Journal of Mormon History Vol. 37, No. 1, Winter 2011

Table of Contents

LETTERS

--Hunting for Jefferson Hunt William P. MacKinnon, vii
--Fascinating and Classic Ken Driggs, ix
--Unmasking Another Hofmann Forgery Richard E. Turley Jr. and Brian D. Reeves, x

ARTICLES

--Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, 1
--Closing the Church College of New Zealand: A Case Study in Church Education Policy Scott C. Esplin, 86
--“The Moste Desert Lukking Plase I Ever Saw, Amen!” The “Failed” 1873 Arizona Mission to the Little Colorado River Kevin H. Folkman, 115
--Roundtable Discussion: Perspectives on Parley Pratt’s Autobiography Introduction Benjamin, E. Park, 151
--A “Truly Eventful Life”: Writing the Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt Matthew J. Grow, 153
--Parley Pratt’s Autobiography as Personal Restoration and Redemption Benjamin E. Park, 158
--Parley Pratt’s Literary Impulse Ryan G. Tobler, 164
--Persecution, Memory, and Mormon Identity in Parley Pratt’s Autobiography David W. Grua, 168
--On the Poetics of Self-Knowledge: Poetry in Parley Pratt’s Autobiography Joseph M. Spencer, 173
--The Conversion of Parley Pratt: Investigating the Patterns of Mormon Piety Matthew Bowman, 178
--The Conjugal Relationships of Parley P. Pratt as Portrayed in His Autobiography Cheryl L. Bruno, 187
--Parley Pratt and the Problem of Separating Latin and Anglo America David C. Knowlton, 194
--Indians, Mestizos, and Parley P. Pratt’s Chilean Mission Jared Tamez, 200
--Nineteenth-Century Missiology of the LDS Bedfordshire Conference Ronald E. Bartholomew, 206

REVIEWS

--John Longhurst, Magnum Opus: The Building of the Schoenstein Organ at the Conference Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City Blair Dee Hodges, 246
--Roger P. Minert, In Harm’s Way: East German Latter-day Saints in World War II Robert M. Hogge, 250

BOOK NOTICE

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.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life, published by ABC-CLIO.

© 2011 Mormon History Association
ISSN 0194–7342

Copies of articles in this journal may be made for teaching and research purposes free of charge and without securing permission, as permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. For all other purposes, permission must be obtained from the author. The Mormon History Association assumes no responsibility for contributors’ statements of fact or opinion.
Staff of the Journal of Mormon History

Editor: Martha Taysom
Copy Editor: Lavina Fielding Anderson
Editorial Staff: Elizabeth Ann Anderson, Laura Compton, Linda Wilcox DeSimone, Sherman Feher, Zachary R. Jones, Linda Lindstrom, Craig Livingston, H. Michael Marquardt, Rene Romig, Jerilyn Wakefield
Book Review Editor: Boyd Jay Petersen
Composer: Brent Corcoran
Art Director: Thayne Whiting
Advertising Manager: Steve Eccles

Board of Editors
Polly Aird, Seattle, Washington
Ruth Knight Bailey, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
Samuel Brown, University of Utah School of Medicine, Salt Lake City
Keith A. Erekson, University of Texas, El Paso
David J. Hawlett, University of Iowa, Iowa City
Holli R. Johnson, Bloomington, Indiana
Jennifer L. Lund, Salt Lake City
Laurie F. Muffy-Kipp, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Susanna Morrill, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon
Christopher A. Newton, Terre Haute, Indiana
Jonathan A. Stapley, Bellevue, Washington

The *Journal of Mormon History* is published four times a year by the Mormon History Association, 10 West 100 South, Suite 610, Salt Lake City, UT 84101 {mha_slc@msn.com}, (801) 521–6565. It is distributed to members upon payment of annual dues: regular membership: $55; joint/spouse membership: $65; student membership: $25; institutional membership: $75; sustaining membership: $125; patron membership: $250; donor membership: $500. For subscriptions outside the United States, please add $20 for postage, in U.S. currency, VISA, American Express, Discover, or Mastercard. Single copies $15. Prices on back issues vary; contact Patricia Lyn Scott, executive director, at the address above. Also a fully digitized copy of all back issues through 2007 is available on DVD for $40 plus $2 for postage ($15 for international postage). Contact the MHA office.

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-century history and contemporary history, regional and local history, folklore, historiography, 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 consider reprints or simultaneous submissions.

Papers for consideration must be submitted to Martha Taysom, Editor, *Journal of Mormon History*, at mormonjournal.taysom1@gmail.com, preferably in Word. The author’s name and contact information must be located on a page separate from the manuscript. Illustrative materials must be attached in a separate file, not embedded in the Word document. The *Journal’s* style guide, based on the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the LDS Style Guide, and specifications for photographs and other illustrative materials, are available on the Mormon History Association’s website {www.mhahome.org}.
LETTERS

Hunting for Jefferson Hunt  
William P. MacKinnon  vii

Fascinating and Classic  
Ken Driggs  ix

Unmasking Another Hofmann Forgery  
Richard E. Turley Jr. and Brian D. Reeves  x

CONTENTS

Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism  
Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright  1

Closing the Church College of New Zealand:  
A Case Study in Church Education Policy  Scott C. Esplin  86

“The Moste Desert Lukking Plase I Ever Saw, Amen!”  
The “Failed” 1873 Arizona Mission to the  
Little Colorado River  Kevin H. Folkman  115

Roundtable Discussion: Perspectives on Parley Pratt’s Autobiography

Introduction  Benjamin E. Park  151

A “Truly Eventful Life”: Writing the Autobiography of  
Parley P. Pratt  Matthew J. Grow  153

Parley Pratt’s Autobiography as Personal Restoration  
and Redemption  Benjamin E. Park  158

Parley Pratt’s Literary Impulse  Ryan G. Tobler  164
CONTENTS

Persecution, Memory, and Mormon Identity in Parley Pratt’s Autobiography  David W. Grua 168

On the Poetics of Self-Knowledge: Poetry in Parley Pratt’s Autobiography  Joseph M. Spencer 173

The Conversion of Parley Pratt: Investigating the Patterns of Mormon Piety  Matthew Bowman 178

The Conjugal Relationships of Parley P. Pratt as Portrayed in His Autobiography  Cheryl L. Bruno 187

Parley Pratt and the Problem of Separating Latin and Anglo America  David C. Knowlton 194

Indians, Mestizos, and Parley P. Pratt’s Chilean Mission  Jared Tamez 200

Nineteenth-Century Missiology of the LDS Bedfordshire Conference  Ronald E. Bartholomew 206

REVIEWS

John Longhurst, Magnum Opus: The Building of the Schoenstein Organ at the Conference Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City  Blair Dee Hodges 246

Roger P. Minert, In Harm’s Way: East German Latter-day Saints in World War II  Robert M. Hogge 250


Robert S. McPherson, *Comb Ridge and Its People: The Ethnohistory of a Rock*
Hunting for Jefferson Hunt

Tom Sutak has performed a real service with his article “Jefferson Hunt: California’s First Mormon Politician” (36, no. 3 [Summer 2010]: 82–117). As Sutak points out (83), very few of Hunt’s letters have survived and there is no known diary. As a result, until the appearance of Sutak’s work, our awareness of this Mormon pioneer, soldier, rancher, and politician has too often been limited to documents generated by other people and overly focused on his famous Mexican War service as a captain of U.S. volunteer troops, the Mormon Battalion.

I write to elaborate briefly on Jefferson Hunt’s discharge of his duty in the important later role that Sutak identifies—as a brigadier general of the California militia and as chairman of the state assembly’s committee on military affairs. To encourage Sutak to discuss the matter in his pending book about Hunt, I want to comment on an issue not covered in his article: the possibility that, during the Utah War of 1857–58, General Hunt of California’s militia may have been engaged in acquiring and channeling munitions to Utah’s territorial militia, the Nauvoo Legion.

Skipping over the ten-year run-up to the Utah War, I would note that, in early January 1857, just as first news reached Utah that James Buchanan had been elected president on the previous November 4 and would therefore take office on March 4, Nauvoo Legion brigadier Peter W. Conover wrote to Hunt in California to urge him to join an unusual plot. Conover sought Hunt’s help in advancing covertly Brigham Young’s highest military priority for what was widely viewed as a future military conflict—the quest for arms and munitions.

In a letter now in the Amasa Lyman Collection at the LDS Church History Library, Conover wrote:

Provo City Jan 8th 1857
Brother J. Hunt.
Sir,

I again sit down to write you a few lines to inform you something about matters and things as they exist here at present, the time has come when the Lord has set his hand to purge iniquity from amongst his people, and draw the dividing line between him that serves God and him that serves him not and it makes those who are ill disposed towards us make some pretty big threats about destroying the authorities of this church and the Gentile merchants that are here, have refused to let the Mormons have any ammunition to defend themselves with, so I thought as the Lord through his servants had seen fit to call all the saints from your place and Carson I would just say to you to bring or send as much powder in as you can get hold of, for we shall need it by the time we can get it here. I want you to bring me 1000 lbs for my Brigade it will bring the money before anything else you can bring.
here at present, if you could send a Keg by the mail every time they come it would be a good plan by that means we could be supplied at Uncle Sams expense now Brother Hunt if you feel like helping us any you can do it in this way more than any other, we are expecting some U.S. troops in here next summer, but we do not anticipate as much trouble from them as we do from the apostates that are here in our midst but from all appearances we will need [gunpowder and [percussion] caps before long and if you cannot send it before you come be sure to bring it with you, enough of that there is a general time of health here at present and I hope these few lines may find you and yours injoying the same great blessing. I want you to write to me as soon as you get this and let us know how you are getting along. I believe I have nothing more of importance to write but remain yours as ever in the bonds of the everlasting covenant[.]

P.W. Conover
To Jefferson Hunt

How, if at all, Hunt responded to Conover’s plea is not known; but what has been established is that on June 30, 1857, six months later, Brigham Young wrote to his purchasing agent in St. Louis, Horace S. Eldredge, to direct that he too acquire large quantities of gunpowder also to be shipped covertly to Salt Lake City through the U.S. mails. Soon thereafter Brigham Young sent Conover west across the Sierra to San Francisco, where, with or without Jefferson Hunt’s help, he purchased large quantities of weapons and munitions. This was a not-illegal acquisition, but it was so provocative that it touched off harassing vigilante action as Conover attempted to return from California to the Mormon settlements in what was then western Utah’s Carson Valley.

In October 1857, William Allen Wallace, a correspondent in southern California, wrote to San Francisco’s *Alta California* under the pseudonym of “Yo Mismo” to accuse Jefferson Hunt of Mormon gun-running. The background for this accusation was the flap in northern California over Peter Conover’s purchasing activities; the furor that had just arisen as news of the Mountain Meadows Massacre on September 11, 1857, drifted across the desert into San Bernardino and Los Angeles; the imminent Mormon exodus from San Bernardino; and perhaps an awareness that, during April 1856, Hunt, as Tom Sutak mentions (106), had introduced legislation into the California assembly by which the state was to petition the U.S. government for 3,000 rifles and associated equipment.

On October 27, 1857 the *Alta California* ran “Yo Mismo’s” dispatch: “I nearly omitted to tell you that I am informed by a person who saw the document, that Capt. Hunt, of San Bernardino, has written by this steamer to the Governor for rifles and ammunition to suppress insurrection in that country, and also to fight Indians! This is all pretence. All the files [of arms] and ammunition they receive are instantly forwarded to Salt Lake, where the majority of these [San Bernardino] people are expected soon to depart.”

By early January 1858, Hunt was heading for Utah. Whether he resigned his California responsibilities
properly or simply left the state as part of the mass Mormon exodus then underway is not clear; but on January 7, an ambitious J. R. Gitchell of San Diego wrote to Governor John B. Weller requesting appointment as commander of the militia’s 1st brigade, 1st division inasmuch as “General Hunt has left San Bernardino for Salt Lake City with his wives and goods.”

I have hopes that Tom Sutak’s book will shed more light on Jefferson Hunt’s Utah War role, both before and after he left California. It is amazing that thus far no sign has turned up that Brigham Young tendered Hunt a senior command in the Nauvoo Legion once he returned to Utah Territory even though, as Sutak describes, Hunt had previously served as a captain in the Mormon Battalion and for years had commanded a brigade of California militia. It will also be interesting to see if Sutak discusses the twentieth-century speculation that Jefferson Hunt’s name, if not the man himself, somehow served Arthur Conan Doyle as the ill-suited inspiration for Jefferson Hope, the non-Mormon, American revenge-killer of a villainous Latter-day Saint in the first of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, “A Study in Scarlet.”

**Note**


William P. MacKinnon
Santa Barbara, California

---

**Fascinating and Classic**

I bought D. Michael Quinn’s *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark* shortly after it was published by Signature Books in 2002. As with most of Quinn’s books, it was so thick I set it aside for a later read. Clark was the son-in-law of Charles R. Savage, a 1906 graduate of Columbia Law School, a State Department heavyweight, an ardent Republican, and, for twenty-seven years, a member of three LDS First Presidencies—from 1933 until his death in 1961. Brigham Young University’s Law School is named in his honor.

The book had recently been recommended to me by Dave Hall whose wonderful piece “A Crossroads for Mormon Women: Amy Brown Lyman, J. Reuben Clark, and the Decline of Organized Women’s Activism in the Relief Society,” was published in the *Journal of Mormon History* 36, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 204–49. So, now that I’ve read *Elder Statesman* I can’t believe I waited so long to take it up.

The book was primarily of interest to me for Quinn’s discussion of Clark’s pursuit of the growing Fundamentalist Mormon movement, an assignment he was given by President Heber J. Grant in 1933 (237–54). I am starting to write about Fundamentalist Mormon leader Joseph W. Musser (1870–1954) and wanted the benefit of Quinn’s research. I had not expected to be fascinated by so much more.

Clark was an extraordinarily bright man with strong opinions and endless energy. The book engaged me with its discussions of in-
ternal Church politics, the roles of individual members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, Clark’s reservations about the increasing growth of the Church through convert baptisms, the controversy over the 1958 publication of Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* (222–25), Clark’s national stature among Republicans after his service in the Herbert Hoover administration, his unrealized political ambitions, his hostility toward President Franklin D. Roosevelt, his relatively progressive attitudes on blacks and the priesthood (339–59), and his nurturing of the Church’s welfare program (377–424).

Frankly, my stomach churned while reading of his vile attitudes toward Jews and his sympathy for Adolph Hitler and Nazi Germany, even while the United States was fighting in World War II (87–89, 142–43, 281–304, 329–39). He hated the British. Clark publicly urged a peace treaty with Hitler that would have effectively ceded continental Europe to the Nazis (296–97). My fifth-generation LDS father, Don F. Driggs, was the son of German convert Ida Fehring. He served an LDS mission in Nazi Germany from 1934 to 1937 when Roy Welker was mission president. Welker also shows up in the book (284–85). This book gave me much insight into Dad’s experiences.

Clark was full of contradictions, some of them hard to accept, but I was impressed that Quinn’s writing was balanced and highlighted Clark’s many admirable qualities. Clark was blunt but generous to a fault with most individuals, was fiercely loyal to the LDS Church and its leaders, and for the most part was committed to religious intellectual freedom. I am a criminal defense lawyer myself, so I can understand Clark’s dispassionate legalistic way of thinking.

As I’ve found with Quinn’s other books, his Clark biography digests an enormous amount of research. Just organizing that much material was an Olympian task, but I felt the book did that pretty well. His copious footnotes have pointed me to a number of sources I want to look at further.

I was so impressed with the book that, while finishing it up, I called friends at Signature Books to ask about whether it had sold well. I was very surprised to learn that it had not. Other than Thomas G. Alexander’s *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), which covers the earlier period of 1890 to 1930, I have never read a book that taught me so much about twentieth-century Mormon history, governance, and politics. *Elder Statesman* is not a book you should take up without at least a basic knowledge of Mormon history and structure, but informed readers will be absorbed. I have been recommending it to friends and would strongly commend it to Mormon History Association members.

*Ken Driggs*
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Unmasking Another Hofmann Forgery

Polly Aird’s review of David L. Bigler and Will Bagley, eds., *Innocent Blood: Essential Narratives of the*
Mountain Meadows Massacre (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), published in the Journal of Mormon History 36, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 250–62, states: “The editors might also further explore whether the William Edwards affidavit... is a forgery, for it was acquired by the Utah State Historical Society from rare manuscripts dealer Mark Hofmann before he was known to be a forger” (262).

In the wake of Aird’s comment, Gary Topping, who worked at the Utah Historical Society when the document was acquired, recalled: “It’s been a long time, but I’m pretty sure I got the document from Lyn Jacobs, who got it from Hofmann [sic]... I decided just to put a note in the cataloguing that the source of the document was Mark Hofman and let the buyer beware. Apparently that note didn’t make the transition when USHS switched to online cataloguing. That’s the way my dim memory has it, anyway.”

We had previously accepted the William Edwards affidavit at face value, cited it in Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 191, 360 note 23, 257, 354 note 37, and included Edwards’s name in the appendix as a massacre participant. After reading Aird’s comment, we became concerned about the document’s questionable origin and decided to take a closer look.

William Edwards was born October 21, 1841, in Bewdley, Worcester, England. His family left England in 1850 and reached Utah in 1853. They moved to Parowan in 1857 or 1858 and to Beaver County in 1859. They helped settle Greenville in 1860, where William lived for the rest of his life. He married Ellen Miller April 8, 1861. William served as bishop of the Greenville Ward, 1898–1913, and died April 24, 1925.

The Edwards’s name is a one-page affidavit dated May 14, 1924, sworn before notary public F. E. Woods in Price, Utah. It includes a notary seal. Frederick E. Woods was born March 23, 1861, in Brandon, Vermont, married in about 1889, was admitted to the Nebraska bar in 1886, and moved to Utah in 1890. He practiced law in Provo, Salt Lake City, Castle Dale, and Price. He served as a judge for the Seventh Judicial District, 1921–22. In the early 1930s, he and his wife moved to Los Angeles.

The Edwards affidavit begins: “In September of 1857 your affiant resided at Cedar City, Iron County.” Other sources suggest that the Edwards family moved to Parowan—not Cedar City—in 1857 or 1858. No Parowan residents are known to have been at Mountain Meadows at the time of the massacre.

The affidavit also states that Edwards “was but 15 years of age at the time of the said Massacre... He and a few others who were nearly as young would have not been permitted to accompany the men if a battle were foreseen.” This statement is also problematic, because there were no Cedar City residents at the massacre “who were nearly as young” as Edwards. The youngest known participants from the Cedar City area were Daniel Macfarlane...
John Urie (22), Benjamin Arthur (23), Nephi Johnson (23), and Elliott Willden (23). James Pearce (18) and Columbus Freeman (19) were teenagers, but they traveled to the Meadows from the Washington settlement. Furthermore, of the white massacre participants listed in Massacre at Mountain Meadows, Edwards was the only one who was not enrolled in the Iron Military District of the territorial militia.6

Many of the assertions in the affidavit reflect information found in widely available books, particularly William W. Bishop, ed., Mormonism Unveiled; or The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee; (Written by Himself) (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877); and Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1950). For instance, according to the Edwards affidavit, “Affiant accompanied about 30 men and older boys to Mountain Meadows.” In Mormonism Unveiled, 232, John D. Lee named twenty-four men who arrived at the Meadows, plus “some others whose names I cannot remember.”

The Edwards affidavit states: “We were told, an Indian massacre of a [sic] emigrant train had been consummated, and our services needed to bury the dead.” This is similar to a John M. Higbee statement quoted in Brooks, Mountain Meadows Massacre, 172: “Savages . . . had killed all the emigrant company and if Mormons wanted to bury them they could . . . [A] dozen or more of as honorable good citizens as lived in the country volunteered and started at once to go and bury the dead.” (See also Daniel S. Macfarlane, quoted in Brooks, Mountain Meadows Massacre, 178.)

According to Mormonism Unveiled, a couple of days before the massacre Lee sent a messenger—“either Edwards or Adair, (I cannot now remember which it was)” (229)—to Cedar City with a request for reinforcements at the Meadows. A list of massacre participants near the end of the book identifies George Adair Jr. and “________ Edwards. Cedar City” (379). The sketchy reference to Edwards provided a silhouette to which a bright and devious person could add enough detail to loosely match existing historical accounts. Mark Hofmann excelled at such work, evidenced by his forgery of the Charles Anthon transcript and other documents.7

Tracking provenance became another key piece to the Edwards puzzle. Polly Aird suggested that the Utah State Historical Society acquired the document from Mark Hofmann, but its catalog record contained no donor information at the time of her review. Brandon Metcalf, who joined the LDS Church History Library staff earlier this year, worked closely with our peers at the Division of State History (Utah State Historical Society) and the Utah State Archives to look for clues. They conducted a thorough search of available records, including prior catalogs. In a series of Historical Society files, Metcalf found a quarterly report for April-June 1983 that stated: “The Library acquired some interesting items from a manuscripts dealer this quarter. . . . They include a deposition made in the 1920’s by William Edwards, one of the participants in the Mountain
Meadows Massacre." In the same quarter, the library also acquired from this unnamed dealer letters by historian Charles Kelly, "a legal document signed by the outlaw Matt Warner, a draft of one of the territorial laws of Utah signed by W. W. Phelps, Willard Richards, and Brigham Young, and the papers of George Montgomery Scott." A finding aid for the Scott papers confirmed that they were acquired from Mark Hofmann in June 1983.8

We also sought the help of forensic document examiner George J. Throckmorton. The Division of State History kindly supplied us with a digital image of the Edwards document and allowed us to borrow the original for testing purposes. The Utah State Archives provided two known signatures of F. E. Woods, 1922, from case files of the Carbon County Court, where he served as a district judge. In LDS Church History Library collections, we located four letters that Edwards wrote to Church leaders in 1902 and 1908 while he was serving as bishop of the Greenville Ward.

After comparing the signatures on the affidavit with other documents and conducting additional forensic tests, Throckmorton concluded that the affidavit is not genuine. Edwards’s signature “is a partial ‘traced-forgery’” based on his April 2, 1908, letter to Joseph F. Smith. Both the Edwards and Woods signatures were made more deliberately than is customary and “showed tremor and hesitation,” which “frequently appears when someone attempts to imitate or simulate another person’s writing style.” Finally, “the ink on both . . . had been exposed to an artificial aging process, to make them appear older than they really are.”9

Throckmorton referred us to Peter V. Tytell, another forensic document examiner, who specializes in typewritten works. After examining a digital image of the Edwards affidavit, Tytell concluded that it “was prepared with a version of Royal Standard Elite style type that was not available until 1950, over a quarter of a century after the 1924 date on the Affidavit.”10

We also learned that, in the late 1970s or early 1980s, collector Brent F. Ashworth traded several Carbon County documents to Mark Hofmann. Ashworth is certain that there were no massacre-related documents in the deal but believes that Hofmann likely “followed the format on this forgery from the many Notary Public documents I traded him.”11

We have corrected on our website (http://mountainmeadowsmassacre.org/) our mistaken usage of the forged William Edwards affidavit. When a revised edition of Massacre at Mountain Meadows is published, we will also make corrections in it. Our thanks to Polly Aird for raising an important issue and to the individuals and institutions that helped to unmask another Hofmann forgery.

Notes

1Gary Topping, email to Will Bagley, Polly Aird, Richard E. Turley Jr. et al., May 12, 2010; copy in our possession.

2“Former Bishop of Greenville Buried,” Deseret News, April 30, 1925, sec. 2, p. 4; William Edwards, biographical sketch, June 1919, in LDS Church History Department, biographical sketches; Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake


7George J. Throckmorton, R. C. Christensen, and Richard H. Casper, Motive for Murder: The Bombs, the Mormons, and the Salamander (Salt Lake City: The Authors, 2005), 186–90.


Richard E. Turley Jr.
Brian D. Reeves
LDS Church History Department
Salt Lake City

Editor’s Note: A similar version of this letter from the authors to Philip F. Notorianni, Director, Utah Division of State History/Utah State Historical Society, was posted on its website {http://history.utah.gov/} on August 31, 2010, and published in Utah Historical Quarterly 79, no. 1 (Winter 2011).
FEMALE RITUAL HEALING
IN MORMONISM

Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright

Wash and anoint the sick, beneath your hands,
Those not to death appointed, shall revive;
Let no man say you nay, what God commands,
The pure and humble spirit understands,
And through it oft, the dead are made alive.1

ON MARCH 2, 1876, EIGHT WOMEN from the Salt Lake Eleventh Ward
gathered at the Wickens family home. They were fasting for Sister
Wickens who had developed a problem with her speech and for a

1[Louisa Lula Greene Richards?] “Woman’s Thought and Woman’s
Work,” poem written for and read at the first Semi-Annual Conference
of the Relief Society, reprinted in Anonymous, “Relief Society Conference,”
Woman’s Exponent 18 (October 15, 1889): 78. This stanza was included
among several intended to summarize Joseph Smith’s teachings to the Fe-
male Relief Society of Nauvoo.
Sister Young who had “been a cripple for 20 years.” Mary Ann Burnham Freeze described what followed:

They had washed Sister Young preparatory to having her annointed which ordanance I attended to after we had prayers, Sister Lawson being mouth made an excellent and humble prayer. Then I called Sopha to seal the anointing, which she did in a praiseworthy manner, for one so young. Then I called upon Jane to anoint the head of Sister Wickens and Sister Newsom to administer to her. They both did exceeding well, I will here mention that we all laid our hands on when each one was administered to. Then it was proposed to bless Sister Louie Felt, she being poorly. Sister Cushing annointed and Sister Lawson blessed her. After we were through with these, Sister Aggie Tuckett who is very sick sent a word for us to come and pray for her. We went in and Lizzie Felt annointed, and, I administered to her. Felt, that they would all soon be healed. They were so grateful to us, seemed to look upon us as ministering angels.2

Freeze’s diary reveals how healing rites conveyed both liturgical knowledge through ritual participation and created social networks among Mormon women. Religious historians have long regarded ritual as a lens through which they can examine how communities created and re-created their cultural world. In contrast to the priesthood anointing, sealing, and blessing ritual that comprises the entirety of current Mormon healing praxis,3 Mormon healing in the past was ritually diverse, incorporating many forms and enlisting a variety of participants. Several authors have discussed the participation of women in Mormon healing rituals.4 This study however, traces the history of female ritual healing within the broader context of LDS Church liturgy and strives to fill the explanatory lacunae between the past and present.

---

2Mary Ann Freeze, Diaries, 1875–99, March 2, 1876, photocopy of holograph, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

3For an outline of the ritual, see Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders, Section 1: Melchizedek Priesthood (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 172–73.

We have previously described women’s integral participation in the development of Mormonism’s distinct healing liturgy by the time of the settlement of the Great Basin; that research is essential context for this study. In this paper, we briefly review this history, highlighting the interaction of healing ritual and power with the development of the temple. We then discuss the various healing rites employed by women in Utah and the contexts in which they administered. All Mormon ritual operates in two partially overlapping liturgical modalities: one folk and the other formal. Throughout the nineteenth century, Mormon liturgy generally existed as oral tradition. There were no manuals to dictate precise ritual formulations; instead Latter-day Saints learned ritual performance from the example and mentoring of both male and female Church leaders. Folk pedagogy served the Latter-day Saints well; however, due to pressures within and outside of the Church, the hierarchy first reformed liturgical authority and then


explicitly formalized the Church liturgy itself. In this paper, we show how female ritual healing evolved in context of this history and how it is a key feature in understanding the development of Latter-day Saint liturgy. Furthermore, we show how these dynamics led to the end of female administration of healing ritual in the Church.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE RITUAL HEALING TO 1847**

The roots of female ritual healing are inextricably tied to the founding communities of Mormon history. Understanding the evolution of female participation in healing rituals from those early beginnings provides a window into developing liturgical modalities as well as the developing milieu of ritual and gender relations. Although there is some evidence that Lucy Mack Smith was known as a healer in the Palmyra community, female administration of Mormon healing rituals emerged during the Kirtland period. While women were often the recipients of healing rituals, the primary evidence of early female ritual administration occurs in the patriarchal blessings bestowed by Joseph Smith Sr. These blessings, which often identified the individual’s spiritual gifts, legitimized the exercise of female healing during the early 1830s.6 Joseph Smith Sr.’s blessings often indicated that ritual healing was to be administered within the domestic circle.7 However, it is clear that, by the winter of 1835, women were beginning to conceive of themselves as fuller participants in the ritual community. Early Mormons believed in a literal biblical restorationism and often had paradigmatic experiences, typified by Joseph Smith’s interaction with the divine. For example in early Kirtland, Sarah Leavitt clearly viewed herself as both able and qualified to receive and act upon a personal revelation to heal her daughter. An angelic visitation instructing Leavitt to lay hands on her daughter not only sanctioned her to act within the limits of her own conscience, but also within her developing Mormon community.8

By 1837, patriarchal blessings specifically instructed women to

6See, e.g., H. Michael Marquardt, comp., Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), 19, 56, 104, 147.
7Ibid., 36, 47, 73, 163.
administer to the sick by the laying on hands, the common form of administration among Mormon men.9 Notably, early Mormons did not use consecrated oil or invoke priesthood authority to heal; the earliest healings in the Church frequently involved laying hands on specific areas of the body. Concomitant with the introduction of anointing as a ritual form in the Kirtland Temple, Mormons anointed ailing regions of the body or areas that were believed to be sources of sickness.10 Up until this point, women did not have access to institutionalized roles in the early Church, so their movement into ritual healing is significant.11 In these early years, there is no question that Church leaders viewed the ritual administration by the elders with primacy, but female participation in ritual healing was also common. After the Smith family relocated to Far West, Missouri, in 1838, Mary Isabella Horne later remembered that Lucy Mack Smith participated in the healing of her daughter: “[she] was taken very ill, and her life despaired of, in fact it seemed impossible for her to get better. The mother of the Prophet, Mrs. Lucy Smith, came and blessed the child, and said she should live. This was something new in that age, for a woman to administer to the sick.” That same year while on a mission in Maine, Phoebe Woodruff administered to her sick husband, Wilford. The apostolic missions appear to have spread the practice of female ritual healing as British women were also anointing the sick by 1838.12

While these instances of female healing illustrate that women's

---


10Stapley and Wright, “The Forms and Power.”

11Ibid. Besides priesthood offices, men filled virtually all roles in the nascent Church, from clerks to craftsmen.

participation in healing was becoming normative, the founding of the Relief Society coupled with the introduction of the Nauvoo Temple ceremonies ushered in an expansion of ritual healing, reinforcing the role of women within Mormon religious rituals. Distinct from the authority to administer healing rituals, Joseph Smith yearned for his people to acquire the charismatic power to heal and the ritual forms to channel that power. Through the promised endowment, Smith sought to fill his people with God’s power, including the power to heal. Furthermore, throughout his life, he adapted the salvific rituals of his church and used them to focus this power. Church leaders adapted the Kirtland anointing ceremony, baptism, and the Nauvoo Temple rites to healing the sick, and women naturally participated in these ceremonies.13

After settling in Illinois, Mormon women formed the Nauvoo Female Relief Society in March 17, 1842, as an organization to help the needy and strengthen each other. Women sometimes administered to the sick in formal settings as a part of their regular Relief Society meetings. This practice apparently caused some controversy; however, Joseph rebuked the detractors on April 28, 1842, “according to revelation,” which he newly preached that day. He stated that it was proper for women to administer to the sick by the laying on of hands and that “healing the sick... should follow all that believe, whether male or female.”14 Joseph Smith’s defense of female participation in healing rituals set a pattern that would continue for the rest of the century. From


this point forward, Church leaders continued to encourage women to experience the power of the Restoration through healing.

As with the Kirtland Temple, the rituals of the Nauvoo temple liturgy were adapted to healing and other purposes from the earliest moments, yet this time women were included as full participants. Smith’s temple ceremonies were a space where women received an expanded liturgical authority and administered rituals of salvation. Joseph Smith organized a “quorum” or “holy order,” as a body to mediate the transmission of the temple ceremonies and both men and women were members. Both voted Joseph Smith as president and both voted on the admission of prospective members. Never before had men and women labored so proximately for the latter-day kingdom. The Nauvoo Temple liturgy introduced a greater complexity to healing as Church leaders adapted the salvific rituals of washing and anointing and baptism to healing before the temple was even completed. The prayer circle was used to consecrate oil and, in conjunction with the laying on of hands, to heal the sick. The sick were also washed and anointed for their health.

Although Utah-era Relief Society women claimed that Joseph Smith taught women to wash and anoint the sick during his lifetime, the first example of such a ritual that we have found occurred in De-
cember 1845. (See below.) Washing and anointing ritual texts, committed to writing during the twentieth century, show how administrators alternately washed and anointed various parts of the body, pronouncing a blessing upon each of them, and then sealed the ritual by the laying on of hands.\textsuperscript{19} Essentially a healing litany, the practice of washing and anointing for health shares a liturgical homology to the Mormon temple rituals. Though these written patterns do not include language from the temple initiatory ritual,\textsuperscript{20} they share a similar overall pattern of administration, which is also reflected in other aspects of nineteenth-century temple worship. For example, temple dedicatory prayers during the same era consecrated exhaustive lists of temple constructions and fixtures.\textsuperscript{21}

The first documented example of washing and anointing for health that we have found highlights how, as women participated in temple ordinances, they also participated in the new healing rituals, thus beginning an era of collaborative healing: “President Young and H. C. Kimball, assisted by their wives and Sister Whitney, washed and anointed the Sick.”

\textsuperscript{19}Washing and anointing blessing, circa 1906, Cannonville Relief Society Record, 126–30, microfilm of manuscript, LR 1371 22, cf., Panguitch Stake, mimeograph washing and anointing text, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2; Washing and anointing blessings, circa 1909, Oakley, Idaho, 2nd Ward Relief Society, Minute Book, 1901–09, 195–98, LR 6360 14, microfilm of manuscript; Washing and anointing blessing texts, ca. 1923, typescripts, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2.

\textsuperscript{20}In the late nineteenth century, Church leaders persistently warned women against incorporating temple ritual language into their healing rites. See, e.g., Relief Society General Board, Minutes, October 4, 1895.

stapley and wright/female ritual healing

anointed for their health their three little children.”22 Primarily facilitated by participation in the temple quorum, men and women labored together to administer healing rituals.23 Underscoring the importance of such unity, Apostle George A. Smith preached to the initiated in the temple: “We are now different from what we were before we entered into this quorum. . . . When a man and his wife are united in feeling, and act in union, I believe they can hold their children by prayer and faith and will not be obliged to give them up to death until they are fourscore years old.”24 Church leaders modeled and encouraged collaborative healing.

Like his predecessor, Brigham Young advocated women’s participation in healing rituals. Affirming the practice at an April 1844 Nauvoo general conference, he declared, “I want a Wife that can take care of my children when I am away—who can pray—lay on hands anoint with oil & baffie the enemy.”25 Young’s early support of female ritual healing and his example in collaborative healing functioned to

22Helen Mar Kimball, “Scenes in Nauvoo, and Incidents from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” Woman’s Exponent 12 (August 15, 1885): 42. Note that this serialized episode is an excerpt from the Heber C. Kimball Diary (December 28, 1845) kept by William Clayton and not included in Smith, An Intimate Chronicle. See also William Clayton, Diary, kept for Heber C. Kimball, in Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 210. Two days later, one of these children, Brigham Willard C. Kimball, was included in the temple prayer because of continued illness. Ibid., 233. There may be earlier extant accounts of washing and anointing for health that we did not find in our research.


24Smith, An Intimate Chronicle, 221, December 21, 1845.

subvert the prevalent notion of “separate spheres” within the realm of healing—a notable shift that moved with Church members as they relocated. Collaborative healing was common on the trail west. Patty Sessions administered to the sick in Winter Quarters with her husband.26 Eliza R. Snow participated in healing rituals with men and women at blessing meetings, and Hosea Stout gathered endowed men and women to dress in their temple robes and administer to his dying son “according to the Holy order.”27 In conjunction with collaborative healing, a distinctive female healing culture grew up alongside these unified administrations. Growing out of female isolation from husbands in the vanguard company, Mormon Battalion, and other colonization efforts, and potentially from Victorian ideas of propriety, women frequently administered for each other’s healing and comfort. As memorialized in the Woman’s Exponent, women in Utah described the post-Nauvoo wives of Heber C. Kimball:

“They used often to meet and pray together and others of the family and neighbors would gather in. They were much exercised in their feelings for the pioneers who had gone out into a new and undiscovered country, exposed to the perils of a savage wilderness. It was a time of great anxiety... the settlement almost deserted. The Sisters had greater need to draw near the Lord, and the manifestations of his goodness and power were indeed marvelous, especially in healing the sick.”28

Ritual exercise at times of critical life events such as miscarriages, births, and illness bound women together and further intensified the kinship bonds often forged from polygamous unions. As


Lucy Meserve Smith described washing and anointing her sister wife Sarah Ann Libby Smith along with two other plural wives and a friend, “Bathsheba said when she and Zina and Hannah [Maria Libby Smith] and I layed our hands on her she felt as though she was praying over an infant we prayed with our right hand uplifted to the most high and we all felt the blessing of the holy spirit. Zina said there was a union of faith.”

The period of exodus along the Western trail functioned to train Mormons in their expanded healing liturgy. All of the various healing rituals were prevalent, and this activity provided both a meaningful expression of faith and deepened communal ties. Not only did women administer to women, but they also occasionally administered to men; and men and women administered together. By the time of their arrival in the Great Basin, Mormon women were established and potent healers, being recognized as such by lay member and General Authority alike.

**Nineteenth-Century Women and the Utah Healing Liturgy**

The body of rituals formulated before the Latter-day Saints’ arrival in the Great Basin formed the core of healing activities among LDS women to the modern era; however, there was a distinct evolution in practice in Utah. Beyond the pre-Utah rites, Mormon women began administering a specific washing and anointing ritual for expectant mothers. Additionally, following the pattern set by Joseph Smith, Mormon temples were locations for special healing; and female as well as male temple workers regularly administered healing rituals to patrons. In all of these ritual modes, women frequently administered with men, uniting in faith for the physical restoration of their people.

In the immediate post-Nauvoo era, cases of blessings without the use of oil are extant. However, women, across the world wherever the Church was located, more commonly anointed the sick with oil that had been consecrated for that purpose. In 1849, the Millen-
nial Star printed a letter from Briton Eliza Jane Merrick, describing how she anointed and healed a young member of her family.\textsuperscript{31} Louisa Barnes Pratt, who left with her husband on a mission to the Society Islands (Tahiti) in 1850, described how the native inhabitants “would frequently bring their young children to me when they were sick to have me anoint them, give them oil inwardly, and lay my hands upon them in the name of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{32} Drinking consecrated oil was also a common Mormon practice into the twentieth century. Individuals likewise continued the practice of anointing the sick on the area of affliction. For example, one woman anointed her son’s throat and stomach and gave him oil inwardly when he had a “bad cold” and another anointed her child’s teeth in the “name of Jesus.”\textsuperscript{33} Both men and women engaged in this practice, though anointing the head only was also common.

After the 1840s, washing the sick with water was commonly viewed as therapeutic in the United States\textsuperscript{34} and a few Mormon healing accounts are ambiguous about whether participants ritually washed and anointed or simply cleaned and then ritually anointed the


\textsuperscript{34}Cold water cure or “hydrotherapy” was introduced in the eastern United States in the 1840s as a popular treatment for the sick. Susan E. Cayleff, \textit{Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women’s Health} (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Jane B. Donegan, “\textit{Hydropathic Highway to Health”: Women and Water-Care in Antebellum America}” (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986). While some Mormons were aware of
sick. There is no question, however, that a formal washing and anointing ritual was commonly employed after the Nauvoo Temple ceremonies became available to the body of the Church during the winter of 1845–46. During the exodus to the West, men performed most of the documented instances of washing and anointing for health.

Although several retrospective accounts of women washing and anointing the sick during this period are extant, it is not until the Utah period that women regularly and contemporaneously describe washings and anointings. While men continued to wash and anoint the sick during the Utah period, these accounts are less common. Women, by contrast, frequently employed the ritual into the twentieth century.

In 1849 Patty Sessions, began recording instances of washing...
and anointing the sick in her diary, which quickly became saturated with similar, often succinct accounts. For example, on August 14, 1849, she wrote, “went and washed and an [sic] anointed Sister Gates & laid hands on her.”39 That same year, Louisa Barnes Pratt, in the Society Islands, washed and anointed a sick boy who was brought to her.40 Writing decades later, Mary Ann Burnham Freeze recorded in her diary: “I have been with Sister E[lis]. Shipp, to wash and anoint, Mrs Linie felt, who is very low with lung fever, but she seemed much relieved when we got through, could breathe easier.”41

Though accounts of women administering healing rituals to men are extant, the most frequently recorded recipients of female healing rituals were women themselves, with children also being regular beneficiaries. Moreover, as Joseph Smith had reportedly done in Nauvoo,42 Willard Richards called and set apart women “to act as midwives and also administering to the sick and afflicted and set them apart for this very office and calling, and blest them with power

---

39Smart, Mormon Midwife, 134. See also, pp. 164, 176, 191, 194, 196, 198, 203, 215, 242. Sessions was a polygamous widow of Joseph Smith, member of the nascent Board of Health, and a renowned midwife.

40Ellsworth, The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt, 154.

41Mary Ann Freeze, Diary, June 14, 1875; see also, e.g., Zina D. H. Young, Diary, July 7, 1855, microfilm of holograph.

to officiate in that capacity as handmaids of the Lord.”43 As maternity complicated female health and as women were frequently the health care providers during pregnancy and labor (among other times), it is no surprise that women blessed their pregnant sisters for safe deliveries and also blessed women who desired children with fertility. Over time, LDS women developed a specific washing and anointing ritual for these cases, which quickly became normative. In journals and other records, this ritual is commonly called “washing and anointing for confinement.”

Though the specific evolutionary chronology is ambiguous, accounts suggest that the confinement ritual had been formalized by the 1880s—perhaps as early as the late 1870s. For example in 1878, Louisa Greene Richards wrote in her diary, “Sister E. R. Snow, Zina D. Young and E. B. Wells have been to see me today, and to wash, anoint and bless me, preparatory to my approaching confinement.”44 Five years later Zina D. H. Young spoke on washing and anointing to a Logan Relief Society conference: “I wish to speak of the great privilege given us to wash and anoint the sick and suffering of our sex. I would counsel every one who expects to become a Mother to have this ordinance administered by some good faithful sisters.” She then gave instructions on the procedure for the rituals.45 The language of these accounts suggest that, during this time, there was not a specific ritual for expec-
tant mothers; soon thereafter, however, specific accounts became commonplace. As with other rituals, washings and anointings for confinement were performed wherever Mormons located.46 Washings and anointing for confinement shared the same ritual form as washings and anointing for health, where different parts of the body were sequentially washed, anointed, and blessed. The confinement ritual differed by adding a relevant blessing for the parts of the body necessary for safe delivery and breast-feeding the infant.47 These blessings for safe and successful pregnancies were deeply communal, with family and close friends often participating in the administrations.

In 1888, Church President Wilford Woodruff wrote to Woman’s Exponent editor Emmeline B. Wells in response to several questions relating to healing ritual administration: “I imagine from your question that you refer to a practice that has grown up among the sisters of washing and anointing sisters who are approaching their confinement. . . . There is no impropriety in sisters washing and anointing their sisters in this way under the circumstances you describe.”48 Wells’s uncertainty likely arose from the ritual homology between the confinement blessings and the temple blessings. That many Latter-day Saint women received these same healing rituals in the temples likely added to her uncertainty. Later that same year and in response to the support of Apostle Franklin D. Richards, Wells published an editorial reiterating the importance of Joseph Smith’s April 28, 1842, sermon and pointing to details of her instructions.

