment London was the center of the Mormon world.34 Addresses followed from Franklin D. Richards, well-beloved president of the British Mission; Apostles Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, and John Taylor; and from their own numbers, “an honored young Woman” and an “honored young Man.” For two days the conference continued, its oratory filled with eloquent longing to gather to a Zion home. Richards stressed the need for the brethren to increase the Emigration Fund.35 Listening to him were branch presidents


33Manuscript History, London Conference, 1-3 June 1851.
John Griffiths, Robert Clifton, Sr., and Henry Augustus Squires. Recent converts and future branch presidents William L. S. Binder and James Godson Bleak were probably among the blue-scarved young men in the congregation. David Blair, a soldier whose duties kept him at the Crystal Palace, missed the conference festivities but became president of the Windsor Branch on 1 December 1851.

**BEFORE THE JOURNEY**

The London Conference's membership began to decline after 1851. London was struck by a depression, marked at its worst by the “Bread Riots” of March 1853. Fifty thousand Britons were

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35Manuscript History, London Conference, 2-3 June 1851. London Conference records appeals for members to send money to support the Utah Saints, to clothe and supply American missionaries in London, to rent and furnish meeting halls, to contribute to temples, to pay travel expenses for conferences, and even to exhume the bodies of three American missionaries and send them home in lead coffins. Emigration was the greatest expense. British Saints were encouraged to contribute to the Perpetual Emigration Fund, a revolving fund set up in Salt Lake City to help pay the expenses of the poorer Saints, who would repay the loan after arriving in Utah. Hafen and Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 25.

36William L. S. Binder, the youngest of the branch presidents, was born 10 July 1832 in London. He was baptized 13 November 1849. His wife, Eliza, was baptized 9 September 1849. They had no children although Binder later had a daughter by his second wife, Alice Maud Crawford Blind. He was a member of the Marylebone, Theobalds Road, and Finsbury Branches, and at age twenty-three served as president of the Lambeth Branch until he was released to emigrate to Utah on 13 April 1856. Manuscript History, London Conference; Marylebone Branch records; Theobalds Road Branch records; Finsbury Branch records, Film 86,998; and Lambeth Branch records, Film 87,008.

37James Godson Bleak was born 15 November 1829 in Southwark, Surrey, and was baptized 8 February 1851 by Thomas Johnson in London. Elizabeth Moore Bleak was born 6 March 1828 in Twig Folley, London, and was baptized 27 June 1851. They had twelve children, four of whom (Richard, six; Thomas, five; James, three; and Mary, one) accompanied them to America. On 6 February 1854 at age twenty-five, Bleak became president of the Whitechapel Branch, the largest in London, and served until he was released to emigrate to Utah on 13 April 1856. He and Binder served on the planning committee for the 1855 New Year’s festival.
out of employment at this time and many Londoners were starving. Families were also dying of disease, pollution, and overcrowding in the city.\(^{38}\) Pressures for members of the London Conference to gather to Utah intensified, and emphasis on the Perpetual Emigration Fund increased.\(^{39}\) Church officers urged some guidelines: families should emigrate as units and those aided by the fund had to have their conference president’s permission. (Brigham Young had warned them to screen out those who joined the Church “whose chief aim and intention may only be to get to America.”\(^{40}\) Members read copies of Piercy’s illustrated travel guide to tatters, visualizing an easy trek.\(^{41}\) But as trail historian Wallace Stegner pointed out, “In Piercy’s pictures, the road looked softer than it was with no dirt, disorder, dust, mud, or ruffianly population.”\(^{42}\)

In October 1855, the First Presidency issued an epistle urging “the poor” to “come on foot, with handcarts or wheel-barrows let them gird up their loins and walk through, and nothing shall hinder or stay them. . . . Let the Saints, therefore, who intend to immigrate the ensuing year, understand that they are expected to


\(^{39}\) Of the six branch presidents under study, only the names of Blair and Griffiths appear on the Perpetual Emigration Fund (PEF) list. Both died on the trail. The list includes only names of members who did not pay back their loans, so it is probable that the fund included all six, as this was the means through which Martin Handcart participants funded their trip. Perpetual Emigration Fund 1850-77, Film 25,686.


\(^{41}\) Few copies of Piercy’s emigrant guide are in existence. Accordingly, Robert Ernest Cowan, bibliographer and expert in early Americana, attached a note to his own copy, now in the Rare Book Collection of the University of California at Los Angeles: “The work was of peculiar interest to the Mormon people, and the few extant copies were thoroughly (and most carelessly used), and all are in very indifferent condition.” Frederick Piercy, \textit{Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley}, edited by Fawn M. Brodie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). Cowan’s note appears in Brodie’s “Notes on Text,” xxvii.

\(^{42}\) Stegner, \textit{The Gathering of Zion}, 218, 221.
walk and draw their luggage across the plains, that they will be assisted by the Fund in no other way." This message was published in the *Millennial Star* in January but no doubt circulated immediately among the branches.

Meanwhile, on 22 December 1855, the *Millennial Star* published articles by both Brigham Young and Franklin D. Richards extolling the virtues and practicality of handcart travel to the Salt Lake Valley. Young assured: "Fifteen miles a day will bring them [the handcart travelers] through in 70 days, and after they get accustomed to it they will travel 20, 25, and even 30 [miles] with all ease, and no danger of giving out, but will continue to get stronger and stronger; the little ones and sick, if there are any, can be carried on the carts, but there will be none sick in a little time after they get started." Richards's editorial was as idealistic as Piercy's sentimental sketches:

> When we allow our imaginations to wander into the future and paint the scenes that will transpire on the prairies next summer, they partake largely of the romantic. The plan is the device of inspiration, and the Lord will own and bless it... There being few animals in a handcart company, there will be less to tempt the cupidity of the Indians—a large share of that most laborious and harassing duty—guarding—can be dispensed with, and the time occupied with sleep and refreshments, with songs of rejoicing and prayer.

