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BOOK NOTICE


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Mission Statement of the Mormon History Association

The Mormon History Association is an independent organization dedicated to the study and understanding of all aspects of Mormon history. We welcome all who are interested in the Mormon past, irrespective of religious affiliation, academic training, or world location. We promote our goals through scholarly research, conferences, awards, and publications.

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The Journal of Mormon History exists to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history. Manuscripts dealing with all aspects of Mormon history are welcome, including twentieth- and twenty-first-century history, regional and local history, women's history, and ethnic/minorities history. First consideration will be given to those that make a strong contribution to knowledge through new interpretations and/or new information. The Board of Editors will also consider the paper's general interest, accuracy, level of interpretation, and literary quality. The Journal does not usually consider reprints or simultaneous submissions.

Papers for consideration must be submitted in triplicate, typed and double-spaced throughout, including all quotations. Authors should follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition (see a recent edition of the Journal or style guide at www.mhahome.org) and be prepared to submit accepted manuscripts on computer diskette or CD, IBM-DOS format preferred. Send manuscripts to the Journal of Mormon History, P.O. Box 581068, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1068.

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Winter Quarters Correction

In Edward L. Kimball and Kenneth W. Godfrey’s “Law and Order at Winter Quarters,” 32, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 195, the number of problems involving the stray pen are given as 0 but should be 10; the total number of problems should be 74 rather than 75.

Announcement:
Mormon Scholars in the Humanities: Call for Papers

Mormon Scholars in the Humanities is dedicated to promoting intellectual and collegial exchange among LDS humanities scholars in the United States and abroad; fostering support and mentoring for the production of superior scholarship in all humanistic disciplines; providing a forum for exchange that explores and strengthens LDS values, especially as they relate to humanistic inquiry; and assisting members in the successful integration of the intellectual and spiritual aspects of their lives.

It will sponsor its first symposium from the Brigham Young University College of Humanities, “Mormon Belief, Scholarship, and the Humanities,” on March 23–24, 2007, at BYU to explore the relationship between Mormon belief and the practice of humanistic scholarship. Richard Lyman Bushman will give the keynote address.

MSH invites papers that cover a wide range of practical, theoretical, and historical questions regarding the connection between faith, teaching, and research, and that draw on experiences at a wide range of institutions of higher education. We wish to provide a forum for humanities scholars that reflects on the experience of Mormon religious practice and its connection to humanistic scholarship, how the experience of Mormon scholars in the humanities relates to historical and contemporary scholars of other faiths, and what prospects exist for the successful integration of faith and scholarship. Proposed topics may include:

1. Scholarship: Is there a Mormon foundation to humanistic inquiry? What role does Mormon belief play in the practice of scholarship, especially about topics far afield from Mormon experience? What is the Mormon responsibility toward secular, cultural, and intellectual knowledge? How does one approach the lifestyles, belief systems, and values that humanistic scholarship analyzes when these conflict with those of the Mormon faith?

2. Religious Humanism, Past and Present: What examples from the past demonstrate the successful in-
integration of faith and scholarship? What examples from other religious and cultural contexts today provide insightful comparative contexts for the symposium’s themes? What values ought the humanities espouse in light of Mormon belief? To what degree is secular humanism compatible with religious humanism? Where must they part ways?

3. Pedagogy: What is the relationship between scholarship and teaching? What role does Mormon belief play in teaching mostly non-LDS students or mostly LDS students? Which aspects of teaching are particularly challenging and rewarding? Is there a Mormon pedagogy in the humanities? What are the ultimate aims of teaching the humanities and how do those aims relate to spiritual and intellectual development?

4. Intellectual and Professional Development: What road maps exist for those pursuing scholarship in the humanities? What advice can be given to future Ph.D.s? How does one balance the expectations of a humanistic scholar with the expectations of an active LDS Church member?

Please submit paper proposals (no longer than one page) to George Handley (George_Handley@byu.edu) by December 15, 2006. Include a two-page CV. We also welcome entire panel proposals, workshop ideas, or other proposed formats. All participants must be members of MSH ($10 annually) at the time of the symposium.

The organization will manage a member website, which will provide a database of members, their scholarly interests, and professional locations; a venue for querying fellow scholars how LDS views may operate in scholarly, pedagogical, and intellectual inquiries; informal meetings at major professional conferences; a newsletter posted on website and printable in hard-copy to members; a mentoring program for junior scholars; and conference sponsorship.

MSH’s primary purpose is to facilitate contact among LDS scholars in all humanistic disciplines, not to provide a specialized forum for scholarship on Mormon culture and history. LDS membership is not required. Membership information and additional MHS information is available at http://www.mormonscholars.org/.
THE BICKERTONITES: 
SCHISM AND REUNION IN A 
RESTORATION CHURCH, 1880–1905

Gary R. Entz

IN THEIR STUDY OF DIFFERING Mormon factions that have emerged since the death of Joseph Smith Jr., historians Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher argue that “dissent has been a significant force in the church and a dynamic that has continued throughout the movement’s history.”¹ The dynamic of dissent was particularly apparent in a small group of Mormons known as the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite). The followers of William Bickerton were introduced to Mormonism through Sidney Rigdon’s Pennsylvania church in 1845 but broke away in 1846 to form their own organization, first in Pennsylvania and eventually in Kansas. While William Bickerton’s church was born of dissent and experienced disagreement throughout its formative years, it was after attempting to found a “stake of Zion” in Kansas in 1875 that the Bickertonites experienced their most serious internal rebellion and came fully at odds with the Utah Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). What follows is not a comprehensive his-

tory of the Bickertonite Church. Rather it is a study of William Bickerton in Kansas and the conflicts he faced within his own church and with the LDS Church.

Born in 1815 to a working-class Methodist family in Northumberland, England, William Bickerton immigrated with his mother and siblings in 1832 to the United States. Settling in the area of Monongahela, Pennsylvania, Bickerton found work as a coal miner and eventually became a mine foreman. In April 1845, almost a year after Joseph Smith’s death, Bickerton and his wife, Doratha, went to hear the followers of Sidney Rigdon preach in Limetown, Pennsylvania. It was a life-altering experience for Bickerton, who came away from the meeting convinced that Rigdon “had the power of God.” According to later accounts, he was baptized by Elder John Frazier and became a member of Rigdon’s Church of Christ. It was a short-lived union because Bickerton disagreed with Rigdon’s 1846 decision to relocate the church in Pennsylvania’s Cumberland Valley near Greencastle. Feeling “through the spirit that he was going wrong,” Bickerton severed his affiliation with Rigdon.²

A small group of neophytes coalesced around Bickerton to

study the Book of Mormon, and in 1849 a convert named Charles Brown predicted that Bickerton “was to be a prophet to lead this people.” In 1851 Bickerton made a tenuous affiliation with the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but stood firmly against polygamy. As a result he severed his connection with the Utah Saints in 1852 after learning of Brigham Young’s pending acknowledgement of plural marriage. After this point Bickerton experienced several epiphanies that confirmed his calling and he began actively preaching from the Book of Mormon. He learned of his official excommunication from Elder Samuel Wooley of the LDS Church in 1857, but it did not matter to Bickerton or his followers. In 1859 a revelatory experience gave them confirmation that God had “raised up another like unto Joseph . . . and now I have called forth my servant William Bickerton to lead forth my people.” William Bickerton’s Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite) was formally organized in 1862 and incorporated in 1865 at Pittsburgh.3 Almost all members of the Church during its formative years in Pennsylvania were English immigrants with whom Bickerton had worked in the mines or whom he had met through his preaching. To my knowledge, none of his followers had been with Joseph Smith at Nauvoo.

Bickerton interpreted the beginning of the Civil War as confirmation that he was “living in the generation when the judgements of God will be poured out as spoken of by our Saviour.” The group believed in the restoration of Israel and that “God will use man as his instruments for its accomplishments in these last days.” They also held that the “aborigines or Indians upon this continent are a part of Is-

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Sun, August 4, 1887, 3, identified “Elder Frazier” as having performed the baptism. This was probably John Frazier, one of Rigdon’s councilors. Richard S. Van Wagoner, Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 385. Bickerton’s first wife, Doratha, died in 1862 and he married his second wife, Charlotte Hibbs, the next year.

Important Bickertonite sites in western Pennsylvania, ca. 1880s. Map by Gary R. Entz.
rael.” As such it was crucial to deliver the restored gospel embodied in the Book of Mormon to the Indian nations; and in November 1861, an interpretation of a message delivered through the gift of tongues revealed: “Thus saith the Lord I will purify my Church and my Servants shall go and preach the Gospel to the Indians of America.” This was a charge Bickerton took seriously, but the Civil War largely confined the group’s early proselytizing efforts to Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

After the war ended, Bickerton renewed his calls to embark upon a mission to the Indian peoples and, in April 1868, reported a vision confirming that “the time has come that salvation shall go to the Lamanites.”

To fulfill this mission, Bickerton called one of his converts to accompany him, thirty-four-year-old William Cadman, who became important in this conflict. Born in England in 1834, Cadman and his wife, Elizabeth (surname not known), immigrated to the United States in 1856. Cadman heard about Mormonism in a tavern conversation, then heard Bickerton preach in the summer of 1859. The two men continued meeting, until Cadman accepted baptism in December 1859. With another elder, Benjamin Meadowcroft, Bickerton and Cadman traveled to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma in September and spent a month meeting with leaders of the Cherokee Nation and ministering to the Indian peoples.

The mission had mixed results. Cadman had embarked upon the mission predicting that the outcome “would be fruitless” and saw no reason to alter his opinion. Bickerton, on the other hand, understood that this mission represented only a first step and was committed to continuing the mission. He joined this commitment with the doctrine of the gathering and, in 1872, began urging his followers to establish a Stake of Zion near Indian Territory.

Bickerton took another step toward the Stake of Zion by organizing a committee to study the matter. However, at this point in 1872,

4Entz, “Zion Valley,” 102; The Ensign: or a Light to Lighten the Gentiles (Pittsburgh: Ferguson and Co., 1863), 11–12; typescript copy made by Bob Watson, church historian for the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite), and given to David Clark, who donated the typescript in November 1986 to the Community of Christ Library-Archives.

5William H. Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ (Monongahela, Pa.: Church of Jesus Christ, 1945), 32.

6Ibid., 50.

7Ibid., 54, 64; Entz, “Zion Valley,” 102–3.
some members began to question his revelations. George Barnes had been with the Bickertonites as early as 1851, had been recognized as a prophet in the Church since 1863, and headed a congregation in Coal Valley, Pennsylvania. He became uneasy about Bickerton’s visions for an Indian mission and Stake of Zion in the West. According to Cadman’s history, Barnes argued that it was the “false revelations given to the church in its rise”—meaning earlier doubts about the validity of Bickerton’s revelations—“which had caused him to stumble. He contended that our revelations were imperfect, and that we ought to hear the voice of God.” Because Barnes had defied church authority and could not be reconciled, Bickerton had no choice but to “separate from the Church” (excommunicate) Barnes and his followers. Barnes became the leader of his own Mormon sect and remained independent, but out of Bickerton’s sight, for the next ten years.

In 1874 Bickerton had a revelatory experience showing him that the gathering was to take place in Stafford County, Kansas, near the borders of Indian Territory. Bickerton felt his vision confirmed in late 1874 when, on a scouting mission to western Kansas, he drove a symbolic “stake of Zion” into the ground of his future colony. He returned to Pennsylvania and, overcoming opposition voices, organized a group of between thirty-five and forty families and led the colony that established Zion Valley, Kansas, in April 1875. Initially the colony suffered tremendously from the elements and from dissenting Saints who remained behind in Pennsylvania. Bickerton persevered, dissenters were purged, and the colony became a success. However, while his followers openly endorsed the doctrine of the gathering, many chose to remain behind in Pennsylvania. The result was a divided church with Zion Valley becoming headquarters of the western branch and West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, becoming headquarters for

8Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 66. Cadman refers to Barnes’s church as the “Rock Run Branch.”
9Ibid.
10Although exact membership figures are not known, William Bickerton is quoted in St. John County Capital, November 14, 1889, as saying that “five wagons landed here April 3, 75 others came by RR oxen arrived on the 17th May, each had two men and a yoke of oxen.” Apparently a group of ten men came overland from Wilson County, Kansas, in early April and made arrangements for the remaining families who arrived via railroad connection in Great Bend.
William Cadman, leader of an important Bickertonite schism in Kansas.
Within a few years, Zion Valley's prosperity attracted enough other settlers that it lost its identity as a religious colony. In 1879 Zion Valley reorganized as the secular town of St. John and won the battle to become Stafford County's seat. Bickerton had planned all along for Zion Valley to be a base from which he could dispatch missionaries into Indian Territory and the secularization of the town made little difference to his goals. However, secularizing Zion Valley was anathema to others. William Cadman, who presided over the eastern branch, was adamant that the colony “was the place of the gathering; and that the Saints should gather to it, and none but the Saints, and
that there should be no speculation there, and that it was a spiritual gathering and not a temporal gathering.”

William Bickerton had overcome opposition and dissent before and gave little heed to Cadman’s strictures.

As the year 1880 opened, Bickerton, who turned sixty-five that year, returned to his original mission and began making arrangements to use the Church’s annual summer conference as a launching point for sending missionaries to Indian Territory. What he did not suspect was that his most difficult trial in the West had yet to begin.

In the spring of 1880, William Bickerton, accompanied by forty-two-year-old James Taylor, a farmer, and Taylor’s twenty-nine-year-old wife, Tryphena Singleton Taylor, spent three weeks visiting the home of every Saint in Stafford County, asking them to confirm their commitment to support God’s mission to the Lamanites. However, in April, plans for that mission hit an unexpected snag when Taylor suddenly broke from Bickerton and accused the prophet, either in a Church meeting or in a setting in which Church members rapidly learned about it, of “causing a separation in his family,” meaning that he suspected his wife and Bickerton of adultery.

The accusation revived old factions and polarized Church membership. Bickerton was mortified.

Entz, “Zion Valley,” 103–17; Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 75.

The Taylors, originally from Tennessee, had moved to Wilson County, Kansas, near Parsons, and converted to the Bickertonite Church in 1873 with several other local residents when John Stevenson, a Bickertonite missionary, demonstrated the spiritual gift of healing in the area. The Taylors, who had two daughters, were among the original 1875 Zion Valley settlers. Between 1875 and 1879, as Bickerton later recalled, “Mrs. Taylor was taken very sick with lung fever, so there seemed no chance of her living and she gave up all hope. She bade her husband and all the brothers and sisters farewell and told them what to do with the children. I went to the edge of the creek and felt by the spirit of God that she would be healed. I came up to the house and found all standing around her bed. I asked her if she had faith in Christ, and she said yes; I took her by the hand and commanded her to arise and be made whole. She arose and went through the house glorifying God, and from that time was healed.” “Bickerton’s Letter,” St. John County Capital, November 14, 1889, 1. The original letter used commas throughout instead of periods. I have silently substituted periods. If
In 1875, as Zion Valley was being founded, Eli Kendall, George Baker, and other Saints who eventually migrated to Kansas from the West Virginia branch of the church had expressed reservations about Bickerton’s prophecies for a western branch. Now in 1880 they believed that their doubts were confirmed and gave immediate credence to Taylor’s complaint. In early May, Kendall led a dissenting bloc that attempted to suspend William Bickerton from all privileges within the church. Bickerton protested that he was innocent and denied that Kendall had any authority to displace him from his leadership positions. Accordingly, Bickerton along with Counselors Charles Brown and Arthur Bickerton, William’s brother, proceeded with business as usual and declared that the scheduled July conference would take place as initially planned.\(^{13}\)

William Cadman, who presided from Pennsylvania over the eastern branch of the church, had announced in April that he would attend the summer conference in St. John. This was Cadman’s first trip to the western branch and the site of the former Zion Valley colony. It may have been sheer happenstance that his visit coincided with Taylor’s accusations, but Cadman condoned the charges and supported Kendall’s actions in stripping Bickerton of his office. In June Cadman directed Kendall’s faction to speak with Bickerton in an attempt to persuade the Church president to repent of his alleged sins. Kendall, accompanied by Elder John McKewan, a forty-four-year-old farmer, originally from Ireland, and Elder Sam Campbell, a forty-three-year-old farmer,\(^{14}\) followed through with Cadman’s request and met with Bickerton. However, Kendall and his colleagues

Tryphena Taylor was a true believer, which she seems to have been, then she had reason to be grateful and solicitous toward William Bickerton. That may have been enough to spark feelings of jealousy from James Taylor.

\(^{13}\)Cadman, *A History of the Church of Jesus Christ*, 77; William Bickerton, “Conference,” *St. John Advance*, June 19, 1880, 2; “Conference,” *St. John Advance*, June 26, 1880, 3; J. S. Weeks, “St. John, Kas., Aug. 13th, 1887,” *St. John County Capital*, August 18, 1887, 4. No one accused Bickerton of anything other than an adulterous affair. There is no evidence suggesting that Bickerton, like Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, was commencing clandestine plural marriage. However, if he were, it never advanced beyond this single incident.

\(^{14}\)Campbell, along with Eli Kendall, had been a member of the Church’s West Virginia branch at Wheeling, where he was a coal miner. He
had preconceived notions of Bickerton’s guilt and were unwilling to openly discuss the issue. Bickerton would not confess to what he held were false allegations so Kendall’s group walked away without reaching an accord. After his encounter with Bickerton, Kendall proclaimed, “We, being officers of the church and appointed by the church to see them, we did so, and they are not reconciled.”\textsuperscript{15} Nevertheless, since the Saints who had migrated to Kansas from Pennsylvania held a majority of the membership and continued to support their president, Bickerton felt confident in proceeding with the July 4 conference as scheduled.

Taylor’s accusations effectively divided the Church, which left Bickerton and Cadman to preside over rival July conferences in St. John. Bickerton ignored his adversaries and used his assembly to arrange for missionaries to depart for Indian Territory.\textsuperscript{16} Cadman, on the other hand, made the disagreement the whole agenda for his conference, denounced Bickerton, and asserted his own presidency over the entire Church. Up to this point, the accusations of adultery had largely remained an internal Church affair; but to legitimate his own authority, Cadman issued a public notice of the controversy’s full particulars. He charged that Bickerton had “willfully and knowingly walked in such a way as has brought a division in the family of Brother James Taylor, also a disgrace upon the family, also a reproach upon the church of Jesus Christ and a disturbance among the Saints.” St. John’s secular affairs and focus on gaining the county seat had seemingly taken precedence over the spiritual concerns of the old Zion Valley colony, and this displeased Cadman. He also accused Bickerton of “walking in such a way that you have put a hindrance in the way of the work of God in this place, and have caused some of the Saints to err and some to do things causing their separation from the church.” Cadman’s chief concern was the fact that most of the Kansas Saints faithfully stood behind their prophet despite Cadman’s claims of having “disrobed” Bickerton “of all powers and offices of the Church of Jesus Christ” and excluded him from participation in Church affairs. However, because many of the Saints refused to coun-

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and his wife, Rachel, age thirty-eight, had a young son and daughter.


\textsuperscript{16}The missionaries Bickerton selected to travel to Indian Territory included himself, Samuel Work, and Silas Busby.
tenance the charges, Cadman called for a public meeting in St. John at which both sides could air their grievances.¹⁷

No one expressed any concern for Tryphena Taylor’s version of events, and she apparently left no record of it. From Bickerton’s perspective, there was nothing to ask, while Cadman was interested in little beyond validating her husband’s allegations. However, Cadman’s public condemnation of Bickerton incensed the Saints who remained faithful to their prophet and encouraged them to rally in his support. Robert Cardwell and Duncan Bell¹⁸ openly announced, “We can testify that we have known William Bickerton for a period of ten years. We have never known him to say an ill-begotten word to any lady and wherever he went to preach the gospel he always found favor with the people, both men and women and aided the church accordingly.” These men felt that it was inappropriate and unseemly to publicize internal church disputes. They condemned Cadman for overstepping his authority but simultaneously wanted everyone to know that they maintained open minds and were willing to listen to all opinions: “We are not prepared to say which side is right,” the pair concluded, “but if there is a spark of honesty left with either side the Lord will prosper them and bring them to the front.” Despite their objectivity, Cardwell and Bell feared that, if Cadman had the temerity to persist in his goal of a public debate, no one could predict where the division might end.¹⁹

Ignoring these appeals to let God decide the truth, Cadman proceeded with a public inquiry. On July 15 local citizens William R. Hoole and Frank Cox, who had no affiliation with the Church,

¹⁸Cardwell, originally from Ireland, was a forty-two-year-old farmer who had been a coal miner before relocating to Kansas. A Bickertonite elder, he was married to thirty-four-year-old Eliza Bickerton, William and Doratha Bickerton’s daughter, and the couple had three children. The 1880 federal census shows William as a boarder in the Cardwell home. Even without the family connection, this would not be unusual, since Charlotte disliked Kansas and came only for visits, so Bickerton often lived with his congregants. Duncan Bell, also an elder and a former coal miner, was a thirty-year-old farmer, originally from Scotland. He and his wife, Jane, age twenty-five, were the parents of a son and a daughter.
agreed to preside as chairman and secretary respectively at an informal investigation. Cadman assumed the role of prosecutor. Bickerton dismissed Cadman’s denunciations and refused to attend lest his participation lend credibility to the proceedings, although a number of his supporters were present. Nevertheless, the “grave and serious charges that had been preferred [sic] against the head of the Mormon church” created a public sensation in St. John, and the inquest went forward as if in a true court of law. Cadman called twenty witnesses, all of whom were local residents who lived near Bickerton’s home.20

After eight hours of questioning, people with Church affiliations were asked to retire and the case was turned over to a jury of “disinterested” citizens for deliberation. The members of this ad hoc jury spent thirty minutes considering the charges before reaching a verdict. They decided: “we do not believe that Wm. Bickerton and Mrs. James Taylor have been guilty of any criminal intimacy.” While this decision favored Bickerton, the jury added a reservation: “We do believe that said William Bickerton has acted in such a manner as to cause a division of the family of James Taylor, and disturb the society in this neighborhood.” Allowing a jury of outsiders to decide an internal Church issue was indelicate under any circumstances and certainly not part of official Church doctrine. Despite the split decision, William Cadman found the public dismissal of the adultery charges against Bickerton unacceptable. He immediately returned home to shore up his support in Pennsylvania; and at a late July conference held in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, Cadman formally separated Bickerton and his followers from the eastern branch of the church and denied the authority of Bickerton’s July 4 conference in St. John. Forty-four-year-old Elizabeth Cadman thereupon spoke in tongues saying, “Verily, verily, they are rejected of me, saith the God of

20 Although these proceedings took a legal form, it is not clear whether the witnesses testified under oath. The Church’s declaration of “Faith and Doctrines” claimed the right to “deal with its members . . . on disorderly conduct, or the violation of the commandments” but its remedies were only excommunication and withdrawn fellowship, not “life or limb,” property, or “any physical punishment.” The inquiry was stretching this definition by including non-members as witnesses, but otherwise remained within its own rules.
Heaven.”

While Cadman had been conducting his tribunal in Pennsylvania, Bickerton had been shoring up his own support among the Saints in Kansas with a conference. Charles Brown led the gathering and informed the group that he “had known Wm. Bickerton for thirty years [and] had never heard anything of an immoral character coming from him during that period.” The Church president, said Brown, had always behaved as befitting “the head of a Christian church, and we are satisfied that charges like these coming from such a source, must fall to the ground.” Brown compared Cadman’s attempt to disrobe Bickerton to the punishments levied against Christ and asked rhetorically: “Is it any wonder that leaders should be the victims of unwarranted persecution in these latter days, when we are to believe strange things must happen.” During the three-day Church conference focused on the accusations, Bickerton called four witnesses who corroborated his statement of innocence against charges of adultery. As to the denunciation that he had brought reproach upon the church, Bickerton responded that he “had lived in this locality for six years and . . . no one could be found to testify of conduct reflecting upon him. Such being the case, wherein could the church be disgraced?”

The group agreed that, since competent witnesses were lacking, only divine revelation could prove or disprove the allegations. In this case, “the vote stood two for, and two against. The first two by a majority without any manifestation of the power of God, and the next two in his favor, the power of God came down and testified he was justi-

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21 Frank Cox and W. R. Hoole, “Ed. Advance,” St. John Advance, July 24, 1880, 3; Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 78. Belief in the New Testament spiritual gifts was part of the Church’s declaration of “Faith and Doctrines,” and Cadman’s book is replete with references to various Church members speaking in tongues.

22 Probably Bickerton’s most loyal follower, in 1880 Brown, a former coal miner in Pennsylvania, was a fifty-seven-year-old Kansas farmer. He and his wife, Jane, age fifty-one, had three sons and three daughters. Brown had joined Bickerton’s church in 1851 and served as Bickerton’s first counselor until Brown’s death in 1887. (J. S. Weeks replaced him.) Brown made frequent mission trips to Indian Territory and never questioned Bickerton’s authority over the Church.
fied.” Because Bickerton and his counselors understood that they had received their “calling into the church from God,” they refused to recognize Cadman’s authority to disrobe them “of an earnest labor in the field of christianity for thirty-five years, upon such flimsy charges, and coming from such ungodly Christians.” In concluding the deliberations they attributed the indictment to “jealousy corroding every thought and blasting all love’s paradise.”

Although local residents in Kansas had declared William Bickerton innocent of adultery, their perception of the disturbance among the Saints had become a very real burden. A disagreement that had started as a family dispute between James and Tryphena Taylor escalated into a conflict that polarized families and divided the Church in Pennsylvania from that in Kansas. Bickerton presided over the Zion Valley Church in St. John, Kansas, and a small faction of loyal supporters in Pennsylvania, while Cadman presided over the...

23There was no “vote” in the conventional sense. Rather, it seems that Church members would go into an intense prayer group until one or more members began speaking in tongues, which would be considered a “vote” from God. Cadman’s book contains many descriptions of similar meetings. In this case, two people spoke against Bickerton, but the group decided that the “power of God” had not been bestowed upon them (they had not truly received the gift of tongues) and their vote was rejected. The two speaking in favor of Bickerton were deemed to have the legitimate power of God, so their vote was accepted. Since no one else at the meeting received the gift of tongues, no other “votes” were recorded.

24“Wm. Bickerton’s Answer,” St. John Advance, July 24, 1880, 3. Bickerton’s refusal to accept any outside judgment upon him accorded with his belief system, and in this he was uncompromising. Toward the end of his life he wrote, “I do not believe in sectarian interpretation. God’s way is perfect.” Bickerton, “Testimony, June 1903,” 5.

25William Bickerton’s second wife, Charlotte, said nothing publicly during the controversy; but in August 1880 she sued Bickerton for divorce (grounds not recorded). The Bickertons may have had marital problems predating the adultery accusation since Bickerton, “Testimony, June 1903,” 12, stated that, when he originally moved to Kansas in 1875, he turned over the deed of the meetinghouse in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, to the Church “so my wife could not take any advantage of the Church House.” James and Tryphena’s dispute continued with no further reference to Bickerton, concluding in Tryphena’s scandalous 1882 civil divorce of James (again, grounds not recorded). William Bickerton v. Charlotte Bickerton, Case
main body of the Church from West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, while maintaining a small faction of loyal supporters in Kansas. Since neither side sought reconciliation, the battle focused on control of the meetinghouse in St. John. Cadman’s group sued in the Ninth Judicial District Court for possession of the sanctuary. Bickerton supporter Jacob Beitler, a fifty-seven-year-old farmer in St. John, who had advanced the Church a large share of the construction costs, called in his loan in August 1880.  

A meager harvest resulting from a drought during the previous season had left most of the Saints in debt. Neither group had enough money to retire the mortgage, so the court ordered the building sold at a sheriff’s auction on November 3, 1880. Beitler took personal possession of the building at the auction and announced plans to move it to a Main Street location closer to the town’s central square. Originally constructed in 1878, it was a simple wooden-frame structure measuring 32x50 feet and 14 feet high. He moved it in early April 1881, but because he retained a loyalty to Bickerton, Bickerton’s group continued to worship there, even though it was now privately owned.  

In April 1881 Bickerton held a public conference in St. John in which he lectured the townsfolk on his organization and how he be-
lieved Brigham Young’s apostasy had led to his own calling. According to the *St. John Advance’s* report, Bickerton pointed out to St. John’s rapidly growing non-Mormon population that his Saints rejected polygamy and had no connection to the Utah Mormons or their practices. His followers did “not attempt to force their religion on any person,” maintained the respect of their fellow residents, and suffered no untoward persecution for their beliefs. “Their religion,” commented editor William R. Hoole, who knew Bickerton well and was friendly toward him, “although somewhat singular, is their own by right and is not interfered with by the community. They always extend a cordial invitation to all classes to attend their meetings and are very courteous in their treatment of strangers.”

While Bickerton thus cemented cordial relations with his non-Mormon neighbors, he could not boast of a similar harmony in his dealings with Cadman’s followers. He would have preferred to restore harmony among all the Saints, but such a desire was unattainable as long as neither side would acknowledge the legitimacy of the other’s church. Accordingly, both sides worked against each other. While William and Arthur Bickerton returned to Pennsylvania “to gather together the Latter Day Saints” in that region, William Cadman came out to St. John to accomplish the same end.

Although Cadman traveled to Kansas for the purpose of holding a conference and solidifying his own support, his arrival accomplished little beyond stirring up smoldering hostilities. In June 1881, the Ninth Judicial District Court confirmed the sale of the church building to Jacob Beitler, and Cadman’s faction responded by appeal-

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28“The Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ,” *St. John Advance*, May 6, 1881, 2; William R. Hoole, Editorial, ibid., August 26, 1881, 2. Hoole, then thirty-five, was a leading citizen of St. John, a prominent landowner, and the town’s future mayor (elected 1885). He was not a Bickertonite and may have been a Methodist like the majority of St. John’s population.

29William Bickerton, “To All Whom It May Concern,” *St. John Advance*, May 6, 1881. Arthur Bickerton remained in the East; and while he continued to support his brother’s ministry, he soon dropped out of Church affairs.
ing the decision. The case plodded along for a year, and the continued bickering disgraced both sides in the eyes of the local populace. “We presume,” editorialized Hoole in the Advance on November 25, 1881, “these people are Christians [sic], and ‘by their works ye shall know them.’ We think they should settle this matter by compromise of some kind, and not drag any more of their private scandals before the public.”30 In June 1882 the court dismissed the appeal and ordered both sides to split the court costs. Fed up with the legal wrangling, Beitler in August sold the Zion Valley Church and lot to Elijah and Frank Swartz,31 who announced plans to convert the sanctuary into a hardware store. The brothers relocated the building to a lot on the town square. The former church lot became a lumber storage area until the Swartz brothers began the construction of a house on the site a few months later.32

St. John, the town that had emerged from the religious colony of Zion Valley, was now a community without a church. “Are we spiritually digressing? It looks that way,” bemoaned the local press. “A church was the first building ever erected here, but the rush of business has necessitated its conversion into a business house. Let us not in our eagerness for this world’s gains, forget the importance of our

31The Swartz brothers had moved to St. John from Ohio in the early 1880s. Businessmen who sold lumber and hardware, they had no affiliation with either Bickerton or Cadman. According to the 1880 census, Frank was thirty-two, but Elijah does not appear in that census.
32“Town and Country,” St. John Advance, August 4, 1882, 3; “Town and Country,” ibid., September 21, 1882, 3; “Town and Country,” ibid., September 28, 1882, 3; “Town and Country,” ibid., November 30, 1882, 2; Jacob Beitler v. The Church of Jesus Christ, Case No. 28, June 14, 1881; The Church of Jesus Christ v. Jacob Beitler and James Jenkins, Case No. 28, December 14, 1881; The Church of Jesus Christ v. Jacob Beitler, Charles Brown, and Joseph Astin, Case No. 89, December 15, 1881; all three in Stafford County, Ninth Judicial District Court, Trial Docket, Vol. A, 1880–88, Kansas State Historical Society Archives. During Cadman’s July conference, Eli Kendall was promoted from president of the western branch to first counselor under Cadman, George Kendall replaced Eli as president of the western branch, and Cadman was sustained as Church president. Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 85.
spiritual welfare.” Perhaps feeling a bit guilty, the Swartz brothers volunteered twenty-five dollars to any religious organization willing to construct a house of worship in St. John, but neither faction of Saints stepped forward to claim the money and rebuild its church.33

Both the Bickerton and Cadman factions continued holding meetings in the town hall or in private homes and heeded Hoole’s admonition to keep their disagreements out of the public eye. Cadman, who now alleged that the Church had abandoned plans for an Indian Mission as early as 1869, returned to St. John for conferences in 1884 and again in 1886, but he and his Kansas followers took pains to attract no attention. Bickerton’s Saints were more active and issued invitations for the general public to participate in their meetings. They also worked to differentiate themselves from the LDS Church in Salt Lake City. For example, in 1885 an editorialist made the facetious remark that all Latter-day Saints were polygamists. Elder J. S. Weeks, who had succeeded Arthur Bickerton as William Bickerton’s second counselor, promptly wrote a letter to the editor announcing that there was a clear distinction between the Bickertonites and others who professed to follow the teachings of Joseph Smith. The Utah “Mormons are not in any sense of the word entitled to the name of Saints, for they have apostatized from the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and adopted in its stead the Gospel of B. Young. Joseph Smith was not the author of polygamy.”34

Despite the split within the Bickertonite Church and the growing concern that they might be associated with the LDS Church, Bickerton’s followers remained committed to the primary mission that brought them to Kansas in the first place, ministering to the Lamanites. Accompanied by Silas Busby and Samuel Work, Bickerton led the 1880 mission to Indian Territory. The task had a cathartic ef-

33“A Church,” St. John Advance, November 2, 1882, 3.
fect on Bickerton, who rejoiced in a modest success. “They were very prejudiced when I first began teaching the Book of Mormon,” Bickerton reminisced, “but by the time I had finished with my discourse, they were very kind, as the Lord had worked upon them in his own way.” While the number of converts within Indian Territory was never very large, Bickerton maintained his conviction that the mission was God’s will. He wrote, “I never felt more in the power than while preaching the gospel of Christ in that country.” Busby married an Indian woman and continued the Bickertonite mission to the Cherokee Nation from his home on Cottonwood Creek near Caney in Montgomery County. Bickerton and Work, however, returned to Stafford County and carried on their labors from St. John.

Life for the Bickertonites had settled down considerably. However, the same did not hold true for the Pennsylvania Saints because, in 1885, an old contender for their loyalties reentered their lives. In 1885 John E. Baxendall and Charles Price, both of whom had joined George Barnes when he separated from Bickerton’s church in 1873, became convinced of the divinity of the Doctrine and Covenants and contacted LDS President John Taylor in Salt Lake City asking for more information. Taylor forwarded the request to the president of the Northwestern States Mission, William Moroni Palmer. Palmer in turn dispatched Elders Victor Emanuel Bean and William W. Allen, missionaries in Indiana, to Coal Valley, Pennsylvania, to meet with members of Barnes’s sect. Barnes welcomed the missionaries and enlightened them on the history of the Church of Jesus Christ, including the various schisms that had taken place since the Church’s founding.

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35Bickerton, “Testimony, June 1903,” 5–6. Since the Bickerton and Cadman branches were reunited by 1903, I interpret this statement as Bickerton’s reminder to the Cadman group that he had been doing God’s work while they had been wrangling over leadership.

36Bickerton became the proprietor of the City Hotel in St. John. In addition to his Church duties, which included a mission to New Mexico, he spent the next few years building up his business. Samuel Work assisted in managing the hotel. St. John Advance, May 3, 1883, 3; “Town and Country,” ibid., August 30, 1883, 3; “Town and Country,” ibid., January 3, 1884, 3.

37Palmer, then thirty-nine, had been born in Iowa in 1846 and had three wives: Mary Ann Mellor, Christina Helen Larson, and Mary Ann Mills.
This history clearly interested Bean and Allen because, after ministering to Barnes’s small group, they made a point of visiting both the Bickerton and Cadman factions. Arthur and Thomas Bickerton, William’s brothers, willingly met with the missionaries and, according to Bean, informed them that they “were very much opposed to polygamy and said that if it were not for that principle they would gladly be one with us.” Plural marriage remained a significant point of contention, and Bean specifically noted that Bickerton’s son and Elizabeth Cadman both refused to countenance their presence because of it. As the two elders prepared to depart, Arthur Bickerton informed Bean that “the Cadman branch the Sunday before spoke in very bitter terms against us and denounced the Utah people.”

The denunciation had little impact on Bean and Allen’s primary mission, and the pair succeeded in convincing George Barnes’s sect to affiliate with the LDS Church. More important, however, through their discussions they learned of the Zion Valley colony in Kansas and the adultery accusations that had caused the split between Bickerton and Cadman. The missionaries forwarded this information to Palmer; and after analyzing their report, Palmer joined Bean in 1886 on a second visit to Pennsylvania. Together they ministered to Barnes’s sect; and on May 18, 1886, Palmer baptized Barnes and, two days later, ordained him an elder in the New England, Pennsylvania, Branch.

The news of several contentious splinter factions in Kansas intrigued Palmer, which led him in November to make a brief visit to St. John. “Many Bickertonites live at this place,” Palmer recorded in his diary, “and I was to see what could be done among them.” While he made little headway in a personal meeting with Bickerton, Palmer dis-

38 Victor Emanuel Bean, Journals, 1884–89, Vol. 4:4, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). See also ibid., 3:90–107 (1885); Eli Kendall, “The Other Side,” St. John Weekly News, July 19, 1889, 2. Bean, age twenty-one in 1885, was from Richfield, Utah. His companion, William Allen, was thirty-one and from Nephi, Utah.


covered that the ongoing rivalry between Bickerton and Cadman left many of their followers disillusioned. He was interested in converting the lot of them but recognized that those who followed Cadman would be likely to arouse the ire of the entire community. Palmer also understood that a mission to the Kansas Bickertonites would take time because this “group of professed saints are so scattered that it would be impossible to get them stirred up and to get them all to meet in side of a week or 10 days.” Since he had but a few days till his train ticket expired, Palmer resigned himself to describing the situation in a long report to the otherwise unidentified “Pres. Morgan” (possibly John H. Morgan, who was then a member of the First Council of the Seventy). Palmer urged that “2 experienced Elders be sent there at once to stir them up.”

Bickerton paid little heed to the long-term implications of Palmer’s short visit. Instead he continued focusing on the Indian Mission and, in 1886, asked the James Miskin family to undertake the next mission to Indian Territory. At a Christmas celebration in the Miskin home, Bickerton rejoiced over their success in delivering God’s “glorious message to the fallen sons and daughters of Adams race.”

Palmer made good on his pledge to “stir up” the Saints, and Bickerton’s 1886 Christmas celebration was his last peaceful one. In 1887 LDS Church president John Taylor directed Palmer to add

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41 Palmer, Diary, November 25, 1886. Morgan (1842–94) had been president of the Southern States Mission. The First Council of the Seventy then had primary responsibility for calling missionaries.

42 J. S. Weeks, “St. John, Kansas, December 27, 1886,” St. John Sun, December 30, 1886, 3. The Miskin family departed for Indian Territory in late April 1887. Wide Awake, “Sand Hill Farm,” St. John Advance, May 5, 1887, 1; Arthur R. Miskin and Amelia L. Moore Miskin, “Notes on Our Early Life,” n.d., typescript, 4, LDS Church Archives. The Miskins, English immigrants from Guernsey Island, moved to Kansas in 1874 so James could work as a surveyor for the newly organizing Stafford County. They had one of five established homesteads when Bickerton founded Zion Valley in 1875 and were his first converts in Stafford County. In 1886, James was forty-two and Amelia was thirty-nine. Their fourth child was born while they were on their mission.
Kansas to the Northwestern States Mission; and in June, Palmer dispatched D. E. Harris and J. O. Swenson to start proselytizing among the Bickerton and Cadman sects in St. John. The arrival of the two elders provoked an immediate and negative response. Bickerton reportedly advised “all his members not to let the Salt Lake Mormons, as the LDS Missionaries were called by the Bickertonites, in their homes.”

Bickerton’s second counselor, J. S. Weeks, was aware that “many honest people shun us as they would the ‘Upas tree’ or the ‘black plague,’ for fear that we are part of the same church, which has so long been conspicuous because of their belief in and practice of polygamy.” He therefore wanted everyone in St. John to understand that the Church of Jesus Christ “and the Utah Mormons are antipodes in Theological belief.” Weeks quoted Jacob 2:27 from the Book of Mormon (a stiff denunciation of polygamy) and the marriage service used during Joseph Smith’s lifetime as doctrinal proof against plural marriage. Having made clear his organization’s opposition to this fundamental LDS belief, Weeks stated that “we stand for original Mormonism and want none of Brigham’s addendums.”

Palmer returned to St. John in July and joined the LDS missionaries in preaching at a local schoolhouse known as Blake’s Hall. Their sermons attracted respectable crowds, and the local audience found them to be “smooth and pleasant talkers.” However, the St. John Advance reporter scoffed at their efforts and recorded, “As to their success in the shape of new converts, we have not learned of anything worth mentioning.” However, Palmer’s immediate goal was not the general public. His objective was to convert former Zion Valley colo-

43A more exact date is not available, but it had to have been before John Taylor’s death on July 25, 1887.
44William B. Astin, “Synopsis of the Life of Joseph Astin,” n.d., typescript, 2, LDS Church Archives. See also Palmer, Diary, July 12, 1887.
45J. S. Weeks, “A Letter,” St. John County Capital, June 24, 1887, 4. Weeks quoted the marriage service as follows: “You both mutually agree to be each others [sic] companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other and from all others, during your lives.” See also J. S. Weeks, “St. John, Kansas, June the 21, 1887,” St. John Sun, June 23, 1887, 3. The LDS mission in St. John was soon added to the Indian Territory Mission.
46St. John Advance, July 19, 1887, 3.
nists who already were conversant with the Book of Mormon. Members of Bickerton’s faction remained fiercely loyal to their prophet, but members of Cadman’s sect had lost their focus and primary reason for being in the West after Cadman had abandoned the Indian Mission. Palmer was a guest in Eli Kendall’s home during his visit to St. John; and on July 14, 1887, he escorted Eli and George Kendall, along with several other members of Cadman’s sect, to Rattlesnake Creek and baptized them into the LDS Church. The Kendalls had been leaders of Cadman’s western branch, and losing them represented a serious blow that forced Cadman to make another visit to Kansas.

The presence of the Utah elders put both Bickerton’s and Cadman’s factions on the defensive, but their individual responses reflected the organizational strength of the two Bickertonite sects in Kansas. In June 1887 John Williams issued a banal statement giving the position of Cadman’s church in Kansas. Williams did not make a doctrinal argument; instead he faulted Bickerton for the attrition of members to the LDS Church. His logic came from the belief that Bickerton had no authority to represent himself as a religious leader because the church “had lawfully expelled” him “for disorderly conduct.”

In contrast, J. S. Weeks emerged as an effective spokesman for Bickerton’s group. He disregarded Williams’s charges and used the Church’s 1887 summer conference in St. John as a platform to delineate the differences between Bickerton’s organization and the Utah Mormons. Weeks insisted that Bickerton’s Church of Jesus Christ rather than the Utah LDS Church was the true inheritor of the church organized in 1830 “by Joseph Smith, the Martyr.” When Smith and his brother were killed, many Saints who “had not lived as near God as they ought and therefore were not competent judges in Spiritual things as well as many other careless ones, who were not properly informed in church order, followed the leadership of Brigham Young.” Weeks believed that the emergence of polygamy proved that the

47 Palmer, Diary, July 12–14, 1887.
48 J. D. Williams, “A Letter,” St. John County Capital, June 30, 1887, 4. Williams, age forty-three, came from Ohio and was baptized into Bickerton’s Church in 1873 when he made a trip through Ohio. He settled in Bickerton’s Zion Valley colony in 1877 but after 1880 split from Bickerton and joined Cadman’s faction of the Church.
Saints had erred in following Young and pointed out that “the world knows the result” of this pernicious practice. Sidney Rigdon “had the only authority of presidency that was in existence at that time, but because he stood in the way of those wicked men who were determined to get control of the church, in order that they might gratify the lusts of the flesh,” they drove him out. Weeks described Rigdon’s Pittsburgh ministry, Bickerton’s calling as Joseph Smith’s successor, and the relocation of the Church headquarters to Zion Valley. His only reference to Cadman was an acknowledgment that “internal dissensions, which were brought about by men who were not stable in doctrine, and who have since fallen away from the church,” adversely affected the organization’s progress. However, Weeks was pleased to report that as “of late the Lord has manifested to us that the time to favor Zion had come and that he would build us up.”

While Bickerton’s followers felt secure enough in their position to face the LDS missionaries directly, Cadman’s supporters did not. Cadman resented Bickerton’s tenacity in Kansas. Cadman’s ongoing smear campaign against the man he had “disrobed” was discrediting the origin of his own organization and providing the Mormon elders with additional arguments to lure away Cadman’s own Church members. Through a letter published in the local St. John newspapers Cadman renewed the old adultery charges against Bickerton and challenged Weeks, “If you can successfully defend his conduct, you have only another to defend, which is the Devil. When you get both accomplished I will give you a written recommendation to old Belzibub [sic] that the surrender position is on you.” Cadman dismissed Weeks’s contention that polygamy had been one of Young’s inventions and adopted the stance of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) that Smith had authorized it but, “pronounced it a cursed doctrine, before he died. They admit fairly and squarely that he gave the revelation, but afterwards repented and declared it was of the Devil.” Continuing his tirade, Cadman questioned Rigdon’s claims to succeed Smith and accused: The “facts are that Sydney [sic] Rigdon sank as far in religious fanaticism as any other man that ever lived, and associating his name with your [Bickerton’s] bad conduct don’t help you one bit.” Cadman remained

fixated upon the adultery accusations and alleged that Bickerton was a philanderer who had disavowed plural marriage and the LDS Church in 1852 because “polygamy, bad as it is, places some restraints on sexuality, therefore it did not meet with” his approbation.  

Bickerton reacted to Cadman’s diatribe by filing a libel suit against him in civil court but did not attempt to answer the historical and doctrinal arguments. In contrast, Weeks felt compelled to pen a full rebuttal to the indictment. Weeks knew that his church president rarely acknowledged those whom he believed had apostatized and questioned why Cadman should be so bitter, when “neither Wm. Bickerton or his asociaries [sic] have made any public attack either directly or indirectly on Mr. Cadman or his associates.” He reprimanded Cadman for his excessive vexation over Bickerton’s Church, “for if we are not of God we will fall, and if so be that we are of God your sarcasm and railing will only bring condemnation on your own head.” In response to the resurrected adultery charges, Weeks proclaimed, “many good men from righteous Able [sic] down to Wm. Bickerton have been lied about and had their characters blackened by such men as you, and you can depend upon it that I will stand by them as far as my strength and knowledge may extend in all good things.”

Weeks dismissed Cadman’s accusation that Smith had introduced plural marriage into the faith and drew on his RLDS acquaintances to support his position. “I have seen and conversed with scores of men and women, who were intimate with Joseph Smith, who positively deny that Joseph . . . taught, authorized, or in any way sanctioned either spiritual wifery or polygamy.” He asserted that it was Cadman’s insecurity in his own position that led Cadman to question Rigdon’s authority to baptize Bickerton. Since “you have befouled Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon,” Weeks admonished, “and made sport of Bickerton’s calling and ordination . . . will you be kind enough to tell the public where you got your authority, (if you have any?).” This was Weeks’s strongest argument against

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51 J. S. Weeks, “St. John, Kas., Aug. 13th, 1887,” St. John County Capital, August 18, 1887, 4. Bickerton also filed suit against James Taylor and the newspapers for publishing Cadman’s libelous letter. Both suits were either withdrawn or dismissed.
Cadman because Cadman had been “baptized in 1859 under the authority of William Bickerton” and had received all his “ordinances under the same authority.” He knew that Cadman had administered the sacrament to Bickerton in the past and quoted 3 Nephi 18:28 to counter Cadman’s assertion that Bickerton was unworthy to remain within the church. Weeks scornfully remarked that, when Cadman had done this, he was ignorant either “of your duty or of Bickerton’s true character.” Otherwise, Weeks concluded, Cadman “was negligent in duty, or Bickerton was not what you represent him to have been.”

The LDS missionaries in St. John said nothing throughout this exchange and remained on the sidelines while the two factions tore at each other. Eventually the combatants realized that venting their feelings openly did little to enhance their reputation within the town, so the public side of the debate quieted down after August. Cadman all but conceded the Kansas branch of the Church to his rivals and withdrew to his Pennsylvania stronghold, while Bickerton dispatched Weeks to spend the winter ministering in Indian Territory. The wrangling between the two factions quieted with Cadman’s departure, which allowed the LDS Church to step in and fill the void. In 1888 Elder Heber Bennion of Taylorsville, Utah, joined the mission in St. John, and with his arrival, LDS proselytizing activities escalated considerably. Bennion delivered a series of discourses at the Stafford County courthouse on the “schisms among the Latter Day Saints” and issued invitations to the followers of both William Bickerton and William Cadman to debate the topic. Apparently Bickerton and a few of his devotees accepted Bennion’s challenge, because the reporter for the County Capital remarked, “An exciting controversy took place at the court house last Saturday evening, between the Latter Day Saints of this community, and a Mormon Elder from Utah.” No journalist re-

52 Ibid. 3 Nephi 18:28 reads: “And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall administer it.”

53 Heber Bennion (1858–1932) was thirty when he joined the mission in St. John. His father, John Bennion, was a sheep rancher north of Taylorsville, Utah, and Heber would eventually become bishop of Taylorsville Ward.
corded the exchange or whether either side in the debate prevailed. However, Bennion’s most significant successes came through private meetings rather than public forums.

One of the first proselytes Bennion added to the ranks was Joseph Astin, Bickerton’s former Church secretary and a member of Stafford County’s first courthouse at St. John, its streets at this moment a sea of prairie mud. In addition to the court cases involving Bickertonites, the building was also the site for their preaching services. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

54 “Home News,” *St. John County Capital*, April 13, 1888, 4; see also Heber Bennion, *St. John Advance*, March 29, 1888, 3. One year after the debate, Eli Kendall, who had an axe to grind with Bickerton, gave a one-sided interpretation of the exchange. He recalled, “Mr. Bickerton was very violent in his denunciation of Elder Bennion, the latter described him as literally foaming at the mouth and at one time he thought he intended on making an assault on him, but he managed to satisfy himself with a volley of imprecations. Yet his own admissions in answer to Elder Bennion’s pointed questions proved the latter’s position to be correct and the meeting resulted in good, as a few were soon added to the church.” Kendall, “The Other Side,” 2.
Cadman’s faction. In the spring of 1888, the sixty-two-year-old Astin’s health was failing. He was preparing to meet with some fellow members from Cadman’s Church when Bennion called at his home. At her husband’s request, Martha Astin reluctantly ushered Bennion into Joseph’s bedroom, then returned to the kitchen and the seething churchmen. “Upon Mother’s return,” recollected her son William, “the teachers immediately arose and said, ‘Well, the Devil has gotten into this house, so we must leave,’ then left without further delay.” At the conclusion of Bennion’s meeting with Astin, Martha returned to her husband’s sickbed where, “much to her surprise she found Father overjoyed and delighted with his visit with Brother Bennion. ‘They have the truth, that’s what I’ve been looking for,’ he exclaimed.” Astin converted just before his death in 1889. His family followed him into the Church and in 1893 moved to Salt Lake City.55

Bickerton’s followers tended to be less susceptible to the missionaries’ line of reasoning, but a few found the LDS message appealing and converted. When James and Amelia Miskin left for the Indian Territory in 1887, they had every intention of making their mission a permanent one. They rented a farm from Silas Busby about seven miles south of Caney, Kansas, on Cottonwood Creek and looked forward to establishing their new home. However, by the spring of 1888, malaria had swept through the family, leaving one child and Amelia’s father dead. Additional hardship came when herds of Texas cattle passing near the border infected the Miskins’ livestock with splenic fever. Disillusioned with the outcome of their mission, the family sold their remaining cattle and limped back to St. John. Their arrival coincided with Bennion’s intensification of the LDS mission within the town, and Amelia recalled, “As soon as we were able, we went to hear them.” After attending several meetings, James Miskin invited an Elder Gunn to come hear one of his own services. Gunn accepted; and after hearing Miskin preach on the restoration of the gospel, he sat and questioned the local Saint. Gunn used many of the arguments Cadman had published against Bickerton and asked Miskin if, as his sermon said, God would never take the work on this earth away, then “where was your church from the time Sidney Rigdon died to when William Bickerton started his? And where was the church from the time the prophet [Joseph Smith] died to the time Sidney Rigdon

started his church?"  

Miskin had joined the Bickertonites in 1875 after the founding of the Zion Valley colony. He had no firsthand knowledge of the Church’s beginnings or Bickerton’s early career in Pennsylvania. Unable to give Gunn a response, he was deeply disturbed by the gaps Gunn highlighted. After considering the issue, Miskin informed his wife that he was “convinced the Salt Lake Elders . . . belong to the right church, and I am going to the fountainhead.” Miskin was also weary of all of the backbiting and disappointment. He told Amelia: “The reason we have so much confusion and splits and bitter feelings . . . is because this is just a side show.” Amelia exercised more caution, warning her husband not to rush his decision. “We claim to be the church, and so do the Josephites, and there may be others. I don’t see much difference in preaching. We all believe in the restoration of the gospel and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.” James, however, remained satisfied with his decision. Amelia, who was still mourning the loss of her child and father in Indian Territory, joined him when she learned of “the doctrine of baptism for the dead. Then I too was ready for baptism. I felt this church had more light.” The Miskin family received baptism during the spring and summer of 1889, and in the fall James and Amelia Miskin moved to Utah.  

The LDS missionaries in St. John continued holding regular meetings and became a source of entertainment and amusement for the community. Local reporters commented on the ability of the able and eloquent speakers to draw large crowds, but they also jokeded that the Mormon presentations were, “growing in popularity much faster than the people who attend them.”  

William Bickerton found no humor in the LDS presence and grew increasingly concerned over the inroads they were making. He knew that those unfamiliar with his church discerned little difference between himself and the Utah missionaries. Therefore, in the summer of 1889, Bickerton decided to assist his neighbors in making the distinction. In a series of newspaper articles, Bickerton offered a primer for people curious about what the two churches believed and where they differed. Unlike those who attacked him in the press, Bickerton did not resort to the role of charac-

57Ibid., 6.  
58“Local, Personal, and Otherwise,” Stafford County Rustler, May 30, 1889, 7; see also “Local, Personal, and Otherwise,” ibid., May 23, 1889, 7.
ter assassin or scandalmonger to make his point. Nevertheless, he believed that the missionaries were less than forthcoming about their beliefs and cited passages from the Doctrine and Covenants, Charles W. Penrose’s 1884 address on the “Article of Blood Atonement,” and articles published in the *Millennial Star* (a publication of the British Mission), to “show their doctrines from their own standard books.”

Bickerton identified three principal points of contention with the Utah church. The first was plural marriage, and he cited what he interpreted as over a dozen contradictory passages from Doctrine and Covenants 132. Once he had highlighted the textual inconsistencies, Bickerton expressed his belief that polygamy merely pandered to the flesh and that there was nothing spiritual about it. “It has made slaves of its dupes, and cowards of its leading advocates.” He further charged that polygamy “is not only of suspicious origin, but has been fostered in secret and shielded in falsehood.” Bickerton believed that the doctrine gave no chance of salvation to any woman who rejected it, a dictum that broke “the law of God and man.” Polygamous marriage, he finally condemned, “turns home into a hell and heaven into a harem. If these things reflect the character of God and his works, we are at a loss to know how we shall ever identify the devil and his institutions.”

The second doctrine to which he took exception was blood atonement. Citing Penrose’s 1884 pamphlet as his source, Bickerton quoted Brigham Young: “There are sins which men commit for which they cannot receive forgiveness in this world or in that which is to come, and if they had their eyes open to see their true condition, they would be perfectly willing to have their blood spilt on the ground.” Bickerton selected several other inflammatory excerpts from the pamphlet, but the point he stressed was that the doctrine of blood atonement was “nothing less than murder, and ought to be rejected by all honest people.” He insisted that “there is no place between the lids of the Bible, where man is justified in shedding his blood for the re-

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mission of his sins, and giving him any title to the Kingdom of God hereafter.” His third point of contention was Brigham Young’s Adam-God doctrine, controversial even among the Mormons. Bickerton paraphrased Exodus 20:3, “Thou shalt have no other God besides me,” and dismissed this tenet as simple “idolatry, and needs no comment.”

The remainder of Bickerton’s discourse highlighted Joseph Smith’s discovery of the Book of Mormon, Sidney Rigdon’s ordination as Smith’s successor, and his own organization’s beliefs. However, the key theme he continually stressed was his belief that the Utah missionaries were intentionally misleading their proselytes by withholding information. “We have no desire to interfere with the character of men,” Bickerton proclaimed, “but are only dealing with principle. And the public is left to judge whether they are moral or Christ-like.” He confidently stated that anyone who cared to question him was at liberty to view the relevant books and pamphlets to draw their own inferences. Bickerton wanted to make it clear that the LDS missionaries in St. John provided only the basic outline of their faith, revealing the more controversial tenets only after a convert had made the journey to Utah Territory. He considered this practice deceptive and announced: “We have here treated with only a part of their gospel which is taught in Salt Lake City, Utah. They preach here what they call the first principles of the gospel, but as they tell you, you will have to go to Utah to know it ALL.”

Bickerton’s expository treatise drew Heber Bennion’s response. In what was possibly a move to goad further factional infighting, Bennion asked former Zion Valley colonist Eli Kendall to pen the LDS rebuttal. Kendall, however, was not well-versed in doctrinal issues. Rather than debate Bickerton, Kendall chose instead to slander Sidney Rigdon’s character and, by association, Bickerton’s integrity. Kendall began well enough in providing the LDS interpretation of how Church authority had shifted from Joseph Smith to the Quorum

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61 Ibid. See also Charles W. Penrose, Blood Atonement, as Taught by Leading Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884). The Brigham Young statement is from a discourse, September 21, 1856, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 4:53.

of the Twelve Apostles at Nauvoo and quoted Smith as saying, “There is no First Presidency over the twelve.” Had he continued with this reasoned line of argument Kendall could have cast serious doubts on Bickerton’s spiritual lineage. But instead of detailing the spiritual progression of the LDS Church, Kendall slipped into character assassination, claiming that Rigdon “was a well known adulterer when he was severed from the Church in 1845.” While providing no evidence for his claims, Kendall went on to give a fairly accurate timeline of Bickerton’s conversion under Rigdon and eventual formation of the Bickertonite Church. Nevertheless, Kendall felt compelled to embellish his version of events with misleading commentary to discredit Bickerton’s organization. Bickerton stated on numerous occasions that he had broken with Rigdon because Smith’s former first counselor had gone wrong in the spirit, but Kendall shamelessly asserted that the break had occurred because of Rigdon’s dishonorable conduct. It became so bad, said Kendall, “and his loose immorality so manifest, that he [Bickerton] dissolved all connection with him and stood by himself.”