46E.g., Libbie Noall traveled with her missionary husband to Hawaii and became the Relief Society president where she frequently ritually administered to “women in confinement.” Matthew Noall, To My Children: An Autobiographical Sketch (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1947), 46–47.

47For examples of confinement blessings, see note 19, containing references to texts of blessings in Cannonville, Utah, and Oakley, Idaho, Relief Society ward minutes as well as texts generated in the General Relief Society office. For examples of washing and anointing for health, see Washing and anointing blessing texts, ca. 1923, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2; Anna Fullmer Griffiths (1905–41), Diary, March 20, 1926, microfilm of holograph. See also Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, 1879–95, October 2, 1895, photocopy of holograph, Perry Special Collections.

several published sources.49*

In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith built the Nauvoo Temple as a place of physical healing, among other functions; and in it after Joseph’s death, Brigham Young administered to the sick daily.50* Even though the complete Mormon healing liturgy was available outside of the temple, Latter-day Saints in Utah conserved Smith’s vision. As a result, the Endowment House and, later, the temples (the first Utah temple, in St. George, was dedicated in 1877) served as loci for special healing, though the rituals performed there were not different from those outside of the temples.51* Both men and women administered healing rituals in the temples, and the temple acted as an anchor for female ritual healing over time.52* Testimonials printed in the Young Woman’s Journal recounted several miraculous healings performed by women in the Endowment House and later temples, noting, “How many times the sick and suffering have come upon beds to that temple and at once Sister [Lucy Bigelow] Young would be called to take the afflicted one under her immediate charge as all knew the mighty power she had gained through long years of fastings and prayers in

49[Emmeline B. Wells], “Editorial Note,” Woman’s Exponent 17 (September 1, 1888): 52.
50Stapley and Wright, “The Forms and the Power”; Stapley and Wright, “They Shall Be Made Whole.” See also Brigham Young, Office Journal, July 12, 1845, photocopy of holograph, Brigham Young Papers, MS 0566, Marriott Library. Our thanks to John Turner for sharing this reference.
51Stapley and Wright, “They Shall Be Made Whole,” 69–112, esp. 88–95.
the exercise of her special gift.”

Often individuals participated in several different healing rituals during a single trip to the temple. Helen Mar Whitney Kimball described one of her daughter’s temple experiences; she was “baptized in the Manti Temple 7 times for her health once for remission of sins—then washed & anointed that she might obtain the desire of her heart—was promised that she should. Was also administered to by the brethren.” When another daughter was pregnant, Helen Kimball recorded that Christiana Pyper and Alvus Patterson, both renowned healers, administered to her outside of the temple: “[Lillie] was washed and anointed by Sister Pyper preparatory to her confinement. Bro P. called & she asked him to be mouth in blessing Gen [another daughter]. I asked them to administer to L. which they did & also to me—proposed by Sister Pyper.” Though they were not kin relations, Pyper and Patterson frequently healed together; often Pyper anointed and Patterson confirmed the ritual. Continuing on from cooperative practices from the Nauvoo era, collaborative male-fe-

---


54 Charles M. Hatch and Todd M. Compton, eds., A Widow’s Tale: The 1884–1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2003), 489. For a similar battery of temple healing rituals, see ibid., 204–5. Whitney’s diary contains scores of female ritual healing accounts. For baptism for health, see Stapley and Wright, “They Shall Be Made Whole.”

55 Both prominent healers in their own right, Pyper and Patterson shared a family friendship and even received patriarchal blessings on the same day. He was promised to “have power equal to Elijah of old” being able to go from settlement to settlement healing the sick. She was blessed to “administer to the sick and they shall be healed instantly under thy hands.” Charles W. Hyde, Patriarchal blessing to Alvicous H. Patterson, February 18, 1888, and Charles W. Hyde, Patriarchal blessing to Christiana Dollinger Pyper, February 18, 1888, in George D. Pyper Papers, MS 1, Box 9, fd. 17, Marriott Library.

56 Hatch and Compton, A Widow’s Tale, 402.

57 See, e.g., Christiana D. Pyper, “Accounts of Administration to the Sick, 1888 and 1891,” manuscript, George D. Pyper Papers, MS 1, Box 2, fd.
male ritual healing remained common, with family members frequently joining to administer healing rituals. For example, Wilford Woodruff described the healing of Margaret Smoot, who had experienced paralysis: “Mrs Phebe W Woodruff Anointed her & A O. Smoot Wm. Smoot & my self laid hands upon her And I Wilford Woodruff Blessed her and rebuked her Disease and her speech began to Come to her and she was some better.”

**Utah Healing Culture**

For Mormon women, the second half of the nineteenth century was a period where the transmission of ritual knowledge as well as the consolidation of its performance within the public and private spheres bolstered both the folk and formal liturgical modalities. Throughout the development of the Relief Society from the 1850s, female healing served as a bridge of continuity that would connect women to their Nauvoo origins, to the temple, and to each other. The women at the core of the healing culture of nineteenth-

---

58While collaborative male-female ritual healings were common, it is also evident that some men preferred to administer with other men. Oliver Huntington wrote in his journal after administering to his daughter-in-law, “I called for my wife as I generally do to lay on hands with me in the absence of other elders.” Oliver B. Huntington, Diary, November 28, 1886, 124–25, holograph, Perry Special Collections. Huntington had a preferred mode of administering to the sick, patterned after the prayer circle. Ibid., January 27, 1887, 159–61.


60Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 8:172. For an example of Phoebe administering to Wilford with others, see 7:156. See also George A. Smith, Diary, January 9, 1873, MS 1322, Box 3, fd. 1, *Selected Collections*, 1:32.
century Utah invoked the power and authority to heal that Joseph Smith had recognized and validated at the early Relief Society meetings. These women, whose formative organizational and spiritual experiences occurred in Nauvoo and Winter Quarters, sought to strengthen female ritual participation within the community, and the Church hierarchy approved of their efforts. Through the individual and organizational instruction of Relief Society leaders, as well as the mentoring of Mormon women which occurred through active ritual participation, sermons, letters and other publications, female healing entered a period of growth and intensification, culminating in the Relief Society Jubilee in 1892.

Church leadership in the early Utah period continued to uphold and even expand the healing authority of women. When apostles edited the “Manuscript History of the Church” during the 1850s, they made some editorial changes to Joseph Smith’s Relief Society sermons. However, Smith’s April 28, 1842, revelation to the Relief Society outlining women’s qualification to heal and bless the sick remained intact. Apostles and other Church leaders also set women apart to wash, anoint, and, in one example, to “wait upon her sex in sickness.”

---

61See, e.g., Ezra T. Benson, General Conference Address, Salt Lake City, October 6, 1852, Millennial Star 15 (February 26, 1853): 130. For other examples of General Authority support of female ritual healing not elsewhere cited in this paper, see Logan Utah Cache Stake, Relief Society, Minutes and Records, Vol. 1, June 18, 1868, and August 2, 1869, microfilm of manuscript, LR 1280 14; Orson Pratt, November 2, 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:291; Brigham Young, August 31, 1875, Journal of Discourses, 18:71; John Taylor, Remarks, in “Report of the Dedication of the Kaysville Relief Society House, Nov. 12, 1876,” Woman’s Exponent 5 (March 1, 1877): 148–49; [George Q. Cannon], “Editorial Thoughts,” Juvenile Instructor 17 (August 1, 1879): 174.

62Historians in Nauvoo used the highly abbreviated “Book of the Law of the Lord” for the entry, although they added the minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo to the addendum. “Manuscript History of the Church,” April 28, 1842, 3:1326; Addendum 3:26–27, 38-43, in Selected Collections, 1:1. When historians in Utah prepared and published “Joseph Smith’s History,” they included the edited minutes. “Manuscript History of the Church,” April 28, 1842, 10:468–71, Selected Collections, 1:2; “History of Joseph Smith,” Desert News, September 19, 1855, 217–18. Joseph Smith’s addresses to the Relief Society as edited during this period were later edited
As the few, small Relief Society groups sprang up during the 1850s to meet local needs and perform acts of charity, they endorsed female authority and power to heal and care for the sick and pregnant. The minutes from the formation meeting of one such group under priesthood direction in Cedar City, Utah, illustrates how healing rituals had evolved as well as the central role they played in women leaders’ roles:

President Isaac C. Haight and John M. Higbee then blessed Lydia Hopkins as President of the Institution and as a midwife to the sisters, with the power to wash and anoint the sick, and of laying on of hands. Blessed Anabella Haight as her first Counsellor, and Rachel Whittaker as her second Counsellor, to wash, anoint, and lay hands on the sick. Also blessed Frances Willis, as a midwife, to have power to wash, anoint, and lay on hands, for the recovery of the sick.64

Church leaders in the Utah Territory continued to endorse women’s authority to heal and the gifts of the Spirit remained primarily ungendered in Mormon discourse.

As they had in Kirtland, in Nauvoo, and on the trail west, patriarchs continued to encourage female participation in the healing liturgy. The Martineau family is an example of the recognition of such blessings. On January 23, 1857, Patriarch William Cazier of Nephi,
Utah, blessed Susan Julia Sherman Martineau: “Thou shalt have the gift of healing, and administer to the afflicted of thy family, in the absence of thy husband, and they shall be healed.” A different patriarch gave another Martineau wife, Susan Elvira, a similar blessing two years later: “We seal upon thee the blessings of life—the gift to rebuke disease . . .” Later, Patriarch Benjamin Johnson of Tempe, Arizona, blessed Susan Elvira that “health and peace shall drop from the ends of thy fingers, and consolation and Comfort from thy lips. We ordain thee and set thee apart as a Nurse and as a Midwife, and thou shalt administer peace and comfort to the afflicted. The sick shall rise up at thy touch, and sickness and death shall flee away from thy presence.”

Patty Sessions’s experience highlights the influence that patriarchs wielded in the healing sphere. Having been tutored in healing ritual in Nauvoo and being one of the most active documented healers for decades, she wrote in her diary that Patriarch Charles Hyde “laid his hands upon my head blessed me and to my surprise ordained me to lay hands on the sick.” Over the next years, Sessions regularly administered as she had before; but upon being called to minister to a woman who had a necrotic breast tumor, she wrote: “I felt very curious I feel as though I must lay hands on her. I never felt so before without being called on to do it. She said [‘]well do it[.’] I knew I had been ordained to to [sic] lay hands on the sick & set apart to do that. She had been washed clean & I anointed her gave her some oil to take & then laid hands on her. I told her she would get well if she would believe & not daught it. We put on a cloth wet in oil. She got up & went out door said there was no pain in it at all.” The bestowal of blessings by patriarchs giving women healing power and directing them to

---

67Smart, Mormon Midwife, 349. For a similar example of a patriarch setting apart a woman who was already a well-established healer, see Hatch and Compton, A Widow’s Tale, 471.
68Smart, A Mormon Midwife, 362–63.
administer to the sick endured into the twentieth century.69

After Brigham Young counseled women to reestablish Relief Society under the direction of local bishops between 1867 and 1868, the mandate to heal and bless the sick maintained a position of noteworthy importance. When Brigham Young asked Eliza R. Snow to head up the work of reorganizing the Relief Society at this time, she began traveling throughout the Utah Territory teaching women about its structure, purpose, and history. This education also included imparting specific instructions regarding the healing rituals.70 Snow became the foremost interpreter of Joseph Smith’s discourses to the Relief Society, and the manuscript minutes of the Nauvoo Female Relief Society remained primarily in her possession until her death in 1887.71 As Brigham Young encouraged the spread of the women’s organization, he continued to encourage female healing, at one point asking, in 1869: “Why do you not live so as to rebuke disease? It is your privilege to do so without sending for the Elders... It is the privilege of a mother to have faith and to administer to her child; this she can do herself, as well as sending for the Elders to have the benefit of their faith.”72 During this time period, both Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow encouraged women to seek training in obstetrics, to exercise

---

70In Snow’s meeting with Relief Societies, she frequently instructed the women on healing and encouraged individual Relief Society members to administer to the sick. See, e.g.: Thirteenth Ward, Relief Society Minutes, April 30, 1868, microfilm of manuscript, LR 6133 14; Eleventh Ward, University West Stake, Relief Society Minutes and Records, March 3, 1869, microfilm of manuscript, LR 2569 14; Kingston Ward, Relief Society Minutes, May 26, 1879, microfilm of manuscript; Nineteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, Ladies’ Prayer Meeting Minutes, July 14, 1877, 88, microfilm of manuscript, LR 6092 31. For the administration of healing rituals as part of Relief Society meetings, see, e.g., Seventeenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, Relief Society Minutes and Records, Vol. 5, March 5, 1874, microfilm of manuscript, LR 8240 14.
71Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo,” 91–104.
the power of faith, and to maintain independence from “Gentile” doctors. Furthermore, women who received medical training also administered healing rituals.73

Though all Church members could administer healing rituals, the network of women who had been set apart by a priesthood leader (e.g., a stake president, an apostle, a patriarch, etc.) to wash, anoint, and care for the sick modeled ritual practice and mentored women in healing administration. This formalization of authority occurred both within sacred and mundane space—whether washing and anointing for health in the temple or for childbirth outside of it, female networks conveyed knowledge and experience via ritual administration. In addition to addressing women in more formalized Church settings, “leading sisters”75 like Eliza R. Snow and Zina D. H. Young provided individualized mentoring and ministering by initiating a new generation of women into motherhood through ritual washings and anointings. Helen Mar Whitney Kimball recalled the role that female leaders played in ritually administering to younger women and the need to transmit such knowledge:

The Dr could not cure me, so I’d no other source to look to but my Father in Heaven so concluded to send for Sister [Eliza R.] Snow who came soon bringing Sister [Margaret Thompson] Smoot. They washed & anointed me & I was greatly comforted. We talked about many

73Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons, Reminiscences and Journals, May 19, 1883, 72, microfilm of holograph, wrote: “I went to see Mary Whitney, She is suffering much with a bad leg since her confinement. I am her doctor. She wanted me to anoint her leg and administer to her and she said she knew it would be better, so I did as she required, and the Lord heard my prayers and blessed the anointing. I called the next Tuesday, she said it had been getting better ever since. She asked me to administer to her again. I did so and when I called on Friday I found her so much better I will not have to go again for a while.”

74In general instructions to the Relief Society, Snow’s successor Zina D. H. Young reiterated: “It is unnecessary to be set apart to administer to the sick with washing and anointing.” Zina D. H. Young, Relief Society Instructions, holograph on Relief Society letterhead dated “189...” CR 11 301, Box 4, ftd 11.

things—among the rest I told some of my experience. Sister Smoot told me she thought I would be a great benefit to the young sisters to hear my history & she considered it my duty to tell them.  

The role of the Joseph Smith’s revelatory endorsement of female healing cannot be overestimated in the narrative history of Utah healing culture. Smith’s April 28, 1842, discourse to the Relief Society was the rhetorical basis for female participation in ritual healing, being repeatedly referenced in Relief Society meeting minutes. This discourse was also frequently reprinted in various periodicals, including the *Woman’s Exponent* and *Deseret News*.

The formal organization of the Relief Society general presidency in 1880, with Eliza R. Snow as president and Zina D. H. Young, and Elizabeth Ann Whitney as counselors, facilitated further training for women in healing ritual and academic medical training. Three months earlier, Church leaders held a special meeting in association with the April 1880 conference for apostles and stake presidencies. Among other instructions, leaders were taught: “Sisters could not lay on hands by authority of the holy priesthood but in the name of Jesus Christ & by the prayer of faith heal the sick.” The following fall, the Quorum of the Twelve, then headed by John Taylor who had yet to reorganize the First Presidency after Brigham Young’s death, sent out a circular letter reiterating this position on female administration:

---

76Helen Mar Whitney Papers, “Reminiscences and Diary 1876 and November 1884–September 1885,” January 9, 1876, quoted in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman’s View: Helen Mar Whitney’s Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1997), xxxv–xxxvii. Whitney was the recipient of female blessings before the exodus west. The *Woman’s Exponent* frequently published memoirs and tributes to prominent sisters which served as a method of transmitting female culture to younger generations. See also Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo,” 115.

77When John Taylor ordained Zina D. H. Young as a counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, he included in his blessing, “Thou shalt have the gift to heal the sick.” John Taylor, ordination of Zina D. H. Young, Minutes of General Meeting Held in the Fourteenth Ward Assembly Hall, July 17, 1880, in Relief Society, Record, 1880–1892, microfilm of CR 11 175.

It is the privilege of all faithful women and lay members of the Church, who believe in Christ, to administer to all the sick or afflicted in their respective families, either by the laying on of hands, or by the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord: but they should administer in these sacred ordinances, not by virtue and authority of the priesthood, but by virtue of their faith in Christ, and the promises made to believers: and thus they should do in all their ministrations.  

Local priesthood leaders in turn preached female ritual healing, communicating these general directives to their congregations.

The Relief Society general presidency also played a role in affirming female ritual healing during this period. As the scope of Snow’s leadership expanded, she urged women to grasp the full mandate of the Relief Society and began extensively training women as she continued her travels throughout the Utah Territory. She emphasized the essential work of salvation, the legitimacy of women’s work in the priesthood order, and the significance of the Relief Society in the Church’s history, both ancient and in modern times. She often reaffirmed female healing stating, for example that, “when visiting, the teachers should administer to the sick and wash and anoint them also confirm these blessings upon them by the laying on of hands. We need to be filled with the Spirit of God.”

Zina Young and Eliza R. Snow worked together throughout this 

---

79Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Circular Letter, October 6, 1880, microfilm of holograph, CR 2 30.

80See, e.g., Godfrey and Godfrey, The Diaries of Charles Ora Card, 232, 234, 239, 244.

time period, linked not only as presidency members but also through polygamous kinship (both had been plural wives of, first, Joseph Smith, and second, Brigham Young), further cemented by the experien-
tial bonds formed in Winter Quarters and the proximity of living
together in the Lion House. They were referred to as the “yin and
yang of nineteenth century Relief Society. . . . Sister Eliza was the head
of the women’s work, Aunt Zina was often said to be its heart.”82
Their role as administrative and ritual guides laid out the paradigm
of Relief Society during their lives. Accounts of Relief Society meet-
ings from a broad geographical region reveal similar vignettes
throughout the Church. For example, Joseph I. Earl of Bunkerville,
Nevada, recorded in 1881:

Bro. Sam Knight brought Sister Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. Young and
Minerva Snow. They held a meeting in the forenoon and all spoke by
the Spirit and Power of God, giving good counsel to both old and
young. In the afternoon they organized the Children’s primary Asso-
ciation. And in the evening they organized the Young Ladies Associa-
tion. . . . Sisters Snow and Young anointed and blessed Calista, who was
sick. Sister Snow spoke in the gift of tongues and Sister Young inter-
preted and Calista felt much better after they got through.83

Throughout the 1880s, this duty of blessing and healing was reit-
erated at a variety of Relief Society conferences. Invoking the restora-
tionist ideals of Joseph Smith at the first Logan Relief Society con-
ference following the general organization, Eliza R. Snow declared, “We
want to contend for the faith that was once delivered to the Sts when
the dead were raised Sick healed &c &c, fear and faith never dwell in
the Same bosom.”84 This period was one that secured and consoli-
dated women’s authority and power. Diaries and other records regu-
larly describe healing administrations performed by women. Confin-
ement blessings became a regularly established fixture upon the

Woman’s Exponent 10 (November 15, 1881): 95.
82Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 127.
83Joseph I. Earl, Journal, January 26, 1881, in Owen Ken Earl, comp.,
Journals from the Life and Times of Joseph Ira Earl and His Wife Elethra Claista
Bunker and His Wife Agnes Viola Bunker (Moses Lake, Wash.: Owen Ken Earl,
1986), 58. For a similar healing, see May Jacobs, “Cured by Faith,” Juvenile
Instructor 29 (April 15, 1894): 146.
landscape of women’s health, and women were sought as healers both individually, in groups of Relief Society representatives, and as collaborative administrants with male counterparts.

The establishment of the Deseret Hospital further formalized and institutionalized the relationship between women and healing. At one Relief Society Conference, participants heard a wide range of speakers expound on the importance of blessing and caring for the sick:

Dr. Ellis R. Shipp spoke upon faith and washing and anointing of the sick . . . Mrs. Phebe Woodruff, in addressing the congregation, spoke earnestly in reference to the Deseret Hospital . . . She also spoke of the benefit of the washings and anointing for the sick. President Wilford Woodruff spoke very encouraging to the sisters, both in regard to the duties and responsibilities which necessarily devolve upon them and also the administration to the sick and afflicted.85

Women like Hannah Adeline Savage found both medical support and ritual healing at Deseret Hospital. Lucy Bigelow Young, one of Brigham Young’s wives, toured the hospital with Dr. Romania B. Pratt. Savage wrote that Dr. Pratt “said to me [‘]Sister Young has great faith[’] as she knew that I was desirous of being administered to when an opportunity presented. So I asked Sister Young to bless me and use the holy oil which she did. She gave me a great blessing and told me I should be healed and that I should administer unto thousands.”86

Perhaps the apex of female ritual healing in the nineteenth century was the fiftieth anniversary jubilee celebrations of the Relief Society, where female healing was repeatedly affirmed. At the Logan celebration, Jane Snyder Richards, spoke about the “rights and privileges of the sisters and their duty in regard to administering to the sick and rebuking disease.” Her husband, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, similarly emphasized female healing and recounted Joseph Smith’s

April 28, 1842, revelation at the Ogden celebration. After Apostle John Henry Smith read a discourse by Bathsheba Smith, which highlighted female healing during the Salt Lake City celebration, Joseph F. Smith stated: “It is just as much the right of the mother as of the father [to heal], although he, holding the priesthood, can do it by virtue of this as well as in the name of the Lord. The women are not especially called upon to visit from house to house to administer to the sick, but they can do so properly, if called upon.” The original text of Joseph Smith’s April 28, 1842, teachings on female healing was also reprinted with the jubilee reports.

The administration of healing rituals to women remained a chief concern during the presidential tenure of Zina D. H. Young, a potent healer who taught in a concrete manner. For three years—1889 to 1891—Young kept a meticulous ledger in which she noted the

---


88 Bathsheba W. Smith stated: “This organization is not only for the purpose of administering to the sick and afflicted, the poor and the needy, but it is to save souls” and that “if the sisters come before the Lord in humility and faith and lay hands upon the sick and the Lord heals them, none should find fault.” Bathsheba W. Smith, discourse read by Apostle John Henry Smith in “The Relief Society Jubilee,” *Deseret Weekly*, March 26, 1892, 435. Apostle Abraham H. Cannon also spoke in support of female healing: “It must fill the hearts of the Saints with the joy to think of the glorious work the sisters have done. We cannot conceive of how great a help they have been to the Church, although we know of many houses to which they have carried comfort and brought relief in sickness and affliction. God has been with them in their work. Many miraculous cures have been affected through their prayers and this has strengthened the testimony of many. But their work in the future will be even greater than that in the past.” Abraham Cannon, Sermon, ibid., 433.

89 Joseph F. Smith, Sermon, ibid., 435.


dates, details, and recipients of blessings that she performed in the Logan Temple. During those three years, Young administered anointings, washings and anointings, and blessings to at least 383 individuals in the temple, virtually all women. (See Tables 1 and 2.) Reflecting on her ministry during this time, she wrote simply, “I have seen much of the power of God manifest healing the sick of all most all kinds.”

The effect of her ministrations are observable not only in diarists’ records of her interpersonal relationships, but also in terms of the pattern that was communicated to Relief Society women for ritual performance. Minutes from a Salt Lake Temple women’s meeting reflect the power of her example over decades, “Sister Mary Freeze arose & stated a circumstance of twent[sic] years ago when she was washed & annointed by Aunt Zina Young before her confinement & being told that she was Beloved of the Lord & the effect it had upon her & her strengthening her to become such.” Relief Society work, both in and outside of the temple, was the center of attention for Zina through the end of the nineteenth century. Her death in 1901 signaled a deep and long-lasting change to the healing culture of women within the Church.

---

92Zina D. H. Young, Memorandum, Zina Card Brown Family Collection, microfilm of holograph, MS 4780, Box 1, fd. 15. As blessings were frequently performed on the same day (temples had days specially set apart for healing) and as there are many records of Zina’s bestowing blessings outside of the temple during this time that are not included on this ledger, we conclude that the ledger is a record of her temple ministry. For examples of these extra-temple rituals not included in her ledger, see Zina Young, Diary, January 23, February 13, 26, and March 5, 1890 and Oliver B. Huntington, Diary, typescript (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1942), 343.

93Zina D. H. Young, Diary, September 26, 1889. In that same entry, Young wrote: “Have been in the temple at work in room no 3 since it opened only a brief absence of going to the city.” Her blessing register chronicles this work in the temple.

TABLE 1
ZINA D. H. YOUNG’S TEMPLE HEALING AND BLESSING RITUALS, 1889–91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W/A Health</th>
<th>W/A Pregnancy</th>
<th>Anointing Health</th>
<th>Misc. Health</th>
<th>Blessing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Temple Healing and Blessing Rituals Performed by Zina D. H. Young, 1889–91. Data extracted from Zina D. H. Young, Memorandum, Zina Card Brown Family Collection, microfilm of holograph, MS 4780, Box 1, fd. 15. W/A signifies “washing and anointing.” In some instances, Young noted that the blessing was for “health” but did not indicate which ritual she administered. These instances are grouped in the generic “Health” category. “Miscellaneous” includes blessings for which a purpose was not indicated or for reasons such as a “sisters blessing,” a blessing “for her comfort,” a “mother’s blessing” and blessing a woman “for a mission to Mexico,” for which the other categories do not account.

TABLE 2
ZINA D. H. YOUNG’S TEMPLE HEALING AND BLESSING RITUALS, 1889–91, BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W/A Health</th>
<th>W/A Pregnancy</th>
<th>Anointing Health</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
<th>Blessing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Years</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFORMATION OF LITURGICAL AUTHORITY

As the nineteenth century ended, both external and internal pressures led to shifts in the liturgical roles of LDS men and women. Specifically in response to non-Mormon healing, Church leaders reformed the relationship of the Melchizedek Priesthood to the Mormon healing liturgy. Leaders changed traditional modes of female ritual healing to accommodate the priesthood’s elevated role in stabilizing and strengthening the Church.

Healing Authority, the Temple, and Priesthood

Before Joseph Smith’s death, both men and women derived authority to heal from their Church membership and faith in Christ. The question of priesthood and women’s healing during this period is therefore simply an anachronism. Women had healed for years before Joseph Smith delivered his April 28, 1842, revelation on female healing to the Relief Society women, and they did not participate in temple rituals until the fall of 1843. In that discourse, however, Smith indicated that he intended that women join in the temple liturgy and be endowed with power, by receiving the “keys of the kingdom.”

With the inclusion of women in the Nauvoo Temple liturgy, beginning with Emma Smith’s initiation on September 28, 1843, a measure of ambiguity entered into the relationship between women and the priesthood. Joseph Smith often imbued words in common parlance with new and sometimes radical meaning. Such was the case with “priesthood.” Smith administered temple rituals to men and women within a specially created quorum that contemporaries called various names including “the order of the priesthood,” “quorum of the priesthood,” and simply “the priesthood.” Through the temple rituals, women received the “garment of the holy priesthood” and wore the “robes of the holy priesthood.” The temple quorum was also a space in which women received an expanded liturgical authority and administered rituals of salvation and empowerment. Records indicate that early female administrants of temple rituals were also referred to as “priestesses,” a reflection of the ultimate promise to temple participants of the “fullness of the priesthood.” In Smith’s temple cosmology, men and women looked for-

---

95Stapley and Wright, “The Forms and the Powers.”
ward to reigning through eternity as kings and queens, priests and priestesses.\textsuperscript{96}

Joseph Smith died before the completion of the Nauvoo Temple, and consequently it was left to the Quorum of the Twelve to transmit these concepts to the broader church. These Church leaders generally assumed a separation between the liturgical or priestly function of the temple (the new cosmological priesthood), the older governing priesthood of the Church, and the authority to administer in the healing liturgy. For example, in 1857 Mary Ellen Kimball, one of the plural wives of Heber C. Kimball, washed and anointed a woman for her health and then wrote:

\begin{quote}
After I returned home I thought of the instructions I had received from time to time that the priesthood was not bestowed upon woman. I accordingly asked Mr. Kimball if woman had a right to wash and anoint the sick for the recovery of their [sic] health or is it mockery in them to do so. He replied inasmuch as they are obedient to their husbands they have a right to administer in that way in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ but not by authority of the priesthood invested in them for that authority is not given to woman.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{96}For a more detailed discussion of this priesthood language, see Jonathan A. Stapley, “Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism,” \textit{Journal of Mormon History} 37, no. 3 (Summer 2011). The significance of the priestly aspects of the temple liturgy to the relationship between women and the governing priesthood of the Church is controversial. Further, teachings contemporaneous with Joseph Smith are frequently stripped from their context. D. Michael Quinn, “Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843,” argued that women receive the Melchizedek Priesthood through the temple endowment. He also argues that Mormon women healed by this priesthood authority. A complete rebuttal to Quinn’s argument is not possible here; however, Church leaders consistently taught from the earliest days of the Church that women healed as members of the Church and in the name of Jesus. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Mormon Women and Temple: Toward a New Understanding,” in \textit{Sisters in Spirit}, 80–110, offers a similar narrative to Quinn. On the Anointed Quorum and the temple liturgy, see Andrew F. Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982); Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., \textit{Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History} (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005); and Anderson and Bergera, \textit{The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846}.\textsuperscript{97}
There are examples of Church leaders speaking more ambiguously on the relationship of women to the priesthood, specifically in the context of marriage. These examples highlight the linguistic complexity resulting from using words with evolving meaning and the difficulty in discerning personal idiosyncrasy. For example, in a public sermon in 1879, John Taylor asked, “Do they [women] hold the priesthood? Yes, in connection with their husbands and they are one with their husbands.” When Orson Pratt edited an account of Joseph Smith’s teachings for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants, he added an editorial clarification that the “Order of the Priesthood” required for the highest eternal blessings was “the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.” This usage is consistent with Joseph Smith’s expansion of priesthood language in Nauvoo, but not with the Church leaders’ view that women do not


99John Taylor, November 30, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:359. When John Taylor organized the Relief Society general presidency the following year, he discussed the practice of ordaining Relief Society officers, which dated to Nauvoo, and stated: “The ordination then given did not mean the conferring of the Priesthood upon those Sisters yet the sisters hold a portion of the Priesthood in connection with their husbands. (Sisters E. R. Snow and Bathsheba Smith stated that they so understood it in Nauvoo and have always looked upon it in that light.)” Minutes of General Meeting Held in Fourteenth Ward Assembly Hall, July 17, 1880, Relief Society, Record, 1880–1892, microfilm of manuscript, CR 11 175. See also Brittany Chapman, [Ruth May Fox Diaries] (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, forthcoming), March 8, 1896; microfilm of holograph available at the LDS Church History Library.

100Orson Pratt, ed., *The Doctrine and Covenants, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Containing the Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, Jun., the Prophet for the Building Up the Kingdom of God in the Last Days* (Liverpool: William Budge, 1879), 462–63 [D&C 131]. See also Smith, *An Intimate*
hold the priesthood of Church governance and office.

In 1878 Angus Cannon, president of Salt Lake Stake, whose plural wife, Martha Hughes Cannon, frequently administered healing rituals, spoke at a stake conference. According to the minutes, “in answer to a question that had been asked, [he said] that women could only hold the priesthood in connection with their husbands; man held the priesthood independent of woman. The sisters have a right to anoint the sick, and pray the Father to heal them, and to exercise that faith that will prevail with God; but women must be careful how they use the authority of the priesthood in administering to the sick.” Statements such as this clearly relate to the relationship between men and women as solemnized in the temple, where couples are promised eternal glory as royal priests and priestesses. While there is no question that women received real liturgical or priestly authority and power in the temple, taken as a whole, Church leaders consistently taught that the authority to heal was discrete from authority as received in the temple.

Chronicle, 101.

101 Constance L. Lieber and John Sillito, eds., Letters from Exile: The Correspondence of Martha Hughes Cannon and Angus M. Cannon 1886–1888 (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 88–89, 163. Martha’s mother was also a known healer.


103 For example, chiding a congregation in 1854, John Taylor asked rhetorically, “Have you forgot who you are, and what your object is? Have you forgot that you profess to be Saints of the Most High God, clothed upon with the Holy Priesthood? Have you forgot that you are aiming to become Kings and Priests to the Lord, and Queens and Priestesses to Him?” John Taylor, April 19, 1854, Journal of Discourses, 1:372. See also John Taylor, August 30, 1857, Journal of Discourses, 5:189. Brigham Young’s statement that “the man that honors his Priesthood, the woman that honors her Priesthood, will receive an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of God; but it will not be until this earth is purified and sanctified, and ready to be offered up to the Father” is a similar association of temple priesthood language. June 28, 1874, Journal of Discourses, 17:119.
On some occasions when men and women administered together, men did invoke priesthood authority. In 1854, Wilford Woodruff recorded laying hands on his twelve-year-old son’s head with his wife Phoebe and delivering a “Fathers blessing” by virtue of the “Holy Priesthood.”\(^{104}\) In relation to healing, similar pronouncements were so common by 1907 that Church President Joseph F. Smith published a statement in the *Improvement Era*: “A wife does not hold the priesthood in connection with her husband”; however, “it is no uncommon thing for a man and wife unitedly to administer to their children, and the husband being mouth, he may properly say out of courtesy, ‘By authority of the holy priesthood in us vested.’”\(^{105}\) Perhaps not surprisingly, language that related female ritual healing to the priesthood is extant. For example, Ellen McKay’s 1882 obituary stated that she “was a woman of great faith in the healing of the sick by administration according to the order of the priesthood.”\(^{106}\)

Following the dedication of the Logan Temple on May 17, 1884, another wave of emphatic declarations from the Relief Society

---


\(^{105}\)Joseph F. Smith, “Questions and Answers,” *Improvement Era* 10 (February 1907): 308. In 1885, the Salt Lake Stake High Council debated whether women who were married in the temple shared the priesthood with their husbands and could therefore invoke the priesthood when healing alone. Regarding shared priesthood, Bishop Pollard stated, “I will say that I never heard this doctrine before. I have been in the Church a great many years, and I have tried to inform my [sic] concerning the principles of the Gospel but that is something entirely new to me.” Others advocated for shared priesthood, but the council concluded that women should not invoke priesthood when healing. Joseph E. Taylor, presiding, stated, “I know nothing of womans’ right to the exercise of the power of the priesthood.” Salt Lake Stake High Council Minutes of Trials, Manuscript, vol. 10, October 13, 1885, 673–79, CR 604 10.

\(^{106}\)Anonymous, “Obituaries,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10 (February 1, 1882): 134. Note as well that the “order of the priesthood” was also used as a euphemism for the temple. Consequently this obituary could be referencing healing ordinances as patterned after temple rituals. For a similar usage, see Fred C. Collier, *The Office Journal of President Brigham Young, 1858–1863, Book D* (Hannah, Utah: Collier’s Publishing, 2006), 53, in which Dr. John Lewis Dunyon called healing rituals “ordinances of the House of the Lord.”
reiterated women’s right to heal but also dramatically altered con-
ceptions of liturgical authority. The *Woman’s Exponent* again re-
printed Joseph Smith’s April 28, 1842, discourse to the Relief Soci-
ety, and the following issue contained a letter “To the branches of
the Relief Society” in which Eliza R. Snow sought to definitively an-
swer the question: “Is it necessary for the sisters to be set apart to of-
ciliate in the sacred ordinances of washing and anointing, and lay-
ing on of hands in administering to the sick?” Affirming decades of
practice, Snow declared emphatically, “It certainly is not.” However,
she continued:

Any and all sisters who honor their holy endowments, not only
have the right, but should feel it a duty, whenever called upon to ad-
minister to our sisters in these ordinances, which God has graciously
committed to His daughters as well as to His sons; and we testify that
when administered and received in faith and humility they are accom-
panied with all mighty power.

Inasmuch as God our Father has revealed these sacred ordinances
and committed them to His Saints, it is not only our privilege but our
imperative duty to apply them for the relief of human suffering. We
think we may safely say thousands can testify that God has sanctioned
the administration of these ordinances by our sisters with the manifes-
tations of His healing influence.107

Mormon women understood Snow to be asserting that women who
administer healing rituals must be endowed. Snow therefore intro-
duced the idea that the liturgical roles of women in the temple were
to be enlarged and conflated with healing authority outside of the
temple. Although Latter-day Saints in Kirtland and Nauvoo viewed
the endowment as a conferral of healing power,108 Snow sought to
formalize the endowment as the conferral of healing authority, per-
haps to strengthen claims to that authority. Her requirement was in-
novative; and in many ways it muddied the waters, as the question of
who was qualified to administer healing ordinances became a domi-
nant theme of Mormon discourse throughout the next decades.

Female Church leaders endorsed this concept of temple en-
dowment as a prerequisite for female healing and taught it in train-

---

107E. R. Snow Smith, “To the Branches of the Relief Society,” letter
dated September 12, 1884, *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (September 15, 1884):
61.

108Stapley and Wright, “The Forms and the Power.”
ing meetings. Furthermore, the idea appears to have competed with the occasional practice of being set apart to heal. Reinforcing Snow’s role as one of the most decisive interpreters of the early Relief Society documents, some Church leaders, though generally only temporarily, accepted her expansion. Though he later taught differently, when Joseph F. Smith spoke at the 1892 jubilee celebrations, he referenced Snow’s concept of deriving healing authority from the temple: “It is a proper thing for mothers, who have received their blessings in the house of God, to pray for their sick and to rebuke diseases.” Similarly, on several occasions, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, when addressing women’s conferences, associated their “holy anointing” with healing authority.

In the year after Eliza R. Snow’s death, however, acting Church President Wilford Woodruff corresponded with several prominent

109See, e.g., Zina D. H. Young, Sermon, in Anonymous, “First General Conference of the Relief Society,” Woman’s Exponent 17 (April 15, 1889): 172. The introduction to Young’s remarks, which were read by Emmeline Wells, states that Wilford Woodruff had approved her talk.


111Joseph F. Smith, “The Relief Society Jubilee,” Deseret Weekly, March 26, 1892, 435. As already quoted, he further stated: “It is just as much the right of the mother as of the father [to heal], although he, holding the priesthood, can do it by virtue of this as well as in the name of the Lord. The women are not especially called upon to visit from house to house to administer to the sick, but they can do so properly, if called upon.”

Relief Society leaders regarding the intersection of healing and the temple. Emphasizing a position which had been normative from Kirtland, Woodruff wrote to Emmeline Wells and, addressing who was authorized to heal, acknowledged that women wash and anoint outside the temple “not as members of the priesthood but as members of the Church exercising faith for, and asking the blessing of the Lord upon their sisters. Just as they and every member of the Church might do in behalf of the members of their families.”

To Presendia Kimball, he wrote: “I will say you and all the Sisters who officiate have a right to wash and anoint any Sister for their confinement whether [sic] they have had their endowments or not and bless them as you feel led by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Though Eliza R. Snow’s limitation was occasionally reiterated after her death,

Church leaders and members generally followed the more traditional rules that all Church members had authority to administer to the sick. As Zina D. H. Young told the attendees of a ladies’ meeting in 1893: “President Young said when women are living their

---

113 Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Emmeline B. Wells, April 27, 1888, microfilm of holograph. A handwritten copy is, significantly, found in Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Emmeline B. Wells, April 27, 1888, holograph, Relief Society Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1. Only minor differences exist between the two.

114 Wilford Woodruff, Letters to Presendia Kimball and Mary Isabella Horne, ca. 188[8?], holograph copies by Zina Young Card, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1. It is also possible that this is the letter Salt Lake Stake President Angus Cannon read to a Thursday fast meeting on December 7, 1887. Hatch and Compton, A Widow’s Tale, 271.

Priesthood Reformation and Female Healing

In November 1895, the *Juvenile Instructor* published an article by Richard S. Horne, which described the healing of his daughter by his younger son. Previous to the healing, the boy asked, “Pa, has a Deacon authority to rebuke disease?” Horne responded, “Yes, if he is administering to the sick.” Two months later, the *Juvenile Instructor* ran an editorial indicating that an inquiring correspondent had questioned the propriety of Horne’s response. After explaining that all members of the Church, both male and female, have the right to administer healing rituals to the sick, the editor, likely George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency, wrote: “If he were to claim that he had the authority of the holy Priesthood (the Melchizedek Priesthood), we would say that he has no such authority. But suppose that he rebuked the disease in the name of Jesus, has he not authority? And would he be overstepping the bounds of propriety in rebuking disease in the name of Jesus? We think not, if he or she confined the rebuke to the name of Jesus, without using any words that would convey the idea that it was done in the authority of the Priesthood.” The following month another editorial discussed the same matter. A second correspondent wrote and explained that he understood “that to rebuke or to command in the name of Jesus requires the exercise of authority from Him, or, in other words, the authority of the Priesthood.” The editor responded that he thought any member of the Church could rebuke disease or the power of the destroyer in the name of Jesus; however, he also stated that to “satisfy those who might have scruples upon this point, it would be better for members of the Church who do not have the Priesthood to ask the Father in the name of Jesus to rebuke the sickness.”

The cautious positioning of the *Instructor* editor appears to have been reproduced at the turn of the century among the governing quo-

---

118[Editor], “Editorial Thoughts: Authority to Rebuke Disease,” *Juvenile Instructor* 31 (January 15, 1896): 60.
rums. In 1901, the First Presidency, then consisting of Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and George Q. Cannon (though Cannon was convalescing in California and died just a few days later), and the Twelve scrutinized the healing liturgy. James Hall, a resident of Springville, had apparently been traveling and holding “special fast meetings and administering to the sick” similar in nature to increasingly popular Protestant healing events. On April 3 and 4, before general conference, the First Presidency and Twelve met and, among other things, discussed Hall’s case and healing generally. Apostle Reed Smoot prepared a document, which the First Presidency approved, that prescribed administration “in a simple manner, without display.”

Smoot addressed the general conference the following day and spoke upon healing specifically. He claimed that there had been a “tendency exhibited by some of the brethren and sisters in some of the Stakes of Zion to add to the form of our simple ordinances . . . and to depart from the method laid down by revelation from God through the Prophet Joseph Smith.” After quoting the James 5:14–15 instruction on anointing the sick, Smoot acknowledged that it was proper for the sick to be administered to in fast meetings and that prayer circles were especially efficacious for the sick; however, Smoot warned, Church members were to focus on unadorned ritual administrations. Most tellingly, Smoot reasoned:

I believe, my brethren and sisters, that the time will come when every ordinance of the Gospel will be imitated in some form or another by the world, and this should be a testimony to every soul that Mormonism is from God. If our testimony were based only upon our belief in administering to the sick and the healing of the sick by that means, we should be in danger; for since that ordinance has been revealed to this Church other denominations have arisen believing the same thing. There is now a denomination in existence which believes in the administering of oil. By and by there will be other denominations formed that

---

119[Editor], “Editorial Thoughts: Authority to Rebuke Disease,” Juvenile Instructor 31 (February 15, 1896): 102–3.

120Stan Larson, ed., A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 263. See also pp. 366, 762. On Protestant healing services, see discussion below.

will, by reading the Bible, conclude that there should be Apostles in the Church, and they will have men-made Apostles.122

Here, Smoot outlines a massive shift in Mormonism’s relationship to the broader Christian world and to healing specifically.