As matters turned out, nothing could have been further from the truth. Eleven days later at a conference meeting on 31 December 1855, James Godson Bleak, Whitechapel Branch president, was appointed conference secretary. His careful minutes sum-

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45 Ibid.
marize continued discussions of emigration funding, and handcart companies. Special emphasis was laid on how important it was that the "presidents" emigrate. Ironically, one of the most pointed sermons came from William H. Kimball, a son of Heber C. Kimball, and later one of the most determined rescuers of the Martin Handcart Company. A subscription paid for "President Spencer's outfit and my own," and neither he nor Spencer opted for hand-carts.47 In March 1856, James Furguson, a London missionary originally from Ireland, talked of his Mormon Battalion trek across the continent and enthusiastically endorsed handcarts, urging all elders to do the same.48 By 8 November 1855, William H. Kimball assured Franklin D. Richards somewhat flippantly that "folks are willing to part with all their effects and toddle off with a few things in a pocket-handkerchief."49

On 1 March 1856, the Millennial Star contained a final poetic and faith-promoting editorial message from Franklin D. Richards: "The Lord can rain manna on the plains of America just as easily as He did on the deserts of Arabia, or as he sent quails into the camp of the Saints on the Mississippi river in 1846. Ancient Israel travelled to the promised land on foot, with their wives and little ones. The Lord calls upon modern Israel to do the same."50

Some of the branch presidents were skeptical. Bleak, writing under the pen name of "Scribo" in the Juvenile Instructor in 1902, described how he had sent funds to purchase "an ox-team outfit" for himself, his wife, and their four children before the handcart policy was announced. He said that going by handcarts was presented as a matter of "faith," so that the money saved could be used "to emigrate other faithful Saints." Writing in third person, he explained, "The writer confesses, that, in view of his wife being

49William H. Kimball, Letter to President Franklin D. Richards, Millennial Star 17 (8 November 1855):765.
50Franklin D. Richards, Editorial, Millennial Star 18 (1 March 1856): 138.
unused to travel, and that the four children were of tender years, ranging from six years, the oldest, to eleven months, the youngest, he hesitated, indeed made up his mind not to adopt the suggestion requiring a journey of thirteen hundred miles on foot, from Iowa City to Salt Lake, by handcart.”

But when “co-laborers” and members of his branch “declared they were going in the same company, and in the same way that he was going,” Bleak yielded:

Realizing that he had always striven to set a becoming example in temporal and spiritual matters to the brethren and sisters entrusted to his care, he hesitated no longer, but at once wrote to President Franklin D. Richards, asking to be numbered on the handcart list; and to hold the balance of funds subject to his order, “to be used for emigration purposes only.”

After receiving the approval of President Richards, this change was announced in public meeting; and, to the credit of those who emigrated from that branch that season, all adopted the same method of gathering.51

Richards’s 1 March 1856 editorial confirmed Bleak’s message by praising the “several presidents . . . who have been blessed with means to purchase teams, have concluded to cast their lot with the Lord’s poor, and share with their brethren in the hand-cart companies. We wish all . . . to feel that the work is the Lord’s.”52 In March and April, the branch presidents were released so they could emigrate.

Six presidents were in the company that sailed from Liverpool 28 May 1856 on the Horizon. The ship had been delayed in leaving and had to be towed into Boston harbor, where further delays awaited them.53 LeRoy and Ann Hafen summarize: “The unexampled clamor for Zion, the difficulty in procuring ships and in making the necessary arrangements, and various disappoint-

52Richards, Editorial, Millennial Star 18 (1 March 1856): 140.
ments and miscalculations account for the failure to meet the planned schedule for departures. As matters eventuated, the lateness of sailings and subsequent delays...at Iowa City and at Florence were to be nothing less than tragic." 

DEATH ON THE TRAIL: THE PROCESSION OF THE SAINTS

At a meeting held 11 August 1856, the approximately 980 members of the Martin and Willie Handcart Companies decided unanimously to continue, despite the lateness of the season, with only Levi Savage objecting. Ten days later at a second meeting, according to Benjamin Platt, a member of the Martin Handcart Company, "Apostle Franklin D. Richards called a meeting and advised us to stay in Florence until the next season but there were some apostates there or Josephites, and we did not want to stay and we decided that we would go through or die trying and we prevailed." Josiah Rogerson, fifteen at the time, recalled in 1913: "Richards warned of the possibility of encountering snow storms before we should reach Salt Lake, and that we are then three weeks or a month late in starting from there to make the 1031 mile journey to Salt Lake, we all consented with uplifted hands to go on and take the risk." Brigham Young poured out his wrath publicly on Richards for his bad judgement; but it seems unlikely, as William L. Knecht points out, that Richards issued such a warning, for he did not reach Florence until 21 August. If he did, it was not sufficiently strong to change the handcart pioneers' minds and this attempt was never cited in extenuation when Brigham Young raged on.

But the mood in camp was festive. The young men and women who had marched in the London Conference's procession were there, along with the branch leaders and their families, and the grayhaired elders with their walking sticks. On 24 August,

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54 Hafen and Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 91.
55 Christy, "Handcart Companies," 2:571.
57 Josiah Rogerson said that the Martin Company contained many elderly men
Robert Clifton, Jr., and Elizabeth Malcomb McKay were married, adding another gala note. Robert Clifton, Jr., and Elizabeth Malcomb McKay were married, adding another gala note. 58 James Linforth, present for the festive departure, wrote a glowing report for the Millennial Star of the departure on 25 August: “Most were in good health. . . All seemed in good spirits and lively faith concerning their journey. . . When they got to the foot of the hill on which they had been encamped, they made the air ring with a good hurrah! three times repeated.” 59

The procession moved briskly at first, then more slowly. Two weeks later, on 7 September 1856, near Loupe Fork in Nebraska Territory, a fine carriage bearing Franklin D. Richards passed the determined marchers. 60 Of this final contact with the Martin Company he wrote to the Millennial Star: “It certainly would warm your heart with melting kindness to pass along the line of a camp going by hand-carts, and receive the cordial shakes of the hand, with a fervent ‘God bless you,’ as I did when I visited Captain Edward Martin’s train, several of whom expressed their thanks in a particular manner for being permitted to come out this year.” 61

Despite the Saints’ cheerful willingness, the obstacles were simply too formidable. City dwellers had no experience dealing with ferry-boat rafts, Indians, outdoor cooking, and camping in snow, hail, and sleet. Despite Richards’s assurances, they had to and women who could not keep up with earlier companies. Josiah Rogerson, Autobiographical Sketches of Beaver Resident (1879), MS 3363 item 2, p. 12. Others also claimed the company was made up solely of the elderly. The six branch presidents ranged from twenty-four to fifty-one, and many of the families were complete family units with children ranging in age from late teens to infants. Franklin D. Richards “Historian’s Office Minutes,” 4 October 1856, claimed that “old grey-headed men” were part of the Martin company.