Kendall continued with a full examination of Bickerton’s church from its earliest years though the founding of Zion Valley and the town of St. John. However, the point he pressed throughout was that in the eyes of the LDS Church, an apostate had converted Bickerton, and Bickerton was at fault for not recognizing the heresy. “The smallest grain of reason or consistency should have taught them that if the church had gone astray” after Joseph Smith’s death “they themselves were equally destitute of” divine authority, “without which it is sheer blasphemy to minister the gospel ordinances.” Kendall announced that Bickerton had lost his chance for union with the Utah church in 1857 when Elder Samuel Wooley passed through Pennsylvania. Though “he had acted hastily in rejecting a principle he had never fully examined or understood,” Bickerton “had ample opportunity to repent, and reconsider his ill-advised course.” Instead, bemoaned Kendall, “he hardened his heart and chose the opposite road.”

Bickerton was quick to respond and promptly pointed out that his earlier discourse had illustrated the doctrinal differences between his church and the Latter-day Saints of Utah, while Kendall “did not answer a single point.” He “only tried to vilify my character

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63 Kendall, “The Other Side,” 2.
64 Ibid.
and to make me the target to justify themselves.” Bickerton ignored the bulk of Kendall’s polemic and restricted his answer to correcting the latter’s inconsistencies. Sidney Rigdon, Bickerton explained, was anything but an adulterer and worked to expose the doctrines of polygamy and marriage for eternity. “Rigdon, having two daughters that they wanted to make spiritual wives, which he opposed. . . . That was why Brigham Young and his confederacy rejected him which the history of the Brigham Young church will bear us out in.” Bickerton dismissed Kendall’s assertion that he had had the chance to avoid excommunication from the LDS Church during Elder Wooley’s 1857 visit to Pennsylvania and proclaimed that the scriptures along with the Holy Ghost “taught him to oppose Brigham Young in his accursed doctrines which was published in 1852 at Washington, DC.” He charged that the LDS missionaries were lying to accomplish their own corrupt ends by making him “the special object of their calumnies” and appealed to the people of St. John to search their hearts for the truth. “I only ask the people of Stafford Co., as you have been acquainted with me these many years, is this my characteristic or not? And as all of our meetings are open to the public, we leave you to judge.”

Heber Bennion, having completed his mission, returned to Salt Lake City in July 1889, and without his motivating presence Kendall retreated to the sidelines. Bickerton, however, was not finished; and beginning in August he took steps to preempt any further invectives by composing his most exhaustive testimonial to date. In a series of eleven letters that appeared through the remainder of the year, Bickerton gave an ecumenical history of his church that detailed his association with Sidney Rigdon, the organizational growth of the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite), and a chronicle of Zion Valley. It provided a ready reference for anyone wanting to check the veracity of accusations against Bickerton or the Church and ended the controversy between the various restoration churches in St. John. “People ask why we are so few,” Bickerton commented toward the end of his treatise. “Because they have never known the difference between Salt Lake Mormons and Latterday [sic] Saints, and we have to bear the reproach. . . . Many make covenants and break them, we know that this is

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LDS members and missionaries cluster outside the meetinghouse on the day it was dedicated in 1895, on the same site that the Bickertonites had dedicated several years earlier. Courtesy Church Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The factional fighting ceased with the publication of Bickerton’s expository letter; and with the exception of Cadman’s declining branch, both churches settled into a peaceful coexistence in St. John. Eli Kendall left Kansas in March 1890 for Provo, Utah, and enough others followed that S. A. D. Glasscock, a former member of Cadman’s faction, could write back to boast of “the St. John

66St. John Advance, July 12, 1889, 4; “Bickerton’s Letter,” St. John County Capital, November 21, 1889, 1. Under the title of “Bickerton’s Letter,” the entire text ran in weekly installments in St. John County Capital in 1889: August 15, p. 4 (title on only this installment “Mr. Editor, Sir”), August 22, p. 4; August 29, p. 4; September 5, p. 4; September 12, p. 4; October 3, p. 4; October 10, p. 4; October 17, p. 4; November 14, p. 1; November 21, p. 1; and November 28, p. 1.
colony in Salt Lake City.” Over the next few years, a small but steady stream of migrants departed for Utah, but not everyone wanted to abandon their Kansas homes. Enough LDS converts remained that, in 1895, the Mormons purchased a lot on the corner of Fifth and Exchange Streets in St. John, which was unremarkable except for the fact that it was the site of Bickerton’s original Zion Valley church and the location that his followers believed had been dedicated to the Lord in 1874 when Bickerton had driven a symbolic “stake of Zion” into the ground. William Astin, the son of Joseph Astin and an LDS convert from the Bickertonites, claimed that, in the early 1880s it was his father and George Baker who “felt impressed to dedicate the plot to the Lord” after they had joined Cadman in breaking from Bickerton. They very well may have done so, but the location’s symbolic importance clearly came from Bickerton’s earlier consecration.

In the spring of 1895, the Latter-day Saints purchased an existing building from the United Brethren and moved it across town to their newly acquired lot. They spent the summer refurbishing the structure to the point where unnamed local commentators observed, it became a place “for worship second to none in the city.” Edward Stevenson of the First Council of the Seventy in Salt Lake City, President Andrew Kimball of the LDS Indian Territory Mission, and many other dignitaries came to St. John for the dedication ceremonies in September. Kimball and other elders gave religious addresses, while a choir composed of both Saints and Gentiles alike provided an inspirational diversion for the townsfolk. In the days following the services the visiting dignitaries played a game of baseball with the St. John Nine and delivered lectures to area farmers on proper methods of irrigation. The Mormons made a strong impression on local reporters, who remarked that “the Elders and others present conducted themselves in a highly gentlemanly manner, and all were courteously and


69 “The Mormons,” *St. John County Capital*, September 13, 1895, 4. See also ibid., June 28, 1895, 4.
pleasantly treated by our citizens.” The extended dedication program was part of Kimball’s overall strategy of expanding the Indian Territory Mission, and St. John’s population of Saints provided him with a ready-made foothold.

Elder Samuel Kirkman presided over the St. John LDS unit during Kimball’s tenure in the area, and the use of entertainment to proselytize within the town continued throughout the period. In November the Latter-day Saints installed an organ in their church and began holding regular music recitals. However, the musical highlight came in December when the famed Salt Lake City performer Philip Margetts came to town for a violin concert. He attracted an appreciative crowd, but the climax came over Christmas when local residents were invited to share holiday festivities in a church building gaily decorated with colorful Chinese lanterns. The townsfolk presumed that the rationale behind the lavish musical and visual pageants were for public relations purposes. Commentators in the *St. John County Capital* remarked that the Mormon elders were “hustlers and seem familiar with everything that tickles the public palate.” Nevertheless, no one offered any serious objections. In 1897 William T. Jack succeeded Kimball as president of the Indian Territory Mission, and Mormon expertise in irrigation, when combined with the welcome performances, remained significant tools of persuasion that long outlasted the debates with Bickerton.

After 1890 the Latter-day Saints largely ceased their public criti-

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72*St. John County Capital*, December 27, 1895, 4; see also these articles in the *Capital*, November 8, 1895, 4; December 6, 1895, 4; “Program,” December 13, 1895, 4; December 20, 1895, 4.
73Jensen, “Andrew Kimball and the Indian Territory Mission, 21. For reports of LDS activities in St. John during this period, see also these articles in the *St. John County Capital*: January 17, 1896, 4; January 24, 1896, 4; “At the Rink,” July 3, 1896, 4; July 24, 1896, 4; December 18, 1896, 4; “Christmas at the Churches,” January 1, 1897, 4; January 17, 1897, 4; February 19, 1897, 4; February 26, 1897, 4; March 5, 1897, 4; April 30, 1897, 4; May 21, 1897, 4; June 25, 1897, 4. The Latter-day Saints also turned Utah Pioneer Day on July 24 into a local festival, which may have made St. John the
cism of Bickerton; and except for a thinly disguised 1892 satirical diatribe entitled “Them Old Times,” no more attacks appeared against the elderly, respected prophet. Bickerton likewise paid little attention to Mormon activities, though he remained unrelenting in his opposition to the LDS Church. He resumed his work of ministering to the Lamanites; and during the 1890s, he and his followers made repeated visits to Indian Territory. In 1890 Bickerton sold his interest in the City Hotel and left for his third trip to the territory. He was back in St. John in the spring of 1891, but many Saints were focused on their agricultural interests and had become absorbed by Populist Party activities by that time. Few churches of any denomination had much of an impact, but an ecumenical movement was afoot. Though it went mostly unnoticed, the few remaining members of William Cadman’s Kansas branch who had thus far resisted LDS entreaties were again attending worship services with William Bickerton. 74

Cadman was well aware that his influence over the western branch of the Church had been waning since 1887, but now he was in danger of losing what remained of his followers in St. John. Moving to renew their sense of purpose, Cadman declared in a conference held in Pennsylvania in January 1894 that it was the will of God to resurrect the Indian Mission that, in his view, the Church had abandoned in 1869. Under his direction, the Pennsylvania Saints resolved to “consider the Indian Territory Mission as binding on the Church at this time as ever at any time previous.” 75 Cadman ignored the existence of Zion Valley, and Bickerton’s uninterrupted efforts on the Oklahoma reservations, so his proclamation had little immediate impact in St. John. His Kansas members continued meeting with Bickerton, which in 1896 inspired him to interpret a dream to mean that the St. John


75Cadman, History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 91.
branch of the church was like a piece of rotten wood in the foundation of an otherwise sound house.\textsuperscript{76}

Bickerton paid no heed to Cadman’s pronouncements, and in 1895 Bickerton’s Saints began issuing invitations to interested citizens to attend their meetings in the courthouse. Here the Church members offered to “show up the authority and difference between the Latter Day Saints church of Stafford county and the Utah church.” They began calling themselves “Stafford County Saints” to stress their local ties and to differentiate their Church both from the “Utah Mormons” and “Monongahela Saints” who still followed Cadman. Nevertheless, despite the establishment of a permanent Utah LDS branch in town, Bickerton remained fixated on the Indian Mission. He returned to the territory in late 1895 for an eight-month stay and rejoiced in bringing in some “few honest souls.” However, he blamed Mormon efforts in Oklahoma Territory for slowing his work. Bickerton lamented that “some have been almost persuaded to come out and do God’s will but the stigma seems to be that ‘We are connected with the Utah Mormons,’ but we are laboring hard to break down the prejudice and there is good influence working.”\textsuperscript{77}

Despite his complaints of prejudice, Bickerton in 1897 and 1898 made two additional trips to Oklahoma Territory. His greatest success, though, came in St. John, where his Church organization continued to grow in strength. His followers had been without a permanent house of worship since the 1882 loss of the Zion Valley meetinghouse; but once they had regained some of their old vigor, many expressed a desire for something more substantial than a public meeting room in the courthouse. Although their original site was gone and they lacked the funds to buy it back from the LDS Church, Bickerton’s Saints could still gather enough resources for a small structure that would mark them as permanent among the town’s churches. In 1899, the Bickertonites obtained a lot on West Second Street and erected a small frame building to serve as their permanent church building in St. John. Their new church was plain and built without the fanfare

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., 92–93.
\textsuperscript{77}St. John County Capital, September 27, 1895, 4; Sol Van Lieu, ibid., October 18, 1895, 4; Sol Van Lieu, ibid., October 25, 1895, 4; William Bickerton, “From the Indian Territory,” St. John County Capital, July 17, 1896, 4.
that had accompanied the new LDS building, but its appearance served as a reminder of Bickerton’s unyielding persistence in Kansas. 78

In 1898 Bickerton’s brother, Arthur, became a member of Cadman’s church in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, and the old wounds that had festered among the Bickertonites for almost two decades slowly healed. Arthur Bickerton had experimented with membership in the RLDS Church in Missouri but abandoned it, remark-

78 St. John County Capital, May 7, 1897, 4; St. John County Capital, February 18, 1898, 4; Stafford County History, 1870–1890 (Stafford, Kans.: Stafford County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1990), 99.
ing, “They have a form of Godliness but not the power.” His return raised the question of bringing former members back into the fold, an issue that included striving for reconciliation with William Bickerton in Kansas. While trying to expand his church’s Indian Mission in October 1900, Cadman made a personal visit to St. John and Bickerton. The visit brought no resolution to their differences, and Cadman departed, considering Bickerton “as yet standing aloof from the Church.” Nevertheless, he remained open to a reunification between the eastern and western branches and, in 1902, sent Elder Alexander Cherry to St. John to meet with Bickerton and his followers. Arthur Bickerton died in 1902, and feelings of his own mortality may have led the eighty-seven-year-old William Bickerton to seek an accord with Cherry. He did not want a divided church to be his legacy. In November 1902, Bickerton and Cherry reached an agreement that made the two branches one again.

Under this arrangement, Cadman became president over the entire Church; and from his understanding, Bickerton was being readmitted to the Church as an elder after twenty-two years as an apostate. Bickerton had a differing conception. He saw himself as retiring with no break in the continuity of his Church service. While never mentioning the old adultery charges, he considered reunification of the two branches as an admission that Cadman had been mistaken in his earlier zeal. Bickerton made this perspective perfectly clear in July 1903 when he submitted his final written testimony to the annual conference in Pennsylvania. In ruminating over his life’s work for the Church and in Indian Territory, Bickerton wrote, “Don’t think I am trying to throw any reflections on any one. . . . I am only trying to give you all a brief sketch of my own experience with God, feeling the blessing in doing so, not knowing whether or not it will be acceptable to all.” Despite his disclaimer, Bickerton underscored that “every

79 Alexander Cherry was a significant figure in Cadman’s Pennsylvania branch. He became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve when the Cadman branch reconstituted that body in 1904, and it was Cherry who, in January 1906, succeeded William Cadman as president of the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite) after the deaths of both Bickerton and Cadman in 1905. In 1902, Cherry, an immigrant from Scotland, was forty-five and a coal miner. He and his wife, Amy, age forty-nine, had three sons and a daughter.

80 Cadman, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ, 94–97.
church has a history of its own, and I was the organizer of this church.” He believed that he had struggled against the odds throughout his life and had done his “best for the work of God, and with God’s help, I will so continue in the future.” Bickerton’s testimonial had the desired shock effect. It disturbed the Pennsylvania elders because Bickerton presented his personal life story as an unbroken history of the Church with no acknowledgment of any separation from Cadman. Nevertheless, no one wanted to reopen any freshly healed wounds, so after discussing the matter, the elders endorsed his testimony “as far as he was a member in good standing in the Church.”

In January 1905, Bickerton, one of St. John’s “oldest and most highly respected citizens,” celebrated his ninetieth birthday. He used the opportunity to address the residents of the town he had founded, reminding them once again that his Saints were not Utah Mormons. We “are Stafford County Saints, who have come here from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Eastern Kansas.” Bickerton wanted everyone to know that he and his followers “loved the people of Kansas and especially those of St. John as they have never interfered with our view of Christianity.” The winter of 1904–05 was a memorable one for Bickerton since Christmas, New Year’s Day, and his birthday all fell on the Sabbath, which he took as a sign of God’s order in the world. He reasserted his belief in the Book of Mormon but was clearly tired of the struggle and remarked, “I feel like Job that the balance of my life [sic] I will wait until my change comes. I have no enemy that I know of, and only pity the poor souls that do not believe in Christianity.”

Bickerton did not have long to wait. On a frigid February evening the elderly man took a heating stone from the stove and placed it on his bed to keep his feet warm while he slept. The rock was too hot for the bedding, and a cinder that had smoldered all night erupted into a blaze early in the morning. The city volunteer fire department quickly reacted to the alarm and extinguished the flames before the house suffered any significant damage. Bickerton survived with minimal injuries, but the *St. John Weekly News* observed that “the shock was

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almost too much for him and that he is in a very feeble condition.”

Indeed, the trauma proved too great for the aged prophet, and within a week “Uncle Billie Bickerton” was dead. As the entire town mourned the loss of the old pioneer, Bickerton took one final stab at his adversaries. In anticipation of his passing, he had preselected the lamentation of Job to serve as the text of his funeral sermon. Job 19 expressed Bickerton’s feelings of betrayal and abandonment during the years he had been at odds with Cadman and the Utah LDS Church. A selection from Job 19:4–10 reads:

And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.
If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach: Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.
Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgement.
He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set

darkness in my paths.
He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.
He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

At the same time, however, verse 25 reaffirmed his faith that “my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

William Bickerton’s death marked the end of an era for the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite). In November 1905 William Cadman followed Bickerton to the grave, and a new generation assumed leadership of the Church. The Church Bickerton founded continues to bear his name and has remained his greatest legacy, but Cadman had a final victory in his long battle with Bickerton. In 1945 William H. Cadman, the son of William Cadman and official historian of the Church, agreed with his father’s view of Church history and wrote William Bickerton and the western branch in St. John out of much of the Church’s chronicles. The result has been that the memory of Bickerton has become obscured within his own church. In Cadman’s *History of the Church of Jesus Christ*, Bickerton appears as the founding prophet but his lifework in Kansas and Indian Territory after the 1880 adultery allegation is ignored entirely. The memory of Bickerton became as Job 19:14, which was read at his funeral: “My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.”

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MOUNTAIN MEADOWS SURVIVOR?  
A MITOCHONDRIAL DNA EXAMINATION

Ugo A. Perego and Scott R. Woodward

On September 11, 1857, a band of Indians, joined by local residents from southern Utah, attacked a party of approximately 140 men, women, and children in the valley of Mountain Meadows, near Cedar City. The victims of the tragedy were part of the Baker-Fancher wagon train, a group of emigrants on their way from Arkansas to California. Only a small number of young children survived the assault, and were given to neighboring Mormon families to care for. In 1859, government officials investigating the incident gathered all the surviving children who could be identified and returned them to relatives in the east.

The mass murder that took place at Mountain Meadows is known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre and has been the focus of numerous publications, each one attempting to bring new light to an event whose details are likely to remain obfuscated. Because many of the original journals and letters have been destroyed or lost, various anecdotes have replaced first-hand written accounts. One of the mysteries embedded in this episode is the exact number of children who were spared during the attack. Early accounts reported the figure to

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be seventeen, based on the total number of children eventually returned to relatives in Arkansas.\(^1\) Other versions state that eighteen or more children survived the massacre,\(^2\) implying that some of the families who received the children hid them when civil authorities made attempts to reclaim them. Family historian Anna Jean Backus has reported that a young blond girl, purportedly the youngest child of Alexander Fancher and Eliza Ingram Fancher, was given into the care of Philip Klingensmith and his wife, Betsy Cattle Klingensmith.\(^3\) They named her Priscilla and said she was born March 20, 1855, two and a half years before the massacre. According to these accounts, Priscilla grew up as a Klingensmith and married John Urie, on November 24, 1873. The couple lived in Cedar City most of their lives.\(^4\)

This article describes a type of DNA testing utilized to reveal the biological maternal parentage of Priscilla Klingensmith Urie. DNA samples were obtained from one of Priscilla’s descendants and from two additional maternally linked lineages in an attempt to reconstruct genetic data that would confirm or exclude Betsy Cattle Klingensmith as Priscilla’s birth mother.


MITOCHONDRIAL DNA TESTING AND FAMILY HISTORY

The use of DNA to successfully reconstruct genetic information for genealogical and historical purposes has been demonstrated previously with three alleged children of Joseph Smith Jr. born to his plural wives. The DNA test used in the Smith case utilized Y chromosome markers, which are found only in males and are helpful in studying strict paternal lineages. However, a smaller segment of DNA found outside the nucleus of cells in organelles called mitochondria (see Figure 1), can also be used for testing familial relationships.

Each cell has hundreds of mitochondria and each mitochondrion contains multiple copies of mitochondrial DNA.

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6Ugo A. Perego, Natalie M. Myres, and Scott R. Woodward, “Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith: Genealogical Applications,” *Journal of Mormon History* 31 (Fall 2005): 42–60. The conclusion in all three examples (Moroni L. Pratt, Zebulon Jacob, and Orrison Smith) was that it was highly unlikely that Joseph Smith was their father.
MtDNA is a circular genome and contains 16,569 chemical bases called nucleotides. (See Figure 2.) Compared to the three billion nucleotides found in the nuclear genome, the mtDNA genome is quite small. In a segment of mtDNA called “control region,” random changes, called mutations, may occur in each new generation. (See Table 1.) Over the years, these mutations accumulate and create unique mtDNA profiles, called haplotypes, which are characteristic of specific ancestral origins and migration patterns. Mutations in the control region are harmless because they are not responsible for any life-sustaining activity.

The control region comprises 1,121 bases, which contains two segments known as hypervariable region I (HVR1) and hypervariable region II (HVR2) that are traditionally used for matching purposes. For simplicity, mtDNA sequences are compared to an industry standard called the Cambridge Reference Sequence (CRS) and only differences in the sequence are reported. MtDNA haplotypes with identical mutations may indicate a common ancestral and

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7For the complete CRS sequence, see Human Mitochondrial DNA
geographical origin.

While Y chromosome testing as presented in the Joseph Smith study is traceable exclusively along the paternal lineage (from father to son), mtDNA follows the maternal line. Both males and females carry mtDNA in their cells; however, children inherit it from their mothers only. In addition, mtDNA does not recombine and, with the exception of small random mutations, is passed essentially unchanged from one generation to the next. This type of genetic testing became popular for genealogical purposes after it was used to identify the remains of Czar Nicholas Romanov’s wife and children. Later, the same test was used to disprove the identity of Anna Anderson Manahan, who claimed to be Nicholas’s daughter Anastasia.

Using techniques similar to the Romanov study, we employed genetic testing to resolve the biological parentage of Priscilla Klingensmith Urie, the purported eighteenth surviving child of the massacre at Mountain Meadows.

**THE CASE STUDY CANDIDATE**

According to Anna Jean Backus, specific evidence that Priscilla was a Klingensmith by birth is lacking. First, her birth certificate was

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8Perego, Myres, and Woodward, “Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith.”


never found; and second, she does not appear in the Utah Territory census returns of 1856. Backus therefore concludes that, after the massacre, Philip Klingensmith took the child in, gave her a new birthday (March 20, 1855), and renamed her Priscilla.

Priscilla’s alleged mother, Betsy Cattle, was born September 9, 1835, in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England and married Philip Klingensmith on May 30, 1854, in Cedar City. In addition to Priscilla, Betsy had four children, all younger than Priscilla: Mary Alice, born on March 19, 1857, Betsy Ann, born on July 9, 1859, Margaret Jane, born on March 5, 1863, and William Cattle, born on April 16, 1865. To confirm Betsy Cattle’s mtDNA haplotype, we identified and tested a descendant of her daughter, Betsy Ann, and of her sister Mary, Priscilla’s alleged aunt.

**COMPARING MtDNA HAPLOTYPES**

Priscilla’s mtDNA sequence was inferred by collecting a biological sample from one of her living descendants through an unbroken mother-daughter lineage. (See M1 in Figure 3.) To determine the mtDNA sequence of Betsy Cattle, we generated two additional mtDNA haplotypes from samples collected through descendants of Priscilla’s alleged sister, Betsy Ann Klingensmith, who was born two years after the massacre, and also from Betsy Cattle’s sister, Mary Cattle Bladen, and whose biological relationships to mother Betsy Cattle were unquestioned. (See M2 and M3 in Figure 3.)

Biological samples were gathered using a mouthwash rinse procedure and DNA was extracted from the cellular material using the Gentra Systems’ Puregene® DNA Purification Kit protocol (http://www.gentra.com/pdf/400128-000.pdf). MtDNA sequences were generated by Sorenson Genomics Laboratories (http://www.SorensonGenomics.com) using ABI 3700 automated genetic analyzers and sequenced using Gene Codes’ Sequencher® software (Gene

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14Names of participants in this study have been withheld to protect their privacy.
MtDNA haplotypes representing mutations from the CRS are summarized in Table 2. The three haplotypes inferred for Priscilla Klingensmith, Betsy Ann Klingensmith, and Mary Cattle Bladen show identical mutations in the control region: 16224 (C), 16311 (C), 16320 (T), 16519 (C), 73 (G), 146 (C), 152 (C), 263 (G), indicating that the three women share a common maternal ancestor. The genetic data generated from this study, combined with available historical and genealogical sources, support a matrilineal relationship between Priscilla Klingensmith Urie and Betsy Cattle Klingensmith.

To evaluate the frequency of the observed haplotype in the general population, we used this haplotype to query the online Federal Bureau of Investigation mtDNA database, which contains 4,839

mtDNA haplotypes. Because many records in this database report only base positions 16,024 through 16,365, the mutations observed at 16,519 and those in HVR2 for the maternally related Cattle haplotypes could not be compared. Considering only mutations at 16,224, 16,311, and 16,320, the frequency of matching haplotypes in the FBI database is 0.2% (9 of 4,839 haplotypes). It is possible that the frequency of matching haplotypes would be less than 0.2% if longer sequences were available to compare.

Comparison for HVR1 and HVR2 to the University of Pavia mtDNA database (10,667 sequences) yielded only four exact matches (0.04%), all from Iceland. A fifth sample, also from Iceland, matched the Cattle haplotype with an additional mutation at base position 150. Additional comparisons to the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation mtDNA database (4,092 sequences) and to the

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17We consulted the mtDNA database “Genetica Umana” of published and unpublished data belonging to the laboratory of Antonio Torroni, professor of Human Genetics, Department of Genetics and Microbiology, University of Pavia, Italy.

18Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation, “Sorenson MTDNA
Human Mitochondrial Genome Database\(^{19}\) (1,624 sequences) produced no exact matches, which further supports the conclusion that the haplotype is rare.

The low frequency of the haplotype shared by Priscilla Klingensmith, Betsy Ann Klingensmith, and Mary Cattle Bladen in available mtDNA databases strongly supports a close genetic relationship of the three women.\(^{20}\)

**CONCLUSION**

Priscilla Klingensmith Urie has been recorded as one of the surviving children from the Mountain Meadows Massacre following inconsistencies in the available genealogical records. As a consequence, the suggestion has been advanced that Philip Klingensmith and Betsy Cattle Klingensmith, who raised Priscilla as their daughter, might not have been Priscilla’s biological parents. DNA testing performed on the mtDNA control region of descendants from Priscilla, her alleged younger sister Betsy Ann, and her alleged maternal aunt Mary Cattle Bladen, revealed three identical haplotypes. The matching mtDNA sequences provide a strong indication of a common maternal ancestor for the three lineages, supporting the conclusion that Betsy Cattle Klingensmith was Priscilla’s biological mother.

This method of testing for familial relationships using the mtDNA control region does have some limitations, including in some cases a poor resolution.\(^{21}\) However, control-region haplotypes characterized by a well-defined mutational motif, such as that observed in this study, are clear indicators of a shared matrilineal ancestry. In this case study, the inferred haplotype of Priscilla was found at low to zero frequency in the available databases, thus making extremely unlikely that Priscilla Klingensmith and Betsy Cattle had a matrilineal link different from a direct mother/daughter relationship.

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\(^{19}\)Uppsala University, “mtDB—Human Mitochondrial Genome Database,” http://www.genpat.uu.se/mtDB (accessed on March 27, 2006).


RHE TORIC AND RITUAL:  
A DECADE OF WOMAN’S EXPONENT 
DEATH POETRY

Kylie Nielson Turley

In her pioneering 1985 article surveying the first ten years of poetry in the Woman’s Exponent (1872–82), Maureen Ursenbach Beecher concludes that, while “one might disparage the poetic skill” of the women poets, the “content ought not to be dismissed.”¹ She argues that “the very act of composing verses was a statement of identity, an affirmation of gentility, [and] of civilized womanhood.”² The act of composing poetry specifically about death and dying—whether the death be actual or metaphorical—seems to encompass other cultural work as well. With Beecher’s study existing as a framework and pointing out death poetry as a “subcategory,” the first decade of Exponent death poems can be analyzed to understand their purpose and function.³ As a type, death poems bring to light a group of women vacillating between hope and despair, searching desperately for

²Ibid., 59.
³I decided to focus on one decade primarily so I could make appropriate comparisons with Beecher’s previous study. Death rates did not drop
reconciliation to a common trial, and at times doing so in ways different from their male Latter-day Saint peers.

LDS women were not doing anything unique when they wrote death poetry. Michael Wheeler, in *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology*, points out that Victorians had an “obsessive interest in death,” leading to, among other things, “a remarkably high proportion of the lyric poetry of the period, particularly by women writers, address[ing] the themes of death and dying.”⁴ Wheeler considers women’s death poetry as much a part of the “Victorian cult of death” as the elaborate funeral liturgy of the era. Though Mormons, like Protestants, were not given to “pomp and extravagant displays of mourning” as were many other Victorian religions, LDS historian Davis Bitton concludes that these religious groups did not completely avoid ritual, either.⁵ The abundant writing of death poetry coincides with the conventional (typically feminine) Victorian approach to death, while LDS funeral rites were more restrained than those of many of their American peers.

The need to reconcile one’s self to death is clear, as far as the nineteenth century is concerned. In her 1881 poem, “Ere Comes the Night,” Mormon author Emily Hill Woodmansee, survivor of the disastrous 1856 Willie handcart company, speaks of “Death’s shadows” falling everywhere “upon our right and left.”⁶ Statistically speaking, she was right; one was almost certain to have multiple and intimate dealings with death during the nineteenth century and not just during the rugged journey across the Great Plains. In their study, “Infant Deaths in Utah, 1850–1939,” Lee L. Bean and his associates found dramatically until the turn of the century, and death poetry continued in the *Woman’s Exponent* in a similar fashion. Coincidentally, as noted later, LDS women began speaking at funerals after 1900.

that at least “40 percent of women surviving in an intact marriage to age forty-nine and beginning childbearing before 1895–99 would lose at least one infant.”

Over a third of children born in Utah never reached adulthood, with children under twelve comprising nearly two-thirds of total deaths in western Mormon settlements. Adults also faced illness, accidents, and generally unhealthy conditions, all complicated by limited medical care.

A simple survey of the topics of the poetry supports Woodmansee’s feeling that death was ubiquitous. Death is found in eulogistic poems for real persons as well as in poems for fictitious persons and general poetry about dying. Metaphoric death shows itself during all seasons of the year—unsurprisingly in poetry about winter, yet also in poetry about April, June, and mid-summer. Death crops up in poems ostensibly on topics ranging from new brides to New Year’s Day, from instructions to girls on helping their mothers to a birthday poem for Emmeline B. Wells. Of more than four hundred poems published during the Woman’s Exponent’s first decade, at least sixty-seven deal with death. While some refer rather vaguely to death through nature symbolism or imagistically as the “night” that ends suffering, many refer to the death of obviously real people: oblique references to the “deaths of loved ones” but also named persons, as in the case of Eliza R. Snow’s, “Sacred to the Memory, of Our Beloved Sister, Mrs. Matilda Casper.” Indeed so many eulogies and poems memorializing particular persons were received that Woman’s Exponent

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editor Emmeline B. Wells apologized to subscribers in August 1893: “It is almost impossible to keep up with the number sent in for publication” and implored that they not be offended if all the poems and eulogies did not appear in print. 12

When someone died, women had a role to play in the mourning and interment process. Susannah Morrill, assistant professor of religious studies at Lewis and Clark College, labels Mormon women as “mediators of liminality,” literally the “first and the last,” those who stood “ready to welcome newcomers into the world” and who also sent “departing mortals to a higher and happier eternal life.” 13 In her thesis, “Yet I Must Submit’: Mormon Women’s Perspectives on Death and Dying 1847-1900,” Julie Hemming Savage describes the typical nineteenth-century part of death rituals in which women were involved, specifically in “sitting up with the deceased, sewing sacred burial clothing, [the] washing and laying out of bodies, and walking in funeral processions.” 14 Despite women’s intimate dealings with the physical process of death, Savage notes that they were “excluded [from] speaking at funerals and dedicating graves,” the two final—and more spiritual—rituals of death. 15 LDS women were spectator-mourners during the public funerals, in keeping with the religious and social mores of the Victorian time period, though Savage found that women “frequently recorded the contents of the funeral addresses [in journals], often commenting . . . that the talks, music, and community support were comforting.” 16 Perhaps it was a wish for more of this consolation as well as the example of other nineteenth-century women that prompted LDS women to write and publish death poetry, a public performance of their “mediator of liminality” role and one that has not been addressed by LDS scholarly literature.

15According to Savage, Mormon women did not begin speaking at funerals until the early 1900s. Ibid., 74–75. The dedication of graves is still performed exclusively by male priesthood holders.
16Ibid., 75.
Scholars may have overlooked *Exponent* death poetry because it is simply not “good,” at least, not according to contemporary literary values. As Beecher notes in her article, the persistent “failures of the poet’s craft” tend to “make holy things profane and sincere sentiments ludicrous, most noticeably by the jarring juxtaposition of a verse pattern inappropriate to the thought of the poem.”\(^{17}\) The first published death poem, “Sacred to the Memory, of Our Beloved Sister, Mrs. Matilda Casper,” appeared in the second issue of the *Woman’s Exponent* on June 15, 1872, and is indicative of the lows in craftsmanship. In the poem, Eliza R. Snow eulogizes Mrs. Casper and invokes LDS doctrine:

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She has paid the last debt due to nature;
She to earth has the casket resigned,
That the morn of the first resurrection
May restore it from dross all refined.\(^{18}\)
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The rhythmic anapestic trimeter with its end-stopped lines cannot help becoming sing-songy and unbending, often imposing awkward, inverted phrasing. Moreover, Snow’s mixed metaphors work poorly at best; after introducing metallurgic imagery in the first stanza (“dross all refined”), Snow switches in the second stanza and describes Mrs. Casper’s “Mem’ry” as a “garland,” invoking connotations of greenery and wreaths. Snow then switches back, telling readers the “garland” is made of “integrity’s jewels,” not “earthly alloys,” no doubt confusing readers with Mrs. Caspar’s inflexible, metal garland. Perhaps meaning could be forced from Snow’s stiff lines and rote phrases; one could interpret the rigid style as a reflection of funeral etiquette, a sort of symbolic “dressing up” for the somber occasion, though the interpretation requires some stretching. It seems more likely that such formulaic poems grew from pioneer women’s attempts to pattern precisely death poetry written elsewhere. As Beecher points out, “The [Utah] women were loath to alter their pattern lest their inventiveness reveal a qualitative difference between them and their eastern sisters and they be forced to admit that the rough isolation of the preceding decades had toughened their senses.


\(^{18}\)E. R. S. [Eliza R. Snow], “Sacred to the Memory of Our Beloved Sister, Mrs. Matilda Casper,” *Woman’s Exponent* 1 (June 15, 1872): 3.
as it had reddened their faces.”

One could easily sift through this plethora of poetry, excoriating all the amateurish homespun poems and searching for the few gems like Eliza R. Snow’s, “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley.” But readers must ask whether such a search is entirely appropriate. In *Angels and Absences: Child Deaths in the Nineteenth Century*, Laurence Lerner uses the theories of Paul Ricoeur to argue that “a text can move us in two ways. The first is by its semiotic properties: it may command our response because it is powerfully written. The second is by our knowledge that it has a real referent, that [these mothers] really did lose their children. We can, that is, be moved because we are sensitive to literature, or because we respect real suffering.” Simply stated, it behooves readers to recognize that a poet’s writing skills may not match the depth of her grief, yet that does not make the grief any less real. As Lerner argues, to demean death poetry because it is poorly written is to treat actual death as fiction—something to be analyzed on the basis of rhyme and meter without respect to human suffering, a rather inhumane reaction. Readers ought to recognize that these women poets are referring to real deaths; death poets’ search for comfort must be taken on their own terms and analyzed on that basis.

Moreover, the prevalence and pervasiveness of death poetry suggest a broader cultural function. Adapting Jane Tompkins’s arguments about nineteenth-century sentimental novels to *Exponent* death poetry suggests that these poems can be read as “political enterprise[s], halfway between sermon and social theory,” as works that “both [codify] and [attempt] to mold the values” of their time and society. Thus, the question to ask is not necessarily whether they are “good” poems according to modern literary standards (most would concede that few are), but what religio-cultural purpose they serve in

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helping the nineteenth-century LDS community, especially the female community, deal with death.

Poetry was considered an especially fitting venue for women’s “feminine” thoughts and nature during the nineteenth century, and, as Beecher suggested, LDS women in Utah struggled to prove that they, too, were as civilized and cultured as their Eastern female counterparts; yet in her September 1876 death poem, “Given Not Lent,” Mrs. E. B. Browning differentiates herself as a poet from the typical woman, questioning, “Shall I speak like a poet, or run / Into weak, woman’s tears for relief?”22 Browning seems to argue that poetry is a “spoken” or public thing and thus that Mormon women, in writing death poetry, become something other than strictly feminine because they use words rather than “tears for relief.” Their use of rhetoric leads these poets into an area typically prescribed for LDS men: the public ritual of the funeral sermon. There are pitfalls in comparing women’s poetry and male funeral discourse: for instance, the comparison may implicitly set up male discourse as “standard,” and, hence, may presuppose that women’s poetry, when it differs, is an aberration—an unfortunate assumption for gender and literature. Moreover, the comparison is apt to highlight gender differences in writing style and topic, which may or may not accurately reflect actual gender relations during the nineteenth century.

Despite these drawbacks, the evaluation is useful. Putting Exponent death poetry side by side with Davis Bitton’s findings in “Mormon Funeral Sermons in the Nineteenth Century” shows that women poets often compare with their male counterparts yet also added to and otherwise adjusted for their particular needs in Bitton’s three major areas of study: eulogy, the “gospel of comfort” (comforting doc-

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22Mrs. E. B. Browning, “Given Not Lent,” Woman’s Exponent 5 (September 15, 1876): 57.
trine), and scriptural texts.  

**Eulogy**

Bitton concludes that the “most characteristic Mormon virtues” eulogized by funeral speakers were “just and true,” two catchwords connoting “unwavering commitment to the restored gospel.” LDS women’s death poetry rarely uses those exact phrases, though the underlying message of faithfulness was certainly a dominant theme. Thus, while Eliza R. Snow praises Harriet Gray as one who will dwell in the “mansions of the just” and while Lydia Alder pays tribute to Sarepta M. Heywood for being “true to the end,” most poets contented themselves by focusing on more elementary virtues. Besides the two catchword characteristics, Bitton notes that LDS funeral sermons—unlike “orations in the classical rhetorical tradition”—also honored the dead for “rudimentary virtues,” praising them “for having been kind, truthful, unselfish, patient, and cheerful; for having been obedient, dutiful children; or for having given selfless service as parents.”

The poetic eulogies written by women praise simple religious qualities, yet, when a woman died, the poems consistently added her “usefulness” and her honorable service as a wife and mother. In her March 1881 poem, “In Memoriam,” E. B. Ferguson [Ellen Brooke Ferguson], doctor, principal instigator of the Deseret Hospital, and well-known political elocutionist, memorializes “F.A.C.’s” “busy hands” and “kindly deeds” as well as her “loving helpfulness,” noting especially how the deceased wore the “royal crown of motherhood—/ The keystone of the arch of earthly life.” Eliza R. Snow praised Leonora Snow Morley, Snow’s older biological sister, for her years “fill’d with usefulness,” noting especially how Morley “nobly filled”

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24 Ibid., 29.
her role as “wife and mother.”

The anonymous author of “Mother’s Growing Old” remembers a mother who walked the “path of daily duty,” filled “her hands with useful labor,” and made “home a happy place.”

While faithfulness, kindliness, and other virtues were mentioned in funeral sermons and in death poetry, being a mother and being “useful” are exalted in LDS women’s death poetry while male sermons overwhelmingly focused on the virtues of being “just and true.” In their focus, female poets were giving voice to the ethic expressed in prose by their “presidentess,” Eliza R. Snow, in 1877: “What is true greatness? In human character, usefulness constitutes greatness. . . . In the estimation of holy intelligences, the most useful character or person is the greatest.”

By praising usefulness, poets bestowed “greatness” upon the daily duties their women friends and family members performed.

During these ten years of death poetry about other women, one poem, “Only a Portrait,” stands out because it does not name usefulness or mothering as eulogized virtues. Perhaps because the narrator is apparently gazing at a portrait, the object of the poem is praised for being “fair,” with her “blue eyes, so loving and kind / That ever look smiling on me.” Though babies were often eulogized for physical features, women rarely were in Exponent death poetry. The narrator also praises the deceased’s “beauty of the mind” and her “dear, tender heart” that could “soften another’s distress. / And cover its own with a smile,” descriptions of virtues that are more in line with typical death poetry. In the last stanza, the author finally reveals the object of the eulogy:

In joy, hers the spirit of goodness and love;  
In sorrow, of patience and rest;  
The favored of God and His angel above,  
Was Emma—the dearest and best.

The author only uses initials (“O. F. W.”) and leaves “Emma” without a

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29 “Mother’s Growing Old,” Woman’s Exponent 3 (July 15, 1874): 30.
31 O. F. W. [Orson F. Whitney?], “Only a Portrait,” Woman’s Exponent 7
surname. Thus, readers cannot be certain to whom the author is referring, though it is plausible that the author, likely Orson F. Whitney, son of Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney, was speaking of Emma Wells, Emmeline B. Wells’s twenty-four-year-old daughter who died April 8, 1878. Whitney, an ambitious poet in his own right, was a family friend and founder of the Wasatch Literary Association, which met in Emmeline’s home from 1874 to 1878. Whitney’s authorship may explain why “Only a Portrait” seems somewhat irregular in describing the dead woman’s physical features and in overlooking her standard “usefulness.” These stylistic tactics are uncharacteristic of eulogistic female death poetry, but a male friend-author would not necessarily understand by unspoken conventions.

The “Gospel of Comfort”

In his second major area of study, comforting the bereaved, Bitton found that funeral sermons typically “look[ed] forward in time” and “described the spirit world, resurrection, judgment, and eventual reward in one of the three degrees of glory.” Women poets also used this technique, finding consolation when they described, for example, the “heavenly joy” that comes in “God’s perfect day” or how “resurrection’s power combines / Immortal bodies and immortal minds.” Many also relied on the “oft-repeated trope” described by Bitton of portraying the deceased “as relieved from suffering.”

Most poets did not, however, depict the spirit as going to a “spirit world” or a “paradise” before being resurrected, a common facet of funeral sermons. Emily Hill Woodmansee speaks of “the worn body, in the quiet ground,” yet her descriptions of “the tranquil rest, so sweet and sound” and the “blest oblivion” that occurs “till ‘The Trumpet’s sound,’” suggest that the soul as well as the body is

(November 1, 1878): 81.


33Bitton, “Mormon Funeral Sermons,” 33.


36Ibid.
sleeping. Some “rest” or “sleeping” expressions could be interpreted figuratively. LDS Church President David O. McKay, at the 1912 death of his two-and-a-half-year-old son Royle, recorded, “‘He is not dead but sleepeth’ was never more applicable to any soul, for he truly went to sleep. He did not die.” Such imagery speaks less of the status of the immortal soul and more to the “relief from suffering” rhetoric Bitton found in sermons. Such an interpretation seems appropriate when, for example, British convert Agnes Armstrong, says that Brigham Young deserves “sleep for the weary eyes” and “peace for the throbbing breast,” and that he has “earned [his] calm repose.” Readers are apt to consider the difficulty of Young’s life, rather than the consciousness of his spirit when reading such lines. After burying her husband and four of her seven children in St. Louis, Missouri, before coming west to Utah and working as a teacher for the rest of her life to support her remaining children, Armstrong was likely considering her own difficult life and her personal need for relief from suffering when she spoke of “peace” and “sleep for the weary eyes.”

Yet many poets speak of the “sleep” of the spirit quite literally, concurring with Woodmansee’s notion of “blest oblivion.” Hannah Tapfield King, an early British convert who buried six of her ten children before they were adults, explains in “Song of the Weary,” that “we’ll look upon death as a sleep . . . / Till triumphant we rise from the grave.” In her death poem for “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley,” Eliza R. Snow states that while the body decomposes, the immortal spirit is left “to rest—to sleep / Until the glorious resurrection morn,” clearly

39 Agnes Armstrong, “Tribute to President Brigham Young,” Woman’s Exponent 6 (November 1, 1877): 107.
depicting a state of unconsciousness until the spirit and body are reunited.\textsuperscript{42} Perhaps these poets simply misunderstood their nascent theology, though this seems unlikely given the clear doctrine in the Book of Mormon as well as in early sermons on the afterlife. It also seems unlikely that high-ranking and faithful LDS women would, as a group, consciously and subversively alter doctrine, resulting in an un-authoritative female belief about the spirit world.\textsuperscript{43}

Another consideration may be everyday pioneer life; is it possible that frontier existence was so overwhelming that women took the concept of “resting from sorrow,” a common Victorian metaphor for death, and rhetorically explored it in verse, welcoming a time for their spirits and bodies to literally “sleep” rather than be vigorously active in paradise? The notion is not in line with standard LDS doctrine; as Mary Ann Meyers summarizes in her theological study, “Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice,” even if the LDS people believed death brought relief from suffering, “clearly death was not a release from striving.”\textsuperscript{44} Some Mormon women wanted to believe otherwise, given the difficulty of their lives. In her 1872 poem, “Longings,” Mary Jane Mount Tanner certainly wished for a reprieve when she described her life as, “All night! All dark! / so drear and sad!” Tanner writes that she is “Weary! Weary!” and wishes for a “heaven . . . full of rest.”\textsuperscript{45} Women poets used the doctrine of resurrection and celestial glory as their male peers did: to comfort the bereaved. Perhaps that same search for comfort and peace from the trials of this life led them to an unorthodox understanding of the spirit’s “sleeping” after death and before the resurrection.

The LDS doctrine of eternal family and eternal friendship was another means of comfort found in funeral sermons, though by no

\textsuperscript{42}Snow, “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley,” 35.

\textsuperscript{43}Morrill, “White Roses on the Floor of Heaven,” 264, argues persuasively that such “contradictory strains, practices, and subcultures [exist] within any given religious community” and hastens to add that, while “contradictory,” such doctrines are “paradoxically, not necessarily or openly conflicting.”


\textsuperscript{45}M. J. T. [Mary Jane Mount Tanner], “Longings,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 1 (December 1, 1872): 98.
means an original one. In *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology*, Michael Wheeler maintains that the “most characteristic Victorian ideas of heaven are of a place in which family reunions and ‘the recognition of friends’ are to be achieved after death, and (more radically Romantic) of a site in which lovers are reunited as couples.”

LDS women poets also celebrate eternal relationships. For example, Eliza R. Snow’s poem to “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley,” concludes with a farewell for the present time only: “Adieu my sister, we shall meet again, / And live on earth when Jesus Christ shall reign.” In her “Lines” written for Isabel Hamilton, Margaret A. White expresses concern that “we be worthy still to claim [Hamilton’s baby] in eternity”; and Lu [Lucinda Lee] Dalton knows that although “Death stole from my encircling arms / My bright baby,” the child is hers and will “meet me with joy when my earth work is done, / To be mine while duration rolls around.”

Like the Mormon funeral sermons studied by Davis Bitton, the poems for women and children find consolation in “the continuation not merely of the individual soul but also of the family unit beyond the grave.”

Yet the poems disproportionately find that comforting relationship continuation in female-and-female and mother-and-child relationships, rather than in eternal marriage. Even Emily B. Spencer’s tribute to Brigham Young lists the multitude of friends he will meet in heaven (Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, Jedediah M. Grant, Willard Richards, and David Patten) rather than his wives. Only eleven of the sixty-seven death poems are clearly about the deaths of actual men. Five of those poems pay homage to high-ranking leaders and four are tributes for relatives—two

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49 Bitton, “Mormon Funeral Sermons,” 35.
50 In *Woman’s Exponent*: Agnes S. Armstrong, “Tribute of Respect: To the Memory of Brother Joseph W. Young,” 2 (September 1, 1873): 54; Emily B. Spencer, “On the Death of President Brigham Young,” 6 (October 15, 1877): 13; Agnes S. Armstrong, “Tribute to President Brigham Young,” 6 (November 1, 1877): 81; Lula, “Professor Joseph L. Barfoot Dead!” 10 (May
for grandfathers, one for a father, and one for a brother.\textsuperscript{51} Two poems may be about the deaths of husbands, but both are so vague that the deceased may actually be someone else entirely.\textsuperscript{52} This absence of grief-stricken poems about husbands’ deaths is startling. If numbers alone were to measure grief—and, certainly, they do not—then these women poets were more moved by Brigham Young’s death than by the deaths of their husbands.

One of the few times that a husband shows up in death poetry during the first ten years of the \textit{Exponent} is in Hattie F. Bell’s “Post-Mortem Love.” The first person narrator pleads with her husband to, “love me now, while I can know / All the sweet and tender feelings / Which from real affection flow.” She does not wish for him to “wait” until she is “gone / And then chisol [sic] it in marble— / Warm love-words on ice-cold stone.” Unlike the typical poem, which assumes a life after death with companionable family relationships, Bell declares that she will not be able to “hear” her husband’s words

1, 1882): 179. The only poem during this time period about a non-LDS high-ranking official is about the assassinated U.S. President James A. Garfield and is addressed to his widow, Lucretia Budolph Garfield. See Lula, “Mrs. Garfield,” 10 (October 1, 1881): 65.


\textsuperscript{52}E. A. Bennion [Esther Ann Birch Bennion], “Never Again,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 10 (1 October 1881): 67, may be about either her husband or Brigham Young. Her description of the deceased “gather[ing] around thee thy little ones” and her hope to “inherit a glorious home” and “meet to be parted, O, never again!” portrays a personal family situation, yet her somewhat more formal description of a man who “teach[es] the precious Gospel word” and gives “counsel” coupled with no mention of the deceased as a husband or of herself as a wife suggests that the deceased may be a leader whom she admires for his gospel leadership and fatherhood. The poem was written November 22, 1877, and published four years later. Esther Ann Bennion’s husband, John, died August 29, 1877, Brigham Young on September 1, 1877. See also John Bennion, “Esther Ann and Me: An Essay into Boundaries,” \textit{Annual of the Association for Mormon Letters 2000: Papers from the Annual Meeting February 20, 1999}, edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Association for Mormon Letters, 2000), 31–32.
after death, since “there’ll be walls of earth between us.” In her final stanza, Bell again views death as final:

I won’t need your kind caresses
When grass grows o’er my face.
I won’t crave your love and kisses
In my last, low, resting-place.
So if you do love any,
If it’s but a little bit,
I’d rather know it now, while I
Can, living, own and treasure it.  

The jaunty ABCB rhyme scheme, the rigid pat-a-pan rhythm with its end-stopped lines, and the misguided images denoted by the figurative language (grass growing over one’s face) make the poem almost darkly humorous; however, it should likely be interpreted as an unskilled author’s attempts to beg—in the most desperate of terms—for her husband’s attention. Ironically, using her own death to overstate her point causes the author to reject her theology. To convince her husband that he must love her now before it is everlastingly too late, the narrator of the poem assumes the position that there is no life or consciousness after death—that she needs his love now before they are permanently separated by death.

The husband in M. J. T [Mary Jane Mount Tanner]’s “Retrospection” is much more attentive and loving, yet interestingly, this poem also rejects LDS doctrine. When the “good wife’s” son dies, she is devastated, eventually finding comfort in her husband, the man who has “shared her toil [and] the hopes and care of her weary lot.” Despite the effects that “time and sickness and wearying care” have wreaked on her appearance, this husband still loves his wife as “a youthful bride” and tells her that “she [is] far more fair / Than the dainty daughters of fashion.”  

In Tanner’s poem, even the good and loving husband who comforts his bereaved wife will only “clasp her to his

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54 These lines may be an oblique criticism of LDS husbands who marry young plural wives, although Tanner ardently defended the practice as a “sacred principle” in public (while privately describing it as a “severe
heart / And hold her there until death should part,” a surprising bit of “Gentile” rhetoric from a faithful LDS female poet. Perhaps the only eternal marriage described in this decade of death poetry comes in Hannah T. King’s “Tribute” to her father. The poet imagines that her father will “rise and stand among [the Saint’s] ranks” in heaven with “she, who was the partner of his life / . . . His endow’d, / His chaste, and most obedient wife.” Yet King’s eternal family and her doctrine are on shaky ground; her purpose in writing is to “twine [her father’s] honor’d name / Among the Saints of latter days” because she “know[s] / His place is with them,” even though he never joined the church, nor, for that matter, did King’s husband, farmer Thomas Owen King. Though Thomas accompanied Hannah to Utah in 1853, lived there until his death on November 16, 1875, and never discouraged Hannah in her Church endeavors, he was not baptized during his lifetime, and she had herself sealed to Brigham Young as his last plural wife.

The disregard for LDS doctrine concerning eternal husband-wife relationships seems surprising given that M. Guy Bishop’s finding that the “emphasis upon the celestial family” was well established by Joseph Smith’s death in 1844. One might speculate that the female authors simply were mimicking the poetry of their American counterparts without reflecting their own particular beliefs; and, indeed, there is evidence that the Woman’s Exponent lifted poetry from national works every so often in an ex-

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press attempt to exemplify good craftsmanship.\textsuperscript{59} However, the death poetry about women and children during this same period consistently turns to the comforting doctrine of eternal relationships. Moreover, women poets certainly knew the doctrine of eternal marriage. Eliza R. Snow’s “Immortality,” teaches that “We’ll be our very selves . . . To enjoy life’s sweet associations, such / As parents, children, husbands, wives and friends.”\textsuperscript{60} Given these women’s complete faith in the immortality of mothering and female friendship and their understanding of eternal marriage, the dearth of immortal husbands seems odd at best. Jill Mulvay Derr’s synopsis of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s groundbreaking analysis of relations among nineteenth-century American women offers an explanation. Derr points out that “the society in which Mormonism developed was characterized in large part by rigid gender-role differentiation within the family and within society as a whole, leading to the emotional segregation of women and men.”\textsuperscript{61} The lack of death poetry about husbands suggests a coincident lack of emotional intimacy with husbands, a possible consequence of polygamy, extended mission service, or strict Victorian gender roles. Still, if “O. F. W.” is indeed Orson F. Whitney, then at least one man wrote a moving literary tribute for a deceased woman, trying to express his grief and reach out to comfort others—mostly women—in the accepted “feminine” poetic manner. Thus, these emotional “separate spheres” were not unbridgeable.

In any case, the preponderance of poetry about women and children suggests strong emotional connectedness to friends and babies and, hence, great grief when they died. Eliza Snow’s, “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley,” is one of the best poems in this decade of poetry. The free verse, un-rhymed poem with dramatically hanging

\textsuperscript{59}See untitled headnote to James G. Clark, “Leona,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 10 (August 15, 1881): 43: “Competent literary critics have pronounced the following poem unsurpassed by any other production of its class in our language. It is perfect in rhyme, beautiful in figure and expression.” See also Beecher, “Poetry and Private Lives,” 58.

\textsuperscript{60}Eliza R. Snow, “Immortality,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 3 (June 1, 1874): 6.

lines, vivid figurative language and emotional depth, describes the anguish of losing a beloved friend and older sister. The first stanza explains Eliza’s relationship with Leonora, claiming, “No holier sympathy warms human breast / Than of loving sisterhood.” That Eliza R. Snow, married to two prophets, sister to a third, and Relief Society general president, finds her holiest and most sympathetic relationship in “loving sisterhood” is significant. Eliza says that she and Leonora enjoyed the “sweet / Reciprocity where each sentiment / Found safe repository—safe as heaven’s archives.” The soft “s” alliteration lulls the reader into security, as does the repetition of “safe . . . safe.” Certainly the sisters depended on each other. The Snow family was close, yet Eliza Roxcy Snow Smith Young, Leonora Abigail Snow Leavitt Morley, and Lorenzo Snow were the only Snow siblings to remain in the LDS Church throughout their lives, a god-fearing, intimate familial trio that prompted Eliza’s biographer to compare them to some of Christ’s most stalwart supporters: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.62

The reader of “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley” is set up to be startled by the first line of the second stanza, a jarringly short, end-stopped exclamation, “But my sister’s gone!” As the death must have shocked Snow, she now uses short, choppy phrasing to jolt the reader: “I feared—I felt—I knew she soon would go.” Even when sentences lengthen and lines resume their hanging style, the shock of death is not forgotten. Snow continues her second stanza:

But when beside her bed I watch’d, and saw
The last faint breath which fed the spring of life
Exhaled, it seemed frail nature’s tend’rest cord
Was rent asunder, and a crushing sense
Of loneliness, like solitude’s deep shade,
In that unguarded moment made me feel
As though the lights of earth had all gone out,
And left me desolate. 63

Snow’s careful word choices help readers feel her dejection. Line after line, word after word pulls readers down from the “safe” sisterhood

framed by the first stanza. The words are vivid but not harsh or grating: frail, rent, crushing, loneliness, solitude, deep, shade, desolate. Her final, short line, “and left me desolate,” graphically demonstrates Snow’s new isolation, echoing the four-word opening line, “But my sister’s gone!” Even when Snow rebounds in the third stanza, seeking comfort from doctrine, she does not return to rote phraseology or to rigid rhyme and meter. Most of the stanza is one long sentence. Though Snow knows that “the sacred covenants which the Priesthood binds / On earth” promise life after death, the length of the sentences makes the words seem pleading rather than didactic. The sisterhood bond is strikingly strong.

In their devastation over losing their children, a few poets took their emotional connection a step further and claimed that the mother-child bond was the source of eternal “sealed” relationships. In “A Mother’s Resignation,” Lu [Lucinda Lee] Dalton first considers that “mother-love is strong / and deep laid as the everlasting hills”; two years later she claims that “an angel of God’s perfect day / Is mine, by the passion of motherhood won, / By love and fond memory bound.”

Like Dalton, Mrs. E. B. Browning argues that women have a right to their children by virtue of mothering sacrifice:

. . . I appeal  
To all who bear babes—in the hour  
When the veil of the body we feel  
Rent round us—while torments reveal  
The motherhood’s advent in power,  
And the babe cries!—has each of us known  
By apocalypse / . . . the child is our own,  
Life of life, love of love, moan of moan,  
Through all changes, all times, everywhere.  

Why Mrs. E. B. Browning took up this argument is unknown, though Lu Dalton’s unhappy marriage as the fourth wife of the egalitarian but intemperate Charles Dalton may explain her own poetic stance. After Charles died, priesthood leaders suggested Lu obtain a cancellation of sealing and marry a more faithful man, yet she resisted, concerned

65Browning, “Given Not Lent,” 57.
about her eternal relationship with her children. In a letter to D[avid] H. Cannon, Lu Dalton explained, “My feelings as a mother are far keener and deeper than my feelings as a wife. I am the mother of six children; four are still living and two are gone before; and I would not forfeit my claim to them as their mother, for the sake of the best man in God’s kingdom.”66 Dalton eventually followed the advice of her leaders and had her sealing cancelled, despite what must have been great emotional and spiritual turmoil. These Mormon women believed in priesthood sealing power, yet they also searched for comfort within their own female experience, claiming an eternal bond with their children by virtue of motherhood, sacrifice, and love—a bond that would stand regardless of a husband’s behavior or Church status.