At the dawn of the Restoration, Mormons were the only American church with institutionalized ritual healing. Both Catholics and Protestants had abandoned the practice of ritual anointing for the healing of the sick.123 As such and in defiance of Protestant cessationism, Joseph Smith’s healing rituals, whether administered by men or women, were potent proof that the age of miracles had not ceased. As Apostle E. T. Benson proclaimed in April 1852 general conference, “The priests in Christendom warn their flocks not to believe in ‘Mormonism;’ and yet you sisters have power to heal the sick, by the laying on of hands, which they cannot do.”124 However, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Divine Healing, an inter-denominational movement that focused on healing ritual, gained traction among Protestant denominations.125 Anointing meetings and massive healing revivals were widely described in the media, and prominent healers like

122Reed Smoot, Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1901 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 4–5 (hereafter Conference Report). Charles Ora Card’s notes of Smoot’s discourse are cogent: “Elder Reed Smoot spoke of the gift of Revelation & the mission we have & the gift of healing we enjoy & need not special fasts but have the Right of the Priesthood to rebuke & not doubt. Made very good suggestion.” Godfrey and Card, The Diaries of Charles Ora Card, 590.

123The Tunkers, or German Baptist Brethren were the only American exception. Stapley and Wright, “The Forms and the Power.”

124E. T. Benson, “General Conference Address, Salt Lake City, October 6, 1852,” Millennial Star 15 (February 26, 1853): 130.

John Dowie leveraged Divine Healing into a premillennialist restorationism. Leaders in the Divine Healing movement proscribed alcohol and tobacco, and Dowie even claimed that he was a prophet and an apostle, establishing Zion City, Illinois, on a grid system with a temple on the center lot. Also, after baptism, Holiness believers and Pentecostals sought an “enduement of power” very similar to the early references of the endowment in Mormonism.

With non-Mormons claiming healing power and authority, traditional Mormon rhetoric affirming ritual healing as evidence of the singularity of the Restoration lost potency. To maintain institutional primacy, Church leaders reformed the relationship of the priesthood


128 John Fea, “Power from on High in an Age of Ecclesiastical Impotence: The ‘Enduement of the Holy Spirit’ in American Fundamentalist
to the healing liturgy.\footnote{Other churches may or may not heal, LDS...} The intersection of Mormonism and non-Mormon healing resulted in questions regarding authority that probed the foundations of Mormon self-identity. This dynamism played out illustratively in the pages of the *Liahona: The Elders’ Journal*, a periodical published for LDS missions in the United States. In 1908 editor B. F. Cummings, wrote that, though only priesthood holders should seal anointings and individuals should first request the elders to administer healing rituals, “any person, male or female, who has faith, may anoint the sick with oil and pray for their recovery.” Cummings reaffirmed this position in a subsequent editorial. This position apparently scandalized several missionaries. In his lengthy response, Cummings navigated the relationship of priesthood and miracles in a fashion very similar to the earliest Mormons. Healing and similar charismata, he said, were the signs of all believers, even those without “valid baptism.” Cummings claimed that “much space might be filled with the personal testimony of members of different churches, quotations from religious publications. . . . We can only repeat that the evidence going to show that, at the present time, many sick are being healed by faith in Christ, without the aid of men who hold the priesthood, is so great in volume and so strong in character that to ignore or deny it would be neither reasonable nor honorable.” Cummings summarized how “Latter-day Saints can no longer claim to be, the only worshipers in the world who heal the sick by faith in Christ.” Cummings proposed an enumerated definition of priesthood that focused primarily on explicitly salvific aspects of Church function and governance. See Cummings’s three “Editorial[s],” 6 (June 20, 1908): 6–7; 6 (August 8, 1908): 182; 6 (September 14, 1908): 326–32. Two years earlier, editor Ben E. Rich wrote that, although God hears the prayers of others, proper ritual healing can be “performed [only] by those men who hold the proper authority in the priesthood.” “Editorial: Administering to the Sick,” *Elders’ Journal* 3 (July 15, 1906), 410. The 1908 *Millennial Star* carried two articles by Apostle Charles W. Penrose that treated divine healing, priesthood, and female ritual healing. Charles W. Penrose, “About Healing by Faith,” *Millennial Star* 70 (May 21 and December 10, 1908): 328–31, 792–95. For a brief...
leaders reasoned, but they certainly did not have the “priesthood.”\footnote{130} As “evangelicals looked for sources of power and authenticity in the face of alienating social and cultural changes”\footnote{131} at the turn of the century through Divine Healing, Mormon leaders sought the same thing through priesthood reformation.

Drawing on language similar to the \textit{Juvenile Instructor} editorials, the day after the general conference in which Smoot spoke, the \textit{Deseret News} carried an unsigned editorial, “Who May Rebuke Disease,” written to answer the question, “Has a woman who belongs to our Church, the right under any circumstances, to rebuke disease by laying hands on the sick?” The anonymous respondent wrote that it was common knowledge that “every person who has faith in Jesus Christ may lay hands on the sick and pray for their recovery” and that “a mother may lay her hands upon her sick child, rebuke the disease in the name of Jesus Christ, and pray the Lord to manifest His power.” Further, the editor claimed, “No one who understands the spirit of the Gospel will find fault with a brother or sister for laying hands, in faith, on the sick.” However, the author also stated:

\begin{quote}
The ordinance appointed in the Church for the healing of the sick is to be performed by the Elders. They are to anoint with oil and lay their hands upon them. They have authority in the Priesthood to seal the anointing, and the blessing of health and restoration upon those to whom they administer. A Priest, Teacher or Deacon may administer to the sick, and so may a member, male or female, but neither of them can seal the anointing and blessing, because the authority to do that is vested in the Priesthood after the order of Melchisedek; the office of Elder comes under that Priesthood.\footnote{132}
\end{quote}

This editorial clearly repositioned female participation in the Lat-

discussion of a church in the Divine Healing movement dealing with healings by “irregular” groups during this same period, see Stephens, \textit{Who Healeth All Thy Diseases}, 163–65.


\footnote{131}Baer, “Perfectly Empowered Bodies,” 3.

ter-day Saint healing liturgy, effectually cleaving it. This shift was symp-
tomatic, not of disapprobation of female healing, but of a growing ref-
 ormation of priesthood self-conceptions. However, the editorial only
made public a policy that had been determined the previous year.

In 1900, the office of the First Presidency had received a letter
from the Relief Society presidency of the Colonia Dublan Ward in Chi-
huahua, Mexico. The letter included several questions relating to wash-
ing and anointing the sick and the pregnant, among which was whether
"the Sisters [have] a right to seal the washing and anointing, using no
authority, but doing it in the name of Jesus Christ,—or should men
holding the priesthood be called in?"\textsuperscript{133} The First Presidency referred
the questions to the Relief Society general president, who responded:

The answer to this question was as follows: Brethren are some-
times called in to seal the washing and anointing; usually by the desire
of the sister herself, her husband being called, or her father, or some-
one in whom she has great faith. In case no request is made for breth-
ren to be called, the sealing is done by the sisters officiating, uniting
their faith and simply doing so in the name of Jesus, not mentioning au-
thority.

President Smith expressed himself to the effect that in his opinion
the word "seal" should not be used by the sisters at all, but that the word
"confirm" might be substituted, and that it should be used not in an au-
thoritative way but in the spirit of invocation.

Presidents Snow and Cannon endorsed this response, and then "the
secretary was directed to refer the answer back with the request that
the sisters of the Relief Society adopt the change."\textsuperscript{134}

The liturgical difference between confirmation and sealing is
not readily apparent. Church leaders, like Apostle Rudger Clawson,

\textsuperscript{133} Colonia Dublan Relief Society, Chihuahua, Mexico, Letter to
Lorenzo Snow, February 23, 1900, photocopy of holograph.

\textsuperscript{134} Minutes of the First Presidency’s Office, Journal History of the

\textsuperscript{46} The Journal of Mormon History

and Doctrine and Covenants 8:44–52. Charles W. Penrose was then editor
of the \textit{Deseret News}, but it is not clear that he wrote the editorial. The same
day on which the editorial was published, Reed Smoot “read a letter in re-
gard to [the] proper manner of administering to the sick” at the regular
meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve. Larson, \textit{A Ministry of Meetings},
269–70. Anthony W. Ivins, Diary, April 8, 1901, Utah State Historical
Archives, Salt Lake City, indicates that the letter was intended for stake presi-
dents, so it was likely the document approved in the April 4 meeting dis-
cussed above.
frequently wrote of “confirming” ritual anointings in which they participated, and Eliza Snow encouraged the Relief Society visiting teachers to “confirm” ritual healings “by the laying on of hands” as early as 1880. The language employed in the Deseret News editorial is clear, however; the shift from “sealing” to “confirmation” enforced the view that ritual healing by Melchizedek Priesthood holders was liturgically superior. The First Presidency were all men of extensive experience regarding female ritual healing: Lorenzo Snow was Eliza R. Snow’s brother. Consequently, Joseph F. Smith’s suggestion is perhaps surprising, though there are rare accounts of similar perspectives in the previous decades. From this point forward, however, all instruction on the forms of female ritual healing underscored a prohibition on “sealing” by women.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1850–present), March 7, 1900, 1, in Selected Collections, 2:23. On the letter from the Mexican Relief Society, a secretary for the First Presidency wrote in Pitman shorthand: “In your question to the presidency made on the proper answers to use in the use of the word ‘seal’ they suggested that the word confirm might be substituted by them for it.” Transcription of shorthand by LaJean Carruth. The final approved response is available as General Relief Society Presidency, “Answers to Questions (From Sisters in Mexico),” ca. 1900, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1.


137 In 1901, Smith reiterated his view that anointing the sick was primarily a Melchizedek Priesthood duty but that women could still partici-
The change from “sealing” to “confirmation” in the female ritual caused a significant amount of controversy among women in the Church. At the September 16, 1901, board meeting of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, Helen Woodruff indicated that she had responded to a question by “answer[ing], that Aunt Zina & Aunt Bathsheba had lately washed and anointed her and they had sealed the anointing. She took them as very good authority.”

Ruth May Fox noted in her journal that “Pres. [Elmina Shepherd] Taylor said that she thought it [sealing] was all right she had received just as great benefit from the sealing of the sisters as from the brethren but thought it wise to ask the Priesthood to seal the anointing when it was get-able. And if the brethren decided that women could not seal the anointing, then we should do as they say, but she could not see any reason why women could not. Aunt Zina always did.”

The meeting minutes then indicate that “Counselor [María Young] Dougall said, Mother Zina D. H. Young always sealed the washing and anointing, but not by authority of any Priesthood, however. She [Sr. Dougall] was to find out from President Snow.” At a board meeting two weeks later, Helen Woodruff reported that she had asked John R. Winder of the Presiding Bishopric if women had the right to seal ritual washings and anointings. Joseph F. Smith, Letter to John D. Chase, August 13, 1901, Joseph F. Smith Letterpress Copybooks, in Selected Collections, 1:30. Note, however, that, while “sealing” in Mormon history has had various meanings which have evolved over time, the first use of the term in 1831, referring to sealing people into eternal life, was associated exclusively with the “high priesthood.” Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 20–21, October 25, 1831. Joseph Taylor, a counselor in the Salt Lake Stake presidency, used similar reasoning in 1884 by telling home missionaries that only Melchizedek Priesthood holders should seal healing anointings. Minutes of Home Missionary Meeting, January 20, 1884, Salt Lake Stake, General Minutes, microfilm of manuscript, LR 694.

Young Women, General Board minutes, September 16, 1901, microfilm of typescript, CR 13 6.

Chapman, [Ruth May Fox Diaries], September 16, 1901. See also entries for March 6 and October 18, 1900; October 20, 1901; November 28, 1902; January 12, 1907.

Young Women General Board, Minutes, September 16, 1901.
anointings, and he responded, speaking of women: “positively they had not the power to seal, but they could confirm it.”

Church leaders received many inquiries on the policy change from “sealing” to “confirming.” The day after the Deseret News editorial on the change, Louisa (“Lula”) Green Richards, a prominent Relief Society member and former editor of the Woman’s Exponent, wrote to President Snow and incredulously pointed out that if women could not seal, then “thousands” of Church members “were laboring under a very serious mistake.” She also stated that Eliza R. Snow, who was instructed “from the Prophet Joseph Smith,” taught the sisters to always seal the anointings. A month later, the Relief Society General Board discussed female healing and “Sister [Emmeline] Wells, the Secretary, stated that she had the answers to questions approved by President Snow in which he had used the word ‘confirm’ instead of ‘seal.’” These inquiries may be the context in which Anthon H. Lund noted in his diary that, in a meeting in June 1901 with the First Presidency and the Twelve, “The question of women anointing came up and was discouraged.” This brief entry is somewhat confusing as there is no evidence of any discouragement of women participating in healing rituals and as the First Presidency consistently affirmed the practice, encouraging women to anoint the sick. It may be that the meeting was about sealing anointings and Lund’s diary entry is incomplete. However, like the Juvenile Instructor editorial that suggested it would “satisfy those who might have scruples upon this point” to refrain from rebuking disease without the priesthood, Church leaders may also have, at least temporarily, sought to balance competing views by accommodating perspectives that viewed aspects of female ritual healing with disap-

141 Ibid., September 30, 1901. Maria Young Dougall, the first counselor in the YLMIA general presidency, was appointed to ascertain President Lorenzo Snow’s views on the subject for the next meeting, but subsequent minutes do not record a response. John R. Winder was officially set apart in the First Presidency on October 17, 1901.

142 Louisa Lula Greene Richards, Letter to Lorenzo Snow, April 9, 1901, photocopy of holograph.

143 Relief Society General Board, Minutes, May 2, 1901. This “answer” is in reference to the “Answers to Questions (From the Sisters in Mexico),” Newell, “Gifts of the Spirit,” 128, misinterprets this meeting.

144 Hatch, Danish Apostle, 130.
probation. The First Presidency engaged in very similar positioning a decade later when baptism for health became controversial in the leading quorums.145

Still, despite instructions against it, the old ritual form apparently lasted for some time. Emmeline Wells, then general secretary of the Relief Society, wrote in her diary on February 20, 1903: “We went up to Sister Lydia Spencer Clawson’s to wash and anoint her preparatory to her confinement. Sister Smith offered prayer and I washed & sealed that and Sister Smith anointed—and she sealed the anointing.”146 Several Relief Societies wrote down example rituals for washing and anointing expectant mothers in their minutes during the first decade of the twentieth century. The Relief Society in both Cannonville, Utah, and Oakley, Idaho, recorded detailed blessings at this time and both include example “sealings.”147 By the second decade, however, it is clear that the Relief Society fully supported the shift.148 In responding to one stake Relief Society president, the Relief Society General Board wrote: “In washing and anointing the sick, it is customary to confirm both washing and anointing. Sister Eliza R. Snow always followed this rule, but it is not a binding rule. The matter is optional with those who officiate. If the bishop has instructed the sister to have the anointing sealed by those holding the Priesthood, such sisters should comply with the bishop’s request.”149

The first few years of the twentieth century were a confusion of competing policy and practice. In 1902 and 1903, several

145Stapley and Wright, “‘They Shall Be Made Whole,’” 106–7.
146Emmeline B. Wells, Diary, February 20, 1903, typescript, Perry Special Collections. On October 31, 1904, Wells wrote of another ritual administration where “we all joined in the confirmation of sealing the anointing.” Ibid., October 31, 1904.
147See note 19. Note that the example blessings produced by the Relief Society General Board and a mimeograph apparently produced for circulation from the Cannonville blessing text both include a “confirmation” instead of “sealing.” Relief Society Washing and Anointing Files, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2.
148Some women, however, did continue to “seal” rituals. See Griffiths, Diary, March 20, 1926.
149[On behalf of the Relief Society General Board], Letter to Sarah A. Mercer, June 7, 1915, typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1.
Church publications stated positions giving ritual primacy to the Melchizedek Priesthood. An anonymous article in the *Juvenile Instructor* stated: “If it is an ordinary anointing of the head, according to the established ordinances of the Church, it should be done by one holding the Priesthood; not by a sister when an Elder is present. It is clearly out of order to do so.”

Even the *Young Woman’s Journal* included a lesson that declared, “Only the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood has the right to lay hands on the healing of the sick, or to direct the administration . . . though to pray for the sick is the right that necessarily belongs to every member of the Church.”

The First Presidency and Twelve also moved “that the practice [of administering to the sick] be confined to the elders; but in the case of absolute necessity . . . he may, if opportunity affords, avail himself of the company of a member of the Aaronic Priesthood, or even a lay member, but for the purpose only of being supported by the faith of such member or members.”

Female and male healings were no longer viewed as equal. Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo-era teachings and revelation on female healing were not canonized, and the Church quickly leaned on the 1831 revelation that the elders were to be called to lay hands on the sick, in conjunction with the exhortation in James 5:14–15 to seek the elders. Female healing became a “separate sphere”—a special case. Yet on September 7, 1903, several General Authorities stayed with Alberta Stake President Edward J. Wood. While there, Wood’s daughter became ill; and with Wood, President Lund, and Elder Reed Smoot looking on, it was President Joseph F. Smith’s wife, Alice, who anointed the

---

150 Anonymous, “Answers to Questions: Anointing the Sick,” *Juvenile Instructor* 37 (May 15, 1902): 307. It continued: “There may be occasions of disease or accident when it is desirable that other parts of the body be anointed. It would be obviously improper for any but a sister to attend to such an anointing; but when this has been done, it is quite consistent for the Elders to anoint the head in the usual form, and then to seal the anointing.”


child, with Joseph F. Smith sealing the anointing. While public rhetoric continued from this time to focus on male priesthood healing, Latter-day Saints like the Smith family maintained the ritual forms with which they were raised.

Church leaders ultimately publicly affirmed female ritual healing; however, the first years of the twentieth century marked a period of liturgical reconstruction. Along with the vitalization of the Seventies quorums, the debate and policy changes regarding female ritual healing presaged President Joseph F. Smith’s “priesthood reform movement,” which systematized and augmented priesthood roles just a few years later. Church activity at the turn of the century was generally below 15 percent, quorum attendance was low, and the participation of young men was inconsistent. While the Relief Society also struggled with activity, Church leaders viewed the priesthood organization as a means of training male youth and offering fraternity to adult men. As with healing in the first years of the twentieth century, non-priesthood duties, like preparing and passing the sacrament, were assigned to Aaronic Priesthood quorums to instill pur-


154 William G. Hartley, “The Priesthood Reform Movement, 1908–1922,” BYU Studies 13 (Winter 1973): 137–56; William G. Hartley, “From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829–1996,” Journal of Mormon History 22 (Spring 1996): 115–17. On the antecedent reformation of the Seventies, see Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930, 109–11. Two years before establishing the General Priesthood Committee, which was charged with spearheading this reformation, Joseph F. Smith declared in the April 1906 general conference that, when the priesthood quorums fully understood and executed their duties, “there will not be so much necessity for work that is now being done by the auxiliary organizations, because it will be done by the regular quorums of the Priesthood. The Lord designed and comprehended it from the beginning, and He has made provision in the Church whereby every need may be met and satisfied through the regular organizations of the Priesthood.” Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1906, 3.

155 Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 109, 114. Compare to the 1922 figures in Seymour B. Young, Diary, April 6, 1922, MS 1345, Box 13.
pose and eventually became inextricably associated with them. Yet the “priesthood reform movement” was more than the reflection of modern progressive ideals institutionalized in the Church; these changes came at the nexus of Mormonism’s reconceptualization. Abandoning polygamy created a self-perceptual void, and Kathleen Flake has argued that Church leaders elevated the “Joseph Smith Story” and his “First Vision” in Latter-day Saint discourse to fill it. Concurrently and perhaps more emphatically, priesthood reform solidified institutional structures that arose from the same narrative but that also critically directed the activities of Church members, much as polygamy did before the Manifesto.

**AFFIRMATION OF FEMALE RITUAL HEALING**

Despite his role as priesthood reformer, Joseph F. Smith was a consistent proponent of female ritual healing and was a frequent participant in male-female collaborative healing. Also during his tenure, the Relief Society reenvisioned the way it executed its work, and ritual administration continued to be an integral part of that service. The 1914 First Presidency circular letter on female ritual healing was the culmination of this support.

**Affirmation and Clarification**

Perhaps due to confusion surrounding liturgical reform, the First Presidency responded to many inquiries regarding female healing in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1906 the First Presidency wrote to several individuals instructing them: “There could be no objection whatever to a mother administering oil to her children in the absence of her husband” and, further, “we would say it is the privilege of any good faithful woman to anoint the sick with oil and

---


158 See, for example, Joseph F. Smith’s description of healing George Romney with Smith’s wives the year before Smith passed away. [Joseph F. Smith], Sermon at the Funeral of Joseph H. Grant, “Editor’s Table,” *Improvement Era* 21 (February 1918): 355.

159 Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, Letter to J.
pray for their recovery." That same year, Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society general secretary, gave Joseph F. Smith the letter on washing and anointing for confinement that President Wilford Woodruff had written to her in 1888. Smith then used this letter in subsequent instruction to local leaders.

Likely due to the ritual homology between washing and anointing for health and those performed in the temple liturgy, questions persisted regarding its propriety beyond that of other forms of female healing. The precise policies governing these washings and anointings were not generally clear; and the First Presidency, over several years, responded to questions that helped rectify this ambiguity. Specifically, the First Presidency addressed whether, as with temple rituals, women needed special authority to administer the washings and anointings for confinement or health.

Using the previous instruction from the Relief Society general leaders as a base text, the First Presidency wrote to one stake president explaining that recipients of washings and anointings for health or childbirth need not have been endowed and that “it should be understood that such labors of love are not necessarily under the direction of the presidency of the Relief Society. . . . Some sisters are gifted in administering and comforting with faith, and yet may hold no official position in the Relief Society.” Like Wilford Woodruff in 1888, the First Presidency instructed that women “should avoid all reference to ceremonies of the temple, and should be very careful not to detract from or encroach upon the privileges or uses of the priesthood.”


Mimeographed copies of the letter, later distributed by the General Relief Society included the following header: “This is a correct copy of the original which Sister Wells has deposited in our office. Mar. 7th, 1906, (Signed) Joseph F. Smith.” Wilford Woodruff, Mimeographed letter to Emmeline Wells, April 28, 1888, ca. 1909, on Relief Society letterhead.


Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, Letter to
Snow’s 1884 letter, which indicated that women need not be set apart to wash and anoint the sick. However and not surprisingly considering the nineteenth-century antecedents, local Relief Societies continued to call women to bless expectant mothers. For example, one woman wrote that, from 1904 to 1911, she “was chosen and set apart to help wash and dress the dead. Also to wash and anoint the sisters.” In a 1906 ward meeting, James Henry Martineau assisted in setting apart “several sisters, as officers in Relief Society, also washing anointing the sick, and other duties.” Speaking specifically of the ritual washing and anointing for childbirth, the First Presidency was emphatic:

Members of Relief Societies are not set apart and given authority to wash and anoint sisters for their confinement, for the reason that this practice, which has grown up among some of our Relief Societies, is not an ordinance, and because it is not an ordinance authority to act in it need not be given, and is therefore not given. Some of our Relief Society sisters appear to have confounded this practice with one of the temple ordinances; and because certain sisters, as temple workers, are set apart as such, Relief Society sisters appear to have jumped at the conclusion that they too should be authorized and set apart to wash and anoint sisters for their confinement.

Despite this caution, the First Presidency continued:


164The General Relief Society: Officers, Objects, and Status (Salt Lake City: General Officers, 1902), 26–27.


In this writing we do not wish it understood that sisters may not wash and anoint for the purpose mentioned, as there is no impropriety whatever in their doing so, inasmuch as they do it in a proper way, that is, in the spirit of faith and prayer, and without assumption of special authority, not any more in fact than members of the Church generally might do in behalf of members of their own families. . . . But if sisters have faith enough themselves to ask worthy women to thus petition the Lord in their behalf, as they would ask the elders to administer to them, there need be no hesitation whatever on the part of discreet worthy women administering to their faithful sisters in this way. And we may add that such women may thus act whether the person administered to shall have received her endowments or not; and no member of the Church therefore need be barred from receiving a blessing at the hands of faithful women inasmuch as she has faith enough to desire and ask that this be done in her behalf.\footnote{167}

Just as the authority to administer temple rituals was conflated with healing authority, temple attendance as a prerequisite for similar healing blessings outside the temple was likewise a natural association. From the time the temples first opened, both men and women went to them in order to receive washing and anointing blessings and other rituals for their health. In 1903, the Relief Society General Board discussed these issues, as one board member had told local women that only endowed women could be washed and anointed for childbirth. “Sister [Bathsheba] Smith refuted this and so did Sister [Emmeline] Wells.”\footnote{168} Two years later, the First Presidency made a similar statement to a stake president inquiring on the matter.\footnote{169} No similar questions are extant in the case of “baptism for health” which was administered both in and outside of temples, possibly because other baptismal rituals were so commonly performed outside temples and all members had by definition been previously baptized.

\footnote{168}Relief Society General Board, Minutes, September 4, 1903, microfilm of typescript, CR 11 10. Several board members had understood that temple endowment was a prerequisite, having apparently been taught so during “a meeting of officers convened in the Assembly Hall in 1889.” Ibid.
\footnote{169}First Presidency, Letter to Hyde, October 3, 1905.
The 1904 and 1910 Instructional Letters and Ritual Codification

In an effort to clarify Church policy regarding female ritual administration, the Relief Society general presidency and board prepared two circulars with the aid of the First Presidency. In 1900 as already discussed, the First Presidency worked with the general Relief Society to answer questions from a Relief Society in Colonia Dublan, Mexico, regarding healing. This process resulted in the change from “sealing” to “confirming.” In 1903, the General Relief Society submitted this same document to the First Presidency, now composed of Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder and Anthon Lund, who again approved it on December 30.170* From this document, the Relief Society prepared a mimeographed “Answers to Questions” sheet, which bore the notation of First Presidency approval. Leaders then circulated this document throughout the Relief Society.171*

Furthermore, late in 1909, the Relief Society General Board asked the First Presidency’s permission to distribute copies of Wilford Woodruff’s 1888 letter to Emmeline Wells to stake Relief Society presidents.172* The First Presidency approved the proposal, and the Relief Society created mimeographed versions on Relief Society letterhead.

170*“ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS (FROM SISTERS IN MEXICO —-),” typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing Files, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1. The end of the document includes the handwritten text: “Approved by President Lorenzo Snow.” Below this is written in a different hand: “Dec. 30th 1903 We Approve of the foregoing” followed by the signatures of Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund.

171*Relief Society Washing and Anointing Files, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1, includes what appears to be two drafts based on the 1903 approved text, in preparation for the final circular, which appears in James R. Clark, ed., Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 5:224. The mimeographed letter was distributed in several mimeographed forms. One mimeograph was on Relief Society letterhead, the masthead of which listed Bathsheba Smith (served 1901–10) as the general president and Annie Taylor Hyde as first counselor (died 1909). Another mimeograph is without letterhead. See copies in Salt Lake Liberty Stake, Relief Society Scrapbook Selections, 1915–33, LR 4880 41, fd. 2. Clark’s commentary on the history of the circular is inaccurate, as is Newell, “Gifts of the Spirit,” 128.

172*Relief Society General Board, Minutes, December 17, 1909. The First Presidency granted permission. Ibid., January 21, 1910. According to
terhead, which included a headnote that the holograph letter was in Joseph F. Smith’s possession.\textsuperscript{173} The General Board then disseminated both of these instructional documents to local Relief Societies, frequently when questions arose.\textsuperscript{174} An excellent example of a local interaction with these documents is recorded in the minutes of the Logan Cache Stake Relief Society. After reading the general board’s instructions, the local women variously testified, related experiences, and asked questions about participating in healing rituals, with a general spirit of mutual support.\textsuperscript{175}

Despite these instructions, however, confusion still persisted. For example, in June 1911 Martha H. Tingey, general president of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, addressed the association’s general conference, noting that some had come “to the conclusion that women did not have any right to anoint with oil and administer to the sick.” She responded:

Now I want to correct that impression because that is wrong. The Prophet Joseph was asked this same question in his time, and he said

\begin{flushright}
Now I want to correct that impression because that is wrong. The Prophet Joseph was asked this same question in his time, and he said
\end{flushright}

the September 10, 1910, minutes, “There was a letter from the First Presidency stating that Pres. Woodruff’s letter on the washing and anointing [sic] should be the pattern for us to follow unless the presidency should give further instructions to the society.” On December 19, 1912, in response to a question at the general board meeting regarding the form of the healing ritual, Emmeline Wells directed the individual to the prepared “Answers to Questions” document. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{173}Wilford Woodruff, Mimeographed letter to Emmeline Wells, April 28, 1888, ca. 1910, on Relief Society Letterhead, Relief Society Washing and Anointing Files, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2. Copy also available in Salt Lake Liberty Stake, Relief Society Scrapbook Selections, 1915–33, LR 4880 41, fd. 2.

\textsuperscript{174}See, e.g., Relief Society General Board, Minutes, August 18, 1913, when the board received a letter “asking if Stake [Relief Society] Presidents are required to have a sister in each Ward set apart for the purpose of washing and anointing the sick. After discussion, the Secretary was instructed to answer the letter according to the instructions in the Circular letter on this subject, approved by the First Presidency.” At this time Stake Relief Society presidents had autonomy over questions regarding female healing rituals. Anonymous, “Address,” \textit{Relief Society Bulletin} 1 (February 1914): 3.

\textsuperscript{175}Logan Utah Cache Stake, Relief Society Minutes and Records, March 5, 1910, 438–40, microfilm of manuscript, LR 1280 14.
that women were pure in heart and they had a right to anoint with holy oil. . . . This is the point we want to make—a woman never administers the oil, nor administers to the sick in the name of the Priesthood. But she has the right to anoint with oil and lay on hands, and ask the blessing of the Lord upon her sisters, upon her children, or any who ask in the name of Jesus Christ; and we could bring you many evidences that will testify to you that the Lord does hear and answer the prayers of His daughters. We who are here on this stand, and many others in this congregation, I know, can testify that their own children have been healed under their hands and they have also been led of the Lord to give promises and blessings unto their sisters, which have been realized and verified, word for word.176

In 1913, Emmeline Wells expressed her concern to the Relief Society General Board that some men did not approve female ritual healing;177 however, Joseph Smith’s April 28, 1842, revelatory teaching remained a foundation for female participation in the healing liturgy and accounts of his sermon were published in the 1913 and 1915 Relief Society periodicals.178
Perhaps in an effort to ensure ritual preservation, local Relief Societies appear to have been concerned with codifying ritual administrations during this period. As already discussed, it was in 1906 that the Cannonville Relief Society entered an example washing and anointing blessing in its minute book, while the Oakley, Idaho, Relief Society did the same in 1909. The textual similarity between these ritual examples, despite temporal and geographic discontinuity, indicates either a successful oral transmission by ritual proponents or the widespread distribution of written examples. In support of the former explanation, in 1923, the office record of the Relief Society General Board shows that Maria Young Dougall visited the office and explained that Zina Young taught her how to officiate in washings and anointings and then recorded an example blessing which shares a striking textual similarity to the Cannonville and Oakley texts.

The 1914 General Circular on Female Ritual Healing

In 1914, the Relief Society General Board invited President Jo-

---

178 Anonymous, “The Relief Society (Copied from the Original Record),” Woman’s Exponent 41 (March 1, 1913): 46; Anonymous, “Instructions of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” Relief Society Magazine 2 (March 1915): 91. That these instructions were important to individual members is evidenced by Hannah Adeline Savage, who handcopied these instructions into her journal. Savage, Record of Hannah Adeline Savage, 115–20. For other examples, see Derr and Madsen, “Preserving a Record and Memory of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 1842–92,” 108 note 57.

179 Cannonville Relief Society Record, microfilm of manuscript, 126–30, LR 1371 22. Although the ritual itself is undated, we date it at 1906 as pp. 124–25 of the record include the minutes of the meeting on June 7, 1906, while a report of attendance for 1907 appears on p. 132.

180 Oakley, Idaho, Second Ward Relief Society, Minute Book, 1901–9, 195–98, LR 6360 14. We date this document at 1909 as minutes of the December 16, 1909, meeting appear on pp. 186–87, while p. 187 includes the stake auditors’ annual certification. After the blessing text, the remaining pages were cut out of the bound volume, and a new volume was started for 1910.

181 Relief Society General Board, Office Minutes, August 7, 1923, typescript, Washing and Anointing Blessing Texts, ca. 1923, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2. Griffiths, Diary, March 20, 1926, includes a detailed example of a washing and anointing for health that is also very similar.
seph F. Smith to speak at its October general conference. In delivering his discourse, Smith recounted a story which he had “told a good many times.” He described visiting a remote region of the Church where malaria was prevalent. Accompanied by a local Church leader, President Smith “called on them [the sick], visited them, and administered to them.” In one home in particular, the mother “lay prostrate upon her bed, and her husband [was] distracted for fear she was going to pass away, the little children helpless.” Smith then described a woman who came to the home with a basket of food. She washed the children and prepared a meal for them.

Then she turned and administered to the sick mother, and she remained there during, at least, the fore part of the night.

I asked, “How is this done?”

“Well,” she said, “our Relief Society is doing it. The Society is providing these things; I am only acting here for the Relief Society, for this evening until midnight, or until sometime in the night, when I will be relieved by another sister, who will bring other things that will be needful during the latter part of the night and for the morning meal.”

And I said, “Is this being done throughout the settlement by the Relief Society?”

She said, “Yes.”

And I added, “and none are neglected?”

“No, not one, all are provided for. Yes, all are provided for to the best of our ability.”

And I said in my heart, God bless the Relief Society. I felt that the Lord would bless them, because they were doing their duty to the sick and to the afflicted.

The same day that Joseph F. Smith recounted this story to the Relief Society general conference, he and his counselors wrote a circular letter to all stake presidents and bishops. It commented that the First Presidency frequently received questions “in regard to washing and anointing our sisters preparatory to their confinement.” Even though the Relief Society had previously sent circulars

---

182Relief Society General Board, Minutes, October 1, 1914.
to answer such questions, “there exists some uncertainty as to the proper persons to engage in this administration” with the result that the First Presidency “have therefore considered it necessary to answer some of these questions, and give such explanations as will place this matter in the right light. We quote some of these questions and give our answers.” The answers reaffirmed the consistent policies that any woman “full of faith” can participate in the rituals and that the Relief Society need not direct all administrations. The First Presidency affirmed that women “have the same right to administer to sick children as to adults, and may anoint and lay hands upon them in faith.”

The letter also carefully outlined the importance of reserving “sealings” to the priesthood and specified that being endowed was not a prerequisite to ritual healing.\footnote{184}{First Presidency to Stake Presidents and Bishops, October 3, 1914, Salt Lake City, in Clark, \textit{Messages of the First Presidency}, 4:314–15; see also Relief Society Circulars, microfilm, CR 11 8.} The fact that the First Presidency received questions on washing and anointing pregnant women but responded with answers regarding female participation in healing generally affirms their support, as outlined in Smith’s discourse the same day, of female authority to participate in the broader healing liturgy. The Relief Society reproduced this letter in many formats. Besides the original on First Presidency letterhead, the Relief Society General Board mimeographed at least two different versions for distribution to its leaders.\footnote{185}{See, e.g., [On behalf of the Relief Society General Board], Letter to Sarah A. Mercer, June 7, 1915, typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1. Example mimeographs are available in microfilm in Relief Society Circulars, CR 11 8; Salt Lake Liberty Stake, Relief Society Scrapbook Selections.} For example, in responding to one woman’s questions regarding procedures for washing and anointing, the General Board wrote: “If you will apply to the President of your stake she will, no doubt, furnish you the information contained in a circular letter which was issued from this office several years ago.”\footnote{186}{[On behalf of the Relief Society General Board], Letter to L. Nettie Behmann, October 10, 1916, typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1.} Individ-
Joseph F. Smith’s Relief Society conference discourse also highlighted the massive labor of Relief Societies in caring for the sick. Women in the Relief Societies spent hundreds of thousands of hours a year visiting the sick; and as Smith included in his description, they certainly administered healing rituals in the process. Local Relief Societies reported their service to the sick and the totals were included in their annual reports. “Special visits to the sick” were visits by Relief Society sisters on behalf of the society. Visits to friends and neighbors were considered personal and not reported.

According to later Relief Society manuals, “in recording care of the sick, a total of eight hours is counted as a day.” Each local Relief Society customized its ministry to the sick. Highlighting this transition to scientific management, in 1918, the South Davis Stake Relief

---

**Table 3**

**RELIEF SOCIETY STATISTICAL REPORT, 1914–16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1915</th>
<th>1916</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance net resources</td>
<td>$510,536.05</td>
<td>$534,041.88</td>
<td>$606,027.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat on hand (bushels)</td>
<td>193,805</td>
<td>210,050 1/3</td>
<td>215,393 17/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for charitable purposes</td>
<td>48,482.12</td>
<td>56,967.31</td>
<td>56,162.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>37,826</td>
<td>41,274</td>
<td>43,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days spent with sick</td>
<td>22,797</td>
<td>21,985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special visits to sick</td>
<td>78,500</td>
<td>88,140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of visits by stake officers</td>
<td>4,722</td>
<td>9,682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of days spent in Temple work</td>
<td>16,889</td>
<td>26,201</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

187 For example, Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon (1839–1928), Notebook, T, CR 11 301, Box 3, fl. 2, includes a typescript created specifically to fit her notebook.

188 *Relief Society Ward Record Book* (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1922), 152; Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon, Notebook, Q.

189 Relief Society, *Handbook of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus*
Society reported that “during the past year, every fifth Tuesday has been devoted by Relief Society members to special visits to the sick and aged who cannot attend the Relief Society meetings. In some associations the women have made it a practice to spend one whole day a month with each sick and aged person, while other associations have special teachers whose duty it is to see that the sick and aged are not allowed to become lonely.”

**THE FORMALIZATION OF MORMON LITURGY AND THE PRESIDENCY OF CLARISSA S. WILLIAMS**

During his administration, President Joseph F. Smith started a process of bureaucratic reform that facilitated the Church’s modernization. Concomitant with this period was the modernization of medical science that completely transformed healthcare in the United States. This transition, coupled with internal institutional pressures, led Church leaders to reevaluate liturgy generally and healing specifically. Smith’s successor, Heber J. Grant, directed an almost complete transformation of the Church's liturgy. The Relief Society was a key player in this process, as it had a long history of providing care to the sick and aged.

---

*Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1949), 82–83. According to *Relief Society Ward Record Book*, 152, “‘Days Spent with the Sick’ means the number of days or nights spent by volunteer workers in caring for the sick (one night being equal to one day). Less than one day’s service is recorded as a visit. Days spent caring for member of one’s family are not reported in Relief Society.”

190 South Davis Stake, “Notes from the Field,” *Relief Society Magazine* 5 (May 1918): 278.

191 Besides ministering to its own, the Relief Society was a driving force in progressive health reform. Unlike other sectarian organizations that rejected the deleterious heroic allopathic remedies of the early and mid-nineteenth century, Mormons did not persist in their rejection of medicine as it became clinically viable. While some individuals cleaved to their historical affinity to botanic cures or faith healing alone, the bulk of the Latter-day Saints adopted modern medical treatments in combination with their healing rituals. The Relief Society had participated in the modernization of American medicine from Brigham Young’s first calls to women to become physicians, to the establishment of the Deseret Hospital, founded in 1882, and LDS Hospital, founded in 1905. In the Progressive Era, the Relief Society continued an activist role in promoting public health and hygiene, incorporating the topic in its curriculum, hosting lectures, and lobbying government officials. It also sponsored a nursing school and maternity hospitals in addition to supporting the Sheppard–Towner Act. Derr,
complete retooling of Mormon liturgy to the formal, with one significant exception: female ritual healing. The result of this emphasis on a formal codified liturgy was tension with persistent female healing folk practice.

The modernization of both Church and medical institutions was facilitated by the standardization and documentation of policy and labor. Unlike modern medicine and bureaucracy, Mormon liturgy had generally existed as oral tradition. While the prayers for baptism and the Lord’s supper were codified in the Mormon canon, no written prescriptions existed for them; and in the nineteenth century, significant variability existed in ritual practice. Each of the temples offered subtly different activities, and Latter-day Saints participated in a set of rituals governing life and death not described in the canon: anointing sealings, baptism for health, temple healing, washing and anointing the sick or pregnant, therapeutic application of consecrated oil, and deathbed rituals.

The integration of modern medical practice and the greater American culture with LDS communities led to a reevaluation of Mormon rituals that, in contrast, appeared increasingly magical. Consequently, the therapeutic use of oil, notably manifest in repeat anointings, anointing the area of affliction, and drinking consecrated oil, fell out of favor. The old ritual forms of washing and anointing became increasingly anachronistic. This change in the institutional zeitgeist was also a function of the ascendance of younger Church leaders who did not remember or learn liturgical histories. The de-


193*See e.g., Smart, *Mormonism’s Last Colonizer: The Journals of William H. Smart*, April 7, 1913.*
bates surrounding baptism for health in the 1910s vividly illustrate this trend.\textsuperscript{195} Through this period, however, Joseph F. Smith and his first counselor, Anthon H. Lund, were defenders of the old practices. Smith’s successor, Heber J. Grant, maintained the status quo for several years. Grant had a long association with female healing and blessing; his mother was a celebrated healer\textsuperscript{196} and he spoke no fewer than five times in general conference about blessings he had received at the hands of Eliza R. Snow and his wife.\textsuperscript{197} After Lund died in March 1921, however, Grant initiated a program of reformation that had deep and lasting implications for female healing. Four weeks after Lund’s death, the First Presidency released Emmeline Wells, who though ill, was the first Relief Society general president not to die in office.\textsuperscript{198} In reaction to increased logistical pressure, President Grant then initiated a broad liturgical formalization project. Working with Apostle and Salt Lake Temple President George F. Richards, over a period of several years, Grant approved the reformation of the endowment—including the first written versions of all the temple rituals for distribution in the temples—and terminated baptisms for health altogether.\textsuperscript{200} The First Presidency also issued instructions

\textsuperscript{195}Stapley and Wright, “They Shall Be Made Whole,” 105–11.

\textsuperscript{196}Anonymous, “In Memoriam: Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant,” Woman’s Exponent 37 (April 1, 1909): 53. See also Emmeline B. Wells, Diary, June 24, 1909.

\textsuperscript{197}Heber J. Grant, Conference Report: April 1900, 61–62; October 1910, 119–20; October 1919, 31–32; April 1927, 17–18; April 1935, 12–14. See also Chapman, [Ruth May Fox Diaries], August 15, 1898, which describes the Tooele Conjoint Stake Conference in which Grant described the blessing.

\textsuperscript{198}Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 221–22.

\textsuperscript{199}On June 2, 1924, Heber J. Grant and A. W. Ivins, wrote to B. H. Roberts explaining, “We have discontinued the practice of administering to the sick in the Temple. People seem to get it into their minds that a blessing in the Temple is far superior to one by the brethren holding the Priesthood, given outside of the Temple; and the increased number desiring to go to the Temple for administrations interfered with our regular Temple work. Therefore, the brethren decided to discontinue the practise of blessing and baptizing people for their health in the Temple.” Microfilm of typescript, CR 1 20. See also Stapley and Wright, “They Shall Be Made Whole,” 105–11.

\textsuperscript{200}Mouritsen, “A Symbol of New Directions,” 203–10; Alexander,
against dedicating the dying, and the limited use of consecrated oil became standard. Most significantly for the future of female ritual healing, among the first of Richards’s proposals approved by the First Presidency in June 1921, was the removal of healers from the temple, both male and female.