58 Family Group Sheets, Ancestral File, FHL. Elizabeth may have been a widow. Elizabeth Malcomb McKay is listed as the wife of Donal McKay in the Somerstown Branch.


stand guard. Alice Walsh Strong recalled the crowding, with “three couples and six to eight children under eight years of age” in a single tent, the intense cold after passing Fort Laramie, and the exhaustion of men required “to stand guard six hours every other night.”

Josiah Rogerson added:

After a man had pulled a handcart 20-25 and 30 miles in a day, to go, and tramp around on guard from sundown till midnight every other night, and sometimes oftener is more than mortal bone and sinew can stand, and the fact that more men died than women attests what I have above written. Passing a good many things, that occurred on the journey, forgiven, and I wish now were forgotten, I will now close by saying, that for a man or half dozen to lead and direct a company of hand-cart emigrants through the terrible scenes and privations we passed through, is more than the [mind] of man is capable of [understanding].

“Carts broke down, cattle stampeded, Indians threatened, provisions ran out, and a violent winter storm hit before they were even out of the Black Hills—a month before the usual snowfall.”

Three of the branch presidents died. Patience Loader described the death of David Blair, probably the first of the six to die:

I remember well poor Brother Blair. He was a fine, taul [sic] man, had been one of Queen Victorea’s life guards in London. He had a wife and four children. He made a cover for his cart and he put his four children on the cart. He pulled his cart alone. His wife helped by pushing behind the cart. Poor man was so weak and waurndown that he fell several times that day but still he kept his dear little children on the cart all day. This man had so much love for his wife and children that instead of eating his morsael of food himself he would give it to his children. Poor man. He pulled that cart as long as he could then he died and his wife and children had to do the best they could without

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62 Rogerson, Papers, Sketch of Mrs. Alice Walsh Strong, LDS Historical Departmental Archives, MS 6103. This collection also includes several copies of a letter from Strong to Rogerson, 6 February 1912.

63 Josiah Rogerson, “Autobiographical Sketches of Beaver Residents,” MS 3363, item 2, p. 27, LDS Church Archives.

64 Bartholomew and Arrington, Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies, 2.

65 I have been able to identify only three children for Blair.
him to help them. The children got frozen. Some parts of there bodys was all sores, but thay all got to Salt I. City alive but suffering.\textsuperscript{66}

Robert Clifton, Sr., died on the trail in November 1856. His newly married namesake son also died on the trail.\textsuperscript{67}

The John Griffiths family experienced horror after horror. Eight-year-old Jane Griffiths later remembered, "In the morning we would find their starved and frozen bodies right by the side of us, not knowing when they died until daylight revealed the ghastly sight to us."\textsuperscript{68} John Griffiths became weaker and weaker and finally was so sick he had to ride in the provision wagon. One day, feeling stronger, he attempted to walk but fell back and grabbed the rod on the endgate of the last wagon. The teamster hit Griffiths with his whip.\textsuperscript{69} Griffiths fell to the ground and lay in the snow as the wagon rolled away. Finally, after regaining consciousness and discovering tracks leading to another camp, he crawled until he found help and later was able to rejoin his family.

When the handcarts were fifty miles from Devil's Gate, deep snow and cold forced them into camp where twelve-year-old Johnny Griffiths died. Six-year-old Herbert froze to death at Independence Rock. Provisions and rescue wagons finally reached them at this point. The survivors, John, Elizabeth, and their

\textsuperscript{66}Patience Loader's sister was married to John Jacques. Her "Diary" (reminiscences) is included in Stella Jaques Bell, Life History and Writings of John Jaques including a Diary of the Martin Handcart Company (Rexburg, Ida.: Ricks College Press, 1978), 150.

\textsuperscript{67} Clifton family records, TIB records; see also Easton, Index to the Willie/Martin Handcart Company. See also Rogerson, Papers. He was born 22 May 1836 and baptized at age fourteen by his father on 10 February 1850. Whitechapel Branch Records, Film 87,038; Minnie Margetts LDS Membership Records, Film 415,445; Robert Clifton family "Ancestral File." Temple Index Ancestral File computer records dates both deaths as November 1856 in Wyoming.

\textsuperscript{68}In Bartholomew and Arrington, Rescue of the Handcart Companies, 53.

\textsuperscript{69}He may have been trying to keep Griffiths moving rather than driving him away. According to Nicholus Courley Teeples, Martin Handcart survivor, in Utah Pioneer Biographies, 27:5, "Often the people would get so tired they would lie down under a tree or bush and then they would be very hard to get up. The leaders had to take a whip to them and lash them back to consciousness, while they would beg to be left to die."
daughters Margaret and Jane, reached Zion 30 November, but John died the next morning.\textsuperscript{70}

Twenty-four-year-old William L. S. Binder, former Lambeth Branch president, and his wife Eliza had their own grisly experience. William's feet were frozen during the late November storms.\textsuperscript{71} Then their tent companion, fellow Londoner John Watkins,\textsuperscript{72} spotted a stray ox and was determined to kill the animal for food. He decided to go after it at night when the animal was sleeping but did not dare go alone. He managed to persuade a Brother James Hudson to help him and also allowed Eliza Binder to go in her lame husband's place. Obviously in the freezing weather, none of them was thinking clearly. Clad only in a thin gown, Eliza followed them, at one point sinking into the deep sleep that precedes a freezing death. Amazingly she recovered in time to help them kill and carve the ox. Its warm blood was all that kept the three alive. Later, Brother Hudson went into the same death sleep, and Eliza helped John Watkins drag the meat and their fellow worker back to the handcart train before morning. The broth saved William Binder's life.\textsuperscript{73}

James G. Bleak reached Salt Lake Valley alive, but his feet were "so badly frozen that the flesh dropped from his heels, the effects of which he felt until the end of his days." Two other survivors remember him bursting into tears when they reached the bank of yet another river to be forded. "His wife who was by his


\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 641. Finsbury Branch records identify John and Margaret Watkins and William and Eliza Binder as members of the Finsbury Branch and thus close neighbors. See "Appendix" at the end of this paper. Finsbury Branch FHL film 86,998.