In searching for comfort, both male sermons and female poetry address the paradoxical concept of mourning, accepting that tears are “natural” even while affirming that the “knowledge of the gospel plan . . . should help the survivors realize that all is right.”67 Bitton relates that funeral speakers at times declared, “Let us rejoice!” intimating that truly faithful Mormons would find mourning somehow improper.68 Mary Ann Myers concurs, stating that from LDS doctrinal discourse “emerges . . . a kind of Pauline admonition that lamentation is inappropriate for Saints.”69 Female poets could also be harsh in their indictment of anguish: Agnes Armstrong preaches without reservation that “All grief is selfish,” and the anonymous author of “The Loved and Lost” concurs, chastising those who mourn the loss of loved ones: “And this we call a loss! O selfish sorrow / Of selfish hearts! O we of little faith.”70 Margaret A. White abruptly, even rudely, tells Isabel Hamilton: “Sister give thy baby up,” explaining that there is no need to “mourn to lay him down / When he his work hath done.”71

Such—thankfully infrequent—remarks were insensitive at best. They demonstrate a tactless binary opposition of faith/happiness

68Ibid.
69Myers, “Gates Ajar,” 123.
70Agnes Armstrong, “Tribute to President Brigham Young,” 107, and “The Loved and Lost,” 8 (February 1, 1880): 131.
71Margaret A. White, “Lines,” Woman’s Exponent 1 (October 15,
versus apostasy/grief, which most women poets recognize did not conform to the complex reality of reconciling oneself to death. Yet even these aggressive attempts at consolation cover an implicit assumption and affirmation of pain; women poets who seem less than sympathetic apparently recognize a crushing suffering and try to solve the problem, albeit by sporadically rebuking those who grieve and frequently glossing over death’s unpleasant aspects.

The sprinkling of insensitive poems seems to support other scholars’ findings of LDS death psychology. In “To Overcome the ‘Last Enemy’: Early Mormon Perceptions of Death,” M. Guy Bishop concludes that the “innermost thoughts [about death] of many early Mormons may never be known. To express any dissatisfaction, either verbally or in writing, was deemed to be improper behavior and possibly even sacrilegious.”

Susan Easton found a similar trend in her “Suffering and Death on the Plains of Iowa,” noting that, in their journals, the Saints “generally remained objective and even retained a cautious optimism.” However, these claims, and Bishop’s contention that “the literary history of Mormonism displays a culture that was increasingly reconciled to death,” should be considered in conjunction with the outspoken, publicly acknowledged grief that permeated much of the poetry in the *Exponent*. Eliza R. Snow poignantly describes her pain:

> I’ve had a taste of mortal suffering:  
> I’ve seen my fellows drink its cup fill’d to  
> The brim and running o’er, until the pulse  
> Of life was dogg’d in every wheel—until  
> Nature’s deep agonies, outweigh’d the love  
> Of life, and yet the throbbing pulse beat on.

Snow’s recognition that some trials are so bitter and painful that they can “outweigh the love of life” is not rhetorical hyperbole. For example, the pseudonymous author of “Trust in God” finds comfort in the “House of the Lord,” but only after confessing the depth of her anguish: “I felt that the grave was a haven / A refuge from grief and despair . . . / O how I wished I was there!” Many others acknowledge the same despair in vaguer terms: Esther Ann Birch Bennion yearns for “one glimpse” of “the little ones we buried long ago” but feels that if she were “permitted to see them in their home of love and light, / With this dark world I might not be contented.” After comparing death to sleep
in her “Song of the Weary,” Hannah Tapfield King invites sleep/death: “Then come with thy wondrous dreamland, / Yes, Morpheus, come quickly to me.”\(^{77}\) Millicent, the author of “Resignation,” has seen the “clouds of this care-worn world” and their “shadows creep over the soul” to the point where “the heart grows still with pain.”\(^{78}\) Whether in definite terms or indistinct metaphor, some women were so pained by death that their own deaths seemed preferable.

Many other poets did not necessarily wish to die; they simply lived in an agonized present. Contemplating her life without her loved one, A. E. T., possibly Annie Turpin, explains:

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The years go by, the years go by,
I see them pass without a sigh. . . .
What now is all this world to me
But tasteless, dull monotony?\(^{79}\)
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“Hope” (Sarah Russell), the ironically pseudo-named author of “To Maggie,” feels much the same, daring the reader to “sing me one song where no anguish is found,” saying there is no such thing—“for if joy begun, / It would turn to pain ere the song was done.” For her, death is “widely sown” and the “weary” will only find “rest” when “earth’s blood stained cross is exchanged for a crown.”\(^{80}\) Even Louisa (“Lula”) Greene Richards, author of the relatively upbeat “To Bereaved Mothers,” which reiterates for fifteen long stanzas that “we’ve but to wait” through this life and then find the “fair cherub forms at the bright gate,” suddenly bursts out in stanza six: “How long oh Lord! How long!” before quieting herself, “But hush poor heart! / Thou would’st not question Him.”\(^{81}\) Grief-stricken pain is the foundational problem which death poetry tries to resolve, and poets constantly seek to alleviate that pain, vacillating at times between self-righteous doctrine

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\(^{77}\)King, “Song of the Weary,” 1.

\(^{78}\)Millicent [Millicent Russell?], “Resignation,” *Woman’s Exponent* 3 (March 15, 1875): 158.

\(^{79}\)A. E. T. [Annie Turpin?], “Yearnings,” *Woman’s Exponent* 3 (March 1, 1875): 150.

\(^{80}\)Hope [Sarah Russell], “To Maggie,” *Woman’s Exponent* 3 (December 15, 1874): 106.

\(^{81}\)Lula [Louisa Greene Richards], “To Bereaved Mothers,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5 (April 1, 1877): 161.
and doubt, resolution and extreme, all-consuming grief.

Eliza R. Snow’s poem for her sister exemplifies the struggle and tries to find a rational reconciliation between the logical assumption that a true testimony of life after death should stifle sorrow and the emotional devastation when a loved one dies. After describing her own pain at Leonora’s death, and then finding some measure of consolation in doctrine, Snow cuts her stanza into two sections with a dramatic turn:

but love accepts no substitute.
   When the fond mother lays her darling down
   In death’s cold, silent sleep, though others may
   Be added to her arms, the vacancy
   Remains until the resurrection shall
   Give back her child.\textsuperscript{82}

Strikingly, Snow, who was childless, moves beyond her immediate situation (death of a sister) to address bereaved mothers. Without rejecting her theology or the comforting doctrine of eternal families, Snow gives credence to the reality of grief, recognizing that some pains may not be healed in this life. She finds a gap between faith and despondency that allows for sorrow and mourning, recognizing that those emotions may exist for the length of a woman’s life. In so doing, she reaches out and comforts those, who, like herself are struggling to reconcile themselves to death.

The LDS women who wrote death poetry seem, whether consciously like Snow or not, to be reaching out through their words in search of support and in an effort to provide comfort. In so doing, they create a communal identity of faithful sufferers. Mary Ann Myers notes that, generally speaking, “partaking in funeral rites gives participants a renewed sense of belonging to a social whole.” After explaining that funerals reveal the deceased’s “social identity” within the community—be that “husband, father, friend, soldier, civic, and religious leader”—Myers applies the concepts to nineteenth-century LDS culture: “The foremost parts in the category of participants who were not bereaved kinsmen were taken by members of the church hierarchy. It was customary for a member of the Melchizedek priesthood to speak at funerals. The delivering of eulo-

\textsuperscript{82}Snow, “My Sister, Leonora A. Morley,” 35.
gies seems to have been a common duty of elders; at the obsequies of the Mormon elite, the main participants regularly included the President, his two counselors, and members of the Quorum of Twelve. “Typical Mormon funerals, as described by Myers, do not necessarily create the “social identity” and feeling of “social whole” for LDS women that they did for men. Yet Myers’s descriptions apply well to what women were doing for each other in the Exponent. When Margaret Ann Hill White died, the ward Relief Society president, Elizabeth Hill, and ward Relief Society secretary, Frances H. Hanson, composed an eulogy for publication in the Woman’s Exponent, implicitly clarifying Margaret White’s faithfulness and status within her realm of LDS women. Sarepta M. Heywood’s “social identity” is clarified not only by the amount of space given her in the Exponent (a six-stanza poem, a seven-stanza poem, and nearly a full-column eulogy) but also by ward Relief Society president Marinda Hyde’s assertion that she and Heywood “have worked side by side in performing the many labors and discharging the high responsibilities which devolved upon us, without a discordant feeling. . . . [Heywood] has been a true friend and a wise [ward Relief Society first] counselor.” Yet even while clarifying social identity—sister, mother, daughter, friend, religious leader—these published poems allowed women to mourn and seek comfort as a communal group. Women personally responded to deaths which impacted them and did so in a public, published forum—inviting others to share their burden and enjoining others to keep the faith in spite of the pain brought by death.

Funeral Texts

The scriptures that women cite in their poetry further form an identity of God-fearing mourners. Like funeral sermons, death poetry was apt to use key words and phrases from scriptures without ref-

84Elizabeth Hill and Frances H. Hanson, “Margaret A. H. White,” Woman’s Exponent 25 (May 15, 1897): 151.
ferences. For Bitton, this signifies “the ease with which the early preachers moved into and out of sacred texts,” and the same ease is clearly manifest by female poets.\(^{86}\) That women knew the appropriate scriptural funeral texts is obvious from Marinda Hyde’s eulogy for Sarepta M. Heywood. Framed between two poems honoring Heywood, Hyde concludes: “Of Sister Heywood it may well be said, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’ She had ‘fought the good fight, she had kept the faith,’ and had secured the blessed privilege of ‘coming forth in the morning of the first resurrection, crowned with glory, immortality and eternal lives.’”\(^{87}\) In just two sentences, Hyde manages to employ three of Bitton’s most common scriptural references typically used as “funeral texts.”\(^{88}\)

Of Bitton’s list of twelve references, women poets were most likely to refer to 1 Corinthians 15:55 (“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”) and Job 1:21 (“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”). Most used the scriptures as a standard, but E. B. Browning argues a new—and comforting—interpretation of Job 1:21. When a bereaved mother expresses the typically misquoted belief that “God lent him [her child] and takes him,” Browning vehemently disagrees, stating “God’s generous in giving, say I,— / And the thing which He gives, I deny / That He ever can take back again. / He gives what He gives.”\(^{89}\) Refusing the common interpretation that God has “taken back” a child from a mother, Browning contends that God “lends not; but gives to the end, / As he loves to the end,” an idea that women who lost children must have found encouraging.

The few scriptures used by death poets that are not on Bitton’s list of standard funeral texts speak volumes about the depth of these women’s sorrow. A number of poems refer to the “cup,” apparently an allusion to Matthew 26:39 (Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42) when Christ

\(^{86}\) Bitton, “Mormon Funeral Sermons,” 41.
\(^{87}\) Marinda Hyde, Untitled eulogy, 109.
\(^{88}\) Bitton finds that twelve “scriptural passages occurred with enough regularity to be considered standard within the funeral preaching tradition”: 2 Samuel 3:38; Job 1:21; Job 19:25–26; Matthew 25:21; Luke 2:29–30; John 11:25–26; 1 Corinthians 15:19, 22, 55; 2 Timothy 4:7; Revelation 6:9, 7:9, 14:13, 20:12. The sermons also use the “framework” from Alma 40–42 and Doctrine and Covenants 76, 88, 132, 42:46.
\(^{89}\) Browning, “Given Not Lent,” 57.
prays, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” In “The Hand of God,” L. L. (Louisa “Lula” Greene Richards, first editor of the Woman’s Exponent) tells a bereaved mother: “I can sympathize deeply with you . . . I have tasted, though lightly, of life’s bitter cup.” Even though Lula was, at the time the poem was written, an unmarried professional woman, she is sympathetic, recognizing that her friend is “wounded and rack’d, bowing low to the sod.” Still, the author pleads with her friend to continue to “acknowledge the kind Hand of God.”

Similarly, the pseudonymous “Hope” (Sarah Russell) theorizes: “There’s a poison drop in the purest cup, / That earth born mortals are doomed to sup.” She also tells her friends that “howe’er so bitter may seem the cup” we should continue to “bend our own, wild will” to God’s.”

The women seem to be conceding, perhaps more frankly than the typical funeral sermon, that life is full of suffering and difficulty. Like Christ, the women recognize the bitterness of the “cup” God has given them before expressing submission to His will.

Another scripture used by female poets that likely did not find its way into funeral sermons is Matthew 2:18: “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” In “To Beloved Mothers,” Lula Greene Richards references the “Rachel” who “would not be comforted nor find relief, / Her children slain, she wept that they were not.” If any readers missed the obvious comparison, Lula then equates Rachel with bereaved LDS women:

A wailing voice is heard in Deseret,  
The babes are stricken and the mothers mourn;  
Their hearts are pained, their cheeks and eyes are wet,  
For those who’re not; which they have fondly borne.

Though the rest of the poem expresses the comfort to be found in doctrine, Lula does not chastise women for their sorrow. On the con-

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92Lula, “To Bereaved Mothers,” 161.
trary, she justifies their grief: “What though we weep! God gave us tears to shed, / When hearts o’er burdened burst from calm control,” and then compares the bereaved mothers’ agony to Christ who “wept and groaned in anguish of His soul.” In the short four and a half years since her 1872 “The Hand of God,” Lula Greene Richards had had personal experience with the pain she was describing. Sympathetic to her friend’s pain in 1872, Lula had married and lost two infant daughters in the intervening years. She resigned as editor of the Woman’s Exponent in 1877 after the death of her second baby. Lula and others sought consolation in scripture, finding justification not only for hope but also for their deep and abiding grief. That they used scripture easily in poetry speaks to their belief in God, his words, his will and his plan; these women poets were faithful. Yet faith did not cancel out a pain that was, for them, comparable to Christ’s “bitter cup” of agony in Gethsemane.

CONCLUSION

One scholar has concluded that “death itself was, for the Saints, a minor event” and one that was simply a “logical step in the individual’s march to godhood.” While that proposition may be true doctrinally, it is difficult to support in light of LDS women’s nineteenth-century daily life as described in death poetry. From their use of scripture to their wish to die, Mormondom’s nineteenth-century women poets expressed great pain when loved ones died. Especially when dealing with the emotionally challenging deaths of friends or children, women wrote with a regularity and variety that should demonstrate the historical significance of and emotional trauma caused by death. Though they played publicly acknowledged roles in the bereavement process, the women also enacted their “mediator of liminality” role by writing death poetry. In a communal act of sharing and sympathizing, women eulogized those who had passed on and consoled those left behind, imitating the themes and topics of Victorian death poetry and LDS funeral sermons, yet permeating the writing with LDS women’s insight, experience, and style. Writing their grief and publishing their pain was both a self-healing tactic and an

94 Myers, “Gates Ajar,” 133.
empathetic response to other women. They expressed their feelings and sought for consolation, found comfort in doctrine and created doctrine for comfort, stretched out toward others and pled for help from others. Lula Greene Richards explains why she wrote about death in “To Bereaved Mothers”:

Let me these humble, sacred tributes weave,
O’er little ones so loved, so early gone!
It comforts mine, and other hearts that grieve,
May gather courage as they struggle on.  

While she writes to comfort herself and to “gather courage,” Lula also wrote for “other hearts that grieve,” for her sister-sufferers. In “Mrs. Garfield,” Lula again evokes the sisterhood of suffering, telling Mrs. Garfield that “every wife and mother . . . / Feels her own heart bleed with thine!”  

Hannah T. King concurs, saying when “we feel that NO TO-MORROW / Has the power to bring relief,” there is a “law divine” that has “power the wounds of grief to heal.”  

That law is “sympathy”—an empathetic feeling and calling to which women responded again and again by writing death poetry.

95 Lula, “To Bereaved Mothers,” 161.
97 Hannah T[apfield]. King, “Sympathy,” Woman’s Exponent 3 (April 1, 1875): 166; emphasis hers.
In 1855 Iowa’s Davenport Gazette declared that a new invention, the treadle sewing machine, was “to the frontier woman what the McCormick reaper was to the frontier farmer,” and an early magazine, Godey’s Lady’s Book, called it “The Queen of Inventions.” Besides relieving women of “hundreds of hours of hand-stitching,” the machine allowed them “to make more complicated fashions” and enabled daughters to “take over much of the family sewing at an earlier age.”¹ The possibilities seemed endless as American women foresaw themselves constructing draperies, tablecloths, and other household items, as well as producing ship sails, grain sacks, and sturdy work clothing for their husbands and sons. They also imagined reducing the time consumed in sewing tucks and ruffles on their dresses. Time would provide the an-

swers to the myriad problems encountered in a busy woman’s day.

Though a few sewing machines came by ox team across the plains to Utah, sales of the “Queen of Inventions” in the territory awaited the arrival of the railroad, which provided quicker transport to the area. At that point, after 1869, a greater variety and supply of sewing machines were available, and it was possible for more women to enjoy the luxury of machine stitching.

This luxury affected Utah’s communities in diverse ways. For example, the territory’s economy benefitted from the new profession of sewing-machine salesperson. These individuals were frequently hired on a part-time basis, so it provided income to those without full time or year-round jobs. Purchasing the invention also introduced women to the practice of installment buying already known to men. When used machines became available for sale, some buyers bartered to make the down payment and paid the balance later, increasing the movement of goods and money. Such purchases worried Brigham Young, who generally disapproved of buying on time and who also feared that individual clothing production would supersede collective sewing efforts meant to unite the women of the Church. The Relief Society’s work meetings, which sewed clothing for the poor, and quilting bees were well established institutions, in addition to commercial ventures. However, the growing importance of the machine to Utah’s women showed an independence among those who were otherwise obedient to their leaders’ directives.

This article discusses the development of the sewing machine and the introduction of mechanized sewing to Utah women, the impact it had on the economy of the territory, the censure it drew from LDS authorities, the methods by which manufacturers enticed women to buy, and the innovative ways women found of paying for the machine.

**The Development of the Sewing Machine**

The first sewing machines were developed for use in embroidering fabrics. As early as 1790, Thomas Saint, a British cabinetmaker, patented a device for making footwear and included in the patent a machine for stitching on fabrics. In America the apparatus was part of the early Industrial Revolution prior to the Civil War, crafted by men who considered themselves artisans, not just inventors. Historian Page Smith writes that between 1826 and 1860 this country’s in-
ventors modified and perfected tools that were marked by their “great aesthetic potency” with painted surfaces, designs, and gold lettering. Thus, along with new technology, early sewing machines featured beautifully decorated surfaces and carefully modeled cabinets and iron work.²

This period of the nation’s history was the perfect time for the introduction of such technology. Americans eagerly sought labor-saving devices, increased output, and more income. Smith records, “It wasn’t that Americans disliked work. It was rather that they wished to minimize it; to make it as unlaborious as possible.”³ American sewing machine inventors developed numerous technologies to please these busy people, designing their own models, changing the way the machines worked (such as needle placement and direction of sewing), and tinkering with parts, appearance, and size. In the beginning the machine was basically a hand-powered needle, sewing one stitch at a time, but the inventors vied with each other to produce the first interlocking continuous stitch. Elias Howe (1819–67), an inventor from Boston, is usually recognized as the first to patent this feature in America in 1846, although it was a protracted perfecting of products and efforts to build on others’ inventions and he did not start producing it until the 1860s. In the meantime, his brother Amasa won an award at the London International Exhibition for his own excellent sewing machines. The two competed until, in 1867 with both of them dead, Elias’s sons-in-law took over the business, placed a brass medallion featuring Elias’s portrait on their machine, and advertised it as the “original” Howe.⁴

Isaac Merritt Singer patented an improvement on one of Howe’s earlier models by adding a foot treadle, a reciprocating shuttle, and an adjustable tension. By 1856 Singer offered an affordable machine costing $125 for five dollars down and the rest in monthly install-

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³Smith, The Nation Comes of Age, 824.
ments with interest. Other early companies competed with Singer, each adding improvements to set their machines apart from the rest. Some of these were the Domestic Sewing Machine Company, which supplied Sears, Roebuck, and Co. in the mid-1910s; and the Domestic Sewing Machine Company, which became a subsidiary of the White Sewing Machine Company.

Another brand, Grover-Baker’s sewing machines, were a “little larger than a coffee mill and a trifle higher than a milking stool.” Some models looked like toys, while others could be placed on tabletops, and still others had self-standing intricate wood cases. Beautiful

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scrolled and designed iron work supported the machines, and treadles featured intricate motifs.

Power for some came from pushing or pulling a small wheel that moved the needle up and down or from side to side. Others were powered by a foot treadle that spun a large wheel attached to a smaller wheel by a band that rotated it. Manufacturers also created carved cabinets to hold the machine, and carved wooden boxes encased the attachments for ruffling, pleating, buttonholing, and hemming.

**Early Utah Purchases**

Today, many households across Utah have early models, while museums display some of the oldest. For instance, a downstairs room in the Salt Lake Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum features at least a dozen. One model is Sarah Ann Pea Rich’s 1863 machine, made by the Florence Sewing Machine Company. A very early design, it has two arms, a nicely shaped treadle made to hold the feet in place with straps, and a fine cabinet to enclose the machine. Annie Taylor Dee, wife of Thomas D. Dee of Ogden, claimed to own the first origi-
nal Utah machine, brought by her father, John Taylor, for her mother, Sarah Faulkner Taylor. The first sewing machine in Henefer, Utah, was a Wheeler and Wilson model that Joseph and Prudence Edgeworth purchased in Salt Lake City in 1871.  

The Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum in Logan, Utah, displays “one of the first” machines brought into Utah by railroad, a Singer that had been patented in 1855. Katherine Irvine purchased it in 1870 and used it to sew burial clothing for a local undertaker. An 1892 Wheeler and Wilson model in the millinery shop at the American West Heritage Center in Wellsville, Utah, is unusual in that the small wheel must be pushed away from the operator by hand to start

8Notes provided to Audrey Godfrey by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum staff in Salt Lake City on the condition and description of the machines at the time they were donated. Annie Taylor Dee, “Memories of a Pioneer,” n.p., n.d., photocopy of typescript, Stewart Library, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah, 25; Fannie J. Richins and Maxine R. Wright, comps., *Henefer, Our Valley Home* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, n.d.), 132.
The 1902 Sears catalogue featured this full-page illustration, while the tightly packed copy pointed out such features as its drop leaf, seven drawers, its “beautiful rich carving and heavy embossing,” its cabinet of “quartered oak” with a separate box covering, and ball-bearing mechanism for transferring power from the treadle to the wheel. This model sold for the bargain price of $13.85.
the sewing, rather than toward her.\textsuperscript{9}

Even before the railroad's arrival, opportunities to purchase a machine were available through commercial establishments. Godbe and Mitchell, a drug and sundry business, ran an advertisement in the \textit{Deseret News} in December 1867 stating that it had the “Superlative” Wilcox and Gibbs sewing machines. A full-column advertisement in the November 16, 1870, \textit{Deseret News} touted the Florence Sewing Machine. Even ZCMI, the purveyor of home-manufactured items offered Singer machines soon after railroads brought goods to Utah.\textsuperscript{10}

The \textit{Woman’s Exponent} ran this advertisement in 1880: “Have you seen the new Victor sewing machine? If not you should do so at once and examine the New ideas in Sewing Machine Construction. The New Machine is elegant in appearance and admirable in operation, runs without noise and confusion, although the rate of speed is very high. Its self setting and self threading shuttle, and absence of springs and cogs, renders it both simple and durable. Be sure to see it, for its general advantages will make you its friend.”\textsuperscript{11}

Frederick A. Neuberger of Logan, who sold pianos and organs as well as sewing machines, advertised in the \textit{Woman’s Exponent} and in the 1904 Logan \textit{Polk Directory}: “The White Sewing Machine is King. Oldest Reliable Sewing machine House. The Only machine expert in Northern Utah. 20 years experience. Rent, repair and sell machines. Extras for all Machines.”\textsuperscript{12}

While Neuberger called the White the “King,” John Daynes, in 1882, stayed with the “queen” designation. His ad queried, “Have you Seen it! The New Queen.” Then, in nicely laid-out prose he declared, “The only Sewing Machine made which has Shuttle, Take-up and Ten-

\textsuperscript{9}Notes describing the machine in the Logan DUP Museum. Conversation with Lorraine Bowen, Program Coordinator at the American West Heritage Center, in Wellsville, Utah, January 5, 2006.


\textsuperscript{11}Advertisement for the Victor Sewing Machine Company, O. H. Riggs, Agent in Salt Lake City, \textit{Woman’s Exponent}, August 1, 1880, 40.

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Logan City and Cache County Directory} (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk, & Co., 1904).
sions. Entirely Self Threading . . . Easy Running . . . The ‘Queen’ also makes the most perfect lock-Stitch . . . largest Arm Space . . . Most Stylish furniture, and Handsomest Plating and Ornamentation in the Market. It Sews Anything! It Beats Anything! It Pleases Everybody!” Then Daynes, the “sole agent for Utah,” announced his need for agents “in every part of the territory.”

By 1888 Cache Valley had a Singer sewing machine sales office located above Britzelli & Bessler tailors.

**Purchasing a Machine**

The women of Utah called the machine a wonderful invention and scoured their assets to buy either new or used ones, often paying for them in installments. For instance, Minnie Petersen Brown sold three pigs and some fryer chickens while her husband was working out of state; by these means, she raised a $25 down payment on a second-hand sewing machine, purchased from Mrs. Long, a widow. Minnie eventually paid $75 for the machine. To raise additional money, she sewed and sold her work, as well as vegetables from her garden. She said, “I must not forget, when George came home he was so pleased with what I had done he gave me $10.00 towards the machine.” Another industrious seamstress, Rhoda Smith Allred, born in Ogden in 1859 to Daniel and Elizabeth Smith, helped her mother make buckskin gloves by hand to get their first machine.

It was not only the women who were agreeable to paying for a

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13Advertisement, *Salt Lake Herald*, January 7, 1882. In the 1880 census, John, age forty-nine, is listed as a musician. He founded Daynes Music Company in 1862.


15“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread,” *Treasures of Pioneer History*, compiled by Kate B. Carter, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952–57), 4:323. This biographical sketch has no identified author and does not give Minnie’s time period or location.

machine in installments. At least one husband was willing to help his wife buy on credit. While Orson Pratt was in New York in 1867, he wrote to his wife Mary Ann Merrill Pratt, “I think I can get Credit from Godbe & Mitchell for a sewing machine for you, providing that you can make the machine pay for itself in the course of a year or so. Are you willing to try one on those terms?”

**SEWING WITH THE MACHINE**

It didn’t take long for women to fit the apparatus into their province of work—usually their home—where their children and associates observed them. The new invention was indeed memorable. Julia Stewart of Cache Valley saw her first sewing machine at age ten, and it made such a deep impression that eighty-two years later she still remembered: “Every woman in town went to see it and was charmed because it could sew so fast.” Warren Gould Child of Stringtown (Riverdale, Utah), watched his father sew cotton bed-ticking bags to hold the family grain on a “hand power sewing machine, turned by a crank, and screwed to a table like a sausage grinder.” Emily Ann Saunders Winn described the first sewing machine in Nephi, Utah, as similar to a toy. It was powered by hand. Some of the hand-run machines featured empty wooden thread spools or some type of homemade knob attached to the wheel to make for easier turning.

Family cooperation not only helped purchase the machines but helped run them. William Arthur Cox, a farmer and logger in

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17Orson Pratt, Letter to Mary Ann Pratt, July 2, 1867, Orson Pratt Letters, Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. My thanks to Ardis E. Parshall for bringing this letter to my attention.


Sanpete County, whose wife, Christina, usually sewed at night after the children were in bed, dutifully sat behind the sewing machine, holding a lamp so that it would shine on her work. Future LDS Church president Heber J. Grant recalled that, after his father’s death, his mother earned an income by taking in boarders and sewing for others. He said he sat on the floor many evenings and “pumped the sewing machine treadle to relieve his weary mother.”

Mary Johanson Parson, a survivor of the Martin handcart company, lost both legs below the knee to frostbite. At age fourteen she purchased a sewing machine on time. Despite her disability, Mary operated the machine on her own, and many of her neighbors admired her ingenuity and industry. One anonymous observer commented, “It would seem almost impossible for her to tread a machine with her knees, yet this was what she did. She wore pads on her knees for soles, or shoes. Many people who knew her keen ambition to support herself gave her a great deal of sewing and paid her liberally.”

Margaret Boak Browne, a dressmaker in Spanish Fork, Utah, in the 1860s who possessed artistic ability with a needle, decided to use her talents to obtain income for her family. At first she sewed by hand, and often sat up most of the night to finish dresses and hats for her customers. According to a DUP biographical sketch, she purchased a sewing machine about 1870 and “it was quite an event. . . . It was the first in town and the first many people had ever seen,” and sewing tucks and trimmings was less long and tedious after that.

Though the sewing machine saved time and effort, some claimed that it encouraged women to spend too many hours bent over their work, taking a toll on their health. Mary Fuller Frizzel from Salt Lake City, who was pregnant, died suddenly on February 28, 1873. Her mother blamed it on Mary’s excessive labor, taking in much work in addition to her own sewing. Mary was an excellent seamstress, particularly well-known for her long, white, baby dresses. Her personal clothing featured tucks, embroidery, and bias inserts, all requiring ex-

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acting and careful sewing.23

Another complaint was that sewing machines were difficult to operate, which was certainly true of the earliest models. The owner of a Wheeler and Wilson machine said it “made a noise like a threshing machine and ran almost as hard.”24 Annie Taylor Dee recalled that, when her father first purchased a sewing machine, it was called a manufacturing machine. “It was all iron and hard to run; but at that it was a great saving of time.”25 The addition of treadles beginning in the 1850s made operating them easier because the sewer’s hands were free to guide the material; however, early Utah machines were mostly hand operated, according to the anecdotal descriptions

23Elvira Hemenway, Letter to Dear Daughter Anna, July 25, 1873, Heart Throbs of the West, 10:191.
quoted in this article.\(^{26}\)

**Censure from Brigham Young**

President Brigham Young’s speeches indicated his reluctance to see women move from hand-sewing to the use of a machine. His counsel from the pulpit encouraged their industry but feared that the expense of the machines would impact the economy of the territory. As early as 1867 in a discourse about “How the Sisters Can Help to Build Up the Kingdom,” he warned mothers to teach their daughters to make their clothing “when they have cloth to make up, instead of hiring help into the house and getting all the sewing machines that are peddled off in the United States, why do not they sit down and make it up themselves. This would be far more economical.”\(^ {27}\) Part of his concern stemmed from money being sent out of the territory rather than kept within. After the railroad arrived in 1869, he warned the Saints to “cease to build up the merchant who sends your money out of the Territory for fine clothes in the East.” Though at this time he was not speaking of sewing machines, it demonstrates his well-known wariness about imports and his call for a “retrenchment” to simpler home-produced goods.\(^ {28}\)

Also in 1869 at a meeting of the female Relief Society in Salt Lake City’s Fifteenth Ward, he again suggested collective sewing and told the sisters there was no harm in making men’s clothes for profit, but that they ought to do it in collective groups of “six or eight women.” According to Leonard Arrington, such pronouncements resulted from Church leaders’ fear that the coming of the railroad would produce a moneyed class among the Saints which would “rend the social fabric and destroy cohesion and unity.”\(^ {29}\)

In 1875, Young, concerned that the Saints were spending too much “time and money for nothing,” used the sewing machine as an

\(^{26}\)Riley, “‘Not Gainfully Employed,’” 256.


\(^{29}\)Brigham Young, quoted in section on the Relief Society, “Advice from the President,” *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 14:82; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 295.
example. “A sewing machine that costs twenty-two dollars to manufacture, we pay one hundred and twenty-five dollars for; . . . for one that costs sixteen dollars, we pay one hundred. And then, when a man gets his wife a sewing machine she will spend from five to fifteen dollars worth of time in making a dress. This is wasting time.”

It is not clear how Young derived his prices nor if he had considered how much time making the dress by hand would have taken.

Perhaps he should have visited the clothing factories of Orderville and witnessed that very little time was being wasted in this collective effort. Working in the factories built in 1882 were women such as Susan Heaton, Mary E. Box, Mary Ellen Clayton, Susan Fackrell, and Mary Ann Ingram White, who spent long hours cutting cloth or sewing at their machines. White especially found the work difficult. “For ten hours or more each day she cut out . . . men’s clothing through several thicknesses of the heavy cloth” until her arm ached so much she couldn’t sleep at night. Long hours working the treadle caused her feet to swell. Because she was only five feet three inches tall, her legs troubled her because she had to stretch to reach the treadle. A relative recalled,

At first much of her work was done in her own room, and she liked that. It was not altogether to the liking of the leaders of the Order, but she had a sewing machine that was precious to her and she refused to have it moved to the common room or to allow anyone else to use it. Days when she was not cutting in the big room she worked in her own house and hardened her heart to her husband, John’s, chagrin.

In spite of Young’s speeches, I found no examples of women who declined to purchase or acquire a sewing machine if they could, or who expressed guilt about using it, regardless of President Young’s strictures. By the time of his death in 1877, the Church was headed into its stormiest decade of conflict with the federal government over polygamy, and the topic of sewing machines does not seem to have been picked up by any other General Authority, except for Erastus Snow.

30 Brigham Young, August 31, 1875, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:75.

THE EMERGENCE OF MACHINE PEDDLERS

Apostle Erastus Snow criticized, not the sewing machine, but its salesmen. On June 3, 1877, in Provo, Utah, he preached a sermon against them, saying they “ravaged our country, imposing themselves upon every simpleton in the land and forcing their goods upon him. Tens of thousands of dollars are lying idle in houses” where the machines sat unused. Snow used alarmist language: “I was told that Sanpete County owed for sewing machines alone from $40,000 to $50,000 and . . . in Cache Valley $40,000 would not clear the indebtedness.”

The negative view of sewing machine agents supplied an epithet for Judge William Wormer Drummond, appointed to the territorial bench in 1855 but who was disliked so thoroughly by Utah citizens that he fled from Utah in May 1856. A hotel clerk, asked what Drummond’s vocation was, answered facetiously, “He’s not very well known here; I think he is a sewing machine agent.”

Surprisingly, this criticism, which may be related to the generally shady reputation of the traveling salesman or “drummer,” castigated many active and well-known Latter-day Saints. For instance, Orson Ferguson Whitney, son of Horace Whitney and Helen Mar Kimball Whitney and a grandson of Heber C. Kimball, probably sold machines as his first paid employment in 1874 at age nineteen. He later became bishop of Salt Lake’s Eighteenth Ward, a historian, and an apostle. Hyrum Harrison Goddard of Salt Lake City, the first general secretary of the church’s Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association, operated a sewing machine business. Before becoming a sewing machine agent in the 1870s, John Prodger Wright of East Millcreek in the Salt Lake Valley taught school, acted as a trustee for the district schools, kept bees, was a tailor, and sold White sewing machines. When John was away selling machines, his wife, Isabella Wardell Wright, completed sewing jobs for ZCMI—overalls, jumpers, and burial and temple clothes.

Little money circulated in Utah before the railroad’s completion in 1869. Some specie came from passing immigrants who

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34 For Whitney, see Frank Esshom, Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah
bought grain, stock, and garden produce to replenish their supplies before continuing on to California and the Northwest. The military and stage lines also contributed to the state’s currency.35 One historian noted that “many farmers, while possessing property worth hundreds and even thousands of dollars, were often without a dollar of actual money.”36 And of course, many farming families were far from being worth “thousands of dollars.” An unnamed Cache Valley farmwife in 1876 contrasted her situation (unrealistically) with those of “our sisters in the large cities whose husbands are merchants or clerks, etc., that receive very large salaries, . . . Our husbands that follow farming, raise a little wheat, potatoes, etc. etc., and if we did not use economy, we should never be able to sustain our families.”37 The continual stream of Mormon immigrants into Utah Territory until the end of the nineteenth century exacerbated the problems of overpopulation and underemployment, despite “missions” to settle and farm land on the outer limits of the territory. Utah’s industries and manufacturing enterprises grew more slowly than the population until World War II.38 Thus, the possibility of creating a job for oneself as a sewing machine agent was an appealing one, though unusual for women.

**THE SALES PITCH**

Each sewing machine agent developed his personal strategies of dealing with the day-to-day challenges of sales: finding a market, developing a pitch, and finding a way to collect money owed by customers. Some sewing machine agents in Utah came up with quite innovative solutions.

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(Salt Lake City: Pioneer Book Publishing, 1913), 1243; for Goddard, see ibid., 892. For Wright, see Isabella Zenger Christensen, “Faithful All His Days,” *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 2:301.


During the 1860s, for instance, James Sherlock Cantwell of Smithfield in Cache Valley taught school, tailored, and clerked. He also served the community as postmaster and labored for others. Then came another career change. In 1872 he recorded in his journal, “During the last four months I have taken agencies for the following articles Secombs Sewing machines, Dr. A Kings Mother Nobles [sic] Syrup; and L C Kennedys Golden Wonder. I am doing very well.” He canvassed for buyers, taking the time to instruct prospective customers in how to use the sewing machine. After making the sale, he sent his customers’ money orders to his supplier “through the Ogden city PO.” He thought the variety in his work kept him in good health.39

Lucretia Wightman of Payson, an exception to male peddlers, sold both Singer and Wheeler and Wilson sewing machines in about a twenty-five-mile radius. Her buggy was arranged to hold two sewing machines, and she wore out three buggies during her career. Installment payments were so poor that, in about 1885, she thought up an innovative method to collect from those indebted to her. She decided to build a hotel and let those who owed money pay in either material or labor to balance their accounts. The construction lasted five or six years, but in the end Lucretia owned “one of the best and largest buildings in the county”—the Hotel Wightman—all paid for in full and ready to give her a stable income.40

Although he sold sewing machines in a different era, Arthur Ruben of Murray, Utah, describes his work in the 1920s, suggesting the process used by those who sold products door to door. Arthur took his work very seriously and had his sales pitch and demonstrations down to a science. His daughter, Violet Ruben Walker, recalled that her father referred to his demonstrations as “showing-up” a machine, and his sales presentation followed this pattern:

1. Life can hold little meaning to the family who does not own a machine.
2. The time to buy is now because the opportunities are at their best.

3. The payments are so small that they are practically negligible and will not be missed.

4. Anyone can learn to sew.

5. I will be glad to “show-up” the machine without any obligation.

Ruben would then demonstrate the sewing machine. He carefully removed the canvas cover and showed how the head moved up and down in the cabinet. He emphasized the following points regarding the machine: it had ball bearings, a perfect stitch, was easy to clean, could sew any material from crepe de chene to leather, and with the included attachments one could make anything. He then whipped up a doll’s bonnet with great ease using the ruffler, the tucker, and the binder. How could anyone resist such a presentation?

SEWING MACHINE TRADING CARDS

Besides typical advertisements in publications such as newspapers, merchants and manufacturers took some interesting approaches to catch the public eye. Sometimes they were aided by newspaper editors who introduced their products in editorials. Sometimes stores carrying the machines handed out broadside advertisements. Beginning in the 1870s, a new sales method became a big success nationwide. Salespeople and the businesses they represented began to offer humorous or decorative trading cards advertising their products. Collecting them was a popular pastime, and recipients pasted them in albums and used them to decorate their homes. For example, the Warburton family of Tooele, Utah, pasted the beautifully illustrated cards in decorative albums. Others framed them and hung them on their walls. In addition to romantic scenes, these colorful cards featured various machine models and praised their capabilities. Usually the merchant’s address appeared in black print. A rare stereopticon image


42Ibid.

of a woman sitting at her sewing machine shows that this method to
draw customers may also have been used.44

In 1893, the Singer Sewing Machine Company produced a
boxed set of cards to commemorate the Chicago World Colombian
Exposition. The cards featured women in folk costumes of various
countries using Singer machines. For the 1901 Pan-American Ex-
position, Singer published a booklet entitled “All Over the World”
featuring beautifully depicted Victorian scenes that included
women at sewing machines. Other Singer cards showed American
songbirds and other attractive pictures with advertising copy
printed on the reverse side.45

THE LEGACY OF THE SEWING MACHINE

Over the years, innovative marketing and the financial ease of

44 Photocopy in my possession; provenance of the image unknown.
et/victc/victsmtcintro.html (accessed January 16, 2006.)
purchasing a sewing machine made what was originally an object of luxury into an accepted necessity. As the machines improved, so did the lives of many seamstresses and tailors who could produce more articles of clothing with regulated and even seam stitches and with tucks, ruffles, gathers, and buttonholes. Mending was quickly accomplished with machine attachments. Not only was the apparatus valued for its function, but it beautified homes with its decorative iron scroll supports and treads and colorfully painted flowers on the machine heads.

With the introduction of the sewing machine to Utah, individuals with little income became entrepreneurs whose sales of the device benefitted the state’s economy and their own finances. The sewing machine also had a positive effect on the businesses that added it to their inventories and to the publications that found increased advertising markets as a result.

In spite of Brigham Young’s concern about the reduction of women’s unity and Erastus Snow’s grievance against “peddlers,” women in Utah welcomed the invention, and installment purchases of the device became an accepted part of consumers’ lives. In the en-

*This Singer trading card suggests ease of operation by the attractively dressed and well-groomed woman. The iron ornamental work and treadle are typical features.*
suing years, Mormon women have regarded the sewing machine as a necessary tool in clothing their families and in doing good work. In both the first and second World Wars, Church women banded together like other women’s groups to sew for those in the armed forces and for families in Europe who had lost many of their belongings. Designating these projects as welfare work, the sisters produced clothing, bedding, and household linens.

During other times of stress, sewing machines whirred in busy harmony as the women sewed for good causes. For instance, during the 1930s Great Depression, the Relief Society in St. George started a cottage industry to make burial clothing. They also repaired used apparel and furnished machines for a sewing center where mothers could come and remodel clothing with the help of experienced seamstresses.46

Today’s Relief Society enrichment program includes women

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46Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach
working alone or together on humanitarian projects involved in sewing items such as quilts, clothing, and stuffed toys. Brigham Young’s view of their use of the sewing machine surely would have been positive. President Gordon B. Hinckley has encouraged the sisters of the Church, both young and old, to use the family sewing machine to produce more modest clothing for themselves. At the March 27, 2004, Young Women’s broadcast, he said: “I sometimes wish every girl had access to a sewing machine and training in how to use it. She could make her own attractive clothing. . . . I do not hesitate to say that you can be attractive without being immodest.”

Even in an age of cheap, imported clothing, the “Queen of Inventions” and the sewing skills it facilitates have remained part of the lives of Utah’s Mormon women.

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47 *Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005), 2:274.
“A SIMPLE, COMMON-SENSE EXPLANATION”: THOMAS F. O’DEA AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

Howard M. Bahr

Late 1957 must have been a heady time for Thomas F. O’Dea. His book, *The Mormons*, was selling well, the positive reviews beginning to pile up. In December, Alexander Morin, managing editor of the University of Chicago Press, wrote that “the book is moving along steadily, even if not at a remarkably fast pace,” and predicted that “of course, it is destined to become the standard reference on the subject, and therefore will continue to sell, even though we hoped for rather more of an immediate impact on the public.” He penned a hasty postscript, “I have just seen the latest Saturday Review, where we appear prominently & warmly. Alleluia!!”

It was a hard-won “Alleluia.” O’Dea’s encounter with Mormonism had begun eight years before. A new graduate student in Harvard

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1 Alexander J. Morin, Letter to Thomas F. O’Dea, December 28,
University’s Department of Social Relations, he spent the summer of 1949 doing library research on the Mormons for the university’s Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures Project. Project leaders, pleased with the resulting report, published it that fall as a project working paper.

The Comparative Values Project was a study of five ethnic communities (Mormons, Hispanics, Zuni, Navajo, and Texan homesteaders) peacefully coexisting in the American Southwest, in the vicinity of the Mormon village of Ramah, New Mexico. Early in 1950, O’Dea was selected as the project’s Mormon specialist, responsible for an ethnographic account of Mormon society and culture as lived by the Ramah villagers. The fieldwork included six weeks in Salt Lake City in the summer of 1950, followed by five months’ residence in Ramah.

O’Dea’s doctoral thesis, “Mormon Values” (1953), combined a reworking and extension of the 1949 report with findings from his

1957, Thomas F. O’Dea Papers, Box 3, fd. 25, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; hereafter cited as O’Dea Papers.

2 The Values Project, a long range multidisciplinary project funded by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation to Harvard University 1949–55, was directed by Clyde Kluckhohn, Talcott Parsons, and J. O. Brew. For its history and main findings, see Evon Z. Vogt and Ethel M. Albert, eds., People of Rimrock: A Study of Values in Five Cultures (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), and Willow Roberts Powers, “The Harvard Five Cultures Values Study and Post War Anthropology” (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1997).

fieldwork. In the following years, O’Dea published several articles based in his Mormon village research and worked to fashion the dissertation into a book. Eventually he decided that the village ethnography belonged in a separate manuscript. The more general material, on the history, institutions, and values of Mormonism, was reworked, polished, and published as *The Mormons*.

The *Saturday Review* piece, by western historian Dale Morgan, called *The Mormons* “perhaps the most sagacious book about the ‘peculiar people’ yet written, a wholly thoughtful cultural and social inventory.” Later reviews in scholarly journals, almost uniformly positive, cast the book as the best of its genre. In the *American Sociological Review*, Kimball Young wrote, “This relatively brief book is the best ac-

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4 Thomas F. O’Dea, “Mormon Values: The Significance of a Religious Outlook for Social Action” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1953). According to O’Dea’s summary, “It begins with a study of Mormon theology and history, based on library research, in which I have tried to spell out the main aspects of the Mormon outlook, trace their influence on the settlement and institution building of the Mormons, and show the effects of these experiences and these institutions, once built, back upon the Mormon values themselves. This accounts for two sections of the thesis, one on the theology and one on the history of the movement. The third section of the thesis is a community study.” O’Dea, Letter to Everett C. Hughes, September 30, 1952, 2, O’Dea Papers, Box 2, fd. 7.

5 O’Dea frankly assessed his dissertation shortly after he was awarded the Ph.D.: “I believe that it will eventually be published, but the further discussions on that must await the fall. My own judgment on the thesis is not one of overwhelming enthusiasm. Under proper direction—under real direction which I still required at that time but did not have—I could have done much better. But it is not a foolish work and it does show some genuine understanding. It contains problems which I and sociology as constituted to date cannot solve. But it does not labor to hide them. Parts of it are really good and there is a large measure of luck among the factors making that so.” O’Dea, Letter to Everett C. Hughes, July 14, 1953, O’Dea Papers, Box 2, fd. 7.

6 Dale L. Morgan, “The ‘Peculiar People,’” *Saturday Review*, December 28, 1957, 9. Walker, Whittaker, and Allen characterize Morgan as among “Mormonism’s straying intellectuals” of the first half of the twentieth century. In a career mostly outside formal university appointments, Morgan edited or authored more than forty books. At this point, he had been reviewing western history and fiction for *Saturday Review* for more
count and interpretation of Mormonism at hand,” adding that O’Dea had “handled his materials with admirable objectivity.”\(^7\) In the *American Journal of Sociology*, Lowry Nelson said it was “the best general sociological analysis of Mormonism yet made.” O’Dea had shown “remarkable sensitivity to the subtleties of meaning more often implicit than explicit,” and “as an ‘outsider’” had done “a superb job of description and analysis.”\(^8\) Philosopher Sterling McMurrin, writing in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, said O’Dea’s book was “easily the best general statement yet published on the Mormons.”\(^9\)

Some reviewers singled out O’Dea’s treatment of the Book of Mormon for special mention. Leland Creer said *The Mormons* was “brilliantly written” and that its treatment of the Book of Mormon was an instance of O’Dea’s “penetrating analysis of the Mormon prophet.”\(^10\) For McMurrin, O’Dea’s position on the Book of Mormon exemplified the “fine balance and restrained assessments that characterize his conclusions”:

In contrast to many authors who describe Joseph Smith in terms of

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\(^9\)Sterling M. McMurrin, “[Review of] The Mormons,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 26 (April 1958): 183. McMurrin was professor of philosophy at the University of Utah and one of O’Dea’s hosts during his Salt Lake City fieldwork. A wide-ranging, multidisciplinary intellectual, McMurrin later served the University of Utah as Dean of the Graduate School and Academic Vice President. During the Kennedy administration he was appointed U.S. Commissioner of Education.

medical and abnormal psychology, O'Dea treats him as a normal person functioning in a somewhat unusual environment. He assumes uncritically Joseph Smith’s authorship of the Book of Mormon and proceeds with an interesting analysis of the religious and moral ideas of that book as a reflection of the thought, attitude, and life of the prophet’s own world. In contrast to the not uncommon dismissal of the Book of Mormon as a worthless and boring illiterate concoction, O'Dea is found saying that “in some of the scenes of prophecy and preaching the Book of Mormon reaches something like greatness in portraying the tension of hope, the inner soaring of the spirit, of the common man who embraced revival Christianity.”

Although the Church made no official, public critique, the University of Chicago Press had made arrangements to reach the LDS market by advertising the book in the Improvement Era. The advertisement did not appear, and the payment was returned to the advertising agency. The agency “protested vigorously” and received the following explanation from Verl F. Scott, business manager for the Improvement Era:

The book, while it appeared to be extremely well written, in our opinion had parts in it that were in extremely poor taste. One of these sections had to do with detailing the rites and ordinances which take place in the Mormon temples.

These particular things are of a sacred nature to members of the Mormon Church and are not something to be taken lightly nor to be broadcast in books. There are quite a goodly number of other things in the book which would also make it seem rather incongruous to us to contemplate advertising that book to the Mormon people. The main objection was the one mentioned above, and we certainly have no ill feelings toward the author at all, but felt it would not be particularly suitable to advertise in our magazine because of the things I have mentioned.

I am sure President David O. McKay has not sent any kind of endorsement of the book to the publishers, although I believe they requested statements from him as well as from us.

I believe that Church leaders and believing Mormons could also have expressed dismay at O’Dea’s treatment of the Book of Mormon,

12Quoted in Alexander Morin, Letter to O’Dea, December 28, 1957, 1, O’Dea Papers, Box 3, fd. 25.
which appears in Chapter 2. Much of O’Dea’s *The Mormons* had had two previous incarnations as scholarly publication, first as a working paper of the Comparative Study of Values project, then as his doctoral thesis. But O’Dea’s chapter on the Book of Mormon was new, having no counterpart in either O’Dea’s 1949 working paper or the 1953 dissertation. Although the reader was not alerted to this fact, it was not among those chapters that, according to *The Mormons*’ preface, had been read in earlier draft by the late Apostle John A. Widtsoe. And unlike the treatment of transcendence in Mormon history in those earlier works, Chapter 2 of *The Mormons* did what O’Dea himself had cautioned against in the practice of the sociological study of religion, namely taking an “objective” position on the truth or falsity of a spiritual claim, as this essay will establish. This observation acquires meaning, given O’Dea’s efforts to seek critiques of his work from Latter-day Saints, and his well-articulated position about the limitations of scientific inquiry as applied to religion.

**SEEKING MORMON FEEDBACK AND THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE**

In his preface to *The Mormons*, O’Dea conceded, “When my wife and I went to live among the Mormons in 1950, we were tenderfeet indeed.” Perhaps that was so where O’Dea’s personal experience with Mormons was concerned, but it surely was not with respect to academic knowledge of Mormonism. O’Dea had spent much of the preceding year doing library research, preparing *A Study of Mormon Values*.

Part of the Harvard Values Project strategy for facilitating O’Dea’s access to key LDS informants was to distribute *A Study of Mormon Values* in advance of his arrival, and among his stated reasons for visiting Salt Lake City was to receive meaningful criticism of the work from Mormons. O’Dea had mailed copies to the Church Historian’s office, then under the direction of Church Historian Joseph Fielding Smith and received an acknowledgment from Earl C. Olsen, then an employee in the historian’s office. O’Dea brought several copies along; and some had been distributed by Irving Telling, a fellow Harvard student and Values Project researcher whose dissertation on the

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14 Ibid., vii.
early history of Ramah and McKinley County, New Mexico, had necessitated consulting LDS historical sources in Salt Lake City.¹⁵

When, early in their visit to Salt Lake City, O’Dea and his wife, Georgia, met William Mulder and other University of Utah graduate students,¹⁶ Mulder was pleased to inform O’Dea that “about twenty-five people” had read Mulder’s copy of O’Dea’s report and “all indicated that it was favorably received.” Among those who read the report was sociologist Lowry Nelson, whom the students quoted as declaring: “Either this fellow is a Mormon who knows Mormonism, or this is a remarkable job of sensitivity to a culture.”¹⁷

O’Dea’s preface thanked Apostle John A. Widtsoe for having read “an early draft of some of these chapters.” In fact, Widtsoe had done a great deal more than simply read and comment. Impressed by O’Dea’s work, he wrote a letter that O’Dea proudly attached to the front of his copy of the 1949 report, thereby assuring instant respect and rapport with faithful Mormons who examined it. Widtsoe’s letter, on the official letterhead of the Council of the Twelve, addressed to William Mulder, read:

August 11, 1950

Dear Professor: Is that the right term to use?

I did not have the opportunity of another visit with the O’Days [sic], I have read the manuscript. It is one of the best things I have ever read on the subject. He knows his literature. The peculiar thing is, the work was done without being on the field at any time.

Will you get that message to him?

Cordially yours,

John A. Widtsoe

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¹⁶William Mulder was an instructor at the University of Utah, then finishing his doctoral thesis for a Harvard degree. He had a long and fruitful career as professor of English and American studies at the University of Utah. Perhaps his best-known work is Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957).

¹⁷O’Dea, “Meeting Arranged by Hoyt Anderson with Two Mormon Graduate Students,” July 14, 1950, 1, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 7. Hoyt Anderson was employed as a full-time research associate and “investigator” at the University of Utah (1949–53). He worked on several defense-related projects funded by the federal government.
The letter was signed, “Uncle John.”\(^{18}\) (Mulder was married to Widtsoe’s niece.)

O’Dea interviewed Widtsoe twice, one on July 29, 1950, when O’Dea left a copy of the report with him, and another on August 17, the day before the O’Deas headed south for New Mexico. According to O’Dea’s notes, Widtsoe “said there were two or three places where he would have changed the terminology if he were writing it himself, but that even in these places it was all right as it stood. I told him that [I] tried to be scrupulously fair. He said that I was, that I just said what the Mormons believe and did not inject any of my own notions into it. He said he was very pleased with it.”\(^{19}\)


\(^{19}\)Thomas F. O’Dea, “Talk with Apostle John A. Widtsoe,” August 17, 1950, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 8.
It is hoped that his behavior in the preceding pages bears some recognizable relation to it.  

This disarming paragraph was not mere window dressing. O’Dea truly had tried to follow its precepts, and he succeeded to the extent that the report pleased everyone—from apostle to secular liberal graduate students. At times he had used words like “alleged” or “purported” to indicate his own uncertainty about the transcendent events of Mormon history, yet not offend believing readers.

Lowell Bennion at the University of Utah Institute of Religion was among those who said O’Dea had succeeded in his attempt to portray sacred events fairly. According to O’Dea’s notes,

Dr. Bennion spoke in terms of very high praise of my manuscript on the study of Mormon values, which he had on his desk, and said he had read it yesterday for the second time. He asked me if I had had an acquaintance with Mormonism before and if I had been to Utah before. I said that I had done the thing almost entirely from library sources, that I had talked to a few Mormons at the Cambridge branch, but that I had never before been to Utah. He said he thought it was remarkable, that it was the best thing he had ever seen by a non-Mormon, and that most Mormons wouldn’t have done as well. He said that he especially liked my last paragraph where I stated my position on the study of values. I said that I thought that social science had to take such a position and he replied that he was in complete agreement.

Shortly after the O’Deas were first introduced at the University of Utah Department of Anthropology, they were invited to a “private seminar,” where they might meet some of the people O’Dea had been advised to interview. This seminar was a session of the “Swearing Elders,” a group of faculty and graduate students, mostly from the University of Utah, who met weekly to consider issues of interest to LDS intellectuals who found orthodoxy problematic. The O’Deas attended four meetings during their Salt Lake City sojourn. O’Dea was

20O’Dea, A Study of Mormon Values, 120.
21O’Dea, “Interview with Dr. Lowell L. Bennion,” July 15, 1950, 1, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 7.
22Sterling McMurrin recalled: “We weren’t a tame bunch.” The seminar met regularly from 1948 until the mid-1950s “to discuss religious issues with invited guests who had made special studies or written books of inter-
comfortable with these Mormon intellectuals, feeling himself among sensitive, liberal people like himself. At the July 20 meeting, he accepted an invitation to address the group at the next week’s meeting.

In the preface to The Mormons, O’Dea identifies his own stance as an attempt “to combine intellectual objectivity with intelligent human sympathy.” His chapter on “Sources of Strain and Conflict” in the Church identifies “the liberal Mormon intellectual” as one who is “unable to accept an orthodox literal theology which for most of their fellow churchmen is the basis of all the other cherished values” (vi, 240). O’Dea’s field notes identify such liberal Mormons as “very sensitive,” “sensitive and intelligent,” or “sincere and troubled,” in contrast to the more orthodox, “relatively unthinking” majority. See O’Dea, “Meeting Arranged by Hoyt Anderson,” 1–2, and “Interview with Dean Harold W. Bentley,” July 13, 1950, 5, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fld. 7. O’Dea was comfortable with the Mormon intellectuals who found orthodoxy problematic because, as a Catholic intellectual, he occupied much the same position in his own religious tradition. In the late 1960s, he made many of the same kind of non-orthodox criticisms of institutional Catholicism that members of the “private seminar” had offered against Mormonism. He saw the Second Vatican Council as Catholicism’s effort to make “a more adequate confrontation with the world” and a “second great attempt by Christianity to face modernity and adjust itself to the challenge of today’s conditions.” He called for “very bold and far-reaching changes” whereby “the central transcendent message of Christianity must now find radically new expression.” O’Dea, Catholic Crisis (Boston: Beacon
“As these people have been very open with me, I felt that I could not refuse an invitation to lay my cards on the table before them, so I accepted.”

He began his presentation this way: “Since my arrival in Salt Lake City some three weeks ago, I had been treated not only with courtesy, but with kindness and generosity, . . . to a degree which in the old army phrase may be said to be far ‘above and beyond the call of duty.’ I expressed my appreciation for this and said that the least I could do in return was to present the complete account of my plans and my approach to their fulfillment.”

As part of his introduction, O’Dea emphasized the value-free quality of social science, and talked of the “‘science vis-a-vis the non-empirical aspects of the universe,’ holding that science could not at present, and probably never would be able to, structure adequately this important area.” He continued:

In the past, when science has attempted this task beyond its qualifications, it had to surreptitiously bring in non-empirical postulates clothed in the guise of scientific jargon. This I called . . . “scientism.” I said that I felt that such an approach was dangerous to values, as it placed the scientist in the position of advocating a rival religion to the one he was presumably objectively studying. . . . I said that such a scientistic approach was a threat not only to values, which should be data to the social sciences, but also to science itself, as it put science in the position of making attacks upon an existential and value structuring of the universe, which a comparative study of societies had revealed as necessary to man, while at the same time remaining in fact inadequate to structure this area itself. . . . To be more concrete, I said, if I come to you in the name of science, trampling upon your most cherished values, someone among you will invite me to leave, escorting me through the door with a kick in the seat of the pants, and if I am a good sociologist I should have been able to predict it—to have almost called the time.

For O’Dea, this position on the limits of science in the face of re-
igious belief was neither temporary nor transitional. He stated it in the 1949 report, repeated it in presentations in 1950, and much later, in the concluding paragraph of *The Sociology of Religion*, reaffirmed his conviction that “the sociology of religion does not concern itself with the truth or worth of the supraempirical beliefs upon which religion rests.”