The letter from the Colonia Dublan Relief Society which catalyzed the change from “sealing” to “confirmation” was initiated on the grounds that the women were “away from the body of the Church and deprived of the blessings of the Temples” so that “a great many require this ordinance [washing and anointing for health/childbirth] performed, and while wishing to give and receive all the blessings we are entitled to, we do not wish to do anything wrong.” With the temple healers gone, a major channel of folk instruction was broken. Almost immediately after the healers were removed from the temple, Relief Societies began to more formally organize the ritual administration of women to compensate. The Relief Society general officers again sent out circular instructions on female ritual administration; and as one woman remembered, “When our temples did away with this ordinance [washing and anointing] for the sick and expectant mothers, in many of our wards in this stake, as well as adjoining stakes, committees of sisters, generally two or three in each committee, were called and set apart for this work of ‘washing’ and ‘anointing,’ in their respective wards, wherever this ordinance was de-

_Mormonism in Transition_, 302; Stapley and Wright, “‘They Shall Be Made Whole.’”

---

202 Mouritsen, “A Symbol of New Directions,” 201–2. It appears that temple healing still persisted in some locations for a few years. For example, the Arizona Temple included “Blessings for Health” among the rituals performed until at least 1926. [No Author], “Outlines for the Month of March,” _Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District 1_ (January, 1924): 64; [No Author], “Outlines for the Month of September, 1926,” _Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District 3_ (July, 1926): 24.
203 Colonia Dublan Relief Society, Chihuahua, Mexico, Letter to Lorenzo Snow, February 23, 1900.
204 Amy Brown Lyman, “Instructions to Relief Society Stake Presidents,” February 1922, microfilm collection, Relief Society Circulars, CR 118. This document lists all the instructional materials distributed in 1921.
Recommends of Ethel H. Naylor for the Logan Temple. The 1918 recommend allows her “to be Baptized [sic] for her health” and the 1920 recommend is for “Anointing for Her health and Endowments for the Dead.” Photocopy of originals in the possession of Ben and Whitney Mortensen; used by permission.
sired.” This woman herself acted as the “head” of the Logan Stake First Ward committee for more than ten years. A similar committee in the Salt Lake City Thirty-first Ward began a record book that chronicled their blessing ministry for more than twenty years. Many women who served in these capacities reported finding “much joy and satisfaction.”

During this period of liturgical reformation, the First Presidency largely left female participation in the healing unadjusted; however, the result was a natural tension between a Church emphasis on formal codified liturgy and the essentially folk nature of female participation in healing rituals. This tension is evident in one instructional letter written by the First Presidency in 1922, which answered a question relating to women having elders collaboratively “confirm” their ritual healings, a practice which had previously been common:

We fail to see the consistency of sisters administering to the sick in the way mentioned by you and then sending for Elders to confirm their ministrations. The word of the Lord through the Apostle James to the former day Saints...was to send for the Elders to administer this ordinance... But there can be no objection to any good sister full of faith in God and in the efficacy of prayer officiating in this ordinance.

With female healers no longer ministering in the temple, a formal emphasis on priesthood, and instruction on female participation...
limited to letters (general and priesthood handbooks lacked instruction on the matter), Church members continued to have questions regarding the propriety of female ritual administration. The Relief Society general officers and board continued to circulate mimeographed copies of the 1914 First Presidency instructions on female healing, but even this proved insufficient for some. To one woman seeking information in 1922, a General Relief Society leader wrote:

Aside from this circular, we have no instructions on the matter. The sisters performing this service, usually kneel in prayer before they begin. They then wash and bless the sister who is covered with a shield. At the close of the washing, there is a confirmation. The sister is then anointed in the same way, which is also followed by a confirmation. There are no special words to be used in connection with this ceremony. The sister who is officiating usually prays for the things desired by the sister who has asked for this service, praying that all the parts of the body will be strengthened and cleansed from impurities.209

The following year, Clarissa Smith Williams, who succeeded Emmeline B. Wells as Relief Society general president, created an addendum to the 1914 General Circular with instructions reinforcing that all women, even those who had not previously been endowed, could be washed, anointed, and blessed for childbirth.210

Despite the new emphasis on codified liturgy, it is clear that the

contacted with questions regarding female ritual healing. First Presidency, Letter to Relief Society Presidency, August 11, 1923, typescript, Salt Lake Liberty Stake, Relief Society Scrapbook Selections, 1915–33. While Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith had saved the appellation of “ordination” for salvific rituals, Grant’s usage shows that this terminology was dynamic over time.

209[No Author], typescript note, March 31, 1922, stapled to mimeographed copies of the First Presidency letter on female ritual healing, October 3, 1914, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fld. 1. For an example of ritual performance that describes the use of a “shield,” see Sabina Josephine Larson Geoff, Diary, August 24, 1924, in The Kemp-Goff Book: Histories of Willard A. Kemp and Carol Goff Kemp and Their Ancestors, edited by Pamela Kemp Bishop and Robyn Bishop Warner (N.p.: N.pub., n.d.), 181.

210Undated instructions regarding washing and anointings, three small pieces of paper found with a mimeograph copy of First Presidency,
First Presidency continued to support female ritual healing. When one woman wrote President Grant about washings and anointing blessings, Grant referred the question to President Williams, instructing her to “inform her [the questioner] that matters of this kind are attended to by the Relief Society sisters and under their direction.”211 However, not all Church leaders were as equally encouraging. While visiting Arizona in 1921, Apostle George Albert Smith questioned one stake president about washings and anointings for childbirth and apparently instructed a “Sister Robinson” to discountenance the practice. In response, the stake president sent Smith a copy of the 1914 First Presidency circular affirming the rituals.212 Two months before the healers were removed from the temple, Charles W. Penrose, first counselor in the First Presidency, spoke in general conference on healing. He affirmed that women had the right to administer healing rituals; however, he clarified, “When women go around and declare that they have been set apart to administer to the sick and take the place that is given to the elders of the Church by revelation as declared through James of old, and through the Prophet Joseph in modern times, that is an assumption of authority and contrary to scripture.” Furthermore he equated female ritual healing with healing by “people out of the Church.”213 Fifty years earlier, Brigham Young had preached to the women in the Tabernacle: “Why do you not live so as to rebuke disease? It is your privilege to do so without

---

211Heber J. Grant, Postscript to letter to Clarissa S. Williams, April 4, 1923, microfilm of typescript among three undated instructions regarding washing and anointings, filed with First Presidency, Letter of October 3, 1914, microfilm, CR 11 8.

212Samuel F. Smith, Snowflake, Arizona, Letter to George Albert Smith, November 29, 1921, George Albert Smith Papers, Marriott Library. “Sister Robinson” may have been Mary Jane Robinson West, who was Relief Society president of the Snowflake Stake.

sending for the Elders.” He also set women apart to heal. Penrose’s discourse shows how the recently separated spheres of Mormon healing were becoming increasingly disconnected.

Penrose’s conference address appears to have had a significant effect. Two months after his talk, the Relief Society General Board discussed the case of Liberty Stake, where “the giving of blessings and administering by women were apparently carried too far. There was a ruling made that women should administer only in case of expectant mothers and when the Priesthood could not be obtained.”

Though the language of the minutes is somewhat equivocal, it appears that the general board ruled to end female healing, except in cases of exigency and pregnancy. After this point, washing and anointings for childbirth make up the preponderance of documented female-only rituals. Though the specific washing and anointing ritual for childbirth was of rather late vintage, it related to a part of female life relatively inaccessible to men. This decision appears to be the first formal limitation of female ritual healing in its history among Mormon practitioners.

Two years later and for apparently different reasons, Rachel Grant Taylor, Heber J. Grant’s daughter, while presiding over the Relief Societies of the Northern States Mission, where her husband was mission president, ruled that women of the mission were not to perform washing and anointings as they were “hardly prepared.” The lack of local preparation was surely due to the inaccessibility of traditional folk instruction based on proximate example. The general board, discussing this decision, concluded: “President Williams felt that this was a very wise ruling, and recommended that the secretary report this decision to Sister Marie Young, president of the Relief Societies in the Northwestern States Mission, where there has been some misunderstanding regarding washing and anointing.” Not all missions followed this lead, however. In 1924, Elder Joseph W. McMurrin of the First Council of the Seventy, who was serving as

215 Relief Society General Board, Minutes, June 29, 1921.
216 For a detailed example of one later healing ritual, see Griffiths, Diary, March 20, 1926. For a 1937 healing, see Gertrude A. Viehweg Todd, Spiritual Experiences (N.p.: N.pub., 1993), 5–6.
217 Relief Society General Board, Minutes, May 9, 1923. One female missionary who served in the Northwest Mission in 1921–22, remembered
president of the California Mission, reported that washings and anointings by women were “carried on in his mission to the same extent, approximately, that it is in the stakes at home, without any harm having come of it.”

Perhaps echoing the General Relief Society’s demission, the First Presidency wrote to a stake presidency in the fall of 1923 that, while they “certainly would not desire to refuse a good sister that wanted this privilege,” they were “neither encouraging nor discouraging the washing and anointing of expectant mothers.” That same fall, Maria Young Dougall, a daughter of Brigham Young who had been raised by Zina D. H. Young, visited the offices of the Relief Society. Perhaps sensing some institutional ambivalence, she indicated that Joseph Smith had set at least seven women apart to administer to the sick and that her “mother, Zina,” had taught her how to administer. She then apparently dictated an example of washing, anointing, and blessing in preparation for childbirth for official transcription. The transcript was kept with example washing and anointing texts for the sick, all of which appear to have never been circulated despite recurring requests for such forms by local Relief Society officers.

218Relief Society General Board, Minutes, April 16, 1924.
220Washing and Anointing Blessing Texts, ca. 1923, 7 pp., Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 2. Six years later, the Relief Society General Board evaluated the evidence that Joseph Smith had instructed Nauvoo women to wash and anoint. They determined that “while the evidence is not strictly documentary, there is ample proof to substantiate the claim that this ordinance was used by the women who received endowments under the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, and dates back to that period in Church history.” Relief Society General Board, Minutes, January 2, 1929.
221Stapled to the Washing and Anointing Blessing Texts is a holograph note signed by Velma N. Simonsen and dated June 27, 1951, which states: “Found in the files of the General Board of Relief Society. Has not been distributed during the administration of the present general Board officers.”
Whereas instructional documents on male healing were increasingly available, knowledge of female healing rituals was apparently transmitted only by traditional folk means from woman to woman.

Still, local Relief Societies maintained the practices where feasible. Often the women who administered these rituals were local Relief Society officers. One Relief Society president in Logan was set apart to “wash and anoint expectant mothers” in 1929, a job she dutifully performed for more than a decade.223 Another Relief Society president during this time described that her newly constructed ward meetinghouse had a closet equipped with a water faucet and a “number three tub” used for these rituals.224 Not all Relief Societies had such facilities. In 1936, the Relief Society president of the Salt Lake City Thirty-first Ward administered to her pregnant daughter in the parlor of the mother’s home.225 A woman in the Granger Ward in the Salt Lake Valley described “Three Special Relief Society Angels of Mercy” who were set apart and who washed and anointed her before

---

222 Relief Society General Board, Minutes, October 21, 1925, note that, after one such request, “President Williams stated that while the General Board had been asked many times for a definite form to be used in this work, the request had never been granted, and she felt that it would be unwise at the present time to comply with the request.”

223 Laura Pearl Knowles Everton, Diary, undated entries in book covering 1942, typescript, photocopy in our possession, holograph in possession of Frank Everton Wagstaff; used by permission. This diary section documents Everton’s being set apart with other women and then includes a register of blessings for childbirth and health which she delivered from 1929 to 1940. One of the recipients of her blessings was Nora Perry, the mother of current LDS Apostle L. Tom Perry.


225 Marian Coulam Free, Oral History, telephone-interviewed by Kristine Wright, April 14, 2007, transcript in our possession. Documentation of the ritual is in “Washings and Anointings Done by Sisters in 31st Ward, 1921–1945.” One member of the ward Relief Society presidency in Calgary, Alberta, remembered similarly administering as a presidency to the women of her ward from the “early 1930s on.” Lucile H. Ursenbach, unaddressed letter, August 14, 1980, holograph, Jill Mulvay Derr Research Collection.
the births of her three children from 1936 to 1947. Women also administered to other women receiving care at the Cottonwood Stake Maternity Hospital in Salt Lake City during this period.

Whereas folk liturgy met the ritual and worship needs of the isolated and intimate nineteenth-century Mormon community, the Church at the turn of the twentieth century faced increasing pressure from both internal and external stressors. Thomas G. Alexander’s description of Church modernization under Joseph F. Smith, is equally valid in describing liturgical formalization under Heber J. Grant: “As the society in which the Latter-day Saints lived became increasingly pluralistic, if not secular, the Mormon community no longer created its own internal regulatory mechanism. Under those circumstances, rational organization and fixed rules replaced a sense of community as the means of establishing norms which the Saints were expected to observe.”

While the degree to which religious norms of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints was successfully controlled has yet to be demonstrated, the success of the modern Mormon Church in creating meaningful religious community is surely in part attributable to the liturgical formality initiated by Grant. That both male and female Church leaders did not include ritual healing and blessing by women in that formalization process highlights the cleavage in healing liturgy created as Latter-day Saints looked to priesthood as a means of solidifying community and self-perceived institutional primacy in the previous decades. The result of this formalization was a distinct curtailing of female ritual administration to their pregnant sisters in certain geographical regions.

**Priesthood Evolution and Female Ritual Healing**

After the priesthood reform at the turn of the century and the liturgical formalization of the 1920s, the relationship of the priesthood quorums to Church bureaucracy and liturgy continued to evolve. Specifically, in the 1930s due to pressure from schismatic polygamist groups, Church leaders more formally associated the priesthood with ecclesial bureaucratic structure. This association in turn facilitated

---

the “correlation” movement which rebuilt that structure along priesthood lines in subsequent decades. Liturgy during this period became increasingly priesthood-centric; and although female ritual healing persisted for decades during these changes, it also followed a path of declension to its end.

In 1920, the newly amalgamated Correlation Committee and the Social Advisory Committee issued a report intended to define “the relationship of the auxiliary organizations and agencies of the Church each to the other and to the quorums and organization to the Priesthood, and of defining the activities and fields of endeavor of each of the auxiliary associations and Church agencies.” Though the report’s suggestions were not adopted—leaders viewed the changes as too dramatic—many of the ideas found traction later. The report concluded that the duties of the Relief Society including caring for the sick and the poor and providing education on welfare, health and sex education, and household management, though this range of activity “does not preclude work and discussion of a theological or doctrinal nature.” The report then suggested that bishops work with and manage local Relief Societies.

While instructional materials followed the suggestions of the Correlation Committee in the 1920s, the First Presidency continued to encourage the general board’s governance of the Relief Societies’ ritual blessing activities. However, by the 1930s, local priesthood officials started to manage female ritual healing. In 1935 one woman who had served for over a decade in a blessing committee wrote Louise Yates Robison, now the Relief Society general president. She asked if it was still “orthodox and sanctioned by the Church” to wash and

---

229 Report of the Correlation—Social Advisory Committee to the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve on the Definition and Assignment of Auxiliary Functions and Organizations,” April 12, 1921, CR 4 301, Box 4, fd. 3. See also Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 153–54.

230 Instructions to Bishops and Counselors, Stake and Ward Clerks, No. 13 ([Salt Lake City: LDS Church], 1921), 26–27, states: “The ward Relief Society will labor under the direction of the Bishop and will be his chief aid in caring for the poor and unfortunate. The Relief Society teachers should visit every family once a month, or oftener if necessary, and report immediately to the President of the Society cases of need, poverty, distress or sickness. The President, under the direction of the Bishop will see that relief is promptly given.”
anoint pregnant mothers, claiming that neither her “Stake Relief Society President, nor our Stake President seem to have nothing definite on this matter.”231 This statement highlights the general inability of the folk transmission of the ritual to maintain liturgical consistency in the new era. Robison wrote that the inquiring sister should contact her stake Relief Society president and also, with her counselor, Julia Lund, sent that president these instructions:

In reference to the question raised, may we say that this beautiful ordinance has always been with the Relief Society, and it is our earnest hope that we may continue to have that privilege, and up to the present time the Presidents of the Church have always allowed it to us. There are some places, however, where a definite stand against it has been taken by the Priesthood Authorities, and where such is the case we cannot do anything but accept their will in the matter. However, where the sisters are permitted to do this for expectant mothers we wish it done very quietly, and without any infringement upon the Temple Service. It is in reality a mother’s blessing, and we do not advocate the appointment of any committees to have this in charge, but any worthy good sister is eligible to perform this service if she has faith, and is in good standing in the Church. It is something that should be treated very carefully, and as we have suggested, with no show or discussion made of it.232

While the Relief Society General Board thus limited female participation in healings, and blessings of pregnant women were curtailed in certain regions in the 1920s, it appears that some priesthood leaders by this time began to further limit the practice. The Robison-Lund letter of instructions to the stake Relief Society president includes elements that reappeared in a letter from Robison to a bishop in an unspecified locale a few months later. In this letter, Robison noted that the rituals were to be “very quietly performed” but acknowledged that some women “have been over-zealous, or made too much publicity, then the Priesthood authorities have refused to sanction it.”233 The nature of this “over-zealous” behavior is not clear; however, it is certain that the ritual performance common to the nineteenth century was, at

233Louise Y. Robison to Bishop Wm. Albert McClellan, March 31,
this point, beyond the bounds of ecclesial propriety.

The transition to formal priesthood governance over all facets of the Church was facilitated by the rhetorical evolution of the term “priesthood” and the new emphasis that priesthood is essential and inextricably connected with Church bureaucratic structure. Apostle John A. Widtsoe’s *Priesthood and Church Government* was an important volume used as the Melchizedek Priesthood study manual during 1940–41. This compilation of scripture and quotations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Church leaders outlined the role of the priesthood in Church government, with the new bureaucratic functions being heavily evidenced by contemporary leaders’ teachings. This shift was an apparent response to schismatic polygamist threats to the governing authority of the First Presidency and Twelve.234

Beyond the debates induced by non-Mormon healing at the turn of the century, Widtsoe asserted in his section on “Spiritual Gifts,” which treated healing, tongues, prophecy, and other charismata, that “the spiritual gifts which always accompany the Church of Christ and are signs of its verity, are properly exercised under the power of the Priesthood.”235 While this phrase could be read in the context of Doctrine and Covenants 46 to indicate that charismata is managed by the priesthood, it is also easily construed to mean that charismata occurs only through the priesthood.236 Perhaps surprisingly, Widtsoe’s section on ritual healing outlines standard priesthood practice, but it also quotes Joseph Smith’s 1842 revelation regarding female ritual healing without commentary.237 Contemporary with Widtsoe’s publication, Joseph Fielding Smith edited and published various teachings attributed to Joseph Smith in his influen-
tial *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, which followed Widtsoe’s volume as the Melchizedek Priesthood curriculum for two years. Smith also included an extended excerpt of the same Joseph Smith teachings on female ritual healing.238

While there was a systematic effort to consolidate power in the Church bureaucracy through priesthood government during this period, the Church liturgy—an intimate part of Latter-day Saint life—did not radically and immediately transform. Still, the codified liturgy increasingly emphasized priesthood. For example, the dedication of graves, which started as a folk ritual in nineteenth-century Utah,239 was successfully formalized in the 1920s as part of the codified liturgy. The ritual was not traditionally a “priesthood ordinance”; and in discussing the ritual, Widtsoe stated, “Though one holding the Priesthood is generally chosen, any suitable person may dedicate a grave.”240 The Melchizedek Priesthood Committee of the Council of the Twelve reaffirmed this inclusive policy in 1941.241 By the end of that decade, however, this same committee, though composed of somewhat different membership, instructed that grave dedication, like healing and other priesthood rituals “be performed by the authority of the priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ.”242 Since this time, dedicating graves has been formally considered a priesthood ritual.

---

239While there are likely earlier examples, the first grave dedication of which we are currently aware is that of George A. Smith. [no author], “Brigham Young,” *Deseret News*, September 9, 1875, 505.
From the 1930s on, as Church leaders increasingly associated priesthood with Church bureaucracy, priesthood also became increasingly associated with Church liturgy. This trend persisted through the twentieth century, as manifested by questions regarding whether women could pray or be the concluding speaker in sacrament meetings.\(^{243}\)

The blessing of pregnant women by other women endured for a surprisingly long time under these circumstances, though with decreasing frequency. When the Relief Society General Board met in 1940, General President Amy Brown Lyman reported a recent inquiry into the policy regarding washing and anointing. The board discussed the matter and “various reports indicated that this service is still rendered in some stakes, but has been discontinued in others where all administrations are performed by members of the Priesthood.”\(^{244}\) A few months later, in response to questions from one stake Relief Society president in Idaho, Vera W. Pohlman, the Relief Society general secretary, made similar observations indicating that in areas where washing and anointings did not occur, the petitioner was to request a blessing from a priesthood holder. She cautioned, however, that where the ritual was still performed that it be “done quietly and unostentatiously, and that no one be especially set apart to officiate.”\(^{245}\)

Deference to priesthood is a persistent theme in subsequent

---


\(^{244}\)Relief Society General Board, Minutes, February 21, 1940. For an example blessing that occurred in Shelley, Idaho, in February 1944, see Della Maude Dial Fielding, “Maude’s Life: An Annual Autobiography,” typescript edition (N.p.: Privately published, forthcoming); courtesy of Lavina Fielding Anderson. This blessing was administered in Eaton’s Maternity Home in Shelley for the first of her six children but not for the remaining five, the second of whom was born only two years later.

\(^{245}\)Vera W. Pohlman, Letter to Afton W. Hunt, May 27, 1940, typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1.
years. In 1941 when writing to another stake Relief Society president in Utah, Pohlman instructed that “it is left to the discretion of your stake Priesthood authorities as to whether they wish women in the stake to perform this service.” Pohlman further instructed that it “is not recommended that women be set apart for this purpose, but the Priesthood authorities may, if they desire to do so, appoint women to perform this service.”

Questions were sufficiently common that in 1946 the general board queried Joseph Fielding Smith, who was generally viewed as the Church’s authority on doctrine and policy, about this practice. Smith responded:

While the authorities of the Church have ruled that it is permissible, under certain conditions and with the approval of the priesthood, for sisters to wash and anoint other sisters, yet they feel that it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the elders of the Church to come and administer to the sick and afflicted.

The service of washing and anointing is not a Relief Society function, and therefore, is not under the direction of the Relief Society. Women should not be set apart to perform this ordinance, but the presiding priesthood authorities may determine if such an ordinance is to be performed and designate the sisters to perform it. The washing and anointing by our sisters in the past was greatly abused and improperly done, and for this reason, as well as for the reason that the Lord has given by revelation the order for the administration of those who are sick or in need of a blessing, the washing and anointing by the sisters has not been encouraged.

This letter became the definitive statement on female ritual administration for the next several decades. In the years after its reception, General President Belle Spafford read it to the Relief Society Board when discussing the topic and it was included in instructional letters.

---

246 Vera W. Pohlman, Letter to Vera S. Hilton, May 9, 1941, typescript, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1.

247 Joseph Fielding Smith, Letter, July 29, 1946, typescript on Relief Society letterhead, Relief Society Washing and Anointing File, CR 11 304, Box 1, fd. 1. This typescript, apparently a draft copy prepared for circulation, included the following typed headnote: “This letter written by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, July 29, 1946. (Said we might add to it if we wish.)” A typed footer, an apparent addition, stated: “Your letter of recent date with respect to washing and anointing has been received. Many such enquiries have reached this office and after consultation with the proper authorities we have been advised as follows.”
to local leaders. When Relief Society Board member Leone G. Layton, prepared the new Relief Society handbook, printed in 1949, it included the text of Smith’s letter but without attribution in the section entitled “Care for the Sick.” This text remained in the handbook until 1968, when the Relief Society prepared a new handbook and published it through the Correlation Department.

As the Relief Society Board had done in the years before receiving the 1946 Joseph Fielding Smith letter, its publication in the Relief Society’s handbook unequivocally situated female ritual administration firmly under the direction of local priesthood leaders throughout the entire Church. At the same time, local priesthood leaders re-


249 Relief Society, *Handbook of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1949), 82–83. According to [no author identified], *History of the Relief Society, 1842–1966* (Salt Lake City: General Board of the Relief Society, 1966), 99, the handbooks printed between 1949 and 1966 were all the same and were based on the 1931 handbook issued by the Relief Society Board that Amy Brown Lyman and Annie Wells Cannon had prepared. There is however, no mention of administering to the sick in the 1931 edition. The 1949 handbook was prepared by Leone G. Layton, who “studied all the General Board Minutes up to that time, the Magazines, all instructions, record books, etc., in the preparation” for its creation. Relief Society General Board, Minutes, August 4, 1965, 297–98; line breaks removed.

250 On August 4, 1965, Relief Society President Belle Spafford, speaking to the general board about the new handbook, said that it was “to be issued under the direction of the Church Coordinating Committee with Elder Bruce R. McConkie in charge. As preliminary work, she said, Sisters Evon W. Peterson and Anna B. Hart had accomplished a remarkable work in going through all the rules, regulations, and recommendations set up by the General Board, in evaluating them, and in organizing them for a Handbook. Since there will be a Church Handbook, rather than auxiliary handbooks, this preliminary work had been completed just in time.” Relief Society General Board, Minutes, August 4, 1965, 297–98; line breaks removed.
ceived training only on the codified formal liturgy of the Church. Only those local leaders who had been recipients of folk instruction and therefore had a personal history with female ritual administration could direct such activities. And with time such leaders became increasingly rare.

CONCLUSION

The last general instruction on female participation in healing rituals was also an instruction on collaborative healing and was delivered by Joseph Fielding Smith, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, in 1955. In response to a question in his regular “Answers to Gospel Questions” column in the Improvement Era, Smith quoted his father, Joseph F. Smith, as saying that it was “no uncommon thing” for a man and women to join in their faith in administering to their children together. He also quoted Joseph Smith’s 1842 revelation on female healing from his popular Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.251 Joseph Fielding Smith’s parents regularly administered healing rituals together. Aware of this, and of his father’s documented support of female healing as Church President, he had to negotiate between his Church’s increasingly formalized liturgy and the reality of his personal experience in his family of origin. Perhaps surprisingly, Smith’s affirmation of female ritual healing is still in print and available in a recent edition at popular Church-owned book sellers as Answers to Gospel Questions.252 When Bruce R. McConkie silently edited Smith’s teachings for inclusion in Doctrines of Salvation, however, it is clear that the tension had been resolved in favor of the formalized liturgy and priesthood primacy.253

It is notable that the last remaining remnant of Church-approved female participation in healing rituals recalls the union of faith

---

253 An unattributed section states: “The Brethren do not consider it necessary or wise for the women of the Relief Society to wash and anoint women who are sick. The Lord has given us directions in matters of this kind; we are to call in the elders, and they are to anoint with oil on the head and bless by the laying on of hands.” Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft,
that was born of the Nauvoo period. The iconic expression of “no uncommon thing” still resonates with a disappearing generation of Church leaders, who likely saw their own mothers participate in some form of ritual administration during their childhoods. The enduring power of such folk administration, despite the legacy of formalization can be seen in a powerful example of unity that occurred in the life of President Spencer W. Kimball who struggled with a significant number of health problems and received frequent administrations from other Church leaders as an apostle and as Church president. In September 1979, after Kimball’s first brain surgery for a subdural hematoma, his son, Edward, recorded in his diary:

Dad had just been given some codeine for headache; he had not said much according to the nurse, but he had asked for a blessing... Pres. Benson was taking a treatment at the Deseret Gym and could not come right away, so the security man had called Elders McConkie and Hanks; Mother was glad. Elder Hanks anointed Dad and Elder McConkie sealed the anointing as I joined them. At Elder McConkie’s suggestion Mother also placed her hands on Dad’s head. That was unusual; it seemed right to me, but I would not have felt free to suggest it on my own because of an ingrained sense that the ordinance is a priesthood ordinance (though I recalled Joseph Smith’s talking of mothers blessing their children). After the administration Mother wept almost uncontrollably for some minutes, gradually calming down.254

A circle that includes mother and son as well as representatives of the Church leading quorums provides a compelling image, which highlights the enduring legacy of collaborative healing among Mormons.

The evolution of liturgical authority is an ongoing process in Mormonism and the role of both women in the liturgy is still dynamic. Female ritual healing was a natural feature of the Mormon landscape and, for over a century, highlighted changing institutional views of women and authority. Max Weber astutely observed that women are granted greater equality in nascent religions among

1954–56), 3:178. Note that Answers to Gospel Questions was published after this and retains the supportive statements.

254Edward L. Kimball, Diary, September 7, 1979, typescript excerpt in our possession, courtesy of Edward Kimball. President Kimball’s mother recorded several instances when she administered rituals for health. See, e.g., Olive Woolley Kimball, Diary, May 17, 1901, and May 24, 1902, microfilm of holograph, MS 2136.
socially marginal groups. These women generally participate in “unconstrained relationships” with prophetic figures, but that “only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community’s formation, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmark[s] of specifically religious exultation.”

The degree to which Weber’s characterization is useful in understanding female participation in Mormon healing is complicated by the degree to which female healing praxis was marginalized not just by the “routinization of charisma” but by the dynamic reconceptualization of liturgical authority due to extrinsic pressures by competitive religious movements. Both the temple liturgy and female healing rituals were mediated by the conventions of oral tradition. While the temple and other rites were adapted to accommodate the modern era of codification, female healing rituals were subsumed in the same process.

Beginning as simply a sign that follows those who believe, female ritual healing was an integral part of the development of Mormon healing generally. Affirming years of practice, Joseph Smith revealed that women in the Church had both the authority to heal and access to divine power. Equipped with the same rituals as male members, even sometimes ministering with them, women helped to establish Mormonism’s unique culture, blending medicine and divine cures. Women learned how to ritually administer as did men; they relied on the ready examples of trusted leaders, communal experience, and oral communication. The twentieth century brought dramatic changes, first with liturgical and then priesthood reformation. While female healing persisted for decades, relying on older and outmoded methods of pedagogy, it eventually faded as modern systems and new perspectives dominated the liturgy and leadership of the Church.

Though the Church currently does not authorize women to administer healing rituals, the heritage of female healing in the LDS Church is an essential facet of Mormon history and testament to the faith, power, and community of Mormon women.

---


CLOSING THE CHURCH COLLEGE OF NEW ZEALAND: A CASE STUDY IN CHURCH EDUCATION POLICY

Scott C. Esplin

ANNOUNCING THE DECISION TO CLOSE the Church College of New Zealand by November 2009, Elder Paul V. Johnson of the First Quorum of the Seventy and administrator of Religious Education and Elementary and Secondary Schools commented: “It is the policy and practice of the Church to discontinue operation of such schools when local school systems are able to provide quality education.”1 Though troubling for those impacted by the closure, the pronouncement and even Johnson’s very words place the decision in the historical context of Latter-day Saint education. This policy regarding Church school closures was established over nine de-

SCOTT C. ESPLIN (scott_esplin@byu.edu) is an assistant professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. His research specialties include the history of LDS Church education, especially the development and discontinuance of the Church academy system. An earlier abbreviated version of this article appeared in Reid L. Neilson, Steven C. Harper, Craig K. Manscill, and Mary Jane Woodger, eds., Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The Pacific Isles (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), 161–79.

cades ago, and the practice has been consistently applied worldwide since.

Church education in the Pacific—and specifically the history of the Church College of New Zealand—demonstrate a pattern of establishment, development, and ultimately closure in favor of public school alternatives. Earlier Church school endeavors followed this same pattern. Understood in this historical context, the closure decision can be seen as a positive step in the forward movement of both the Church and education in New Zealand.

ESTABLISHING THE PATTERN: HISTORY

The Church’s educational policy developed during its first century of existence. From the earliest days of the Restoration, education was an important part of Latter-day Saint life. Revelations emphasizing education led to Church-sponsored schools in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah. However, while education has always been stressed, current Church educational policy and practice stem from decisions made by Church leaders during the 1880s. Prior to this period, education, like other elements of Utah’s society, was Church dominated. Holding key ecclesiastical positions, Church leaders acted as economic and societal gatekeepers, influencing settlement patterns, private enterprise, and political thought. Their influence extended into education—public in name because the schools served the general populace but private in practice since ecclesiastical leaders held keys to the joint church and schoolhouse doors and hired the teachers. From the smallest school in Utah’s rural south to the largest school in Salt Lake City, all public education in Utah was Mormon.

As Utah became more diverse, some sought to break this monopoly. Hoping to attract LDS youth, Protestant churches sought to improve education. Formally trained teachers came to Utah, appealing to parents with their educational expertise while filling what was largely a lack of secondary education in the territory. A series of Protestant mission schools emerged, beginning in 1867 with the Episcopalian-sponsored St. Mark’s School. Successful Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist schools soon followed, leading one of

---

their missionary educators to predict, “The Mormon people will send their children to our day schools, and Brigham and his bishops can’t prevent it.” And in fact, between 1869 and 1890, as many as 90 of these mission schools operated in the Utah territory, employing at their peak more than 200 teachers and enrolling more than 7,000 students. These private schools made a significant impact in Salt Lake City, which in 1878 reported the lowest percentage of public school attendance (29 percent) in the entire region. This figure, the Deseret News observed, was “undoubtedly attributable to so many children being sent by their parents to mission and select schools.”

While Protestant groups made educational inroads, the federal government focused primarily on reducing the Church’s political power, likewise influencing schools. The Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887), with the most stringent anti-polygamy provisions of the decade, made the office of superintendent of district schools appointive rather than elective. L. John Nuttall, President John Taylor’s son-in-law and personal secretary, had held this position, and his federally appointed replacement was charged to “prohibit the use in any district school of any book of a sectarian character or otherwise unsuitable.” Supporting these efforts, the Edmunds-Tucker Act also provided that revenue generated from the sale of confiscated Church properties be turned over for use in public schools.

This act was a decided blow to Church control of public schools, but additional dangers loomed. Three years later, Vermont senator George F. Edmunds, who had co-sponsored the 1887 legislation, again threatened more federal intervention by introducing a bill that would put Utah’s schools under the control of the U.S. Congress. In response, the Mormon-dominated Utah legislature finally

---

5Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), February 6, 1878, 6, LDS Church History Library.
passed the Free School Act (1890), a measure long opposed by Church leaders.\(^7\) Six years later, the legislation became a permanent centerpiece of Utah’s new state constitution. Among its educational components, the document opened with an ordinance, “irrevocable without the consent of the United States and the people of this State,” declaring that “the Legislature shall make laws for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools, which shall be open to all the children of the State and be free from sectarian control.”\(^8\) Specific stipulations against Church influence over schools included outlawing religious tests for teachers or providing any public aid to Church schools.

Accepting these losses in educational control, Church leaders expanded their private school system. In April 1886, President John Taylor declared, “The duty of our people under these circumstances is clear; it is to keep their children away from the influence of the sophisms of infidelity and the vagaries of the sects. Let them, though it may possibly be at some pecuniary sacrifice, establish schools taught by those of our faith, where, free from the trammels of State aid, they can unhesitatingly teach the doctrines of true religion combined with the various branches of a general education.”\(^9\) At the October general conference six months later, Taylor reiterated his call for a separate, Church-sponsored educational system. Praising efforts in Salt Lake City to establish a school patterned after Provo’s Brigham Young Academy and Logan’s Brigham Young College, the Church president announced, “We would like to see schools of this character, independent of the District School system, started in all places where it is possible.”\(^10\)


Though John Taylor did not live to see its establishment, his successor, Wilford Woodruff, implemented the Church school expansion. At the April 1888 general conference, the first Church Board of Education was formed, with President Woodruff at its head. On June 8, 1888, Woodruff directed each stake president to establish an academy as soon as possible. “The time has arrived,” Woodruff announced, “when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people. Religious training is practically excluded from our schools. The perusal of books that we value as divine records is forbidden. Our children, if left to the training they receive in these schools, will grow up entirely ignorant of those principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices. To permit this condition of things to exist among us would be criminal.”

Response throughout the Church to this call for private academies was swift. Within fourteen months, twenty of the twenty-one stakes in Utah complied with the directive. By the end of 1891, all but four of the thirty-two stakes in the Church had an operating academy. Enumerating the Church academies is problematic because some were short lived, with little formal organization. However, as many as twenty-two schools operated, meeting in their own buildings, while dozens of others existed for several years, meeting in borrowed accommodations. Researchers at Brigham Young University preparing a university exhibit on Church education in 2008 identified as many as fifty-seven schools operated by the Church following President Woodruff’s 1888 directive. Thirty-five of these schools were called stake academies. In addition, twenty-two other secondary schools existed, often called seminaries because a corresponding academy already existed in the stake. These “seminaries” should not be confused with the present LDS religious education program of the

---

12 Brett Dowdle, email to Scott C. Esplin, June 5, 2008, printout in my possession. Research for the “Education in Zion” exhibit, Brigham Young University, 2008. The four stakes without academies by 1891 were Kanab, Maricopa, San Juan, and San Luis. The Maricopa Academy (Mesa, Arizona) began in 1894 and the San Luis Academy (Manassa, Colorado) opened in 1907.
same name. Finally, ten elementary schools, also known as seminaries, operated in the Mormon colonies of northern Mexico.

This system of schools stretched the length of the Mormon Corridor, from the Knight Academy in Alberta, Canada, on the north to the Jáurez Academy in Colonia Juárez, Mexico, on the south. Optimism permeated the new endeavor, with Church officials praising it as "one of the most important factors in establishing the kingdom of God on the earth." However, financial troubles plagued the schools during the 1890s, and fewer than half survived the decade. Writing to the leaders of the Weber Stake Academy in 1893, George Reynolds, secretary of the Church Board of Education, summarized the plight faced by the entire system, "I am directed to say that, at present, the General Board is entirely out of funds, having overdrawn its appropriation from the church several thousand dollars, and the church is not in a condition, just now, to make further appropriations."

Things got worse before they got better. By 1899, Reynolds was writing to the leaders of the Gila Academy in Arizona: "The Colleges at Logan and Salt Lake City both talk of closing, and at the Brigham Young Academy many of the teachers are arranging to work on a missionary basis." To Thomas E. Ricks in Rexburg, Idaho, he continued: "I am free to confess that personally I see very little hope for any financial assistance coming from the general funds of the church for some years to come. Whatever you do educationally for the present will have to be done without any hope of the church being able to relieve you of any financial responsibilities you may incur."

Eventually, only the largest, best established, or most determined of the original academies survived. Some remade themselves into

---

13LDS General Church Board of Education, Minutes, April 9, 1889, quoted in John D. Monett, Revealed Educational Principles & the Public Schools (Grantsville, Utah: LDS Archive Publishers, 1998), 120.
14George Reynolds, Letter to Joseph Stanford, June 1, 1893, in LDS General Church Board of Education, Letterpress Copybooks, 1888–1917, CR 102 1, LDS Church History Library.
postsecondary teacher training schools and eventually junior colleges. In Utah, they were Brigham Young University (Provo), Brigham Young College (Logan), LDS College (Salt Lake City), Weber College (Ogden), Snow College (Ephraim), and Dixie College (St. George). Added to these schools were Ricks College (Rexburg, Idaho) and Gila College (Thatcher, Arizona). A number of Church-run high schools also survived into the early twentieth century. In Utah they were Emery Academy (Castle Dale), Murdock Academy (Beaver), Millard Academy (Hinckley), Summit Academy (Coalville), and Uintah Academy (Vernal). High schools in Idaho were Cassia Academy (Oakley), Fielding Academy (Paris), and Oneida Academy (Preston). LDS high schools in Arizona were Snowflake Academy (Snowflake) and St. Johns Academy (St. Johns). Others were Big Horn Academy (Cowley, Wyoming), Knight Academy (Raymond, Canada), and San Luis Academy (Manassa, Colorado). As Church-run secondary schools, they operated in direct competition with the growing public school systems in the Intermountain West.

Though these remaining schools operated with relative success for more than thirty years, the policy of taking education “in hand by us as a people” changed dramatically in the 1920s. Financial pressures contributed to the change. In 1920, Church Commissioner of Education David O. McKay, Assistant Commissioners Stephen L. Richards and Richard R. Lyman, and Superintendent Adam S. Bennion offered written recommendations to the General Church Board of Education regarding restructuring Church education. “It is manifestly impossible, under present conditions,” they cautioned, “to increase the number of academies, though not a few stakes are earnestly hoping that this be done. . . . The limit of Church finances . . . has definitely limited the number of academies, but it does seem advisable that some plan should be devised that might have more general application than the present system.” Eventually, a new educational policy emerged. Beginning in the early 1920s, the Church began divesting itself of its secular education systems. Academies were eliminated by selling the buildings or transferring the property to the state for use as public high schools, augmenting instruction at these

schools with released-time seminary opportunities. By 1924, twelve schools, with an estimated value of more than $377,000, had been transferred to the states of Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming.\(^\text{18}\) Pushing for still further downsizing, President Heber J. Grant expressed his fiscal frustration in 1926, “I am free to confess that nothing has worried me more since I became President than the expansion of the appropriation for the Church school system.”\(^\text{19}\) In 1928, Church Commissioner of Education Joseph F. Merrill summarized, “The policy of the Church was to eliminate church schools as fast as circumstances would permit.”\(^\text{20}\)

While the school closures indicated fiscal responsibility, the decision to reformulate policy included other elements besides money. Competition and overlap, especially with the Church’s own seminary system, contributed to the change. As educational alternatives improved in Utah, Adam S. Bennion, superintendent of Church schools, reported to the Church Board of Education in 1928, “It became increasingly clearer that the Church could not and ought not compete against the public high school. . . . It became evident that when the public high school was established, the Church was in the field of competition. Such competition was costly and full of difficulties.”\(^\text{21}\)

A year later, Elder Rulon S. Wells of the Church’s First Council of Seventy summarized the change for Church membership, “The present policy of the Church . . . in withdrawing from secular education, must not be construed by the people as a withdrawal from the great cause of education; but it does seem like an unnecessary duplication of


\(^\text{19}\)Heber J. Grant, General Church Board of Education, Minutes, February 23, 1926, quoted in William Peter Miller, “Weber College—1888 to 1933,” unpublished transcription of LDS General Church Board of Education minutes (1975), 2:143, LDS Church History Library.


\(^\text{21}\)Adam S. Bennion, Letter to LDS Church Board of Education, February 1, 1928, Adam S. Bennion Papers, 1909–58, MSS 1, Box 6, fd. 8; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).
work for the Church to undertake to do, in an adequate way, what is already being so well done by our public schools.”

In offering Gila College to Arizona in 1929, Merrill stated: “The LDS Church does not care to go forward in the field of secular education.”

By the 1930s, the general Church education policy and practice had been established: encourage the acquisition of knowledge through qualified public educational options supported by released-time or after-hours religious education programs.

Changes in the educational policy highlight the paradigm shift in the Church during this era. When the academies were formed, the Church and its leaders operated under a paradigm that “necessitated the integration of religion, politics, society, and the economy into a single non-pluralistic community,” as historian Thomas G. Alexander put it. Such an approach was, however, “simply unacceptable to Victorian America, so in the 1890s the Mormons began groping for a new paradigm that would save essential characteristics of their religious tradition, provide sufficient political stability to preserve the interests of the church, and allow them to live in peace with other Americans.”