\textsuperscript{73}John Watkins, "Reminiscences of John Watkins," \textit{Heart Throbs of the West}, 6:372-76; "Frank" [John Watkins], "A Night Adventure on the Plains," \textit{Juvenile Instructor} 23 (1 January 1888): 1-4. This second version is thinly disguised with the hero appearing as "Watson," Eliza as "Lizzie," and Hudson as "Hunter."
side, had the stouter heart of the two at that junction, and said soothingly, 'Don’t cry, Jimmy. I’ll pull the handcart for you.' In fact, he could not walk, and she did pull both the handcart and him.\(^74\)

Throughout the trek, James Bleak had complete faith that he and his family would survive. Before he left London, a woman speaking in tongues had reassured him: “I, the Lord, am well pleased with the offering [of funds for the handcart emigrants] made by my servant, Elder [Bleak]; and notwithstanding he shall see the angel of death laying waste on his right hand and on his left, on his front, and on his rearward, yet he and his family shall gather to Zion and not one of them shall fall by the Way.”\(^75\) The entire family of six did, in fact, reach Utah, although five-year-old Thomas drowned in the Green River in November. Refusing to accept his death because of this promise, James and Elizabeth continued their attempts at resuscitation and succeeded in reviving him.\(^76\)

Sarah Squires, the wife of Henry Augustus Squires, former president of St. Albans Branch, was pregnant, and the oldest of their four daughters was only eight. She never complained, even though, in addition to all of the other misfortunes, she became “snow blind for three weeks and had to be led.”\(^77\) The rescue wagons came in time for Sarah to give birth to the baby, Echo Squires, in Echo Canyon. Patience Loader remembers Henry “running around camp inquiring of everybody if they had a pin to give him to hold something around the baby. No one had one.”\(^78\) As Wallace Stegner commented, “Their women were incredible.”\(^79\)


\(^76\) Addy, “James Godson Bleak,” 11.

\(^77\) Echo Squires Kirkham De Lee, “A Short Sketch,” ca. 1938, MS 7825, 2, LDS Church Archives.

\(^78\) Patience Loader Rosza, as quoted in John Jaques, “Some Reminiscences
AFTER THE JOURNEY

Few survivors sent reports of their ordeal back to London immediately; however, the Mormon Trail was a two-way road and news of the handcart disaster traveled quickly. One of the first accounts was James G. Bleak's, an optimistic attempt to soften the tragic message. A letter to in-laws and friends within a week after his arrival in Salt Lake City reflected either unquestioning faith or a carefully censored version of the ordeal. With no mention that Elizabeth had had to pull him on the handcart, Bleak wrote:

I shall suppose you have received our letter giving the particulars of our sea & part of our land voyage. . . We left a place called Iowa City on the 1st of August and arrived in this City on last Sunday the 30th of November the distance being 1,300 miles. We should not have been so long performing the journey but we were detained on the road in consequence of the snow falling considerably the latter part of our journey.

The scenery across the plains is certainly not to be surpassed. We saw the prairie on fire several times and consider it one of the grandest sights in nature. While the weather was fine we had an abundance of excellent plums and grape which grow wild in the woods also cherries and gooseberries small, but of a nice flavor. Our health as a general thing has been very good. Becky has enjoyed better health on the whole of the journey than she did at home. Mary is rather poorly, at present, and I have my feet frostbitten in consequence of which I am not able to do any thing like work and do not expect to be able for at least two months. But thank God I am consoled to know that neither my wife or children will want for any thing.

Your affectionate Son and Daughter,

James and Elizabeth Bleak

But the death toll shocked many and created the beginnings of a permanent breach with the Church for other Londoners. John Hyde, Sr., refused Brigham Young's call to gather and Young excommunicated him. John Banks, neighbor and former president of the London Mission, led a train of sixty wagons and three


hundred people to Utah that arrived on 1 October 1856. He probably passed the Martin Handcart Company somewhere on the plains. He subsequently became disillusioned, espoused the Morrisite heresies, and was killed in the attack on its headquarters. Frederick Piercy left no record of his reaction, but his shock at the contrast between the idyllic journey and the grueling reality can only be imagined. He had already broken with the Church, refusing to return to Utah on Brigham Young’s demand to Orson Pratt, then British Mission president, written on 30 October 1856 and received before 30 January 1857. He was excommunicated in March 1857.80 In America, Piercy’s coauthor James Linforth, perhaps feeling guilty and certainly stunned, continued straight on to San Francisco where he lived out his life.81

In Salt Lake City, Brigham Young refused to entertain any questions about the efficiency and practicality of handcarts. In May 1857, six months after the Martin Company arrived, he sent seventy men from Utah to Florence pulling handcarts. In decent weather, and without women, children, and the elderly, the healthy men made the trip in forty-eight days.82 One of these missionaries, Phillip Margetts, baptized in London in 1841, kept a detailed diary of both the reverse handcart trip and of his stay in London.83 He recorded the blows sustained by the London branches: not only the leadership drain caused by emigration but the handcart tragedies, the Utah War, and

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80The letters are quoted in LeCheminant, “Entitled to be Called an Artist,” 62-64. Later, Orson Pratt and Brigham Young refused to pay the full amount Young had originally agreed on for Piercy’s engravings.

81Brodie commented in Route from Liverpool, xxvii-xxviii, “Certainly it must have shaken the young British editor [James Linforth], when faced with the horrors of the Willie-Martin disasters, to remember the cheerful expectation and glowing hope implicit in his (and Piercy’s) recently published emigrant’s guide.” She also includes Linforth’s obituary from San Francisco; see also Josiah Rogerson’s Papers, “Mrs. James Linforth,” unpaged. “Linforth’s go to San Francisco. They could not stand the hardship of Zion nor the trauma of the trip.”


lurid press accounts of polygamy. After attending a meeting at Holborn Branch (formerly Theobalds Road) on 17 August, he wrote, “Most of the saints are spiritually dead.” On 22 November, he added, “There is no sign of an increase, the work seems at a perfect stand still.” Even Margetts’s close relatives were reluctant to receive him.84

**LONDON 1870s: THE RETURN OF THE PRESIDENTS**

All three of the London Conference branch presidents who survived the Martin disaster—James G. Bleak, William L. S. Binder, and Henry Augustus Squires—eventually returned to England. Bleak, who lived in St. George where he became temple recorder, served a proselyting mission in 1872 and was appointed editor of the *Millennial Star*. William L. S. Binder, a merchant in Utah and a member of Salt Lake City’s first Old Folks’ Committee, served both a proselyting mission in 1874 and a genealogical mission in 1898.85 In 1876, Binder brought a group of 322 emigrants by steamship from Liverpool to New York and by train from New York to Salt Lake City—a plains journey that took only ten days.86 Both Bleak and Binder died in good standing, Bleak in 1904 and Binder in 1918.