Based on his well-established and well-articulated positions for dealing with such religious questions, it would have been consistent for O’Dea to have presented the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as Mormons viewed that event, making it clear that he was describing their belief and values. Thus, his decision to offer a naturalistic alternative in Chapter 2 of *The Mormons* was at variance both with his public statements on respect for the spiritual values of other groups and with his long-term position that the sociology of religion lacked the tools to assess the validity of religious claims. For example, in a 1958 lecture entitled, “Is an Objective Study of Religion Possible?” he questioned, “Since many religions claim a transcendent element, does not objective study with its assumptions of natural causation leave out precisely what is most important? If God intervenes in human affairs—is not such intervention beyond the criteria of an empirical science that assumes natural causation as the sufficient answer to all problems? I think that we must answer yes.” Even so, he continued, studying the empirical characteristics and social conditions associated with religious change was important. And to say that some religious processes were socially conditioned was not to say that they contained no element of transcendence: “Whether or not there is such an element is a matter for a prudential judgment that surpasses the criteria of science.”

O’Dea’s attempt to stake out an objective position on the authorship of the Book of Mormon is also surprising because modernist sociology, at least since Max Weber, has had an acceptable way of bracketing questions of transcendent experience that allows analysts simply to label them and move on. Whatever represents the inexplica-

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29“Modernist” here denotes a worldview grounded in the epistemology of empiricism, a mindset sometimes labeled naturalism. Modernism in
ble or the ineffable can be effectively encapsulated under the concept “charisma,” or its products.

Of course O’Dea was familiar with the concept. Elsewhere in *The Mormons* he applied it, both in the analysis of Mormon history (e.g., the section of “Containment of Charisma”) and in naming “rationality versus charisma” as one of the “areas of strain postulated in the Mormon value system.” In these contexts O’Dea’s use of the term allowed him to bracket, or ignore, precisely what the “charisma” of Joseph Smith consisted of; whatever it was, it fit Weber’s concept of charisma, defined as “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These as such are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin.”

As an example, when O’Dea described Joseph Smith’s reactions to alleged revelations received by his associates, he wrote: “Joseph Smith, having claimed charismatic gifts previous to his founding of a church, had almost limited his own gift to that of miraculous translation as early as the spring of 1829.” O’Dea has, in that statement, assigned “miraculous translation” to the category of charisma. Here he is on safe sociological ground without further analyzing charisma. But in Chapter 2 of *The Mormons*, he proposed an alternative to the main theories of the origin of the Book of Mormon previously of-

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The sense combines an emphasis on quantitative measurement with reductionism and rationalism. See Huston Smith, “Beyond the Modern Western Mind Set,” *Teachers College Record* 82, no. 3 (1981): 434–57. Modernist social science is committed to the “sophic” outlook, a “world view of horizontal naturalism, a monistic metaphysic that confines all realities to the natural order.” H. Curtis Wright, “A Sophic and a Mantic People,” *BYU Studies* 31 (Summer 1991): 51. William Mulder aptly characterized the modernist outlook in description of the Swearing Elders as marked by “a healthy skepticism about anything that the Brethren—early or late—uttered, and the last resort was always a sense of rationality, the attempt to be rational about everything.” See Blakely, “Swearing Elders,” 11.

pered by non-believing writers. Seeing neither the “diseased mind” nor the “stolen manuscript” theory as tenable, he offered a “simple common-sense explanation” that the book’s reviewers, some of whom were already on record as not believing the literal truthfulness of Joseph Smith’s account, found satisfactory and even praiseworthy.

The O’Dea Papers include his field notes of his first visit to Salt Lake City in 1950 and day-by-day research notes on life in Ramah from September 1950 to January 1951. Relevant also are selections from his correspondence and his hand-marked copy of the Book of Mormon from which he constructed impressive footnotes of the book’s key themes.33

I found nothing in these materials to suggest that O’Dea ever considered seriously that the Book of Mormon might be what Joseph Smith claimed it to be. Nor does there seem to be a paper trail clarifying the decision to ignore his own oft-stated position that social science cannot ascertain the validity of transcendent experience. However, there is relevant context in his notes about conversations with Saints on the Book of Mormon and possible clues in his Book of Mormon marginalia. Significant is McMurrin’s comment that O’Dea “assumes uncritically” Joseph Smith’s authorship of the Book of Mormon.34 This essay examines in detail that uncritical assumption, which O’Dea terms a “simple, common-sense explanation.”

CONVERSATIONS ON THE BOOK OF MORMON, 1949–50

O’Dea’s Study of Mormon Values (1949) covered aspects of Mormon history, practice, and belief that he considered relevant to the

33 Major Book of Mormon themes that O’Dea documented in long lists, referenced by chapter and verse, included the linkage of righteousness and prosperity, the “central message” of repentance, the doctrine of free will, judgment according to works, the availability of mercy and grace and the universal Atonement, the presence of prophecy, obedience to the commandments, earth life as a probationary state, the importance of perseverance, the necessity of knowledge for accountability, the plainness of the gospel, America as a promised land, the desirability of democracy, the perils of monarchy, the evil of oppressive taxation, anti-lawyer sentiment, the obligation of the clergy to work, the existence of a great and abominable church, the doctrine of the gathering, and anti-secret society sentiment. O’Dea, The Mormons, 267–69.

Mormon value system. The report’s first paragraph, explicitly neutral, underscores the Book of Mormon’s centrality in early LDS history. O’Dea writes that Joseph Smith “published his translation of the Book of Mormon which he claimed to have received in an apparition from the angel Moroni, engraved upon plates of gold. This book, purporting to be the record of the ancient inhabitants of the New World, became together with the Bible, the scriptures of the new Church. Moreover, the new religion claimed continuous contemporary revelation from God.” Later, O’Dea briefly refers to the Book of Mormon as part of the LDS scriptural canon, characterizing it as “an alleged record discovered by Joseph Smith through divine assistance and translated by the ‘gift and power of God,’ purporting to be sacred writings of the ancient inhabitants of the American continent. It is considered by the Mormons ‘a record of God’s dealing with some Hebrew inhabitants of the Western hemisphere.’” He hardly mentions the book in the remainder of the report, save for an occasional citation as a source of Mormon doctrine or a reason for the Church’s interest in the American Indian. Throughout the report, O’Dea is scrupulously neutral, indicating neither belief nor disbelief when he refers to LDS accounts of angelic ministrations or revelations. In a note preceding the bibliography, he explained that his objective was to understand Mormon values from the Mormon point of view. Therefore “it was most appropriate that Mormon sources should be used extensively,” but not exclusively.

Although the intervening fieldwork expanded his familiarity with Mormon attitudes about the Book of Mormon, as well as arguments for and against its authenticity, O’Dea maintained the same neutrality of presentation in his 1953 doctoral thesis. In its concluding chapter, he wrote, “Mormonism is clearly American,” and continued, “The strands which enter into its formation are often the same as those which enter into the development of the American community as [a] whole and of other sub-communities within it.” Even the orthodox Mormon reader is unlikely to take issue with that generalization. It may follow for O’Dea that those “strands” include the circum-

35 O’Dea, Study of Mormon Values, 1.
36 Ibid., 12.
37 Ibid., 121.
stances and influences that produced the Book of Mormon; but to the believing reader, to say that Mormonism is American is not an attack on the Book of Mormon. The book plays little part in the rest of the dissertation, except as it appears occasionally in notes on village life as the subject of conversations or talks and lessons at church. O’Dea does not counter or even analyze Joseph Smith’s account of the book’s coming forth, and the reader finishes the dissertation impressed that O’Dea has continued to be neutral and circumspect in his conclusions.

Except for a detailed summary of the Book of Mormon, the O’Dea Papers seem to contain no pre-publications drafts of O’Dea’s 1957 chapter on the book. Perhaps the best we can do is to assess the kinds of input he recorded in his field notes. The Book of Mormon was not a major topic in most of O’Dea’s interviews with Utah Mormons in 1950. Sometimes he asked about its relevance to an increased Church effort to missionize the Indians, and sometimes his informants would criticize or praise recent interpretations of archaeological findings. He also notes that some members of the “private seminar” found, among problematic aspects of Mormonism, Joseph Smith’s story of the origin of the Book of Mormon.

In the course of O’Dea’s fieldwork, he heard positive testimony on the Book of Mormon from apostles, Church administrators, educators, missionary guides on Temple Square, and members in Church meetings, firesides, and personal conversations. He also heard negative testimony from Mormon intellectuals who described themselves as committed to Mormon values and culture, but not its theology. He read the book carefully enough to prepare a detailed summary of its contents and coded much of the book by topic, thus identifying major themes and documenting their location. However, there is little evidence that O’Dea read the Book of Mormon analytically before writing Chapter 2 of *The Mormons*. His 1949 report and 1953 dissertation offer little evidence that O’Dea engaged the book intellectually, either about its origins or its content.

Moreover, in neither the Salt Lake City nor the Ramah field notes does the Book of Mormon figure as a central topic. If one identifies brief and more sizable “mentions” by number of lines or paragraphs devoted to discussions of Book of Mormon issues, the entire body of field notes accumulated during O’Dea’s six weeks in Salt Lake City yields only twenty-one brief references to or statements about the Book of Mormon, plus six “sizable” (roughly, a paragraph or more)
statements. None of these reveal O’Dea’s reactions to or feelings about the Book of Mormon; he simply records what was said or observed. The brief references include descriptions of materials displayed or statements made about the Book of Mormon during O’Dea’s visits to Temple Square plus informant statements about the role of the Book of Mormon in Mormon history, artifacts of ancient America as relevant to Book of Mormon peoples, missionary work among the Indians, and the Book of Mormon as a basis for Mormon theology or missionary work. Three of the “sizable” statements are his notes on testimonies by Temple Square tour guides; two are reports of statements on Church history and the Book of Mormon by BYU professor of psychology M. Wilford Poulson; and the sixth records Lowell Bennion’s explanation of how the Book of Mormon supports a richer understanding of the mission of Christ.

The field notes from O’Dea’s five months in Ramah contain thirty-nine segments on the Book of Mormon, including fourteen statements a paragraph or more in length, mostly summaries of talks or lessons on Book of Mormon topics at church meetings. Typically the twenty-five briefer segments also refer to use of the Book of Mormon in LDS settings, occasionally as applied to missionary work among the nearby Zuni and Navajo.

Combining both Salt Lake City and Ramah, there are twenty “sizable” accounts in O’Dea’s field notes of conversations or other encounters involving the Book of Mormon. The six I discuss here differ from the other fourteen by being longer, tending to involve higher-status Mormons, and, in three cases, offering a rare glimpse of O’Dea’s personal opinions or impressions, in contrast to his typical neutral recording of what was said and done. O’Dea’s notes on these six encounters are relevant for two reasons: They reveal the social contexts in which O’Dea received information about the Book of Mormon, and they also reveal the kind of information that he judged to be worth setting down. O’Dea “votes,” as it were, with his typewriter, and these episodes illustrate some of his most significant input on the Book of Mormon. The first three are from Salt Lake City field notes, and the others from Ramah.

“A Member of the Elect”

Before beginning formal interviews in Salt Lake City, the O’Deas spent a few days orienting themselves. They recorded “general impressions of Salt Lake City,” ranging from depictions of downtown, Temple Square, and the State Capitol through “evidences of
the presence and importance of the LDS Church,” the quality of the newspapers, and the availability of cigarettes and liquor. On Tuesday July 11, they visited Temple Square and joined three guided tours at different points in the tour.

Presumably each of the tours treated the Book of Mormon at some length. However, O’Dea’s notes mention it only in connection with their second tour, guided by a woman “hovering indefinitely around 60, small, with a decisive walk, firmly corseted, and with a clubwoman’s manner.” She spoke, he said, with a certain admixture of attitudes reminiscent of the D.A.R. and Christian Scientists. It was a kind of “sweetness and light” manner.

One got the impression from her remarks, that to her, pride in Utah, the traditions of its founders and the accomplishments of its sons . . . was intertwined with a faith in the righteousness of Mormon revelation. There was about this combined attitude on her part a certain smugness, but also an expression of real feeling. She referred to early Mormon events and relics the way a D.A.R. member might refer to the chair of Betsy Ross.

The importance of America as a chosen land in Mormon thinking was evident in her remarks. She told in part the story of the Book of Mormon, of the two immigrations of the Jews to this continent . . . and of the degeneration of their culture and the darkening of their skins, consequent upon their fall from virtue. She spoke of the discovery of Columbus as guided by the Holy Spirit. She spoke of Jacob referring to America as the promised land, and two or three times referred to America as a land of liberty. One felt that like Thoreau she thought she had been “born in the most estimable place in all the earth and in the nick of time.” One got the feeling that America was wonderful, that Salt Lake City was its center of virtue, and that the Mormons were the soul of this virtue. Moreover, it appeared that she felt quite fortunate to be a member of the elect, and felt a certain pity for her Gentile auditors laboring in darkness. She pointed out, however, that the church was open to all, and warned that a fall from grace could lead to the degeneration of our culture, as it did in the case of the early inhabitants of the American hemisphere.39

Lowell Bennion

Among the Utah academics who discussed the Book of Mormon with O’Dea were Lowell Bennion and M. Wilford Poulson. Bennion had used O’Dea’s report as a basis for fireside discussions

39O’Dea, Untitled field notes, July 11, 1950, 3, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 7.
with his Institute of Religion students, and had some general feedback on Mormon theology, specifically the centrality of Christ, which he thought O’Dea had not emphasized sufficiently. Bennion linked Christian belief and practice to the teachings of the Book of Mormon. He told O’Dea:

The foundation of Mormon faith was faith in Christ, and . . . in his [Bennion’s] work he was trying to orient this to an acceptance of Christ’s values. He said, “You hear much about our being a practical people, etc.” but . . . the Mormons should work toward being known as a people who understand Christ. He said that he thinks that Mormon theological content will be a great help in the future toward making them the finest Christians. He said his own religion was functional, that he thought of it in terms of active participation in the religious life. He said, for example, look at the Mormon teaching on baptism. He asked, what is baptism to the average Christian, and answered that it was a rite by which we get rid of original sin. He said that for many Saints it was just a matter of forgiveness of sins and acceptance into the church. He then said that he wasn’t trying to preach to us, but that he would like to read us a statement on baptism in the Book of Mormon, in which one of the leaders addresses a group of people who are about to be baptised. He read from Mosiah, Chapter 18, where the leader pointed out that the reception of baptism meant willingness to bear each other’s burdens, and that it was a covenant with the Lord, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly in their lives. He said theology and ordinances in the Mormon Church pointed up to man assuming his part. He said, “Let me put it this way. Everything in our religion takes us in as participants.” He said it enabled people to help others and to help themselves, and that this goes back to theology, to the doctrines of the co-eternity and freedom of man.  

M. Wilford Poulson

In contrast to Bennion’s use of the Book of Mormon to support the centrality of Christ in LDS theology was the position of M. Wilford Poulson, of Brigham Young University’s Psychology Department. Poulson “didn’t put much stock in the theology himself, but . . .

40 O’Dea, “Interview with Dr. Lowell L. Bennion,” July 25, 1950, 4, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 7.
he thought a lot of the Mormon values were good.” Poulson’s skepticism about LDS theology included Joseph Smith’s story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

He cited a conversation he had had with Wallace Minor, an elderly resident of the Palmyra area, who told him, that when he was a little boy, Martin Harris had come back to town and “had shown him the place where he and Joseph Smith had dug for buried treasure.” Poulson continued, “We deny this, but I believe Wallace Minor. He had one foot in the grave when he told me this.” Poulson added that Minor remembered that “Martin Harris said that the site of this digging was much more sacred than ‘Mormon hill,’ as there were many more heavenly manifestations there. . . . [and] that Martin Harris felt that the plates had originally been there. He said that Martin Harris told him that they originally began to dig nearer the town, where they had so much trouble from spirits that they had to sacrifice a black sheep.”

Poulson also praised the work of Walter Prince, who had done “a psychological study of the Book of Mormon and had tried to show what influences were acting upon Joseph Smith as he invented proper names.” Joseph Smith had used many names beginning with “M” and ending with “on” or “an.” This, Prince argued, reflected

41 O’Dea, “Conversation with Professor M. W. Poulson,” July 21, 1950, 3, O’Dea Papers, Box 5, fd. 7.


the anti-Masonic excitement of the late 1820s in the area, for “A man named Morgan had been kidnapped into Canada as a result of giving away Masonic secrets and was never again heard from. . . . The name Morgan was a byword in the area at the time.” Poulson himself had examined the local newspapers of the period and found that the name “Morgan” appeared many times in some issues. “Prince’s hypothesis was that Joseph Smith would be unconsciously influenced by names he had heard associated with a strong emotional impact. He [Poulson] said that he himself did not believe these things at first but came to believe them because he had to.” Poulson told O’Dea that Prince had been puzzled by the “Corianton” type of name; Poulson believed that it derived from James Fenimore Cooper, whose heroine in the Last of the Mohicans was named Cora.44

O’Dea found the Morgan episode relevant, not so much as the source of proper names as the origin of Joseph Smith’s apparent fascination in the Book of Mormon with secret combinations.45 Later, when O’Dea coded repetitive themes in the Book of Mormon, references to Gadiantons or secret societies prompted the marginal notes “Morgan,” or “Masonry.” The Wallace Minor story of sheep sacrifice, without attribution, found its way into O’Dea’s sketch of Joseph Smith’s early history and the “necromancy” phase of O’Dea’s explanation of the origin of the Book of Mormon.46

At the August 3 meeting of the seminar, Poulson talked about his interpretations of the historical material on early Mormonism from the standpoint of psychology. He argued that Joseph Smith was better educated and had access to more books than is generally thought, for “the Church had [mistakenly] presented these things as if they happened in a vacuum.”

He said he knew of the library which was circulated in Joseph Smith’s town, which if Joseph had not read himself, at least his neighbors had

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The Journal of Mormon History

1820–1920 (Boston: Boston Society for Psychic Research, 1930).


45Fawn McKay Brodie makes the same point in No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 63–66. This may be one of the instances reviewer Dale Morgan referred to in his comment that O’Dea was “more deeply indebted [to Brodie] than the notes to his opening chapters would make one think.” Morgan, “‘Peculiar People,’” 9.

read . . . He said that Joseph Smith could write better than many of his [Poulson’s] college students, and that he [Joseph Smith] knew quite a bit. He said that he [Poulson] had bought a number of old books, some of which he believed had been owned by Joseph Smith. He said he could smell Joseph Smith on one of them.  

Poulson quoted Walter Prince as saying, “Now, Poulson, you point out to me one passage from the Book of Mormon that has any literary merit, that was not cribbed from the Bible.” Poulson had visited the Sacred Grove and “was convinced that that was not the sacred grove, but that the way it affected him was that he got down on his knees.”

Matthew Cowley

One of O’Dea’s most extensive exposures to the message and meaning of the Book of Mormon was the dedication of an LDS meetinghouse for the Navajo branch near Ramah, New Mexico, in October, 1950. Apostle Matthew Cowley was the visiting authority. The O’Deas attended not only the dedication of the chapel but also a morning missionary meeting in Zuni and a meeting at the Ramah Ward chapel that evening. Elder Cowley spoke at each meeting. At Zuni he bore testimony to the Book of Mormon, commenting on archaeological discoveries and the voyage of Thor Heyerdahl: “These discoveries, he said, merely prove that what the Book of Mormon says is not impossible. He then said that he believed the Book of Mormon not because it was scientifically proven, but because it was revealed by Joseph Smith whom he believed to be a prophet of the Living God. He said that faith was internal, but that testimonies were strengthened by these external evidences.”

Later that day, at the meeting for the dedication, as usual, talks preceded the dedicatory prayer. O’Dea described this meeting in his dissertation, and I quote from that, rather than the field notes, because in the dissertation O’Dea allows himself some evaluative commentary on the speeches while, in the field notes, he gives no indication of his reaction.

48 Ibid., 7.
Finally Apostle Cowley was introduced. (Let the brief summary of these speeches here mislead no one into thinking they were briefly delivered.) He spoke about the Indians as a chosen people and said that the typical Indian conception of the hereafter as a place of activity not unlike activity in this world was closer to that revealed in modern scripture than that held for generations by Christians. The Indians, he said, were far more right than those who thought it consisted of sitting on a cloud and playing a harp. He then gave a long dedicatory prayer. In this he asked the Lord’s blessings of each detail of the building, naming them apparently for the Lord’s information.

It is extremely doubtful how much of these speeches the Indians understand. One would have to have some acquaintance with the Book of Mormon to see the point of most of what was said, for the whole problem of Indian conversion is seen by the Saints in terms of that book. The Indians are, of course, ignorant of this supposed historical background, except in so far as they have heard of it from Mormons. Any congruence between Book of Mormon ideology and the culture of an Indian group is, therefore, quite accidental. Apostle Cowley’s description of the Indian conception of the hereafter appeared to be based upon notions of the Plains Indians, perhaps received several times removed from the source. At any rate it has little relationship to Navaho beliefs. Yet so convinced are the Mormons of the truth of their modern scriptures that they appeal to the Indians with lengthy verbalizations which are in effect expanded exegesis upon them [the scriptures]. One is tempted to say that such overconcern with the Book of Mormon gets in the way of a more understanding approach to contemporary Indian cultures.

Later that evening, after a meeting at the Ramah Ward,

Apostle Cowley . . . shook hands with us in a very friendly way. He said that we had endurance [for having attended all three meetings that day] and he urged us, if we were in Salt Lake City, to come to his office to see him . . . . I asked him if he would take a message back for me to Apostle Widtsoe. He became very interested and asked me if I knew

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50 This account of Cowley’s speech may be a misattribution. In the field notes, O’Dea states that it was President Eugene S. Flake of the Southwest Mission who talked about the Indian view of the hereafter. O’Dea’s field notes on Cowley’s talk prior to the dedicatory prayer occupy just two sentences: “Apostle Cowley paid tribute to the local people for building this chapel, and he urged the Indians to make it their own. He spoke on missionary work and compared his experiences in the South Seas with the work among the Indians.” O’Dea, “Research Journal,” October 17, 1950, 6.

Apostle Widtsoe. I said I knew him, that he had helped me a great deal, and I had great regard and affection for him. Apostle Cowley then said, “He knows that you’re here, doesn’t he?” I said that he did. He said, “I believe he spoke to me about you.” He said, “I remember your name.” He then took out his notebook and made a note to give my regards to Apostle Widtsoe.52

Despite this cordial conversation with Elder Cowley, O’Dea’s account of the day’s speeches in his dissertation was more critical than positive.

*Ramah Villagers*

In line with Values Project norms on ethnographic note-taking, O’Dea’s field notes contain few personal reactions and beliefs. His record of what he told Ramah Mormons when asked about his beliefs is instructive, for it suggests he intended to give the impression that he was undecided. An earlier Harvard researcher had written that the best way to maintain rapport with local Mormons was to feign interest in their church.53 O’Dea, of course, was interested: Mormon life, beliefs, and values were his assignment. When he was questioned about his religious beliefs, he stated that he was a Catholic but also seemed to leave the impression that he was undecided about Mormon theology.

Sometimes O’Dea shared his *Study of Mormon Values* with Ramah people. On one such occasion, he brought along the report to a social visit. He and his host talked about it, the Mormon read some selections, and then asked O’Dea: “What do you find in the Church most difficult to believe?” O’Dea responded:

I said that I had been brought up in the east and knew practically nothing about Mormons when I started that research and that the idea of modern revelation was a new idea to me. [He] wondered if it had been plural marriage. I said no, that I thought I understood the feeling at

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53Values Project researcher Helen Faigin in Ramah wrote: “Perhaps the best way to establish good rapport in this community is to attend Church and act interested in their faith and beliefs. At least we have found this quite successful.” Faigin, June 13, 1950, 12, Ramah Research Files, Laboratory of Anthropology Archive, Santa Fe, New Mexico. See also Helen Faigin, “Child Rearing in the Rimrock Community with Special Reference to the Development of Guilt” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1952).
the time on the introduction of plural marriage. I said that the idea of modern revelation, however, was something quite new. I said that after I began to read the Mormon scriptures I was quite impressed with them. . . . I said that the only things I knew of Mormonism before I started this work were the names of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, polygamy, the trek to the west and the fact that saints had been persecuted. I said that was about all all easterners knew. I said I had known some Mormons from Salt Lake City in the army, and had liked them and one had shown me the Book of Mormon and that I read a few pages in it. But I did not think much about it at the time. I said it seemed a long way off and that New Englanders were unbelievably provincial and did not quite realize what existed west of the Hudson River.  

Late in October, at a farewell dance for a Ramah man entering the military, one of the local Mormons asked another Harvard researcher, David McAllester, what the researchers thought of the Mormons. O’Dea watched the discussion from a distance and reported:

Dave told me later that [the Mormon] had asked him about the opinion of the Harvard people and his own opinion about the Book of Mormon explaining the origin of the Indian. Dave gave an answer that he and I had earlier agreed upon. He said that there were several theories and that the Book of Mormon theory was certainly one of them. He said that he understood that Mormons did not consider the Book of Mormon merely a theory. He said that he realized that when Joseph Smith had first said there had been large cities on this continent that people thought it was crazy, but that subsequent archaeological researches had shown that there were. He said he didn’t know himself but that the Book of Mormon theory had some evidence. . . .

[The Mormon] then asked Dave what Georgia and I were doing in Ramah. Dave said that I was a sociologist and historian and that I had written a history of the Mormons that the elders in Salt Lake City were very pleased with. He said that I had spent some time in Salt Lake City and that I knew a number of Church leaders personally and that they thought well of me.  

Such statements suggesting that O’Dea and other researchers

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believed that “the Book of Mormon theory had some evidence,” along with reports that influential Mormon leaders knew O’Dea and thought well of him, and with the ongoing evidence of the O’Deas’ enthusiastic participation in LDS Church meetings and other activities, were sufficient to ensure his continued rapport with the villagers.

**O’Dea’s Markings in His Book of Mormon**

Another source of information on O’Dea’s beliefs about the Book of Mormon is his marginalia and underlinings in his copy of the book, indicating passages that he found important for some reason. Usually, it seems, he marked the topic categories he wanted to mention in his Book of Mormon chapter. Similarly, most of the marginal notes are coding categories (e.g., “baptism,” “repentance,” “Atonement,” “plainness” of the gospel, “obedience”) that he marked and summarized in footnotes to illustrate the themes of the book. His statement that “the central message of the book is repentance” is supported by reference to verses in eighty-seven chapters. His identification of twenty-one other themes, similarly supported by chapter and verse, is irrefutable evidence—overkill, one might argue—that he has read and analyzed the book.

On the other hand, his markings are those of a coder, his footnotes those of a concordance-maker, rather than evidence of a writer’s thoughtful engagement with a text. For instance, O’Dea finds many more verses on repentance than on the Atonement; therefore, by his quantitative count of impressionistically marked passages, he concludes that repentance is the Book of Mormon’s central message. He did not, however, mark the preface, which plainly states that the book’s purpose is “the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations” (Book of Mormon title page).

O’Dea’s marginal notes in 3 Nephi, which records Christ’s ministry in the New World and is therefore central to the book, identify the theme of “repentance” twenty-four times, “baptism” eight, “Masonry” six, “gathering of the Jews/Israel” five, “Lord’s Supper” two, “Lord’s Prayer” one, and “Atonement” one. The index to *The Mormons* also offers evidence of incomplete thematic coding. It contains more entries for Arminianism (4) and Danites (4) than for Second

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56 O’Dea Papers, Box 38, Item 2.
Coming (3), and there are none for “Atonement,” “Love,” “Christ,” “Jesus,” “Jehovah,” “Redemption,” “Resurrection,” or “Savior.”

Thus, O’Dea’s marginal notes and, to a degree, the index to *The Mormons*, are revealing in what they do not reveal: in the notes that are not there, the absent evidence of intellectual engagement other than topic labeling. Still, one must interpret absences with caution. Perhaps the archived Book of Mormon is not the copy O’Dea first read but rather one he read and marked specifically as a coding project, to provide support and evidence of analysis for the new chapter. And perhaps someone else prepared the index.

A few of O’Dea’s marginal notes suggest an attitude, a stance about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon already in place when he marked this book. It shows up in his ready use of the name “Morgan,” or “Masonry” when secret combinations are mentioned and in his labeling of “errors.” On 2 Nephi 1:14, O’Dea noted, “Shakespeare;” Mosiah 25:15 generated “this is a typical camp meeting description”; 2 Nephi 33:6, Enos 2, Mosiah 5:3, and Alma 5:9, 7:19, 26:6–7, and 34:4–5 are all labeled with some variant of “revivalism” or “revival meeting”; Alma 30:15, 23, and 42–43, are labeled “Village atheism, nineteenth century”; beside Alma 30:44 and Helaman 12:15 are jotted “Copernicus” and “Copernican theory”; Alma 48:10–11 and 54:13 prompted the notation, “America the Beautiful”; Alma 43:38 he identified as “dictating mistake,” Helaman 2:14 as an “artifact of dictation,” Alma 24:19 as “mistake?” and Mormon 8:34–35 as “mistake.” Finally, Alma 27:4 provoked a “poor Joe,” and 3 Nephi 29:6 the note, “Woe to those who reject Joe.” This pattern strongly suggests that O’Dea had already established mental categories and opinions before reading/marking this copy.

**A “SIMPLE, COMMON-SENSE EXPLANATION” REVISITED**

O’Dea’s library research convinced him of the improbability of theories attributing authorship of the Book of Mormon to someone other than Joseph Smith. It also seemed unlikely to him that Joseph Smith was psychologically twisted in any way that might explain the Book of Mormon. That left O’Dea two options: Smith was author of

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57He took this position in 1949, noting that George B. Arbaugh’s *Revelation in Mormonism* “tends to support the Spaulding-Rigdon theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon, a theory which is unconvincing to the present writer,” and maintained it thereafter. O’Dea, *A Study of Mormon Values*, 122.
the book, or, as he claimed, its translator. O’Dea chose the first, and produced Chapter 2 of *The Mormons* in support of that position.

From a book praised as “brilliantly written,” O’Dea’s statement of the “simple, common-sense explanation” is remarkably convoluted. The single sentence “explanation” runs to eighty-four words: “There is a simple common-sense explanation [of the origin of the Book of Mormon] which states that Joseph Smith was a normal person living in an atmosphere of religious excitement that influenced his behavior as it had that of so many thousands of others and, through a unique concomitance of circumstances, influences, and pressures, led him from necromancy into revelation, from revelation to prophecy, and from prophecy to leadership of an important religious movement and to involvement in the bitter and fatal intergroup conflicts that his innovations and success had called forth.”

O’Dea calls this statement “by far the most likely and safest” explanation of the Book of Mormon’s origins. Having thus, from the standpoint of the nonbelieving reader, satisfactorily resolved one of the burning questions in the history of Mormonism, his explanation would seem to deserve more attention than it has received in the half century since *The Mormons* was published.

In fact, it deserved more attention from its author. One might expect O’Dea himself to elaborate this concept, further clarifying the definitions, assumptions, and variables involved. Instead, the next paragraph moved on to a consideration of the book’s themes, thus leaving the reader to interpret O’Dea’s explanation. A systematic reduction and restatement of this complex verbal chain shows that it is composed of these statements:

1. Joseph Smith was a normal person.
2. He lived in an atmosphere of religious excitement.
3. Living in an atmosphere of religious excitement influences the behavior of a normal person.
4. Joseph Smith was influenced, as many thousands of others had been.
5. Joseph Smith was influenced uniquely, or as many thousands of others had not been.
6. He was influenced by a unique concomitance of circumstances, influences, and pressures.
7. Somehow (unspecified in O’Dea’s sentence, but presumably

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as a consequence of the “unique concomitance”) Joseph Smith arrived at necromancy.

8. The unique concomitance “led him” from necromancy to revelation.

9. The unique concomitance led him from revelation to prophecy.

10. The unique concomitance led him from prophecy to leadership of an important religious movement.

11. The unique concomitance led him from leadership to involvement in bitter and fatal intergroup conflicts.

This preliminary reduction of the key paragraph of O’Dea’s chapter generates two problems: First, where is the dependent variable, the Book of Mormon? The paragraph sounds very learned, and perhaps the book has indeed been explained. Still, a careful re-reading confirms the apparent ambiguity about which statement, if any, incorporates the creation of the Book of Mormon. Part of the problem is that the explanation has gone too far—the “unique concomitance” seems to have explained the history of Mormonism up to 1844.

Items 3 through 11 are statements of process: Joseph Smith is “influenced” or “led.” Where in these statements of influence does the Book of Mormon belong? A possible option is statement 7, which invokes necromancy. That word denotes “magic in general, especially that practiced by a witch or sorcerer; witchcraft; conjuration,” or “the alleged art of divination through communication with the dead; the black art.” Earlier in the book, O’Dea described Joseph Smith as one who “seems to have appeared to those who knew him as an agreeable and likable young man, somewhat of a ne’er-do-well,” who as a “digger after treasure” used a peep stone that he said helped him locate treasure. Thus, O’Dea continued, “necromancy, midnight digging—in short, an innocent occultism—seemed to occupy the youth. . . . Joseph later used his peep-stone in the translation of his Book of Mormon, so that even this activity was a sort of preparation for his prophetic career.”

It might also be argued that the visit of the angel Moroni was necromancy under its definition which includes “communication with the dead.”

Elsewhere, O’Dea seems to place the Book of Mormon’s origins later, in the “from necromancy to revelation” link of statement 8. O’Dea’s introductory chapter contains a brief account of the First Vi-

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59 Ibid., 5–6.
sion, followed by the statement: “It was in this way, so Joseph Smith maintained, that there began a series of reported revelations, which included the miraculous discovery and translation of a set of gold plates.” If we include the Book of Mormon as part of that “series of reported revelations,” delete general propositions in favor of the specific, and also delete statements that refer to outcomes other than the Book of Mormon, O’Dea’s causal chain can be reduced to the statement that Joseph Smith, a normal person, lived in an atmosphere of religious excitement. That, and a unique concomitance of circumstances, influences, and pressures, led him to necromancy, and thence to revelation (the Book of Mormon).

A second problem with the “simple, common-sense explanation” is the centrality of the “unique concomitance.” Unique, of course, denotes “existing as the only one or as the sole example; single; solitary in type or characteristics.” Modernist social science is not interested in the unique, but in patterns that conform to laws or tendencies. It is the nature of uniqueness, by definition, to be beyond the pattern; it represents a severe anomaly, a non-repetitive occurrence, a solitary instance. Yet in this case, that characteristic which places an event beyond generalization, its very solitary-in-type-ness, becomes a part of the explanation. By that inclusion, in the strict sense this “explanation” has spilled beyond the allowable limits of the term, for the unique is unreplicable, unpredictable, beyond trend.

In the spirit of further simplification, let us substitute “mix” for “concomitance,” and the single term “influences” for the phrase “circumstances, influences, and pressures.” It can be argued that both circumstances and pressures are, in the sense O’Dea used these terms, influences of one sort or another. Also, religious excitement may be considered as a pressure, circumstance, or influence. Finally, that Joseph Smith was “normal” seems an unnecessary, complicating assumption. Presumably here O’Dea meant to distinguish his simple explanation from those that attribute the Book of Mormon to an unbalanced or pathological mind. More important, here O’Dea was, in good sociological tradition, rejecting the explanations of “mental state” or “black box” in favor of the social environment. Even so, the assumption of normalcy, especially in light of Joseph Smith’s subsequent history, is too strong, and in this explanation it is unnecessary.

60Ibid., 3.
It follows that O’Dea’s simple, common-sense explanation can now be rendered thus: Joseph Smith, influenced by a unique mix of influences, was led to necromancy and revelation (the Book of Mormon). For O’Dea, the Book of Mormon is explained by a unique mix of influences.

The reader is unlikely to be satisfied with an explanation that concludes in “a unique mix of influences,” because that phrase is both opaque (Which influences? How did those “influences” become the book?) and non-informative (How was the universe created? A unique mix of influences). In explaining everything, O’Dea’s simple, common-sense explanation of processes explains nothing. O’Dea may have realized its weakness, for he spends the rest of the chapter identifying influences that he presumed were present in the unique mix. These basic themes “in the air when Mormonism was born” include “the implicit mentality of the popular Protestantism of the time” (a projection of the history of sectarian Christianity), the hopes and exaltation of the revival meeting, “the romantic nationalism of the new republic,” the “popular notions of Hebraic genesis” of the Indians, secular optimism and popular expectations of promise for the common man, “democratic sentiments,” the “ideal projection of left-wing Protestantism” (good and evil easily discernible, ecumenical aspirations), the utopianism of immigrants, “popular beliefs in the special character of this continent,” and the values, aspirations, and interests of American upstate New York.61 Unfortunately, the processes whereby these influences are transmuted into the text of the Book of Mormon—the linkage between external conditions and literary production—remains entirely unspecified. In addition, this explanation suffers from the ecological fallacy by which group characteristics are assumed to influence individual behavior. It fails as an explanation because the connection between characteristics “in the air” and the pages of dictated text is never demonstrated.

Still, O’Dea’s most serious problem is not that his explanation is incomplete but that he states as certainties what are, at best, fragile hypotheses. These are hypothetical links. Unable to demonstrate how any of the characteristics “in the air” of 1820s America actually took shape as the Book of Mormon, he offers with apparent assurance such judgments as these, supporting them with an “obviously” or “one suspects” to deflect attention from the missing connections:

Much can be seen in the Book of Mormon of the implicit mentality of the popular Protestantism of the time. . . . It is obviously an American work growing in the soil of American concerns in terms of its basic plot and its enshrining of America as the promised land, as well as in the unconcealed secular patriotism with which it refers to the United States. . . . The Book of Mormon verses are a description of the disciples of Christ in the New World and are obviously in imitation of the biblical texts. . . . The expectations of the Nephites are those of nineteenth-century American Protestants rather than of biblical Hebrews. . . . Those who are saved are always saved in Christ, and the only difference between what a Nephite prophet and a New York revivalist says is that the former usually adds “who will come” or “who is to come” after the name of Christ. . . . There is one instance when one suspects that the tension and excitement of the revivalistic present tense actually got away from the author and that he hurried to regain himself and to keep from exposing himself before his scribe.62

In fact, O’Dea’s simple theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon is implicit throughout the chapter. He does not need the mystifying chain of elements, the eighty-four-word sentence, or the obscure “concomitance of circumstances, influences, and pressures” to frame his common-sense explanation. He might have said quite plainly: “Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon from ideas that were ‘in the air’ at the time, but I can’t explain how he did it.” O’Dea’s clearest statement of this working hypothesis—not an explanation—is stated in an endnote: “There seems very little doubt today as to Joseph Smith’s authorship of the Book of Mormon.”63

It is this “explanation” that was sharply criticized in the only negative review of the book I have been able to find.64 Ezra Geddes, a sociologist trained at Cornell University, was an assistant professor at

62Ibid., 29, 32, 37, 39, 39–40, 40; emphasis mine. The passage where O’Dea thinks the author had to cover his slip from his scribe is Mosiah 16:6: “And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption.”

63Ibid., 266.

64In all, I have found twenty-two reviews, including eighteen signed reviews and four anonymous brief book notes. Some of these are more positive than others, and often, along with praise, refer to a historical error or two, or to modest shortcomings. However, only the Geddes review is sharply critical. Leonard J. Arrington, “Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in
the University of New Mexico when he reviewed O’Dea’s book for the *New Mexico Historical Review*. In it, he questioned O’Dea’s standards of judgment on several grounds, among them that “he is maintaining that Joseph Smith from early in youth throughout the mature years of his life perpetrated, taught and lived a lie. This accusation is a serious matter and requires careful documentation,”[65] which the book did not provide.

I communicated with Geddes by telephone and email in February 2006, asking about his negative review of O’Dea’s book almost a half-century ago, in contrast to the many very positive reviews. He

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[65]Geddes, “[Review of] The Mormons,” 158. Geddes is a practicing Latter-day Saint. Much of his later career was with the System Development Corporation, the American Justice Institute, and the Technology Service Corporation. He retired in 1986.
emailed on February 18, 2006: “My response has to be speculative since I have not read their reviews nor do I know the unwritten assumptions in their minds when their reviews were written.” The main difference, he said, was in the assumptions from which the reviewers began. “One of my assumptions was that Joseph Smith was, indeed, used by the Lord to provide information that was needed at that time and that the Lord works, not through intellectuals, but through people who are ‘nobody.’ I do not know that he has revealed much through so called intellectuals. Given my assumptions . . . which are in opposition to O’Dea’s that Joseph Smith lived a hoax, I looked for weaknesses in O’Dea’s arguments. Why other reviewers did not find these weaknesses reveals that their assumptions differed from mine.”

Geddes’ second criticism might have been written by O’Dea himself:

The sociologist as a scientist necessarily distinguishes the superempirical from the empirical and confines himself, except for description, to empirical matters which can be reproduced through scientific procedures and to generalizations therefrom. When confronted with such non-empirical questions as when, how and to whom God gives revelations, and even such mundane non-empirical questions as what a dead man actually thought in contrast to what he communicated to others, the sociologist admits that his tools of analysis are inadequate. In these areas the sociologist describes without passing judgment. Dr. O’Dea, on the other hand, not only passes judgment concerning these non-empirical matters, but sets himself up as an authority who presumes to explain the non-empirical “truth” to the reader.

A possible explanation of O’Dea’s violation of his own sociological standard may be his growing expertise in Mormonism, reflected in his recommendations on the necessity for trained theologians to rescue an outdated Mormon theology. Considering “the Mormon encounter with modern secular thought,” O’Dea wrote that “the church has, with few exceptions, no theologically qualified leaders who can guide it in its encounter with secular thought . . . In terms of theology, the church is governed not only by laymen but also by amateurs.”

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66 Geddes, Santa Monica, email to Howard Bahr, February 18, 2006.
of the reason that the Church faced “the threat of apostasy on the part of its intellectuals,” he suggested, was the need for a liberalization of its fundamentalist theology. But the kind of rapprochement necessary to bridge the divide between fundamentalists and intellectuals was not possible because the Church, “involving as it does the principle of lay leadership, has not produced a specialized corps of theologians who would be professionally prepared to grapple with the problems involved.”

That O’Dea’s outlook had matured from his 1949 report is also suggested in a subtle but significant shift. He had presented the report “in a manner respectful to the beliefs and values” of the Saints and an effort to be “sensitive to the beliefs and feelings of others.” His decisions about *The Mormons*, O’Dea said, were governed by “intelligent sympathy,” and for the modernist sociologist, intelligence trumps sympathy. For the believing reader, this may mean that the earlier respect and sensitivity have become sympathetic but patronizing.

Having spent eight years studying the Mormons, O’Dea may have felt he had arrived at that degree of earned assurance and understanding of “his people” described so well by British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard: “It is almost impossible for a person who knows what he is looking for and how to look for it, to be mistaken about the facts if he spends two years among a small and culturally homogeneous people doing nothing else but studying their way of life.” The Mormons were not a small population; but with respect to faith and doctrine, they were fairly homogeneous. On the basis of fieldwork at both their urban center and rural margin, and of familiarity with the relevant literature far beyond that of most educated Mormons, O’Dea could claim a thorough, atypical, and perhaps overconfident mastery of Mormonism.

From the standpoint of twenty-first-century sensitivity in the social sciences to the inherent limitations of any particular vantage point and (in anthropology particularly) to the legitimacy of a worldview grounded in the experience of the people, one is struck by how thoroughly in *The Mormons* O’Dea asserts the etic view, the exter-

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69 Ibid., vii.

In 1949, unsure of himself and new to the culture, O’Dea was constrained, tentative, deferential to the perceptions of the people he studied. Eight years later, trained and certified, seasoned by longer immersion in Mormon culture and history than many of his anthropological colleagues in their preliterate tribes, he was in a position to understand and generalize. In contrast to his earlier work, which explicitly sought the “native” perspective, O’Dea in \textit{The Mormons} became the intelligent but sympathetic expert, an “authority” whose job it was “to explain the non-empirical ‘truth’ to the reader.”\footnote{Geddes, “[Review of] The Mormons,” 158.} That his “explanation” of the Book of Mormon suffered from vagueness, did not sustain the certainties of his conclusions, and cast Joseph Smith as fraudulent seems to have been overlooked or minimized by most reviewers.

One wonders what might have been had O’Dea sought critical reaction to this chapter from orthodox Mormons, as he had earlier done with \textit{A Study of Mormon Values}. There was little critique of assumptions in the editorial process; the anonymous reviewer of the manuscript for the University of Chicago Press noted that O’Dea’s view of the origins of the Book of Mormon agreed with his own.\footnote{Anonymous, “University of Chicago Press—Manuscript Report,” January 24, 1956, 2, O’Dea Papers, Box 9, fd. 4. The reviewer wrote: “It should be mentioned that I approach this manuscript through the eye of an individual who has come out of a Mormon background and who has read the major studies dealing with the history of Mormonism and the social, economic, political, and psychological aspects of Mormon life.” The reviewer found the manuscript comprehensive, but too diverse and seeming to attempt too much: “Thus, a critical appraisal of ‘Who wrote the Book of Mormon?’ is rather remote from a detailed social study of a contemporary Mormon village.” Chapter 2 “provides a detailed analysis of the Book of Mormon. Correctly in my opinion it emphasizes that the book reflects the excited religious atmosphere of the time and that its appeal to converts was based on its concern with the questions and hopes about which lay people worried.”} Perhaps feedback from orthodox readers would have reminded O’Dea of his own standard, published during the same period that
the manuscript for *The Mormons* was in preparation: “It is not the task of the sociology of religion or the psychology and history of religion to pass judgment on the ultimate truth of religious doctrines.”\(^{74}\) Or perhaps, as sections of his manuscript began to take on the ironic tone characteristic of Fawn McKay Brodie, he might have remembered his own criticism of Brodie and the biases he perceived in his project associates.

Such attitudes were apparently more troubling to him in 1949 than they would be eight years later. The bibliography of the 1949 report included his recommendations for other Values Project workers. His annotation on *No Man Knows My History* is revealing: “This biography of Joseph Smith was written by an ex-Mormon, a member of an important Mormon family. Its publication caused quite a stir among the Saints. The present writer found it illuminating in many places. Yet because of the great desire on the part of many of our workers to reduce and expose religious prophets, a desire held on an almost unverbalized level, one hesitates to recommend it, as it might be grist to the reductionist mill. It certainly should be read together with a Mormon view of the prophet.”\(^{75}\)

There was no comparable warning to readers of *The Mormons*. Instead, O’Dea’s “desire,” especially in the chapter on the Book of Mormon, now seemed much in line with that of his modernist peers.


\(^{75}\) O’Dea, *Study of Mormon Values*, 124.

Jessie L. Embry

In 1960 Clark Ballard, who directed a U.S.-funded contract between Utah State University¹ and the Agricultural College in Karadj, Iran, asked my father, Bertis L. Embry, an engineering professor at USU, “How would you like to take a trip around the world?” My parents weighed the advantages and disadvantages of uprooting their five children, ranging in age from six to sixteen. Ultimately, because my father believed that traveling was a valuable education, he agreed to accept a two-year assignment. My life in Iran as a third and fourth grader was a pleasant adventure. Although I was surrounded by a very different culture, I was sheltered by an American school and by LDS religious services that provided important elements of continuity.

In 1998, I interviewed Helen Milligan about her years in North

¹Utah State Agricultural College became Utah State University in 1957. Since the name change does not affect this paper, I refer to the university by its current name throughout.
Logan, but she also intrigued me by describing her family’s two years in Iran in the early 1950s. Her husband, Cleve Milligan, had worked on the same contract as my father. That connection with my family’s experiences sparked my interest. I researched further and learned about the struggles that Utah technicians from USU, Brigham Young University (BYU), and the University of Utah—nearly all of them Mormons—had with the Iranian and American governments. I also saw the Utah contracts in the broader Cold War setting. This article describes the lives of Utah Mormons in a Muslim country during the 1950s and 1960s.

**SOURCES**

To research the contracts, I visited the archives of the three universities. USU’s Special Collections and Archives has extensive records. The annual, quarterly, and end-of-tour reports by the Utah technicians provided valuable insights. BYU’s L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division houses the papers of Dean A. Peterson, a BYU employee who supervised all the Utahns in the 1950s. The University of Utah Records Management also has papers.²

My father wrote weekly letters to his mother while we were in Iran. While these letters rarely discussed his work, they do provide some insights about life in Iran. I conducted an oral history interview with my father, and Iran was one area of discussion. While 1998 was a little late to start the research, I interviewed other technicians and their wives about life in Iran. These interviews do not include day-to-day routines, but they summarize significant events and benefit from reflections on their work, given the changes in Iran with the

²Special Collections and Archives are housed in the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University (hereafter USU Special Collections). In 1998 when I began my research, half of its Iran documents were catalogued and half were in process. Since then Robert Parsons, the University Archivist, has completed the task. The L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts records are in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections). The University of Utah papers are at the Records Management Division, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. While I do not cite papers from this third collection, the records were helpful.
1978–79 revolution.  
I also visited the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. In 1999 over two hundred boxes were declassified but had not been

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3My father’s letters are in my possession. The oral history interviews are part of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies Oral History Program, Perry Special Collections. Unless otherwise cited, all interviews are in this collection. I conducted sixteen interviews with USU and BYU technicians. I did not find any University of Utah personnel to interview.
catalogued. Finding information about the role of the Utah universities was difficult, but I did find some important papers.

This paper focuses on the views of the Mormon Church and the Utah technicians. Two Iranians also reflected on their country’s views of U.S. Point Four programs. USU engineering student Malek Monsour Esfardiaz concluded, “Technical Assistance to Iran was at the most opportune time. It was a time that consciousness was stirring and feudalism was beginning to crumble under the weight of a new nationalism.” I don’t know how much attending USU influenced his ideas. Jahangir Amuzegar, published a book on U.S. assistance to Iran. However, Iranians refused to cooperate, so his research was based on Americans’ final reports.  

BEGINNING THE MORMON CONNECTION

In 1912 John A. Widstoe, USU’s president, who had a doctorate in chemistry and specialized in soil research, met Mirza Ali Gholi Khan, Iran’s Consul General, at an irrigation conference in Canada. A friendship developed, and in 1915 Widstoe invited Khan to speak at a USU baccalaureate service. As a result, Iranians began studying agricultural and irrigation methods at USU. By 1951, 150 former USU students were working for the Iranian government. For example, Mohammed Ameen Khan Sepehri, after his studies at USU, became president of the Karadj Agricultural College. Seyed Jafar Khan, also a USU alumnus, became an advisor in animal husbandry to the Shah Reza Pahlevi.  

The close connection that Widstoe established with Iranian government leaders and students survived a complete change of govern-

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5Gwen H. Haws, ed., Iran and Utah State University: Half a Century of Friendship and a Decade of Contracts (Logan: Utah State University, 1963), 7; “Iran’s Best Neighbor—Utah,” Deseret News, December 17, 1956, 1, in Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings), Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).
ment in Iran. In 1926 Reza Khan, a military leader who began his career as a noncommissioned officer and rose to the rank of colonel, overthrew the 130-year Qajar dynasty and established himself as king. He changed his name to Reza Shah Pahlavi or Reza Shah, as the Iranians called him. Reza Shah focused on changing his country to meet Western economic and political standards. He also attempted to “modernize” dress standards and reduce the influence of Muslim religious leaders. For example, he eliminated the veil for women, an important symbol of the differences between men and women in Muslim society. While Americans saw Reza Shah’s moves as progressive, his methods were often cruel. A 1960 *Time Magazine* article recalled that the Shah “did not mind machine gunning obstreperous peasants” as he “manhandle[d] Iran into a modern world.”

The Shah’s reforms included improving agriculture, so in 1939 he appealed to the U.S. State Department for a specialized advisor. Given the already established Utah connections, members of the Iranian Legation in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. State Department recommended Franklin S. Harris, then president of BYU and an expert in agriculture. Harris spent almost a year in Iran studying conditions and making recommendations. When he left, he suggested that the Iranian government hire two Utahns to continue his work. Since USU focused on agriculture and had the state’s leading authorities in irrigation and soil technology, he recommended professors Lu-

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7Haws, *Iran*, 7–8 said that State Department and Department of Agriculture personnel recommended Harris. Harris recorded in his journal that a combination of former USU students and State Department people recommended him. Franklin S. Harris, Journal, June 8, 14, and August 8, 1939, 1061–62, 1073–74, typescript, LDS Church Archives. I used this typescript for 1939–40.
ther M. Winsor, an irrigationist, and Don W. Pittman, a soil technologist and chemist. Pittman arrived in Iran with his wife in September 1940. They completed their work and left separately despite World War II in January and September 1943. Winsor arrived in Iran without his family a week before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He stayed in Iran throughout the war because he feared transportation bombings.  

World War II brought more political changes to Iran, but the Utah connections survived. The Allies wanted the use of the rich Iranian oil. Following historical patterns, Great Britain and the Soviet Union occupied Iran in 1941, splitting the country in half. Fearing that Reza Shah supported the Germans, the Allies removed him from power, exiling him to Africa where he died in 1944. The English and the Soviets allowed his twenty-one-year-old son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who had been schooled in Switzerland, and the Iranian military system, to take over as a puppet ruler. An indication of his low status was that, when Allied leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin met to determine war strategy at the Tehran conference in 1943, they did not notify the Shah that they were coming.  

Following World War II, Churchill and Stalin relaxed their control over Iran and allowed the Shah to become the ruler in fact. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi continued his father’s plans to westernize the country. At the time, Great Britain owned nearly all of the oil companies and kept most of the profits. The Shah wanted to nationalize business and eliminate foreign control so that money would stay in his country to pay for his expensive seven-year plan to reform Iran. He succeeded in taking over the oil companies, but his removal of the British engineers who knew how to operate the equipment resulted in a drop in oil production and revenues. Funding for his reform movement also dipped.  

The Shah was not discouraged. He and the prime ministers

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8 “Mrs. Pittman Returns from Persia,” Logan Herald Journal, May 18, 1943; “Soil Expert Completes Work in Iran,” September 13, 1943, clipping file, USU Special Collections. The newspaper articles do not list Mrs. Pittman’s first name. See also Luther M. Winsor, Life History of Luther M. Winsor (Murray, Utah: R. Fenton Murray, 1962), typescript, USU Special Collections.

used Iran’s location—a long border with the Soviet Union—to solicit aid from both the Russians and the Americans. Such aid took the form not only of military support but also economic assistance and technical advice to assist in the Shah’s westernization plans.10

**POINT FOUR/USAID**

Those goals dovetailed with President Harry S. Truman’s strategy of neutralizing the Soviet Union’s influence by offering technical aid to Third World countries. Truman announced these plans as part of his inaugural address in 1949: “We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial programs available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped nations.”11 Since this aid was the fourth goal specified in Truman’s address, the new foreign assistance program was informally referred to as Point Four.

While the program’s name changed frequently, the concept remained the same. John F. Kennedy renamed the program USAID (United States Agency for International Development) in 1960, a name which has continued in use to the present.12 But as Iranians liked to explain, Point Four or USAID was always the same organization. “It is the same donkey, but the saddle has been changed.”13

After Truman’s announcement, Congress had to approve the idea, and more importantly, provide funding. It passed a law which required that the U.S. government and the foreign government sign an agreement specifying that the country agreed to accept U.S. aid. The negotiations were time-consuming, so at first Iran agreed to a temporary compact in 1950. A permanent aid package came in 1951.

Point Four goals were lofty. The United States hoped to share its technical knowledge and improve the quality of life for the people of the world. By doing so, it hoped to show that the free world’s econom-

ics, politics, and the way of life were better than Communism. In her interview, Helen Milligan explained that the Russians only wanted to keep the wheat fields of Iran; the British only wanted to save their oil fields. But the Americans wanted to help the Iranian people.\textsuperscript{14}

**POINT FOUR AND UTAH**

As part of the 1950 agreement, Iran agreed to accept technicians. (U.S. technical advisors were referred to as technicians whether they were federal or university contract employees. An immediate need was finding someone to direct the new program. In 1950 Franklin S. Harris, who was then president of USU, was working temporarily in Washington, D.C., with the State Department. On March 10, Glen Taggart, a federal employee in the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and future USU president, called Harris and asked if he “would consider an appointment to the Foreign Service in Iran,” adding that Harris was the government’s first choice. Within four months Harris had resigned his position at USU and was in Iran as the director of Point Four.\textsuperscript{15}

Once Harris arrived in Iran, he recognized that Point Four needed to hire technicians in many areas to improve life for Iranians. U.S. law provided for direct hires and university contracts. Because of his connections in Utah and other contacts between Utahns and Iranians, Harris suggested that the U.S. State Department contract with Utah universities.

Point Four officials liked Harris’s suggestion. E. Reesman Fryer, who was in charge of Point Four for the State Department, wrote to another federal administrator that contracts with Utah made sense because “climatic, topographical and agricultural similarities in Iran have encouraged an interchange of specialists and students between Utah and the Near East for many years. The institutions in Utah train the greatest number of Iranian students, and specialists from this State have served with distinction in the past in advisory capacities to the Government of Iran.” Henry G. Bennett, the first Point Four di-


\textsuperscript{15}Franklin S. Harris, Journal, March 10 and 31, April 26, and July 15, 1950, 1663–64, 1666, 1669, 1683, typescript, USU Special Collections. I used the USU typescript for the 1950s.
rector (killed in an airplane crash in Iran in 1952), supported Utah technicians because of their work ethic. He wrote to the dean of agriculture at USU, “I like these Utah fellows. They usually get things done.”

Franklin S. Harris also told USU President Louis L. Madsen, “USU stands very high in Iran because of the success of the students who return to serve the country.” U.S. officials, Utah technicians, and the state newspapers also referred to similar climate and agriculture as reasons for Utah contracts in Iran. With the Mormons’ experience in irrigation, cooperatives, and “the spirit of rural agricultural improvement,” the Deseret News felt that Utahns would help the “semi-arid plateau” in Iran to “blossom as a rose.”

BYU President Ernest L. Wilkinson felt the federal government selected Utah universities not only for the similar climate but “because the cultural habits of our faculty (in particular the non-use of tobacco and alcohol) paralleled the habits of the orthodox Iranians and would be pleasing to them.”

All three Utah universities agreed to participate. Each university had unique assignments. USU’s contract was for agriculture. The University of Utah’s was for public health. The BYU’s contract was for secondary education, although once on site, the technicians also worked with primary schools.

In May 1951 the U.S. and the Iranian governments signed a formal agreement extending the work that Harris had begun. William Warne, a career foreign service employee, became the director of Point Four in Iran in November, and Harris became the “Technical Advisor to the [U.S.] Ambassador in matters pertaining to Point Four

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16 E. Reesman Fyer, Letter to Mr. [no first name given] Matzger, May 1, 1951, Dean A. Peterson Collection, Box 2, fd. 2, Perry Special Collections; hereafter Peterson Collection; see also Henry Bennett, Letter to Rudger Walker, March 7, 1951, Louis L. Madsen Papers, USU Special Collections.


18 Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to Joseph M. Stokes, Assistant Deputy Director for Technical Services, January 3, 1956, Box 2, fd. 8; Fryer, Memo to Metzger, May 1, 1951, Box 2, fd. 2, Peterson Collection.
work and other matters.” Point Four’s organization included an overall director and a director for each country. In addition, each Point Four division such as education and agriculture had a U.S. director and a country director.

Why were the Utah universities interested in the contracts? They received funds to pay the technicians and it provided research experience for their faculty and other technicians. But finances were not the only motivation. University presidents—Ray Olpin (U of U), Ernest L. Wilkinson (BYU), and Louis Walker (USU) explained, “It is believed that the peoples of the United States and other nations have a common interest in the economic and social freedom of all peoples. Such progress can further the secure growth of the democratic ways of life, the expansion of mutually beneficial commerce, the development of international understanding and good will and the maintenance of world peace.”