From 1890 to 1930, members and leaders of the faith reexamined their organization and its practices. By 1930, the transition, at least in the Intermountain West, was complete, marking “the end of one phase of Mormon history and [ ushering] in the transition to a second.”

**ESTABLISHING CHURCH SCHOOLS IN NEW ZEALAND**

Though more than a generation behind, educational policy and practice in New Zealand have followed the pattern established by earlier Church school decisions. Like the original academies, education in New Zealand began with a period of establishment, followed by development, and concluding with closure in favor of improved public school alternatives. The history of Church education

---

22Rulon S. Wells, *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 7, 1929 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 103.

23Joseph F. Merrill, Letter to H. L. Schantz, February 1, 1929, Joseph F. Merrill Papers, 1887–1952, Perry Special Collections.


25Ibid., 3.
in New Zealand, from its earliest beginnings through the announce-
ment of the Church College’s closure, parallels that of other Church
schools.

Like the Church in Kirtland and Missouri, education in the Pa-
cific began with the earliest missionaries and converts. Encouraging
the assignment of elders to New Zealand, Augustus Farnham, presi-
dent of the Australasian Mission, wrote the First Presidency on Au-
gust 14, 1853, “I also wish to go and open the gospel at New Zea-
land. . . . I have received some little information from that Island, New
Zealand. I am informed the chiefs of the tribes say the [Christian] mis-
sionaries do not preach to them the right gospel; that they are keeping
back the part they need. And they do not feel to receive their teach-
ing. From what I can learn, the field is ready to harvest; and as soon as
possible, we shall send some laborers there to weed the crop and try
to gather the wheat.”26 With Church approval, the first missionaries
arrived in Auckland on October 27, 1854.

Though Farnham envisioned working with the native Maori
people, the first missionary efforts focused on the “pakeha” or Euro-
pean population of the country. Missionaries found some success, but
permanent Church membership in New Zealand remained small as
“it was taken for granted that faithful converts would emigrate to
Utah at the first opportunity.”27 Mission leaders, however, increas-
ingly turned their limited resources toward the Maori people, where
they found even greater success.28 By the mid-1880s, Maori branches
outnumbered pakeha branches four to one in the country. Growth
continued through the turn of the century, when most of the Maori
tribes had been introduced to the gospel. By 1901, there were sev-
enty-nine branches of the Church and nearly four thousand members
in New Zealand.29

As Church membership increased, institutional growth followed. Mission leaders quickly assessed the need for education among the

27Marjorie Newton, “Nineteenth-Century Pakeha Mormons in New
Zealand,” in Proclamation to the People: Nineteenth-Century Mormonism and the
Pacific Basin Frontier, edited by Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp and Reid L. Neilson
(Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 230.
28Ibid., 234. See also Marjorie Newton, “Mormonism in New Zea-
29R. Lanier Britsch, Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day
Maori people. Throughout New Zealand, government schools were operated in populated regions; but in Maori communities and rural areas of the country, few schools existed. Responding to this need, Church leaders formed the first school in the Hawkes Bay community of Nuhaka on January 11, 1886, with Elder Sondra Sanders as the first teacher.\footnote{Brian W. Hunt, Zion in New Zealand: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand, 1854–1977 (Temple View, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977), 27.} Seeing the success of the endeavor, mission leaders soon established additional schools in Awarua, Kohonui, Kopuwahara, Korongata, Opoutama, Porirua, Moawhanga, Hastings, Tauranganui, Waikura, and Wairau. In total, as many as sixteen Church-sponsored primary schools operated in the country, most housed in Church meetinghouses with curriculum focusing on English, reading, writing, arithmetic, and music.\footnote{Ibid., 31; Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 119.}

Though helpful for many Maori families, numerous factors hampered the success of the schools. Chief among them was concern regarding educational excellence. Missionary-teachers were seldom professionally trained and almost always educated in the American school system, a model which differed from New Zealand’s British structure. Staffed by foreign missionaries, the schools also experienced frequent turnover and suffered from poor financing and limited supplies.\footnote{Britsch, Unto the Islands of the Sea, 288–89.} As a result, few if any of the mission schools were formally recognized by the New Zealand Department of Education. By the early 1920s, the Church ceased to operate its primary schools, which were replaced by a more efficient and widespread state school system.\footnote{Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 31; Britsch, Unto the Islands of the Sea, 288; Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 127–28; Marjorie Newton, From Tiki to Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854–1958 (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, forthcoming), esp. chaps. 3–5.}

**The Maori Agricultural College**

While elementary education increasingly became a state function in New Zealand, the early missionary education efforts paved the

*Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 272. For additional detail on Church history in New Zealand, see Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand.”
way for a more permanent secondary school, the Maori Agricultural College (MAC), which opened its doors in Korongata (near Hastings) in 1913. Similar to the rise of Mormon academies in Utah in the 1880s, the MAC was created to fill the void of state secondary education for Maori youth in rural areas where the best alternative was usually a denominational school that sometimes drew them away from Mormonism.\textsuperscript{34} Like the earlier elementary schools in New Zealand, the college was initially operated by the missionaries and focused toward the educational needs of the Maori people.

The first catalogue stated that its goals were “to teach Maoris the principles of agriculture . . ., to instruct them in the manual arts . . ., to train them in the secular branches of education that they may cope successfully with their associates in the commercial and social world, and to furnish them with an opportunity to possess themselves of that education that will imbue them with a better understanding of the obligations of life and a higher appreciation of its opportunities and blessings.”\textsuperscript{35} The MAC focused on serving boys ages twelve to eighteen (some were older), accommodating them in five separate structures including an assembly hall, chapel, dormitory, and manual training building. Hundreds of acres of Church-owned farmland surrounding the campus provided students with work opportunities. Extracurricular activities included athletics, debate, band, and glee club.

Though the MAC started well, the school faced some of the same challenges as the earlier Maori elementary schools. The New Zealand Department of Education had reservations about the school’s curriculum and its faculty, most of whom were missionaries untrained in formal educational pedagogy.\textsuperscript{36} Government officials praised the character-building elements of the school, lauding “the formation of habits of punctuality and tidiness and the band and choir practice,” but rejected its academic attainment. “As a scholastic institution for imparting a literary education,” school inspector G. M. Henderson observed, “the college is not worthy of serious consideration.” Poor pedagogy fueled the criticism. Henderson continued,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{34}Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 130.\\
\textsuperscript{35}Latter Day Saints’ Maori Agricultural College, \textit{Catalogue and Announcement of the Maori Agricultural College} (Auckland, New Zealand: Abel, Dykes Ltd., 1913), quoted in Hunt, \textit{Zion in New Zealand}, 33.\\
\textsuperscript{36}Britsch, \textit{Unto the Islands of the Sea}, 294.
\end{flushright}
“Their invariable practice seems to be to work steadily through a
text-book in each subject explaining the meaning to the pupils where
necessary. In many cases, I suspect, the subject-matter of the text-
book is as new to the teacher as it is to the scholar.”

Faculty turnover exacerbated the problem. “The absence of per-
manent teachers,” summarized the inspector, “stultifies the indoor
study work of the pupils; and, until there is a permanent staff, this
part of the work must be regarded largely as a waste of time.”37 The
government refused to grant the MAC approved status, a limitation
which, in turn, kept Maori students from receiving government schol-
arships.38 As a result, school attendance remained low, averaging
around fifty students a year. Additionally, though designed as a sec-
ondary school, the MAC was forced to accommodate as many as half
of each year’s enrollment in primary grades due to their low educa-
tional levels.39

A second problem, ironic for an agricultural college, was the
land on which the school was situated. Historian Marjorie Newton ob-
erved, “Controversy over the suitability of the chosen land raged for
years, even after the College ceased operation.”40 The debate cen-
tered on the land’s unsuitability for farming, an observation emphati-
cally noted by Elder David O. McKay during his 1921 visit at the
school. “The farm is very poor, shallow soil and not fertile at best,”
McKay observed. “The depth of productive soil will not average more
than six inches! Why such a place was selected for an agricultural col-
lege is more than I can comprehend.”41

In spite of the challenges, mission leaders worked hard to im-
prove the school and thereby achieve government-approved status. In
January 1930, school president Ariel S. Ballif wrote in the New Zea-
land mission periodical, Te Karere,

In the past three school years every effort has been put forth by the
President of the Mission and Staff to place the M.A.C. on the standard
that you have asked for. You have asked for teachers that the Govern-

37G. M. Henderson, quoted in Newton, “Mormonism in New Zea-
land,” 137, 140.
38Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 51.
39Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 144–45.
40Ibid., 132.
41David O. McKay, quoted in Newton, “Mormonism in New Zea-
land,” 133–34.
ment would accept; that has been arranged. You have asked us to prepare the boys for the Government examinations; that has also been arranged. You have complained at the amount of work that the boys have had to do at the College, stating they did not have enough time to study; this year they will be freed from the tying jobs and ample time given for study. Everything that has been asked for in reason and possible, has been granted. Yes, this year we will receive our first visit from the Secondary Department Inspector. From this we anticipate with every reason to believe that our College will be a registered Secondary School this year.42

Despite this hard work, the MAC did not receive government approval.43 Enrollment dropped still further, from forty-five in 1929 to thirty-five in 1930.44

That same year, a policy change in Church education further threatened its growth. In a letter sent to the school in February 1930,

---


43 Both Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, 51, his “The Maori Agriculture College,” 17, and Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 294, 307, mistakenly write that the MAC received government approval. However, more recent research by Marjorie Newton, *From Tiki to Temple*, chap. 5, quoted by permission, has clarified that “the MAC never became a registered secondary school. An announcement that boarding scholarships were available to Maori students has been taken as evidence that the school was registered. But Robert P. Hodge, Ballif’s successor, was merely alerting parents to the fact that the scholarships existed and was urging them to apply to have these scholarships made tenable at the MAC. . . . On April 15, 1930, the mission history noted that mission president John E. Magleby ‘received word from Principal Ariel S. Ballif of the Maori Agricultural College that the Government man who inspected the College did not recommend them for registration [sic] as a second grade [secondary] school, which was sad news.’” President Magelby’s official statement however, shows an undaunted spirit: “We must work on—improving until we reach the standard required.”

44 Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 294, states that the 1930 class was the largest, “a group of around eighty boys.” Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, 51, gives a figure of twenty, which he repeats in his “The Maori Agriculture College,” 16. Newton, *From Tiki to Temple*, chap. 5 note 123, gives attendance figures from the catalogue and the mission history that show a steady decline: from fifty-five in 1928 to forty-five in 1929 and thirty-five in 1930. She
Elder David O. McKay championed the cause of the school, emphasizing its continued existence, “The boys surely look well in that excellent picture; they seem to be the finest type of young manhood and I am truly proud of them. . . . I hope that the time will never come when we haven’t one (Church school) in New Zealand.” McKay’s fears materialized later that year when the First Presidency sent a letter to John E. Magleby, the mission president, informing him that the institution would close after the 1931 school year. Reasons for closure included the high cost to operate the school, improvements in the New Zealand system of public education, and the Church’s general policy of retreating from secular education. These reasons were the same as those driving the divestiture of the Church’s U.S. schools during this era. The closure of the Maori Agricultural College appears to have been merely an outgrowth of the Church’s educational policy.

In the end, nature ended the college before the Church could. On February 3, 1931, an earthquake struck the area, rendering the school’s buildings unsafe. The Church offered the property, including the damaged buildings, to the New Zealand Department of Education in an effort to keep the institution open. When the government refused, the major part of the land was later leased to John Gimblett, with a portion of the farm land eventually divided among local members.

The Church College of New Zealand

With the closure of the Maori Agricultural College, the Church formally removed itself from education in New Zealand for the next two decades. However, through the influence of two prominent

---

45David O. McKay, quoted in Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 51. Importantly, McKay made some of the same pleas for preserving Church schools in the United States during this same time period. Esplin, “Education in Transition,” 206–10.

46Britsch, Unto the Islands of the Sea, 307.


48Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 51.
Church officials in Salt Lake City, Church education returned to New Zealand in the 1950s. For their efforts, Elder Matthew Cowley and President David O. McKay may be considered the founding fathers of the Church College of New Zealand.

Matthew Cowley’s ties to New Zealand stem from his service as a young missionary in the country (1914–19) and again as the mission president (1938–45). Upon returning to Salt Lake, he was called to fill the vacancy created in the Quorum of the Twelve after the death of President Heber J. Grant. As a new apostle, one of Cowley’s first assignments was as president of the Pacific Missions of the Church, bringing him back in contact with New Zealand where he investigated the possibility of reestablishing Church schools in the Pacific. Cowley’s previous experience in New Zealand and especially with the Maori Agricultural College had convinced him of the positive influence of Church education. He remarked, “As I went around among the native people, I discovered that the leaders of the natives—of the native race today are not those who went to the Church of England school or are not those who went to the Catholic schools—the leaders in the native race are the young men who learned at the feet of the Mormon elders at the Maori Agricultural College.”

Based on this previous experience, Cowley recommended to the First Presidency the construction of a school to take the place of the old MAC.

By now, David O. McKay was a member of the First Presidency. He had first visited New Zealand in 1921 during his worldwide tour of missions. Touring the all-boys Maori Agricultural College, McKay had been so impressed that he encouraged local leaders to find a possible site for a similar all-girls school. Furthermore, before becoming an apostle in 1906, McKay had been a professional educator, teaching at and serving as principal of the Church’s Weber Stake Academy. Among his Quorum of the Twelve assignments, he served as Church Commissioner of Education and later participated in the discussions about closing the Church schools in the 1920s. He had

---

49Henry A. Smith, *Matthew Cowley: Man of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 213. Some question the extent of this claim. Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 168, acknowledges that “the MAC produced a generation of good men . . . but to assert that it produced a generation of leaders is debatable.”

50Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand*, 55. The proposed all-girls school never materialized.
been a strong opponent of the closures, arguing before the Church Board of Education in 1926, “I think the intimation that we ought to abandon our present Church Schools and go into the seminary business exclusively is not only premature but dangerous. The seminary has not been tested yet but the Church schools have, and if we go back to the old Catholic Church you will find Church schools have been tested for hundreds of years and that church still holds to them. . . . Let us hold our seminaries but not do away with our Church schools.”51

Lobbying with Church officials, McKay favored the “retaining of junior colleges at this time because by their elimination the Church would lose its hold on the training of its teachers.”52 In the final vote to close the schools, McKay cast the lone dissenting vote against the action.53 In 1934, following the closure of most of the Church schools, McKay was called into the First Presidency by President Heber J. Grant. From this position and later as Church president, he championed the expansion of Church education, especially internationally.

President McKay and the rest of the First Presidency acted on Elder Cowley’s recommendation that Church education return to New Zealand by announcing in September 1948 that a secondary school would be built, to be called the Church College of New Zealand.54 A site was located near Hamilton and construction began in 1950. Throughout the project, McKay, who became Church president in 1951, maintained an active interest. In 1955, he made his second visit to New Zealand to confidentially search for a site for a temple and check on the progress of the school. He was also investigating Church leaders’ concerns over escalating costs.55 Impressed with what he saw, McKay reversed an intention to scale back the program and instead

---

54The term “college” can be misleading, especially for individuals familiar with the postsecondary use of the term. Though called the “Church College of New Zealand,” the school more closely approximates a U.S. high school in student population and curriculum, much like the original Brigham Young College in Logan, Utah.
announced, “We will not curtail, we will enlarge this project.”56 As a result, additional buildings were added to the campus.

Turning the mandate into reality was a challenge, however. For example, Arnold Ehlers, supervising architect for the Church, expressed his frustration that, though buildings were being discussed, there was no formal educational plan for the school. Voicing the concern to President McKay, Ehlers recalled:

I remember we sat in President McKay’s office with all these brethren one day and I was putting in a plea for a written program that covered everything that the school was intended to do. I said, “Now, President McKay, there’s not a one of us in this office that’s an educator. We don’t know anything about education. We need educators to develop this program for us.”

But you know, it hit me just like that, like a bat out of . . . heaven when I said that, and I went to him after and I said, “President McKay, I owe you a big apology. When I said that there wasn’t an educator in this room, I completely forgot your background.” He put his arm around me and said, “Brother Ehlers, don’t you think another moment about that. Don’t let that bother you a bit.”57

With President McKay’s educational oversight and the labor of committed professional and volunteer workers, the campus was ready for dedication together with the New Zealand Temple in April 1958. The college became part of a growing international Church educational system as similar schools spread across the Pacific in Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji during the era.

Throughout the remainder of the McKay presidency, the Church College of New Zealand continued to grow, expanding from a first-year enrollment of 342 students in 1958 to 647 students in 1970, the year of McKay’s death. Unlike the earlier MAC, which focused on Maori boys, the Church College served any student, male or female, within the country. Additionally, it succeeded where the agricultural college had failed because of ongoing Church financial assistance, a

56David W. Cummings, Mighty Missionary of the Pacific: The Building Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—Its History, Scope, and Significance (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), 51.
broad-based curriculum, compatibility with the New Zealand school system, and professionally trained teachers. However, though the program seemed to be flourishing, the Church College of New Zealand existed as an exception to general Church education policy, which operated schools only in areas with inadequate public education.58 Among Church schools in the Pacific, this concern was especially acute in New Zealand which had a tradition of superior public education and therefore “little real academic necessity” for the school.59

Following McKay’s death, changes occurred at the school. These were sparked, in part by a change in Church leadership, but also because of statistics showing limited Church activity among the college’s graduates. Particularly troublesome were the low numbers of missionaries and temple marriages among former students.60 Bothered by the findings, leaders focused their concern on students leaving home to attend the college. Beginning in 1972, younger boarding students could no longer attend Church College without special priesthood permission. Exceptions of up to thirty students per year could be made with specific bishop and stake president recommendation. All students were encouraged, where possible, to live at home and attend local schools, where they could better receive family and ecclesiastical support. Furthermore, college officials were restricted from recruiting students or pressuring families to support the institution because it was a Church school.61 With these changes in place, enrollment dropped from 663 in 1972 to 450 in 1974.

CLOSING THE CHURCH COLLEGE

With decreasing enrollment and rising costs, Church leaders began to question the persistence of the Church College of New Zealand as an exception to existing Church education policy. Emphasizing the other educational opportunities available, Church leaders observed that “with only a few exceptions, the students in all forms [grades] who were attending CCNZ could get a public ed-

58Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 77.
59Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand,” 189.
60Ibid., 181.
ucation in the areas where they lived. This, of course, included the CCNZ day students in the Hamilton area. Early in the 1970s, Church officials asked Alton Wade, administrator of Church schools in the Pacific, and Barney Wihongi, a public school administrator in Utah and former student at the Church College of New Zealand, to conduct a study about continuing the school. The pair contacted over 200 individuals, including faculty, staff, Church leaders, students, and government and education officials. Their report stated that “the data, based on board criteria only, [do] not support the continuation of CCNZ. However, the history of the project, its proximity to the temple, the community which has grown up around it, the reputation of the school in the eyes of the New Zealand public, and the symbol which the College represents to the New Zealand saints should be considered.” They expressed specific concerns that closing the school might lead to “public skepticisms of a failure within the Church after such an enormous investment of funds and human resources.” They warned of a possible “psychological and spiritual letdown among the Church members in New Zealand” and concluded: “It is recommended that the Church College of New Zealand continue in its present role as a secondary school.”

As had occurred in Utah in the 1920s, some discussion ensued regarding transforming the Church College of New Zealand into a postsecondary institution. This earlier move had, in fact, temporarily preserved Dixie College, Snow College, Weber College, Ricks College, and Gila College when the Church’s secondary schools were discontinued. Wade and Wihongi’s study examined this option for the Church College of New Zealand in the early 1970s. However, they found that “the New Zealand government is providing adequate educational opportunities for its citizens at the university, teacher training college, technical college, and secondary/elementary levels.” Therefore, they concluded, “there is neither need nor a justification for the Church to provide a tertiary educational program in New Zealand.”

Though the school’s existence was questioned, the Church College of New Zealand refocused its emphasis and survived. Discourag-
The ratio of younger and older students shifted, as students enrolled in the fifth, sixth, and seventh forms (U.S. tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades), who constituted 36 percent of the school population in 1970, rose to 65 percent of the total population by 1977. Additionally, the school deemphasized boarding. In 1967, boarding students had made up 83 percent of the student body. A decade later, only 46 percent of the students were boarding. The rest of the students, a slight majority, came from the Hamilton area. Eventually, enrollment at Church College plateaued, accommodating about 700 students a year by 2006: 75 percent Maori students and 10 percent Pacific Islanders, with a balanced male-female ratio.

While the continued existence of the Church College was being appraised, the seminary program was introduced for public school students in New Zealand in February 1970. The seminary alternative offered distinct advantages for Church members in the country, including the possibility of keeping youth with their parents rather than sending them to or moving near the Church College. Economically, religious education could be offered to more students for much less cost. Under this model, enrollment in the seminary program grew to serve 2,311 by 2006.

With an established seminary alternative in the country and aging facilities at the Church College, the stage was set to follow the pattern of school closures. Like the Utah debate in the 1920s, however, the decision appears to have been a difficult one. Announcing the closure to faculty, staff, parents, and students on June 29, 2006, the Church Commissioner of Education, Elder W. Rolfe Kerr of the Seventy, described it as “an agonizing, multi-year decision which has been made at the highest levels of Church administration. President Gordon B. Hinckley visited the school himself three years ago to make a personal evaluation.” This visit had been part of President Hinckley’s June 2003 tour of New Zealand, Australia, Vanuatu, Christmas Island, and Hawaii. During the trip, he repeatedly spoke on edu-

---

64Ibid., 25.
65Hunt, Zion in New Zealand, 77.
66Ibid.
cation. Emphasizing that “knowledge is an eternal thing and we have an opportunity and obligation to try to acquire it,” Hinckley encouraged members to “get all the education you can.” Educational opportunity had thus apparently been on his mind as he considered the future of the Church College of New Zealand.

After the announcement that the school would close, Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy, then serving as Pacific Area president, wrote candidly on the Church’s website of the dilemma presented by the school’s discontinuance:

The decision to close CCNZ has been extremely difficult, and that is why it has taken several years to reach its announcement. The Brethren have carefully considered the great good that has come from this wonderful institution, including thousands of competent, talented graduates, over the past half century. The Brethren have considered the positive influence which CCNZ has had in bringing the Church “out of obscurity” throughout all of New Zealand. They have tender concerns about disrupting the professional careers of the faithful faculty and the vocational pursuits of the devoted staff members. The Brethren have deliberated long about the disruption the school’s closure might have upon the lovely little community of Temple View.

The same difficult scenario that had presented itself in earlier Church educational decisions seems to have repeated itself in New Zealand.

When the schools in the Intermountain West were closed or turned over to the state, Church leaders praised the effectiveness of the public schools. While offering Gila College to Arizona in 1929, Joseph F. Merrill wrote, “I was connected with the University of Utah for thirty-four years. During this period I was thoroughly converted to the thought that the L.D.S. Church should in nowise compete with the public schools. And so I am using the influence of this office to get [across] the thought that it is the policy of this Department to give one hundred percent support to the state systems of education under

---

68Walton, “New Zealand Church College to Close,” 11.
which the L.D.S. Church is doing any educational work.” According to this articulation of policy, Church schools are closed when adequate public alternatives can replace them.

Announcing the closure of the Church College of New Zealand, Elder Paul V. Johnson had similar praise for New Zealand public schools, noting that “educational standards in New Zealand are the highest in the Pacific region and among the highest in the world.” Elder Spencer J. Condie similarly observed, “The original mission of the Church College of New Zealand (CCNZ) was to provide suitable educational facilities for Latter-day Saint youth living in remote towns and villages who, half a century ago, did not have access to adequate schools. Now, fifty years later, New Zealand has recently been ranked by UNICEF as having the 10th best school system in the entire world.” Reassuring members impacted by the announcement, Condie promised, “The decision to close CCNZ was not made before receiving assurances that the New Zealand Ministry of Education would be able to provide adequate alternative educational opportunities for CCNZ students.”

More than a hundred faculty and staff were impacted by the closure; but plans were made to absorb them into the New Zealand state school system or transfer them to teaching posts at Church schools elsewhere in the Pacific. In addition, Church leaders expressed confidence that existing Church programs, especially seminary, could provide religious instruction for its youth. Apparently, the strength of the public school system, supported by a successful seminary program, factored heavily into the closure decision, much as it had done in the United States.

A second factor impacting the decision to close seems to have been the financial burdens of operating the school. Looking back on the closure of the earlier Church schools, Joseph F. Merrill had observed in 1938, “The Church Board of Education and the Church’s leading educators and thinkers in many fields had long realized that

---

71 Merrill to Schantz, February 1, 1929.
72 Walton, “New Zealand Church College to Close,” 11.
73 Condie, “The Hollowing Precedes the Hallowing.”
Church-operated academies were a financial burden and were performing a limited service, geographically at least.”75 In announcing the closure of the Church College of New Zealand nearly seventy years later, Elder Johnson similarly noted that the school’s aging facilities had been a factor in the decision.76 Likewise, Elder Condie explained that the “Brethren have weighed the benefits of maintaining CCNZ versus the benefits of using these financial resources for the construction of temples, building and maintaining chapels, supporting missionary aid throughout the world where needs are the greatest.”77 Noting that “the decision is sad in many ways,” Elder Kerr reiterated that the financial impact of the decision “will allow the Church to bless others in parts of the world where the need is greater.”78

Also like the closures of the 1920s and ’30s, the announcement to discontinue the Church College of New Zealand has been difficult for some members. The local Waikato Times reported that member “Maureen Davies rushed out of the meeting at the Temple View high school last night, a handkerchief held to her face as she tried to hide her grief at the school’s closure. ‘I can’t believe it,’ she said. ‘We’ve talked about it, but we never realized it would happen this soon.’”79 Former student and now parent Daniel Beijerling similarly observed, “The closure of the school means all our hopes and plans for our children’s educational future have been dashed to pieces, and suddenly we’re forced to make decisions we hadn’t counted on.”80 Testing the faithful response by Church members may, in fact, be a byproduct of the decision. “This is not the first time in the history of the Church,” declared Elder Condie, “that buildings have been built with faith and sacrifice only to be left behind. . . . It seems that the Lord would have a people who do not become overly attached to places and things, especially buildings.”81

Indeed, in the wake of the closure announcement, details

76Walton, “New Zealand Church College to Close,” 11.
77Condie, “The Hollowing Precedes the Hallowing.”
78Walton, “New Zealand Church College to Close,” 11.
about the fate of the school’s physical facilities have received the most attention. In July 2008, Church officials announced plans to demolish most of the buildings, retaining only two structures (a community meeting center known as the George R. Biesinger Hall and a kitchen/dining facility known as Kai Hall) while transforming the property leading up to the adjacent temple into pasture.82 “By returning the land to pasture,” explained Church spokesman and faculty member Philip Hague, “the Church will retain its primary focus, both aesthetically and spiritually, on the New Zealand temple.” Leaders expressed concern that the approach to the temple not “be one of passing empty and derelict buildings on the former CCNZ campus.” Additionally, officials expressed reservations about buildings being “used for a purpose that was not conducive to [Church] values.”83

Interested government officials and parent groups scrambled to block the action. The Hamilton City Council and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust succeeded in preserving select campus buildings by bestowing “heritage protection status” on them, a designation attributed to the structures because of the unique role of labor missionaries during the 1950s and 1960s in their construction.84 Hamilton area politician Martin Gallagher summarized, “You are not going to find anything else like this in Australasia. It was built with volunteer labour and it is a great New Zealand story.”85 Hamilton area art historian Dr. Ann McEwan argued that, even if architecture of the era isn’t appreciated, “the danger is, if people don’t think it’s attractive, in 50 years time, we may regret demolishing the buildings.”86 However, Church planning consultant David Hay questioned the “heritage” status, calling it puzzling “that it was even considered that institutional

81Condie, “The Hollowing Precedes the Hallowing.”
84Ibid. For the labor missionary program, see Cummings, Mighty Missionary of the Pacific.
85Martin Gallagher, quoted in “A Question of Heritage.”
86Ann McEwan quoted in ibid.
buildings dating back to the 1950s were heritage items.”

Government and historical groups were not the only ones interested in preserving school facilities. Local parents have also organized efforts to preserve the campus, hoping to transform Church College buildings into part of the Koromatua School, a state-run primary facility three kilometers away which serves children (95 percent of whom are LDS) in forms (grades) one through eight. One proposal involved relocating the Koromatua campus to the vacated school property and adding secondary-level classes. A second proposal advocated creating a separate satellite campus on the site and preserving the library and auditorium buildings from demolition for “future educational endeavors.”

Acknowledging unique Church values, the proposal sought “special character status” for the school, allowing it to “reflect the standards of the local community” while remaining under state sponsorship. For a variety of reasons, however, both on the part of the Koromatua School and the Church, transferring campus facilities to public control failed to materialize.

Church leaders were prepared for strong feelings of attachment as the school’s closure approached. Elder Condie explained sympathetically, “To ease the burden of closure, the Brethren felt impressed to allow a three-and-a-half year notice, so the closure will not take permanent effect until the end of . . . November 2009.” Promising that the decision had not been made lightly, he concluded, “The decision to close this school was made by fifteen inspired, wise and experienced men whom we sustain as prophets, seers and revelators. I pray that you will continue to sustain them in this important decision.”

Despite the sadness surrounding the announcement, a highly negative response seems not to have materialized. Though some opposition has occurred, a week after the notice, the local newspaper

---

88 “A Question of Heritage.”
90 “A Question of Heritage.”
91 Condie, “The Hollowing Precedes the Hallowing.”
92 Ibid.
observed, “It . . . seems unthinkable [that] those who love the college are not protesting at the decision. Not petitioning church officials, staging protests, chaining themselves to railings, as happens in communities where state schools get such bad news. . . . They’re sad, but not angry, and certainly not interested in recriminations.”93 A local mother characterized the response, “I felt a bit sad at first, but it’s quite an exciting new perspective on life. . . . Hopefully the children will be good examples in state schools or others where they go.”94 Richard Ball, chairman of the school’s fiftieth anniversary reunion in 2008, summarized the final farewell, “It is with a sense of positiveness that we as a whole look forward to the next chapter.”95

Indeed, a new chapter may be emerging in spite of the school’s recent closure. While continued educational use for the campus has not developed, building preservation initiatives have curtailed immediate demolition of the now vacant school and led the Church to reconsider its options. In April 2010 the Waikato Times heralded, “The Mormon Church appears to have abandoned its plans to demolish the old Church College campus.” Though future plans remain unclear, the paper cited a Church property manager who visited the campus, indicating that officials were “still exploring options (for the campus) that are economically viable and sensitive to community needs.” Noting the influence of local constituents on the decision as well as the historical attraction of the buildings involved, the official continued, “We appreciate all of the support that we have received. This spirit of co-operation is evidence of the ongoing historical significance of this place.” Looking to a future for the location, he concluded, “We are hopeful that a scenario will be identified. We plan to work with both the city and the community toward this end.”96

At present, though Church College has closed, discussion continues regarding the fate of the facilities. As recently as June 2010, President Thomas S. Monson inspected the campus, touring the com-

---

94Ibid.
munity and meeting with the Temple View Envisioning Committee, a group of "local residents and others with an interest in Temple View and CCNZ... [whose] aim... is to study various options for the future of the former CCNZ campus and the surrounding Church land holdings." Summarizing his experience with this committee as well as the trip itself, President Monson concluded, "You always learn more than you leave behind, when you come here. I'm a better man for having visited New Zealand."97

CONCLUSION

Though both eras of closure were met with sadness, the 1920s decision to discontinue Church schools in the United States in favor of public school alternatives and the 2006 announcement to close the Church College of New Zealand follow similar patterns. The recent announcement itself, "It is the policy and practice of the Church to discontinue operation of such schools when local school systems are able to provide quality education," implies a connection to the past.98 Given researchers’ limited access to the process, however, several questions remain. As the decision was discussed, what connections did leaders make between the fate of Church College and earlier academy closures? What specific policies guide the existence of international Church education programs? How might this closure impact the future of other Church schools?99

For the Saints in New Zealand, the immediate question is how the closure will influence their own lives. The earlier Utah closures opened the door for increased interaction in educational arenas between members and those of other faiths. It highlighted a transitional era during which the Church and its members achieved greater pa-
ticipation in regional and national society. The closure of the Church College of New Zealand may likewise prove to be a positive step forward for the Church and its members in the Pacific. Commenting on its potential, Elder Condie remarked, “I thought how wonderful it would be to spread these enthusiastic Latter-day Saint youth throughout the entire nation so they could enrich and edify the lives of other youth from Kaikohe to Invercargill.” Like the replacement of academies with seminaries in Church education eighty years ago, the closure of the Church College of New Zealand may indeed prove to be a milestone in the history of the Church in the Pacific. The school and its timely motto, “Build Now for Eternity,” may become a permanent legacy.

100Condie, “The Hollowing Precedes the Hallowing.”
IN THE SPRING OF 1873, BRIGHAM YOUNG, anxious to establish new settlements for a growing number of immigrant Saints, called some 250 individuals, mostly men from northern Utah, to travel south beyond the Colorado River in Arizona. Their mission was to explore the drainage of the Little Colorado River, find land suitable for farming, and establish settlements. They were the first group directed south of the Colorado River.

Many of those called never left home. Horton D. Haight, president of the colonizing mission, numbered the actual settlers and estimated that only about half of those called actually traveled south that spring.1 By the end of July 1873, the majority of the settlers had returned home, discouraged and worn out from the hard travel, lack of water, and inadequate feed for horses and cattle. Others who started

KEVIN H. FOLKMAN {kfolkman@gmail.com} is 1974 graduate of Weber State College, Ogden, Utah, with a bachelor’s degree in communications (journalism and English). He and his wife, Katie, live in Redmond, Washington. His day work is in computer hardware and software sales. In the evenings he reads history books and occasionally writes guest posts for the Mormon history blog, www.keepapitchinin.org. Frederick and Charlotte King are his great-grandparents.
later never made it as far south as Arizona.\(^2\) Of those who reached
their destination, only a handful stayed on, most of them near Jacob
Hamblin’s mission to the “Moqui” or Hopi Indians,\(^3\) but even they
had to abandon the area within the next year due to troubles with the
Navajo.\(^4\) Frederick Augustus King and Charlotte Emma Senior King,
whose year-old daughter Mary was the only child on the expedition,
returned to Ogden, Utah, early in August 1873 on a borrowed pony,
having lost all their possessions on the trip down and back.\(^5\)

To say that Brigham Young was disappointed is an understate-
ment. Some time after the return of the colonists from Arizona,
Brigham Young fumed: “Had we sent the sisters of the Relief Society,
some of our pioneer sisters, they would have held that place and ac-
complished the mission. But instead we sent a passel of squaws down
down there—some of our pets whom we have raised in Salt Lake City. [We
have] raised them on a feather pillow with silver spoons in their
mouths. Men that don’t know anything about a hard day’s work or a
privation—and they came away because the sun shone hot and the
wind blew! Can you imagine such faint hearts! They gave up their in-
heritance without a stroke.”\(^6\)

Current newspaper reports, often copying content from one pa-

---

\(^1\)Horton D. Haight, “Report of the Arizona Mission,” August 1873,
typescript, Horton D. Haight Papers, MSS 3849, L. Tom Perry Special
Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young
University, Provo, Utah. His report lists 109 men, 6 women, and 1 child. Wil-
liam James Belnap’s account gives a number of 112 men and boys, 6 women,
and 1 child. Quoted in W. Dean Belnap, “Heritage with Honor: Genealogy
and History of the Ancestry and Descendants of Gilbert Belnap (1821–
1899),” 301–2, typescript, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

\(^2\)Levi Mathers Savage, Journal, 1876–1935, typescript, 8, Utah State
History Archives, Salt Lake City.

\(^3\)While the journals and diaries use “Moqui,” I have used the current
name “Hopi” for clarity throughout.


\(^5\)Charlotte Emma Senior King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Inci-
dents in the life of Charlotte Emma Senior King,” n.d., typescript, 3, LDS
Church History Library; photocopy in my possession.

\(^6\)Brigham Young, quoted in Martha Cragun Cox, “Biographical Re-
cord of Martha [Cragun] Cox, 1928–1930,” typescript, 127–28, LDS Church
per to another, carried stories of the “Mormon Failure.” The *New York Times* headline read in part, “The Mormons. Failure of the Colonization Scheme.” The “failure” label stuck. Subsequent histories of the Mormon colonization of Arizona have devoted a paragraph or two to the 1873 “failed” mission, and then moved on to the richer history available on the later settlements further up the Little Colorado at Joseph City, Brigham City, St. John, and Snowflake.

However, examining the details of the 1873 “failure” contrasted to the “successes” of 1876 and later show some significant intersections. Later colonization missions found the lower Little Colorado explored by Haight’s party just as inhospitable as the 1873 colonists and moved on up the river and farther east. Unrealistic expectations and a lack of solid first-hand information hampered the 1873 group in particular, but also handicapped those of 1876 and later. These 1873 colonists were clearly not prepared for the difficulties of the Arizona deserts; and from the various accounts, it also appears that leaders in Salt Lake City and southern Utah did not fully understand the magnitude of the obstacles involved. Hard land and harsh climates broke good Saints, forcing many to retreat. The later missions had the advantages of roads already built, trails already blazed, and watering holes located by the 1873 missionaries.

As a result, I argue that calling the 1873 mission a “failure” may be overstated. I describe how the 1873 mission came about, the reasons for the reversals the missionaries experienced, and how, despite significant accomplishments, the mission was labeled a failure. In addition, this article pays tribute to the courage and faith of those missionaries and recognizes them as equal to those pioneers who later established permanent settlements in Arizona on the upper Little Colorado and its tributaries.

---

History Library. For a discussion of this statement, see the Appendix.


MORMON COLONIZATION AND ARIZONA

During the period between the Utah War and eventual statehood for Utah in 1896, Brigham Young and other presidents of the LDS Church pushed the Saints in an effort to gain self-sufficiency. Using the model of the typical Mormon village and various cooperative enterprises, communities tried to provide their own food, clothing, and other necessities that would make them as independent as possible from other communities and from the “Gentile” world. A key component of these efforts required the continual acquisition of agricultural lands to support new immigrants arriving in Utah. New Saints arriving in the Salt Lake Valley often rested only a day or two, and then pushed on to new communities where land was available and where their labor was needed.

As these colonization efforts expanded ever further from the Salt Lake Valley, competition from outside settlers and American Indians increased as well. Fort Lemhi in the Salmon River country was colonized but abandoned after conflict with the Shoshone. Settlements in Nevada and California were also abandoned or sold to outside interests after the Utah War. Expansion toward the southern deserts had been on Brigham Young’s mind, both to fulfill the requirements for additional lands, and also as a possible haven in which the Church could continue its practice of polygamy, particularly in Mexico. Some settlements had been made in southern Nevada and the Arizona Strip north of the Colorado River prior to 1870.

During these times of colonization, settlers were encouraged to live in the traditional village model, with homes in small towns surrounded by farms and pastures, and founded on various interpretations of the cooperative movement. This model provided security from potential Indian incursions, and the availability of tithing labor and cooperative efforts in building irrigation canals, dams, and projects that benefited all members of the community. Colonists typically took with them seeds, tools, livestock, and implements to build a village from scratch in these remote areas. Settlement companies included not only farmers but others with needed skills, such as carpenters and blacksmiths. Church leaders modeled organization on the companies that had successfully crossed the plains and originally set-

---

tled the Salt Lake Valley. Leadership in both spiritual and temporal affairs came from ecclesiastical officers appointed by Brigham Young or his deputies.

Brigham Young spent the winter of 1872–73 in St. George with Thomas L. Kane and his family. Among their far-ranging conversations was the topic of colonizing Arizona south of the Colorado River and down into Mexico. In anticipation of this expansion, President Young instructed John D. Lee to establish a ferry at the mouth of the Pahreah (Paria) River on the Colorado in 1872 and consulted Indian missionaries Jacob Hamblin and Ira Hatch about gaining the cooperation of local Indians.

In December 1872, Young instructed Lorenzo Roundy, bishop of Kanarraville, to make a survey of the Little Colorado River drainage. Accompanied by Hatch, Hamblin, and eleven others, Roundy crossed the Colorado at Lee’s Ferry on February 2, 1873, traveled down Moencopi Wash to the Little Colorado, then moved upriver to the area near present-day Winslow, and finally west to the San Francisco Mountains before turning back and arriving at Lee’s Ferry by the end of February.

Roundy gave a mostly favorable report, which he summarized at a conference in St. George in May 1873. He described the country as much like the area around St. George, with the Little Colorado slightly smaller and less brackish than the Virgin River. Cottonwood trees grew in abundance along the river bottoms, he said, with additional timber available at the San Francisco Mountains to the west. He also reported that the Hopi, who were anxious for the Mormons to settle in the area, had described a “warm and favorable” climate, with plentiful grass and water plentiful. He didn’t overlook the difficulties, however, saying that much of the land did appear “inhospitable.”

In essence, Roundy had seen the country very quickly and at its best. He had covered several hundred miles on horseback in less than four weeks during Arizona’s winter when the summer’s heat and lack of rain had not yet dried up the springs and rivers, and grass and feed

---

10Peterson, Take Up Your Mission, 5–6.
grew more abundantly. Tensions between the Hopi and other tribes, particularly the Apaches, may have also influenced the Hopis’ positive descriptions. Chief Tuby’s later invitation to the Mormons to settle at Moencopi likely was linked to hopes that Mormon settlers would help protect the Hopi from Navajo and Apache raiders. In fact, the Hopi switched to growing cotton as the primary crop at Moencopi (near present-day Tuba City) before 1873 to discourage raids on food crops.14

Roundy accurately described the area south of the San Francisco Mountains as “very broken” and accurately reported that some areas lacked timber, water, or land fit for settlements.15 Nonetheless, Brigham Young had seen the Saints overcome other obstacles in a quarter century of settling the Great Basin. In fact, even before receiving Roundy’s report, Young had already called the new mission’s president, Horton D. Haight.

THE COLONISTS

Horton D. Haight was a veteran of other missions and the Utah War. He had crossed the plains with his parents in 1847 at age fourteen and grown up in Farmington in Davis County. During the Utah War of 1857–58, Haight had served in Lot Smith’s company of raiders, harassing and delaying the U.S. Army and its supply train in Wyoming.16 In 1858, Haight led one of the companies under Smith, relieving the Mormon settlers at Fort Lemhi in Idaho, under attack by the Shoshone.17

In the 1860s, Haight captained four “down and back” pioneer companies, meaning that he led wagon trains from Utah to Nebraska

---

13Tuby is alternately referred to as “Tuuvi,” or “Chief Tuba,” after whom present-day Tuba City, immediately adjacent to Moencopi, is named.
16Andrew Jenson, ed., LDS Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: A. Jenson History Co., 1914) 1:302. Interestingly, Jenson does not mention Haight’s leadership of or participation in the 1873 Arizona mission.
17Ibid., 302–3.
and returned, bringing Saints who were emigrating from Europe. In 1866, one of these trains brought back the wire, batteries, and tools for the Deseret Telegraph, sixty-five wagon loads in all. He served as Davis County sheriff and as a member of the territorial legislature for one term. By 1873, the forty-year-old Haight had the credentials of an experienced and reliable leader.