Squires, a merchant in Salt Lake City, had a more complicated departure. In the spring of 1867, he took his first wife, Sarah, and their younger children back to England, leaving three

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84Ibid., 4 August 1857.

85In 1866 only nine small branches remained, according to J. Ewing Ritchie, *The Religious Life of London* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1870), 343-45. A non-Mormon contemporary, he painted a dreary picture of Mormonism at that time: “The principal place of worship of the Mormons . . . is in the Commercial Road, but there are others; one of them in George Street. . . . In that locality there is a very shabby dancing saloon, from which the graces seem long since to have departed. At three o’clock every Sunday afternoon the Mormons assemble there. On a raised platform may be seen seated some seven or eight men, apparently decent workmen. All seem enthusiastic and very friendly, and wretchedly poor. . . . You might fancy as you enter you had made a mistake, and got amongst the Primitive Methodists.”

86Andrew Jenson, comp., *Church Chronology: or a Record of Important Events* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1886), 95.
married daughters in Utah. His plural wife, Emma Caroline Slade Squires, refused to go and stayed in Salt Lake City with their three sons and a daughter, born six months after Henry left. According to one of Sarah's granddaughters, Brigham Young advised the move because of Henry's health problems. However, it seems more likely that Henry had lost his faith in Mormonism. In England, the family attended Methodist school and the Baptist church, and Henry again became a Baptist minister, serving until his death in 1914. Sarah returned to Utah in May 1874 for a year. When she returned to England, her seventeen-year-old Echo, who had "prayed all the way to Zion that she would have the knowledge that the Gospel was true," remained behind with a married sister. Squires's apostasy contradicts the Mormon folklore that no member of the Martin Handcart Company ever left the Church.

CONCLUSION

The decision of Brigham Young and the leaders of the Mormon Church to assist the worthy poor to "gather" to Zion was a project of daunting proportions. Although they had been forced from their homes by hostile mobs in Missouri and Nauvoo, the Mormons pledged to assist all who would join them in Utah. When funds ran out for wagons and oxen, leaders searched for new ways to bring the Saints to Zion. The handcart experiment seemed promising. For the most part it worked; eight of ten companies arrived successfully. To members of the Edward Martin Handcart Company, nature dealt a cruel blow; but except for a few, their faith remained alive.

88President Gordon B. Hinckley told a story with this point in October 1991 conference (Ensign, November 1991, 54); see also Bruce C. Hafen (Ensign, April 1992, 16); and Elder James E. Faust (Ensign, May 1979, 53). Squires has many active descendants by both his wife Sarah who returned to England with him, and also by his plural wife, Emma.
APPENDIX

London Members of the Edward Martin Handcart Company


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birthyear</th>
<th>Baptism</th>
<th>Death on Plains</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beer, Benjamin James</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>20 Jan. 1844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beer, Margaret</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>17 Jan. 1848</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binder, William L. S.</td>
<td>1832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Binder, Eliza Crump</td>
<td>1832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bird, Thomas P.</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>8 Nov. 1854</td>
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<td>Bitton, John Evington</td>
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<td>1836</td>
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<td>Bitton, Sarah S.</td>
<td>1839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blair, David</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Aug. 1842</td>
<td>Oct. 1856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blair, Deborah</td>
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<td>Aug. 1842</td>
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<td>Bleak, James G.</td>
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<td>Bridge, Alfred</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Nov. 1856</td>
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<td>1805</td>
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<td>1854</td>
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*Samuel George Read, a wealthy Londoner, sailed on the Horizon but did not travel with the Martin Handcart Company after it left Florence, though
he is listed on all official rolls. In London Samuel volunteered to travel with the handcart people, using his wealth to pay travel costs for other members and purchasing medicines and supplies for the whole group. His six-year-old son Walter disappeared in Florence, so the mother, Elizabeth, and two daughters continued with the Martin Handcart Company while Samuel and the older son, Samuel Milford, searched for the child, found him, and went west the next year. Elizabeth provided medical care to the company and later became the only pioneer doctor in Price, Utah. Daughter Thisbe eventually married one of her rescuers, Ephraim Hanks. May S. Arnold, "Samuel Read," in Carter, Heart Throbs of the West, 6:370.

Reviewed by Richard O. Cowan

The life of Howard William Hunter holds special interest to students of Mormon history. All other twentieth-century presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were reared in active Mormon homes. Over half were sons or grandsons of earlier General Authorities. One, Joseph Fielding Smith, was the son of another Church president. In contrast, President Hunter's father did not join the Church until his son was nineteen. Young Howard was not baptized until age twelve. All other twentieth-century presidents grew up in Mormon communities in Utah, southeastern Idaho, and Arizona. President Hunter, in contrast, spent his childhood and youth in the Boise area, then lived in southern California until being called as an apostle at age fifty-one.

Many Mormon historians will remember with appreciation Howard W. Hunter's helpful encouragement of historical research. Not only did he play a key role in organizing the Church's new Historical Department during the early 1970s, but he also took a keen personal interest in the history of the Latter-day Saints.

For some time Elder Hunter had modestly resisted the proposal of a biography; but when Elder Marvin J. Ashton, chairman of the board of Deseret Book Company, promised that the work would be done promptly by a writer who understood the sensitivities of writing such a book, he acquiesced. Eleanor Knowles, Deseret Book vice-president and executive editor, in a speech to a group of Religious Education faculty at BYU, explained that she was involved in the search for the right author and was surprised when company executives gave her the assignment.

Knowles's resources, though scanty in terms of archival material, were rich in personal insights. Although Elder Hunter's schedule and illnesses did not permit extensive interviews, he made available his journals containing some three thousand single-spaced pages of detailed daily entries. Knowles also interviewed many of Elder Hunter's associates from all periods of his life, thus rounding out traits of his personality that he would not have written about himself. The publication of this work could not have been more timely. After about two years of research and writing, this biography became available in book stores early in May 1994—just three weeks before the death of President Ezra Taft Benson.