**FIRST UTAHNS IN IRAN**

In October 1951 when the first Utahns arrived in Iran, Point Four faced urgent concerns in agriculture, health, and education throughout the country. William Warne assigned the contract employees to work with U.S. federal employees in the main office in Tehran and in the *ostans* (states). Welling Roskelley from USU headed the Point Four agricultural division in Iran. USU Professor Cleve Milligan stayed in Tehran to work in irrigation. Bruce Holmes Anderson, who was working on a master’s degree in agriculture under Milligan, and Jay Hall, who had completed a master’s degree in animal husbandry and later worked for the USU Extension Service, went to Shiraz. BYU sociology professor Reed Bradford directed all Point Four work in Resha. BYU education professor Max Berryessa stayed to work in Tehran, and public school teacher Glen Gagon planned educational

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19 Harris, Journal, May 12, 1951, 1728, USU Special Collections.

20 USU’s original contract, June 26, 1951, was for $100,000; six amendments brought the total to $729,072 by April 9, 1954. BYU’s original contract, June 30, 1951, was for $65,000; four amendments brought the total to $246,335 by July 23, 1953.

21 Memorandum of Agreement signed by the presidents of Brigham Young University, the University of Utah, and Utah State Agricultural College, June 26, 1951, Record Group 1240A, Box 2, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
programs in Shiraz.

When the Utahans arrived, the Iranian government was very unstable.22 Historian Nikki Keddie pointed out some reasons. First, peasants and city residents faced economic stress from high interest rates and taxes. Products from the West threatened the merchants or bazaar group. Religious leaders opposed the Shah’s westernization plans. Nomadic tribes resisted plans to force them to settle in stable communities. British and American governments threatened to boycott Iranian oil if the Iranian government controlled the fields. The Tudeh (Communist party) which had started during Reza Shah grew in power because of these concerns. The party urged that Iran forget dealing with Great Britain and the United States and turn to Russia

22This account summarizes Keddie, Modern Iran, 110–31. I follow Keddie’s spelling of “Mosaddeq” rather than “Mossaddeq.” Keddie does not mention the riots that the Utahns discuss, so it is difficult to determine exactly how they fit in the larger picture. I have included notes during this discussion for direct quotes from Keddie.
In the 1960s, Iran was a land of contrasts between the modern and the traditional. Here camels gather at a water well on the University of Karadj campus. Photo by Bertis L. Embry, courtesy of Jessie L. Embry.

for aid.

Iran had a parliament (*majiles*) that included a few representatives from many secular and religious political parties. Coalitions elected a prime minister who was often not the Shah’s choice. Although the Tudeh was banned, it influenced Iranians. In March 1951, for example, a religious nationalist assassinated the prime minister, General Ali Razmera. The Shah proposed Hosain Ala as his replacement; but in April, the Iranian parliament chose Dr. Mohammed Mosaddeq “a high-born Western-trained liberal nationalist intellectual” who had opposed Reza Shah in 1929.23

While many Iranians liked Mosaddeq the Shah, the British, and the Americans did not. To express their displeasure with the Shah and foreign influence, Iranians demonstrated, carrying “Yankees Go Home” signs. Sometimes these marches turned into riots and violence. The Tudeh did not always support the prime minister. In July 1952 some Iranians attacked Mosaddeq’s home next door to the Teh-

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23Ibid., 88.
ran Ostan’s Point Four offices. According to BYU education technician and Point Four education director Max Berryessa, the Americans escaped taking Mosaddeq with them. When Berryessa returned, he found burned cars in the compound and bullet holes in the bathroom attached to his office which faced Mosaddeq’s home.24

USU technician Bruce Anderson lived in Shiraz, six hundred miles from Tehran. The dirt roads required a full two days to make the trip to the capital. He wrote in his journal on July 30, 1952, “Tehran is now quiet after all the troubles a few days ago.” His wife Lula wrote to her parents, “It is usually calm[er] in Shiraz and we miss out on all the excitement and demonstrations.” But that changed in April 1953. The Americans usually went to the movies Wednesday evenings but stayed home when an Iranian friend warned them of an attack planned by Mosaddeq’s supporters. William Warne was also concerned and asked the Point Four employees in Shiraz to remain at home with their families and not to go to their offices.

As tensions continued to mount, the five Point Four families

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sought refuge with Quahqa’is, an anti-government nomadic tribe. Glen Gagon had set up tent schools for the tribe and developed friendships with key figures. The tribesmen protected the Americans for three days until it was safe to return to their homes in Shiraz. As a result of the problems in Shiraz, Warne and Loy W. Henderson, the U.S. ambassador to Iran, convinced Mosaddeq to apologize to the Americans there and promise future protection on April 23, 1953.

Anti-Americanism flared up again a few months later. Bruce Anderson recorded his fears in his journal, “It appears that the commies were ready to take over the country, to assassinate Mossadek [sic] and rule Iran. All the American homes were assigned and from

26William Warne, Letter to Loy W. Henderson, April 23, 1953, Record Group 469 250, Box 8, fd. 506 labeled “Shiraz, Iran.”
the spoils they would pay for the revolution.”

In response to the riots, the U.S. officials in Iran ordered all dependents to leave. Some Utahns had completed their two-year assignment, and those technicians returned with their families to Utah. Others who planned to stay for a second tour of duty sent their families to Switzerland and Germany. They did not want to return to the United States because the federal government would not pay for their passage back to Iran. According to Point Four leaders, the technicians stayed to show the Iran government that the United States was willing to provide assistance despite political uprisings.

Early in August 1953, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the British planned a coup to overthrow Mosaddeq. The plan called for the Shah to replace Mosaddeq as prime minister. However, Mosaddeq learned of the plan, probably through the Tudeh, and succeeded in retaining his power. The Shah and his wife left Iran as they had agreed to if the plan failed.

Anti-Shah rioting increased after he left. But the CIA funded the largest riot on August 17. The American agency hired a crowd to yell Tudeh slogans and knock down statues of the Shah and his father. The U.S. ambassador then asked Mosaddeq to control the crowds. The Tudeh complained and refuse to support Mosaddeq. On August 19 a group of “strongmen” and the Shah’s military moved against Mosaddeq. Once again, the Tudeh refused to support Mosaddeq because of actions he had taken to control the crowd two days before. Mosaddeq gave up. He survived a military trial, but his foreign minister, Hosain Fatemi, was tried and executed.

After Mosaddeq left office, the Iranian government signed an agreement that returned the power and half the profits to “the world oil cartel companies.” While the majiles met, the Shah controlled elections. He appointed Fazlollah Zahedi as prime minister to replace Mosaddeq. Zahedi’s son, Ardestir Zahedi, a USU graduate, was married to Princess Shahnaz, the Shah’s daughter. In 1955 the Shah re-

27 “Incidents in the Lives of Bruce and Lula Ellis Anderson.”
28 Keddie, Modern Iran, 130.
29 Ibid., 130.
moved Zahedi and became “Iran’s single ruler.”\textsuperscript{31} Still the Shah did not feel that he had complete power until 1967 when he declared himself Emperor of Iran.\textsuperscript{32}

With the overthrow of Mosaddeq in August 1953, a new group of Utahns arrived in Iran in the fall without their families. As the Shah took control, the dependents in Europe and the families of the new contract employees joined them in April 1954. But now there were only BYU and USU technicians. The University of Utah’s contract was not renewed in 1953. It had been difficult for the University of Utah to hire people with public health experience; as a result, there were disagreements between its technicians and the Point Four health officials, who decided to use only federal employees.\textsuperscript{33}

**American and Iranian Views of Point Four**

American policy during the 1950s was that Point Four was essential and that Iran needed special help. M. J. Regan, acting chief of agriculture for the Iran Point Four program for ten months in 1953, wrote in his completion report, “The friendly contacts and progressive work accomplished by the technical aid program was largely responsible for keeping Iran from going behind the Iron Curtain.”\textsuperscript{34} Helen Milligan expressed the same feelings fifty years later. When her sister asked if the Milligans would have accepted an assignment in Iran again, Milligan replied, “Yes, because I feel like we got there soon enough so the communists didn’t take over.”\textsuperscript{35}

But there was more to the technical assistance than just controlling the Communists, at least from the Americans’ point of view. The Americans felt a sense of mission. The term was even used in the title of Point Four, United States Operational Mission/Iran (USOM/I). In a speech in Iran in 1952, William Warne explained,

\textsuperscript{31}Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 135.
\textsuperscript{32}“Iran’s Shah Crowns Himself and His Empress,” *National Geographic*, March 1968, 301.
\textsuperscript{33}Dean Peterson, Letter to L. O. Horsfall, February 3, 1954, Box 2, fd. 4, Peterson Collection. Horsfall was the University of Utah employee in charge of its contract employees.
\textsuperscript{34}M. J. Regan, End-of-Tour Report, December 1953, typescript, USU Special Collections.
\textsuperscript{35}Milligan, Oral History, 12–14.
“The United States of America feels it has been blessed by God. . . . America is giving some of herself to help others to help themselves.”

The Utah technicians tried to improve Iranian life. Jay Hall helped import chickens. After brooding 500 unexpected chicks in his home in Shiraz, he distributed them to local farmers, replacing their small chickens with the new American ones. While the American chickens were larger and looked very promising, many died of native diseases. Bruce Anderson planted plots using controlled planting and furrow irrigating while others used the Iranian methods of broadcasting the seed and flood-irrigating. Most demonstration plots showed that the American farming methods increased production, as long as the irrigation was done properly.

BYU technicians started schools to demonstrate American teaching techniques and also sponsored summer teacher workshops.

**Shifts in University Contracts**

Until 1955 Point Four focused on immediate problems such as spraying mosquitoes to control malaria, improving water supplies, and providing updated seed and machinery to the Iranian people. In completing the assignments, Americans worked together but not with Iranian government employees. Once these concerns were met, the U.S. government shifted its focus to training Iranians to take over. This new program was called integration. Having the Iranians take responsibility sounded very good in theory. In reporting the USU contract in 1956, Rudger H. Walker, dean of the College of Agriculture at USU, explained, “The program must be an Iranian program,

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not an American program.”

In contrast, my father felt that the system did not work because “the US seems to want to turn over all they can to the foreigners who neither know how to operate or in many cases want to know. As a result much time, effort, and materials are wasted.” Yet at the same time, he agreed with the concept underlying integration, “One can only help people by teaching them to help themselves.”

Integration was not the only change in 1955. That year Congress and the State Department examined all the federal aid programs and especially questioned contracting with universities. Some felt that Point Four’s arrangements with institutions of higher education allowed the government agency to shirk its responsibility to obtain FBI clearance and hire trained personnel. To correct the problem, Congress mandated that university contracts have a clear assignment to work with a university in the foreign country. After 1955 Utah State University’s assignment was only to work with Karadj Agricultural College (founded in 1937) teaching classes and supervising an experimental farm.

The initial BYU contract was for secondary education. But with the combined efforts of all Point Four employees prior to 1955, the BYU technicians—professors and public school teachers from Provo hired by BYU—worked with elementary, secondary, and tertiary education. Federal records listed their assignments as “various” while USU was listed as “agriculture.” Ernest L. Wilkinson, BYU’s president, recorded in his journal that Point Four officials—he did not say whom—told him “we did not have a specific program [and] the scat-

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40 Bertis L. Embry, Letter to Mother, February 16, 1962. All Embry correspondence is in my possession.
41 Russell Andrus, Memo to FOA/W office, December 11, 1953, Box 53, uncatalogued, Record Group 469, National Archives. University contracts were a very small part of the Point Four program in Iran. Between 1951 and 1964, approximately ninety American Mormons served as agricultural and educational advisors in Iran. Utah State University’s agricultural contract (1951–64) was one of the largest and longest. Others included the University of Utah (health, 1951–53), Brigham Young University (education, 1951–55, 1959–61), Syracuse University (audiovisual), and University of Southern California (business).
tered work we were doing... was fitted better for government employees." 42 BYU's administration was working with the Teachers College at the University of Tehran to assist in teaching classes, consulting professors, and improving library facilities. While BYU technicians and administrators expected a smooth transfer from one contract to the next, something USU accomplished, it took until 1957 before all the paperwork was completed between the Tehran and Provo institutions.

Some BYU professors wondered if there were other reasons why their contract was not renewed. The Mormon presence in Iran made some American officials uneasy, and the Mormons were quick to read religious discrimination into the decision not to extend BYU's contract. As the technicians completed their assignments in 1955, most planned to return to the United States and their previous jobs. Boyd McAffee, a public school teacher from Provo who worked on the BYU contract from 1953 to 1955, felt that, if he stayed for another year, he could complete some projects he had begun. He began negotiating for an extension in January 1955. After months of protracted talks, he recorded in May that Hoyt C. Turner, the Point Four director of education in Iran, had unexpectedly requested that other BYU personnel also extend. McAffee complained in his journal, "Why... didn't he ask them months ago?" 43

Those going home were unable to change their plans at the last minute. It was just as well. In another surprise development, McAffee learned on August 12, 1955, that his contract would not be extended and that BYU's involvement in Iran would terminate on August 31. Bitterly disappointed, McAffee lamented, "It seems that our own people are not interested in either us or the program here for which we have worked so hard." His suspicions multiplied when U.S. officials refused to give him a reason or support him in an appeal for a different decision. "Everyone seems to be in complete ignorance about the whole BYU government contact cancellation causes." 44

Others felt the same way. A. Reed Morrill, a BYU education

42 Russell Andrus, Memo to FOA/W office, December 11, 1953, Box 53, uncatalogued, Record Group 469, National Archives; Ernest L. Wilkinson, Journal, November 17, 1955, Perry Special Collections.
technician, said that the contract was “terminated abruptly. . . . (No logical explanation was known.)” Dean A. Peterson wrote, “After several months of discussion, we suddenly discovered that our contract with the Government is not be renewed or extended” and that those who wanted to stay in Iran would have to be hired directly by Point Four.45

George Stewart, a BYU professor who had been hired on the USU contract and who supervised all the Utah contracts after Dean Peterson left in 1953, had written to BYU President Ernest L. Wilkinson four months earlier in April 1955. He passed on a rumor of internal disagreements in the Point Four Education Division in Iran that focused on the BYU group. Stewart said there were “two or three antagonistic spirits” who felt “that the LDS people have been given a much more kindly reception by the Iranians than have the people from the eastern United States who drink, smoke, and carry on in other ways of having a good time.” He had been in meetings with Iranian ministers who “have taken the trouble to explain” to U.S. officials “that they are particularly pleased with the way that the Utah group live and the attempt that they make to be of sincere service to the Iranians,” often pointing out that the other Americans seemed interested only in a salary. Dean Peterson agreed. In a letter to Boyd McAffee, he wrote, “I could tell of many instances where the Iranians have openly expressed their preference for the Utah technicians because of the way the LDS live and are devoted to giving outstanding service.” Stewart had written to Wilkinson several months earlier suggesting, “As a purely personal feeling, I think that it is one way in which Iran and other parts of the Middle East might properly be opened up to the religious missionary work”—meaning because of the positive response to the Utah technicians.46

Ernest L. Wilkinson told U.S. State Department official Russell Andrus at a university presidents’ meeting his deduction that the BYU contract had not been renewed because of “religious intolerance in the staff in Iran,” particularly on the part of Clark Gregory, a Point

45A. Reed Morrill, End of Tour Report, October 28, 1955, Box 6, fd. 4; Dean A. Peterson, Letter to Saul Kupfer, September 1, 1955, Box 5, fd. 7, both documents in Peterson Collection.

Four attorney who had replaced William Warne as head of Point Four in Iran in 1953. He claimed that Gregory had told Washington officials that there were too many of the same faith in Iran. Wilkinson was convinced that Gregory’s attitude influenced the State Department.47

Wilkinson wrote letters to the Point Four officials in Washington and to the Utah congressional delegation looking for answers. He also grilled Horace F. Bryne, acting chief of the Greece-Turkey-Iran Division of Point Four. Bryne had been in Iran as the director of the work in Shiraz in 1951 and had worked with the BYU technicians. He might have been the “so called friend” that Dean Peterson complained about in a letter to Boyd McAffee. Peterson claimed that someone “who worked with us in Iran and who are in key positions in Washington are favoring their kind rather than Utahns.” In his conversations, Wilkinson found Bryne’s responses “entirely unsatisfactory. I feel quite sure that he was not telling me all he knew.”

In October 1955, Oliver Caldwell, the Assistant Commissioner of U.S. Education, corroborated some of Wilkinson’s suspicions: An English couple complained to Caldwell that the United States was paying missionaries to go to Iran. This couple “were church people and Caldwell thought they were probably envious of the work of BYU faculty members. The English couple . . quoted one of our Utah persons as saying he had accepted the position only because he

47Wilkinson, Letter to Stewart, December 22, 1955, Box 2, fd. 18, Peterson Collection. Wilkinson also expressed this concern in his journal at a Point Four university contract meeting in Lansing, Michigan, on November 17, 1955: “I took part in the discussion and demanded to know why our contract was terminated. I was told that it was because we did not have a specific program but the work we were doing was the scattered kind of work which was fitted better for government employees. Since discussion had been asked for on general principles rather than particular contracts, I felt it was inappropriate for me to pursue the matter further. But I have learned definitely since that our contract was terminated because the Administrator in Iran thought there were too many teachers ‘of the same faith’ in Iran and because of jealousies over the success of our program. This was substantiated to me by a very high official in the government. I intend to pursue this matter and to register a vigorous protest in Washington.” Wilkinson, Journal, November 17, 1955, Perry Special Collections.
wanted to be a missionary.”

Like most gossip, it is difficult to pin down sources for the anti-Mormon stories. Marion Merkley, assistant superintendent of Salt Lake School District and director of the Point Four education program in Jordan, told his sister, Rissa Clarke, a BYU education technician in Iran, that Clark Gregory had told him that they were going to reduce the BYU technicians to no more than four since he thought they were entirely too many in Iran and “Utahns were rather clannish in Iran” (which was true). Rissa, whose husband, John, was also a BYU education technician, passed the report on to Dean Peterson who promptly told Wilkinson.49

However, Gregory did not mention those concerns to Wilkinson. He explained that BYU’s contract was not being extended because of the new policy of U.S. universities working with Iranian universities and the shortage of Point Four funds to continue programs on their previous scale. In a letter to Wilkinson, Gregory explained, “This Mission is earnestly seeking to provide as much technical assistance to the Iranian government as available U.S. funds will provide and as much as they want and can use effectively, with local funds, for program operations. Based on these conditions, it is unlikely, at the present time that this Mission will request a Brigham Young University contract.”50 But he was not entirely candid. Just as Wilkinson had feared, two months earlier Gregory had sent a telegram to his supervisors in Washington, D.C., “Indications also of growing problem inherent in having too [many] . . . of any one faith working as unit in country predominately Muslim.”51

If having too many Mormons was the problem, then why was the USU contract renewed? Gregory might have recognized the historic association between USU and Iran, acknowledged USU’s agricultural expertise, and decided that ending the BYU contract would reduce the number of Mormons in Iran below a critical threshold.

48Wilkinson, Notes, October 11 and 25, 1955, Peterson Collection.
49Dean Peterson, Letter to Wilkinson, November 28, 1955, Box 2, fd. 8, Peterson Collection.
50Clark Gregory, Letter to Ernest L. Wilkinson, December 1, 1955, Box 3, fd. 7, Peterson Collection.
51Clark Gregory, Telegram to Fitzgerald, Seager, Holmgreen, October 15, 1955, USOM/I, State Department Records (Record Group 469), National Archives.
Bruce Anderson discussed Mormon-related concerns with Ray Johnson, who headed the Point Four agricultural program in Iran, and concluded that Johnson “was doing everything to strengthen the Utah contract and was not anti-Mormon.”

**THE MORMON CHURCH IN IRAN**

Were Gregory’s concerns about Mormons justified? In some ways they were. All the technicians from USU and BYU were Mormons, and many of those from the University of Utah were also Church members. Franklin S. Harris was pleased in 1951 after the contracts were signed that other Mormons would come to Iran. He hoped to organize LDS units in Iran. When he came to Utah to encourage the three Utah universities to sign contracts in May 1951, he visited Church President David O. McKay. In a letter to his family after this meeting, he reported that the First Presidency “set me apart as President of the Tehran branch and gave me authority to make whatever organization seemed necessary in this country.” Because Muslim and Iranian rules prohibited missionary efforts by any religion, Harris continued, “There is of course no idea of proselyting.”

But the Mormon technicians felt a sense of mission to help the world and, in doing so, to share their religion. One of the first BYU education technicians, J. Richard Brown, asked Mormon Apostle and Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, “There’s one thing that bothers me just a little bit, and I don’t know quite how to approach it. We know that we have our responsibility to spread the gospel, but we’ve been told by our instructors at the foreign language institute that we’d better forget those kinds of things.” According to Brown, “Benson looked at me and said, ‘You can always call them to repentance.’ I found out that he was serious.” If Brown had interpreted these instructions in the traditional Mormon sense, he would have violated both Iranian law and State Department protocol, as Benson was well aware. According to hearsay evidence from other technicians, Brown did take the advice too literally, and the Point Four offi-
cials in Iran almost sent him home because he was too open about his Mormon beliefs.

Benson’s advice to another couple was more helpful and specific. According to Helen Milligan, she and her husband were undecided about going to Iran when they encountered Benson by chance at a service station in Cache Valley and asked his advice. Benson told them, “I know you can’t proselytize, but you can go and answer questions and you can live your religion. If you’ll go and treat it as a mission, I’ll promise you that you’ll go there and return home in peace and safety.”

Boyd McAffee remembered that Thorpe B. Isaacson visited Iran in his capacity as a trustee for Utah State University but also met privately with the Mormons in his role as a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. According to McAffee, Isaacson “had always been skeptical of such government work as Point 4, but not any more after seeing the work here where we are trying to help people live better.” McAffee then commented solemnly, “We are truly on a Mission. This is as much of a Mission field as any place on earth.”

The Mormons did not have to preach to stand out. Their dietary code made them conspicuous. At nearly every occasion—social or professional—the Iranians offered them tea. When they explained that they did not drink tea for religious reasons, the Iranians accepted their refusal respectfully since they, as Muslims, also had religious dietary restrictions. Instead of tea, the Mormons asked for hot water (they feared drinking unboiled water) with lemon. Later many Iranian hosts provided fruit juices.

According to J. Richard Brown, the Iranians did not know about Mormons but “they knew we were different. On many occasions people said, ‘I like all of these Americans, but you people are different.’” Brown added, “We had to be careful explaining. Those Iranians who worked directly with us knew quite a bit by the time we got through.” Iranians continued to notice differences between the Mormons and other Americans. Grace Farnsworth, whose husband was a library

56 McAffee, Journal, June 8, 1954, 185–86.
technician at the University of Tehran Teachers College between 1959 and 1961 said that her landlord commented approvingly, “Really, you’re sort of Muslims’ because of the fact that we didn’t drink. They weren’t supposed to drink, but they did. He felt that we were ideal tenants because of our living habits.”58

When the Mormons worked with other Point Four employees, they often met together socially and professionally. So non-Mormon Americans also noticed the difference in Mormon beliefs. For example, Lula Anderson remembered the parties that she hosted for Point Four employees in Shiraz and visiting officials from Tehran. “It was nice and lots of fun although there is a difference in entertaining strictly Utah people and a mixed crowd. LDS people are satisfied with good food and simple entertainment, while some others are deadheads unless they’ve had a few cocktails.” William McSwain, a University of Utah visual aid specialist, observed to Lula Anderson that Point Four employees were “a bit suspicious of all these Utah people.” However, the parties “broke down their suspicions and they discovered we were people just like themselves.”59 These parties were not held after Point Four gave the Utah universities separate assignments and technicians no longer worked closely with federal employees.

Mormon Worship Services in Iran

The Mormons started holding religious services immediately after their arrival. On Sunday, October 26, 1951, the weekend after the first Utahns came, Franklin S. Harris presided over a sacrament meeting at the new arrivals’ hotel. The following week more technicians arrived. Another group came at the end of November. On November 25, 1951, with seventy-three members including children in attendance, Harris organized a branch in Tehran, a meeting he described as “very satisfying.” Harris selected George Stewart, an education technician from BYU and Joseph Coulam, an agricultural technician from USU, as his counselors. USU technician Welling Roskelley was superintendent of the Sunday School, and BYU director Dean Peterson was branch clerk. At the first meeting, all the new officers spoke. Also speaking was Gussie Stobbe, the wife of L. M. O. Stobbe, a Salt

58 Brown, Oral History, 12; Grace Farnsworth, Oral History, 9.
59 Lula Anderson, Letter to Folks, April 9 and May 19, 1952, Bruce and Lula Anderson family papers.
Lake City physician on the University of Utah contract.\textsuperscript{60}

The branch met in the hotel until the new arrivals found homes to rent. Many moved next door to each other in Shimron, a suburb on the outskirts of Tehran. They created a “little Utah” where they held Church meetings and socials. The Iranian government allowed the meetings with the understanding that they were for Americans only. Helen Milligan recalled, “For awhile they had a policeman at the door to be sure that there weren’t any Persians that came.”\textsuperscript{61}

When the Utahns were assigned to work in other ostans, Harris appointed one man in each area to be the group or branch leader. Bruce Anderson became the presiding officer in Shiraz. In addition to the Mormon technicians and their families from BYU, University of Utah, and USU, who were assigned to Shiraz, other Americans who were Point Four employees but not Mormons also attended the meetings. The group initially met on Sunday but switched to Fridays, the Muslim day of worship, since Sunday was a regular work day.\textsuperscript{62}

Since there were only two Mormon families in Ahwaz, there was no formal branch. But J. Richard Brown recalled, “Somehow or other, I didn’t bring it up, but [other Americans] did. They said, ‘We need to have some Bible study. Would you help us?’” Brown agreed and planned the lessons, being “careful not to throw too many things at them that they would be dismayed at or offended by.” The group “went through parts of the Old Testament, almost line by line.”\textsuperscript{63}

Although Utahns were stationed throughout Iran, the main LDS branch was in Tehran. After Franklin S. Harris completed his two-year assignment and prepared to leave in May 1952, he reorganized the branch. His counselor George Stewart became the new branch president. Joseph Coulam continued to serve as a counselor, and Dean Peterson became the other counselor. Harris recorded in his journal, “The Branch has unity and strength,” adding “We leave this branch with much regret. We have enjoyed the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[60] Franklin S. Harris, Journal, September 30, October 14 and 28, November 5, 20, and 25, 1951, USU Special Collections.
\item[61] Milligan, Oral History, 12.
\item[63] Brown, Oral History, 11.
\end{footnotes}
group so thoroughly.”

When Boyd McAffee arrived in 1953, he was delighted to find the Church so well organized in Shiraz. “It was really good to meet in those services with our own people,” McAffee recorded in his journal. “The services were conducted as completely as if we were home.” When McAffee’s wife, Louise, and their children were allowed to come to Iran in the spring of 1954, they also attended church meetings in Shiraz with the other Utahns and their families and the non-Mormon Point Four employees and families, including an African American Sam Fuhr. Whenever McAffee went to Tehran, he attended the services there and felt that was a treat to meet with a larger group of members. But no matter where he went, McAffee wrote, “No doubt we are all better LDS members now than ever before in our lives . . . [in] this land far from our native land.” For McAffee, who was often frustrated in his professional work, LDS services “made us appreciate our blessings even more.” After one meeting culminating an especially hard week, he wrote, “It did me good to regain a spirit of brotherly love. I almost lost it last week.” He continued, “These weekly meetings do much to keep us united and spiritually geared to the huge task at hand: That of helping other people.”

From 1955 to 1957, the only Mormons on university contracts were those from Utah State University who lived in Karadj, thirty-five miles from Tehran, although other Mormons with business and military assignments lived in Tehran. It is not clear where the branch met during those years. In 1957 when the BYU technicians returned to work at the Teachers College, they joined with the business and military Mormon families in Tehran. From then until 1964 when the USU contract ended, the branch met in Tehran for two months and then in Karadj for a month. The meetings were held in members’ homes. The branch owned folding chairs which passed from member to member depending on where the meetings were.

Dean Farnsworth, a BYU library technician from 1959 to 1961

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64 Harris, Journal, May 11 and 18, 1952, USU Special Collections.
66 Personal knowledge; Dean Farnsworth, Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, November 6, 1998, 8.
and branch president for part of that time, recalled, “The branch in Tehran fluctuated. Sometimes it was almost all servicemen. Sometimes it was almost all technicians. Sometimes it was very large and sometimes it was extremely small, depending on the assignments.” According to my father’s letter to his mother, “About 65 members are going home and most of them will not be replaced” in the spring of 1961. These were the seven families who had been in Iran on the BYU contract.  

The branch members were nearly all Americans. Even Iranians who had joined the Church while they attended college in Utah did not associate with the members at church because many were government officials, required to be Muslim to keep their jobs. I recall my family giving one Iranian a ride to church occasionally. Gordon Van

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Epps, who served as branch president from 1963 to 1964, remembered two, Higgigi and Godarze, who had been students at USU. Van Epps recalled, “I remember them bearing their testimonies some Sundays. Sundays are work days there so they couldn’t attend our meetings very often unless they were traveling in the area. But tears would stream down their faces as they would bear their testimonies.” Iran’s political struggles would, he feared, leave them vulnerable. “Godarze had a position high up in the agriculture ministry for the country. I imagine that he was killed when Khomeni came in. I don’t know unless he was able to escape the country, which I hope he was. I wonder about Higgigi.”

After the USU contract ended in 1964, the branch continued to meet exclusively in Tehran where all the members, mostly U.S. military families lived. For a short time in 1967, the members used the American nondenominational Protestant church for meetings. David Ream, a U.S. military officer and a branch leader, recalled a meeting with its minister who asked for rent. The branch returned to meeting in homes to avoid the added expense. For a while the branch met on Fridays, but some members felt uncomfortable having services on a day other than Sunday so worship was returned to that day. Meetings were held in the afternoon so that two Iranian members could attend occasionally. USU professor Anson Call, who fulfilled an individual contract from 1967 to 1969, recalled that only three Mormon families were meeting at that time.

During much of this period, the branch was not an official church unit. When my family was in Iran, our membership records stayed in North Logan, and my father paid his tithing to that ward. Branch leadership changed as needed and not always in the expected way. Dean Farnsworth assumed he was branch president because Golden Woolf was head of the BYU contract and had other responsibilities. Two USU technicians, Glen Wahlquist and Raymond Farnsworth, served as clerk and counselor respectively. (Dean and

69 David Ream, email to Jessie Embry, August 6, 1999, printout in my possession; Tehran Branch Minutes, January 1, 1967, LDS Church Archives; see also Anson Bowen Call, “A Good, Long Life: The Autobiography of Anson Bowen Call, Jr., 1900–1993”, as told to Carole Call King, typescript, USU Special Collections.
Ray were not related.) The other counselor, “Kay Morris [was] not a member of our team.” Although Farnsworth did not say, Morris was probably with the U.S. military.\(^{70}\) Until the late 1970s, the Tehran Branch was under the jurisdiction, first, of the International Mission and then of the Swiss Mission.\(^{71}\)

A highlight for the branch came when General Authorities visited. Like Thorpe Isaacson, some were in Iran on other business, but they took the time to visit with the little group of Mormons there. During the 1960s, four apostles came to Iran. Spencer W. Kimball represented the Kiwanis Club, Richard L. Evans the Rotary Club, Ezra Taft Benson as European Mission President, and Howard W. Hunter at Benson’s request. Benson returned in 1971 to represent the United States at an Iranian celebration.\(^{72}\)

*Types of Mormon Worship Services*

The types of meetings held in Iran changed with the size and location of the branch. Sacrament meeting was always the first to be held; but Helen Milligan remembered that the Tehran Branch also held Primary, Mutual, Sunday School, and priesthood meetings when she was in Iran in the early 1950s. Children and youth classes often combined several age groups. Depending on the size of the home, the adults stayed in the living room and the children gathered in corners or bedrooms for their classes. Since all the women worked with the children, the branch held a special adult meeting Sunday evenings. The group often studied the Old Testament because “we could look out our windows and see them harvesting grain with a sickle.”\(^{73}\)

From 1960 to 1962 when my family lived in Karadj, the branch held priesthood meeting early in the morning; Primary met during the same time slot. Because of the distance, the branch had Sunday School one week and sacrament meeting the next. Since LDS wards served the sacrament at both Sunday School and sacrament meeting then, the branch members partook of it each week. Those in Tehran, according to Maxine Shirts, whose husband Morris was with the BYU

\(^{70}\)Dean Farnsworth, Oral History, 8.

\(^{71}\)Tehran Iran Branch, Manuscript History, LDS Church Archives.


group from 1959 to 1961, also held an evening meeting. Maxine gratefully remembered, “Morris usually stayed with the kids. He said I was with them all week.”74

In 1963 when Gordon Van Epps became branch president, the schedule was changed slightly. Sacrament meeting, Sunday School, priesthood, Relief Society, and Primary were held in a two-hour block. There was no Mutual because the youth were too scattered to meet for a weekday activity. The teenage boys attended priesthood meeting; the teenage girls taught Primary so the women could attend Relief Society. After the BYU contract ended, the branch held sacrament meeting, Relief Society, priesthood meeting, and Junior Sunday School.75

Mormon Social Activities

Since the first Utahns lived so close together in Tehran, they created a “little Utah.” Max Berryessa explained, “Primarily it was because of our church affiliation” that they lived so close. “We knew our wives would have a close relationship with American friends.” Nearly all the homes had swimming pools, and members gathered at them to visit, play games, dance, and talk. When Bruce Anderson went to Tehran on business during the summer of 1952, he attended a party nearly every night—either dinner at homes or hotels, swimming at members’ homes, Bible study classes, farewell parties for technicians and their families, or movies. These socials were an important part of the members’ lives. Lula Anderson told her father in 1955 after they had moved to Tehran that she was always entertaining because “our chief pleasures here are our friendships.”76

Grace Farnsworth remembered that, when she was in Iran (1959–61), “We would have group celebrations for the holidays, for Thanksgiving, Christmas, the Fourth of July, and the Twenty-fourth of July. We kept our association close that way.” During the time I was in Iran (1960–62), the children in the USU complex frequently played night games. We were always together. When we went to church in Tehran, someone always invited us to dinner. When we had church in Karadj, a family from Tehran came to our home. Even after the

75Personal knowledge; Van Epps, Oral History, 22; Ream, email.
76Jessie Embry, Mormon Wards, 96–97.
Utahns left in 1964, David Ream recalled “frequent pot luck suppers, with home-cranked ice cream, at the homes of various members on Friday, Iranian holidays, or Sundays after church.”

_Mormon Family Life_

Family life for wives and children also changed over the years. From 1951 to 1953 children in Tehran attended an international school run by the Presbyterian Church. By 1954 the U.S. government had started a school for dependents which Point Four children could attend. Mildred Bunnell, whose husband worked for USU, had taught high school and was assigned to teach a fourth-grade class. Mormon Leah Hart, whose husband was a Point Four employee, had a degree in business and secondary education from the University of Utah; she taught typing and shorthand in the early 1960s.

Until 1961 the American school did not include a high school, so my older brother Lloyd attended the Presbyterian school for one year where he learned some Farsi. The second year we were in Iran, he attended the Tehran American School. Dean Farnsworth’s two older children also attended the Presbyterian school, which he remembered as “quite demanding.”

In the early 1950s, those who were sent to the _ostans_ had to home-school their children. Lula Anderson was concerned since she was trained as secretary and not a teacher. She was grateful there were other Americans to help with the teaching. Jay Hall’s wife, Beth, was an elementary school teacher; and as her small children reached school age, she purchased the Galbert system, then a popular home study system, and taught many of the children in Shiraz, including the Andersons. Jay bragged that his children did very well when they returned the United States. Later Anderson was grateful to move to Tehran where her children could attend school.

In the 1950s and 1960s tradition, many technicians’ wives were homemakers. My mother did not work out of the home, for example. She had five children plus the challenge of managing a home in a new country. Many other wives hired Iranians to cook, clean, and tend chil-

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77 Ream, email.
79 Personal knowledge; Dean Farnsworth, Oral History, 13.
80 Hall, Oral History, 7; Lula Anderson, Oral History, 2, 8.
dren. Such inexpensive household help allowed some American wives to work in the U.S. community. After the Andersons moved to Tehran, Lula worked as a secretary for the Point Four and the U.S. embassy office. Imogene Wood worked as a secretary for the Corp of Engineers.81

Wives who socialized usually sought their friends among the other Utah Mormon women, but a few reached beyond the Mormon group. Mildred Bunnell took knitting lessons and “did sweaters for my grandchildren with bears and kittens on the back.” Maxine Shirts was involved with a group of women at the officers’ club who sponsored clothing drives for an orphanage.82

Only a few Utahans learned Farsi. Clark Ballard and Bruce Anderson, who were in Iran the longest, could speak it quite well. My father learned words from his Iranian drivers when he was on trips. Dean and Grace Farnsworth took classes when they first arrived, but the classes were discontinued after a short time. Grace felt that Golden Woolf, the BYU director in Iran, was old, had a difficult time learning languages, and decided it was not worthwhile since most of the Iranian counterparts and assistants spoke English. When Lula Anderson got her job as a Point Four and embassy secretary, a Persian maid tended her preschool children. The youngsters “probably spoke Farsi to the servants, but they wouldn’t speak it to us.” Anderson and other wives learned enough to “get by” in markets.83

**MORMON INTERACTION WITH IRANIANS**

According to my father, the Iranians resisted the American presence in Iran. However, in the fall of 1962 after my family left, feelings softened. In September an earthquake destroyed whole villages and killed more than 10,000 people under the collapsing “thick-walled, mud-brick houses.” One village lost 3,000 of its 6,500 residents; in another 3,200 of 4,500 died. Those who survived lost their homes and all their possessions.84

Branch President Gordon Van Epps wrote to the First Presidency and asked if the Church could help. The First Presidency

81 Lula Anderson, Oral History, 8; Wood, Oral History, 12.
82 Bunnell, Oral History, 2; Shirts, Oral History, 8.
84 “Iran: The Night the Earth Went Wild,” *Time Magazine*, September
agreed to ship clothing to the impoverished survivors. It was one of the Church’s first efforts to provide assistance in an area where it did not have an established network of units and officers. CARE, Inc., shipped the goods, and branch members distributed the clothing personally to avoid their diversion to enrich corrupt government officials. This direct service created good will among the Iranians, but the Americans learned the hard way about techniques of distribution. At first the Mormons divided the goods on site; but the residents at the first village, angry that everyone did not receive the same amount of clothing, tore up the wooden shipping crates for firewood and threw rocks at the Mormons. At the second village, the Mormons kept the supplies in the truck; but when children discovered that not everything was distributed, the villagers again stoned the Mormons. After this experience, the Mormons sorted and repacked the twenty-two tons of clothing they had received, set up tents, and had the villagers come through in orderly lines with each person receiving the same goods. For example, the Mormons gave each woman five dresses.\(^{85}\)

The Iranians were impressed that the American Mormons would make such effort to help people they would never see again. According to Gordon Van Epps, “From that time on there was a tremendous difference in the feelings of the students and faculty toward we Americans.” The driver whom the Church hired from the college usually did not do manual labor, but he helped distribute goods. When the technicians returned to campus, “It made a difference in the classes and in walking around the campus of the college there in the friendliness. You could just feel the changes that were made.”\(^{86}\)

**THE END OF UTAH UNIVERSITY CONTRACTS**

After BYU signed a new contract, its technicians worked with the Teacher’s College for four years, averaging seven employees during the two contract periods. Each professor—either from BYU’s College of Education or contracted from another university (e.g., Morris Shirts from the College of Southern Utah)—worked with a counterpart and an assistant. Dean Farnsworth did not get along with his

\(^{14}\), 38–39.

\(^{85}\)Van Epps, Oral History, 11.

\(^{86}\)Ibid., 12–13.
counterpart who was not “congenial.” He worked mainly with an assistant, Parvin Amin Salehi, who “as most enlightened Iranian women, had to be a diplomat and be submissive to people like my counterpart. Yet she was quite well trained in library science.”

When BYU’s contract came up for renewal in 1959, Golden Woolf agreed to an extension with some misgivings since BYU’s relationship to the University of Tehran Teachers College and its role in the educational system was unclear. The contract was extended until 1961, and Woolf remained in charge. Then the U.S. Point Four program claimed that the objectives had been met and a new type of program was needed. BYU’s contract was not renewed. Clarence Hendershot, the director of Point Four Education, disagreed that the goals had been met, but agreed with Woolf that, since the University of Tehran Teachers College did not know which direction it was going, the BYU technicians did not know what was expected. BYU technician John Clarke stayed on as a U.S. employee to work with general education programs in Iran.

USU continued to work at the Karadj College until 1964. Professors or extension agents taught classes, assisted on the farm, and oversaw other assignments. My father, for example, taught basic electrical engineering classes, worked on the campus’s electric system, oversaw farm machinery at the agricultural college (his original assignment), and advised the Point Four property management division in Tehran. The work was extremely frustrating. The professors and students were not interested in working on the farm; the workers did not know how to read and had a hard time understanding the machinery. For example, because the workers persistently used the wrong motor oil, the machinery frequently broke down.

The Shah appreciated USU’s efforts. In 1961 Ardeshir Zahedi, the Shah’s son-in-law and a 1950 graduate of USU, presented USU President Daryl Chase with the Order of the Crown on behalf of the Shah in ceremonies held at the Hotel Utah. Zahedi announced that the honor recognized USU’s “indefatigable support of education and

87Dean Farnsworth, Oral History, 5.
Ambassadar Ardeshir Zahedi, representing the Shah of Iran, confers the Order of the Crown on Daryl Chase, president of Utah State University. Iran and Utah State University (Logan: Utah State University, ca. 1963), 119.
international understanding. It would take hours of talking and many books to describe the great friendship that exists between Iran and Utah.” Chase accepted on behalf of USU’s forty-nine faculty members who had served in Iran. “They were ambassadors of good will, just as the [eighty-five] students from Iran here are ambassadors of good will.  

Although the Shah appreciated the efforts, every two years USU struggled with both the Iranian and the U.S. government to get its contract renewed. By 1964 Clark Ballard told Chase that, while the technicians “continue[d] to enjoy good prestige” in Karadj, “we have made our maximum contribution unless conditions change dramatically.” By “conditions,” he meant that, although the dean of the Keradj Agricultural College did not want another university to take over, U.S. funds had been cut and the Iranian government seemed uninterested in education. Still, Ballard hoped to create a grain legume research center in Iran. That effort failed.  

**THE IRANIAN MISSION**

But the Utah Mormon influence continued. In 1975 Spencer W. Kimball, then LDS Church president, called Dean Farnsworth, who had returned to BYU’s English Department, as president of a mission in Iran. The Church News, which usually lists all mission presidents and their assignments, included the Farnsworths’ names but did not identify their assignment. For the next three years, Dean and Grace Farnsworth directed a small but dedicated group of young men who learned Farsi and shared their message wherever possible. They could not tract and could talk only to people who approached them. The Farnsworths left Iran in 1978. Later that year, political problems erupted again; and early in 1979 a conservative Islamic group over-

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91 Clark Ballard, Letter to Burgoyne, 26 May 1963, USU; Daryl Chase, Letter to Martin G. Weiss, associate director, crops research division, 26 August 1963, Box 17, fd. 4, Chase Papers; Clark Ballard, Letter to Daryl Chase, 14 October 1962, Ballard to Chase, no date, Box 27, fd. 4, Chase Papers.

threw the Shah. The only Mormon mission in a Muslim country was closed. The Mormon Church, like the U.S. government found that its special relationship with the Shah and his government prevented continuing relationships with his successors. One historian even claimed that U.S. aid, including Point Four, caused the revolution. “Huge American sales of arms, agricultural equipment, high technology, and consumer goods inadvertently helped destabilize Iran’s economy and contributed to the Iranian Revolution.”

Until 2001 a group of BYU and USU technicians and their wives held bi-monthly social gatherings in Utah Valley. Some individuals also worked with what Dale D. Clark, a former U.S. Department of Agriculture and State Department employee, called the “Iran-Utah Group.” In 1998 Mohammad Khatami, then president of Iran, wrote to Dale Clark asking for “exchanges of scholars, artists, and other groups to break down two decades of hostility and suspicion” between the United States and Iran. Clark contacted Max Berryessa, who had retired from BYU’s College of Education. Berryessa polled the social group, who agreed to sign a letter supporting such exchanges, and Clark developed a plan to reintroduce voluntary funding and exchanges in Iran. Although nothing happened, Clark and the former technicians still hoped that Mormons could continue to have contacts in Iran.

SUMMARY

From 1912 to 1978, a small but significant group of Utahns, nearly all of them Mormons, held U.S. government contracts in Iran. Those who worked from 1951 to 1964 in Iran for the three Utah universities felt a sense of mission. They were spreading the gospel of democracy and showing Iran, a Third World country, that the U.S. plan had more to offer than the USSR’s communist system.

Nearly all the Utahns were also members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They supported their church’s belief that

93 Keddie, Modern Iran, 214–39.
94 Keddie, Roots of Revolution, 276.
the United States was a chosen land that had a responsibility to assist all of God’s children throughout the world. While they could not proselyte, they practiced their religion among themselves and hoped to set a good example for the Iranian people.

According to the Utahns, the Iranians appreciated the Mormons’ standards, but the U.S. government was concerned about the presence of a clannish religious group in Iran. Although other factors were involved, this religious perception was one reason why the U.S. government cancelled the BYU contract in 1955. The LDS Church continued to win friends, especially following the 1962 earthquake. That rapport may have allowed the Church to establish a mission in Iran during the late 1970s.  

The story of how Utah Mormons worked and worshipped in Iran during the height of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s provides an interesting look into the history of the LDS Church during that time period. The Church was a small intermountain organization, but it was gaining influence in the United States and the world. The members’ sense of mission gained them both friends and enemies as they created a community, shared their secular knowledge, and practiced their religion.

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96The LDS Church Historical Department has documented the mission, but delicate political situations prevent those records from being open to researchers.
Mormonism and Guerrillas in Bolivia

David Clark Knowlton

Mormon Growth and Terrorism

In May 1989, two LDS missionaries from Utah, Jeffrey Brent Ball and Todd Ray Wilson, were assassinated in Bolivia by a little-known guerrilla movement, the Frente Armada de Liberación Zárate.


Sources: I gathered the data on which this paper is based during several ethnographic trips to Bolivia self-financed (1989) and financed by the College of Family, Health and Social Sciences at Brigham Young University.
Willka (FAL-ZW, the Zárate Willka Armed Liberation Front). Although these murders fit into a pattern of attacks by militant movements on LDS targets, including the assassination of three native LDS missionaries in Peru, the deaths of these two U.S. elders stood out in the consciousness of North American Latter-day Saints. The murders were widely reported, unlike the assassinations of the Peruvian elders.

The FAL-ZW was part of a range of popular militant organizations of the time in Bolivia; but unlike the others, it chose the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as one of its major targets. Besides assassinating the two Anglo American missionaries in a working-class neighborhood of the country’s largest city, La Paz, it bombed as many as five LDS chapels between 1980 and 1990, and threatened Filiberto Cardozo, the mayor of the suburban city of El Alto de La Paz, with death if he did not close all Mormon chapels. As justification, the guerrillas stated their opposition to “gringos who come to deceive...”

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Zárate Willka was an Indian independence leader in the late nineteenth century and has become a hero of the contemporary Indian movement in Bolivia.

These Peruvian elders were Manuel Antonio Hidalgo and Christian Andreani Ugarte, killed August 1990, and Oscar Zapata, killed March 1991.

the poor and humble people.”

This paper explores the background and context of FAL-ZW militancy, as well as the growth of Mormonism in Bolivia, that together made LDS missionaries and chapels targets of a revolutionary struggle.

**U.S. FOREIGN EXPANSION AND MORMONISM**

The images of gringos and their deception of the poor are powerful in Bolivian political and social rhetoric. While on the one hand most of the missionaries and officials of the Church in Bolivia were gringos (i.e., American citizens), nevertheless the meaning of this word and the links by which the FAL-ZW connected it with the Church as justification for violence are anything but clear. To make sense of it and the accusation of deception, it is useful to begin with the pattern of LDS growth in the country to identify the particular status that Mormonism came to occupy in that society.

Although Latter-day Saints may prefer to see the growth of the Church as driven by spiritual ends and policies, to accomplish its ends the Church relies on social factors that can militate in its favor or, contrariwise, impede its growth, despite the Church’s dependency on them. However these social factors also give meaning, intent, and purpose to the Church in ways that may seem strange to many Latter-day Saints. Here we must discover the social dynamics of Mormonism in Bolivia that made it a useful target for FAL-ZW.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has experienced very high growth rates in Bolivia. Over the five years preceding 1991,
the Church’s membership increased by some 75 percent, from 40,000 members to 71,000. While the rapidity of that growth—i.e., the sudden appearance of Mormons throughout the urban areas of the country in what to Bolivians seemed a surprisingly well-financed push—is an important factor in this story, it must be contextualized in the patterns established early in the history of Mormonism in the country that give it purpose and form. The financial argument may seem surprising to many Latter-day Saints, but the amount of money and time required by the Church’s missionary endeavor, although donated by members, still makes a large and critical impact on Bolivian society. This fact alone makes Mormon investment in Bolivia seem unusual. Furthermore, to these funding sources must be added the Church’s purchase of land and construction of Mormon chapels that appeared quickly all over the urban landscape between the 1970s and 1980s. Bolivians could not help asking why gringos were spending so much money and effort in their country, nor were Mormon reasons either as apparent or as persuasive as Church officials and missionaries believed—as this paper illustrates.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints established a continuing presence in Bolivia in the early 1960s with the influx of U.S. personnel who worked with USAID and other government aid programs. After the Bolivian revolution of 1952, the United States was concerned about leftist influences on the new government and attempted to persuade it to follow U.S. direction by providing such huge amounts of foreign aid that Bolivia, during this period, was the recipient of the largest amount of aid of any country in South America. As a result, relatively large numbers of U.S. personnel were dispatched to Bolivia on various governmental or military assignments, among them Anglo Mormons who were to develop the Church in

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6. Andes Mission, Manuscript History, microfilm, December 5, 6, 7, 1964, CR/MH 6311, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

Bolivia and set some of its dynamics.8

After World War II, many young Anglo Mormons made careers in government, the military, and international business. Among them were Mormons who had completed missions in Latin America in an earlier period, particularly in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. As a result they had the language and cultural skills that qualified them for international service and made them overrepresented in U.S.-based institutions working in this area compared to the population as a whole.9

Many North Americans resided in Bolivia in the early 1960s, including several North American Mormon families affiliated with development assistance and the U.S. military.10 Bolivian Mormonism started among them and extended to their friends and networks, once the missionaries arrived in 1964.

8This dual government/religious function of Mormon government employees leads to some of the contradictions Julio Córdova poses on the basis of his survey data for El Alto, as I elaborate below. Julio Córdova Villazon, “Los Evangélicos: entre la protesta y la compensación: minorías religiosas y sectores urbano-populares: el caso de El Alto,” Tesis de Licenciatura para optar por el título académico de Licenciado en Sociología, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (La Paz, Bolivia, Diciembre de 1990).

9As an illustration, in 1950 there were 926,700 Latter-day Saints in the United States according to official Church accounts. In 1960 there were 1,422,700. These numbers form 0.6 percent and 0.8 percent of the United States population respectively. To be representative of the population, one would expect that, out of every hundred government or business officials working in Latin America, less than one would be a Mormon. The numbers required drop substantially if we consider how many American Mormons were actually active and, as a further restriction, how many served missions at the time, particularly in Latin America. At that point, the numbers would more likely be one in ten thousand. A simple perusal of the role of American expatriates in LDS history in Latin America illustrates that they are far more common than one in ten thousand—and even more common than one in a hundred. Mormons outweighed their presence in the population in terms of their advantage to government and business expansion in Latin America.

10For the American influence on the Bolivian economy, see
According to the Deseret Morning News 2005 Church Almanac, “Norval Jesperson, a member, who in 1962 became the director of the American-Bolivian Center in Cochabamba introduced the gospel to a number of Bolivians. . . . In 1963 Jesperson, along with two other Church members, Duane Wilcox and Dube Thomas, who lived in La Paz, helped the Church gain legal status.” In 1964 the first LDS branches were organized in Bolivia. But the work of these North Americans and others who followed them influenced the Church’s presence in Bolivia. They provided a connection between governmental and official circles that has proven important over time. Inevitably the social class and occupational perspectives of U.S. Mormons in Bolivia colored the attractions of Bolivians to Mormonism.

This foreign presence in Bolivia, including the Mormons, had a strong political character. The United States, as mentioned, was concerned about strong leftist influences after Bolivia’s 1952 revolution and 1953 agrarian reform. Once the military came to power in 1964, the United States poured in funding to counter leftist activities by providing development and a strong national government. It is important to note that, during this period, one of the most important social and political organizations was the Central Obrera Bolivia, the national labor organization, which had a strong leftist, militant cast. Furthermore in the late 1960s, Che Guevara entered the Bolivian lowlands to attempt to mount a people’s revolution. He was caught and killed in Nancahuazú by Bolivian forces with American support.

As a result of the association between Mormons and the U.S. business, aid, and diplomatic missions, it is not surprising that, during the 1980s, most LDS members with whom I spoke perceived a general association between Bolivian Church leaders and right-wing


politics.\footnote{For example, see René Cabrera, Regional Director, Presiding Bishopric’s Office, La Paz, Bolivia, interviewed July 1991 by David Knowlton, notes in my possession. See also John L. Hart, “Ideals Elevate Convert to New Heights,” \textit{Church News}, February 19, 1984, 7, is about Bolivian Mormon Jorge Leaño Rodríguez, early convert, prominent banker, and long-time Church official.}

This relationship among Mormonism, right-wing politics, and U.S. foreign assistance furthermore found another institutionalization in the ongoing relationship between the state of Utah (LDS Church headquarters and a state where the majority of the population is Mormon), and Bolivia. Programs included “Partners of the Americas,” “Sister Cities” arrangements, and Utah-based, non-governmental organizations that have received semi-official sponsorship from USAID and the Church, such as the Andean Children’s Foundation, Brigham Young University’s Benson Institute, Choice Humanitarian, a group dedicated to rural development and humanitarian service, and the interrelated activities of the Church’s Humanitarian Services Committee, among others.\footnote{Gregory S. Jones, “A Critique of the Andean Children’s Foundation” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1994). Much of this information is drawn from more than thirty years’ involvement with Bolivia. After serving a Bolivian mission (1974–76), as a student, then as a professional anthropologist, I have been involved with almost all of these organizations in one capacity or another.}

To understand why such relationships are perceived as right wing, it is important to note the flourishing development of leftist parties and social movements in Bolivia, contrasted with the dearth of a left in the United States. As a result, reformist Americans, even if they are liberal, would be seen as right wing.\footnote{C. F. Lesley Gill, \textit{Teetering on the Rim: Global Restructuring, Daily Life and the Armed Retreat of the Bolivian State} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).}

Of particular importance, USAID contracted with Utah State University to provide agricultural development assistance to Bolivia in the 1960s.\footnote{Zondag, \textit{The Bolivian Economy, 1952–65}.} Out of this program came three of the first four mission presidents in Bolivia: Keith Roberts (former dean of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Utah State University, had resided in Bolivia from 1965 to 1967 and had also done aid work in
Iran); Keith Allred, and Devere McAllister, both Utah State University faculty members who had also resided in Bolivia doing development work. In Bolivia, Roberts, Allred, and McAllister functioned as local Church leaders while fulfilling their professional obligations. Only Franklin K. Gibson, an Arizona attorney, and first of the first four presidents of the Bolivia Mission, had not worked for Utah State.

This connection between U.S. diplomatic, military, and development efforts in Bolivia and the Church became clear by the 1970s. When populist general Juan José Torres, representing leftist factions of the military, took over the government in a coup d'état in 1970, among many other actions, he threatened to ban the LDS Church from Bolivia, precisely because of its relationship with U.S. “imperialism” as understood in the direct and indirect interventions that were then part of U.S. policy. Torres was overthrown in 1971 by right-wing Colonel Hugo Banzer Suarez, affiliated with the Falange, the historically fascist Bolivian Socialist party. Ezra Taft Benson, as Church president, called Banzer, in a public meeting in Bolivia, “the best president Bolivia had ever had.”

Although the point never came up directly in documents or research materials, I cannot help suspecting that the overall anticommunist and right-wing politics of Church leaders like Benson, during the cold war period, also played a role in the Church’s becoming a target of the militant left. While Benson may be an outlier, he is only so because of his associations with the John Birch Society. The broadly rightist and anti-Marxist sentiments were widely shared by other General Authorities and led to similar associations between rightist lead-

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17For example, see Andes Mission, Manuscript History, March 31, 1967.

18This threat was commonly discussed in Bolivia among Mormons in 1974 while I was a missionary in the country.

19He made this statement on January 12, 1979, when rededicating Bolivia for missionary work, and this praise was commonly reported among members in La Paz where I did field work June-December 1979. See also Carlos Pedraja, “Historia de la Iglesia en Bolivia.” http://www.boliviamission.org/cgi-bin/downlog.cgi?action=download&doc=church_history_bolivia.doc (accessed September 24, 2006).
ers and the Church.\textsuperscript{20}

Under Banzer’s government, LDS Church membership continued to expand. But Mormonism also continued to be extremely controversial in Bolivian nationalist and leftist political and intellectual circles.\textsuperscript{21} At the time, many were concerned with what was called “the invasion of the sects.” There was a strong argument that Evangelical Protestant groups and Mormons were financed from the United States and were part of the general U.S. agenda to maintain political and economic hegemony over the region. Such an agenda included the domination of Bolivia’s Indian masses by “Euro-Bolivians” those of primarily European physical origin and culture.\textsuperscript{22} The separation between religion and politics, taken more or less for granted in the United States, was something that did not make sense within the Bolivian field of argument. As a result, the social reality of the Church’s growth in Bolivia was primary in these critics’ analysis. They saw a church strongly associated with the right wing and with United States governmental and business interests.

This is the broader context. However, we must still examine how the pattern of Church growth further contributed to making the LDS Church an ideologically valuable target for the FAL-ZW.

**LDS GROWTH IN BOLIVIA**

The initial LDS branches were established in 1964 in the cities of La Paz and Cochabamba almost simultaneously.\textsuperscript{23} Branches in the cities of Oruro and Santa Cruz soon followed. Growth was most rapid, however, in the city of La Paz; and that dynamic will be the focus of this paper because La Paz was where many of the political ideologies and actions against Mormonism developed. Furthermore, La

\textsuperscript{20}Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005). Although this topic permeates much of the book, including the fervent anti-Communist sentiments of Clare Middlemiss, McKay’s secretary, see esp. chap. 12, “Confrontation with Communism.”

\textsuperscript{21}Julio Córdova Villazón discusses some of these perceptions of non-Catholic religions in general, including Mormonism, in his excellent “Los Evangélicos.”

\textsuperscript{22}Fausto Reinaga’s *Tesis India* (La Paz, Bolivia: Ediciones PIB, 1971), is most instructive on these developments.