Members of the various companies called to Arizona that spring came from Draper and Salt Lake City in Salt Lake County, from Riverdale and Ogden in Weber County, from Farmington in Davis County, and from Cache County. Most were men; and typical of the mission calls at the time, those who were married left their wives and children at home. Charlotte King, one of only six women on the journey, and her infant daughter, Mary, accompanied Frederick King from Riverdale, along with Thomas J. Stevens and his wife Maria, and a number of single and married men also from Riverdale. Haight, Jacob Miller, and others from Farmington came as a group, and had signed a “cooperative” agreement to hold their goods in common. Many of the missionaries met in the Old Tabernacle on March 8, 1873, and were instructed in person by Brigham Young. The colonists left at various times, and in smaller groups, rather than one large company. John R. Bennion led the first group to depart, leaving March 26. Traveling in his party was twenty-four-year-old Andrew Amundsen of South Jordan, who kept perhaps the most detailed journal about the mission.

Other groups followed. Frederick King and his small family left with the group from the Riverdale area in April 18. King may have been included as he had experience as a pharmacist and was part

19Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 1:303.
20King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 2.
21Jacob Miller, Journal of Jacob Miller (Sandy, Utah: Joseph Royal Miller and Elna Miller, 1968), 41.
owner of the Pioneer Drug in Ogden prior to the mission. This group also included Thomas and Maria Stevens, W. W. Childs, Lee Hammond, Sanford and John Bingham, and John Thompson of Riverdale.23 Henry Holmes, called as Haight’s counselor in Arizona, left in mid-April and had traveled as far as Johnson’s Ranch in southern Utah by the end of April.24 A group of four men, including Andrew Jackson Allen and Joseph Terry, left Draper on April 21.25 All of the groups traveled with wagons and ox or horse teams.

Haight left from Farmington April 30 with a company made up largely of colonists from the Farmington community in Davis County. Joseph Allen Taylor of Farr West, who had been in Haight’s wagon train on his 1866 journey to bring back the telegraph wire, may have traveled in this group, along with mission clerk Jacob Miller.26

The colonists carried seed, grain, flour, and provisions enough to last, they hoped, a year. According to Charlotte King, whose biographical sketch includes vivid and detailed descriptions of this mission, Frederick sold his interest in Pioneer Drug at “a great loss” and paid $300 for a team of horses, a new wagon cover, and harness. They took as many of their possessions as they thought practical, assuming that they would need to furnish the cabin they anticipated building.

THE JOURNEY SOUTH

Travel by horse and wagon in early spring through central and southern Utah was still pioneering work. The dirt roads turned muddy with the rain, snow, and hail. The farther south they traveled, the worse the roads became. The Kings left part of their possessions in Round Valley (present-day Scipio) due to the bad roads and the strain on their horses, hoping to bring them south later.27 William James Belnap described the way as “hard.” Owing to the condition of the roads and the weather, he stopped to rest his horses for a week in Round Valley after only a few days on the road.28

23King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 2.
27King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 2.
Despite the labor, travel as far as southern Utah was largely uneventful. On April 8, Amundsen records stopping at noon to eat dinner in Kanarraville and meet with Lorenzo Roundy, who likely shared his observations of the Little Colorado with the colonists. By April 12, John Bennion’s vanguard group had arrived at Winsor Castle on the Arizona Strip, site of a small settlement and Mormon fort (present-day Pipe Springs). Here, Joseph W. Young, president of St. George Stake and Brigham Young’s nephew, met with Bennion’s company. Joseph Young, charged with overall responsibility for the Arizona mission, read a letter he had previously sent to Captain Haight.29

The letter appointed Haight to “preside over the settlements,” with Ira Hatch as interpreter and missionary to the Indians, and Jacob Hamblin as guide and Indian missionary. Joseph Young, in his address to the gathered colonists, encouraged maintaining “friendly relations with the Indians” and counseled the missionaries to “seek to obtain their confidence . . . by Christian conduct.” He particularly warned the settlers not to trust the Indians “to far” and “under no circumstances . . . trade ammunition of any kind to the Indians,” specifying that the Apaches were currently at war with the United States.30 Bennion’s group resumed their travel south on Monday, April 14. According to Amundsen, the day was cold and he had to walk to keep warm. But within a couple of days, the weather warmed. Amundsen notes his first experience with a “dry camp” without water.31

On Thursday, April 17, the strain of the rough country, muddy and sandy roads, and overloaded wagons began to take its toll. James Glover’s wagon broke down descending the rough road off Buckskin Mountain, east of Jacob’s Pool in House Rock Canyon. Glover’s horses were also suffering and wandered off that night in search of feed or water. Others reported that the rocky and sandy roads created great strain for their teams, and frequently the pioneers had to rest them for a day or two before they could continue.32

On Friday, April 18, Glover spent the day unsuccessfully searching for his horses. Amundsen and a companion, waiting for the cool-

28Belnap, “Heritage with Honor,” 301.
31Amundsen, Journal, 3.
ness of evening, backtracked to bring in Glover’s broken wagon. They failed to find it but came across another heavily loaded wagon, abandoned by the road. At dawn, they made some hasty repairs, hitched up their team, and started back toward the main camp at House Rock Springs. Their horses gave out trying to pull the heavy wagon, so they abandoned it again, this time some eight miles from their camp at the springs.  

Apparently concerned about the lack of progress, and perhaps due to limited water in House Rock Canyon, three wagons started on Saturday, April 19, for the next watering place on the way to Lee’s Ferry, Navajo Springs. Others in the group went back and retrieved the wagon Amundsen had found and repaired it so Glover could use it, Glover having since recovered his team. They then resumed their own travel south. Amundsen notes that the water was “vary bad” but the feed (spring grass and weeds) was good. On April 20, Bennion’s group reached Marble Canyon where they camped for the night. On Monday, April 21, they covered the final ten miles to Lonely Dell, Lee’s ferry outpost on the Colorado River crossing. Here John D. Lee and Emma, one of his plural wives, greeted them. Lee, Amundsen recorded, was “jovial and full of fun.”

This stretch from Kanab to Lee’s Ferry had been the travelers’ first real encounter with extended desert travel, and it had been hard on both humans and animals. The route required journeying east some distance from Kanab, over the Kaibab Plateau, then south along the west slope of Five Mile and Buckskin Mountain to the House Rock Valley, where they found the north ledge of Marble Canyon. From there, the company headed east to the Paria River and Lee’s Ferry. According to Amundsen, Jacob Hamblin was ill for a couple of days. Frederick King also felt ill during this part of the trip and decided to avoid the jolting wagon by walking, only to collapse and faint on a particularly hot and sandy stretch. A fellow traveler from Riverdale, Lark Thompsen, drove King’s wagon for the next few days. Charlotte King also became ill on this stretch. When they finally arrived at

---

33Amundsen, Journal, 3.
34Ibid., 4.
35Ibid., 3.
Lee’s Ferry, Emma Lee cared for Charlotte’s infant daughter, Mary, and revived the ailing Kings with a chicken dinner.36

The experience of the travelers to this point showed that the horses lacked the endurance of the oxen that had pulled heavily laden wagons across the plains to Utah, but even the relatively few oxen and mule teams on the mission suffered greatly.37 Everyone was concerned about the horses’ welfare. The Kings had stocked up on supplies, including medicines, at Kanab, but left more of their possessions to lighten their load. As they got closer to the Colorado, Charlotte and Frederick, for the third time, left possessions behind—a trunk containing all of their dishes and tableware. At the ferry, Charlotte cached a small table and her sewing machine. Many of the missionaries in all of the groups left some of their flour in Lee’s keeping, realizing that the wagons were still too heavily loaded.

The country on the other side of the river had no wagon road, and the climb out of Marble Canyon to the plateau beyond looked brutal. Farther west, about three miles from Lee’s Ferry, the canyon narrows, and the walls become vertical, rising from five hundred to a thousand feet above the river. At Lee’s Ferry, the canyon is just as

---

36 King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 2.
Wagon road over Lee’s Backbone at Summit, December 2008. The unidentified men are friends of the photographer. Photo courtesy of LaVar Clegg, Scottsdale, Arizona.
deep, but “Lee’s Backbone” (now Echo Peak) on the south side of the river, is slightly less steep. It is still the only place along the Colorado River for seven hundred miles where travelers can drive down to the level of the river on an improved road. Before 1873, only those on horseback or on foot had crossed the river here and climbed up to the plateau beyond.\(^{38}\)

From the north side of the river, the land opposite the ferry is still a mostly trackless pile of rock, rising to a total height of about 5,500 feet, 2,500 feet above the river. The colonists disembarking from the ferry would gather on the small strip of sandy beach but immediately have to start up Lee’s Backbone, skirting the peak to the southwest and climbing some 1,500 feet in little more than a mile. The peak’s north and west sides are eroded by gullies and cliffs. The south and east sides are even steeper—almost impassable except on foot. The only feasible route in 1873 was where the crumbling red sandstone rocks of Echo Peak, created from millennia of landslides and flood deposits, jam abruptly against a hard gray shelf of Shinarump bedrock sandstone, which uptilts sharply, then drops off into the Colorado River. In and around this steep V-shaped formation, filled with the debris of the two rock layers, the colonists had to build a wagon road. Today’s U.S. Highway 89 crosses the river at Navajo Bridge, about five miles below the ferry, avoiding Echo Peak altogether. At the bridge location, both the north plateau and the south plateau are on the same level—about 4,000 feet.

Bennion’s group began crossing the river on April 20. All of the colonists remarked on the cost of the ferry, one dollar for a horse, and two dollars for a wagon. According to Charlotte King, whose group crossed a week or two after Bennion and Amundsen’s party, the charge was five dollars for a team and wagon.

Bennion’s group ferried their wagons across over several days, while simultaneously beginning to build the road over the rocky mountain. The suggested path had been laid out by a small group under the direction of Joseph Young and a group sent from St. George a month earlier, who also built the road down to Lee’s Ferry on the

Remnants of the wagon road built by the 1873 colonists on the south side of Echo Peak and Lee’s Backbone, December 2008. Photo courtesy of LaVar Clegg, Scottsdale, Arizona.
north side of the river.\textsuperscript{39} The proposed route was so steep that three and four teams had to be hitched to each wagon to make the pull up the steep rise. The road had to continually be repaired and maintained, as much of it was still just broken rock.\textsuperscript{40}

Once on Lee’s Backbone, the travelers faced a matching steep descent, again requiring multiple teams and locking the wagon wheels with small logs to act as brakes.\textsuperscript{41} Wilford Woodruff, who crossed Lee’s Backbone in 1879, described it as “the worst hill Ridge or Mountain that I Ever attempted to Cross with a team and waggon on Earth. We had 4 Horses on a waggon of 1,500 lb weight and for two rods we Could ownly gain from 4 inches to 24 with all the power of the horses & two men rolling at the hind wheels and going Down on the other side was still more Steep rocky and sandy which would make it much worse than going up on the North side.”\textsuperscript{42} And beyond that point, the country, though less steep, remained a dry, roadless wilderness of rock and sand.\textsuperscript{43}

**MOENCOPI**

The colonists’ intermediate destination was Moencopi, adjacent to present-day Tuba City, several days’ journey by wagon from Lee’s Ferry. Hamblin and Hatch had some familiarity with the country, having worked with many of the local groups of native peoples over the preceding decades.\textsuperscript{44} Situated on the edge of a mesa and watered by dependable springs, Moencopi’s resources allowed the Hopi to maintain a semi-permanent presence, raising cotton and some food crops.

En route, the settlers could count on small amounts of water at Willow Springs and another set of springs that they called Mohave or Moabbi Springs, a few miles from Moencopi (present-day Moenave).\textsuperscript{45} Between the Colorado River and Willow Springs, however,
water and feed were unreliable. One stop was called Bitter Spring for its alkali-infused water, and the name stuck. Some colonists tried to moderate the bitter or foul taste of the few water sources by splitting prickly pear cactus and dropping the lobes into the water. Willow Springs was two or three days away from the Colorado River, meaning that the colonists had to load their wagons with enough water in barrels to get them through the dry camps. The additional weight further drained the strength of the inadequate horse teams. On several occasions, overnight spring rains filled potholes in the sandstone rock, but these sources of water could not be depended on, especially during the dry, hot summers.

This section of the trip—from the Colorado to Moencopi—presented the greatest physical challenges yet. After the arduous climb up and down Lee’s Backbone, the dry haul across the plateau to the Moencopi Wash, and the increasing heat taxed human beings and animals to the utmost. The limited amount of water available at any one location imposed restrictions on the number of teams and colonists that could stop over. Fortunately, the staggered departure times meant that the colonists arrived at the water holes at different times. Had all of the colonists actually traveled in one group, the water situation likely would have been impossible. It was still bad enough.

Bennion’s party reached Moencopi on May 1, the day after Haight and the final group left from Northern Utah. There, Amundsen writes, the area was sandy, with a “good menny springs.” Some fifty miles to the southwest were the San Francisco Mountains, just north of present-day Flagstaff. East was confirmed

---

45 Several sources incorrectly call this location “Moabbi” or “Moencopi.” Moenave is several miles west of Moencopi along the Moencopi Wash and was a small Hopi seasonal village in 1873. Moencopi, southeast of present Tuba City, although seasonal for a few years prior to 1873, was slightly larger and appears to have been continuously occupied by the Hopis since then. At present, Moenave is mostly abandoned, Moencopi/Moenkopi remains a Hopi town; and Tuba City, on the mesa above Moencopi is the largest city in the Navajo reservation. Due to limited water, most of Haight’s colonists during May and June were scattered among Willow Springs to the west, Moenave, Moencopi, and the locale that Peterson calls “Camp Utah,” a half mile from the Little Colorado near present-day Cameron, Arizona. Peterson, Take Up Your Mission, 12.

46 King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3.
Indian country, home to the Navajo. Cottonwoods grew in abundance along the eighty-mile long Moencopi Wash, with higher country and hills to the east. On May 2, Hamblin and Hatch traveled a few miles east to the permanent Hopi settlement at Oraibi and returned with Chief Tuby, a couple of women, and a few other Indians, including a Navajo and a pair of Piutes. The Indians seemed glad to see the Mormon settlers, and stayed overnight with them, sharing the colonists’ food. On the third day at Moencopi, Amundsen records that a committee was appointed to look for potential farm sites, and some plowing began.48

Meanwhile, newspapers in northern Utah published reports on the colonists’ progress. Henry Holmes, a thirty-six-year-old farmer and bishop from North Ogden, wrote a series of letters to Franklin D. Richards that appeared in the Deseret News and other papers. Holmes recounts miles traveled, the lack of good water, and loss of livestock as they weakened.49 When a rumor circulated in May 1873 that Apaches had killed some of the colonists, the Deseret News published a correc-

---

48Ibid., 6.
49Henry Holmes, Letter to Franklin D. Richards, Deseret News, July 28,
tion stating that the missionaries were all safe.50

On Sunday, May 4, the Saints held a sacrament meeting and listened to Jacob Hamblin describe his experiences from more than twenty years of working with various American Indian tribes in southern Utah and northern Arizona. Late in the day, four men were dispatched to return to Lee’s Ferry and bring back some of the cached flour. Hamblin and a colonist identified only as W. Morrell left for a quick trip south to the Little Colorado River, thirty miles away across the open desert.51

Over the next few weeks, more colonists arrived at Moencopi, bringing the total number to about 120. By the time Haight arrived on May 19, it was clear that the water available at Moencopi could not meet all of their needs. One group of colonists moved west to Moabbi, another small source of reliable water.52

On May 20, Haight gathered all the colonists at Moabbi and called Henry Holmes and John Bennion as his counselors. He reread the letter from Joseph Young. A Hopi priest, with Ira Hatch interpreting, welcomed the colonists. Haight then selected a group (number not specified) to move to the Little Colorado River, a good day’s ride on horseback and a couple of days by wagon.53 Amundsen was among them.

**The Little Colorado**

The colonists’ first view of the Little Colorado must have been sobering. Amundsen describes it as a “poorly lukking pleas,” with quicksand, very little water—and that salty—running about six inches deep and seven feet wide.54 Some cottonwoods and brush grew along the banks, but there was little grass for the horses. Because of the sand and quicksand, they moved their initial camp back several hundred yards from the river. A chase after a grizzly bear offered some ex-

1873, 14.

50“Local and Other Matters,” *Deseret News*, May 21, 1873, 8. The source of the correction is listed as the telegraph operator in Kanab.
52Ibid., 8–10.
53Ibid., 11.
54Ibid., 19.
The next morning, May 24, an exploring party of fifteen, including Haight, Holmes, Bennion, and Amundsen, started upriver where they encountered the Black Falls—twenty feet high, thirty wide, and still only six inches deep. They continued up the west side to the Upper Falls, a higher and wider shelf of rock.

Crossing to the east side the next morning, May 25, they continued to encounter quicksand in the river, dry and barren land away from the river, and volcanic mounds southeast of the San Francisco Mountains. By this time, Amundsen records, they had traveled twelve miles farther than Roundy’s exploring party and had seen nothing encouraging. That night, he said, prospects seemed “no more encouraging than before,” and “a dull feeling” settled over the exploring party.

On Tuesday, May 27, the explorers reached the old California Stage Line running on the Beale Road, later to become Route 66. The group covered thirty-six miles that day, and the gloom deepened. All thought, Amundsen says, that they had come for “naught.” After one

55Ibid., 19.
56Ibid., 20.
57Ibid., 21.
more day of travel upriver, they found “no better prospeckt,” and provisions were running low. After 150 miles following the river for five days of difficult riding, they had found “no plase fit for a humen being to dwell upon.” Nor had they found a suitable dam site. The river bottoms were too wide and too sandy. The cottonwood and brush were too small for cabins, and there was no stone suitable for building rock homes. The nearest timber was seventy-five dry miles to the west in the San Francisco Mountains. Amundsen dismissed the Little Colorado in his entry of May 28 as the “moste desert lukking plase that I ever saw, Amen.” On May 29, he says, the exploring party turned around and spent two days returning to the first camp on the Little Colorado.58

Haight called a meeting, accompanied by prayer and singing, and gave his report. John Bennion and Henry Holmes also spoke. Obviously, they accompanied their description of the country’s resources with strong appeals to the men’s religious faith, for Amundsen wrote that the grumbling decreased, and all felt “well in and true regards to ther Religeyon.” After a day’s rest, they started back to Moencopi, “all willing you can bet to git ower animals away from that miserable river.”59

After another dry camp and twenty-eight miles from the Little Colorado, the party met eleven wagons of fellow missionaries, mostly from Draper. All of them returned to Moencopi, arriving June 5. Hoping to raise the spirits of the colonists waiting there, Haight’s party found a fiddle and a piccolo, fitted out the rest of their group with cans and kettles for drums, and marched into camp to “welcome The Captain on his retreat from Arizona.”60

Haight assigned two of the men, W. Morrell and E. H. Evans, to go back to Kanab, where the telegraph line began, and report on conditions.61 Haight’s message outlined the conditions that the exploring party found, the inadequate water in the Little Colorado, and the need to regroup at Moencopi. Then he asked for instructions: “What shall we do?”62

58Ibid., 22.
59Ibid., 23.
60Miller, Journal, 24; King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3.
61Evans and Morrell are identified only by their initials and last names, and I could not find their hometowns or professions in the journals and letters of the other missionaries.
While they waited for the messengers to return, Haight reassigned the colonists among Moencopi, Moabbi, and Willow Springs to reduce the demands on the water. Charlotte King wrote that the horses and cattle soon ate all the available browse, and they resorted to feeding the horses flour mixed in water. Colonists had brought flour, seed, and supplies for a year but had had to cache significant amounts. The lack of grazing meant that they had already fed most of the seed to their animals. They shared supplies as much as possible, and the Hopis prayed to the “Great Spirit” for rain.63

Meanwhile, hearing rumors that soldiers from the U.S. Army were coming to arrest him, John D. Lee fled from Lonely Dell on June 25, leaving Emma to maintain the homestead and run the ferry. He reached Moencopi on June 27 and started a little farm both there and at Moabbi.64 The soldiers turned out to be part of Major John Wesley Powell’s geological survey team, and no threat to Lee. Lee noted in his diary that grazing was depleted and that the Hopis at Moencopi were a little unhappy that some of the colonists’ stock had gotten into their crops. Lee “interpreted for them & the matter was settled] by paying them the damage in Flour &c.”65

Morrell and Evans, who reached Kanab on June 7, immediately sent Haight’s appraisal of the colonists’ situation by telegraph. It was five days before they received an answer—a bare confirmation that the message had been sent to “the President.” The line was down somewhere between Kanab and Toquerville, so two days later, they sent a message to Toquerville with a traveling Paiute to send another telegram to Brigham Young, asking if he had received their telegram on June 7.66 They never received an answer.

However, Lee reports that President Young had sent a telegram to Bishop Roundy, asking him to “go over to AraZona & See whether

63 King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3.
64 Cleland and Brooks, A Mormon Chronicle, 263.
65 Ibid., 263–64; King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3. Charlotte King recounts Lee’s arrival in camp at the same time the horses’ feed was failing. She also writes that some of the colonists asked Lee about Mountain Meadows and were satisfied with his answers, which included a statement that Brigham Young had nothing to do with the affair “anymore than that little child,” indicating Charlotte’s baby, Mary.
the water had really dried up, or whether it was the feelings of the Brethren that had dried up.” Apparently, Roundy, upon meeting Morell at Kanab “concluded the best thing was to raise Teams & help bring the Brethren back.”

THE MISSION’S END

Back at Moencopi, the colonists were naturally at loose ends. Haight counseled patience but also told those who felt they could not stay on to return to their homes in the north. In the absence of any instructions from Brigham Young, some three or four unidentified colonists opted to begin their journey back but, feeling guilty, returned the same evening. Some played checkers. Some attempted communicating with the Hopis. Charlotte King gave one of little Mary’s red flannel nightgowns to an Indian woman for her son, pleasing them both “very much.” Andrew Allen tried his hand at weaving wool under the tutelage of an elderly Hopi male. He was also introduced by a Hopi woman to a local delicacy. As he described it, the Hopis made it with “fresh cid” [kid, or goat meat] wrapped in “what they call cal peake it is made from corn ground fine on rocks and roald out thin yes as thin as paper and then cooked then roald up into to roals.” Samuel Parkinson recorded in his journal that the Hopis were “very sorry there was no place for us to live in this country.”

In addition to the lack of active work, Brigham Young’s silence made all of them uneasy. Allen noted in his diary that some expressed concern that Indians might have attacked the messengers.

By June 23, still no answer had come. More of the missionaries petitioned to retreat north to find better water and feed. Haight gave permission for them to do so. On June 27, Henry Holmes, who

---

69 Allen, “Diary,” June 4, 1873.
70 King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3.
72 Ibid., June 19, 1873.
73 Samuel Parkinson, Diary, June 10, 1873, LDS Church History Library.
74 Allen, “Diary,” June 8, 1873.
served as a “presiding elder” or bishop in North Ogden, wrote another letter to his ecclesiastical leader at home, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, who shared it with the Ogden journal newspaper. In it he acknowledged, “The Little Colorado may not be a suitable place for a settlement, but I am satisfied that other parts of the country will bear investigation.” Despite this optimism, however, he expressed cautious criticism of Roundy’s initial report: “Another thing is evident: men can obtain but a limited knowledge of a country by passing through it at the rate of thirty or forty miles a day.” A critical piece of misinformation had been the availability of water and grazing. To spread out the burden on these natural resources, the settlers were already scattered with twenty wagons at House Rock Springs, another twenty at Navajo Springs, another water source a little further north, while the remaining thirty-two wagons were with Haight at Moabbi and Moencopi. He also lapsed into theology. Were the missionaries “not prepared to . . . build up a city to the Lord, or is the love of Babylon still too strong with us[?]” Still, he felt that “all will work out for good to them who serve God.”

The next day, June 28, a letter from Evans and Morrell arrived, explaining that high water in the Colorado River had washed away the ferry, they had still heard nothing from Brigham Young, and Bishop Roundy recommended falling back north of the Colorado. The letter also reported that Joseph W. Young, the local leader with direct responsibility for the Little Colorado expedition, had died on June 7. Discouraged and confused by the silence, Haight thanked the colonists for their efforts, and released them to return home, subject to other instructions that might reach them along the way. Divided into two companies, the remaining colonists at Moencopi and Moabbi started back north on June 30.

A few of the colonists apparently abandoned some of their sup-

---

76Milton R. Hunter, ed., Beneath Ben Lomond’s Peak: A History of Weber County 1824–1900 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1944), 433. Richards served concurrently as president of Weber Stake and was well acquainted with Holmes, Bishop Stanford Bingham of Riverdale, and others of the Weber County contingent of the colonists.

77Henry Holmes, Letter to Franklin D. Richards, reprinted in Millennial Star 35 (August 26, 1873): 535.
plies; others sold some 800 pounds of foodstuff and hardware to Lee, who planned to stay at Moencopi indefinitely. On July 9, Lee noted in his diary that he found more supplies abandoned at the camp near the Little Colorado, indicating that not all of the colonists had retreated in good order.  

Traveling in July, the returning missionaries found the temperatures so much higher that they traveled at night when possible. Equally worrisome, water was even scarcer than before. At Willow Springs, some of the colonists wrote comments on the rock walls of the canyon. One inscription reads, “Arizona Mission Dead–1873.” A more optimistic colonist countered with graffiti of his own: “Thou Fool, This Mission is not dead, it only sleeps.” With the ferry gone at the Colorado River crossing, the colonists made do with a small skiff, an arduous and complicated process. They unloaded their wagons, rowed their goods across in the skiff, disassembled their wagons, loaded the loose parts in the wagon beds, and towed the wagon beds across with the skiff. They made the horses and cattle swim across, reassembled their wagons, formed companies of ten, and continued the journey for home. One of the King’s horses had died, and the other was sick and worn out. They traded for a pony, turned over their wagon cover and harness to another colonist, and abandoned the rest of the wagon. Limping slowly through central Utah with the pony as their only transportation, the Kings reached Ogden during the first week in August, only to discover that Frederick’s partner in Pioneer Drug had died during their absence and that the business had failed.

Haight traveled in the rear, making sure all of his charges returned safely. He gave John Blythe, who had stayed north of the Colorado, the responsibility of assisting the last four teams with extra flour and water. Horses and oxen were failing fast under the toll of too much work and too little food and water. Haight reached Salt Lake City on July 31, still having received no word from Brigham Young. The only other known communication besides the earlier telegram to

79Cleland and Brooks, A Mormon Chronicle, 265, 269.
80Graffiti quoted in Peterson, Take up Your Mission, 12; Standifird, Life and Journals, 26–28.
81King, “A Short Sketch or Biography of Incidents,” 3, 1.
Bishop Roundy, also reported by John D. Lee, was a telegram from Young to Jacob Hamblin, instructing the missionaries “to remain South & recruit ther animals & prepare for another Move, as the Mission was not give up, & that Pres. B.Y. would be down in the Fall.” Why these telegrams were sent to Roundy and Hamblin rather than Haught is unknown. In either case, the Hamblin telegram arrived after the colonists were already well on their way home to northern Utah. No doubt Joseph W. Young’s death complicated matters.

There is no evidence that Brigham Young ever received Haught’s final report, written in August after his return. An examination of the correspondence file for President Young shows no letters or telegrams written by Young to Haught, nor are there any records of letters or telegrams received from Haught at Salt Lake during the entire year of 1873.

THE “FAILURE” LABEL

A few of the colonists stayed in the south. John Blythe, who had originally stayed north of the Colorado River, journeyed to Moencopi with Jacob Hamblin where they spent the winter of 1873-74. According to Samuel Parkinson’s diary, he and William G. Nelson briefly met with Brigham Young on their return to Salt Lake City, and Young said: “I suppose your mission is finish (sic) now.” Parkinson then returned to Cache Valley.

On July 31, Brigham Young, who had been in Salt Lake City during April-July wrote to Thomas L. Kane, now back at home in Pennsylvania, on a number of subjects. He mentioned his disappointment in the Arizona colonists and hinted that he would head the next mission.

83 Cleland and Brooks, A Mormon Chronicle, 277.
84 Ibid., 245.
85 I thank Ardis E. Parshall for checking Brigham Young’s correspondence file, which she has transcribed, including 1873. Parshall, emails to Folkman, September 1 and 2, 2010, printouts in my possession. Possibly the report never reached Brigham Young or was misplaced or lost; possibly Haught made his report in person. Mystifyingly, neither Jacob Hamblin’s letter to Brigham Young dated July 19, printed in the Deseret News on July 30, 1873, nor the telegrams to Roundy and Hamblin, appear in the correspondence file either.
86 Parkinson, Diary, July 24, 1873.
himself in the fall. Ten days later, preaching in the Old Tabernacle on Sunday August 10, Brigham Young publicly mentioned the returned colonists. As reported in the *Deseret News*, he stated: “If the Saints would sanctify themselves, Zion would be built up, but if they did not, others would be chosen to do the work.” In the afternoon, George Q. Cannon took up the theme, saying that if the Arizona deserts were so inhospitable and forbidding, then “Thank God for Arizona,” because others would not want the land, thus allowing the Mormons space for expansion.

However, a number of factors delayed reviving the Arizona experiment for another three years. At the time of the colonists’ return, Brigham Young was embroiled in the divorce suit brought by one of his plural wives, Ann Eliza Webb Young, and a long-running legal feud with James B. McKeen, Utah Territorial Supreme Court justice. Indian troubles also escalated in Arizona, causing the handful of missionaries who remained at Moencopi over the winter of 1873–74 to leave. Drought also exacerbated already harsh conditions. Even while Haight’s exploring party was retracing its path down the Little Colorado, they found that parts of the river that had had water (though brackish and bitter) had dried up even in the few days that had passed. The Hopi in the area reported a drought going back several years, with the river drying up for most of the summer. The Indian crops at Moencopi had failed in early July 1873 because of the extreme

---

87Brigham Young, Letter to Thomas L. Kane, July 31, 1873, Thomas L. Kane and Elizabeth W. Kane Collection, 1762–1982, Perry Special Collections. Young was seventy-two at the time, within four years of his death, and obviously in no fit condition to lead a colonizing expedition, even if his administrative duties had permitted such an extravagant gesture.


drought, and Lee had kept his small farm at Moabbi viable only by ex-
hauating round-the-clock watering with buckets from the springs.93

Modern studies of the Little Colorado’s flow show that Silver
Creek, where settlements were permanently established in 1878, was
the only Little Colorado tributary with consistent year-round flows.
In fact, the Little Colorado fluctuates almost directly with seasonal
rainfall, and the months of April through mid-July are the driest parts
of the year. Water ceases to flow over much of its length. To grow
crops successfully, the period of April-June requires 45 percent of the
irrigation water required for the full season. With no dam, prospects
must have looked bleak indeed to Haight’s exploring party.94

Conflicting reports also filtered back to Salt Lake City. Jacob
Hamblin painted a much more optimistic picture in his record of the
mission. His own report, a letter to Brigham Young, spoke at length of
the many springs at Moencopi and the good prospects for farming.95
A biography of Hamblin, published as part of a series by the Juvenile
Instructor Office in 1881, relates that, after the others had given up
and returned home, he stayed on at Moencopi, planting crops. Later
companies also “partook of the same demoralizing spirit,” he said, as
the 1873 missionaries, leaving the effort “for the time being, a fail-
ure.” Hamblin judged that “the failure” was caused “evidently for
want of faith in the mission.”96

By 1876 Brigham Young was ready to try again. This time, he
chose Dan Jones, also a proven veteran of many other ventures, in-
cluding wintering over in Wyoming with the baggage trains of the
Martin and Willie handcart companies of 1856–57. In his autobiogra-
phy, Jones reported being present for a conversation at St. George be-
tween Brigham Young and emigration agent W. C. Staines. Staines
told a story about “Brother McMaster,” chaplain of one of the 1873
companies, who was traveling with “several hundred persons with
teams, in a perishing condition.” They were forty-five miles beyond
the Colorado, with no water available. McMaster went off and “pled

94William S. Abruzzi, “Ecology and Mormon Colonization in the Lit-
tle Colorado River Basin, Arizona,” *Land Use History of North America: Colo-
rado Plateau*, http://www.cpluhna.nau.edu/Research/ecology_and_mor-
mon_colonization.htm (accessed October 13, 2009).
95“Correspondence,” Deseret News, July 30, 1873, 8.
96Corbett, *Jacob Hamblin*, 341.
with the Lord” for water. In response, it both rained and snowed, filling potholes in the rock. These potholes, according to the story, enabled the settlers to water their animals and refresh their water barrels. Staines then told how the settlers “all were refreshed, barrels filled up, and all turned back rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord. They returned to Salt Lake and reported Arizona uninhabitable.” (See below for a discussion of this story’s credibility.) President Young then asked, “Bro. Jones, what do you think of that?” Jones replied, “I would have filled up, went on, and prayed again.” Brigham Young expressed his approval, and said, “This is the man that should take charge of the next trip to Arizona.”

Jones led a company of seven men south to explore the Salt River Valley (near present-day Phoenix), leaving in September 1875. In March of 1877, he led ten families to establish a permanent settlement at what is now Mesa, much farther south than the Little Colorado.

Brigham Young called some during meetings in St. George and also in Salt Lake City, starting early in 1876. In small groups, led by Jesse Ballinger, Lot Smith, William C. Allen, and others, they began to move south, arriving in late 1876 and early 1877 along the route established by Haight’s party. The route took them to Lee’s Ferry, up the road over Lee’s Backbone, down the Moencopi Wash, then up the Little Colorado to the area near where Silver Creek, the river’s only reliable tributary, joins the river. They benefited from the existing road to Moencopi and a more reliable supply of water during the winter. They found that, farther east in higher country, the Little Colorado, although diminished in size, ran clear and was less brackish than the flow below the Upper Falls.

That spring and summer of 1877, they established small communities at Obed and Joseph City, a few miles apart on opposite sides of the Little Colorado. As earlier experience by St. George settlers on the Virgin River had shown, a dam was essential but also enormously difficult to maintain. The 1876–77 settlers built a log-and-rock dam near Allen’s Camp (later renamed St. Joseph) to water the fields and flocks of the two small towns. It took fifty men two and a half

97Daniel Jones, *40 Years among the Indians* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1890), 234–35.
98Ibid., 305–7.
100Ibid., 176–91.
months to construct this first dam. They finished it in June of 1877, but on July 19, a flash flood from rains upstream washed it out.\(^ {101}\)

The river bottom here was too sandy and wide for an effective dam, and their crops shriveled. All but a handful of the settlers left, and most did not return. To avoid actual famine, Brigham Young ordered flour sent from Utah to the upper Little Colorado settlements.\(^ {102}\)

In the spring of 1878, new colonists began to arrive. Some of the original settlements (Obed, Lake’s Camp) were abandoned for better sites like Woodruff, Snowflake, and St. Johns, further up the Little Colorado. While more of this third wave stayed on, the difficulties did not abate. In eighteen years at Woodruff on Silver Creek, twelve dams were washed away by intermittent floods. It was not until 1895 that a permanent dam was constructed—the thirteenth attempt.\(^ {103}\)

**AFTERMATH**

No one doubted that Arizona was a desert or that colonization would be difficult. But even staunch faith was not proof against environmental realities. Successful Mormon colonies in Arizona were not achieved until at least a decade after the 1873 expedition, and then on different ground with the advantage of better information.

Encouraged by Chief Tuby of the Hopis, a small Mormon presence persisted at Moencopi on and off after 1873. The chief encouraged the Mormons to build a mill to weave cloth there, an enterprise that ultimately failed. It was perhaps the most logical place for a settlement between the Upper Falls of the Little Colorado and Lee’s Ferry, as the springs were more reliable there than elsewhere in the area. But the Moencopi Mormon settlement was seen as valuable primarily for its mission to the Indians, not as a farming endeavor. Tuby and some of his family joined the Church, but few other Hopis became any more than nominal members.\(^ {104}\)

Subject to raids by Navajo and Apache war parties, the land was in dispute both before and after the Mormon colonization period. In 1902 the federal government brokered a partition of reservation land between the Navajo and Hopi tribes, assigning possession of the mesa

---

\(^{101}\)Ibid., 18.

\(^{102}\)Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 375. Young died August 29, 1877.

\(^{103}\)Peterson, *Take Up Your Mission*, 185–86.

\(^{104}\)Ibid., 197–99.
area above Moencopi where the mill was located to the Navajo, a resolution which required the remaining Mormon settlers to go elsewhere. Some Hopis remained below the Tuba City mesa at Moencopi, but many others returned to their settlements around Oraibi.

An interesting perspective is gained through some modern views of the landscapes involved with the first 1873 mission. The area north of Interstate 40 and east of the San Francisco Peaks is still mostly arid, barren, and sparsely populated. Even with modern, deep-well technology, water and wells are in short supply in the Little Colorado drainage and surrounding deserts. The water supply from springs at Tuba City and Moencopi has been fairly consistent to the present; but as population has grown, additional wells have been drilled to meet the demand, pulling more water from underground aquifers. The surrounding landscape, though, is still desert, with little in the way of agriculture apart from the fields immediately around the Moencopi springs.

The 1873 colonists who returned to the north regained their stability for the most part. Frederick and Charlotte King relocated for a short time to Parowan, where the 1890 census lists Frederick’s occupation as a tanner. A year or two later, he moved back to Weber County in northern Utah, opened a new pharmacy, and became a “country doctor” in the Hooper area. He and Charlotte raised a family of eight children there. Charlotte devoted more than half of her biographical sketch to the 1873 mission, obviously regarding it as something of a high point in her life. She exhibits no bitterness over their financial losses.

Jacob Miller, the mission’s clerk, taught school in northern Utah and died in 1911. Andrew Amundsen, a single man at the time of the 1873 mission, married two of James Glover’s daughters polyga-
mously: Elizabeth in 1874, and Mary Jane in 1878. He later served a term in the Utah penitentiary for “unlawful cohabitation” and died in 1927.109

Horton D. Haight returned to Farmington. Church president John Taylor called him in 1882 at age fifty-five, to move to Oakley, Idaho, where he became bishop. In 1887, he was called as the Cassia Stake president and served until his death in 1900.110 A grandson, David B. Haight, served in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles (1976–2004).

Haight, in particular, seemed to chafe under the “failure” label attached to his 1873 mission. He remained close friends with Jacob Miller, visiting him when he traveled to Utah. The two of them discovered that Haight’s official written report of the 1873 mission had apparently been lost, leaving Jacob Hamblin’s and Dan Jones’s accounts as better known.

In 1901, Jacob Miller wrote a letter to Church Historian Anthon H. Lund, including a new copy of Haight’s report of the mission, taken from his original shorthand notes. “As three unfavorable references is all that has gone to history,” he wrote, “Pres. Haight when last here asked me to trace up the report.” Miller added that one of Brigham Young’s private secretaries, David McKenzey, had expressed doubts that the Historian’s Office had ever received the report.111 In his letter, Miller suggests that Jacob Hamblin’s July 1873 letter to Brigham Young, printed within days in the Deseret News, took “undue credit to himself.” Miller specifically challenged Hamblin’s claim that “the brethren became demoralized and returned home.”

111Miller, Journal, 79–80. He copied this letter into his journal. Joseph Royal Miller, Jacob’s son, as he prepared his father’s journal for publication in 1967, discovered that the report still was not in the LDS Church Archives. The current copy in the LDS Church History Library was sent in by Joseph’s sister, Elma Miller, and is dated as a 1971 acquisition. I found the typescript copy that I used for this article in the Perry Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University; it was donated by Mrs. M. F. Simmons, a descendant of Horton D. Haight from Twin Falls, Idaho.
As for Dan Jones’s autobiography, Miller pointed out two important factual errors. First, Jones claimed that Haight’s party had penetrated only forty-five miles beyond the Colorado, which would not have put the party as far as Moencopi, let alone another 125 to 150 miles up the Little Colorado. Second, Miller dismisses Jones’s story about McMaster and the potholes. “No such instance occurred as the McMaster Story or anything from which it could be constructed. There were no several hundred nor even 100 that reached the Little Colorado. We had penetrated 87, instead of 45 miles, and Pres. Haight and party had explored up the Little Colorado, as per their estimate (another) 126 miles.”

Miller also took issue with John Blythe’s claim that he had wintered over with Jacob Hamblin in an intent to “carry out the design of the Mission” until honorably released. Although Blythe had, in fact, traveled to Moencopi as the colonists were returning home in July and stayed in Arizona with Jacob Hamblin until February 1874, “John Blythe . . . had got no further than Johnson’s [Johnson’s Ranch, a way station near Kanab] where we met and left him. No person of the company remained south of the Colorado or nearer than Johnson’s, 80 miles this [north] side, Hamilton and Bolton having returned from Moabbi. Blythe and others may have gone later to support Hamblin at the Moabbi farm.”

Miller summarized: “Considering these misrepresentations Pres. H. D. Haight was anxious that the facts should be known, and that his report be added to the records of the church and gist of abridgement be published showing the effort, the long delay, waiting for an answer that never came to the question “What Shall we do?.”

Bishop Roundy’s counsel to retreat north of the Colorado was as close to an answer as the colonists got, Miller explained, as President Joseph W. Young had died, and Bishop Roundy was trying to look after the colonists. Miller signed the letter, noting it had been written in

---

112Jones, 40 Years among the Indians, 234.
113I have been unable to identify anyone named McMaster associated with the 1873 mission. However, my research has turned up only sixty-three names, slightly more than half the number of colonists counted by Haight and others. Although “chaplain” is not a typical LDS term, Standifird, Life and Journals, 26, mentions that a chaplain (unnamed) was appointed for his part of the company on May 18, 1873.
“behalf of Pres. H. D. Haight, now deceased.”

The later settlements on the upper stretches of the Little Colorado succeeded primarily because of years of perseverance by successive waves of colonists who, not incidentally, moved quickly over the desert ground rejected by Haight and his companions and which is still largely empty today. The road from Lee’s Ferry to the Little Colorado via Moencopi later became known as the “Honeymoon Trail” as Arizona colonists traveled to St. George, the closest temple, to be married. Today’s Highway 89 splits into a northern and southern route around Lee’s Ferry, carrying travelers past Bitter Springs and Willow Springs, with no recognition of the pioneering efforts that went into laying out the route, and the sacrifices made. The 1873 mission should be remembered as the first major step in the long and difficult colonization of the Little Colorado River in Arizona.

APPENDIX

The original motivation for this project came when I read Brigham Young’s scornful statement demeaning the “faint-heart[ed]” male settlers in Leonard J. Arrington, “Brother Brigham: The Human Side,” This People Magazine, Spring 1990, 3. The article explored the many facets of President Young’s public and private persona, interspersed with quotations Arrington had gleaned from his research for Young’s biography. When I read the quotation, I assumed Brigham Young was referring to the experience of my great-grandparents, Frederick and Charlotte King, as recorded in Charlotte’s history, a copy of which has been in our family for as long as I could remember. Arrington states: “Brigham sometimes used sarcasm in motivating people. . . . For example, in 1873 he called a group of young men . . . to go to Arizona and begin the settlement of that territory. But they became discouraged and returned without accomplishing their mission. Brigham was disappointed, of course, and at a meeting held after their return, he did not mince words: “Had we sent the sisters of the Relief Society, some of our pioneer sisters, they would have held that place and accomplished the mission. But instead we sent a passel of squaws down there—some of our pets whom we have raised in Salt Lake City. [We have] raised them on a feather pillow with silver spoons in their mouths. Men that don’t know anything about a hard day’s

115Jacob Miller, Letter to Anthon Lund, February 1901, holograph copy, George Tanner Papers, Box 27, fd. 16, Western Americana Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah; holograph original in LDS Church History Library.
work or a privation—and they came away because the sun shone hot and the
wind blew! Can you imagine such faint hearts! They gave up their inheri-
tance without a stroke.”

A source note at the end of the article states: “Arrington . . . authored the
book Brigham Young: American Moses (Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). All the quota-
tions used here are fully referenced therein.” I could not find that particular
quotation in the book. It does, however, appear in Arrington’s autobiogra-
phy, Adventures of a Church Historian (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,
1998), 206.