The book's first chapter reviews President Hunter's ancestry. His early years in Boise are described in the next two chapters. Four chapters then
record his nearly four decades in California, including his family life, law practice, and Church service. The second half of the book focuses on his years as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Knowles provides some intimate glimpses into Howard Hunter's character and personality. She points out that he was willing to give up a promising musical career because he believed it would put him in situations at odds with his fundamental principles and values (chap. 4). Chapter 7 shows how he used high council and other meetings as forums for instruction while he served as stake president in Pasadena. Chapter 8 reveals his feelings at being called as an apostle and having to leave his law practice. Through reading Chapter 14, we can also empathize with his feelings of triumph as he overcame the inability to walk after serious health problems.

Descriptions of Elder Hunter's service as a General Authority sometimes provide interesting and valuable insights into Church activities and ecclesiastical procedures. At least one member of the Twelve anticipated before Elder Hunter's calling that the next apostle would come from California where the Church was experiencing such rapid growth (p. 148). We come to appreciate Elder Hunter's responsibilities relative to Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center (chap. 11) and see his suggested modification of policies affecting temple ordinance work (chaps. 8 and 10). Incidentally, we also learn that Monday is supposed to be (but not always) a day off for the General Authorities (chap. 9).

Knowles provides valuable contexts that enrich this biography, including descriptions of Los Angeles's growth in the 1920s (chap. 4) and the challenge to Church administration posed by skyrocketing baptisms since the 1950s (chap. 9).

The author's frankness helps reveal Howard Hunter as a believable person. She quotes his good-humored admission that, as a new apostle, he was welcomed to Utah with a speeding ticket (p. 157). He complains mildly about being overfed on conference assignments (p. 172). With commendable balance, she did not give Elder Hunter credit for everything that was happening in the Church's genealogical program during the time he directed it but pointed out his efforts to master the computer so he could more effectively give direction to this work (chap. 10). Her openness in detailing Elder Hunter's illnesses helps us more fully appreciate his strength and determination (chap. 14).

In writing this biography, Eleanor Knowles confronted the dilemma frequently faced by authors in the field of history—whether to present material by topics or in a strictly chronological order. She opted for a good compromise—arranging major topics somewhat in a chronological sequence, thus enabling the reader to follow themes to their conclusions. This arrangement does, however, result in occasional minor confusion in the flow of events. There are also some unnecessary repetitions. The route of the interurban railroad serving towns on a loop west of Boise is mentioned on both pages 14 and 26. Elder Hunter's father's attendance
at sacrament meetings is also mentioned twice (pp. 17, 36). The Los Angeles Temple is misidentified as the second largest temple (p. 131); at the time, it was the largest, although auxiliary facilities later gave the Salt Lake Temple a larger number of square feet. Chapter 7 credits President Hunter with a role in establishing the Church's first early-morning seminaries; although the 1950s in southern California brought its first widespread implementation, the program had actually begun in the Salt Lake area before World War II.

Page 307 states that Stake President Hunter helped organize the Mormon Choir of Southern California for the Los Angeles Temple "dedication" in 1953. The temple was not dedicated until 1956, although the cornerstone was laid in December 1953. The choir had performed at the Hollywood Bowl Easter service in 1952 and was made a permanent organization by direction of the First Presidency on 10 March 1953.

The narrative describing the 1978 revelation extending priesthood to all worthy males refers to "the written copy of the revelation" (p. 236). I believe that this document is Official Declaration 2 and, hence, not a record of the revelation but rather an inspired announcement that the revelation had previously been received.

The division of Reno Stake, over which Elder Hunter presided in 1970, sounds like a routine assignment (p. 194); but it was actually a significant milestone. The Fallon Stake, created as a result of the division, was the Church's five-hundredth.

These matters are minor, however, compared to the significant insights of Eleanor Knowles's thoroughly researched and well-written biography of Howard W. Hunter. His family and other close associates agree that Knowles truly depicts the Howard Hunter they knew. Speaking to the BYU group of Religious Education faculty, she declared that she found him to be "a man who has a mission, who loves the Lord, and wants to do the best he can." She added: "I wanted to write a book that I would like to read." This is a book even teenagers will enjoy.

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Reviewed by Scott H. Faulring
Two of Mormonism's most conspicuous critics have combined forces to "reinvent" early Mormon history by offering a secular interpretation that challenges the traditional, orthodox historical view of Mormon origins. Researcher H. Michael Marquardt and the late Presbyterian minister Wesley P. Walters announce in their preface that their primary objective was "to find and present historical records, such as tax lists and censuses, and recollections of people living at the time and place where Mormonism began." By doing so, they hoped to "bring new insights to the study of Mormon beginnings" (p. vii). While I disagree with most of their interpretations and decidedly narrow selection of sources, their dogged research impresses me and their presentation of nontraditional historical data challenges me. This book is the kind of revisionistic treatment I enjoy reading because it prods me, forces me out of my intellectual comfort zone, and motivates me to explore deeper into the rich undergrowth of early Mormon history.

These two devoted anti-Mormon writers have spent more than three decades challenging standard Mormon interpretations of historical developments such as the revivalistic setting of Joseph Smith's First Vision, Smith's early legal entanglements, and textual origins of the Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham. Given Marquardt's and Walters's previous antagonistic polemics, I admittedly expected their typical acrid critique here. Surprisingly, the book's tone is less belligerent and more moderate than I could have imagined. I interpret this style change as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" strategy. As I see their main purpose, though carefully camouflaged, it is to enervate the established view of the foundational events of Mormonism. In many respects, Inventing Mormonism is acceptable social history, but that approach is also the book's most serious limitation. From my perspective, Joseph Smith's early history and the origins of the Mormon Church demand the primary focus be religious, not social, history.

Marquardt's and Walters's goal of "new insights" sounds like the ultimate goal of all of us researching and writing early Mormon history—to reconstruct the past accurately and fairly based on the available public records and accessible private writings of those who personally witnessed the events of the beginning of the Restoration.

The question is, then, do Marquardt and Walters offer any "new insights"? No, not really. I could find little that was new or insightful in their discussion of the Smith family's movements to and around Palmyra and Manchester, Palmyra's 1824 religious revival, Joseph Smith's money-digging career, his 1826 trial as a "glass looker," the organization of Smith's Church of Christ in Manchester, New York (as opposed to the traditional Fayette, New York location), etc. These chapters are revised and updated from earlier articles, making the book a repackaging of previous essays into a volume of loosely related topics. This book's depth and coverage suffers by comparison with its main rival, Richard L.