\textsuperscript{23}Andes Mission, Manuscript History, December 6, 7, 1964.
Paz has played a critical role in Bolivian politics because of its social conflicts. Situated in the densely populated northern altiplano above 3,000 meters, La Paz is not only the largest city in the nation with close to a million and a half inhabitants (almost a fifth of all Bolivians), it is also the center of the Mormon population. I do not have LDS membership figures for Bolivia’s different cities, but the LDS population can be substantiated by the location of Mormon stakes, a territorial unit that requires the presence of at least a few thousand members. By the end of 1991, the end of the period of guerrilla activity, Bolivia had eleven stakes, five (46 percent) of them in metropolitan La Paz.24

The next largest concentration of members was in the lowland boomtown of Santa Cruz, with three stakes (27 percent), followed by the valley city of Cochabamba, with two stakes (18 percent). Only one stake (9 percent) was in the altiplano city of Oruro, where Protestantism first established itself in late nineteenth-century Bolivia, in association with the area’s liberalism and mining.25

Nevertheless, this population pattern thoroughly links Mormonism with urban growth in each of these cities. La Paz manifests the difficulties between a dominant mestizo, Hispanic urban population and a massive immigrant population from the nearby Aymara-speaking altiplano that brought new cultural forms and politics into the city especially from the 1960s to the present.26

La Paz, the de facto capital of Bolivia and seat of government, grew substantially in the last half of the twentieth century, due to its relation with the densely populated Aymara-speaking rural area surrounding it. In 1960, some three years before Mormonism was le-

26See, for example, Fernando Calderón, Urbanización y etnicidad: el caso de La Paz (Cochabamba, Bolivia: CERES, 1984) or Godofredo Sandoval Z. and M. Fernanda Sostres, La Ciudad Prometida: pobladores y organizaciones sociales en El Alto (La Paz, Bolivia: ILDIS, 1989). The terms mestizo, Indian, and white are used in Bolivia in an ethnic, racial, and class sense. Although perceived in everyday life as important, the terms do not fit neatly into any of those categories. For more on the ethnicity issue, see Klein, Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society.
gally established in Bolivia, La Paz had a population of around 400,000. By 1970, this population had grown by 25 percent to around 500,000, by 58 percent in the subsequent decade to 790,000 in 1980, and by 67 percent in the following decade to 1,320,000 in 1990.\textsuperscript{27} During this period, La Paz, which had begun with 11.7 percent of the total national population, had increased its share to 18.1 percent in 1990.\textsuperscript{28} Thirty-eight percent of La Paz’s inhabitants originated outside the city in 1976; and 25.3 percent of the immigrants (64 percent) came from the nearby Aymara-speaking countryside.\textsuperscript{29} This immigration has formed the city’s central dynamic resulting in an ethnically complex, bilingual city, with dense and contradictory cultural politics. Most of the newcomers, although they may also speak Spanish, speak Aymara.\textsuperscript{30} This factor is not only important in the expansion of Mormonism but also in the growth of other non-Catholic religions, a flourishing range of social movements and other political organizations, and the development of the guerrilla challenge to Mormonism, among others. This urban growth provided the key possibility of Mormonism developing in the country at the same time it fostered the growth of the leftist movements, such as the FAL-ZW, that conflicted with it.

La Paz was built in a rather narrow river valley that drains the high altiplano. Initial urban growth occurred within the valley walls, with the result that primarily upper-class, white suburbs were to the south in the lower regions, while more lower-class, Indian neighborhoods were built to the north and along the valley’s steep slopes.\textsuperscript{31} Later growth, beginning in the 1960s but booming in the 1980s, took place above the edge of the valley on the altiplano, primarily in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 125.
\item Xavier Albó et al., \textit{Chukiyawu: La cara aymara de La Paz. II. Una odisea, buscar pega} (La Paz, Bolivia: CIPCA, 1982).
\item Ibid.; Fernando Calderón, \textit{Urbanización y etnicidad: el caso de La Paz} (Cochabamba, Bolivia: CERES, 1984); and Sandoval Z. and Sostres, \textit{La Ciudad Prometida}.
\item I use the ethnic terms that were common in Bolivia prior to the revolution of 1952 and which are once again coming into use, since they respond to the political issues I am trying to bring into focus—namely, the importance of how ethnicity and race were understood in socio-political and
\end{enumerate}
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suburb known as El Alto.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1900 the city of La Paz had a mere 58,015 inhabitants, divided almost completely along caste lines into 18,184 whites, 13,648 mestizos, and 26,183 Indians, marked by social, legal, and residential segregation.\textsuperscript{33} This situation changed dramatically with the revolution of 1952 and the subsequent agrarian reform in 1953. With the lifting of juridical caste restrictions (that limited where Indians could live and work), the division of agricultural land among the Indians, and the expansion of popular education to the Indian communities, a number of critical changes ensued. Immediately after the reforms, indigenous communities dedicated themselves to solidifying their hold on the land, although they also expanded to fill economic niches abandoned by elites in the regional market towns and even in the cities. After the reform, most whites abandoned the rural towns and countryside, moving first to regional cities, and then to La Paz.\textsuperscript{34} They were followed a little later by much of the traditional mestizo population. Thus, much of La Paz’s growth in the fifties can be attributed to whites and mestizos.

In comparison El Alto de La Paz grew by some 133.9 percent between 1976 and 1985. This period included the end of the Banzer dictatorship and its political economy. Severe difficulties emerged in the transition to democracy, including hyperinflation and high levels of unemployment.\textsuperscript{35} This period was also characterized by high Indian migration to La Paz. In 1950 El Alto had only 11,000 inhabitants. By 1976 it claimed 95,434, and by 1985 some 223,239 persons. By 1987

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\textsuperscript{32}Albó et al., Chukiyawu; Sandoval Z. and Sostres, \textit{La Ciudad Prometida}.

\textsuperscript{33}For La Paz’s population in 1900, see Olen E. Leonard, “La Paz, Bolivia: Its Population and Growth,” \textit{American Sociological Review} 13, no. 4 (August 1948): 452. For the social background of separation, see Klein, \textit{Bolivia}.

\textsuperscript{34}Albó et al., Chukiyawu; Judith Maria Buechler, “Peasant Marketing and Social Revolution” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1972); David A. Preston, \textit{Farmers and Towns: Rural-Urban Relations in Highland Bolivia} (Norwich, Eng: University of East Anglia, 1978).

\textsuperscript{35}Sandoval Z. and Sostres, \textit{La Ciudad Prometida}, 63.
its population was estimated at 356,514,\textsuperscript{36} making it the third or fourth largest city in its own right in Bolivia, depending on various population estimates. It is also a unique city because the vast majority of its residents come from rural, Indian origins. As a result, it is a natural extension of the geographically elevated (more Indian) neighborhoods of La Paz.

In short, the social and cultural dynamics of the city were dominated over the forty years between 1952 and 1992 by the collapse of the former system of relatively closed castes and the competition for social mobility, expressed in ethnic terms in a limited urban space that has suffered extreme economic crises during the same period.\textsuperscript{37} The city has a sedimented ethnic quality, making Indianness a dividing point of class and of the city’s politics. As a result, an organization’s relationship with Indians can be defining in giving it a presence and identity in Bolivian social life.

The first Mormon branch in La Paz was established in 1964 in the upper middle-class, white zone of Sopocachi (Branch I), where until recently the Church had its headquarters in its own office building, down the block from the Ministry of Defense, and around the corner from the U.S. ambassador’s residence.\textsuperscript{38} This siting also gave Mormonism a definite social position in the country. Its office building was a prominent symbol, marking what to many is a critical relationship between it, rightist military governments, and U.S. interests in the country.

Shortly afterward a branch was opened in the middle-class neighborhood of Miraflores (Branch II), near the Bolivian Pentagon (Estado Mayor). Both of these branch locations are important since a significant number of top Bolivian Mormon leaders have come from these upper-middle-class, white zones. They have imported their culture into Mormon life, giving a complex ethnic and sociopolitical cast to Mormonism’s existence in the cultural and economic politics of everyday Bolivian life.

A different kind of branch, La Paz III, the first with an ethnic character, was founded in August 1967. According to the mission his-

\begin{itemize}
\item[36]Ibid.
\item[38]Andes Mission, Manuscript History, December 6, 1964.
\end{itemize}
tory, “We started our first branch in the mission among pure Lamanites. . . . In December other Lamanite branches, La Paz IV and Juliaca, were opened.”

A critical dimension developed with this problematic conjoining of Mormon language/identity with Bolivian reality and discourse. To Mormons, the Lamanites are American Indians and are the descendants, according to the Book of Mormon, of Israelites on this continent. They are also a people upon whom Anglo Mormons have a particular obligation to bestow the gospel. As a result an elective affinity developed between Anglo paternalism and that of upper-class white Bolivians. In both cases and in ways that find scriptural support from the Book of Mormon, this relationship contained concepts of “civilizing” the Indian. It also fit into questions that the Bolivian political spectrum, particularly the right wing, posed concerning the ambivalent place of the Indian in national life. Furthermore, it served white and mestizo Bolivians to make a claim for legitimacy as Indians (and hence as Bolivians) in the face of an increasing Indian identity movement that denied Indianness to whites and mestizos. Mormons consider race in terms of descent, not in terms of cultural belonging.

As a result, Mormon ideas of Lamanite conflicted and contrasted with the notions of Indian resurgence and justification developed by the increasingly strong Indianist movement in Bolivia. The contrasting claims between the Book of Mormon as a reputed history

39Ibid., January 1, 1968. Juliaca, a city in Puno, Peru, on the other side of Lake Titicaca, was soon transferred to the Peruvian Mission.


41A large literature is developing on Indianism in Bolivia. An intro-
of the indigenous peoples in general and the Indianist movement’s claims to represent the specific Indian people of Bolivia, their history, and their claim to a place at the national table, seem irrevocably poised for conflict, just by the foundation of this branch and the way it fit in Bolivian and Mormon social reality.

La Paz Branch III, the first “Lamanite branch,” was located in the neighborhood of Munaypata, the primarily Indian section of the upper reaches of the valley. Branch IV was in the villas or unstable neighborhoods of the hillsides above Miraflores, particularly Villa Armonía, with its immigrants from southern Bolivia, most of them Quechua-speaking mestizos, in my experience, although numerous residents are Aymara speakers as well. It is important to note the rapid growth outside the upper-middle-class, white, and mestizo neighborhoods and into the poorer more Indian neighborhoods at a time these neighborhoods were beginning to expand rapidly.

In February 1968, Branch III was divided, and Branch V was formed, also in the upper area of the city. A month later in March 1968, Branch VI was established in the eventual boomtown in El Alto’s middle-class, mestizo town of Ciudad Satelite, and Branch VII in the “Indian” boom areas of Villa Ballivian and Alto Lima. With this step, the Church was poised to take advantage of the stupendous growth of this region in subsequent years.

By 1975, the branches in El Alto and the upper reaches of the city constituted 68 percent of the total membership of La Paz. While I do not have specific membership figures for the branches for the years between 1976 and the present, this pattern of growth has evidently continued. Three of the five La Paz stakes are located in this zone (La Paz Constitution, which includes the northern area of the city), with the other two stakes in El Alto. Furthermore, each of these latter two stakes includes substantial numbers of members in the villas, the poorer neighborhoods on the slopes. As a result, the actual...
number is probably higher.

Another dynamic of Mormon expansion in Bolivia appeared in October 1968 when missionaries began to work in the provincial town of Viacha (now practically a suburb of La Paz). Viacha is Aymara-speaking and, hence, Indian. By 1976, branches had been opened as well in the provincial, Aymara towns of Achacachi, Corocoro, Guaqui, Santiago de Huata, Patacamaya, and Puerto Acosta. In the 1960s, towns like these boomed, depending on their location in the marketing network that crossed the altiplano, as Indians moved out of rural communities to occupy the areas abandoned by mestizo and white elites following the 1953 agrarian reform. Despite what would seem to be a propitious area for Mormon growth, given the rapidly changing social environment, missionary work has been difficult at best here, logging only modest success. Nevertheless, these areas, along with Branches III, VII, and XII of La Paz, were the focus of active proselyting in the Aymara language. Significantly, other than in the case of Huacuyo and Compi, Mormon proselytizing has been unsuccessful among the dispersed rural population of the Aymara-speaking altiplano, although other non-Catholic churches, such as the Seventh-day Adventists, have been phenomenally successful here during the same period. The LDS Church remains a church of Bolivia’s largest cities. Although its main presence is in the poorer, more Indian neighborhoods, it is primarily Spanish speaking.

**Peculiarities of Mormonism in Bolivia**

This conflict between the use of Indian languages and being a Spanish-speaking Church is one of the contradictions of Mormonism in Bolivia that sociologist Juan Córdova Villazon discovered in his 1989 survey of El Alto. He found in this booming region of primarily Indian background that “the Mormons predominate in the poorest sector, ([where they are] 4 percent [of the total]) and in the middle, comfortable class ([where they are] 3 percent [of the total]). They almost do not have a presence in the middle sectors (1 percent).”

He also found that “the Mormons have [of all the non-Catholic religions

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43David C. Knowlton, “Protestantism and Social Change in a Rural Aymara Community” (M.A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1982).

44Córdova, “Los Evangélicos,” 84. Since Córdova’s thesis is not easily
surveyed] the second highest percentage of Aymara (12 percent) and the highest percentage of Spanish on this level (24 percent), and the lowest percentage of bilingualism of all the confessions.” He interprets this counter-intuitive fact in the following way:

The Mormon Church follows the contradictory tendency of the socio-economic sectors that compose it. . . . In terms of language it concentrates on those who speak Aymara or Spanish, with a low percentage of bilingualism. As we have shown, their services are carried out solely in Spanish. This confession represents a channel toward westernization. This is verified if we notice that in their deep linguistic identities the Mormons tend toward the usage of Spanish. The elevated percentage of Aymara speakers on an external level is the expression of sectors who find themselves entering the process of occidentalization yet they still have a relatively free space for speaking their maternal tongue.

By 1991, there were officially 71,000 members of the Mormon Church in Bolivia. If we apportion them according to the percentages derived from the presence of stakes, this would give us roughly 32,270 Mormons in La Paz, or a relative 2.4 percent of the total urban population. Of these, some 19,364 were found in the upper reaches of the city and in El Alto. For El Alto alone, this would come to 12,908 mem-

available in the United States, I provide the original text behind my translation. “Los mormones predominan entre el sector pauperizado ([donde son] 4% [del total]) y en el estrato medio ‘acompado’ ([donde son] 3% [del total]). Casi no tienen presencia entre el sector medio (1%).”

45Ibid., 129: “Los Mormones tienen el segundo porcentaje más elevado de aymara (12%) y el más alto porcentaje de castellano en este nivel (24%), y el más bajo porcentaje de bilingüismo de todas las confesiones.”

46Ibid. “La Iglesia Mormona sigue la tendencia contradictoria de los sectores socio-económicos que la componen . . . en el aspecto idiomático concentra a quienes se expresan en aymara o en castellano, con bajo porcentaje de bilingüismo. Según hemos comprobado, los cultos se llevan sólo en castellano. Esta confesión representa un canal hacia la occidentalización. Esto se verifica si constamos que en las identidades lingüísticas profundas, los mormones tienden hacia el uso del castellano. El elevado porcentaje de Aymara parlantes en el nivel externo es la expresión de sectores que encontrándose en el proceso de occidentalización, aún tienen un espacio relativamente ‘libre’ como para expresarse en su lengua materna.”
bers, or a rough relative percentage of 3.58 percent, distinctly higher than the distribution in the entire urban zone. Interestingly, Córdova’s survey found that 3 percent of the population of El Alto claimed to be Mormon.  

In Córdova’s sample, only 66.3 percent of the heads of household in El Alto claimed to be Catholic. This left an astounding 33.7 percent claiming other religious affiliations. Of this total, 7 percent were Assembly of God, 4 percent Adventists, 4 percent Jehovah’s Witnesses, 2 percent Nazarenes, 1 percent Quakers, 2 percent members of “Dios Boliviana,” 3 percent Baptists, 1 percent Holiness, 3 percent others, and 3 percent not responding. Thus, besides the LDS Church, other groups have also grown in Bolivia over a brief period of time to constitute a significant portion of the population. Yet significantly, Mormonism shows a different class profile than these other groups within El Alto.

GUERRILLA ATTACKS:
FRENTE ARMADA DE LIBERACIÓN ZARATE WILLKA

In 1989, when the Church in Bolivia had grown by a stunning 37.5 percent in a brief two-year period, two Anglo missionaries, Elders Ball and Wilson, were gunned down by assassins who awaited their arrival home at night in a working-class neighborhood near the city’s main cemetery. According to their mission president, Steven R. Wright, the guerrillas had carefully studied the movements of the missionaries and had even taken the missionary lessons in preparation for the assassination. The missionaries appear to have been a carefully chosen target as part of a broader guerrilla agenda, since the guerrillas had previously bombed two chapels (in the neighborhood of Pampajasi—above Villa Armonía—and the second near the ceme-

47Ibid., 67.
48Ibid., 28.
49Ibid., 67.
50Note that this growth rate was the highest in South America during that two-year period. The Mormon membership for the continent as a whole grew 29.1 percent. These calculations are based on members from sequential Deseret News and Church Almanac for 1989–90, 1991–92.
51Knowlton, “Missionaries and Terror.”
52Steven R. Wright, interviewed by David Knowlton, spring 1992, notes in my possession.
tery where they later assassinated the missionaries). Both of these areas are zones of Aymara migrants to the city.

A half-hour or so after the assassination, the guerrillas provided a handwritten manifesto to the nation’s dailies.\textsuperscript{53} It read:

The violation of our national sovereignty cannot remain unpunished. The Yankee invaders who come to massacre our peasant brothers are warned the same as their internal lackeys. The poor have no other path than to rise up in arms. “Our hatred is impluscable and our war is to death.” Zárate Willka Armed Liberation Front.\textsuperscript{54}

At the time, FAL-ZW was primarily known for a botched 1989 attempt to bomb the motorcade of U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz, in protest of U.S.-financed attacks on the peasant farmers who grew coca, which others transformed into cocaine. Initially then, the manifesto seems to refer directly to U.S. pressures against the production of coca and the violent repression of coca producers’ protests by military and police forces.

It is important to note that FAL-ZW was but one of a range of guerrilla organizations operating in Bolivia at the time and that it was building on a history of guerrilla movements, such as the ELN (the National Liberation Army), which was active in the 1970s, following the killing of the international revolutionary Che Guevarra in the country. The Indianist Katarista movement developed its own guerrilla organization, the EGTK (The Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army), which became strongly active in the years following the FAL-ZW’s attacks on Mormonism and which builds on some of the same ideological arguments as the FAL-ZW.\textsuperscript{55} The EGTK is described as follows by the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base of the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism in Oklahoma City (http://

\textsuperscript{53}“Dos misionares mormones norte americanos asesinades por gropo teroriste,” \textit{Presencia} (La Paz, Bolivia), 25 de Mayo de 1989.

\textsuperscript{54}Since this document is not easily available, I provide the original: “La violación de nuestra soberanía nacional no puede quedar impune, los invasores yanquis que vienen a masacrar a nuestros hermanos campesinos están advertidos al igual que sus lacayos internos. A los pobres no nos queda otro camino que alzarnos en armas. ‘Nuestro odio es implacable y nuestra guerra es a muerte.’ FAL Zárate Willka.” I do not know the source of the quotation embedded in the manifesto.

The Tupac Katari Guerrilla Movement, also known by its Spanish acronym EGTK, was an indigenous Bolivian terrorist entity. EGTK members believed that Bolivia should be returned to its pre-colonial status, in terms of its form of government, economic system and social structure. EGTK hoped to decrease Western influence in Bolivia and increase the indigenous Indian populace’s power over the country’s culture and priorities. With this objective in mind, EGTK conducted terrorist attacks, frequently low-level bombings, of power pylons, oil pipelines, government facilities, and missionary churches. In addition to frequent attacks on domestic power and oil facilities, EGTK bombed several Mormon churches within Bolivia, and also bombed a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) motor pool.

In other words, the FAL-ZW was part of a context of militant organization and mobilization. It built on a radical leftist culture and history of guerrilla movements in Bolivia and is related to a history of labor struggles and Indian organizing. This culture was particularly strong in the nation’s public universities and helped give meaning and purpose to the experience of immigration and cultural struggle by Indian migrants to the cities and their children. As Iturri Salomón notes, the radicalization of Indian organization led to a struggle against the Bolivian state as well as the symbolic, cultural, and religious organizations that seemed to maintain the Indian in a position

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57 It should be noted that a number of militant groups chose Mormon property and personnel as targets in Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Colombia during the late 1980s and early 1990s. That they have done so, and that Mormons have continued to be threatened in Colombia into the present century, illustrates the value of Latter-day Saints as a target.
58 For information on the Bolivian left, see Guillermo Lora, Historia del Movimiento Obrero en Bolivia: Lucha revolucionaria de los 60 (La Paz, Bolivia: Editorial La Muela del Diablo, 1991); as an introduction to the literature on contemporary social movements, see Fernando Calderon and Alicia Szmukler, La política en las calles (Cochabamba, Bolivia: CERES, 2000).
of weakness and dependency. To this I would add the issue of the U.S. presence in Bolivian life and its role in subordinating the interests of the Indianists.

The 1980s led to a strengthening of the Indian movement, a widening dispersion of its ideology and debates around it, and to increased feelings of frustration on the part of many Bolivians. After the struggles to wrest democratic control from the military dictatorships, the country went through a period of extreme economic instability and hyperinflation. At this time, the United Left Party (UDP), a coalition of many leftist groups, governed in the figure of President Hernán Siles Zuazo. The UDP was unable to bring the promised social change that the left, and particularly the Indian parties of the left, desired. The UDP’s collapse and the subsequent rise to power in 1985 of the old oligarchy in the form of the National Revolutionary Party (MNR) and its shift to neoliberalism, following the demands of multilateral agencies and the United States, left many of the left very frustrated with electoral politics. The left increasingly felt little possibility of obtaining its ends through the electoral process, particularly given the economic and political power of the United States and the multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, in which Washington plays an important role.

Bolivian mass culture has been very sensitive to U.S. interference in its affairs and to the broad range of pressures loosely defined as “imperialism.” It was (and is) not uncommon to see banners flying from the National University of San Andrés saying “Yanquis out,” or some such slogan. At the time of the missionaries’ assassination, U.S. pressure against Bolivia’s coca production was intensely felt and very visible. The relatively tiny city of La Paz had one of the largest North American delegations on the continent and its affairs were widely reported in the press, including at times violent encounters between the U.S.-trained anti-narcotics force and coca producers.

The connection with Mormonism, though, seems stronger than merely a weak association with the broad label of imperialism. The FAL-ZW deliberately chose to attack Anglo Mormon missionaries. Besides the guerrillas’ attempt to bomb Schultz’s motorcade, they had already attacked the National Congress Building, bombed the two Mormon chapels already mentioned in La Paz, and subsequently bombed one in Santa Cruz in July 1989, and threatened the mayor of

El Alto with death unless he closed the area’s Mormon chapels. I also received threats that I took seriously and fled from Bolivia, interrupting my fieldwork. In short, the FAL-ZW dedicated a substantial portion of its entire guerrilla effort to attacking Mormons specifically, something that is quite rare in the history of radical guerrilla organizations in Latin America.

The FAL-ZW generally was described as relatively ill-trained and unusual in its often confusing ideology. The Bolivian daily Última Hora characterized FAL-ZW ideology as “nourished by a strange amalgam of Marxism, Maoism, and Indigenism.” This “strange amalgam,” however, was at the time very common in the popular salons and cafes of La Paz among those involved in education and in the universities and normal schools. The popularity of this ideology was enhanced by voluminous newspaper reports on the latest activities of the Shining Path in Peru, particularly when classmates told of the excitement that movement has caused among social science majors in Peru.

Colleagues in Bolivia indicated that Zárate Willka originated among public school teachers and college students, particularly sociology majors, at the University of San Andres. Furthermore, those arrested, following intense U.S. pressure and FBI assistance, including a reward of US$500,000 offered for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the assassinations and who were publicly identified were affiliated with the University Mayor de San Andres Department of Sociology and with Indianist parties.

These two categories, students at the University Mayor of San Andres and normal school graduates were representative of an increasing number of second-generation immigrants to La Paz from the campo. They have attained a certain mobility within the city, manifested in their attempt to attain professional standing, yet find their mobility blocked by the lack of jobs and the relatively low-salaried positions for these highly trained persons whose subject matter involves

60 Like the other guerrilla group that dedicated much effort to attacking Mormons, the Lautaro Youth Movement in Chile, the FAL-ZW is almost not studied. See, for example, the bibliography provided by the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupId=4321 (accessed June 9, 2005).

61 Knowlton, “Missionaries and Terror.”
a critical perspective on the very constitution of society.62

The Bolivian newspaper Hoy responded to this structural niche in expressing then-common fears that FAL-ZW might somehow be associated with the Peruvian Shining Path. In part, this was because the FAL-ZW operated within and seemed to direct its efforts toward the so-called marginal populations of the villas and El Alto. The paper expressed much ambivalence about this sector of La Paz, but at the same time described its structural situation:

The urban marginal zones of La Paz can be a propitious “soup of generation” for their intentions to destabilize the system. . . . The city of El Alto could offer them that opportunity, given their peculiar preferences, for which the threat to the mayor of El Alto and the assassination of the two North American Mormon missionaries in a popular zone of La Paz seem to coincide with our hypothesis and the evident tendency of the group Zárate Willka to carry out its actions in marginal urbanizations, more than in the countryside. . . . In Bolivia El Alto offers them this possibility, because of its proximity to an anarchized university and various high schools which function in extremely bad conditions, “objective factors” for the surge of an urban guerrilla war with its members recruited from these educational centers, according to the experts. . . . At the same time, El Alto and the marginal zones where groups of young students live, who have only recently been torn from their peasant roots in precarious conditions and with difficulties finding work, and withstanding the rejection of the society that is installed in the city, can be organized into the principal center of recruitment for the purposes of a guerrilla war or urban terrorism.63

One of the issues fueled by this structural bind concerned eth-
nic identity. As noted above, daily life in La Paz has been marked by the collapse of the former juridical system of quasi-castes—such as Indian, mestizo, and white—that manifested itself both in laws and in practices of social exclusion. The structures of inequality and the labels remain, as do the important indexical markers of indigenous communities and indigenous languages spoken by the parents and relatives of many of these young people. The system of stratification that operates in Bolivia is according to perceived ethnicity: whites at the top and Indians at the bottom. This pattern was strong in the late 1980s and continues to the moment, although Indians have risen and challenged the hegemony of whites and mestizos. Nevertheless the system of stratification operates daily through discrimination in terms of dress, language choice, festival participation, employment, and medical services.

This inevitable issue in La Paz life is constantly part of most discussions and pervades the horizons of most citizens’ consciousness. How one understands one’s own ethnic identity in an ambivalent structural and ideological position is a burning question for Paceños (residents of La Paz).

Out of this quandary developed the vital Indianist movement of revitalization, including the construction of a urban Indian identity as critically Bolivian and necessary for national life and progress. A burgeoning literature has arisen on which the young can cut their
teeth. At the moment Indianism is very strong in Bolivia. But in the 1980s, it was growing and was very strong in working class and poor neighborhoods of rural origin such as in El Alto, although it did not have the official power and legitimacy it now does.

The role of indigenous religion in the face of the onslaught of sects from the West, especially the United States, has been much discussed. Many argue that foreign sects destroy necessary elements of an already eroded indigenous identity. This discussion is particularly critical because many of the organizers of Indianist syndicates (unions), etc. have a background in non-Catholic religions, such as Methodism. These syndicates, unified in the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB), have become a critical force in bringing down recent governments and are led by Felipe Ovispe, a former guerrilla in the revolutionary Indianist EGTK. Álvaro García Linero, elected as vice president in 2005 in the Indianist national government, is also a former guerrilla in the EGTK. These groups came into prominence after the FAL-ZW was broken; however, they shared the basic Indianist perspective and concern about foreign and national organizations as inimical to Indian culture and life.

Issues of Indianism are also important for many converts to Mormonism and have become part of the socio-cultural politics of Mormon existence. One response is to note that the Book of Mormon provides an Indian identity that has the virtue of not being affiliated with any particular local community and thus is beyond Bolivian systems of stratification. It comes with value provided by the pinnacle of the developed world and modernity, the United States. The reality of this identification is strongly felt by many LDS members who rewrite their indigenous past to fit Mormon mythic canons with the purpose of legitimating the Book of Mormon with its promise of future

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66 Barre, Ideologías indigenistas y movimientos indios.

67 I vividly remember one long and vital discussion about the nature of indigenous spirituality, particularly in the context of its challenge by Mormonism and Protestantism, in 1985 in a comedor popular off the plaza Isabel La Católica in La Paz, with a group of young, self-styled Indian intellectuals. They strongly felt that Mormonism was a clear and present danger to indigenous identity.

revindication as their sacred history. This strategy became clear to me when I spoke at a fireside in La Paz, Bolivia, in a working-class class ward, about the relative dearth of archeological evidence for the Book of Mormon. The negative reaction by numerous people in the audience indicated the importance they assigned to the Book of Mormon as “their” history. A Bolivian LDS archeologist has also written works for the Mormon audience arguing that the Book of Mormon makes sense of Bolivia’s archeology and that the ruins of high civilizations there are Book of Mormon sites where people can find their faith validated.

Córdova, in light of his 1989 survey, argues this idea more concretely. Referring to the fact that Mormonism seems to draw its adherents from the lower socioeconomic strata, yet has very low indices of bilingualism and uses Spanish predominantly, he argues that one has to understand this distribution of Mormons in terms of the symbolic and practical offerings of Mormonism to these populations. He argues that Mormonism presents a set of symbols and attitudes that make reference to a “North American and middle class life style”—including the Book of Mormon in the way it is read—which separates Mormonism from other non-Catholic religions.

[The Mormon’s] “luxurious” churches, their sports grounds, their liberal social practices, their emphasis on the nuclear family, etc., everything points to “upward social mobility” anchored in the popular urban environment. Their practical offerings are composed of a set of personal contacts with bourgeois strata of the city of La Paz which permits, from time to time, access to sources of jobs and some scholarships.

This is the same process that is verified in the numerous young people who attend this church from time to time. It deals with a religious path of cultural differentiation from their Aymara background. . . . We can say hypothetically that the middle comfortable stratum sees in this pair of offerings dominated by their symbolic pole, a religious answer to their desires for social mobility and a distancing from their poor Aymara surroundings. We find a search for social cultural differentiation from the surroundings. On the other hand, the impoverished sector is oriented by these offerings but dominated by their single practice. In a search of alternatives for survival, the most depressed sectors attempt to find economically in the dissident confessions a “network of
mutual assistance” that can reduce the weight of the crisis.69

This pattern, furthermore, fits into a context of numerous discussions and debates about the nature of modernity, rationality, knowledge, epistemology, and ontology, fueled by the relatively recent and rapid spread of mass education due to a massive indigenous movement to obtain it. Anthropologist Juan Ossio observes that, in Peru, the growth of the New Israel offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventists and the Shining Path guerrilla movements both stemmed from popular attempts to appropriate the symbols and history of the enlightenment and modernity for their own social ends.70 The case is similar for Bolivia where popular discussion struggles with these issues, in terms of an ideological competition by numerous proselyting groups—political, educational, pop-cultural, and religious—to comprehend the world and articulate a strategy in the face of its confusing and contradictory reality.

When FAL-Zárate Willka denounced the “gringos who come to lie to the poor and humble” in their letter threatening the mayor of El Alto with death if he did not close the Mormon chapels, they strongly connected their attacks on Mormons with this situation of ideological struggle and the role they saw Mormons taking. This tie is strength-

69 Córdova, “Los Evangélicos,” 84–85. Because of the difficulty in obtaining the original text in the United States I provide the original Spanish: “Sus templos ‘lujosos’, los ambientes deportivos, las prácticas sociales de corte liberal, su énfasis en la familia nuclear, etc., todo apunta al ‘ascenso social’ tan anclado en el ámbito urbano-popular. La oferta ‘práctica’ está constituida por un conjunto de contactos personales con estratos burgueses de la ciudad de La Paz que permiten, excepcionalmente, el acceso a fuentes de trabajo y algunas becas.

“Es el mismo proceso que se verifica en los numerosos jóvenes que temporalmente asisten a esta confesión. Se trata de un camino ‘religioso’ de diferenciación cultural con su origen aymara . . . podemos decir hipotéticamente que el estrato medio ‘acomodado’ ve en este par de ofertas dominadas por su polo simbólico, una respuesta RELIGIOSA a sus anhelos de ascenso social y distanciamiento de su entorno aymara y pobre. Se trata de la búsqueda de una diferenciación socio-cultural del medio. En cambio, el sector pauperizado se orienta por estas ofertas, pero dominadas por su sola práctica.

70 Juan Ossio, Violencia estructural en el Perú, antropología (Lima, Perú: Asociación Peruana de Estudios e Investigación para la Paz, 1990).
ened when one notices that one of the persons charged with the missionaries’ assassination, Susana Zapana Hanover, was a former member of the Mormon Church. Hers was one of the early families that joined in Branch VIII, the hillside villas just above Sopocachi. 71

WHY MORMONS SPECIFICALLY?

But, why did FAL-Zárate Willka specifically choose to attack Mormons when there are other religions proselyting in the same neighborhood that have greater numbers of members? In 1992 the Bolivian National Census calculated that some 10 percent of the population was Protestant. 72 In contrast, the LDS Church claimed only 1 percent of the almost 7 million Bolivians for that date. 73 Some of these, such as the Assemblies of God, tended to use their association with the United States as an important element in attracting converts 74 and were also controversial at the popular level. Nevertheless, none of them had or have as tight an association with the U.S. government and other American symbols as the Mormons.

The LDS Church, during the 1970s and 1980s, undertook a massive building program that constructed relatively elegant chapels of white cinderblock with cast-brass lettering in most neighborhoods. While I do not have the details for construction of chapels and their location, one index of the presence of chapels is the total number of congregational units per national population. In 1987 there was one Mormon unit per 50,000 Bolivians—substantially fewer in metropolitan La Paz. In contrast, Brazil in 1987 had one unit per 271,000 persons, and the rapidly growing Ecuador had one unit per 101,941 persons. Furthermore, if we calculate that each mission in Bolivia had around 180 missionaries, then there were 360 for the total country, or

71 Ethnographic sources from the former Branch VIII have established this relationship.

72 Clifton L. Holland, comp., “Programa Latinoamericano de Estudios Socioreligiosos” (“The Latin American Program on Socioreligious Studies”) Data Base on Religion in the Americas, www.prolades.org (accessed June 24, 2002). Most Evangelicals, but not all, are Pentecostals, but the most common umbrella term in English-language scholarship on Latin America is “Protestant.”


one per every 17,222 persons, compared with one per 26,867 in Ecuador and one per 55,556 in Colombia. In La Paz the density of missionaries was greater. Since most missionaries in the 1980s were North Americans, they formed the most significant population of North Americans working in these expanding neighborhoods of migrants. To hundreds of thousands of Bolivians, LDS missionaries are the only U.S. citizens they have ever met. None of the other religious groups, even though more numerous, had such a strong public presence in their buildings as the Mormons, nor did they have as visible and numerous a corps of foreign missionaries.

Steven Wright, the Bolivian mission president in the late 1980s, told me that he warned Church headquarters in Salt Lake City that he had more missionaries than places for them to work. During those years of economic adjustment, following the hyper-inflation of 1985, Bolivia was enjoying one of the highest growth rates of any area in South America.

Furthermore none of the other religious groups had as strong a connection with upward social mobility and the clear rejection of Aymara identity, as commonly understood, coupled with the association with Bolivian and foreign elites. These factors indicate the ideological and social pressure that Mormon proselyting was placing on these neighborhoods of migrants. I argue, consequently, that these factors were important triggers in FAL-Zárate Willka’s decision to target the Mormon Church in its ideological/political campaign. Such a relationship forces us to reconsider our definition of politics to include religious issues, such as those raised by the growth of Mormonism in this particular social, ideological, and economic context.

Although the attacks on the LDS Church had ended by the 1990s, it is still important to understand the ways in which the trajectory of the militant left and that of the LDS Church intersected. If nothing else, it helps us comprehend the social locations of the international Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the dynamics of its growth. Since then, after a brief regression in growth, Mormonism has continued to grow strongly in this landlocked Andean country. The left has taken a different path—that of attacking the structures of neoliberalism. Increasingly the left sets the agenda of the country’s future, including the context in which the LDS Church will exist and grow in the country.

75Wright, interview, spring 1992.

*Reviewed by Trent D. Stephens*

There comes a time in the life of almost all thinking persons when they experience a clash of faith and fact. The clash may come early or late, may occur often or seldom, and may be minor or profound. Unfortunately, those who experience their first such clash relatively late in life and for whom the clash is profound tend to feel completely isolated and alone. It seems to be a common experience that individuals encountering such a clash believe that their experience is uncommon, even unique. They often feel that they have nowhere to turn, no one in whom to confide, no one with whom to share a common experience. They frequently turn to ecclesiastical leaders, who all too often don’t have a clue and further have no idea where to refer the person for help, even if they realize the person actually needs help. They may turn to the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, which gives directions to ecclesiastical leaders on how to obtain professional help for legal matters, psychological problems, marriage problems, problems of abuse, and financial problems. But nowhere does it offer advice on what to do with a person who has an intellectual problem. The best advice seems to be “from such turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5). Unfortunately, the rejoinder that is both accurate and all too often appropriate is, “That may be easy for you to say.”

As I read the chapter, “Beginnings,” in Duwayne R. Anderson’s book, *Farewell to Eden: Coming to Terms with Mormonism and Science*, my heart was broken. I felt so sorry for the not uncommon plight of this young intellectual who wanted so desperately to know the truth. He described his all too familiar life of growing up in a family where the truth, though idealized and given lip service, was all too often shunned or
moved into the shadows of “things we don’t talk about.” Such families often have a wayward, intellectual, black sheep, such as Duwayne’s Uncle Marlo, who has a Ph.D. in geology and who seldom comes up in conversation, and then only as one who is lost from the fold.

Anderson states, “My life had been planned for me” (xiv): mission, marriage, BYU. It was after graduating from BYU that he “decided, for the first time, to read the Bible from cover to cover. This was one of the most disturbing experiences in my life, for the Old Testament is a book filled with the most unimaginable inhumanity and violent crime I could have anticipated” (xvi). He then goes on to describe a small portion of the “cruelty and debauchery” outlined in, for example, Numbers 31. I must confess that I was a bit startled at Anderson’s obvious shock. I know that people can grow up in intellectual isolation, and I admit to not paying a lot of attention to the people around me (my wife reminds me of this defect in my personality quite regularly), but how can an intelligent person grow up, go to school, and serve a mission without ever reading Numbers 31, along with the rest of the Bible?

The next step in Anderson’s saga, unfortunately, was not surprising to me. Anderson made an appointment with his bishop. “The discussion with the bishop was very troubling.” The bishop was no help at all. Furthermore, “the stake president repeated the bishop’s answer.” Anderson “withdrew in mental agony” as he imagined the bloody atrocities committed by the Israelites. He stated, “For the first time in my life. I was drawing to [sic] the conclusion that my ecclesiastical leaders were unable to deal with a serious question. They seemed totally blindsided by the issues, as if they had either never read the Old Testament or had never put any thought into it” (xviii). I wish that every leader in the Church would read at least this chapter of Farewell to Eden. This problem is real, it seriously affects the lives of thousands of people, and it isn’t going to go away by being ignored.

Unable to find someone with whom to have a reasonable, intelligent conversation about his concerns, Duwayne Anderson, following an all-too-common path, drifted away from the Church. His connections to the Church, however, also following a common and predictable path, remained. He explored websites where other disaffected intellectuals discussed Church matters and often vented their frustration. He read some of the common stock of “anti-Mormon” literature. This literature not only addressed the history of the Mormon-science interface but the historicity of the Church itself. For example, Anderson stated, “The most immediate thing I learned from Brodie [No Man Knows My History] were the many details about Joseph Smith and church history that the church ignored, glossed over, or denied” (xxii).

The more he read the more alienated from the Church he felt. Every other intellectual with whom he interacted seemed to have had the same experience. He came to realize that his experience was not unique and concluded that “many others like us” (any thinking person) would ul-
timately follow the same path. The only people who remained active members of the Church must be either idiots or liars. Anderson concluded: “For the skeptical and scientific, the evidence is clear, and the jury has reached its verdict; [as an example] the Book of Mormon is a product of a 19th century author . . .” (286) Therefore, any one who still believes in the Book of Mormon and, by extension, in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not skeptical and is consequently unscientific. That is not an uncommon conclusion for one who has taken the path that Anderson has followed.

The bulk of *Farewell to Eden* is also, unfortunately quite predictable. The first chapters deal with the differences between science and Mormonism, as expressed primarily by the leaders of the Church, who are, for the most part, untrained in the sciences. Chapter 1, “What Is Mormonism?” provides a twenty-six-page thumbnail sketch of Mormon history with an emphasis on “the uncompromising requirement within the LDS Church of accepting and following the teachings of the church’s prophets and leaders” (8). Anderson includes a fourteen-point list of “Fundamentals in Following the Prophet,” by Elder Ezra Taft Benson in 1980 (10). He also quotes from President Thomas S. Monson: “Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it” (20). The remaining chapters cover issues of complexity, cosmology, geology, biology, and the Book of Mormon. Most of what is presented there is not particularly new or unique. Most of the book seems to be directed toward the uninformed, whether inside or out of the church. The absence of a bibliography is a major flaw in this book. The list of “Suggested Readings” at the end of each chapter looks more like high school reading assignments than serious references addressing the meat of the subject. The paucity of references to recent, responsible works on the topic of science and Mormonism is particularly conspicuous.


It’s also unfortunate that Anderson is unaware of Wootton’s 1955 and 1990 studies. Most members of the Church appear equally unaware of this chapter in Mormon history. The basis for Wootton’s research was the 1949 edition of *American Men of Science* and the 1990 (17th) edition of *American Men and Women of Science*. These books provide the premier
listings and biographies of U.S. scientists with advanced degrees. Wootton’s study found that Utah (at 1,886 per million, 32 percent above the second place state) led the nation, with Idaho (at 1,421 per million) as second, in the number of scientists listed in the 1949 edition per million of the 1900 white population, which was matched for the average age of those listed in American Men of Science. Again, in the 1990 edition of American Men and Women of Science, Wootton found that Utah (at 1,658 per million, 21 percent above the second-place state, Delaware) led the nation by state of per capita birth of those listed in relation to the white population of 1950 (Idaho had dropped to sixth).

In contrast, Anderson chose the SESTAT study conducted by the National Science Foundation, which includes scientists and engineers with bachelors’ degrees or greater. This study looked at the birth state of scientists and engineers normalized to the number born in the state who have a college degree. Anderson also normalized his data to 2000 census data rather than normalizing them to birth data from fifty years in the past. Wootton used the fifty-year-old data because they matched the average age of those listed in American Men and Women of Science, thus comparing the birth data of scientists with the population at the time they were born. Anderson, by using 2000 census data, does not seem to realize that newborns don’t do a lot of science.

It is also unfortunate that Anderson is not aware of Wootton’s studies for other reasons. Anderson says that when he receives a survey form, he simply tosses it into the trash. Most of us do the same. Indeed, surveys with a 15 percent return are thought to be successful. In that regard, Wootton’s responses are remarkable: 63 percent response to his 1955 survey and 65 percent to his 1992 survey.

In his Chapter 5, Anderson argues that there is a big difference between the age of the earth as represented in the scriptures and in science. Wootton stated in Saints and Scientists that “no geologists [in his survey] . . . came in against the ‘hundreds of millions of years’” when asked about the age of the earth. In Chapter 6, Anderson pointed out that the scriptures are not in agreement with the biological data concerning evolution. Wootton found in his study that, “While most Utah biologists are Strong Mormons, we found none who believed in Special Creation as against evolution.” Wootton’s survey defined Strong Mormon as “Mormons who responded to the questionnaire that they have convictions that are either Strong or Very Strong that Joseph Smith was inspired by God in the formation of the Mormon Church [81 percent of the LDS scientists in the 1992 survey listed themselves as Very Strong and an additional 4 percent listed themselves as Strong].”

In Anderson’s “Final Thoughts,” he states, “It should be clear by now that many key doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are inconsistent with science. . . . It’s difficult to see how any church could have its foundational material at more odds with what we know from science” (311). Anderson apparently sees scientists as invinci-
ble, unbiased harvesters of knowledge wielding Occam’s razor to cut through the chaff and identify infallible kernels of truth. Unfortunately, nature, human history, and theology are all much more complicated than that. Not only are there data to obtain and sift but there is the much larger issue of the interpretation of those data. Occam’s razor falls short all too frequently. As a result, there is a lot of room for faithful scientists who do not have to be idiots or liars to reconcile their faith with their scientific experience.

Anderson states, “So awful are the prospects of such treatment [being branded as apostates and being cast out] at the hands of friends, family, and associates that many intellectuals within the church simply cannot bear to face the trials” (316). I totally agree with Anderson’s perception. What a tragedy when this occurs—as it does all too often. “Not surprisingly, many members choose to keep quiet and maintain outward appearances rather than risk the pain and anguish of the church’s wrath and the feeling they have betrayed and lost their families” (318). I agree completely with this assessment as well, but I also know that there are many of us who are not afraid to speak up for what we believe to be true, both in science and religion. I applaud Duwayne Anderson for his efforts.

What is truly unfortunate, and what is brought into sharp focus by Farewell to Eden is that uninformed bishops and stake presidents don’t have access to a list of scientists who are strong, active members of the Church when they encounter a young person who discovers one or more of these apparent conflicts between science and religion. If young people (or older people, for that matter), could be directed to a member of the Church who is an active, productive scientist, they could at least be assured that they are not alone in their quest for answers, that many, many people have taken the same path when confronted for the first time with a clash between faith and fact, and that there are paths that lead to reconciliation rather than to despair and alienation.

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Reviewed by D. Jeffrey Meldrum

In a time when repeated legislations and judications over the imposition of intelligent design in high school science classrooms capture news
headlines and when animated exchanges between “evolutionists” and “anti-evolutionists” occupy the editorial pages of local papers, a surprising number of Latter-day Saints are essentially ignorant of the Church’s official position on the fundamental matters at issue. This lack of information applies even to reasonably informed LDS college students majoring in the biological sciences.

I am a professor of anatomy and anthropology in the Department of Biological Sciences at Idaho State University, a campus that hosts a majority of LDS students. I teach two sections of organic evolution, taken by seniors majoring in our department. I appraise my students’ knowledge of and attitudes toward evolution with a generic pre-assessment questionnaire and an initial writing assignment; the results show how little the typical LDS student understands the doctrinal position of the Church on matters relating to the physical origins of the earth and its inhabitants. They frequently appeal to their upbringing in a Mormon family as justification for their inclinations toward a basically fundamentalist young-earth creationism position, one that is decidedly anti-evolution.

Most of these students are quite surprised to learn that the LDS Church is one of a number of Christian and non-Christian denominations that has no official position concerning God’s modus operandi in preparing the earth as a temporal abode for the human family, or in providing physical tabernacles for the first of his spirit children to take up residence here. Based on my own children’s educational experiences, it is clear that another potential source of diverse and often contradictory information is the seminary classroom and, to a lesser degree, Institute of Religion classes.

Given this sometimes confused state of affairs, Mormonism and Evolution provides a very useful and accessible reference to the surprisingly limited authoritative statements by the LDS First Presidency on this subject. Evenson and Jeffery clearly spell out, in both the preface and an afterword, the criteria met by documents included in this handy booklet. The core of these materials constitutes what has come to be called the “BYU packet.” Readers of the Journal of Mormon History will be interested in these statements, even if the creationism/evolution debate is not of pressing personal interest to them, if only because these documents trace a thread that gives a fascinating glimpse into one aspect of Mormon intellectual history reaching back almost a century.

William Evenson is an administrator and physics professor at Utah Valley State College, where he moved in 2004 upon retiring from Brigham Young University. During his thirty-four years at BYU, Evenson was a professor of physics, dean of General Education, dean of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, and associate academic vice president. Duane E. Jeffery is a professor of integrative biology at Brigham Young University. He has published professionally in various biological journals and on matters of Mormonism and science in Mormon periodicals. He
has received numerous teaching awards at BYU and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for Science Education.

As Evenson explains in the introduction, he and Jeffery assembled the “BYU packet” in response to the perennial and large volume of student questions on the subject. Because Evenson had authored “Evolution,” for the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992, pp. 1,669–70), BYU Provost Bruce Hafen directed him in 1992 to assemble a packet of materials that could be made available to students and that would represent the “official Church position” on the subject.

This packet contained a cover letter approved by the BYU Board of Trustees, dated June 1992, and authorized for distribution with the packet, the 1909 First Presidency statement entitled, “The Origin of Man,” a brief excerpt on the topic of human origins from the 1910 First Presidency Christmas message, the 1925 statement entitled, “‘Mormon’ View of Evolution,” and Evenson’s Encyclopedia of Mormonism article, because it contained authorized excerpts of the 1931 First Presidency minutes not otherwise available to the public.

The other selections in Mormonism and Evolution consist of an appendix that adds a series of twelve (labeled A-L) “other authoritative statements,” which are documents produced under the First Presidency’s sponsorship, statements published by the President of the Church over his signature alone, or documents approved for publication by the First Presidency as a body.

Evenson stresses that in both the preparation of the BYU packet and the inclusion of the appendix items, he and his co-editor made no attempt to achieve a “balance” in pro- and anti-evolution statements. Instead, these official views are intended to “provide the basis for evaluating other expressions that are not themselves authoritative” (p. 3).

No less significant than drawing these selected documents together under one convenient cover is the added perspective supplied by the brief introduction preceding each document that establishes its historical and doctrinal context. The greatest contributor to these introductions was Jeffery, whose foundational article “Seers, Savants, and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface” (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 8 [Fall/Winter 1973]: 41-69) is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Church’s position relative to evolution.

The ecclesiastical history of many LDS doctrines goes for the most part unappreciated by the Church membership at large, its development over time often unremarked. However, revelation does not occur in a vacuum. Direction and clarification often come in direct response to historical and social circumstances of the times. For example, the First Presidency issued its 1909 statement in the year marking the hundredth anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth and the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of his Origin of Species. This statement was drafted by a committee of General Authorities in 1908, in anticipation of the events and discussion that would accompany these celebrated anniversaries. Its final
The 1925 statement was approved by the First Presidency under Joseph F. Smith. The principal points of this statement may be characterized by the following excerpts:

God created man in his own image. . . . All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity. (20)

The creation was two-fold—firstly spiritual, secondly temporal. (17)

The spirit of man is in the form of man. (20)

Adam was the first man of all men . . . and the primal parent of our race. (23)

True it is that the body of man enters its career as a tiny germ or embryo, which becomes an infant, quickened at a certain stage by the spirit whose tabernacle it is, and the child, after being born develops into a man. There is nothing in this, however, to indicate that the original man, the first of our race, began life as anything less than a man, or less than the human germ or embryo that becomes a man . . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. (23–24)

As another example of historical context, the 1925 statement came in response to press inquiries stemming from the public spectacle of the famous Scope’s trial. Rather than reissue the existing 1909 statement, the First Presidency under Heber J. Grant released a dramatically abridged version, omitting all statements that have been construed by some to be anti-evolution in sentiment and that seem to dismiss evolution as merely the “theories of men.” Instead, the 1925 statement focused on human-kind’s spiritual origin and on Mormonism’s distinctive assertion of the literal divine parentage of our spirits: “The doctrine of pre-existence pours [a] wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man’s origin. It shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents” (32, emphasis mine).

Ambiguities in the earlier 1909 statement concerning the manner in which the physical body originated were perceived then, as they are today, by many who read the entire statement. It seems apparent that the authorized message to priesthood quorums that followed in 1910 came in response to questions stemming from those ambiguities and was an attempt to address the queries by acknowledging three possible means for the physical creation of the human tabernacle, but lending affirmation to none of them (Appendix A). One of these acknowledged possibilities is of particular interest: “Whether the mortal bodies of man evolved in natural processes to present perfection, through the direction and power of God . . . are questions not fully answered in the revealed word of God” (44).

The provenance of the entry on evolution in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism is particularly interesting as it reflects the position adopted
by the current president of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley. The original draft for the article progressively expanded with additions recommended by the associate editor of the Encyclopedia and by advisors from among the Quorum of the Twelve, reflecting the range of opinions voiced by various brethren throughout Church history. Under President Hinckley’s leadership, however, the article was condensed to the brief statement now comprising the first half of the final article, combined with the excerpt from the official First Presidency minutes. It was decided to reiterate that at present no greater resolution exists beyond that indicated by the contents of the BYU packet and that ultimately the matter falls beyond the purview of their apostolic calling and mission—in short, “Leave geology, biology, archeology, and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church . . . ” (38).

Indeed, when Trent Stephens and I were writing our book¹ and sought a clarification of the Church’s position on this matter from the Office of the First Presidency, the answer we received in early 1995, via our mutual stake president, included an excerpt from Evenson’s concise encyclopedia article and the complete 1909 First Presidency statement.

Another valuable document in Mormonism and Evolution is the full text of the 1931 seven-page memo referred to as the “First Presidency Minutes” excerpted in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism article. Published in full, it establishes the context of those excerpts and adds perspective on the dynamics of the discussion and the diversity of personal opinions held by the General Authorities on these matters, at that time and also at present.

When considering the context of any of these early statements, one should also be aware of the scientific paradigms which then prevailed—most of which have also undergone revision and development over time. The early decades of the twentieth century saw considerable discussion and debate within the scientific community over particulars of the processes of evolution. The modern evolutionary synthesis now generally accepted emerged out of that debate in light of new data. Recent advances in the many scientific disciplines in which evolution remains the unifying principle should also be weighed and considered. The successive refinement of the scientific understanding of these processes should not be construed to indicate that evolution is “just another theory” in the colloquial sense that is likely to be replaced by another paradigm, as some proponents of intelligent design have tried to argue. (See Stephens and Meldrum, Evolution and Mormonism.)

In that the authors’ stated goal was to make these brief authorita-

tive statements accessible in a “more readily available context and format,” they have succeeded. That some will be disappointed to find the pronouncements of their favorite authority omitted is unavoidable until the membership recognizes, as the BYU Board of Trustees clarifies, that “formal statements by the First Presidency are the definitive source of official Church positions” (p. 2).

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Reviewed by Susan Easton Black

Kyle Walker is to be congratulated for bringing together in one volume life sketches of ten members of the Joseph Smith Sr. family. Although Walker could have tackled the writing alone, having written a doctoral dissertation on the family dynamics of the Smiths, he chose instead to bring acclaimed historians, well-known Smith descendants, an administrator from Brigham Young University-Idaho, and a strong writer from the Church Educational System together to assist him. In so doing, they created a resource to better understand the supportive nature of the Smith family in the Restoration process, which contrasts with Dan Vogel’s depiction of a dysfunctional family. With this said, readers may find the title of the book problematic. It suggests that all members of the Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith family have place within its covers. Buried in the three-page preface is the disclaimer, “The volume is dedicated exclusively to the Smith family who supported Joseph Smith; hence, the reader will note the absence of a chapter on Joseph (iv).” The editor reasons, “There has been extensive publication documenting the life of Joseph Smith, and the reader is referred to those volumes for information on him” (iv). Thus, by design the book omits a biographical sketch of the Prophet Joseph, the very person who united the family in one faith. I, for one, would have appreci-


2 Dan Vogel, Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet (Salt Lake City: Signature Book, 2004).
ated a concluding chapter analyzing how and why the life experiences of the Smith family united them in faith. I would have also appreciated a bibliography. Nevertheless, readers will discover that United by Faith is a contribution to our understanding of Mormonism’s “First Family.”

Each of the ten chapters contains a biographical sketch of one member of the Smith family—Father Smith, Mother Smith, Alvin, Hyrum, Sophronia, Samuel, William, Katharine, Don Carlos, and Lucy. The chapters begin with a brief but interesting episode from the final moments in that particular family member’s life. Then follows a chronological narrative that highlights significant benchmarks in that life. Unfortunately, benchmarks are repetitious. Whether writing of the epidemic in Lebanon, New Hampshire, that led to the crippling of young Joseph, Mother Smith giving birth to a child, crop failure in Norwich, Vermont, the purchase of a farm in Palmyra, New York, young Joseph’s First Vision, Moroni’s visits, the founding of the Church, or the martyrdom, noting such events in more than one chapter creates repetition. Including these episodes is curious since Joseph’s father and his siblings wrote precious little about key subjects pertaining to his life. When family members did write, it was mostly of their own experiences. The authors took literary license in filling the biographical void, but not always successfully. Contributors Dean Jarman and Kyle Walker admit, “Samuel [Smith]’s early life is known only through the general history of the Smith family” (206).

Walker has a leading, if not dominant, role in authoring. Four of the chapters, including the longest, a sixty-page sketch of William Smith, were penned by him. Complementing Walker’s writings are those of veteran historians. For example, Lavina Fielding Anderson shares her insights into the life of Lucy Mack Smith;3 Richard Lloyd Anderson discusses new discoveries about Alvin Smith; and Ronald K. Esplin addresses the overlooked contributions of Hyrum Smith. From these recognized scholars, readers learn about the prominent public role that Mother Smith played in Nauvoo after the tragic deaths of her sons Joseph and Hyrum (69), the importance of Alvin’s earnings and how they helped to purchase the Palmyra farm (89), and the personal relationship between Hyrum and his second wife, Mary Fielding Smith, through correspondence from Liberty Jail (138).

Well-known Smith descendants Mark L. McConkie and Gracia N. Jones write on Joseph Smith Sr.4 and Sophronia Smith McCleary respectively. Perhaps in deference to their progenitors, historical assumptions in their writings should be overlooked, such as, “Through the role of Pa-

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4See also Mark L. McConkie, The Father of the Prophet: Stories and Insights from the Life of Joseph Smith, Sr. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993).
triarch, Father Smith developed an increased sensitivity to the feelings of others, a sensitivity which seemed to increase the Saints’ affection for him and concurrently enhanced their ability to exercise faith in his presence” (18). Failure to cite a source for this conclusion leaves me unconvinced. The same could be said of undocumented feelings attributed to Sophronia: “For Sophronia, leaving her many relatives was painful, since she was old enough to realize she might be saying goodbye to her beloved grandparents for the last time” (167). The affectionate, interpretative nature of these chapters is more honorific and eulogizing than other sketches of the Smiths.

As is to be expected in any compilation, the writing is uneven, but Walker’s authored essays keep pace with the more recognized scholars. Where his pace slows is his too-frequent reliance upon secondary sources. In so doing, he misses historical tidbits that would spice up a chapter or two. For example, when writing of the funeral of Don Carlos Smith, readers may have found it amusing if Walker had included John C. Bennett’s calling the Nauvoo Legion to arms to prick with their bayonets women sitting in the wrong chairs.  

For authors who do not rely heavily on the readily accessible secondary sources, conflicts arise, suggesting that history is only as supportive as its sources. Scholars Richard Anderson and Ronald Esplin pit themselves against each other when writing of young Joseph contracting typhus fever, caused by the bacillus Rickettsia prowazekii, or typhoid, caused by Salmonella typhi bacteria. Readers wonder which is correct (86, 124). Concerns over accuracy of details subside when reading chapters on the neglected sisters of Joseph since those are filled with refreshing, little-known biographical details. Yet each is disturbing in a peculiar way. Concern shifts from accuracy to questions about the causes of their poverty, suffering, and persecution long after the martyrdom of Joseph. Readers will wonder why the sisters were not better cared for nor longer remembered. However, the book is worthwhile for these chapters alone.