In her autobiography, Martha Cragun Cox recalls having heard this
statement made by President Young many years earlier. Cox, on her way to
Mexico in 1901, stayed over a few days in Phoenix. Here is how she records
her recollection:

“Arriving at Phoenix I was struck with its likeness to Salt Lake City and
so remarked. I was told it should be so, for in its inception it was Mormon.
For some cause we stayed a few days at Phoenix, and that gave me an oppor-
tunity to enquire and learn a little of its history. The town was surrounded by
beautiful alfalfa fields and citrus groves, and from one farmer I learned that
the waters of the great canal that irrigated the lands about the city [were]
leased by the farms from a syndicate of men in New York City. That no one
held stock in the canal they paid for their water at so much an acre to the land
that was irrigated. He told me the Mormons opened up this ancient Nephite
canal and laid out their city. Then for some cause left their possessions. An
eastern firm in New York City was watching this Mormon movement and as
soon as the enterprise was abandoned they took it up and soon had their
hands up the canal and its waters and a thrifty town and thriving commu-
nity. I have been told that the law has changed the outlook for the people and
the farming land owns its own waters. But the story carried me back to a ser-
mon I heard Brigham Young tell on this very subject of opening up the Salt
River Country. After describing this ancient canal which could he said be
opened up at not much expense the fertility of the soil and the beautiful lay
of the country, he said with much irony for he was very angry, ‘had we sent
the sisters of the Relief Society, some of our pioneer sisters, they would have
held that place and accomplished the mission. But instead we sent a passel of
squaws down there—some of our pets whom we have raised in Salt Lake City.
[We have] raised them on a feather pillow with silver spoons in their mouths.
Men that don’t know anything about a hard day’s work or a privation—and
they came away because the sun shone hot and the wind blew! Can you imag-
ine such faint hearts! They gave up their inheritance without a stroke.’

“As I looked at the beautiful city of Phoenix I did not wonder at the great
President Pioneer’s wrath.”

Some aspects of this reference raise more questions than answers. First,
Cox recalls in great detail President Young’s words, attributing them to a sermon about how the Phoenix saints abandoned the “Nephite canals” (the canals in the Mesa area, now largely covered by development, are actually remnants of the Hohokam culture that abandoned the Salt River area several hundred years prior to the arrival of white settlers). However, Brigham Young died in August 1877, just as the first Mormon colonists were settling in the Phoenix area. That hardly leaves time for the settlers to repair the canals, abandon them, and have a New York company to take control of them. Young could not have been talking about later Arizona colonists, many of whom also gave up on the Upper Little Colorado and Silver Creek settlements, as that also happened after his death. So, the timing points to a likely connection to the 1873 colonists. Arrington seems to agree.

When, then, did President Young say these words? At first, I thought they might have been part of his sermon on the morning of August 10 that George Q. Cannon referred to in his remarks in a sermon later that day. Cannon’s comments are recorded in the Journal of Discourses and the Millennial Star, with an abbreviated version in the Deseret News on August 13, 1873. President Young’s morning sermon is also reported in part in the Deseret News and reprinted in the Millennial Star, with reference to “the mission to Arizona.” However, no transcript of his exact words are recorded in either paper or in the Journal of Discourses. The summary states: “He desired that those of them [the returned colonists] who wished to do so should fit themselves and accompany himself to the south this fall,” echoing the sentiment he expressed to Thomas L. Kane on July 31, 1873. Cox, according to her biography, was continually in St. George, Utah, from 1873 until Brigham Young’s death in 1877, so it is unlikely that Young spoke these words on August 10, 1873.

Brigham Young, as was his custom, spent the winter at his home in St. George those years and often spoke at Church meetings while there. It is likely that Cox, if her recollection is correct, heard President Young make the statement during one of his wintertime visits. Given the timing, a connection with the 1873 colonists is probable. But why does Martha Cragun Cox remember the circumstances differently? Cox wrote her autobiography in 1928, twenty-seven years after the visit to Phoenix. Her remembrance in 1901 of President Young’s statement had to be from at least twenty-four years earlier, prior to Brigham Young’s death in August 1877. She may not have remembered correctly the circumstances of Young’s sermon, nor even the exact words. However, she seems to have been struck with the statement’s significance, and the inclusion of quotation marks and brackets in her text could point to copying it from another document, perhaps an earlier journal. These writings were mostly destroyed by a fire in her cabin in the 1880s.

From my perspective, it seems possible, even likely, that Young’s com-
ments were directed at the 1873 colonists, as evidenced by his other negative comments during the same period of 1873 to 1877. Cox’s detailed recollections of other events and statements in her autobiography are impressive. I have chosen to assume that her recollection of Young’s words is fundamentally accurate, if not verbatim, and that she merely applied it to the wrong Arizona event more than fifty years later as she wrote her autobiography. Further research into any extant transcripts or notes on Young’s sermons in St. George from 1873 to 1877 may shed additional light on this quotation.
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OVERSTATE the significance of Parley P. Pratt on early Mormonism, particularly when tracing the development of Mormon theology and narrative. Indeed, Pratt served to expand, explain, and most significantly, frame the distinctive doctrines of the LDS Church; and his historical works laid the foundations for the many chronicles that followed. What Joseph Smith left as inchoate, fragmented, or unwritten, Pratt systematized, defended, and popularized; what many of the early Saints experienced, Pratt described, explicated, and spread abroad. In short, Pratt not only shaped how Mormons have understood Joseph Smith’s revelations and teachings, but also many of the early events of the LDS Church. The subtitle of Terryl Givens and Matthew Grow’s forthcoming biography on Pratt, to be published by Oxford University Press, sums up his role succinctly: “The Saint Paul of Mormonism.”

Central to Pratt’s significance was his understanding of the power of print. His literary oeuvre was as diverse as it was expansive. *Millennium* (1835) was the first Mormon book of poetry; *Voice of
Warning (1837) was Mormonism’s first lengthy text, a 216-page millennial tract that never mentioned Joseph Smith by name. After the Church’s experience in Missouri, Pratt published Late Persecutions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1839), one of Mormonism’s first historical texts. By 1840, he had turned his attention to refuting claims of opposing ministers, and his pamphlets laid the foundations for Mormon apologetics. Finally, Pratt’s writings in the mid-1840s exuberantly focused on the possibilities of Mormon doctrine, attempting to tease out the theological implications of many of Joseph Smith’s underdeveloped teachings. These later texts are triumphalist in tone and audacious in scope as they navigate the potential of a rich and radically new ontology. Published in 1855 as his magnum opus, Key to the Science of Theology is considered by many to be one of the most important LDS theological treatises of the early Utah period—and perhaps of the entire nineteenth century.

His most frequently read work, however, did not appear until two decades after that—that is, nearly twenty years after his death. The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt was published in 1874, after being edited and likely revised by his son and John Taylor. This is the work that makes Parley Pratt well known even today; excluding Lucy Mack Smith’s Biographical Sketches (known today as History of Joseph Smith by His Mother), it is possibly the most important historical work written in the nineteenth century. Due to its readable prose, the Autobiography has been reprinted numerous times by various presses, and remains one of the most frequently read texts for Latter-day Saints even in the twenty-first century.²

Unfortunately, the book itself has rarely been engaged in an academic way.³ While the short essays that follow are not a comprehensive examination of Pratt’s Autobiography, they suggest the rich possibilities of a critical examination of the text. Ranging from a small

²Though the Autobiography has been reprinted numerous times, all editions are based on the same text—the original edition published in 1874. For the sake of clarity, all contributions to this roundtable will be referencing that edition: Parley P. Pratt [Jr.], ed., Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts in Prose and Verse, from his Miscellaneous Writings (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874).

scope (the composition of the Autobiography itself) to one much larger (the context of nineteenth-century autobiographies), and from inter-community topics (patterns of Mormon piety) to broader cultural implications (Mormon racial relations), these brief articles demonstrate the broad range of topics possible when deeply examining a work as significant as Parley Pratt’s Autobiography.

These articles were originally solicited for and written as part of a series at the Mormon history blog, Juvenile Instructor (juvenileinstructor.org). They were then compiled and slightly edited for print format in the Journal. While each contribution may offer more questions than it does answers, collectively they are designed to display the benefits of using interdisciplinary tools when approaching traditional documents long taken for granted. Together, they seek to show that sometimes the most effective way of achieving new insights is to ask new questions.

A “TRULY EVENTFUL LIFE”:
WRITING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PARLEY P. PRATT

Matthew J. Grow

In late 1853, Orson Pratt, then in Washington, D.C., excitedly wrote to his brother Parley about an effort to publish genealogical information on the descendants of their ancestor William Pratt, an English Puritan who migrated to New England in the 1630s. Orson had already pledged his assistance to the project’s compiler, Congregationalist minister Frederick W. Chapman. Learning that Parley and Orson were “prominent men in this Church,” Chapman asked them to write autobiographical sketches for his planned volume. Parley replied that “a mere sketch of the outlines of [my]
truly eventful life would occupy several hundred pages” and speculated that Chapman would not publish it if it “contained the truth as it is in Jesus.” Praising his brother’s “interesting, easy, flowing stile,” Orson encouraged Parley to “Try them and See.” Working together and with the “dictations of the Holy Spirit,” Orson hoped they might “write something that shall hereafter prove a blessing to our brethren.”

Within a few months of this correspondence, Parley embarked on a project to narrate his “truly eventful life” in “several hundred pages.” In July 1854, after Pratt arrived in San Francisco to preside over the Pacific Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he began writing his autobiography. Within a month, he had written an impressive 250 manuscript pages, bringing the story “up to the prison, in Boon Co. Mo. 1839”—roughly half of the published autobiography. He described the project to Church Historian George A. Smith as “A Lean, megre sketch of Church History. As my hurried life, and hurried manner of writing, prevents my branching out on many interesting items.” He further told Smith, “I am determined to complete it now if the Lord will. If I miss this opportunity I have my doubts whether it will be written at all.” Perhaps, Pratt thought, his autobiography might be published in California.

To accomplish this goal, Pratt hired George Q. Cannon, a talented missionary returning from Hawaii, as his scribe. Cannon, who copied 300 pages during the next six weeks for $50, relished the work (perhaps because his three companions dug potatoes to earn money for their trip home). By mid-November, Pratt had completed an additional 100 manuscript pages, bringing his history “up to the beginning of the year 41. [I]t is neatly revised and chapters and headings all finished up to that time ready for the press, or to leave to my children;

---


3 Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Family, August 22, 1854, Pratt Collection.

4 Parley P. Pratt, Letter to George A. Smith, August 23, 1854, Pratt Collection.

5 George Q. Cannon, Journal, September 1854, typescript in private possession.
or to the archives of the church. Without Cannon’s assistance and with mounting responsibilities in California, Pratt’s pace slowed, though he continued to write intermittently. In addition, a financial crisis in San Francisco dried up any funds that Pratt might have raised from local Church members to fund its publication.

In writing his autobiography, Pratt relied heavily on his previous writings. After extensive analysis, Pratt family historian Steven Pratt concluded that almost 90 percent of the text is either based on or copied from earlier works, which he generally revised and condensed. Pratt drew especially heavily from his books about the attacks on Mormons in Missouri and articles from the *Millennial Star*. The autobiography also includes items from his book of poetry, *The Millennium*; his earliest pamphlet, *Shameful Outrage*; his manuscript family record; various letters and journals; and other newspaper articles. For instance, the most famous episode of the autobiography—Pratt’s account of Joseph Smith’s rebuke of the guards in Richmond Jail in November 1838—first appeared in the *Deseret News* in 1853, prompted by the newspaper’s printing of the “History of Joseph Smith.” Pratt also described the event in an unpublished 1854 play, the “Mormon Prisoners,” and included his *Deseret News* article verbatim in his autobiography. Pratt generally avoided or downplayed controversial subjects; the published autobiography also contains little information on his wives and children.

Pratt returned to Utah in the summer of 1855, where he spent about a year before embarking on a mission to the eastern states in September 1856. While in Utah, Pratt continued work on his autobiography, and one of his plural wives, Keziah Downes, copied additional sections of his manuscript. He completed his autobiography up to 1851, at which point he inserted his later journals. Access to eastern printing presses, Pratt hoped, might give him the opportunity to publish the autobiography. Isaiah Coombs, one of his traveling companions to the East, recorded, “Br Pratt has read 13 chapters of his history to me. . . . It is very interesting; so much so that I could have listened to it all day without tiring. I am sure no saint will be without a

---

6 Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Mary Wood Pratt, September 21, 1854, Pratt Collection.

copy of it when it is printed.” Financial problems, however, prevented Pratt from publishing his autobiography in the East. By January 1857, he lamented that it likely would not be “published in my days”; and he instructed his family, “Should any thing happen to me, & the record be preserved I wish it Carefully Compiled, Coppied & taken Care of.”

Eleanor Macomb, Pratt’s twelfth wife, accompanied Pratt on the initial part of this mission, intent on retrieving her children from her parents in New Orleans, where her estranged husband Hector McLean had sent them following her conversion. She succeeded temporarily, and McLean tracked Pratt down to avenge himself. Knowing of McLean’s pursuit and fearing for his life, Pratt entrusted his manuscript autobiography to George A. Smith while the two were in St. Louis in March 1857, with instructions to return it to his family. On May 13, 1857, McLean killed Pratt in rural Arkansas.

When George A. Smith arrived home in late May 1857, he gave the manuscript to Parley Pratt Jr., Pratt’s oldest son, then twenty years old. In 1872 and 1873, Apostle John Taylor, whom Pratt had converted, assisted Parley Jr. in preparing the autobiography for publication. Taylor minimized their role, claiming they had made few changes “and preserved intact” Parley’s original manuscript “so far as possible.”

Because that manuscript has not survived, it is not clear to what extent Taylor and Parley Jr. edited the autobiography, particularly the pre-1851 section. Some information on the amount and type of editing done by Parley Jr. and Taylor can be gained by comparing Pratt’s journals in the 1850s with his published autobiography. To cover the last six years of Pratt’s life, the autobiography reproduces journals (including the journal of his final mission), letters, and newspaper articles. To prepare the autobiography for publication, Parley Jr. copied his father’s journals into a document known as the “After Manuscript.” This document was then edited. In general, the editing excised passages from Parley’s journal and letters about his family,

---

8Isaiah Coombs, Journal, October 11, 1856, holograph, LDS Church History Library.
whether they were positive or negative; also omitted were references
to financial difficulties and controversial events. Parley Jr. was also
conscious of his own image. Parley Sr.’s journal for August 18, 1855,
notes that Parley Jr. met him riding on a mule. In the “After Manu-
script,” Parley Jr. crossed out “mule” and inserted “horseback.” Event-
tually, the entire episode was cut from the autobiography.  

In February 1873, Parley P. Pratt Jr. announced the imminent
publication of his father’s autobiography and sought subscriptions
for the book, which sold for between $2.50 and $5.00 depending on
the binding, by traveling throughout Utah Territory and also by em-
ploying local agents. The Deseret News expected it would “meet with
a large sale among members of the church and others.” In Decem-
ber 1873, Parley Jr. and his wife, Romania Bunnell Pratt, traveled to
New York City, where Romania assisted Parley for six weeks in “proof
reading his father’s autobiography” before beginning medical
school. Parley Jr. made arrangements for the book’s publication by
the New York firm of Russell Brothers and began shipping copies to
Utah in April 1874. He made few, if any, profits, as he published it
“at a sacrifice.” Nevertheless, the first edition soon sold out, and

Parley Jr. promised prospective readers that his father had not
emphasized “dull, stale, and uninteresting events” but had written on
“the most noted and striking incidents of, as he says himself, a truly
eventful life...with an originality, a force and beauty of style peculiar
to himself.” At the end of his short editor’s preface to the autobiog-
raphy, Parley Jr. quoted his father’s Voice of Warning: “Should the au-

---

12R. Steven Pratt, “The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt: A Study of
the Sources.” The “After Manuscript,” which is an undated holograph, is at
the LDS Church History Library.
15Romania Bunnell Pratt, Memoir, 1881, LDS Church History Li-
brary.
17Parley P. Pratt Jr. et al., Letter to John Taylor, July 24, 1884, LDS
Church History Library.
19Parley P. Pratt, Jr., “Prospectus to the Life and Writings of the Late
thor be called to sacrifice his life for the cause of truth, he will have
the consolation that it will be said of him, as it was said of Abel, ‘He be-
ing dead yet speaketh.’”

PARLEY PRATT’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS PERSONAL
RESTORATION AND REDEMPTION

Benjamin E. Park

Building on Matthew Grow’s detailing of the actual context of the Autobiography’s composition and in conjunction with Ryan Tobler’s examination of Pratt’s literary impulse (below), this article seeks to determine some of the private motivations behind the book. In short, it argues that, besides acting both as a first-hand account of early LDS history and as a capstone to Pratt’s literary career, the Autobiography was written for two primarily personal reasons. First, it was a way for Pratt to restore the “glory days” of Mormonism; I see his reexamining the past as a way to relive fond memories and perhaps revive his own diminished position within the Church he had spent his life defending. Second, Pratt sought to redeem—or at least recompense—his past mistakes by either correcting or defending them throughout his memoir. Indeed, Parley Pratt had a personal agenda in writing his Autobiography, and the result was a text pregnant with possibilities to reconstruct not only his ministerial career, but also his later reflections and anxieties.

During the Nauvoo period, a decade before his death, Pratt was at the heart of the LDS Church. After publishing his Voice of Warning


1BENJAMIN E. PARK (benjamin.e.park@gmail.com) has a B.A. in English and history from Brigham Young University, an M.Sc. in historical theology from the University of Edinburgh, and is currently a graduate student at the University of Cambridge studying political thought and intellectual history. He has written on religious boundaries in antebellum America, the transatlantic flow of ideas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the formation of American national identities, and the development of Mormon theology.

2Due to the complicated nature of the Autobiography’s composition, as outlined in Grow’s examination, it should be kept in mind that several
(1837) and *Mormonism Unveiled* (1838), the first two booklength works written by a Mormon, he became the preeminent LDS apologist in America. While on the Quorum of the Twelve’s mission to Britain during 1840–41, he edited the Church’s periodical *Millennial Star* and thus was the primary explicator of Mormon theology for the thousands of British converts. Pratt’s numerous published tracts in response to anti-Mormons and his refutation of their critiques became standards for Mormon apologetics and established the apostle as the premier defender of the Mormon faith. Once back in Nauvoo, his importance steadily increased in members’ sight as articles in the *Times and Seasons*, *The Prophet* (the Mormon newspaper in New York and main publication for eastern Saints), and several individual pamphlets rolled steadily off the press. After Joseph Smith’s death, it was Pratt whom Brigham Young sent to solidify the eastern branches in favor of the apostolic succession. Put simply, Parley Pratt was central in the growing hierarchy, the main voice of printed Mormonism, and a major figure in the eyes of the Latter-day Saints.

However, Pratt did not remain in the limelight for four reasons. The first reason for his declining role was his perceivably diminished position among Church leaders. Brigham Young administered a public and sharp chastisement during the migration in 1846, a rebuke that embarrassed Pratt and sent a signal to the Saints of his position in the then-dynamic hierarchy. Young was quick to defend his own centralizing power and ecclesiastical position during this period, and Pratt became a negative example of what happened to someone who challenged Young’s authority.3

Second, Pratt lacked the ritualized familial kingdom structure made possible by the growing practice of multiple-family adoptions that many of the other priesthood leaders possessed. For instance, Brigham Young had sixty-six individuals sealed to him in his “family kingdom,” while Heber C. Kimball had thirty-eight. Pratt, for reasons

---

3A brief account of Pratt’s chastisement is found in his *Autobiography*, 400–401. The fuller account is in Richard E. Bennett, “We’ll Find the Place”: *The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1848* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 268–73, 278.
that are not clear, had none.\textsuperscript{4} Given the increased emphasis on centralized authority and visible patriarchal leadership, which the adoption rituals provided, rifts with higher ecclesiastical leaders had significant, broad implications.

The third reason for Pratt’s diminished role was largely practical. The trek west required the Church to focus on logistics, and settlement in the Utah Territory only amplified a focus on sheer physical survival. There was neither time nor need for theological treatises, given the pressing demands for farming and colonizing competencies. Pratt’s assignments no longer consisted of writing religious expositions or historical tracts; rather, he was sent south in the late 1840s to seek for possible settlement sites in what is now southern Utah. Except for a brief period of intensive composition in San Francisco in 1854–55 when he again defended Mormonism in print,\textsuperscript{5} Pratt was in South America until May 1852, followed by a Southern Indian mission in 1854—far away from both the body of the Saints and a printing press. Though his previous writings still circulated, his voice was largely silent in public for most of the late 1840s and 1850s.

During this same period, Parley’s brother Orson was flourishing. While serving as president of the British Mission from 1848 until 1851, Orson set out on a daring publishing venture that quantitatively dwarfed anything Parley had accomplished to that point. With very few exceptions, most pamphlets of the period were published in the range of one to ten thousand; however, Orson multiplied pamphlet publication to the point that it strapped the Church financially and strongly influenced Brigham’s decision in the 1850s to suspend all publications. However, even though Orson had been unjustifiably optimistic about the sale of his own works, it was his voice, not Parley’s, that now sounded loudest among Mormon authors; and he had taken his older brother’s place as the grand explicator of Mormon theology.\textsuperscript{6}

Fourth, it is possible that personal problems channeled Parley’s

\textsuperscript{4}Jonathan A. Stapley, “‘Heirs to the Priesthood’: Post-Martyrdom Adoption Ritual and Theology,” paper presented at the 2010 Mormon History Association Conference, Kansas City, Missouri; copy in my possession; used by permission.

energies away from writing. Parley and Orson went almost half a decade with limited communication and a strained relationship—the result of an argument over polygamy between the two brothers in the Nauvoo Temple in 1846 that left bad blood until 1853. Further, while Orson was thriving in England, Parley was miserable in Chile while serving the Church’s first mission to South America. Away from the body of the Saints, unable to communicate adequately in Spanish, and suffering third-world accommodations, Parley was lonely, frustrated, and homesick.

Things were not much better in Pratt’s immediate family, either. Parley’s first wife, Thankful Halsey, died in 1837. Mary Ann Frost Stearns, his second wife and his monogamous wife for fifteen years, divorced Parley during the early Utah period, at least partly because of her inability to accept his practice of plural marriage—the very doctrine Pratt labored diligently to defend.

For all of these reasons, I see Parley as welcoming the chance in the early 1850s to revisit the “glory days” of his personal life and to celebrate the Church under its charismatic prophet Joseph Smith by writing about his earlier life.

Writing as a venue for reliving past, preferred ages is a common element for memoirs and autobiographies. Indeed, the nineteenth century was a period especially ripe for personal reminiscences, where many sought to (re)create their own “conception of reality” as a substitution for their present circumstances. For instance, when Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Freeman Clarke, and Henry Channing edited the *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, they were more inclined to relive the joys of their past Bostonian intellectual circles than to detail the difficulties of Fuller’s life. It was also common within the Mormon movement itself, especially among those who had left Mormonism at various moments during the Church’s develop-

---


9Ralph Waldo Emerson et al., eds., *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, 2
ment, most notably David Whitmer and William McLellin.10

The story presented in Pratt’s Autobiography is thrilling, adventurous, and, most importantly, triumphalist. The numerous difficulties Pratt had experienced (including his brief apostasy in 1837, his quarrel with Orson, and Young’s stinging chastisement) were either dramatically downplayed or ignored altogether. Parley presented himself as standing at the center of Mormon activities, taking part in the most important missionary endeavors, defending the Church in the front lines of battle, and learning at the feet of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Although polygamy had been publicly announced in 1852 (tellingly, by Orson acting under Young’s direction), the autobiography downplays the practice for the first two-thirds of the narrative, and Parley exulted about how in 1840 he learned from Joseph Smith that “the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity”—a statement that is highly ironic, considering that his wife in 1840 had by then left him, at least in major part, over Smith’s teachings on marriage.11 (The published autobiography devotes an entire late chapter to a sermon on plural marriage.) The daring, witty, visionary, and sympathetic figure presented in text was how Pratt wanted the Saints to remember him; the charismatic leader, successful missionary, and influential writer was what Parley wished they still recognized him to be.

Combined with restoring the past was Pratt’s desire to redeem past failures. As is common with the human psyche, Pratt felt regret over previous mistakes he had made and saw the Autobiography as a chance to correct them—or at least defend them to future genera-


tions. In one instance, he interrupted his narrative of escaping Richmond Prison to give detailed accounts of how the other prisoners made it out, justifying this apparently tangential story by reasoning, “it would be impolite and disrespectful to get myself out of a bad place until I have first seen my friends all safely out.” While this would seem gentlemanly, if somewhat tangential, in itself, Pratt then revealed his deeper motivation: “True, I did not strictly observe this rule of good breeding in the escape itself; therefore it becomes me to take the more care to observe it now.”12 Thus, granting his fellow prisoners a prominent role in his narrative redeemed his earlier self-centeredness, and Pratt was able to literarily redeem his past deed.

Similarly, Pratt regretted how he dealt with Samuel Brannan, a local leader in New York during the mid-1840s. Brannan had been tried for misconduct, but Pratt worked to get him reinstated to his ecclesiastical position after he felt Brannan had demonstrated sufficient remorse. However, much to Pratt’s chagrin, Brannan later became a thorn in the Church’s side when he led a party of Saints by sea from New York to California and eventually left the Church publicly, taking many disillusioned Saints with him. Pratt knew that his readers would be surprised when they came upon Brannan’s name in the narrative—especially when Pratt was the one who restored him to the leadership position that he later used against the Church—and thus felt he needed to retroactively defend himself in the story.

Pratt described Brannan as “a corrupt and wicked man,” claiming that he (Pratt) had “always regretted having taken any measures to have him restored to fellowship.” However, “if I erred, it was on the side of mercy.”13 By explaining his actions as merely being “merciful” and his decision as motivated by charity, Pratt positioned himself as compassionate and Brannon as scandalously deceitful. It was not Pratt’s fault that Brannan took advantage of his kindness.

Parley Pratt’s eventual restoration to glory and redemption from mistakes came ultimately, however, through his murder in 1857. As is often the case, early and violent death cleared Pratt’s diminished image and placed him at the forefront of Mormon memory. A martyred apostle is a remembered apostle. Not only did the Autobiography solidify his reputation, but it became the best-known text of his print career. Through his narrative, he became such an example of Mor-

---

12Ibid., 290.
13Ibid., 375–76.
mon piety and faithfulness that many of his hardships are unknown to modern readers.

Even more influentially, the history of early Mormonism that most mainstream Latter-day Saints know today is largely based on his own narrative. Indeed, the Autobiography ended up being more redemptive and restorative than even Pratt could have envisioned and still serves the role of vindicating its author nearly a century and a half after its publication.

**PARLEY PRATT’S LITERARY IMPULSE**

*Ryan G. Tobler*

Benjamin Park's commentary is an effort to highlight the “personal agenda” behind Parley Pratt’s writing of his Autobiography. He outlines two chief forces behind its production: Pratt’s desire (conscious or not) to revive his eminence in the Church, and his inclination to give a revisionist account of its history that treated him favorably. In addition to those two well-reasoned general motives, I here argue for a third fundamental impetus—one that reflects a unique aspect of Parley’s character.

It is important to recognize when approaching Parley’s writings, especially his curious Autobiography, that he saw himself as part of the literary world. From the time that he published his first collection of poems and hymns in 1835, Parley was consciously embarked in a literary career. His affiliation with literature went back even further. As a child he had clamored for “a book! a book!” at every moment of leisure; as an adult he converted his enthusiasm for literary consump-

---

1Ryan G. Tobler {ryantobler@yahoo.com} recently finished an M.A. degree in American religious and cultural history at the University of Chicago Divinity School. His current interests include American book and educational history, religious culture, and religion and secularism; he has written on transcendental religion and the American clergy. In Mormon history, he has written or contributed to several forthcoming articles on Parley Pratt and is finalizing a documentary piece on contact between Mormons and Ralph Waldo Emerson.
tion into literary practice. Pratt’s writings suggest that he was both conscious and fond of the noble tradition in which he was participating. He realized that in writing he was contributing both intellectually and artistically to the public sphere. He took up his pen in earnest.

Unfortunately, most of Pratt’s personal papers—those that were not prepared for publication—have not survived. Those writings may have given some indication of Pratt’s reading and other encounters with the world of literature (particularly, perhaps, during his sojourns in England). They might have yielded some clues about his developing literary sensibility. In their absence, however, Pratt’s literary impulse is best understood through the function of his writings in Mormon culture, the contours of his literary career, and the literary trends of his time.

In the microculture of Mormonism, Pratt’s literary tendencies flourished. Mormonism provided Parley with a morally supportive audience and a wealth of topics and themes. Using these resources, he ventured—as per literary convention—through a variety of genres, from poetry, hymnody, and essay to satire, polemics, history, theological treatise... and finally to autobiography. Although much of what Parley wrote was didactic, he did not think the religious orientation of these writings prevented them from being part of his own “literary” oeuvre. He claimed the prestige of their publication both for God and for himself.

Having elevated himself to a degree of education through study, Parley moved into the ranks of a small Mormon intellectual elite. In a concentrated Mormon society, even more than in the print culture of larger society, literary activity brought distinction. Parley eagerly embraced his position as a microcultural leader. He shared this standing with a few other lettered Saints, among whom were his brother Orson, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, William W. Phelps, and Eliza R. Snow. In conjunction with Joseph Smith, Pratt and these others acted as “public intellectuals” for Mormonism in the fashion that many scholars of literature and sociology have written about: thinkers with public influence who articulate, represent, and/or create the mind of a larger social body. In the small corpus of writing that could be said to represent Mormonism, Pratt’s writings were weighty. His influence was amplified by his position as a religious leader. In his mind,

\[\text{Pratt, Autobiography, 18.}\]

and in the minds of those around him, Pratt’s social influence blend-
ed with his apostolic calling. His authority was potent—it was at once
literary-intellectual and ecclesiastical-spiritual.

Moments in the arc of Pratt’s life hint at the attraction he felt to
the literary sphere. Upon the completion of each of his productions,
Pratt carefully obtained a copyright. He was aware of the value of in-
tellectual property and sought to protect his own, a concern he shared
with other contemporary writers. While this recurring act was proba-
bly more formal than necessary, it reflected Pratt’s aspiration to pro-
duce substantial literature, as well as his confidence that he belonged
in print. Publication ratified his ideas and extended his influence.

Pratt’s literary sensitivity also showed up when he was commis-
sioned to establish a Church periodical in England, the Latter-day
Saints’ Millennial Star. As a rhetorical tactic, Pratt prefaced its intro-
ductive prospectus with an epigraph, a couplet from Alexander
Pope’s Essay on Man:

    Truths would you teach, to save a sinking land,
    All fear,— few aid you, and few understand.4

Beyond appropriating Pope’s language to his evangelizing purpose,
Pratt’s quotation did cultural work. It demonstrated his awareness of
a long and lustrous English literary tradition. This kind of literary
savvy made him a natural choice to anchor the publication.

If assigned to a literary movement, Parley would certainly be a
Romantic. Before turning to religious themes (which tend to obscure
his literary impulses), Pratt’s poetry was sentimental, contemplative,
and centered in nature and the sublime. In 1836 on his way to preach
in Canada, he stopped to observe Niagara Falls. Later, in prison, he re-
membered this impressive experience in his “Falls of Niagara,” which
he reprinted in the Autobiography. (For a detailed look at Parley’s expe-
rience at and after Niagara, see Joseph Spencer’s contribution below.)
At the time, the Falls were a touchstone for Romantic culture—a “gate-
way to transcendence on the grandest scale imaginable” or, in Parley’s
words, “a lively emblem of eternity.”5 They became a symbol of the
great scale and sublimity of the American landscape. Scores of Ro-
mantics such as Margaret Fuller made the same pilgrimage that Parley

---

2002) is perhaps the latest iteration in a long line of thought on this issue.
did and versified similar epiphanies. Perhaps slightly behind the cultural times, Pratt’s early writing was saturated with Romantic feeling; while different literary trends had begun forming in Victorian Britain, Romantic sentiments lingered in America.

If, as Park suggests, Pratt employed the Autobiography as a tool for renewing and remaking himself as part of the Mormon past, he may have been inspired by his literary counterparts. Autobiography as a distinct genre was a new development of the late eighteenth century. It became established (particularly in Britain) as the Romantic emphasis on individualism drove the reading public to call for more personal details about their leading figures. In fact, it has been observed that the rise of biography and autobiography is “one of the most significant features of the literary culture that defines the Romantic movement.”6 Literary notables (like Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning) used popular interest to their advantage by producing autobiographical accounts intended to magnify their public stature and mythologize their pasts; Romantic writers were particularly afflicted with the longing to immortalize themselves.7 This use of the genre was in some ways different from the way that autobiography had been used previously in Britain and the way it was being used in contemporary America. In these other contexts, autobiography was typically used for social commentary or criticism, not public relations.8 Parley’s conception of the Autobiography—relatively unusual in America at the time—parallels contemporary trends in Romantic literature.

8The few prominent works of early (pre-1850) British autobiography are virtually all used to lodge social commentary. They include Olaudah Equiano’s Narrative (1789) and Mary Wollstonecraft’s autobiographical Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark (1796). American autobiog-
Recognizing that Parley regarded himself as part of the literary tradition and as a public intellectual helps us understand that his unique decision to compose an autobiography grew (at least partially) out of this sense of self. Unlike much of his other writing, the Autobiography reflects personal and artistic interests; it is Pratt’s attempt to memorialize his life and to anthologize his craft. As a benediction for his life, the Autobiography embodies Pratt’s awareness of the corpus he would leave behind. A self-styled literatus, Pratt would have seen such a project as becoming; an autobiography was, after all, the natural culmination of a Romantic writer’s life.

PERSECUTION, MEMORY, AND MORMON IDENTITY IN PARLEY PRATT’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

David W. Grua

Parley P. Pratt’s Autobiography is a classic of nineteenth-century Mormon literature, a work that has shaped Latter-day Saint identity as a persecuted people into the present. As historian Kenneth H. Winn observed in his Exiles in a Land of Liberty, Pratt was “the foremost Mormon commentator” on the Missouri conflict, rendering the apostle one of the principal architects of Mormon collective memory of persecution.2+ The Autobiography has been the most widely available of his writings on persecution and therefore has had a significant impact on how Mormons since its 1874 publication up until the late nineteenth century mostly followed suit. Such writings include the narratives of Frederick Douglass (1845) and Harriet Jacobs (1861). Benjamin Franklin (1793) was a notable exception to this pattern. Other proletarian autobiographies seem unrelated to it.

1David W. Grua (davidgrua@gmail.com) is a Ph.D. student in American history at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. He completed an M.A. in history at Brigham Young University in 2008, and his publications have appeared in BYU Studies, Mormon Historical Studies, and Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought.

tion have constructed their identities as God’s suffering Saints. For example, as a teenager in frontier Utah, Heber J. Grant won a Sunday School contest and was awarded a copy of the Autobiography, which he described as “intensely interesting.” In addition, B. H. Roberts relied on Pratt’s Autobiography in some of his own historical writings on Missouri. Pratt’s narrative of persecution was complex, alternating between martyrological and republican discourses to plot his story, thereby orienting himself and the Saints in relation to other Christians and the American nation.

Starting with Pratt’s February 1834 Evening and the Morning Star “Extra” describing the Jackson County persecutions, which he co-authored with Newell Knight and John Corrill, Pratt wrote hundreds of pages of commentary on the Mormon persecutions in pamphlets, letters, poems, editorials, proclamations, and even fiction. His Autobiography continued his early interest in writing about persecution, with seventeen chapters—almost a third of the total fifty-four—dedicated wholly or in part to describing the Missouri and Illinois persecutions. Scattered


Ronald W. Walker, Qualities That Count: Heber J. Grant as Businessman, Missionary, and Apostle, BIOGRAPHIES IN LATTER-DAY SAINT HISTORY (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004), 47.


references throughout the text further highlighted individual instances of persecution in Pratt’s life. Much of the Autobiography’s sections on persecution are simply revisions of prose or poetry that had appeared in earlier publications. Pratt made dozens of subtle revisions throughout the text, but most of the changes are literary or grammatical.

One change, or rather omission, deserves comment. In the face of public accusations and legal indictments for treason, murder, arson, and larceny, stemming from the October 1838 Mormon preemptive strikes in Daviess County, Missouri, few Latter-day Saints were willing to publicly discuss or even acknowledge any truth to these allegations. As Richard Lyman Bushman has noted, “When the Mormons thought of Missouri, they did not remember looting houses or burning stores. They believed they had acted solely in their own defense.” Although Pratt assured his readers often that Mormon men honorably defended their families and homes, he did so in vague terms. However, in his 1839 history of the persecutions, Pratt admitted that Mormon depredations occurred in northwestern Missouri: “It is said that some of our troops, exasperated to the highest degree, retaliated in some instances by plundering and burning houses, and bringing the spoil to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, whose

---


provisions and clothing had been robbed from them; and upon the whole, I am rather inclined to believe it is the case; for human nature cannot endure all things.”8 This passage, which admittedly is not as forthright as modern interpreters would prefer, was not included in the published Autobiography. Forthright or not, its 1839 publication is significant, and its omission in 1874 is likewise noteworthy.

The Autobiography illuminates how Pratt saw himself and his fellow Saints within the grand narrative of Christian history—as a people persecuted in much the same way as the biblical prophets and ancient Christians. This martyrological interpretive framework gave Pratt a way to interpret the meaning of the sufferings of his people. For example, when recounting a blessing he received from Oliver Cowdery, Pratt recalled Cowdery saying, “You have read of the persecutions and trials of ancient days. Has not bitter experience taught you that they are the same now?”9 Not only did Pratt see himself as suffering for the same cause as the ancients, he also cast Lilburn W. Boggs and other opponents as heirs of those who opposed God’s peoples centuries before. Pratt even predicted that when these ancient persecutors would learn of Missouri’s misdeeds, they would respond “with a mixture of envy and admiration, yield[ing] to her the palm.”10 In its most extreme form, this memory of persecution also condoned divine vengeance against the enemies of Mormonism, with Pratt approvingly recounting in his Autobiography several purported examples of God having brought horrible pain and death upon the Saints’ persecutors.11

Pratt also narrated the persecutions within the broader story of American liberty and republicanism, describing the United States as a divinely ordained nation founded on the principles of religious free-

8Parley P. Pratt, History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri upon the Mormons, in Which Ten Thousand American Citizens Were Robbed, Plundered, and Driven from the State, and Many Others Murdered, Martyred, &c. for Their Religion, and All This by Military Force, by Order of the Executive (Detroit: Dawson and Bates, 1839), 32–33.
9Pratt, Autobiography, 129. When responding to anti-Mormons who taunted him after the death of Joseph Smith, Pratt replied, “To these taunts and questions I replied . . . that nearly all the prophets and Apostles who were before him had been killed, and also the Saviour of the world, and yet their death did not alter the truth nor hinder its final triumph” (359).
10Ibid., 237.
11Ibid., 475–77. See also Grua, “Memoirs of the Persecuted,” 53.
dom. The persecution of the Saints however was gradually transform-
ing the nation from land of liberty to a land of tyranny. Pratt indicated
that the Mormons upheld “the laws and the constitution of our coun-
try,” in the face of “outrages which would put monarchy to blush, and
from which the most despotic tyrants of the dark ages would turn away
from with shame and disgust.” He called upon his fellow citizens to
“restore a persecuted and injured people to their rights, as citizens of a
free republic. Down with tyranny and oppression, and rescue your lib-
erties from the brink of ruin. Redeem your much injured country from
the awful stain upon its honor,“ but his cries fell upon deaf ears. Pratt
came to believe that the murder of Joseph Smith signaled the fall of
America as a chosen nation, necessitating the founding of a new “Em-
pire of Liberty” in the American West, where the Mormons could carry
on the true spirit of the Constitution.

Pratt’s Autobiography is therefore a powerful text that illuminates
how nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints constructed identity and re-
membered their persecutions. Casting his persecution narratives
within martyrrological discourse allowed Pratt to place the Saints with-
in an ancient story, in which the elect of God always suffered persecu-
tion for their righteousness. This way of remembering persecution set
firm boundaries between authentic Christians (that is, the Mormons)
and everyone else. Likewise, Pratt’s use of republican discourse to re-
member persecution told a different, yet not incompatible, story,
where the United States by tolerating religious persecution was gradu-
ally losing its chosen status as a refuge for the oppressed. The text illu-
minates how Pratt oriented himself in relation to the American na-
tion, as the memory of persecution led him at times to embrace his na-
tional heritage and at others to reject the nation all together, as he
despaired that the once “sacred privilege of American citizenship”
was being “trampled under foot” (247).

Pratt’s Autobiography remains in print and continues to shape the
memory and identity of contemporary Latter-day Saints, as suggested
by a recent experience I had. When discussing the book with a friend
at the Mormon History Association’s 2007 conference in Salt Lake

---

13 Ibid., 248.
14 Ibid., 231, 487. See also Grua, “Memoirs of the Persecuted,” 78–90. For the West as a new Mormon “Empire of Liberty,” see Grua, “Memoirs of the Persecuted,” 89.
City, he related his undergraduate encounter with Pratt’s persecution narratives in the *Autobiography*. He described his anger at the injustices perpetrated against the Saints and his accompanying desire to “avenge” them. To be clear, my friend was speaking hyperbolically and in no way intended to start Mountain Meadows II, but his reaction does suggest that Pratt’s message resonates with at least one Mormon in the present.

**ON THE POETICS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE:**
**POETRY IN PARLEY PRATT’S *AUTOBIOGRAPHY***

*Joseph M. Spencer*

Interrupting one of the many banal travel itineraries that punctuate Parley Pratt’s *Autobiography* is a striking poem written—according to the text—during Pratt’s first visit to Niagara Falls. Pedestrian though the itinerary is, it is not without narrative importance. The journey in question was set in motion by an event that Pratt makes into something of a centerpiece for the *Autobiography*. Soon after he had been ordained a member of the original Quorum of the Twelve and immediately after he had received his “endowment of power” in the Kirtland Temple, “Elder Heber C. Kimball and others entered my house, and being filled with the spirit of prophecy, they blessed me and my wife,” telling him that—despite a number of difficulties—he would “go to Upper Canada, even to the city of Toronto” to “find a people prepared for the fulness of the gospel.”

Thus ordained, endowed, and prophetically blessed, Pratt de-

---

1JOSEPH M. SPENCER (stokiejoe@gmail.com) holds degrees from Brigham Young University and San Jose State University and has taught philosophy as an adjunct instructor at Utah Valley University. He is currently pursuing further graduate work in philosophy at the University of New Mexico, where his studies are focused on contemporary French thought. He is the author of *An Other Testament: On Typology* (Salem, Oregon: Salt Press, forthcoming), and he serves on the executive board of the Mormon Theology Seminar (http://mormontheologyseminar.org).

scribes himself as setting out almost immediately for Canada. But although the reader would expect him to leap, narratively speaking, straight from Kirtland’s spiritual outpourings to the series of miracles that structure his recounting of the fabulously successful Canadian mission, Pratt surprisingly interrupts his journey to Toronto to describe his visit to Niagara—and at some length. What is the function, narratively, of this poetic interruption?