Still, *Inventing Mormonism* has several strengths. First, Smith Research Associates has handsomely printed and bound the book. The contents are well organized with preliminary pages (preface, prologue, maps of western New York in 1829, vital statistics of the Joseph Smith, Sr., family, and a chronology of Mormon origins), serving as guides to the contents and nature of the discussion. The back matter includes appendices of Joseph Smith's 1832 manuscript autobiographical sketch, the 1859 *Tiffany's Monthly* interview with Book of Mormon witness Martin Harris, and E. B. Grandin print shop typesetter John H. Gilbert's memorandum describing the printing of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. Along with two bibliographic essays on Smith family recollections and the 1826 trial, they provide interesting, albeit controversial, reference materials.

Second, Marquardt and Walters generously quote from primary documents, published contemporary and reminiscent sources. The informative endnotes are placed at the end of each chapter. Although not as convenient as footnotes, their proximity make them accessible to the reader.

I noticed some weaknesses in Marquardt's and Walter's study of Mormon origins. They approached each topic or period focused on discussing their discovered facts and, at times, appeared unwilling to cross-examine possible contradictory sources. They also avoid exploring or discussing alternative analyses of many key events. For example, they sidestep the existence of significant religious excitement and increases in Church membership during 1817-20 in a less restrictive "whole district of country" context, and neglect the contemporary legal setting of Joseph Smith's 1826 misdemeanor "glass looker" charge and the subsequent pre-trial hearing. They also fail to dispassionately analyze the rudimentary historiographical methods used by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and others as they, years later, recorded events associated with the birth of Mormonism. Furthermore, they do not acknowledge or discuss the findings of such competent Mormon scholars as Richard L.

Anderson, Milton Backman, Jr., Richard L. Bushman, Larry Foster, Marvin Hill, Gordon Madsen, Larry Porter, and Jan Shipps, who have responded to the issues and questions raised over the years by Marquardt and Walters.

I also believe that Inventing Mormonism displays an overdependence on hostile or unsympathetic observers whose “testimonies” are of questionable veracity. For example, Marquardt and Walters cite more than thirty times E. D. Howe's Mormonism Unvailed affidavits, which were based principally on the negative statements and recollections of the Smith family's Palmyra-Manchester neighbors collected by recently excommunicated Philastus Hurlbut in late 1833. They accept these declarations without question. In doing so, these authors have embraced a tradition of history as myopic as that which they hope to revise. It would have been more constructive if the authors had included a variety of statements from a broader spectrum of people who knew the Smiths during the 1816-31 period.

At times the research suffers from a serious lack of attention to detail. On pages 130-31, they missed an opportunity to offer “new insight” on early Mormon beginnings when they failed to accurately explain a noteworthy event during publication of the Book of Mormon. Marquardt and Walters related how, in January 1830, the Palmyra lawyer-editor Abner Cole published unauthorized Book of Mormon excerpts in his Palmyra Reflector that brought Joseph Smith, Jr., back to Palmyra-Manchester from Harmony to enforce his copyright. While at his parents' home, the young prophet entered into a written agreement with his benefactor, Martin Harris, in which Joseph granted Harris “an equal privilege” (i.e., 50 percent share) in the sales and profits from the Book of Mormon. A photograph and transcription of the 16 January 1830 agreement, mistakenly identified as including Joseph Smith, Sr.'s, signature (rather than Joseph Smith, Jr.'s), appear as the eighth and ninth unnumbered illustrations following page 198. If Marquardt and Walters were as familiar with the “documentary sources” as their dust jacket endorsers claim, they should have noticed that it was Joseph Smith the Prophet, not his father, who signed the agreement.2

There is abundant evidence, most not mentioned by them, to prove that the signature is actually Joseph, Jr.'s. First, Joseph Smith, Sr., did not include either “Sr.” or “Sen.” with his signature. Second, the 9 June 1830 priesthood licenses for John Whitmer (original at Yale University) and Joseph Smith, Sr., (original at LDS Historical Department) both contain nearly identical Joseph Smith, Jr., signatures as on the agreement. Third, Orsamus Turner, a journeyman printer at Grandin's print shop, described in detail the contents of the agreement and stated that it was “signed by the Prophet Joseph himself.” O. Turner, History of the
Another weakness in this book is that Marquardt and Walters persistently expend enormous quantities of energy on small and tangential issues but ignore weightier questions. For instance, was there any correlation between Harris’s and Smith’s January 1830 agreement and the journey made by Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery to sell the Canadian copyright for the Book of Mormon? Several contemporaries later suggested that they undertook this trip to raise funds to pay the printer because Martin Harris was too slow in selling his farm. Was this January 1830 agreement made because Harris felt insecure about his interest in the first edition of the Book of Mormon? Marquardt and Walters do not even attempt to synthesize the data and offer an analytical interpretation on this point.

As another example, they present in excruciating detail (more than nine pages) the early documentary evidence that the Mormon Church was founded in Manchester, instead of the traditionally accepted site of Fayette, on 6 April 1830. Yet except for two passing references (p. 145, note 52, and p. 164), they do not mention Oliver Cowdery’s important 1829 draft of the Articles of the Church of Christ. This critical document, entitled “A commandment from God unto Oliver [Cowdery] how he should build up his church and the manner thereof,” is the earliest documentary source connected to Church organization and is key to a comprehensive, balanced understanding of the foundation and development of the Church in 1829-30. Again, Marquardt and Walters missed an opportunity to offer some genuinely “new insights” about the origins of Mormonism.

Although I cannot unequivocally recommend Inventing Mormonism, all persons, both scholars and novices, who are serious about the study of early Mormon history have an obligation to read the book and weigh the facts presented. Unfortunately, however, the book lacks balance, depth, and serious interpretive scholarship—problems which will undermine its sober consideration as a lasting historical contribution.

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Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham’s Purchase (Rochester: William Alling, 1851), 216. Fourth, as Marquardt and Walters observe in an endnote, a Joseph Smith, Sr., signature given just three days later on 19 January 1830 in the Nathan Pierce Docket Book, “appears to be different from the one” on the 16 January 1830 agreement. The reason is obvious: they were two different signatures, signed by two different individuals.
is the editor of An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

**BOOK NOTICES**

The Journal of Mormon History invites candidates for this column—particularly biographies, family histories, community histories, and regional histories of interest to researchers in LDS and RLDS history that are published privately and of limited circulation. Please send one review copy to Richard L. Jensen, Book Review Editor, 125 Knight Mangum Hall, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.