SUSAN EASTON BLACK (susan_black@byu.edu), a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, co-edited with Andrew C. Skinner Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds. Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842-1845: A Documentary History. Foreword by Todd

5John C. Bennett court martial, Manuscript Document File, Nauvoo Legion, 1842, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.


Reviewed by Roger D. Launius

One of the most significant beliefs about Mormon Nauvoo is that it is where Joseph Smith completed his work of restoration. Among the Mormons, a powerful interpretation is that Joseph Smith is significant not just for his life but for his religious innovations. As Ronald K. Esplin commented in an insightful essay about Nauvoo, “Nauvoo was, and is, and will be important to Latter-day Saints because it was the City of Joseph. It was the city he built, where he lived and acted, where he died. Above all, it was the city where he fulfilled his religious mission. . . . In a very real sense, his other labors were prologue.” 1 Nothing was more significant to this achievement than the religious innovations he incorporated into the religion. These two books, both edited by Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, document in excruciating detail the efforts of Smith and his inner circle to establish the practice of the Mormon temple endowment. As documentary records that range far in reproducing primary source material on the subject, both works are of exceptional value. They open a window into the esoteric practices that emerged in Nauvoo in the 1840s and found their place in some strains of Mormonism following the death of the founding prophet.

Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed deals with the development of the rituals that took place in the upper room of Joseph Smith’s Red Brick Store beginning in 1842, portions of which were accidentally witnessed by some in the city. For instance, Ebenezer Robinson, who later embraced the Reorganized Church and later still departed from it, for example, described walking innocently into the upper room only to see “John Taylor, one of the twelve Apostles, in a long white garment, with a white turban on his head, and drawn sword in his hand, evidently representing the ‘cherubims and flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the tree of life’” (p. 79). Robinson was not part of Joseph Smith’s inner circle and did not participate in these

ceremonies. Like others who became part of the Reorganized Church, he was repulsed by them.

Not so many others—who embraced the endowment as Joseph Smith taught them, even as it evolved during the last couple of years of the Prophet’s life. As George A. Smith recalled in 1874:

He [Joseph Smith] stated that the Twelve were then instructed to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel for the dead, beginning with baptism and the laying on of hands. This work was at once commenced. It soon became apparent that some had long records of their dead, for whom they wished to administer. This was seen to be but the beginning of an immense work, and that to administer all the ordinances of the Gospel to the hosts of the dead was no light task. The Twelve asked Joseph if there could not be some shorter method of administering for so many. Joseph in effect replied—“The laws of the Lord are immutable, we must act in perfect compliance with what is revealed to us. We need not expect to do this vast work for the dead in a short time. I expect it will take at least a thousand years.” (38)

These ideas anchor the faith of the Latter-day Saints to this day. This work does a fine job of documenting through primary sources how the ideas emerged in Nauvoo. Arranged chronologically, various sources are connected together to describe the process of teaching these ideas among the Church’s elite.

The Nauvoo Endowment Companies is in essence a sequel to Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed. It deals with efforts after Joseph Smith’s death to ensure that the temple endowment was administered to as many Saints as possible prior to the departure of the main part of the Church from Nauvoo in 1846. Again, it arranges in chronological order the many accounts of temple work during 1845 and 1846. The washings and anointings; the eternal marriage ceremonies; the ritual passage from the Garden of Eden through the celestial, terrestrial, and celestial glories; the adoptions; and other endowments depicted in these primary accounts suggest the evolution of the rituals even after the death of Joseph Smith and the promulgation of this aspect of Mormon theology among the rank and file in the Church.

The events of this effort are related in such accounts as this one by Abraham Owen Smoot:

On Saturday the 18th of December 1845, having been called on by the Council of the Twelve Apostles, I went to the Temple in Nauvoo to receive my endowment, at the hour of 8 o’clock in the morning I was received into the preparation rooms, with several others of my brethren, and I was there prepared to be conducted into the washing and anointing room, where I received my washings in clean and pure water, preparatory to my anointing, which I received under the hands of Samuel Bent, President of the High Council. I was then presented with a garment, b[e]aring the marks of the Priesthood, which I was instructed to wear as a prevention from evil. I was now prepared for the reception of further ordinances in the House of the Lord which were to me sublime, great and glorious,
making on my mind endurable impressions, or as the prophet said, “en-
graving upon the heart or writ[t]en upon its inner parts &c.” (82–83)

The haste with which these endowments were undertaken is revealing. On February 6, 1846, the last day before endowments were suspended, 512 people in eight different companies went through the Nauvoo Temple. The intention of making these ceremonies available to as many of the Latter-day Saints as possible prior to departing from the city was apparent in these actions. Such widespread administration helped to standardize the practice among those who went west with Brigham Young.

What is most remarkable about both of these books from my perspective is the hierarchies created in the rituals in which men were endowed to become kings and gods and women to become queens and priestesses. The Mormon temple concept as it emerged in Nauvoo with its secrecy, ritualistic washings and anointings, incantations, preoccupation with Old Testament images, and elaborate rites provided for eternal exaltation during which faithful Mormons would “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths” (D&C 132:20) implies that those who did not experience this same endowment must occupy an eternally subservient station. The temple rituals as documented here always mandated a second-class position for women beneath their priesthood-holding husbands, but women of the faith would be exalted above all others. Did this set of ideas emerge ambivalently over time or was it deliberately fostered by status anxiety or other more subtle factors?

Both Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed and The Nauvoo Endowment Companies are welcome additions to the literature of Mormon Nauvoo. They present highly useful documentary materials for all to review. Historians will find them helpful in understanding the evolution of the Mormon temple concept and the practice of rituals in the city. Genealogists and believing LDS will profit from the wealth of biographical and canonical material contained in these works.

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Reviewed by William P. MacKinnon

When Donald R. Moorman died of cancer at age forty-nine in 1980, he left ten related but different manuscripts on the origins and prosecution of the Utah War (1857–58) and the impact of the U.S. Army’s presence in Utah Territory during the next three years. He had researched and written these drafts between 1962 and 1980. Over the next twelve years, a selfless effort by a few devoted colleagues in the History Department at Weber State University in Ogden shaped this material into a coherent book that appeared in 1992. Now, after thirteen years, the book returns to print in a paperback edition.

The aim of Moorman’s friends was to present his research, distinctive writing style, and analytical judgments rather than theirs. The effort was so prolonged that Jerome Bernstein, one of its spearheads, died, passing the torch to Moorman’s unflagging friend Gene A. Sessions, chairman of Weber State’s History Department.

In both 1992 and 2005, Sessions made it clear that *Camp Floyd and the Mormons* was “Don’s book”—that he and his collaborators had resisted the temptation to alter aspects of the manuscript with which they personally disagreed because of matters of fact, interpretation, language, or the simple passage of time. The 2005 edition is unchanged from 1992, except for Sessions’s new four-page preface which supplements his original preface.

Given that background, it is appropriate to ask what Moorman intended and how well *Camp Floyd and the Mormons* accomplishes his purpose. He apparently left no draft introduction, and his editorial successors did not attempt to create one for him. The first edition was published as a volume in the University of Utah Press’s statehood centennial series. Distinguished Utah historian Charles S. Peterson, who wrote the foreword, viewed the book then through the lens of Utah’s prolonged and idiosyncratic journey toward statehood. From a current perspective, the book seems more useful when viewed as sixteen essays on five interrelated subjects: (1) the events that made Camp Floyd necessary; (2) the camp’s impact on Utah’s Mormons, their governmental hegemony and economy; (3) the army’s important development of territorial roads; (4) the influence of garrison life on the army itself; and (5) the impact on Utah’s nomadic Native Americans.

Some of these chapter-essays are brilliant successes—narratives sparkling with verve, analytical skill, and ground-breaking research. This
material has stood the test of time and remains the standard treatment of its subject. Yet other chapters strike me as off-target, unbalanced, and dated. Perhaps most frustrating is the extent to which some chapters are a mixture of both qualities.

The flat spots derived, I believe, from Moorman’s interpretive judgments, distracting factual errors, and puzzling but important omissions. The appearance of arresting scholarship by other historians since the 1970s is not, of course, something Moorman could control, although the matter of somehow acknowledging such new developments or correcting obvious errors must have posed a difficult dilemma for his editors and publisher. In not intervening, they may not have served readers well.

Most historians have viewed the Utah War as an event beginning with Winfield Scott’s general circular on May 28, 1857, organizing the Utah Expedition, and ending with Albert Sidney Johnston’s march through Salt Lake City on June 26, 1858. Moorman knew that the campaign was neither so short nor so simple. His work quite properly dealt with both the ten-year origins of the conflict as well as the prolonged, contentious period of federal “occupation” that followed the settling of Johnston’s dust. Because only the first two chapters deal with events preceding the army’s entrance into Salt Lake City, *Camp Floyd and the Mormons* is not a campaign history in the conventional sense. It thus meshes well with Norman F. Furniss’s splendid *The Mormon Conflict, 1850–1859* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960), which concentrates on the early phases and minimizes the Utah War’s post-1858 impact. Based no doubt on his awareness of Moorman’s views, Gene Sessions commented in his 2005 preface that Moorman would be disappointed to hear Furniss’s study, rather than his own, described so frequently as the standard narrative history of the Utah War. Such disappointment perhaps explains why Moorman mentions Furniss’s study only once in his text (although he cites it ten times in the notes). Sessions cogently observed in his 2005 preface: “Whether Furniss’s excellent book really is still the best work on the subject does not matter and is in many ways immaterial, because Moorman’s volume . . . does not attempt to repeat the work of Furniss or anyone else” (xiii).

From the perspective of my own long interest in the Utah War, Moorman’s most valuable work comprises seven chapters: 4, “The Scourge of Gold: Fairfield,” 5, “Life at Camp Floyd,” 8, “The March into

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the Wilderness,” 13, “Unsaintly City,” 14, “Disquiet in Zion,” 15, “The Economic Impact of the Utah War: An Analysis,” and the “Epilogue.” These chapters showcase Moorman’s extraordinary ability to create vivid descriptions of people, situations, and social forces through vignettes derived from unusual sources. Sessions expresses mild discomfort with his “peppery and defiant” colleague’s “colorful language” and “purple prose.” I find Moorman’s style delightful—an integral part of the historian’s essential need to tell a story while marshaling less dramatic facts and statistics. Hence, one finds the following classic portrait of the gambling scene in Fairfield, Utah (“Frogtown”), the sordid hamlet abutting Camp Floyd:

The debris of a displaced society was drawn to the basin from the far reaches of the continent—cardsharps fresh from the goldfields of California, Mexicans muffled in their serapes who could lose a fortune without moving a muscle, smartly dressed Monte dealers from the river trade whose good or ill luck was not betrayed by a change in facial expression, and discharged soldiers and teamsters. In its time, the gambling halls of Fairfield became legend, being more numerous and notorious than those in any other frontier town of equivalent size. But to the Saints, the town was a den of vipers. (64)

With equal aplomb, Moorman limns the boredom and brutality of military life at Camp Floyd itself; the surprisingly violent, wide-open character assumed by post-war Salt Lake City; and the boom/bust impact of army spending on non-Mormon speculators, LDS Church leaders, and individual settlers. Moorman’s prose is compelling, although occasionally—in the apparent pursuit of verve—the author strays into the unsupportable. For example, Moorman describes Thomas L. Kane as “a heavily built, erect man slightly under six feet in height” (32) while Kane’s biographer viewed him as “small in stature” and Kane’s 1882 application for a military pension says he stood five feet four and weighed 122 pounds.3 Similarly, Moorman sketches a dramatic portrait of Alfred Cumming as “tub built” and “somewhat on the heavy side of two hundred pounds” (41), although Cumming actually weighed nearly four hundred pounds and was so well insulated that he occasionally strode about Camp Scott in winter in his shirt-sleeves.4

These discrepancies at least prompt caution about the author’s titillating but harsh description of Chief Justice Delana R. Eckels (mis-
spelled “Eckles”) as “outwardly resembling the Charles Dickens prototype of a ruthless, ham-fisted merchant of industrial England” and as a “fire-breathing nationalist who could accommodate no beliefs or actions but those that supported the position of the federal government” (103). One needs to square these characteristics with Eckels’s subsequent notoriety as one of Indiana’s most prominent Confederate (not Union) sympathizers and his kindly mentor-guardianship in Utah of orphaned Indian lads, little English girls, and Hoosier law students. Finally, in terms of balance if not accuracy, Moorman four times characterized Associate Justice John Cradlebaugh as “one-eyed” without a single reference to President Buchanan’s well-known vision problem or that of Daniel H. Wells, whom the editor of the Salt Lake Tribune called the “One-Eyed Pirate of the Wasatch.”

Perhaps Moorman’s most valuable achievement was his documentation in Chapter 8 of military trail explorations and road-building projects during 1858–60 that radiated in all directions from or toward Camp Floyd. This flurry of topographical engineering and construction activity facilitated the completion in Utah of both the transcontinental telegraph (1861) and the transcontinental railroad (1869) while benefiting its population on a scale dwarfing that of any other American territory. Even in the short run, it was civilians, not the army, who most benefited from the new knowledge and infrastructure generated by these war-related surveys. Barbara Beeton has documented Captain James H. Simpson’s trail-blazing accomplishments in Utah during 1858–59, but Moorman quite properly documents the far broader story of Camp Floyd’s surveying and engineering achievements. I only wish that his acknowledgment of Albert Sidney Johnston’s leadership was less grudging and that he had commented on Johnston’s fortuitous insistence on blazing a new trail from Camp Floyd to New Mexico in 1858. As LeRoy R. Hafen pointed out in 1946, this track became the principal wagon route between east-central Utah and Colorado.

Another contribution of Moorman’s book is his recognition (Chapter 16) of the significant post-1858 activity of the Utah War’s participants, particularly during the Civil War. Yet valuable as it is, Moorman’s discussion barely scratches the potential of this rich lode for rewarding study. Missing, then, is the story of a vast number of other people as well as significant social forces triggered by the Utah War: the Anglo redis-

beth Cumming, 1857–1858 (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund and University of Utah Library, 1977), 101.
covery of the Grand Canyon, Russia’s sale of Alaska, the English formation of British Columbia, and the repeated, punitive truncation of Utah’s borders to form or expand Nevada, Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming. The Utah War’s epilogue contains far-reaching political and topographical consequences in addition to the downstream economic and personal impact addressed in limited fashion in *Camp Floyd and the Mormons.*

The second factor contributing to Moorman’s success is his remarkable knack for exploiting sources unused by his predecessor-historians or even those who have followed. Sessions touches briefly on the extent to which Moorman—a non-Mormon and perhaps an atheist—won extraordinary access to the records of the old Church Historian’s Office from their (then) less-than-open-handed keepers. Yet this is only half the story of Moorman’s research success. Moorman also drew on wonderful documents held by private collectors and published in obscure historical journals unexploited by other writers. For example, Brigham Young was oddly fascinated by the possibilities of long bows and crossbows for mountain warfare, an interest to which Nauvoo Legion musician Myron Brewer pandered by offering to organize a squad of Mormon archers. Moorman also tells the story of how Brewer, with two confederates, attempted to forge Camp Floyd quartermaster drafts on a massive scale (chap. 14). This Byzantine counterfeiting plot almost resulted in Brigham Young’s indictment and did have the unintended consequence of forcing the resignation of U.S. marshal Peter K. Dotson. Another story to which Moorman makes a genuine contribution is that of the Second U.S. Dragoons’ agonizing October-November 1857 march from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Bridger. He does so through the account by William G. Chambers, master of transportation, of this longest cold-weather trek in American military history. Heretofore the dragoons’ extraordinary march has been known only by the report of the regiment’s colonel, Philip St. George Cooke, and the journal of his bugler, William D. Drown.

Yet in presenting for the first time snippets from James Sweeney’s colorful narrative of Captain Randoleh B. Marcy’s November-June trek to New Mexico and back, purportedly the only first-person account beside Marcy’s own, Moorman failed to notice that it is bogus. According to army records in the National Archives, Private Sweeney spent the entire winter of 1857–58 at Camp Scott-Fort Bridger rather than on the trail with Marcy.

The book’s images are also a mixed bag. C. C. Mills’s 1858–59 photographs of Camp Floyd, especially his rare panoramic sweeps, are probably their first display since Secretary of War Floyd saw them in 1859. Disappointingly, the book’s single map fails to trace most of the trail-blazing expeditions to which Moorman devotes Chapter 8. Readers

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may also regret the absence of a bibliography, since citations are often inaccurate or based on collections at the LDS Church Archives that have since been reorganized.

Notwithstanding its multiple strengths, *Camp Floyd and the Mormons* is weakened by errors of fact, interpretation, and omission aggravated by a regrettable lack of balance in several chapters. For example, there are numerous problems with names: Captain John Wolcott Phelps becomes the laughably different “William Phelps” (272), General Newman S. Clark’s first initial is rendered as “A” (146), Mormon judge Jeter Clinton’s given name becomes “Peter” (236), Apostle John Taylor becomes “George” (284 note 27), Nathan Augustus Monroe Dudley improbably becomes North Americus Manning Dudley (111), editor-publisher J. H. Beadle is “Beale” (244), Yale’s fabled Coe Collection is described as the “Cole” trove (300 note 69), legal historian Arié W. Poldervaart is cited as Arnie Podervaart (283 note 12), and the formidable William Adams (“Wild Bill”) Hickman is persistently described as “Billy” (238). Such errors can, of course, be corrected in the next printing, depending on how the publisher juggles the competing forces of a quest for accuracy and the cost of new printing plates.

More worrisome are the book’s other errors of fact. T. B. H. Stenhouse was not in Utah during 1851 to “witness” Judge Perry E. Brocchus’s disastrous public utterance (9); he did not reach Salt Lake City until 1859. Ebenezer Hanks’s February 6, 1858, letter describing Thomas L. Kane in California was written to Amasa Lyman, not Brigham Young (287 note 35); Brigham Young decided on a non-military resolution of the conflict in March 1858, not the prior December-January (30). Russell, Majors, and Waddell’s 2,600 wagons required nearly the same number of teamsters, not 1,000 men (31). Kane did not arrive “unannounced” at the White House in December 1857 (32); James C. Van Dyke had arranged the meeting. Kane’s father died on February 21, 1858, before Thomas reached Salt Lake City, not before he entered Utah (33). Kane did not travel across the southern desert with his “black servant” Osborne, since Osborne had left the Kane household in Philadelphia months earlier for a job in San Francisco (34). Alfred Cumming refused, rather than accepted, the role of Kane’s second in his putative Camp Scott duel with Albert Sidney Johnston (38). The 1853 posse seeking to arrest Jim Bridger at Black’s Fork was led by Joseph L. Heywood and James Ferguson, not Bill Hickman (48). J. E. Farmer was a civilian, not an enlisted “private,” with the Seventh U.S. Infantry (97). Sergeant William H. Morton died from gorging himself at the end of Marcy’s arduous trek to New Mexico, not from “exposure and fatigue” (152). Fitz

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9Moorman may have unwittingly conflated the pompous Dudley’s name with the nickname (“the Great North American Dudley”) that his fellow-officers bestowed upon him.
John Porter was Albert Sidney Johnston’s assistant, not “acting” adjutant general (254). Lorenzo Thomas, was a lieutenant colonel, not a “general” (216). John W. Gunnison was murdered in 1853, not 1855 (183). Indian Agent Garland Hurt rode into Johnston’s bivouac near South Pass on October 23, 1857, rather than “crawl[ing] miserably” into Mormon-occupied Fort Bridger (187). Johnston heard of Steptoe’s defeat in Washington Territory while he was at Camp Floyd, not Fort Bridger (192). Eugene Banel of the Sixth U.S. Infantry was a sergeant in 1858, not a private (193). General Joe Shelby, not Utah War veteran Henry Hopkins Sibley, was “one of the last men to surrender his command during the Civil War” (279). Civil War generals Henry Heth, John F. Reynolds, and John Buford did not winter together at Camp Scott in 1857–58, but they did serve together at Camp Floyd (279). The 1857–58 expedition to ascend the Colorado River was commanded by Joseph Christmas Ives of the topographical engineers, not Captain W. P. Blake (287 note 38).

In what I would call errors of omission rather than inaccuracies, Moorman inexplicably gives no more than a sentence or two to three of the most significant events of the Utah War: (1) Brigham Young’s proclamation of martial law on September 15, 1857; (2) Major Lot Smith’s destruction of three federal supply trains on the night of October 4–5, 1857; and (3) the strike by Bannock and Northern Shoshone warriors on the Mormon Fort Limhi Mission on February 25, 1858. Young’s decree and Smith’s raid, more than any other actions, convinced the American public and Buchanan’s administration that Utah was out of control, led by a federally sworn but rebellious governor. As a result, both Young and Smith were indicted for treason. The Fort Limhi massacre, according to David L. Bigler, was a reversal so strategic that Brigham Young immediately shifted plans from a spring offensive by the Nauvoo Legion to a strategy of withdrawal, if not accommodation. Moorman’s bypassing these events is puzzling.

Most damaging of the book’s shortfalls, though, are what I see as errors of interpretation. In Chapter 7, Moorman argues that the Mountain Meadows Massacre was induced largely by inflammatory behavior of what he calls Missouri cowboys traveling with the Baker-Fancher party but somehow absent from the slaughter. Even Sessions has distanced himself from this traditional but highly fanciful interpretation, commenting in 2005, “I doubt the very existence of the infamous ‘Missouri Wildcats’ who play such a prominent role in Don’s chapter on the Mountain Meadows affair” (xvi). I believe this chapter should be read only with Juanita Brooks’s Mountain Meadows Massacre, Will Bagley’s Blood of the Prophets, and Richard E. Turley, Glen M. Leonard, and Ronald W. Walker’s forthcoming Tragedy at Mountain Meadows at hand.

Sessions’s 2005 preface praises Moorman for writing “a balanced narrative that he painstakingly compiled from the documents he read. Perhaps the best and most cogent example of this is in Chapter 7, ‘Tragedy at Mountain Meadows’” (xiii). I cannot agree. As a non-Mormon na-
tive of Illinois who came to Utah only at mid-life, Moorman surely cannot be accused of religious or familial bias. Yet his treatment of Albert Sidney Johnston, Brigham Young, and Utah’s federal judiciary shows a puzzling, perceptible pattern of emphasis and omission.

For example, Moorman is fairly unforgiving on benign subjects such as Young’s willingness to cede mining, freighting, and mercantile activities to non-Mormons in favor of farming, grazing, and the development of home industries (chap. 15). Yet on life-and-death issues relating to legal matters, Mountain Meadows, and military strategy, he leaves Young’s behavior and judgments unquestioned. Even leaving aside the contentious matter of who bears what responsibility for the unprecedented slaughter at Mountain Meadows, I find it odd that Moorman would describe at length the army burial party’s 1859 erection of a memorial cairn and cross but remain silent about Young’s inexcusable destruction of these markers when he visited the meadows two years later. Moorman likewise does not describe Young’s intended arrangements to send the child survivors of the massacre back east in freight wagons, accompanied by a group of Mormon matrons, which he reduced in size because some had not fully repaid their PEF debt. Albert Sidney Johnston was so aghast at Young’s insensitivity that he provided more comfortable army spring wagons for the traumatized children and detailed two companies of dragoons to escort them as far as Fort Leavenworth rather than the civilian teamsters.

As another example, Moorman quotes George A. Smith’s mockery of federal judges who traveled with a bodyguard of eighty dragoons, yet on the next page, he notes without comment that Brigham Young entered a federal courtroom “with a nervous assembly of several hundred of his followers, well-armed and eager to assure the safety of the Lion of the Lord” (104–5). Finally, I agree with Moorman that “Bill Hickman’s career as a criminal had repeatedly made a fool of justice, and a more illogical candidate for the bar could not be imagined” (244–45). Thus, I cannot understand Moorman’s failure to mention that, in January 1857, Young and the legislative assembly petitioned Congress and the U.S. president to appoint Hickman as Utah’s U.S. attorney and did so in language so intemperate that it helped to incite the Utah War.

Perhaps more than some, I appreciate Moorman’s comment: “In retrospect it is difficult not to admire Brigham Young, a towering legend in his own time who, like the vast majority of the Saints, had his mind wrapped around the roots of religious consciousness” (18). Still, I prefer Moorman’s additional assessment that Young “came to symbolize the most revered as well as disliked qualities of the Mormon temperament” (18) to Moorman’s excessive praise of him as “a brilliant tactician” (26) who executed “masterful strategic maneuver[s]” (40). I also cannot agree with Moorman’s repeated characterization of the Utah War as “blood-
If Camp Floyd was a mixed blessing for Utah Territory of the late 1850s, Donald Moorman’s book about it is for today’s readers a work of commensurately uneven character and usefulness. It is a fascinating study of the latter stages of the Utah War and its pre-Civil War aftermath that cannot be ignored, yet one that must be read with an awareness of its considerable flaws and limitations. For readers willing to thread this intellectual minefield, the rewards are substantial. Those inclined to dismiss the book out of hand will miss opportunities; those who accept it at face value may drop into historical pitfalls.

The historiography of the Utah War is littered with historians who devoted decades to researching this fascinating struggle only to fall victim to death, illness, or inhibitions before publishing all of what they intended to say. Among them are Dale L. Morgan, Hamilton Gardner, LeRoy Hafen, E. Cecil McGavin, M. Hamlin Cannon, Francis W. Craigin, Frank Evans, Albert L. Zobell Jr., Philip S. Klein, Richard D. Poll, Charles Kelly, and Harold Schindler. Thanks to the tenacity and extraordinary friendship of Jerry Bernstein, Gene Sessions, and others, Donald R. Moorman and his work have largely escaped the fate of these unfulfilled Utah War historians. For this outcome, Moorman’s readers—even the most skeptical among us—should be grateful, both to him and to his indefatigable colleagues.

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Reviewed by Linda Wilcox DeSimone

From the title only, one might think that this book would be a comprehensive account of “women in Utah history,” outlining in a carefully con-

structured narrative the role and accomplishments of women during Utah’s 150-plus years of recorded history. But as the fact that it has editors rather than an author gives away, this is not a single narrative but rather an anthology of twelve essays on various facets of women’s participation in Utah’s history. As such it is best read as a series of separate pieces rather than a historical whole, for while individual authors generally do a commendable job of dealing with the assigned topic, there is a fair amount of duplication among the various chapters.

Almost thirty years in the making, this project began with a workshop put together by a task force on Women in Utah History of the Utah Commission for the Observance of International Women’s Year (IWY) in 1977. The workshop creators later formed the Utah Women’s History Association and decided to write and publish a book on women in Utah’s history. A number of chapters were assigned, written, and presented as a lecture series around the state in the mid-1980s, and their authors have updated the original chapters for this volume. The project was largely supported by the Utah State Historical Society, which also provided most of the wonderful photographs—around seventy!—which are a treasure in themselves. Susan Whetstone was the book’s able photo editor.

The book begins with a comparison of polygamous and monogamous Mormon women by Jessie L. Embry and Lois Kelley, followed by a chapter on the legal status of women by Lisa Madsen Pearson and Carol Cornwall Madsen. The next two chapters deal with women in churches (largely non-Mormon) by John Sillito and ethnic women by Helen Zeese Papanikolas, followed by chapters on farm women by Cynthia Sturgis and “gainfully employed” women by Miriam B. Murphy. There are essays on women in education by Mary Clark and Patricia Lyn Scott, women’s clubs and associations by Jill Mulvay Derr, women of letters by Gary Topping, women in the arts by Martha Sonntag Bradley-Evans, and women in politics by Kathryn L. MacKay. The book concludes with a chapter on women’s life cycles by Jessie L. Embry.

Each chapter covers a different time period. Some focus on the territorial period. Others survey a century (1877–1977), early twentieth century (1900–1940, 1890–1940), or the whole period from 1847 through 2004.

Clearly the reader will find in this book much of Mormon women’s history, a good deal of which is already fairly well known to students of Mormon history. The strength of this collection is in integrating the experiences and achievements of the “other” women into the state’s history. Their stories are more striking because of their relative unfamiliarity to most readers. Helen Zeese Papanikolas, for example, provides a lively, clear, and focused account of ethnic women, including Native Americans and African Americans as well as immigrants—and not just the more familiar Greeks and Italians, but groups like Armenians and
Asians. It is worth noting that some of these “ethnic” women were also Mormon. Papanikolas gives us a good feel for what life was like for the women in these communities and how they were perceived by others.

I also found Miriam Murphy’s essay on “Gainfully Employed Women” a fascinating account of the opportunities and difficulties, setbacks and progress, of women in Utah’s work force over the years. Although by 1950 women made up almost one-fourth of the Utah work force, Murphy notes that they were still practically invisible: “But for some these women remained as mysteriously unseen as if they were in purdah. An economist and bank vice-president writing a 1956 textbook would note ‘the extremely small percentage of women who are gainfully employed’ in Utah. Men ran the working world and that was the important and visible thing. That they could never have run it without the labor of women did not occur to most men or women in the 1950s” (213).

Another excellent chapter explores one particular thread of a transitional shift from rural to urban values and methods. In it Cynthia Sturgis provides a detailed account of how farm women’s roles changed from producers of goods and experts on home tasks to being consumers of products (and thus “household managers”), reliant on university experts in domestic science to teach them how to run their homes and raise their children. While initially resistant, the farm women eventually traded their traditional authority for “professional” methods and modern labor-saving conveniences. Sturgis effectively traces the other social, cultural and economic developments surrounding this shift.

Another workmanlike essay is the chapter on the legal status of women during the territorial period, written by the mother-daughter team of Carol Cornwall Madsen and Lisa Madsen Pearson. It sets the Utah experience in the context of both national developments and differences with other western states and territories. The authors carefully describe and explain a wide range of legal issues and systems in territorial Utah: the court system, marriage and divorce laws, custody and guardianship issues, women’s property rights regarding real estate and wills, inheritance laws, the right to sue or be sued, female lawyers, jury duty and political rights—including suffrage and the right to hold office—creating a very readable account of how Utah Territory’s legal system treated women and how women, including the occasional female attorney, functioned within it.

With several chapter topics being “women in” various disciplines (education, churches, arts, politics, letters, etc.), there’s a danger of an essay becoming basically a catalogue or list of notable individuals. Jill Mulvay Derr’s chapter on women’s clubs and associations “samples rather than lists” (249) such groups and presents really varied examples of women’s associations—society clubs, “daughters” organizations (DAR, DUP, etc.), mothers’ groups, student and youth groups, women’s auxiliaries, etc.

Gary Topping, writing about women of letters, refreshingly moves
quickly from the nineteenth century into the twentieth and includes poets, historians, and environmental writers as well as fiction writers. The strength of his essay lies in his careful choices of subjects, his attention to context, and his fine critical eye, which succinctly evaluates the writers’ work. Martha Sonntag Bradley-Evans has a similar challenge in corral-ling the history of Utah women in the various “arts,” (music, dance, drama, visual arts, applied arts/crafts), any one of which in itself could produce a long list of female worthies. Her solution is to set her essay within the conceptual framework of gender identity as a social construction, describing how the arts were considered appropriate for women as an adornment in their domestic sphere but were less acceptable for women who had aspirations in the public or professional arena. The essay also helps rehabilitate the reputation of women’s traditional or folk art such as weaving, quilting, and other domestic crafts.

There is a wealth of information and detail in these essays, so how well does the book accomplish its purpose? The editors state: “The chief goal of this book is to integrate Utah women of all ethnic and religious backgrounds into the broader field of women’s studies” (ix) and “This book’s primary objective is to make the history of Utah’s women more visible, to celebrate their achievements, to appreciate their struggles and sacrifices, and to see more clearly the work that still remains to be done” (x). This list sets out five ambitious objectives. The goal of integrating women of all backgrounds into the field of women’s studies would seem to have been achieved fairly directly in John Sillito’s chapter on women in churches, which concentrates on those other than Mormon, and in Helen Papanikolas’s chapter on ethnic women—and to some extent in many of the other chapters such as those on women in letters and the arts. The overall impact of the several studies gathered here certainly achieves the first two elements of the “objectives”—visibility and celebration—while I assume any “appreciation” will be up to readers rather than the authors, as will the more difficult task of seeing what still needs to be done in the field, since the editors do not provide an explicit “future research” list.

There are a few problems related to the book’s production. A number of typos escaped proofreading: “Sale” Lake City (123), the appointment of a “women” state school superintendent (xiii), a woman’s “spere” (337), women instilling their people’s “vales” in their children (144). There are also some usage issues such as women protesting the “eminent” passage of a bill (374) and “women” suffrage (372), where everywhere else—even on the same page—it is referred to as “woman” suffrage.

And then there are some slippages of fact: Carol Gilligan’s name is spelled as “Giligan” (249); a Salt Lake City publication date is listed as 1803, probably meant to be 1893 (124 note 59); the account of the two wives of Clarence Merrill seems to misidentify Julia as the daughter of George A. and Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith rather than the more likely Bathsheba Smith Merrill (19); and only the St. Ann’s School, not
the orphanage, “still occupies a handsome red-brick building” on Twenty-first South and Fifth East (116)—possibly one of the casualties in the process of updating these twenty-five-year-old essays for the present publication.

This updating, incidentally, was accomplished with varying degrees of success. In most cases, it was probably done in the form of revision rather than adding new material, although some authors took a different approach. Miriam B. Murphy, for example, added a “Postscript: Fast Forward to a New Century,” which deftly identifies a number of trends in women’s employment in Utah in the past half century along with useful statistics, similar to her approach in the main essay. Mary R. Clark and Patricia Lyn Scott’s chapter on women in education purports to cover the whole period from 1847 to 2004, but post-1980 developments are confined to the last two pages. Kathryn L. MacKay added three paragraphs at the beginning of her essay on women in politics and three at the end which comment on Olene Walker, Utah’s first woman governor, and mention recent female state legislators and congressional officeholders. Especially in these two cases, the past quarter century seems to receive fairly thin coverage compared with the rest of the period these authors cover.

Despite these minor difficulties, the book serves a valuable purpose in finally bringing these long-awaited essays to publication. It provides useful and detailed overviews of Utah’s women’s roles in many facets of the state’s history which can serve as a springboard for further exploration. And it serves up for the reader some fine pieces of writing, many delightful stories, and of course the marvelous photographs.

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*Reviewed by Brian C. Hales*
Debbie Palmer and Dave Perrin teamed to write *Keep Sweet: Children of Polygamy*. The title comes from a phrase frequently employed by Fundamentalist Latter-day Saint (FLDS) leader Rulon Jeffs (1909–2002) to hearten his followers as they confronted life’s challenges. Dave Perrin, a veterinarian, who has authored several other books,1 practiced near the FLDS community of Bountiful, British Columbia. In 1982 he married a woman who had broken away from the nearby Mormon fundamentalist group. Through his contacts with the FLDS, he met Debbie Palmer and followed her through her experiences with the polygamy faction.

*Keep Sweet* gives a brief history of Mormon polygamy to 1904 and then jumps ahead to the Mormon fundamentalist movement of the 1920s and 1930s (x–xi, 189–90). The Canadian connection to Mormon fundamentalism began in 1947 when a small group of Latter-day Saints at Cardston, Alberta, Canada, was excommunicated from the Church for practicing polygamy. Traveling to Creston, British Columbia, an isolated area in the southeast portion of the province not far from the U.S.-Canadian border, they formed a new settlement called Bountiful. Within a few years they aligned themselves with fundamentalists at Short Creek, Arizona. Leroy Johnson, the polygamist prophet, visited them in 1961.2 Ray Blackmore became the first local leader of the group until his death in 1974.3

Palmer and Perrin have created a remarkable account of Debbie’s life within the fundamentalist group. Born in 1955 to Dalmon Oler, Palmer recalled: “My father had six wives and I have forty-seven brothers and sisters” (back cover). She recounts her experiences growing up within that distinctive environment. Her conflicts with her father’s plural wives created immense stress for her. She also recounts incidents of sexual abuse committed by teenage boys in the community (74–77), although she never accuses leaders or parents of being involved.

Palmer remembered early divisions within the Canadian polygamist group (14–15, 40–44) but notes a general unity supporting Leroy Johnson. She quotes an undated Blackmore sermon: “All peoples, Jew or Gentile, who don’t seek out and come under the sound revelation of our prophet and revelator, LeRoy Sunderland Johnson, are in darkness at noonday, and the great destroyer, yea even Lucifer, son of the morning, will take them and drag them down into eternal damnation in the last day” (80).

At age fifteen, Debbie was directly affected by a doctrine unique to

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1Don’t Turn Your Back in the Barn (2000), Dr. Dave’s Stallside Manner (2001), and Where Does It Hurt? (2003), all published by Dave’s Press.
3Ibid., 7:57, 229.
the FLDS called the “Law of Placing.” She relates: “The priesthood brethren were putting a stop to men thinking they could run after young girls at will, and were starting the system of ‘placement marriage,’ whereby God would tell the prophet exactly who each young woman promised to marry in the pre-existence” (5). “The Lord would make the decision and tell the prophet whom we . . . were assigned to marry. Only the prophet would know for sure who was promised to us in the spirit world” (249). The Law of Placing figured prominently in this young girl’s life (5, 63, 163, 189, 198, 202, 203, 204, 215).

While Debbie and the other Bountiful polygamists esteemed early Church leaders Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor as prophets (189), they failed to identify the contrast between the law of placing and Brigham Young’s 1853 teachings: “I am free, and so are you. My advice to the sisters is, Never be sealed to any man unless you wish to be. I say to you High Priests and Elders, Never from this time ask a woman to be sealed to you, unless she wants to be; but let the widows and children alone.”

He also instructed: “When your daughters have grown up, and wish to marry, let them have their choice in a husband, if they know what their choice is. But if they should happen only to guess at it, and marry the wrong man, why let them try again; and if they do not get in the right place the second time, let them try again. That is the way I shall do with my daughters and it is the way I have already done.”

Obeyingly, Palmer promised fundamentalist prophet Leroy Johnson, “I’ll never marry anyone the Lord has not revealed to be the right one. I’ll marry anyone you instruct me to” (270). Fortunately for her, the man she preferred was the same man the prophet had selected. In 1969 at age fifteen, she became the sixth wife of Ray Blackmore, then fifty-seven. She immediately became a stepmother to thirty-two children, most of whom were older than she. “My oldest daughter is my aunt and I am her grandmother” she recalled. “When I was assigned to marry my first husband, I became my own step-grandmother since my father was already married to two daughters of my new husband” (back cover).

As a married woman, she agonized over Joseph Musser’s Law of Chastity, which states that sexual relations are only acceptable when a wife is fertile. Abstinence during lactation, menstruation, and pregnancy is mandated. “This commandment weighed heavily on a woman; if she deceived her husband and did not inform him of the proper times, she

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6 On May 6, 1936, the sixty-four-year-old Musser recorded in his journal a strict law governing sexual relations in marriage. These regulations are accepted as standard for many Mormon fundamentalists today.
would be guilty of adulterating the birth canal, and the consequences would be ‘dire and severe’” (281, see also 300–303).

Palmer chronicles the poignant events leading up to husband’s 1974 death of leukemia, which is where her narrative ends. She was reassigned to marry another man and remained in the community for another fourteen years. In 1988 at age thirty-five, she left Mormon fundamentalism.

Palmer and Perrin’s book is a treasure trove of accounts of early fundamentalist leaders and their dealings within the group. While many names have been changed, the authors retained the names of Priesthood Council members. Fundamentalist ministerial contributions of men such as Guy Musser, son of Joseph W. Musser, are recorded in detail (83, 118, 202–3, 267, 270, 324). Richard Jessop is also mentioned (267, 324) with numerous references to Leroy Johnson.

I feel some skepticism about the accuracy of word-for-word conversations that occurred decades before the book’s writing. Perhaps all readers will not find the book “shocking” as Jon Krakauer asserts on a back-cover endorsement, but certainly I agree that the authors have created a “richly detailed portrait” and “heart-rending story” of polygamist life in Bountiful, British Columbia, during the mid-twentieth century.

Jenny Jessop Larson, prior to publishing her boldly titled Brainwash to Hogwash: Escaping and Exposing Polygamy, had a dream:

In my dream I was talking to my sister who had died. A man’s voice came between us like a flash of lightening [sic]. He said, “I interrupt your dream to tell you what to name your book.” I threw my hands into the air as I said to him. “Oh, I’m dreaming! How will I remember it until morning?” In a very monotone voice he repeated three times, “From Brainwash to Hogwash.” His voice faded away and I awoke from a sound sleep.

The title also reflects Jenny Jessop’s personal response to plural marriage. She was born in 1934 to Vergel Yeates Jessop and Verna Spencer Jessop, making her a niece to Mormon fundamentalist leaders Richard S. Jessop (FLDS Priesthood Council) and J. Lyman Jessop (Allred Priesthood Council). She spent her first twelve years in and around Short Creek with the Mormon fundamentalists located there. In 1946, her mother escaped from her polygamous marriage and took her family to St. George, Utah. Nevertheless, twelve-year-old Jenny continued to maintain contacts with her fundamentalist friends and family for years.

Larson recalls that, after her parents’ excommunication from the LDS Church in about 1940, “my Mom’s double cousin Mae came into the picture” soon afterward as her father’s plural wife (7). She concluded: “I saw enough of polygamy to know that there was always a favorite wife. Of course maybe it wouldn’t be too bad if I could be the first and favorite wife. That way I could carry the man’s name and be his favorite too.
There weren't very many first wives who were favorite wives too, the way I saw it. The plural wives were usually a lot younger and prettier but it didn't take very many years for them to look as haggard and tired as the other wives” (49).

In Larson's polygamous family, her mother, the first wife, was apparently not the favorite: “If I was a man and had to choose between Mae, a little young teenager, and Mom, a sickly woman with a bunch of kids, I don’t think it would be hard to decide. Especially if I was forty years old like Daddy was. I know Mom tried to make it work but it was too hard to share her husband with a pretty young girl. Of course Daddy wanted it to work! His spot in the Celestial Kingdom depended on polygamy according to his religion” (20). Although Vergel had apparently supported Verna and her nine children, after the plural marriage “Daddy didn’t give us any money so Mom had to get on public welfare” (21; see also 35).

One of Jenny’s Short Creek childhood memories was of “a funny man who built a little one room house out of old tires. . . . His wife was pretty and she had a little baby. That man wouldn’t let his wife wear jewelry. He’d go around growling like a lion. He claimed to be the one mighty and strong. I thought he was mighty odd. His name was Ben LeBaron” (24). Jenny’s memory of the 1944 polygamy raid when she was ten is an interesting narrative from the child’s perspective, also unique in that she describes her father’s travails apart from the more famous fifteen men who were tried in Phoenix. Jenny’s father was convicted and incarcerated in Denver, Colorado (61–65).

Larson, unlike Debbie Palmer resisted the “Law of Placing”: “God tells men who to marry and yet we’re all supposed to be his children. No one ever talked about God asking if the girls minded who he had chosen for them. Besides, why did he have to tell it to a man? Didn’t he think girls had ears? I know of quite a few girls who were told who to marry, that didn’t like the idea at all. Even tears didn’t keep them from being given to some old geezer they didn’t want. If its [sic] God’s will and you get your reward in heaven you must keep in mind that the more you suffer here, the bigger the reward in Heaven” (42). Then she added her own commentary: “Hogwash!”

Larson did not live at Short Creek after age twelve and does not always specify how she knows some of the episodes she describes. However, many of her narratives fit other accounts. For instance, she states that, after attending school through the eighth grade, girls “were supposed to get married.” She noticed the disappearance about this time of several girls her age: “It wasn’t hard to figure out what happened. Whenever any young girl came up missing you automatically knew she’d been given to some old man in polygamy. . . . After several months of absence the girl would reappear carrying a baby. The big mystery was solved. Many times the girls didn’t even leave town. They would stay under cover during the day only to sneak out at night to take a little stroll” (30, 34).
She also reported: “I’d already been told it was all right to marry a first cousin if your last names weren’t the same” (70).

By the time Jenny was sixteen, even though she was living in St. George, she received “several marriage proposals from the boys from Short Creek.” The most formal proposal came when she was seventeen and was called out of class to talk to a visitor waiting in the hall:

I saw an older guy from Short Creek standing there and I sort of suspected what it was all about. He asked me to go for a walk so we could talk. As we left the building and started walking up the sidewalk, he looked at me and told me the brethren had sent him down to talk to me about marriage. They thought I would make him a good wife and he was sent to propose to me. When he asked me if I would marry him I gasped, “My gosh! I don’t even know you. I mean I know you but we’ve never dated. Besides I’m not ready for marriage!” . . . He begged me to go with him out to talk to the brethren. . . . My thoughts were getting wild. Who the heck did they think I was anyway, some piece of furniture being auctioned off? Well, I had news for them. What right did those old men have trying to control my life? . . . What hogwash! (77)

Jenny refused to go with him, married a non-polygamist at age eighteen (79), and kept her distance from all religions professing polygamy as a tenet.

This homespun memoir is full of interesting recollections and the writer’s frustrations with polygamy beginning in the 1940s. The second half of the book contains more than a dozen vignettes of other individuals who suffered as a consequence of FLDS polygamy. No index is provided, but the text is richly supplemented with dozens of photographs, many never previously published. While it may be difficult to document some of Jenny Jessop Larson’s assertions, she has produced a fascinating and entertaining recollection that would prove useful to anyone interested in Mormon fundamentalism as practiced at Short Creek (later Colorado City), Arizona.

In December 2001, Kathleen Tracy, a Los Angeles–based writer focused her journalistic attention on Mormon polygamy. As the author of more than twenty books and as a contributor to numerous domestic and international magazines, she knew a story when she saw one and wrote The Secret Story of Polygamy.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that students of Mormon history will find her contribution very useful. While four chapters of The Secret Story of Polygamy are devoted to a history of the LDS Church and polygamy (19–79), it appears that her eye for the sensational got the best of her. In addition to a summary of the well-known pre-1890 period of Mormon polygamy, she also includes a three-page discussion of the alleged connection of the Spaulding Manuscript to the Book of Mormon (40–42), four pages on the Mountain Meadows Massacre (67–70) and four pages on “blood atonement” (35, 74–76). Her sources include a disturbingly disproportionate number of acknowledged anti-Mormon writers (24, 31,
38, 40, 70, 76, 116), and she claims, “It is extremely difficult for any non-Mormon to obtain a copy of the book [Doctrine and Covenants]” (79).

Concerning the history of contemporary polygamy, Tracy commits an error that is common to essentially all historians documenting the rise of post-1904 polygamy. She skips over the crucial start-up years of 1904 to 1934 without a single sentence (80–81). The details she provides are often in error but invariably create a negative view of the LDS Church and its leaders (115, 118). Echoing a common Mormon fundamentalist tradition not found in the teachings of LDS Church leaders, she claims that “a minimum of three [plural wives] was required” (27) and “the more wives you had, the higher your place would be in heaven” (37).8

Unfortunately Tracy provides no references for such statements as: “In 1978, 70 percent of the teenage brides [in Utah] were pregnant at

7 For example in dealing with the 1904–34 period of renegade plural marriages, Richard S. Van Wagoner, Mormon Polygamy: A History (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 182–85, discusses the 1904–11 conflict of Apostles John W. Taylor and Matthias Cowley with their quorum, then moves immediately to a discussion of Lorin Woolley and his claims during the 1920s and 1930s. Admittedly a one-volume history may have required compression; however, that crucial period has been significantly neglected.

8 Tracy is repeating a common fundamentalist tradition that equates the blessings of exaltation with the number of wives. Lorin Woolley was apparently the first to suggest this idea in 1932: “To be the head of a Dispensation, 7 wives necessary. [The head of] the Patriarchal Order must have 5 wives. President of the Church—3 wives.” Quoted in Joseph White Musser, “Book of Remembrance,” 21, holograph, n.d., photocopy in my possession; see also Items from a Book of Remembrance of Joseph W. Musser (N.p., n.d.), 16; Moroni Jessop, Testimony of Moroni Jessop (N.p., n.d.), 2, photocopy in my possession. The LeBaron polygamists in Mexico apparently share this doctrine: “A small percentage of the leaders of the sect have between five and nine wives, adhering to the sect’s code of building up a ‘quorum.’ Three are needed for a rudimentary quorum, five wives are adequate for a medium quorum, but seven and sometimes twelve wives are required for the highest quorum of all.” Janet Bennion, Desert Patriarchy: Mormon and Mennonite Communities in the Chihuahua Valley (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 135. I am unaware that any LDS Church leader ever taught that a greater number of wives and posterity equates to greater eternal glory. President Wilford Woodruff’s letter to Samuel Amos Woolley, fourth bishop of Salt Lake City Ninth Ward, on May 22, 1888 (before the Manifesto), states that being married to two wives constituted full compliance: “You ask some other questions concerning how many living wives a man must have to fulfill the law. When a man, according to the revelation, married a wife under the holy order which God has revealed and then married another in the same way . . . so far as he has gone he has obeyed the law. I know of no requirement which makes it necessary for a man
their weddings. And a young woman is more apt to be raped in Utah than she is in California" (119). She also asserts:

While civil divorces in Utah are easily gotten, it is very difficult for Mormon women in general to obtain divorces in the Church because of the doctrine of celestial marriage. . . . After a civil divorce, a woman’s “temple recommend” is revoked; in other words, she is then considered unworthy to enter the Temple until she can prove to the heads of the Church that the divorce was not caused by adultery. To do this, the woman has to describe her sexual activities in a series of letters to male church authorities. Once she is deemed worthy again, she needs to obtain a “cancellation of sealing” so she doesn’t have to spend eternity with her ex-husband and so she can remarry in the church. In addition to the cancellation of sealing, Mormon women have always been required to obtain permission from their estranged partners and the Mormon church First Presidency before being allowed to remarry in a temple ceremony. (115)

However she provides a useful bibliography and index.

Despite her mistaken view that John Daniel Kingston is “one of Utah’s most prominent Mormons” (v), she provides one of the best in-depth looks at the super-secret Kingston financial empire currently available, a genuine contribution. She also furnishes a detailed though undocumented history of sixteen-year-old Mary Ann Kingston’s ordeal (8–18, 85–121, 143–74), who was forced to marry her uncle, David Ortell Kingston. When she tried to escape, her father, John Daniel Kingston, belt-whipped her until she fainted. John Daniel pled guilty and served a seven-month jail sentence (151, 168). David Ortell fought the charges, was convicted of incest, and was given a four-year prison term (154–81).

Tracy also includes an interesting history of former polygamist wives and Tapestry against Polygamy founders Carmen Thompson, Laura Chapman, Vicky Prunty, Rowenna Erickson, and Lillian Bowles, recording their frustrations with polygamy and Utah state law enforcement agencies (123–42).

It appears that Tracy’s limited research and biases have undermined the usefulness of the history of plural marriage she provides. Nevertheless, her documentation of some contemporary practices of polygamy, especially concerning the Kingston clan, will be helpful to anyone studying Mormon dissenters practicing plural marriage today.

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to have three living wives at a time.” Photocopy of typescript in my possession.
Among the many books published about Joseph Smith in 2005 is this collection of essays, almost all of which were written by faculty members in the College of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. The companion volume to a six-hour series of the same name produced by BYU Television (now available as a DVD), *Joseph* may be useful for a general Latter-day Saint audience but it is not essential reading for informed readers.

The producer of the companion television series said that the book emerged because “great scholarship . . . was going into the writing” of the script. He also said it would help viewers to “delve deeper into the different aspects of Joseph’s life.” 1 I suspect that most readers of the *Journal of Mormon History* would disagree with his assessment. The essays do not delve very deeply into the Prophet’s life or ministry, they rarely reveal or employ new sources, and they almost never suggest or even engage new or alternative interpretations of familiar events. Someone who views the documentary and then goes to the book to “delve deeper” will probably be disappointed, though the footnotes and bibliography may offer helpful leads.

The book itself is well constructed, containing thirty-nine chapters with endnotes, a seventeen-page bibliography, and a twenty-page index. Thirty-nine illustrations by well-known artists supplement the text, and some of the art may spur as many thoughts and questions as do the essays. I see some parallels between the topical structure of *Joseph* and the first twenty-two chapters of *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, a survey of Mormon history produced by the Church Educational System. Indeed, the essays focus on early Mormon history as much as they do on Joseph himself. Overall, I think that *Joseph* makes a rather slim contribution to our understanding of the Prophet. In fact, two books that Susan Easton Black helped edit years ago seem to probe Joseph Smith in more interesting ways. 2 This new anthology favors breadth over depth.

That said, some essays do communicate thought-provoking observations: Scott Faulring asserts that Joseph transcribed several Nephite

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2. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, eds., *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988); Susan Easton...
“Caractors” from the plates for the benefit of Oliver Cowdery rather than Martin Harris, as has usually been assumed (94 note 17). Kent Jackson provides a fine-grained narrative of the painstaking process to produce the first edition of the Book of Mormon, noting, for instance, that Egbert Grandin’s employees placed some “forty thousand pieces of type” to print a typical sixteen-page signature (115 note 13). In Robert J. Matthews’s overview of Joseph’s “translation” of the Bible, he recounts that scribes copied the entire text of the Old and New Testaments by hand, then later annotated these manuscripts as the Prophet studied the King James Version and dictated revisions (178–79).

Steven Harper argues that early revelations identified “the mainstream [American] culture,” with its emphasis on self-interest and individualism, as “the most dangerous ‘enemy’” stalking the infant Church. The call to gather, Harper contends, helped protect Latter-day Saints against this threat as it required them “to decide whether to serve themselves or the Lord” (134–35). Milton Backman concludes that one of the primary purposes of the School of the Prophets was to help members “recognize and learn to listen to the Spirit” (171). In his essay about the call of the Twelve and the Seventy, Richard E. Turley Jr. reports that Joseph Smith reviewed, altered, and approved a list of twelve apostles proposed by the Three Witnesses before the calls were issued (233, 239 note 14), and he also shares some interesting prophetic predictions in regard to those calls (230–35). Reid Neilson treats the 1837 financial crisis in Kirtland as the “meridian of Joseph Smith’s spiritual career,” addressing questions about Joseph’s prophetic authority before and after those events that may merit further inquiry (264).

Alex Baugh helpfully clarifies the meaning of Governor Lilburn Boggs’s 1838 “exterminating order.” Though Boggs treated the Mormons unfairly, his order did not authorize a blood bath, nor did it cause the Haun’s Mill massacre, nor did it allow any Missourian to gun down any Mormon he met, contrary to persistent folk tales. Instead, the governor used “exterminate” in a manner consistent with Webster’s 1828 dictionary definition—“to drive from within the limits or borders” of his state (292–93). Baugh reproduces most of Governor Christopher S. Bond’s June 1976 statement that rescinded Boggs’ order, branded it unconstitutional, and expressed “deep regret for the injustice and undue suffering” it caused. Baugh also notes that Governor Bond first issued his gesture of goodwill to members of the Far West Stake of the Reorganized Church (292–94, 295 note 16).

William Hartley shares Wandle Mace’s poignant account of a Church conference outside Quincy, Illinois in May 1839, where the singing of a hymn about Zion deeply moved the Prophet. So recently freed

from imprisonment in Missouri, “Joseph was overcome” as he contemplated the words of the hymn in light of recent events—"he could scarcely refrain from weeping” as he stood to speak (316). Kent Jackson surveys Joseph’s Nauvoo preaching, reminding us how heavily he relied on the Bible compared to modern scripture and summarizing key doctrinal contributions of those sermons (371, 373–77). Cynthia Doxey observes that one purpose of the Nauvoo Relief Society was to prepare women for temple ordinances (364). Fred Woods demonstrates that the Nauvoo city ordinance on religious liberty, rather than serving as a cloak for Mormon monopoly, sprang from Joseph’s deep-seated views about human agency and religious freedom (380–85). Richard Bennett engages critics of the Nauvoo Legion, observing that it differed little from other city militias in Illinois and that Joseph’s appointment as lieutenant general by no means signaled Nauvoo’s independence from the state’s regular chain of command. On the other hand, he acknowledges that overlapping jurisdiction between legion members and the Nauvoo police force and the use of some legion members to prevent Joseph’s extradition to Missouri probably aggravated neighbors’ fears of Mormon power (394–97). Lastly, Donald Cannon and Zachary Largey consider what it means to say that the martyrdom of a prophet would “seal” his testimony (406–8).

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Reviewed by John S. Dinger

Though published almost twenty years ago, Zion in the Courts is still the authority on the legal experience of the Latter-day Saints. Both authors are well qualified to write this book; Firmage and Mangrum are both accomplished law professors at the University of Utah and Creighton University respectively. The book’s purpose, in the words of its authors, is to “examine . . . Mormon experiences with the civil law and Mormon attempts to implement a church court system” (ix). Though this goal is a lofty one, the authors are able to achieve it and more. The real strength of the book is placing the Mormons in their nineteenth-century legal setting, which explains why many of the events in their history happened the way they did.

For example, after granting the Nauvoo Charter in 1840, the Illi-
nois State Legislature attempted to repeal it, beginning in 1842 and succeeding in 1846. Though the Saints were horrified at this action, it was not a new one. The authors explain that these problems were already being discussed at the time and were not specifically targeted at Mormons: “Although the United States Supreme Court in Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge had just rejected the notion that state legislatures could grant charters irrepealable by later legislatures, the 1819 case Dartmouth College v. Woodward, which had held that a later legislature could not unilaterally modify a charter granted by an earlier legislature, still influenced the thinking of many in state and local government” (88–89). Such background and context is important when analyzing such Mormon statements as: “What reliance can be placed upon a legislature that will one session grant a charter to a city, with ‘perpetual succession,’ and another session take it away?”1 In the beginning, the actions of the Illinois legislature were not directed only at harassing the Mormons. There was a popular and legal movement toward repealing all charters. It is clear that, when Nauvoo’s was repealed, it was less about legality and more about prejudice. Zion in the Courts provides many similar instances of context and background for events in Mormon history.

Zion in the Courts is divided into three parts, each of which describes a distinct period in LDS legal history. The first section, “Early Mormon Legal Experience,” discusses legal struggles from the New York period through Nauvoo. The second section, “A Turbulent Coexistence: Church and State Relations in Utah,” focuses primarily on the legal issues and efforts related to the practice of polygamy. The third and final section, “The Ecclesiastical Court System in the Great Basin,” discusses specific topics in the late nineteenth century, such as gentile law, Church courts, dispute resolution, land policy, and water law.

The first section discusses many of the court trials familiar to Mormon history, such as legal complaints about Joseph Smith’s treasure-digging and his lawsuit against Philastus Hurlburt, but also introduces lawsuits not commonly discussed such as the 1835 Pratt v. Howell, in which Parley P. Pratt sued to recover damages for assault in Mentor, Ohio: an individual threw eggs at him while he was preaching. Despite its somewhat comic character, this seemingly insignificant case shows that the Saints were willing to use the court system early on to address wrongs directed toward them.

The legal response to Mormon polygamy has received sustained attention for decades, most notably in Sarah Barringer Gordon’s award-winning The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Still, the analysis provided by Firmage and Mangrum re-

1 Editorial, The Wasp, quoted in History of the Church, 5:306. John Taylor was then The Wasp’s editor.
mains important. While *The Mormon Question* deals with sophisticated legal questions of Constitutional interpretation and the effect of the Mormon cases on U.S. legal history, *Zion in the Courts* is comprehensive enough to give the reader the whole story but is also easy to read and understand, even for the casual reader.