This stylishly designed centennial (1883-1993) history in coffee-table format, lavishly illustrated with more than 150 photographs, records the history of a mining town and now upscale suburb in the southern part of Salt Lake Valley. Sandy owed its existence to the north-south axis of the railroads running from Ogden and Salt Lake City down into Provo intersecting with the railroads that provided access to the mines in the Little Cottonwood Canyon to the east and Bingham Copper Mine in the Oquirrh Mountains to the west. Sandy’s smelters were the destination for both until they closed during the Depression of 1893.

The book’s four chapters identify the four main periods of Sandy’s existence: its agricultural/mining beginnings from the 1850s to 1893, its return to agricultural/urban setting, 1893-1917, a period of slow and stable growth when even the saloons moved into Mormon hands between World War I and the 1960s, and then a post-World War II explosion in growth that quintupled the population during the 1970s, shifted the political balance of power to the “newcomers,” and resulted in the proud “who-we-are” statement of its new city hall. Subtopics include government, housing, education, civic celebrations, religion, and architecture.

An interesting item is that Charles Thiede, who murdered his wife in 1894, was executed for his crime and buried in the city cemetery; but his body was exhumed by citizens outraged at the “affront to their decency and dignity” and re-interred in a field at a point which is now, according to oral tradition, beneath the current intersection of 700 East and 9000 South.

Gracefully written by Martha Sonntag Bradley, the text deals straightforwardly with the sense of displacement caused by such growth. She describes how the “oldtimers” she interviewed “ex-
pressed both amazement and bewilderment at the changes around them. Many of them recalled the landscape of their childhood with bittersweet nostalgia, a place where everyone had known everyone else—and had probably been kin to boot. Now they moved through a Sandy of strangers, missing their moorings, puzzled by the disappearance of landmarks that anchored their memories. Nevertheless, they expressed optimism about the city's potential for solving the epidemic problems created by growth" (p. 3).


Riverton, a small farming community in the south end of Salt Lake Valley, dates its founding from 1865 when Nicholas Thomas Silcock and his pregnant wife, Jane, moved their eight children under fifteen to a farm he had bought sight unseen. Jane's comment the next morning, on viewing their new home in the daylight, was "Well, . . . this is the last place on God's earth to bring a woman and little children" (p. 2). This history maintains this vivid, personal feeling from beginning to end, thanks to its excellent use of historical sources and a staggering number of interviews with residents. World War I soldiers, influenza sufferers, and down-and-dirty fights in the city council are all part of this rural history, changed forever by the population explosion in the south end of the valley.

The thumbnail biographies of (mostly historical) residents of Riverton is an excellent reference tool, even though only three of the first thirty entries are of women. The book unfortunately lacks an index, greatly reducing the value of this highly readable history as a reference work.

Particularly heart-wrenching is the stunning account of the 1938 school bus-train collision in a snowstorm that killed the driver and twenty-three of thirty-eight high school students. This chapter, written by Melvin L. Bashore, reconstructs not only the accident but also, from numerous interviews, recounts the horrifying toll on the whole community. Particularly poignant are the enduring memories of seeing shoes scattered around the accident site and the apprehension of one survivor to this day when he hears a train whistle. The single section of photographs has two pictures that appeared in Life, one showing the center section of the school bus improbably wrapped around the nose of the locomotive.

Bernarr S. Furse, general ed., and Glen Moosman, ed. Part II; authors: Nola Duncan, Bernarr S. Furse, Max Hogan, and Glen Moosman. A History of West Jordan. Salt Lake City: Printed by Publishers Press for the City of West Jordan, 1995; 320 pp., tables, maps,
photographs, appendices, index.

$20.00.

This history of a third community in the south end of the Salt Lake Valley reports the same pioneer beginnings, the same agricultural roots, and the same explosive population boom as the Sandy and Riverton histories but provides an absorbing narrative in its own right.

Using a large 8½ by 11 inch format, this history is generously illustrated with historic and contemporary photographs, buildings, portraits of elected officials, and useful maps—including a full-color fold-out of its new city hall. The narrative painstakingly reconstructs not only the pioneer economy of agriculture, sheep-ranching, and Archibald Gardner mills and associated industries but also the Japanese truck-farming of the twentieth century and the "glamour" professions of mink-ranching and prize-fighting, both of them spark-plugged by entrepreneur and sportsman Marvin G. Jenson.

Native son Gene Fullmer, the world champion boxer, is well known. Less well-known but equally historic is Lagar R. Culver, a farmhand, who in 1909 became the first Utahn to build and fly not only a glider but also a gasoline-powered airplane, originally launched with the literal horsepower of local cowboys who pulled it across a meadow at a gallop until it had enough speed to become airborne.

The book is also candid in its descriptions of city government. West Jordan, for instance, though founded in 1850, did not incorporate until 1941, and then was motivated to do so by a desire to get WPA help in beautifying its cemetery. Its first "law enforcement" official was a dog-catcher. Its attempt to establish a city sewer line in 1957 resulted in bitter legal battles on the part of disgruntled citizens that resulted in the deannexations of almost two thirds of the town's original area. A colorful town character was cantankerous Willis Jacobson, self-appointed thorn in the side of city government during the 1950s and 1960s, who once protested that the minutes of the previous meeting had excluded his reference to the mayor as a "jackass." The phrase was duly added.


This slim autobiography, based on reminiscences dictated while Elder Martins recuperated from back surgery, is a good introduction to Mormonism's first black General Authority, a Brazilian, but rouses hopes for a more complete biography later.

The oldest of seven children of an illiterate father who worked himself to death for the family, Helvécio educated himself in night school, married a beautiful woman above his own social class (neither race—Ruda was not
black—nor class differences seem to have been a barrier to her family). She immediately stopped her own education and apparently gave up any kind of career plans. They had spiritual hungers that were unmet by Macambo or Freemasonry, but joined the Church as soon as they encountered missionaries, despite its unconcealed racism.

While Ruda cared for their four children, Martins became a high officer in a national oil company, dealing with national politics and internal politics mostly by holding himself aloof. He retired early but lost all of his money in an unwise investment by cosigning a note for a project that he hoped would provide a way for returning missionaries to earn a living. Resolutely, he reentered business and paid back the entire sum. The emotional and historical core of the book, presented didactically but with great sweetness and sincerity, is his church career, his meetings with President Kimball, the preparatory (though not fully processed) experiences he and Ruda had about the coming of the priesthood, and his immense faith and faithfulness.
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Edited by Blair R. Holmes and Alan F. Keele
Foreword by Klaus J. Hansen

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