The major strength of the third section is the discussion of LDS Church courts and how they developed from their origins in high council courts from the 1830s on. It is especially interesting to see that Church courts face the same issues of state and federal courts: jurisdiction, rules of evidence, appellate procedures, and enforcement of decisions. This discussion is particularly significant in its description and analysis of excommunication cases, particularly because such records are not accessible today. The authors describe, in part, the reasons for conducting such hearings:

To achieve the twin objectives of social harmony and personal righteousness among the Saints, ecclesiastical leaders wielded sanctions with some acuity. The key concept was repentance, which usually included asking forgiveness of the person or persons wronged. Church leaders extolled the virtues of voluntary reconciliation, encouraging members to freely request and extend forgiveness to other community members. Voluntary reconciliation, even if the threat of sanctions hovered in the background, enhanced social harmony by increasing the chances of a permanent solution. . . . A bishop in an 1883 case . . . "expressed his regret at the necessity of having to sit in judgment on his brethren. Said he has always endeavored to bring about a reconciliation among the parties before proceeding to trial." . . . Despite conciliatory efforts, however, church courts used their powers to ensure they would be taken seriously. Members who refused to appear at the hearing were disfellowshipped for “contempt of the priesthood” and were restored only after willingly submitting to the court’s jurisdiction. (288–89)

The discussion of such time-specific topics as water law, land policy, and torts will probably have limited appeal for the general reader. Overall, *Zion in the Courts* is an excellent study that maintains an enduring appeal both to those interested in Mormons and the law or, more generally, nineteenth-century Mormon legal and social history.

The book’s most significant limitation is that its analysis ends with 1900. As a law student at the University of Utah, I was able to take a course from Collin Mangrum when he was a visiting professor. He commented that he planned to write a second volume, covering from 1900 to the present. I sincerely hope that this project will come to fruition. Having Professor Mangrum’s take on events such as the Reed Smoot hearings, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Mormon aspects of civil rights legal issues, and the Church’s current involvement in the anti-gay rights movement would be a great addition to Mormon scholarship.

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Reviewed by Daniel P. Dwyer, O.F.M.

Two hundred years after his birth, in May 2005, Joseph Smith was the subject of a conference sponsored by Brigham Young University and the Library of Congress. The result of the symposium was this volume of seventeen papers by men and women from within and outside the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The papers are divided into five categories, each based on a plenary session of the conference. According to the authors of the introduction, Richard L. Bushman, James H. Hutson, Robert L. Millet, Richard E. Turley Jr., and John W. Welch:

> Several interesting points of discussion, consensus, and divergence arose in this conference. While all agreed that the sincerity and significance of Joseph Smith was not to be doubted, people wondered, Can he best be understood in an American context or transnationally? Should he be approached through the tools of Enlightenment rationality or Romantic sensibilities? How should, or how can, his effulgent approach to religion be characterized? How and why have his seminal ideas become so influential in the lives of his many adherents? What do his prophetic insights and promises offer to people today the world over? (x)

In four of the five plenary sessions, a principal paper was followed by three response papers. The one exception is Part 3, a single essay by Dallin H. Oaks called “Joseph Smith in a Personal World.” Part 1 is “Joseph Smith in His Own Time” with the principal paper being Richard L. Bushman’s “Joseph Smith’s Many Histories”; Part 2 is “Joseph Smith and the Recovery of Past Worlds,” with the principal paper being Terryl L. Givens’s “Joseph Smith: Prophecy, Process, and Plenitude.” Part 4, “Joseph Smith and the Theological World,” is based on David Paulsen’s “Joseph Smith Challenges the Theological World”; and finally, Part 5, “Joseph Smith and the Making of a Global Religion,” is led by Douglas J. Davies’s “World Religions: Dynamics and Constraints.” This special issue also includes photographs of a display constructed for the conference.

As in any compilation, the quality of the papers varies, but a notable feature of this work is the lack of polemic. The approach taken to Joseph Smith by each of the presenters was respectful. If this is the strong point of this work, it is also a weakness, for if “all agreed that the sincer-
ity and significance of Joseph Smith was not to be doubted," then it is clear that harsh criticism of Smith or doubts about his motives were not seriously entertained. Still, many of the essays were thought provoking, and the civil tone of the discourse was refreshing.

Though the focus of this compilation is on the person and work of Joseph Smith, it also ventures into the related issues of the Book of Mormon and Mormonism as a potential “world religion.” A fascinating part of this book for the non-Mormon reader is found in the sections that deal with Smith’s challenge to the world of theology. There are interesting juxtapositions of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mormon, and Protestant outlooks on authority, deification, Christology, mission, and ritual. One encounters some intriguing grounds for future dialogue among these traditions.

For example, from a Catholic perspective, a key section of this work is found in Roger R. Keller’s paper, “Authority and Worldwide Growth.” Keller says of his own conversion to Mormonism: “When I saw that I did not have the authority [as a Presbyterian minister] to administer the saving ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the priesthood of God restored by Joseph Smith, that made all the difference for us [Keller and his wife], and we became Latter-day Saints” (308). He further notes: “The return of the authority to administer the saving ordinances of the gospel is the heart of the Restoration. Likewise, the loss of the authority, with the loss of the original Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, is the heart of the apostasy or ‘falling away’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3) that made a restoration necessary” (309).

Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Mormonism share a common concern with authority; and none of these accept the Protestant understanding of sola scriptura. Whether there was indeed a “great apostasy” therefore becomes a crucial issue. The early post-apostolic church should be an area of serious common study for scholars from these three traditions. If the authority of Christ was not lost, the Catholic and/or Orthodox Church would seem to have a claim on Latter-day Saints, and Joseph Smith’s “restoration” would be redundant at best. If, on the other hand, it were somehow proved that authority was indeed lost, then Catholic and Orthodox Christians might find the claims of the Latter-day Saints more compelling.

Likewise, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant scripture scholars should engage some of the interesting points raised in Margaret Barker’s “Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion.” Barker very correctly notes that “Latter-day Saint scholars might have more in common with the more radical elements in contemporary biblical scholarship than with the strictly traditional and conservative people” (71). While some cooperation has taken place in this area, serious scripture scholars may wish to be more engaged with LDS scholars in the study of the Bible; and methods of contemporary biblical scholarship might be extensively used to analyze the texts of latter-day scriptures.
From a historical point of view, the most fruitful portion of this work is Part 1, “Joseph Smith in His Own Time.” The authors reexamine Joseph Smith’s American context but make an attempt to situate Joseph Smith in the broader currents of world history. Richard L. Bushman issues a sort of challenge in this regard: “It is doubtful that a purely American history of the Mormon prophet will explain him. His mind ranged far beyond his own time and place, and we will have to follow if we are to understand. A small history will not account for such a large man” (18).

This compilation is based on the historical record, but much of it is devoted to philosophical and theological reflections on the present and the future. There is little in the way of new information about Joseph Smith. Obviously, despite the positive contributions that this work makes, historians will continue to ask questions of fact, and will search for evidence that might, once and for all, solve the enigma that is Joseph Smith—for the basic questions still remain. Did Joseph Smith write the Book of Mormon? Did he really have writings of Abraham and Moses in his possession? Can the Book of Mormon someday be proved true, or definitely disproved? The evidence may never be persuasive for all.

In the final analysis, historians, like all other men and women, will have to wrestle with the perennial and complex relationship between faith and reason. Nevertheless, this volume presents the work of dedicated scholars who are willing to engage each other with candor, mutual respect and serious thought. That, in itself, makes this a worthwhile, and sometimes exciting, work.

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Reviewed by Richard D. Ouellette

Danish Apostle is the tenth volume in the Signature Books ongoing Significant Mormon Diaries Series. This invaluable series has provided researchers with published editions of some of the most important primary sources in Mormon, Utah, and Western history. A majority of the volumes issued thus far have focused on those critical transitional de-
cades between 1890 and 1920 when the U.S. government forced the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to abandon polygamy and theocratic politics. To date, the series includes such pertinent records from that period as the journals or memoirs of Reed Smoot, B. H. Roberts, Rudger Clawson, John Henry Smith, and James Henry Moyle. To this impressive lineup, John P. Hatch now adds the diaries of Anthon H. Lund, one of the era’s most valuable records.

Anthon H. Lund has been largely forgotten. Little has been written about the man. He published few works, never founded a settlement, never served as Church president, never held a prominent political office, and rarely, if ever, stirred controversy. Yet Lund served in the First Presidency for almost two decades. He was something of a pioneer for international Mormonism, particularly Scandinavian Mormonism. He worked behind the scenes to shape some of the Church’s most lasting historical and theological works. He wielded substantial clout as a political, financial, and educational powerbroker. And he worked tirelessly to dampen fires of controversy that engulfed those around him.1

Lund was born in Denmark in 1844, only weeks before the murder of Joseph Smith. He was raised by his grandmother after the untimely death of his young mother. Following the example of his uncle, Lund joined the LDS Church on his twelfth birthday. He was a precocious young man with a gift for languages and a reading ability far beyond that of his peers. While still in his mid-teens, he served a proselytizing mission in which, among other responsibilities, he read English to Danish members and presided over the Aalborg Branch. In 1862 he emigrated with his grandmother to the United States and settled in Sanpete County, Utah, a stronghold of Scandinavian Saints. He was just eighteen.

Over the next quarter-century, Lund taught school, married Sarah Ann (“Sanie”) Peterson, acquired U. S. citizenship, raised a large family, served in the Utah Territorial Legislature, completed several missions, and served as president of the Scandinavian Mission. In 1889, to the surprise of virtually everyone, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles selected the relatively unknown Lund to replace the late Erastus Snow, the apos-

tle who opened the Scandinavian mission in 1850. As a new apostle, Lund became Church Historian, superintendent of the LDS Board of Education, and president of the Manti Temple, the European Mission, and the Utah Genealogical Society. In 1901, Joseph F. Smith, the new Church president, selected Lund as his second counselor. Lund subsequently became a leading figure in many of the Church’s financial and educational institutions—ZCMI, LDS University, Zion’s Savings Bank, Utah National Bank, Knight Sugar, and the Hotel Utah. In 1910, Lund became Smith’s first counselor, replacing the late John R. Winder. While retaining many of his previous responsibilities, Lund now became president of the Salt Lake Temple, the State Historical Society, Amalgamated Sugar, and Consolidated Salt, and a member of the commission overseeing the construction of the state capitol.

During his decades of service, Lund also served as an editorial sounding-board for the Church’s best historians and theologians: Andrew Jenson, B. H. Roberts, James E. Talmage, Charles W. Penrose, and John A. Widtsoe. Their collaboration resulted in such lasting works as *The History of the Church*, *The Articles of Faith*, and *Jesus the Christ*. Recognizing Lund’s exemplary seventeen years of service to Joseph F. Smith, in 1918 the new LDS president, Heber J. Grant, retained Lund as first counselor. As the longest-serving member of the Twelve behind Grant, Lund stood next in line to become Church president. But he died in March 1921 from complications associated with a duodenal ulcer.

Among his apostolic brethren in the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency, Anthon H. Lund was something of an anomaly. At the time of his ordination in 1889, his colleagues were all native-English-speakers from England, Canada, and the United States. Few could speak other languages. Those who hadn’t been reared as Mormons came from Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist backgrounds. Without exception, all were practicing polygamists. And aside from George Teasdale, all were related to one another through blood or marriage. In contrast, Lund came from Denmark, a non-English-speaking country. He knew several European languages. He came from a Lutheran background, was a lifelong monogamist, and had no kin among the apostles. Rather than speculate on millennial or doctrinal matters like some of his apostolic predecessors, moreover, Lund preferred to focus on the temporal programs and progress of the Church. And while some of his colleagues were regularly embroiled in personal, religious, and political conflicts, Lund was considered a peacemaker who, despite his unwavering commitment to the Mormon Church and the Republican Party, fostered comity among adversaries. Lund, in effect, embodied

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Mormonism’s transition from the combative, tribal, polygamist, and millenarian ideals of the Great Basin Kingdom to the assimilated, international religion of the twentieth-century. He was, in a sense, a pioneer of modern Mormonism.

As Hatch explains in the introduction to Danish Apostle, the diaries of Anthon H. Lund number forty-one volumes and span some six decades, from 1860 to 1921. Lund wrote sporadically during the first three decades, but became a somewhat regular, if terse, diarist in 1890. Following his 1898 mission to Palestine, however, his entries improved dramatically in both detail and regularity. Over the remaining twenty-three years of his life, Lund produced one of the great Mormon diaries. In the 1970s, five decades after his father’s death, George Cannon Lund donated the diaries to the LDS Archives with the stipulation that they must be open for research. They quickly became a pivotal source. D. Michael Quinn cited Lund repeatedly in “The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: An American Elite” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1976). And the diaries proved indispensable to Thomas G. Alexander’s seminal Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930.

Anthon H. Lund stood at the epicenter of religion, politics, finance, education, and historical scholarship in Utah. And because he was an intelligent, pastoral, and conciliatory man, individuals of all stripes came to him with their interests and concerns. Readers will therefore find a bonanza of information and anecdotes in Danish Apostle—some moving, some funny, many fascinating. I’ll list but a few: George and Abraham Cannon’s visceral reaction to the death of their son and brother (8–9); the stripping of Moses Thatcher’s priesthood and apostleship (24); Apostle Franklin D. Richards’s evidence for an 1830 rather than 1829 dating of the Melchizedek Priesthood restoration (28); Lorenzo Snow’s explanation for the origins of his couplet, “As God was—so man is. As God is so man may be” (31); Lund’s loss for words over the Scofield mining disaster (83); the discovery of Joseph Smith’s earliest journal (89); the clash between President Joseph F. Smith and Lorenzo Snow’s heirs (162–63); foot races between Lund, his brethren, and their wives (242–43); the debate over a second manifesto on plural marriage (271); Lund’s vigorous defense of women’s suffrage (411–12); Lund’s refusal to allow deposed apostle Matthias Cowley to bless his son (413); the embarrassing applause Joseph F. Smith and company received at a wrestling match (454); Governor William Spry’s and Bishop Charles W. Nibley’s efforts to get LDS leaders to withdraw their support for a prohibition bill (569); LDS leaders’ reaction to Joseph F. Smith’s vision of the spirit world (710, 713); and Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith’s effort to have his office sustained before that of the presidency (723). Suffice it to say, there is a plethora of stories and information here.

Hatch suggests that Lund wrote his diaries “as if he were speaking to a close friend” (xxxvi). The diaries served as an outlet for gossip, criticisms, and observations that the diplomatic Lund would have shared
with few others. In 1901, for example, shortly after Joseph F. Smith succeeded Lorenzo Snow as LDS president, Lund had this to say about one of Brigham Young’s more colorful sons:

John W. Young was in the office. He told me about how much money he spent in Washington [D.C.] in order to influence opinion in our favor. I have my doubts on this matter. I have heard that large sums were placed in his hands and there had been no accounting. As he has no idea how he spends money, and he spent a fortune[,] he has an idea he spent it for the Church. I have an idea that he thought Brigham [Young Jr.] was the rightful successor to Prest. [Lorenzo] Snow and that he came expecting to manipulate his brother in financial matters. (157)

Lund commented on an exhibit at the state fair: “We saw Bro. C. C. A. Christensen’s picture. We could tell it was his as soon as we saw it for he has little versatility while his idea is good” (92). He wrote of Apostle-Senator Reed Smoot: “I wish he would quit using his put on twang in speaking” (485). And of Apostle Heber J. Grant’s business acumen he remarked: “How many schemes revolve in his head!” (99).

Though candid, Lund was also a prudent diarist. He recorded the most sensitive information in shorthand or foreign languages. In October 1896, for instance, Apostle Lund wrote: “I was appointed a mission to go and see the Sevier and Panguitch [Utah] Stake and work with the leading men for {electing Pres Geo. Q [Cannon] as our Senator [Danish]}” (23). In 1908, during the LDS leadership’s belated crackdown on new plural marriages, Lund noted: “A man from Idaho asked {if his daughter could go in as a second wife. The president said anyone whom she took will be cut off from the Church. [shorthand]}” (375). Lund apparently deemed some matters too controversial to record at all, even in a foreign language. Circumstantial evidence indicates that in 1897–98, several years after Woodruff’s 1890 Manifesto withdrawing official support for new plural marriages, the loyal Lund solemnized two clandestine plural marriages at Woodruff’s request. Lund mentioned neither event in his diary. His pen fell completely and conspicuously silent during the trip to southern California to perform the first sealing.3

Signature Books obviously could not publish all 8,720 pages of the Lund diaries. John P. Hatch had to decide what to include and exclude and therefore focused exclusively on the three decades Lund served as a General Authority. Readers interested in the first thirty years of Lund’s diaries will still need to consult the holograph. Hatch further limits the parameters by concentrating on “entries focused on meetings with other LDS leaders or prominent Utahns” (6). As a result, readers will find little here about Lund’s marriage, family, and the sundry trips and missions he took as a General Authority—the 1891–93 Manti Temple presidency,

his 1893–96 European Mission presidency, the 1898 trip to Palestine, the 1903 excursion to Canada, the 1909 trip to Europe, or the 1919 dedication of the Hawaii Temple. Given that Lund spent much of his early apostleship away on missions and didn’t write many detailed entries at the time, Hatch devotes just thirty-five pages to the diary entries dated between 1890 and mid-1898. All in all, then, Danish Apostle has a definite thematic and chronological concentration: It focuses on Lund’s meetings with prominent religious, financial, political, and educational figures in Utah during his decades as an apostle and counselor, particularly the years 1898–1921.

Hatch’s parameters seem reasonable. Without excluding much of Lund’s life and ministry, the size of the book would have been prohibitive. Given the clarity of Hatch’s parameters, moreover, a publisher could easily supplement Danish Apostle with Lund’s mission diaries or Lund’s pre-apostolic diaries. Having said that, I must say that I (and probably Hatch as well) wished that Lund’s mission and travel entries could have been retained. Hatch includes three intriguing entries from Lund’s Palestinian mission that left me wanting more (41–42). And given that Apostle Matthias Cowley solemnized a clandestine plural marriage in Big Horn, Wyoming, during Lund’s brief stopover with Joseph F. Smith, I would like to have known what Lund wrote during that visit.4 But again, these are events left for another book (hopefully).

Within the parameters that Hatch has set, I am not fully qualified to assess his selection of entries, for I have not read Lund’s unabridged diaries. What I can say, however, is that his selection process seems consistent throughout. Many of the same subjects appear again and again—plural marriage, council meetings, election days, prohibition, the Utah State Capitol Commission, and so on. There weren’t many entries that didn’t broach a subject discussed in an earlier or subsequent entry. Given this topical continuity, I was generally, if not always, capable of following Lund’s reporting of events.

To provide a less subjective assessment of Hatch’s selections, however, I’ve compared Danish Apostle with some of the secondary scholarship on Lund’s era to determine if the book includes diary entries that scholars have found useful. What I’ve found is that Hatch provides an impressive number of such entries on a wide range of subjects. He includes Lund’s ironic 1901 observation concerning LDS leaders’ political preference: “In regard to a senator[, Thomas] Kearns is thought to be the man who can do us the most good; but what a man to send east! It will be a

bitter pill for many to swallow” (101). He includes Lund’s displeasure at the 1903 decision to upgrade the name of diminutive Brigham Young Academy to Brigham Young University: “I hope their head will grow big enough for the hat” (248). He includes Lund’s 1903 response to the warning that a sugar factory proposed for Cache County would compete with the Church-affiliated sugar trust: “I was afraid greater harm would be done if the people should get an idea that Pres. Smith would hinder our people from starting industries for fear of the Trust” (237). He includes President Joseph F. Smith’s 1910 instructions to the Twelve concerning a prohibition bill: “He said: ‘Yes, I want the brethren to say nothing of State wide prohibition. We may get local option and I think that is the best we can do.’ I brought the Council his message, and quite a discussion arose. [Three apostles were very chagrined [French]]” (438).

Given Danish Apostle’s inclusion of many of the references scholars have found noteworthy, I would conclude—again, speaking as someone who has not examined the original diaries—that Hatch has admirably performed the onerous task of paring down forty-one journal volumes to a single book.

Nonetheless I found some citations that Hatch didn’t, but perhaps should have, included. I’ll cite one example. On December 1, 1897, as Lund prepared for his mission to Palestine, he recorded: “President Woodruff took me to one side and spoke to me concerning Mrs. Mountfert. I was rather astonished.” On the basis of this and other pieces of evidence, D. Michael Quinn and B. Carmon Hardy suspect that Wilford Woodruff informed Lund he had been sealed to Madam Lydia Mountford the previous September in a clandestine plural marriage. However, Woodruff’s biographer, Thomas G. Alexander, thinks Mountford and the LDS leader were good friends rather than partners in plural marriage. He interprets Lund’s astonishment as a sense of surprise that Mountford, a Palestinian Christian, would accompany him and his companion to Palestine. Unfortunately, while Hatch retained an earlier foreshadowing of the Woodruff-Lund conversation dated Novem-

5 Quoted in Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 17, and Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy, 354–55.
7 Quoted in Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 79.
10 Thomas G. Alexander, Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of
ber 18, 1897 (41), he didn’t include the December 1 entry. Whatever the truth of the matter, I think the debate over this passage renders it important enough to include in Danish Apostle. Unfortunately, while Hatch retained an earlier foreshadowing of the Woodruff-Lund conversation dated November 18, 1897 (41), he didn’t see fit to include the subsequent December 1 entry. Hatch mentions the Mountford controversy and actually quotes part of Lund’s December 1 entry in the introduction, but I think it should have been included in its entirety in the main body of the work. 11

Hatch provides a sturdy scholarly scaffolding for Danish Apostle. The introductory essay is outstanding; it gives the reader a firm grasp of Anthon H. Lund’s life, family, and contributions, as well as a sense of what to expect from the diaries. My one criticism here is that Hatch doesn’t say enough about his own labors with the diaries. Did he work with the original Lund diaries at the LDS Church Archives, with D. Michael Quinn’s transcription at Yale’s Beinecke Library, or with a private copy provided by the Lund family? If he completed the bulk of his labors at the LDS Church Archives, did he work with the original diaries, the microfilm copy, or the typescript? Who translated the shorthand and foreign language entries? And from whom did he obtain permission to publish the diaries? Besides the introduction, Hatch also provides a chronology of Lund’s life and biographical sketches of prominent figures mentioned in the diaries, both of which are quite helpful, though the latter could have been more detailed. The index, while generally adequate, has more than a few oversights. I found references to John M. Cannon on some pages (224, 243, 344) unlisted in the index. Finally, Hatch supplies first-rate explanatory footnotes to help the reader understand certain diary entries. He renders complicated subjects comprehensible and addresses historiographical questions with skill. I found the footnotes so useful I wished there were more. On average of about twice per chapter I found myself wishing for a footnote to help me better understand Lund’s comments.

The presentation of the diaries is impressive. We’ve grown accustomed to Ray Morales’s handsome design for the Significant Mormon Diaries Series. Connie Disney’s Baskerville font is a pleasure to read. I sat with the book for long periods at a time and never experienced eye-strain. The collection of photographs, not a standard feature of the series, is a wonderful addition. They enable us to visualize Lund, his fam-


11 Quinn, “New Plural Marriages,” 90 note 323 and 92 note 328, cites two other Lund entries that, I would argue, should also have been included in Danish Apostle. Hatch alludes to one (on p. 113 note 6) but doesn’t include it in the main text.
ily, and the First Presidency as we read along, although I think photographs of the Quorum of the Twelve certainly, and perhaps Lund’s most important political and business associates as well, should have been included. Finally, I found remarkably few typographical errors for a book of this size and a text of this complexity.

John P. Hatch, Signature Books, and the Smith-Pettit Foundation are to be commended for this work. Short of reading Anthon Lund’s unabridged diaries in the LDS Archives, anyone studying the end of pioneer Utah and the beginnings of modern Mormonism should read Danish Apostle.


Reviewed by Claudia L. Bushman

Carol Madsen’s thorough study of Emmeline B. Wells, one of Zion’s preeminent women, has long been anticipated and is greatly appreciated. This carefully crafted, meticulously researched monograph sets out to tell “how a young girl from a small mill village in rural Massachusetts was able, through the strength of her convictions and determination, to transform herself into a self-confident, nationally known spokesperson for women and for her faith” (2). This life story is a chronicle of success against heavy odds.

New England girl, Mormon convert, journalist, activist, reformer, plural wife, Church worker, politician, and club woman, Wells is described in her old age as “our little, delicate, great-minded President [of the LDS Relief Society], walking softly, yet with fierce independence into the room” (98). Wells had not always been this independent. She married three times. Her first husband deserted her, and their only son died young. She was the plural wife of Newel K. Whitney for his last five years and the mother of two of his children. She later became the seventh and last wife of Daniel H. Wells, and they had three children. Then she was a widow for thirty years. This thrice-married mother of six never had a close marital relationship. Her feelings of “inadequacy, loneliness, and
constant longing for ‘the shelter and protection of a strong arm’” (23) forced her into self-reliance.

Because Madsen has a superfluity of materials—thousands of worthy quotations—she has divided Wells’s public and private lives into separate volumes. This public book is then divided into neat, topical chapters, each able to stand alone, as several of them have in earlier versions. Tantalizing private facts are dropped into the narrative as necessary. Given the wealth of material and Wells’s particularly detailed experience, a composite life story would be too long, but rending her life down the middle might have been reconsidered. Would a chronological division have been more successful? Is not Wells’s endless concern about woman’s strength a reaction to her own abandonment by her three husbands? This book leaves us hungry for more personal life.

Although Wells’s early ambition was to write poetry and fiction, she spent thirty-seven years editing the influential Woman’s Exponent, the accomplishment for which she is best known. The journal was the effective public voice of Mormon women. The Exponent gave Wells a cause, a platform, a precarious livelihood, and an opening into public life. Her name first appeared on the masthead in November 1875 when she was forty-seven. Two years later, she was the editor and in time the publisher, business manager, and owner, a position she maintained until the paper closed in 1914.

As editor she devoted much space to the defense of polygamy on moral and social grounds. Plural marriage advanced woman’s status by making her less subordinate and more independent with space for personal development, she argued. “We are not in bondage as [the Gentiles] suppose. We are perfectly capable of thinking for ourselves” (52). She also agitated for woman suffrage and statehood with suffrage. After plural marriage was officially discontinued in 1890 and suffrage reinstated in 1896, those topics were obsolete.

Much of this story has been told before in general terms. Here the material is squarely Emmeline-centric. Madsen’s account of these stories with their juicy quotations from speeches, letters, and several newspapers are the strength of this book. The writer is in total command of her materials and characters and includes detailed information not available elsewhere. Her commentary shows the complexity of the vivid players working for the suffrage, woman’s rights, and statehood movements of the period along with those who opposed them. We tend to deal with the triumphant simplified versions of these movements. But here each convention and campaign is described in detail.

Emmeline Wells and Zina Young Williams traveled to Washington, D.C., in 1879 to the National Woman Suffrage Association’s (NWSA) annual convention to represent Utah’s women who were in danger of losing the vote they had happily exercised. Wells and Williams were invited to address the convention. Writes Madsen:
Emmeline used this speaking opportunity to chastise Congress for seeking to remove the ballot from Utah women. “Congress had better heed what wrong is contemplated to be done by taking away the only safety they enjoy,” she warned. “The women of Utah have never broken any law of that Territory, and it would be unjust as well as impolitic to deprive them of this right.” Zina Williams followed, reinforcing Emmeline’s message, and asked the women of the convention to aid them in their fight to retain the ballot. In support, Sara Spencer then reminded the audience that the women had been invited to the convention and added that polygamy was “preferable to the licensed social evil, which is being advocated by many of our bloated public men.” (163–64)

The Utah women were well treated, but Zina felt she was viewed as a curiosity. “Dear me, what an awful thing to be an Elephant. The ladies all look at me so queer,” she wrote in her diary (163). Wells considered the experience a great personal triumph and confided to her diary, “I thank God I was the first to represent our women in the Halls of Congress” (170). In this pivotal life experience, she promoted herself as well as her church and homeland.

There were many campaigns, conventions, meetings, and elections to which Wells lent her voice, her correspondence, her editorials, and her prestige. Utah women lost the vote in March 1887, due to the Edmunds-Tucker Act, but such setbacks did not stop Wells. At one disappointing juncture, when Wells was asked what she would do next, she replied: “We are going to do just as we did before, only better if we can. . . . We are going to labor in the interests of humanity, in the education and elevation of women and children; we are going to help promote the interests of Zion with all the energy and ability we possess” (190). Indefatigable as well as inspirational and wonderfully quotable, Wells carried on.

B. H. Roberts of the First Council of the Seventy was a thorn in suffragists’ side—including Wells’s—at the Utah constitutional convention for statehood in 1895. By then Utah women had had seventeen years of the vote and almost a decade without it. Roberts opposed woman suffrage. He claimed to regard women highly but argued that “their influence did not come from public platforms but rather from the hearthside and that the political arena could do nothing but debase them,” a familiar argument even today. He prissily claimed that only the most shameless women would sully themselves by going to the polls (283). Wells expressed her dismay in the Exponent: “It is pitiful to see how men opposed to woman suffrage try to make the woman believe it is because they worship them so, and think them far too good, and one would really think to hear those eloquent orators talk, that laws were all framed purposely to protect women in their rights, and men stood ready to defend them with their lives” (284).

This book is full of the lively quotations surrounding these pivotal events, but the things said were not necessarily those that made the difference. Wells worked tirelessly and did, as she said, more work than any
other seven people in activities like lobbying, petitioning, sending letters, giving speeches, and writing editorials. Wells was present at the events, but she was not necessarily central. When the delegates voted on April 18, 1895, Utah’s constitution included suffrage, making it the third state where women could vote. But was Wells responsible? Politics are very complicated and results difficult to credit.

In 1899, Emmeline Wells, then sixty-nine, went to Washington to attend meetings of the National Council of Women (NCW) just after B. H. Roberts’s election to the House of Representatives. She sensed animus against her because of the widespread movement to prevent Roberts, a polygamist, from taking his seat. The dilemma of the women leaders: Should the National Council of Women add its voice to the dissenters, thereby offending the Utah Relief Society and Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, two charter and very supportive members? Wells’s dilemma: If there was a condemnatory resolution, should the Utah delegates walk out? To complicate their decision, the Utah women were privately advised by suffrage leader May Wright Sewall to vote for the anti-Roberts resolution, a golden opportunity for them to gain wider acceptance and prestige.

In the closed-door session of the resolutions committee, Emmeline Wells and Ann M. Cannon, both on the committee, tried to block passage of the anti-Roberts resolution, suggesting the substitution of a less personal resolution. They actually won the day, but the opposition demanded that their negative views also be presented in a minority resolution at the general meeting the next day.

Finally, after the lengthy discussion, a vote was taken on the minority [anti-Roberts] resolution. It was defeated thirty-one to sixteen, leaving the majority [the more moderate compromise] vote before the convention. At this point, Emmeline Wells decided to speak, declaring that “the seating of Mr. Roberts need not be regarded as any menace on the part of the people of Utah. Previous to his nomination,” she explained, “I did all I could to defeat him. I did this as a Republican and a suffragist.” But, she continued, he had been elected by the citizens of Utah and should be allowed to take his congressional seat. She concluded by expressing her regret that “the Mormon question should have been made the main work of the convention.” . . . “There is little doubt,” the Salt Lake Tribune reported, “that the final result was attained by the weight of the representatives from the National Women’s Relief Society and the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Society of Utah, whose arguments and emotional appeals led” to the favorable outcome. (411)

This segment is an example of the Wells-centric focus of this book. Many groups opposed Roberts, and his muted rebuke by the NCW made little difference in the final outcome of his case. More is said of Roberts in this book, but I saw no reference to his failure to be seated in Congress. The action of Wells on her many stages is the focus here, not the larger picture.
Wells concluded her suffrage work by writing the Utah chapter in the great suffrage history edited by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She went on to become active in other organizations such as the Daughters of the Revolution and the National Household Economic Conference. She attended her last suffrage convention in 1902 at age seventy-four. As the older, devoted reform workers died out, they were replaced by younger leaders who cared less about national relationships and organizations and who granted their seniors less deference. Wells feared that the Mormons might return to isolation, losing the hard-won respect of their predecessors. In a letter to Susa Young Gates, she lamented, “If our sisters could only comprehend that we can never be ‘polished stones, etc’ without some preparation—and that we must meet and mingle with people to remove prejudice” (441–42). When national woman suffrage was finally attained in 1920, Emmeline Wells had not only “survived to relish this moment, but through her meticulous record keeping and through her letters, editorials, articles, and diaries, she [had] left her own permanent account of this remarkable story” (369). It is a moment of triumph that the author, as well as Emmeline, shares with the reader.

In 1910 at age eighty-two, Emmeline Wells succeeded to the presidency of the Relief Society. The *Deseret News* found her a natural for this job as she had “come to be looked upon well nigh as an oracle, so familiar is she with all [Relief Society] workings down to the smallest detail.” Wells considered this unexpected elevation to be the “crowning point” of her work for women (475). However, Wells’s Relief Society work is scarcely discussed and is probably (and surprisingly) relegated to the forthcoming Volume 2 on her private life. She presided over Relief Society board meetings until a month before her death at age ninety-three in April 1921.

Wells is less known than her contemporary Eliza R. Snow. One reason is that Snow has a firm lock on the LDS hymnal and particularly the doctrine of the Mother in Heaven. For another, Wells’s political and organizational infighting is too complex and ephemeral to provide the tension, climax, and success of the long-lived historical vignette. For another, Wells’s major concerns—the defense of plural marriage, woman suffrage, Utah statehood, and participation in national and international clubs—are no longer current. Wells was an important actor in and chronicler of her period, and times have changed.

But the writer of such pertinent sentiments as these should be remembered. In 1895, she wrote in her diary, “I have desired with all my heart to do those things that would advance women in moral and spiritual as well as educational work and tend to the rolling on of the work of God upon the earth” (307–8) At age seventy, she wrote in her diary, “I am not sure which is the right course to pursue but am determined to stand for women” (341). Or, as she wrote to Susa Young Gates in 1909, “I have not followed anyone else, but I hope I have kept within the radius
of the true light” (459).

These are words to remember and live by.

Emmeline Wells personified the dilemma of women seeking to define American womanhood in the nineteenth century, an effort still underway in the twenty-first. Wells found strength in her religion, an alien organization to many of her suffrage allies. Mormonism, with all its past and current tensions, is still a seething source of power to those seeking to create their own lives and to define themselves against the world. Emmeline B. Wells has long been an example and mentor to these LDS women examining their past. We owe thanks to Carol Cornwall Madsen for this excellent reconstruction of Wells’s work.

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Reviewed by Cherry B. Silver

Stand As a Witness is an authorized biography of a very influential women leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Young Women’s values which Ardeth Greene Kapp and her board prepared are still recited every week in girls’ classes around the Church. Behind these statements, we learn, lies a philosophy of personal development and esprit de corps close to Ardeth Kapp’s own life outlook. Born in 1931 and reared in Glenwood, Alberta, Canada (population 258 in the 2000 census), Ardeth was the third of five children. Her father Edwin ("Ted") Greene raised cows, turkeys, pigs, and sheep on an eighty-acre farm. Her mother Julia ("June") Leavitt Greene ran a twenty-by-twenty-foot general store in Glenwood. As might be expected, Ardeth assisted in the store and helped at home with her younger sisters. Ardeth later said, “I think that I just grew up with a sense of purpose and planning. I learned it from the crops, with Dad planting and harvesting and Mom buying and selling” (20–21). Just before her father’s death, they talked through material for a book, Echoes from My Prairies (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), “designed to provide life lessons from their experiences as a father and a daughter” (234). Feelings of inadequacy as a student early undermined Ardeth’s self-esteem. She had the grace and
humor to translate painful experiences from her own childhood into learning perspectives in *Miracles in Pinafores and Blue Jeans* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977) and *The Gentle Touch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979) (233–34). When she could not make up eleventh-grade classes missed because of her recovery from serious ear surgery, her parents arranged for her to complete high school in Provo, living in an apartment off campus. Here she began to overcome the reputation of not being college material. She graduated among the top ten students and was voted “Representative Girl” of the senior class (84–85).

Before she left Glenwood, her family entertained four missionaries, including Elder Heber Kapp. Ardeth thought he was wonderful. He wrote in his journal, “Met the bishop’s daughter. She is cute and fun but kind of young” (69). They met again in Utah after his mission. In this section of the biography, Thompson provides stories of Ardeth’s spiritual awakenings and personal growth. Ardeth and Heber married in June 1950 in the Cardston Alberta Temple.

When children did not come to their marriage, Heber and Ardeth gradually built a mature philosophy for facing difficulties: “We who do not have children can wallow in self-pity—or we can experience ‘birth pains’ as we struggle to open the passageway to eternal life for ourselves and others,” wrote Ardeth in *My Neighbor, My Sister, My Friend* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 127. “I bear testimony that instead of wrapping our empty and aching arms around ourselves, we can reach out to others. As we do so, one day we can even be able to hold our friends’ babies and rejoice” (quoted 133).

After marriage she worked in stores and businesses, manifesting energy, inventiveness, and great interest in people. However, at age thirty Ardeth received a prompting: “Time is passing. You must return to school and get your degree” (140). She earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education at the University of Utah in three years while continuing to work full time, then began teaching fourth grade near their home in Bountiful, Davis County.

While a student, she also taught her ward’s MIA Maids and Laurels. Girls who declared they were too busy to attend Mutual were outmatched by Ardeth’s night-and-day schedule. Teacher and girls became friends and co-workers on an elaborate fashion show to raise funds for the stake recreation center: “She later remembered that in the midst of the furor of preparation, she sent a silent prayer heavenward, which she repeated every day until the event was completed: ‘Heavenly Father, if you’ll help me to lead these girls successfully through all of this preparation to a successful outcome, I promise I’ll never get myself involved in such a big project again!’ It was a promise she was destined not to keep” (146).

A calling to the Youth Correlation Committee began her service on the general Church level. She also began working on a master’s degree at Brigham Young University in the fall of 1968 and graduated in
August 1971 in curriculum development along with Carolyn Rasmus, who became a lifelong friend and later her administrative assistant when Kapp served as Young Women president.

President Harold B. Lee called Kapp to be second counselor to general president Ruth Hardy Funk when he reorganized the MIA in November 1972. Sister Funk described Ardeth Kapp’s modus operandi: “She loves to be given an assignment, with the results that are expected, then to be left alone to do it” (213). At this point, the biography offers inside views of how general boards maneuver through correlation and approval processes.

When Ruth Funk and her counselors were released in July 1978, Ardeth joined the Student Life Faculty at BYU. President Jeffrey R. Holland asked her to chair the Advisory Committee on Women’s Concerns. Here the biographer had a chance to provide context on second-wave feminist issues over equality of opportunity and pay. She does not. She simply states that Ardeth took the assignment with reluctance, realized she had much to learn, and worked “on issues such as upward mobility for female faculty” (252).

In the spring of 1984, Ardeth felt that another major Church calling was coming. Two days before April conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley telephoned, and on Saturday Ardeth Greene Kapp was sustained as Young Women general president. She and her board aimed to give young women a sense of identity and “additional recognition” to counter the vagueness of their position in the Church structure compared to Aaronic Priesthood young men (275). Priesthood leaders agreed with her approach, yet early in her administration, they cancelled a Church-wide Young Women satellite broadcast that had already been approved. Stunned, she might have protested. Instead, she called a special board meeting to explain “that an idea might be right, but the timing must be right, too.” With this experience, she developed a philosophy of loyalty:

“I believe in who the Brethren are and I don’t question the revelation they receive... I also believe that [when] you have a stewardship and a responsibility,... you are a resource to the Brethren; you’re not asking for something that you want. You’re bringing information to them to help them guide and direct what they want for the young women of the Church and what you can help facilitate. Learning to work with the Brethren is to understand that there’s only one organizational channel, and it is the priesthood channel.” (277)

The new Young Women’s theme and seven values were finally introduced with great visual impact at a November 1985 conference carried by satellite broadcast. A year later the first Young Women world-wide celebration was held. An estimated “300,000 young women in 128 nations launched helium-filled balloons with messages of testimony and hope attached, creating a rainbow of goodwill throughout the world” (297). Bell ringing was the motif of the second worldwide cele-
boration held in 1989 in recognition of Brigham Young’s calling his daughters to daily devotionals. My husband and I were laboring as missionaries with district callings in remote Lubumbashi, Zaire, Africa, and worked frantically to locate bells for the young women to ring. Those African girls in their sandals, long, colorful, wrapped skirts and blouses responded positively to the vibrancy of the Young Women values. They carried banners as they marched and sang in French “Called to Serve,” emulating the Tabernacle processional which had originally announced the Young Women Theme.

Since her release as Young Women general president in April 1992, Ardeth has served beside her husband, when he was called as president of the Canada Vancouver Mission and later as president of the Cardston Alberta Temple. She continues to hold special assignments in Utah. After working with Ardeth at This Is the Place Heritage Park, Elder M. Russell Ballard commented, “She has a great sense of history and she’s very creative. Her mind doesn’t slow down. It’s going 100 miles an hour all the time!” (355). Later he predicted, “Ardeth’s name will be numbered among the great women of the Church” (371).

Readers generally will enjoy this story of a dynamic Mormon women leader and welcome the book’s honesty of outlook and use of many primary sources—journals, interviews, letters, and personal recollections. In an interview, author Anita Thompson explained that she had been interested in tracing Ardeth Kapp’s journey from smalltown Glenwood, Alberta, to Young Women general president. In agreeing to a biography, Kapp had instructed her, “When you finish I want people to know me, and I don’t want it to be a documentary.” So Thompson used a litmus test in selecting material: if the story made her cry, if the story made her laugh, she used it.1 Other than selecting, Thompson does not appear to critique or analyze the account she narrates.

History buffs, therefore, may be disappointed on three or four counts. No citations are given, except parenthetically in the text and then only for published speeches, books, and scripture verses. Although Ardeth’s early writings are summarized on pages 233–34 and later works are mentioned on 311 and 359, no formal bibliography lists Kapp’s books and articles. Historical facts are hard to pin down. Instead of appearing in chronological sequence, births, marriages, and careers of her siblings are tucked into chapters along the way. More consequentially, Anita Thompson does not situate Ardeth Kapp’s achievements in any comparative contexts. That is left for future biographers or historians.

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Horizontally in time, one ought to compare Kapp’s methods of meeting social challenges with leaders of other national and international youth groups. Vertically, one needs to place her in the stream of Latter-day Saint youth leaders. And certainly one would want to assess the effect of Ardeth Kapp’s innovations on subsequent YWMIA programs.

Despite these limitations, the narrative *Stand As a Witness* offers useful insights into the transformational years of the Young Women’s program and into the strengths of its gifted leader.

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Reviewed by Robin Scott Jensen

In 1930, Milo M. Quaife, editor of both James K. Polk’s and Meriwether Lewis’s diaries, as well as the history of Illinois by Thomas Ford, published his ten-year work on James J. Strang. Quaife undertook the first scholarly approach to the many questions concerning Strang’s life, and his work brought forth new insights as well as new questions; it should still be consulted as part of any serious study of Strang. Since 1930, more scholars have addressed Strang’s life and his influence over those who followed him.

Vickie Speek has now contributed to that body of knowledge with her new work on Strang, his followers, and his church—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangites). Speek, an acclaimed journalist, has been studying Strangism for fifteen years. Her study is refreshingly different in several ways, but one crucial element stands out: Speek emphasizes the story of Strang’s believers instead of focusing solely on Strang himself. As controversial as Strang’s methods of establishing and

1Milo M. Quaife, *The Kingdom of Saint James: A Narrative of the Mormons* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1930). See page 193 of Quaife’s work for the time he spent studying Strangism.
running his church may be and as important as it is to understand his modus operandi, Speek recognizes the significance of telling the untold story of those who held fervent beliefs in the prophetic king. Yet like Quaife in 1930, Speek also raises additional questions about Strang and his Church.

At times the similarities between the Strangite Church and the Mormon Church are striking. So too are the continual parallels between Joseph Smith and James Jesse Strang. Persecution seemed to constantly dog the two groups, enemies from without and opportunists and traitors from within. Both churches grew as a result of missionary work, but each had unique doctrines that strengthened some members’ testimonies and weakened the resolve of others. Both leaders claimed that angels ministered to them, translated ancient records, and became martyrs to their religion. Speek, like many contemporary Mormons, had not heard of Strangism or its founder until she inadvertently stumbled across remnants of Strangism in Voree, Wisconsin; however, the story she learned has been well crafted in this narrative.

Speek characterizes Strang as an intelligent and discerning man. Born in New York, Strang was a talented young man, prone to intellectual activities over physical exertion. His gift for debate helped him become a talented lawyer and newspaper editor. He married Mary Perce in 1836. Like so many of his fellow Americans, he responded to the promise of quick money in land speculation farther west and moved to southeastern Wisconsin in 1843 where his wife’s family resided. While he was establishing his law practice, he began investigating the faith of Moses Smith, his wife’s relative. Moses Smith had been a member of the Mormon Church since shortly after its founding. Strang, earlier a self-proclaimed atheist or agnostic, was driven to investigate Mormonism and wanted to hear it straight from its founder, Joseph Smith.

According to the Strangite record, when Strang visited Nauvoo in 1844, he was baptized and ordained an elder into the LDS Church. Joseph Smith then asked Strang to investigate a possible place in Wisconsin where the Saints could settle. Strang returned to Wisconsin and made the report to Smith. In answer to Strang’s letter, Smith wrote back less than a fortnight before he was killed at Carthage. This letter from Smith, according to Strang and his followers, appointed Strang to be the leader of the LDS Church following Smith’s death. Strang was to call the Saints to Voree, Wisconsin, and there build a temple. The day Smith was killed, an angel visited Strang and anointed Strang to the new office of prophet.

Strang wasted no time in providing proof to potential followers of his appointment. He found three brass plates that many felt were of ancient origin and translated them; like Smith more than twenty years earlier, witnesses attested to the find’s miraculous nature.

Speek unfortunately offers little critical analysis for these controversial topics in Strangite history. As the plates of Voree and letter of ap-
pointment provided Strang with the strongest evidence of divine succession, critics often first attacked the genuine nature of these artifacts. Likewise, historical works on Strangism should focus on the questions surrounding the artifacts as well. Speek, who has spent more than a decade studying Strang and his Church, has developed insight into some of the more controversial aspects, including the authenticity of Joseph Smith’s letter of appointment and the plates found at Voree. Understanding the sources is essential in understanding what the Strangites claim. Almost all of the historians who have written about Strangism claim that the letter of appointment was a forgery. Speek, however, provides little in the way of modern analysis and sources. Other such events are narrated to the reader without hypotheses from other historians or from Speek’s own work with the sources. A lack of analysis in no way destroys the usefulness of the book but leaves much for the readers to analyze on their own.

Strang began an aggressive missionary program designed to bring Mormons and non-Mormons alike to Voree. Speek shows the readers the different individuals who made their way into the Strangite Church. Characters like John C. Bennett and William Smith did Strang more harm than good. Their checkered history in the Mormon Church had preceded them, and Strangites were not willing to trust them. Other characters like George J. Adams and John E. Page did some good by preaching and bringing attention to the Church, but eventually left it with bitter feelings on both sides. Still others, like Warren Post and Lorenzo D. Hickey, were faithful to Strang to the end of their lives. Speek has rightly given these individuals an important position in the story of Strangism, for without them, Strangism would not have reached its peak.

Strangism brought in many converts because of Strang’s initial rejection of the contentious issue of polygamy. Mormons, shocked at the news in Nauvoo of “spiritual wifery,” turned to Strang in hopes of finding a version of Mormonism without polygamy. However, Strang soon introduced polygamy into the Church and his family, leading to trials and misunderstandings. Strang’s first plural wife, Elvira Field, attended Strang on a missionary tour dressed as a teenager boy. Some members discovered her identity, and the news sent schisms and apostasy throughout the church. When the Strangites began to practice polygamy more openly, difficulties similar to those that plagued the Utah Mormons arose.

Although Strang appointed Voree as his “gathering place,” Beaver

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Island in Lake Michigan became the central location of Strangites who wished to practice their faith. However, Beaver Island was a fuel stop for the many steamboats traversing the lake and home to many non-Mormon fishermen who did not take kindly to the Strangite presence. These suspicions were aggravated when Strang had himself crowned king over the Strangites in July 1850. Strang’s rule, according to the gentiles on and around the island, was not a just reign. Speek documents the Strangite practice of “consecration” (stealing non-Mormon property for the good of the kingdom). In contrast to her earlier lack of analysis on founding events, she devotes an entire chapter to consecration on Beaver Island and what happened when the Strangites left. Utilizing many sources, both negative and positive, Speek provides significant analysis of the thefts. Not surprisingly, these crimes were a main reason for the antagonism between the Strangites and the gentiles.

But Strang’s dictatorial rule of Beaver Island was the eventual cause of his downfall. Polygamy and the recent trend toward—or forced appearance of—bloomers seemed to dominate gentile descriptions of the Mormons on Beaver Island. These problems, with perhaps unspoken others, caused many Strangites to become dissatisfied. Two former members, Thomas Bedford and Alexander Wentworth, furious at Strang’s iron rule, shot and fatally wounded him in 1856. And like those who killed Joseph Smith, Bedford and Wentworth entirely escaped the law.

Some of Strang’s close associates asked him on his deathbed who was to lead the Church, but, according to one report, Strang, with “a tear . . . in his eye . . . said, ‘I do not want to talk about it’” (224). Although Strang had capitalized on Smith’s ambiguous succession plans at his death, he did not correct the potential problem that would follow his own death. Many members hoped for a successor to Strang but lost hope as months and years passed.

When Strang was carried off Beaver Island wounded, he left five wives who were all pregnant. After Strang died at Voree on July 9, 1856, his wives were left on their own to survive, some finding new homes with siblings or parents, and still others remarrying. All felt lost religiously after their husband and religious leader was gone. Speek documents the lives of each woman and what became of her after Strang’s death. Personal religious conviction is obviously difficult to track, but the sources hint that each of Strang’s wives eventually left the Strangite movement. Although they all viewed Strang in a positive light, they each felt that his religious life had elements that contradicted the good, honest man they knew and called husband.

A few Strangites remained faithful to Strang and his memory throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A son captured their difficulty: “They waited; and when no divine manifestation came, . . . they began to doubt themselves and their past.” Speek comments, “When they thought of the king’s advice to take care of their families rather than jeopardize their safety for the sake of the church, ‘they did as
he ordered, and they have been doing that since, as best they knew” (317). The story of this group is the story of the dedicated few who honored the memory of their prophet by carrying their tradition to the following generations. Speek’s strongest contribution is her ability to enlarge the previous story of Strang. She deftly weaves an interesting narrative of his five wives in as many chapters. She also describes the Strangites who scattered following Strang’s assassination. And finally, we are also treated to a brief discussion of modern Strangites and their status as a religion. Upon all three topics, little or nothing has been written before. In several aspects, Speek has opened up the topic of Strangite studies that should have been addressed long ago. Speek’s work, in some ways, will blaze the trail for years to come for future writers of Strang and the people he influenced.

No one interested in the history of Strang or his Church can overlook *God Has Made Us a Kingdom*. There are still unanswered questions, unmentioned parallels, and missing context in the current Strangite historiography, but Speek’s work will help scholars identify some of those topics and will ignite their interest in Strang and the fascinating people who followed him.

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The *Journal of Mormon History* invites contributions to this department, particularly of privately published family histories, local histories, biographies, historical fiction, publications of limited circulation, or those in which historical Mormonism is dealt with as a part or minor theme.


This two-volume autobiography had its origins in a pocket diary Rulon T. Burton’s father gave him in 1938 when he was twelve to record “the performances of our clarinet trio.” Then in September 1943, when he was seventeen, he began keeping his diary in stenographers’ notebooks. He journaled his World War II experience in the South Pacific with the U.S. Navy (1944–46) and his mission to Denmark (1946–49). He includes statistics: 26,413 doors knocked on, 4,722 new homes visited for the first time, average monthly expenses $48.22 (330). His adult diary, begun in 1954, has continued to the present, now on computer. The diaries themselves must be a meticulous record, but the story written from them for a broader audience is a fascinating document in its own right.

A descendant of Robert Taylor Burton of the LDS Presiding Bishopric, Rulon was born March 3, 1926, to Fielding Garr Burton and Melba Stewart Lindsay Burton on Truman Avenue in South Salt Lake and grew to manhood in the same house, surrounded by aunts, uncles, and cousins, including his own four siblings.

He speaks candidly of his failed
and childless first marriage and the happiness of his second marriage to Josephine (“Jo”) Omer, his education as an attorney (1965–70), including an internship in Washington, D.C., his legal practice as perhaps the first specialist in bankruptcy law in Utah (a career that had many challenges and setbacks of its own) (1970–95), and the rearing of their three children.

For Mormon readers, this autobiography of an always believing and actively participating Mormon man, fully carrying on the commitment of his believing parents, is a window into Church beliefs and practices during the twentieth century. One of Burton’s earliest memories is, on a hot summer day, standing across a picket fence from an equally small cousin in the adjoining yard (neither of their heads topped the fence), trying not very energetically to catch the drowsy grasshoppers on the fence, but discussing, “When will Jesus come again?” (13).

Burton served three times on a high council, served four missions (three with his wife), as a counselor in the bishopric, and as a temple ordinance worker. In addition to teaching in the auxiliaries, Jo also served as stake Relief Society president. Because Jo had earlier been married in the temple, then widowed, a peculiar quality of their relationship was the lengthy negotiations to cancel her first temple sealing to permit her sealing to Rulon in 1978 after eighteen years of marriage.

The Church’s shift in emphases between generations from the ward-centered activities of Burton’s youth to the family-centered concentration of his adulthood is especially interesting. Rulon’s mother was a redoubtable piano teacher and musician, who mustered a twelve-piece ward orchestra that “for as long as I can remember” played weekly for Sunday School, accompanying hymns and providing prelude and postlude numbers (100). He also sang in a male quintet organized by his mother that performed in wards around the valley and at community events. Rulon started playing clarinet in fifth grade, took elocution and drama lessons, performed routinely in ward dramas and was, at age seventeen, the ward drama director.

Although there was no slackening in the number of Church callings extended to Rulon and Jo as adults, they accepted fully the Church’s emphasis on teaching the gospel to their children. “We held daily family scripture study, faithfully [from 5:50 to 6:10 A.M.], and . . . Monday night family home evenings,” keeping minutes from 1974 on in a “detailed Family History Journal” (427–28). The parents offered “cash incentives for scripture reading,” attended all Church meetings, and held kneeling family prayer and private prayer twice daily. Each week they held a family council, and Rulon, in response to the stake president’s urging, also began conducting “regular weekly interviews with each of our children” plus “interviews for special occasions.” He describes these twenty-minute interviews as attended by “a sweet spirit” and the children’s ap-
preciation for receiving “one hundred percent of their father’s attention” (435). Jo later began interviewing them as well. Rulon also gave regular father’s blessings on such occasions as the start of a new school year, illness, or leaving home.

“By precept and meticulous example, we endeavored to teach both respect and obedience.” Rulon and Jo let the children know that they always accepted callings. “The children never learned our bishop’s first name from us. . . . The same was true of their teachers” (436).

Suppertime heard daily reports from the children about how well they felt they had done at restraining undesirable behavior. “Not hitting” after about a week of daily reports shifted “to reporting verbal abuse, and eventually voluntarily reporting on their own unkind thoughts” (432–33).

Burton also includes a chapter on books that influenced him in youth and adulthood and his own publishing ventures, including his eight-year effort to produce We Believe: Doctrines and Principles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He designed it as a reference work, with 898 doctrinal statements arranged in alphabetical order from “Adversity” to “Zion” (chap. 40). Although he was first denied permission to quote General Authority statements by the Church Copyrights and Permissions office, his persistence coupled with his “good spirit” resulted in the book’s becoming the “only privately published book to have been reviewed by [Correlation]” (632, 645). In a photograph of him with the first printed copy in his hands, his face is alight with joy (638).

He tells of the book’s official reception. The Correlation Department purchased the first copies. Elder David B. Haight requested twenty-five copies to supply his family, “President Thomas Monson sent a man to our office to obtain a computer diskette . . . [to install] on his computer,” and President James E. Faust, speaking in a meeting to his children and grandchildren, held up the volume and recommended that they each acquire a copy (645). It was “officially accepted for use by seminaries and institutes of the Church” (645). Burton also had what must have been the special pleasure of reporting to Deseret Book’s general manager that a book his company had refused to publish had sold 10,000 copies in its first year when, according to the manager, “sales above 3,000 for a church reference book the first year” would have been considered “a winner” (646).

The review copies of By My Own Hand and Missionaries Two were uncorrected proofs and had no index, a deficiency which has hopefully been corrected in the final volume.

In Missionaries Two, the second volume of Burton’s autobiography, he describes three missions that he and Jo served as a couple, thus fulfilling a recent but strong emphasis in LDS missionary work.

The first was in the Micronesia Guam Mission on Majuro in the Marshall Islands (1990–91). Each
chapter begins with a portrait and brief vignette of another missionary couple. Burton’s main concern was the lack of leadership training on the part of male members, a lack he remedied with notable success by providing simplified instructions, close tutoring, and regular, concentrated priesthood interviews. The Burtons also worked intensively in a structured program they created to help members overcome alcohol addiction and wrote a ten-lesson Family Home Evening Idea Book so that the missionaries could teach the people how to hold these family gatherings (218). The Burtons also launched the seminary program in the Marshallese language. Enrollment reached sixty, including 20 percent non-Mormons, with an “average attendance of about thirty students. For islanders not used to regimented hours, this attendance record was remarkable” (17).

Based on Burton’s diary and letters home, this account also brings into high relief the challenges of living in a tropical environment, including a typhoon that uncovered small Japanese tanks ten yards from their apartment. A cultural discovery was that the seven island languages frequently lacked specific names for common trees and flowers. “The problem was not a mere matter of education, it was sometimes a matter of nonexistent vocabulary.” Most high school graduates could not pass entrance examinations for BYU-Hawaii. “The island people in the mission were not lacking in intelligence, but they were deficient in ability to learn, which is not the same thing… They simply have not acquired the learning techniques or the thinking tools” (68–69). Using the local form of “King stories” was successful in teaching gospel principles clearly. (Examples are included in an appendix.)

Next came a “service mission” at the Senior Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, from October 1993 to June 1994. Based on their own experiences, they prepared an eighteen-page handout on how to train local people in leadership principles, effective fellowshiping, and harmonious interfacing with the full-time proselytizing missionaries. They felt that their efforts were successful: “Those couples to whom we gave leadership training . . . came into classes bewildered. They floated out on clouds. They were happy couples” (271). This material is reproduced in Appendix B.

Despite the Burtons’ success, they were released in an abrupt five-minute meeting with a new director because “we are changing the curriculum” (272). Despite their disappointment, they immediately began planning for another mission, which they served in Papua, New Guinea (1995–96). Again, they had success with the seminary program and leadership training, including preparing for the creation of a stake presided over by local members.
Conflict between matters of faith and historical truth has been a conundrum at the heart of doing and telling the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormon Church). Some of the best essays on that topic were written by Leonard J. Arrington, perhaps the best-known member of the group of professionals who founded the New Mormon History of the late twentieth century. Now, Arrington’s essay on history and the Mormons are collected in a single source work.

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