It should first be noted that Pratt’s account of the visit to Niagara is, according to the methods and rigor of twenty-first century historiography, most likely inaccurate. While there is no strong reason to question Pratt’s claim that the encounter with Niagara “made a deep and awful impression” on his mind, the “train of reflection” that he says he experienced—along with the poem in which it culminated—seem to have been retrojectively worked into the event. Of the several contemporary primary sources available, only Orson Pratt’s journal mentions Niagara at all, and then only in passing. No contemporary journal from Parley himself has survived, and a letter he wrote from Canada to the *Messenger and Advocate* ten days or so after his arrival says nothing about the visit. In a letter written a few weeks later, after he had returned to Kirtland, Parley says only that reaching Toronto required “a long and tedious journey, through mud and rain.” A letter from Parley to John Taylor about six months later includes a poem that describes the “four regions of the North” as the place “where Bold Niagaras waters Loudly roar,” but it says nothing about the actual visit to Niagara.

Much more importantly, there is strong evidence that the climactic poem that concludes the account in the *Autobiography* could not have been written (at least in its entirety) before 1838: the third and fourth of the poem’s four stanzas appear in Pratt’s 1840 collection of poems under the title “The Falls of Niagara” and under the inscription “Written in Prison.” Unless Pratt was trying to heighten the

---

3Ibid., 141–42.
4Ibid., 142.
5Elden J. Watson, ed., *The Orson Pratt Journals* (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1975), 75–76.
6Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Oliver Cowdery, May 9, 1836; Parley P. Pratt, Letter to Oliver Cowdery, May 26, 1836; Parley P. Pratt, Letter to John Taylor, November 27, 1836; typescripts in my possession courtesy of R. Steven Pratt and Matthew Grow.
pathos of his account by alluding to his imprisonment, he did not compose the second half of the poem until some time between November 1838 and July 1839, when he was making the literary best of his unfortunate prison stay in Missouri. Moreover, the first two stanzas of the Autobiography’s poem do not appear in any form whatsoever in the 1840 collection—a fact that makes it unlikely that they had been composed before 1840. Instead, their first appearance was in the Millennial Star in 1841, where (1) they were combined with the third and fourth stanzas of the poem, and (2) the now-completed poem was coupled with the prose narrative introduction that eventually found its way (in the early 1850s) into the Autobiography. In sum, it seems most likely that Pratt wrote the first two stanzas of the poem, as well as the poem’s “introduction,” only in 1841, rather than in 1836.

It thus seems best to conclude that, at least according to the model of historiography prevailing in the West at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Parley P. Pratt’s autobiographical account of his visit to Niagara is, strictly speaking, “unhistorical”: the poem he claims to have put together as he stood before the falls is actually an 1838–39 poem that he expanded in the early 1840s. But the account’s lack of historicity makes it even more imperative to ask about the narrative function of the Niagara experience in the broader Canadian mission story: If Pratt did not write the account as he did in order to recount “what actually happened,” then what does it accomplish nar-


8Parley P. Pratt, “Reflections on the Falls of Niagara,” Millennial Star 2 (November 1841): 100–101. It should be noted that Pratt here claims that he has excerpted the article “from our private journal.” Because he could not have had access, at the time, to the journals of his fellow-visitors to Niagara, he was apparently referring to his own journal, although no such journal is known to be extant. Even so, the fact that he claimed in 1840 to have written at least part of the poem in prison (in 1838–39) makes it clear that, in producing the Millennial Star article, either (1) he was not entirely faithful to the “original” source he claimed to have been using (if he indeed had one before him), or (2) he was using a journal or other personal record that he had created only since 1838–39. Either way, the account of the event is not, according to the historiographical standards of the early twenty-first century, accurate.
At the very least, the role of the Niagara encounter as interruption is quite clear. Breaking a chain of miraculous events—ordination to the apostleship, endowment in Kirtland, prophetic blessing, and the entirety of the mission experience—the event at Niagara seems a misfit in the broader narrative Pratt constructs. The simple explanation would, then, of course be to suggest that Pratt was so overwhelmed by the spectacle of the falls that he could not forbear describing the event. Unable to resist the breathtaking vision of the falls, he disrupted the flow of his narrative to include a rapturous account of the visit.

However, I would like to explore another interpretive possibility, namely, that the account of the visit—even as an interruption—is essential to the broader narrative in which he construed the mission to Canada as fulfillment of the Kirtland blessing. Indeed, a closer look at the poem and its narrative introduction makes very clear that—in the narrative context of the *Autobiography*—the sublimity of the spectacle is meant to function more as a temptation for Pratt than as a revelation to him.

On this reading, Pratt’s account of the visit to Niagara details a kind of struggle with the temptation that was Romanticism, in which, like the biblical Jacob’s midnight encounter with a mortal enemy (Gen. 32), Pratt is likewise detained by a terrible and fascinating force. Also like Jacob, Pratt holds his foe (Niagara) long enough to wrest from it a kind of renewed existence, a confirmation of sorts of his recently bestowed apostolic office. This reading deserves to be worked out in some detail.

Pratt’s account of his Niagara experience begins with a kind of introduction to the poem, entirely in prose (142–43). After a characteristic description of Niagara as “a lively emblem of eternity,” Pratt describes himself falling into a “train of reflection” that reaches its peak in the poem. Addressing Niagara directly, Pratt attributes to it the desire “to speak in awful pride,” with “mingled feelings of pity and contempt.” The prose ends and the poem begins, then, precisely when Niagara finally claims its voice. The first two stanzas—written, as argued above, in the early 1840s—recount Niagara’s boastful words, first taunting history’s great emperors (“the mighty Pharaohs, the ter-

---

9As Ryan Tobler’s examination points out, this reading would make Pratt just one of many nineteenth-century visitors to the falls, many of whom left elated, poetic accounts of the scene.
rible / Alexanders, the invincible Caesars, / The warlike Hannibal”) and thinkers (“the gifted poets, the splendid / Orators, the profound philosophers / Of Greece and Rome”), and then exulting in having, through its unquestionable beauty, “animated” all “the intelligences of olden worlds” to join with “all the sons of God” in “shout[ing] for joy” at its creation (143–44).

It should not be missed that Pratt carefully employs these first two stanzas to present Niagara’s sublime beauty as a source of unfortunate pride on the part of the falls—its overwhelming grandeur being a temptation as much for Niagara as for Pratt. But if the subtle critique in the poem’s first two stanzas is too easily overlooked, the last two (significantly written while Pratt was in prison) unmistakably—if not didactically—secure Pratt’s appraisal of the falls (144). With the first words of the third stanza, Pratt takes back the voice he has poetically lent to Niagara: “But, boast not, O proud Niagara!” He goes on to acknowledge the beauty of the spectacle but privileges the prophetic word concerning the future over the idolatrous object of the present: “There is a voice to speak, long and loud; / ’Tis Michael’s trump, whose mighty blast shall rend / Thy rocks, and bow thy lofty mountains in the dust,” until “Earth / Restored to its original, receives / Its final rest, and groans and sighs no more.” Concluding the poem in the fourth stanza, Pratt describes the roar of the falls as “a funeral dirge” whose boastful taunts are, in the end and despite its pretensions otherwise, merely so much “weep[ing] o’er the miseries / Of a fallen world in anguish deep.”

With the silencing of Niagara accomplished by the third and fourth stanzas of the poem, Pratt narratively accomplishes two simultaneous goals. On the one hand, he finally secures the status of the Niagara encounter as a temptation rather than a revelation. But on the other hand, and precisely through his silencing conversion of Niagara from revelation to temptation, he presents himself as having—in 1836 and on location at the falls (in other words, at the moment of most powerful temptation)—overcome that temptation by preaching to the falls, delivering to Niagara the very message he would go on to present to the people of Toronto. In essence, his message in both locations was that the sounding of the trump was near that would announce the restoration of the whole material world to its original Edenic purity. Pratt’s autobiographical narrative of visiting Niagara thus not only marks the spectacle as a temptation, but also presents Pratt as proving his apostolic fervor (and hence his worthiness for that calling) by
overcoming the temptation and preaching to what he himself called the “wonder of nature.”

A final, historiographical question should at least be mentioned. Historian and philosopher Jacques Rancière has suggested that written history—as a “poetics of knowledge”—is a creative weaving together of three commitments: a “scientific contract,” a “narrative [or literary] contract,” and a “political contract.”10 If it is the case, as has often been suggested, that Parley P. Pratt established the model for Mormon autobiography—and thus, by extension, for Mormon self-understanding—how might these reflections on Pratt’s use of poetry in his *Autobiography* open up possibilities for thinking, whether anthropologically or philosophically, about the uniquely Mormon poetics of self-knowledge? This question, I think, deserves attention.11

**THE CONVERSION OF PARLEY PRATT: INVESTIGATING THE PATTERNS OF MORMON PIETY**

*Matthew Bowman*

**DEFINITIONS**

In the context of the Reformation, “piety” or “pietist” are used to refer to the introspective, mystical, “heart religion” that emerged most profoundly among German Protestants in the seventeenth cen-

---


11 Is there a possibility that Pratt—perhaps early Mormonism’s most astute reader of the Book of Mormon—was influenced by Nephite historiography? Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 89–213, argues for a similarly three-pronged, complex understanding of Mormon’s historiographical methodology.

1 MATTHEW BOWMAN {matthewbbowman@gmail.com} is a Ph.D. candidate in American religious history at Georgetown University and is a 2010–11 Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellow. He is completing his dissertation, which examines the practice of evangelicalism and the rise of Protestant fundamentalism in early twentieth-century New York City. He is the author of several articles on Mormon and evangelical history.
tury, but also among the English Puritans. The Germans Jakob Boehme and Philip Spener, the Puritan Lewis Bayly, and the Anglican William Law were the most influential of these writers. Their works were devotional manuals, comprised of instructions on how to pray, to read scripture, to meditate; how, in short, to cultivate a personal relationship with God. As Bayly argued, “Without piety there is no internal comfort to be found in conscience, nor external peace to be looked for.” In 1982, historian Charles Hambrick-Stowe borrowed Bayly’s title for his The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England detailing the elaborate patterns of devotion, of worship, and of method by which Puritans sought to know their Father; since that time, historians have used the term “piety” to describe these devotions.

John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards, the founders of the movement called “evangelicalism” which dominated early nineteenth-century America, studied the works of all these figures. And they not only read them; they used them. The pietist writers were not theologians but pastors, concerned more with how religion was lived than how it was understood. These founders of evangelicalism took the pietist works, synthesizing them into a process which they called “conversion,” which, behind the evangelical movement, became the central preoccupation of American religion in the early nineteenth century.

“Conversion” is a notoriously sticky word, even if we limit it to the religious, and within that, Christian, and within that, Reformed Protestant tradition, from which Mormonism emerged. Three of its vectors are relevant to Parley Pratt’s—and more broadly—to the American Protestant experience. The first has to do with the will; the second with human nature; and the third with the power of the Holy Spirit.


At the most basic level, the biblical Hebrew and Greek words usually translated as “conversion” mean something like “turn” or “return.” These verbs imply that there is something of volition in the event: that it is a choice and an action. This is how, generally, the Latter-day Saint missionary presents it: as a process, a series of actions that the prospective convert willingly pursues, a remaking of the self.

This last point gestures to the second way much of Christian theology has often understood conversion. It has not only to do with believing something, but also with, simply, being. As St. Augustine, whose conversion experience remains (alongside that of St. Paul) the paradigmatic example of the event, realized that, to be converted was not merely to realize that one believed in God; rather, it was a series of steps that began with exposure to knowledge of God, but which was followed, of necessity, by knowledge of the self. The second, for Augustine, was much more difficult than the first; we can accept God only in the abstract, he mused, but to know ourselves in the light of that knowledge is to know of our own fallen and incomplete state, to be aware how much we depend upon the Creator. Evangelicals call this often devastating movement “conviction of sin.” But, paradoxically, to be convicted was also to be granted the sort of self-knowledge that was ultimately freeing.

Augustine’s wrestle with himself reveals the extent to which an ultimately pessimistic understanding of human nature lay at the bottom of Christian theologies of conversion. For Augustine and many other Christians who followed him, the New Testament spoke of a humanity enslaved to something called sin. Sin was not, as St. Paul taught of it, merely wrong action, but rather an ultimately corrupted state of being. Behaviors themselves, therefore, are secondary expressions, not primary causes. As St. Paul asks, wondering why he wrongs others knowing that it’s not what God would have him do:

---

5See, for instance, Augustine, *Confessions*, 5.14.25, translated by Edward Pusey (1909; rpt., New York: Modern Library, 1999), in which the saint agonizes about whether to join the church (the physical community of Christians) though he has already intellectually assented to the theology.  
6Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.11.25-26, is the most famous explication of this point. It records Augustine’s cry: “And as I spake, I all but enacted it; I all but did it, and did it not; yet I sank not back to my former state.”
I can will what is right, but I cannot do
For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.
Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. (Rom. 7:18-20 NRSV)

Thus, to be converted is not merely an act of will but a transformation of being. Conversion is a change of mind, but also of spirit, a reorganization of the relational networks that we use to define ourselves, and even a reformation of our inclinations—those things that our instinct and desires foist off upon us at the deepest of levels. It is a conscious, but also unconscious change. For St. Paul, it is perhaps not eradication of sin (for Paul, of course, still struggles; a thorn continues to prickle his flesh) but the gift of a new nature that saves him from this bondage and is derived of Christ:

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Rom. 8:9–10 NRSV)

Christians have explained this dance between the power of our will to choose, the intractability of our sinful natures, and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in many different ways, emphasizing each to different proportions. Below, I will first present the heritage that Mormonism inherited from the American evangelical world and then describe Parley Pratt’s own depiction of his conversion as an archetype of Mormon conversion experiences.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONVERSION

The great scriptural model of conversion is Paul, whom God threw stricken to the dirt of the Damascus road. This overpowering religious experience translated his motivations, sense of morality, and even identity in the twinkling of an eye, particularly compared to Augustine’s laborious, years-long process. Many Christians still privi-
lege, or at least value, this sort of charismatic experience. The revivals of
the First Great Awakening that Wesley and Edwards witnessed in the eight-
teenth century, among many Calvinist evangelicals and holiness Chris-
tians in the nineteenth, and in the spiritual eruptions of Pentecostalism in
the twentieth, all celebrated conversion as an outpouring of the grace of
the Holy Spirit or, in the dialect of modern Pentecostalism, the “latter
rain.” The language here is important. An “outpouring” of conversion
and awakening are not sought or earned or gained. Rather, they simply
come. This was conversion as the Puritans described it.8 Unwilled by
humans, it was instead inflicted, as was Paul’s, by God.

These Christians craved such events but believed they were not
theirs to choose; their piety was rigorous, but also, to a certain extent,
quietist. They believed in human depravity and, thus, that salvation
would come only and entirely through a gracious act of God—un-
earned. They prayed for revival but ultimately placed their fate in the
hands of the Spirit. However, they knew the channels that God had
ordained for such experience; as Paul taught, “faith comes through
hearing” (Rom. 10:17, NIV). God interacted with the world through
the Word—the command of creation, the Incarnation of Christ, and
the text of scripture. This was why the Bible was a book different from
any other; it was why preaching replaced the mass as the center of the
liturgy.

The ways in which piety was directed toward conversion emerg-
ed in their struggles. “Methodism,” like “Mormonism,” was originally
a term of derision, for Wesley and his followers strove to rigorously, or
even methodically, pattern their lives following the Word—the hours
of their days were marked off by scripture study, by prayer, and by
worship.9 They desired nothing more than the possibility of a tran-
scendent encounter with the Word, for they would thus encounter the

8For explanations of the First Great Awakening according to this
model, see, for instance, Jonathan Edwards, A Faithful Narrative of the Sur-
prising Work of God (New York: Dunning and Spalding, 1832), 51–57; Frank
Lambert, Inventing the Great Awakening (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univer-
sity Press, 1999), 25–32; Thomas Kidd, The Great Awakening: The Roots of
Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univer-
sity Press, 2007), 15–24. For the Latter Rain Covenant, see Edith Blumhofer
and Randall Balmer, Modern Christian Revivals (Urbana: University of Illi-
nois Press, 1993), 150–57. For references to the “latter rain,” see, e.g., James
5:7, Jer. 5:25, Joel 2:23.
saving event embodied in Christ and, if God chose, would be reborn a Christian, a new person, elected to salvation, and birthed in the Holy Spirit.

But in the ecstasies of the First Great Awakening lay the seeds of an alternative interpretation of conversion. This alternative was flavored not only by Methodist Arminianism (ultimately, the belief that the human will could play a role in its salvation), but also by the developing contours of American psychology. Revivalist Charles Grandison Finney, preeminent among American evangelicals in the 1820s and 1830s, believed that human beings were fallen but also that they were not incapable of accepting the mercy God held out to them. God offered personal regeneration; humans had only to overcome their sinful natures enough take it. And more, they know the truth upon hearing it; this was Common Sense theology.10

To Finney, depravity merely meant that the emotions and the souls of his hearers had to be sufficiently pummeled into humility before they would accept God’s grace. Thus, borrowing from the emotional techniques of the Methodists, Finney reconceived of the conversion event as an emotional choice that people had to be persuaded to make, under duress, if necessary. He was famous for his charisma; his blazing eyes, his spirited exhortation that his audience weep for their sins, his summons that the humbled walk publicly down the aisles of the church. He was willing to keep his listeners praying for spiritual manifestations in his tabernacles until late at night, all of which created an atmosphere sufficiently emotional that would invite the Holy Spirit to help his listeners overcome the natural reticence of the sinner. This was piety as theatrical technique.11

Finney, and many others influenced by Methodist theology, also amplified the effects of conversion, and ultimately developed a notion

---

11On Finney’s revivals in New York, see Charles Hambrick-Stowe,
of “perfectionism” from a concept called “sanctification” that Wesley had toyed with. That is, as Finney and some of Wesley’s more radical followers eventually concluded, a convert could become so aligned with the Holy Spirit as to eradicate any trace of the sinner’s nature. This holiness could be lost, but also gained. Some Calvinists accepted the doctrine but were more hesitant and preferred to speak of “covering” or “subduing” the sinful nature rather than destroying it. Such people were never the majority of American Protestants (and eventually became the parents of today’s Pentecostals), but they are perhaps the most dramatic example of confidence in what conversion could make of a sinner.

Many contemporary evangelicals still conceive of themselves as Finney-ites; Billy Graham and his children are the most famous. But a third conception of conversion relevant to understanding how Mormons think of the concept emerged in the later nineteenth century. Congregationalist minister Horace Bushnell was among those who found Finney’s theatrics distasteful. Rather, Bushnell insisted that, if Christians began bringing their children up correctly, they need never know that they were unsaved. Conversion, for Bushnell, was not an event but a process, a gradual weaning of the soul away from the selfishness of the natural man toward the faithfulness of the Christian. Thus, piety became domesticated, transformed from the rigorous religious practices of the Puritans toward the moral niceties of the Victorian class. Like Finney, Bushnell believed that the initiation of conversion lay within human capabilities. For Bushnell, Christians did not become such through the abrupt intervention of the Holy Spirit but through simply acting as though they were Christians all along, bathing their lives in God’s grace, line upon line.


CONVERSION AMONG THE MORMONS

Mormons tend not to speak of "conversion" as a sort of divine intervention that changes human nature through the working of the Spirit. Rather, Mormons emphasize the will. Conversion among the Latter-day Saints is the choice all are capable of making, given the evidence of the spiritual experience. The LDS Bible Dictionary defines conversion as the "conscious acceptance of the will of God," citing Acts 3:19. Here, human will works in tandem with the Holy Spirit; faith is the result of seeking spiritual experience, which experience in turn produces increased confidence in the Spirit, which in turn produces increased spiritual experience. The current missionary manual, Preach My Gospel, speaks of "the witness of the Spirit" and quotes current Apostle M. Russell Ballard: "When individuals feel the Spirit working with them, or when they see the evidence of the Lord’s love and mercy in their lives, they are edified and strengthened spiritually, and their faith in Him increases." Mormons would therefore side with Finney against Edwards, though they might find his methods distasteful, preferring the decorum and optimism about human capability that Bushnell offers. And as with Bushnell, there’s little sense of the radical regeneration of a depraved human soul in Mormon language about conversion; rather, Mormons emphasize process and effort. They see in conversion not metaphysical transformation but the cultivation of character.

And this is where Parley Pratt might help. Here is what Mormons would generally call his conversion experience:

I opened [the Book of Mormon] with eagerness, and read its title page. I then read the testimony of the several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this, I commenced its comments by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows he exists. My joy was now full, as it were, and I rejoiced sufficiently to more than pay me for all the sorrows, sacrifices, and toils of my life.

Parley’s is a paradigmatic Mormon conversion experience. It is

---

14Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Work (Salt Lake City: LDS Church, 2004), 93.
how things are supposed to work, based, of course, on the claim of the text itself in Moroni 10, and the way Mormons have traditionally applied that passage. Pratt’s is the model missionaries are taught to pursue with potential converts. As Preach My Gospel instructs, “Reading, pondering, and praying about the Book of Mormon are critical for an enduring conversion,” and “The honest seeker of truth will soon come to feel that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.”

Finally, I wish to contextualize Pratt’s conversion in the context of the competing models contemporary to him in nineteenth-century America.

First, Pratt’s conversion would have sounded entirely typical to an evangelical of the early nineteenth century. It was an encounter with the word as the Word—with scripture as the medium of God’s grace. Many evangelicals treated—and still treat—the Bible as a tool of devotion in the same ways that Mormons treat the Book of Mormon: studying it, praying about it, speaking of it as a miracle and evidence of God’s benevolence. It is as much an object of devotion as it is a text, and a tool for inspiring converting encounters with God.

Second, Parley presented his experience in a narrative format. In 1737 Jonathan Edwards wrote A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God, a work which, along with his later The Life of David Brainerd, laid the patterns of evangelical piety. In his stories of converts, Edwards presented models of conversion that his readers could emulate. Pratt’s narrative, along, of course, with Joseph Smith’s own narrative of his search for knowledge of the divine, gave Mormons their own models. And unlike Edwards’s work, which closely tracked the Reformed theology as it manifested itself in the lives of the believers of Northampton, Massachusetts, Smith and Pratt provided in their lives not doctrine, but stories which their followers imitated. Mormon piety is about modeling, and imitation—replication of the behavior experiences of preceding generations in hopes of gaining similar results. It’s why works like Lucy Mack Smith’s history of her son, the Autobiography of Parley Pratt, and the countless life chronicles of various apostles sell so well. It’s why the appetite for biographies of Joseph Smith remains insatiable. Mormons are not seeking cheap

15Pratt, Autobiography, 38.
16Preach my Gospel, 38.
inspiration, but spiritual guidance.

What might startle Pratt’s evangelical contemporaries was that his experience was less an encounter with the Christ of the Atonement than the acquisition of knowledge about the truth of the book itself. That is, his encounter was intellectual rather than metaphysical. He does not report that his experience assured him of his salvation, but rather that it convinced him of a particular truth. His conversion was not, then, the type that evangelicals like Edwards or Finney presented. For them, Parley’s truck would have lurched to a stop halfway down the trail. He had learned about God but had not been reborn. This insight might well force us to reconceive how Mormons speak to Protestants about conversion.

All Christians believe that conversion is a process; the difference is what parts of that process one compresses and what parts one speeds up. For evangelicals, the moment between the conviction of sin and the reception of grace can be but a breath; the lifelong struggle is the progression toward sanctification. For Mormons, as Pratt demonstrates, conviction has always already occurred; all human beings have what Mormons call the light of Christ, or what Methodists call prevenient grace, setting alive in them a hunger for the truth. The moment of contact for Mormons, therefore, is not the plunge into despair followed by the glory of relief that evangelical conversion consists of but is, rather, a sense of homecoming and a call to the new life that this knowledge brings. This difference, more than anything, illustrates the full extent to which Mormons repudiated from the very beginning the depravity of humankind.

THE CONJUGAL RELATIONSHIPS OF PARLEY P. PRATT AS PORTRAYED IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Cheryl L. Bruno

SEARCHING PARLEY P. PRATT’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY for clues about his

1CHERYL L. BRUNO (clbruno@hotmail.com) served a mission in Quebec, Canada, and has had a keen interest in Mormon history since that time. Her degree is in physical education with graduate work in educational psychology. Cheryl has coached high school and summer league swimming for many years. While teaching at Prince Sultan University in
love and marital experiences is a fascinating enterprise, both because of what is included and what is purposely left silent. As Matthew Grow details, Pratt drew upon many of his earlier writings, journals, and letters to form the posthumous *Autobiography*. During this process, much of the information concerning family relationships was excised. Although the holograph manuscript no longer exists, and later Parley Jr., John Taylor and possibly others made editorial decisions as well, the omitted information provides insight into the portrait Pratt has sketched of his life.

Certainly Pratt’s emphasis in writing his life history was to establish his place in building the kingdom of God, especially through his missionary work. But enough information is included about his conjugal relationships to demonstrate that he viewed his family as part of an ever-growing kingdom. Pratt’s references to his wives demonstrate conflicting feelings arising from his successes and failures in putting into practice a uniquely Mormon vision of the family kingdom. He juggles familial concerns, ecclesiastical duties, and religious commitments in a way designed to be both representative and instructive to his readers.

Parley’s first wife, Thankful, is introduced in the *Autobiography* in brief but glowing vignettes commencing with their courtship and concluding with her death on March 25, 1837. She remained a source of passion, symbolism, and spiritual guidance for him throughout his life.\(^2\) Still, only six weeks later, he married Mary Ann Frost Stearns, a widow with one child, in May 1837. In his *Autobiography*, Pratt leaves Mary Ann out of a narrative that, to this point, had been sequential. Instead, he skips ahead to devote an entire chapter to his subsequent return to Canada and activities in the state of New York in 1837 and 1838 before finally providing a brief note about his remarriage.\(^3\) Pratt seems to be placing a respectful distance between the death of Thankful and

---

Saudi Arabia, she organized the country’s first university-level girls’ basketball team.

\(^2\)Pratt, *Autobiography*, 261. The spirit of the deceased Thankful comforted Parley while in prison. In other places, he recounted the role she played in encouraging him to practice polygamy. According to family legend, she appeared to him in 1843 and told him “that by taking other wives he would be adding to his own glory in the next world and thus would make her a queen over the other wives who would become her handmaids.” George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: “. . . but we called it celestial marriage”* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), 333.
his marriage to Mary Ann.

The *Autobiography* in general is quite vague, even duplicitous concerning Mary Ann. By the time the text was penned, she and Pratt had gone their separate ways, an estrangement that may account for the reticence of his descriptions. The one exception is of special note. When Pratt encountered Joseph Smith in Philadelphia between August 1839 and January 1840, the Prophet taught some “great and glorious principles” about the “eternal family organization” and the “heavenly order of eternity.” Smith revealed “that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love,” wrote Pratt. The teachings had such an effect upon the apostle that he included poetic and discursive rapturous thoughts, including the vision of a woman standing as a queen and priestess to her husband, reigning forever over their numerous and increasing offspring. “I had loved before,” he exulted, “but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean.” The explanation for his newly acquired knowledge depicts “the wife of my bosom” as an “immortal, eternal companion”—a kind ministering angel, “given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory for ever and ever.” These especially striking thoughts, most likely referring to Thankful, were placed in the narrative in a way that suggested they were referring to Mary Ann, his wife in 1839 when he had this illuminating encounter with Joseph. However, he assembled most of his autobiography during 1854–55. Not only were Parley and MaryAnn estranged during the time that he was putting together his reminiscences, but some speculate that she had been sealed for eternity to another. Indeed, as he wrote these words, Pratt was beginning to imbue the words “my wife” with the concept of his family kingdom, a cadre that would eventually include twelve women in all.

---

3Pratt, *Autobiography*, 188; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text. “On May 9th I received the hand of Mary Ann Frost, daughter of Aaron Frost, of Bethel, Oxford County, Maine, in marriage. She was the widow of Nathan Stearns, and had one daughter, about four years of age.”


5Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 208–9. Smith speculates that “Mary Ann was sealed to Parley on June 23, 1843, by Hyrum Smith, but Joseph subse-
At the beginning of 1843, Parley Pratt returned to the States from a mission to England, and the Autobiography commenced one of the longest and most portentous silences within its narrative. For the following year Parley wrote simply that his time “was spent in the ministry, and in building, travelling, etc.” (366). Only outside sources disclose that in June 1843 the eternal sealing of Parley and Mary Ann was performed by Hyrum Smith. Dramatic repercussions, shrouded in mystery, ensued. The sealing was canceled by the Prophet Joseph, citing Hyrum’s lack of authority. Shortly thereafter, on the 24th of July, a now-authorized Hyrum sealed Parley to his first wife, Thankful, his civil wife, Mary Ann, and a plural wife, Elizabeth Brotherton. This started a chain of events that would result in an alienation of affection and Parley and Mary Ann’s eventual divorce ten years later in Utah. These two clandestine proceedings, no doubt monumental at the time, were deleted a decade later when Pratt sought to create a didactic, familial narrative.

Pratt continued to write about additional mission work, returning to Nauvoo following the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and being “appointed by the President and others of the Twelve to go East, and take charge of churches in the Atlantic States.” He left on December 2, 1844; and when he returned to Nauvoo in August 1845, he merely noted: “I found my family mostly in health, and was rejoiced to meet them” (374, 376). But he does not inform the reader that, by this time, his family included his son by Thankful, Parley Jr.; his second monogamous wife, Mary Ann Frost Stearns, her daughter by her first husband, Mary Ann Stearns, and two of her children by Parley: Olivia and Moroni (two other children had died); and plural wives Elizabeth Brotherton; Mary Wood; Hannahette Snively and her newborn son Alma by Parley; and Belinda Marden, who was


**7** Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 208.
pregnant. While attending to the business of the Quorum of the
Twelve and administering the endowment in the Nauvoo Temple be-
tween August 1845 and February 1846, he married two additional
wives: Sarah Huston and Phoebe Soper.

Within days of his marriage to Phoebe, the Saints were driven
out of Nauvoo in February 1846. Camping in tents and vacant log cab-
ins for more than a year while Pratt was performing ecclesiastical du-
ties, his wives and children struggled along with numerous other
newly formed polygamous families. During this time, whenever Pratt
referred to his “family,” the narrative seems to imply that he meant
only Mary Ann and her children. But he is more likely speaking of his
other wives and children—his growing family kingdom. For, although
Pratt’s narrative does not mention it, Mary Ann had in fact, taken her
three surviving children, returned to Nauvoo in October 1846, and in
March 1848 went to live with her parents in Maine for about three
years. While Parley and his plural wives reached Salt Lake City with
the second company of pioneers in September of 1847, Mary Ann did
cross the plains until June of 1852, traveling with the Harmon
Cutler Company. When Pratt included a poem sent to his family at
Winter Quarters in November 1846 addressed to “my dearest wife,” it

Ibid., 613–14. For marriage dates of all of Parley’s wives mentioned
in this article, see Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy, 613–14.

Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy, 613, dates Pratt’s sealings to Sarah Huston
and Phoebe E. Sopher as October 15, 1845, but also notes that Lyndon
Cook’s Nauvoo Marriages, Proxy Sealings: 1843–1846 (2000), dates Phoebe’s
marriage as February 8, 1846. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor,
The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, Revised and Enhanced Edition (Salt
Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 598, found that the temple was closed on
that date.

Jayne W. Fife and Roselyn Kirk, “Western Maine Saints, Part 3: A
Bethel Family (Frost): Nauvoo, Bethel, and across the Plains to Utah,” The
Courier 31, no. 3 (2007), http://www.bethelhistorical.org/Western_Maine
_Saints.html (accessed July 28, 2010). In October 1852, after he returned
from a mission to Chile, he included a short note that is the first and only in-
timation for the reader concerning Parley’s separation from Mary Ann:
“On my arrival home I found my wife, Mary Ann Frost, and my two chil-
dren, Olivia and Moroni, who had arrived from Maine, where they had
been for several years. The two children were glad to see me, but their
mother had for several years been alienated from me. I, however, supported
is difficult to determine to whom it refers. While the narrative gives the impression that it is addressed to Mary Ann, it seems more probable that Pratt is speaking of his family kingdom, which better highlights some of its lyrics: “Best of Heaven’s gifts to man, / my germs of Life and immortality, / [M]y hope of Heaven, / My principality on earth began, / My kingdom in embryo, big with thrones of endless power and wide dominion” (388–89).

Other references Pratt made to his family during the same segment of the narrative include his description of returning to Winter Quarters in April 1847 after a mission to Liverpool (July 1846-April 1847). At the moment of reunion, however, Parley enumerated his cattle more exactly than the fourteen persons who constitute his family.11 During his short stay at Winter Quarters, as he prepared wagons to take his family west, Parley married two more wives on April 28, 1847—Martha Monks12 and Ann Agatha Walker, bringing the total of those who made the trek to Salt Lake together to eight. He later added two final wives: Keziah Downs in 1853 and Eleanor McComb in 1855.

her until the following spring, when she applied for and obtained a bill of divorce; after which, with the two children, she removed to Utah County” (455).

11Ibid., 397–98. “I found my family all alive, and dwelling in a log cabin. They had, however, suffered much from cold, hunger and sickness. They had oftentimes lived for several days on a little corn meal, ground on a hand mill, with no other food. One of the family was then lying very sick with the scurvy disease which had been very prevalent in camp during the winter, and of which many had died. I found, on inquiry, that the winter had been very severe, the snow deep, and, consequently, that all my horses (four in number) were lost, and I afterwards ascertained that out of twelve cows I had but seven left, and out of some twelve or fourteen oxen only four or five were spared.”

12Arthur D. Coleman, Pratt Pioneers of Utah (Provo, Utah: J. G. Stevenson, 1967), 61. Martha Monks married Parley in 1847 and came to Utah the same year with the family. Her first home in Salt Lake Valley was in the fort where, on January 30, 1849, she gave birth to her first child, Ether. She suffered greatly when, on February 22, the child died and was buried in or near the fort. Martha later was separated from Apostle Pratt and soon afterward left for California where she died. Orson Pratt, Brief Abstract of Genealogy and Ancestry of Jared Pratt, Jared Pratt Family Organization, http://jared.pratt-family.org/general_histories/genealogy-of-jared-pratt.html (accessed July 25, 2010). Orson Pratt adds that Martha Monks left her
His narrative includes none of the details of his plural marriages nor the dissolution of his marriage to Monks. Like other tensions in his familial relationships, this marital discord is removed from the presentation of his life in these pages. If these facts were included, the narrative would tell a very different tale, allowing a glimpse of the pressures incurred by faithful efforts to comply with Church teachings that encouraged—even mandated—polygamy despite inner conflict and outside criticism. Years of preaching away from home must have been an added strain, as well as financial concerns and the pain of children’s deaths, divorce, and separation. But Parley’s *Autobiography*, a polished view of his personal history, reinterprets these events in the grand and glorious image of an eternal family dynasty.

The final four chapters of Parley P. Pratt’s *Autobiography* defend plural marriage. Here, at last, are found references to plural wives and children in letters, articles, poetry, and journal entries. These details are not part of his developing story and are not presented in the same style as the rest of the narrative. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to decipher how this final section was affected by later editing. The appendix recounts his murder “by three bloodthirsty wretches” but omits the name of Eleanor McLean, whose marriage to Pratt resulted in his death. Again, the image of the story defines the way in which the wife was depicted in—or, in this case, removed from—the narrative.

Parley P. Pratt’s *Autobiography* could be described as revisionist history because of his reinterpretations of events while looking back on his life. Though aware of his failures and weaknesses in the family arena, he ached to make sense of these relationships and how to fit them into his personal religious framework. His sentimental fare-

—

husband July 1, 1849, and eloped with “unprincipled men” to the gold mines.

13These scattered references are: On Parley’s forty-eighth birthday, he gave gifts “to each of my wives.” *Autobiography*, 474. He spent time in the San Jose Valley, in California, with his wife Elizabeth (458). One Monday he “visited my wife Sarah and her two children, Julia and Teancum, who resided on my farm” (478). He made a trip to Ogden with his wife Belinda (479), took a carriage ride with his wife Mary (479), went to Fillmore with his wife Agatha (480), and wrote his family history with his wife Keziah (483). The autobiography includes a letter addressed to his wife Hannahette (497).
well to Thankful is replete with the comfort of later revealed doctrine and images of thrones and priestesses seated on the thrones of their husband—theological innovations that were unknown at her death.\textsuperscript{14} When Mary Ann’s independence didn’t fit the model of the dutiful plural wife, he altered time sequences and locations, using “wife” as a much more inclusive reference to the entire polygamous familial relationship.\textsuperscript{15} He quietly omits Martha’s and Eleanor’s dramatic and indecorous stories in an attempt to downplay marital strife. All of these techniques contribute to the portrayal that Pratt wished to present of his conjugal affairs, epitomized in his statement: “Our virtuous wives and children, given us by the law of God, are our glory; our crown of rejoicing; our kingdom in embryo, big with thrones of power and immortality” (470). Indeed, the \textit{Autobiography} is important documentation of tensions between early Latter-day Saint marital practices and their kingdom-building outreach.

\section*{Parley Pratt and the Problem of Separating Latin and Anglo America}

\textit{David C. Knowlton}\textsuperscript{1}

The division of America into two, Latin and Anglo, is a strange

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 182–83. “Farewell, my dear Thankful, thou wife of my youth, and mother of my first born; the beginning of my strength—farewell. Yet a few more lingering years of sorrow, pain and toil, and I shall be with thee, and clasp thee to my bosom, and thou shalt sit down on my throne, as a queen and priestess unto thy lord, arrayed in white robes of dazzling splendor and decked with precious stones and gold, while thy queen sisters shall minister before thee and bless thee, and thy sons and daughters innumerable shall call thee blessed, and hold thy name in everlasting remembrance.” Thankful died in 1837, well before Joseph Smith’s introduction of eternal marriage.

\textsuperscript{15}See ibid., chap. 44, where Pratt addresses a poetic chapter to a “wife” and family; at that point, he actually had seven wives and five living children dwelling in tents at Council Bluffs.

\textsuperscript{1}DAVID C. KNOWLTON (dknowlton@uvu.edu) is an associate professor of anthropology at Utah Valley University. His interests include Latin America, Mormonism, and social theory.
and deceptive cut, particularly when used for academic analysis. If used to refer simply to matters of nation-states, the contrast has some utility, but it founders if taken as a statement of cultural separation. The boundaries are simply far too fuzzy and probably always have been, simply because of the ways in which colonial, and later national, powers competed in the New World and because of the ways in which enterprises and people migrated and engaged one another.\(^2\)

This issue is particularly germane for understanding Mormonism. Despite its growth outside the New World, Mormonism is almost entirely a religion of the Americas. We can argue, however—and this is important—that its growth both depended on (and still does) on the separation of Anglo America from Latin America as a political reality at the same time that it has depended on blurring the lines both now and in the past. To understand this dynamic, it is useful to look, briefly—far too briefly—at Parley P. Pratt.

Pratt is generally argued to have been the first missionary to Latin America, when he performed his short and troubled mission to Chile.\(^3\) Leaving aside for a moment the question of “first,” the Latin American-ness is not so clear, despite his being in Chile, on the far southern edge of Spanish-speaking America. Pratt moved in a world dominated by English mercantilism and a local English-speaking population during his few months in Valparaíso. In Quillota, although he was more involved with a monolingual Spanish-speaking world, his activities were still informed by the broader place of British and Anglo-American mercantilism.\(^4\) Nevertheless Pratt’s missionary work was made possible—yet ultimately frustrated by—the realities of how

\(^2\)José Limón’s work is a useful introduction to some of the complexity of the border and its rhetorical construction, as opposed to its empirical complexity and lack of clarity. See, for example, his *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) and *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

\(^3\)See, for example, Néstor Curbelo, *Historia de los mormones en Argentina: Relatos de pioneros* (Buenos Aires: N. Curbelo, 2000).

\(^4\)For example, see Michelle Prain Brice, “Presencia británica en el Valparaíso del siglo xix: Una aproximación al legado institucional y cultural de la colonia británica en chile” in *Bicentenario: Revista de Historia de Chile Y América* 6 (2007): 5–38.
the Anglophone world engaged the Hispanophone world at a time of English mercantilism and Chilean involvement in trade with English-speaking populations. But understanding this requires a more-than-usually careful look.

The growth of Mormonism is not simply a matter of the Lord preparing the way or the movement of the Spirit as a matter of historiographic approach. Rather Mormonism itself is a social and cultural project that takes form and presence in certain political economic circumstances and relies on them, at the same time it is limited by them, for its growth.

Much needed is a comparison of Mormon non-growth in Chile with its success in England, Scandinavia, and Polynesia at the same time that takes serious account of the social, political, and economic contexts of Mormon growth. Each was a different place, and Mormonism entered in different ways—that is, it fit into different contexts which then enabled or constrained it.

Unfortunately, that is not the task of this essay. In Chile, Pratt was hampered in his efforts by his lack of Spanish, to be sure, though he had more than many give him credit for, including himself, as Grover’s and Palmer’s work points out. He was well on his way to a usable communicative competence even though his autobiography is filled with frustration at his linguistic inabilities. In fact, the autobiography leaves out many of the ways in which Pratt was using Spanish and writing in it even without full command.

More importantly, Pratt was hampered by the expectations from

---

5 Though I have great respect for the historical works of both F. LaMond Tullis, Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987) and Mark Grover, A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960–1965 (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), I think their books suffer from being hybrid works—torn between an internal LDS hermeneutic qua historiography and a more social scientific standard of explication. There is a world of difference, however, between their work and more internal LDS histories, such as that of Néstor Curbelo, Historia de los mormones en Argentina, Rodolfo Acevedo, Los mormones en Chile (Santiago, Chile: Impresos y Publicaciones Cumora, 1990), and so on.

his religious culture of how religion and conversion should operate.7 There were severe differences between his religious culture and that of the Spanish-speaking Catholics he hoped to proselyte. Pratt’s detailed and extensive dismay at formal Catholic worship illustrates the gap between his expectations and the nature of Latin Catholic practice.8 They were deliberately separated worlds, following the sixteenth century Council of Trent’s reaction against the Protestant Reformation and the periodic reformations of Latin American Catholicism to make it less like the Protestantism that was the base of Mormonism.9 They also were separations that fit into the political calculus of national elites.

Pratt expected to write and preach, using language to create communication with religious power, instead of establishing an institution among the English-speaking population that shared his norms, or using the distribution of the Bible as a means of reaching a Chilean population. He did not rely on healing and miracles, which might have gained him a bigger audience, as a holy man performing holy acts, nor did he understand the ways in which holy images and holy days are tied to place and people’s life histories, nor the places where holy individuals can make a difference and develop a following.

Forming the issue this way, however, overstates the difference between Pratt’s religious culture and that of the Latin American Catholics he hoped to proselyte. The field of Latin American Catholic studies is very rich and diverse. For an entry from my point of view, see Jean Meyer, Historia de los cristianos en América Latina: Siglos XIX y XX (N.p.: Vuelta, 1989), Luis Millones, Díoses familiares: Festivales populares en el Perú contemporáneo (N.p.: Ediciones del Congreso del Perú, 1999), and Cristián Parker, Otra lógica en América Latina, religión popular y modernización (Santiago, Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996).

between Pratt’s Anglo Protestant world and Chilean Catholicism, just as
the ideologues—or perhaps more accurately, “theologues”—would have it. Catholicism was more diverse in practice than the theologues liked. As sociologist Jean Pierre Bastian observed, this diversity provided the most important possibilities for Protestant growth in Latin America. Many Anglo Protestant missionaries found niches for implanting and cultivating their faith in this Catholic world; Mormons did not. Protestants particularly found ground among liberal Catholics who were influenced by the broader currents of a liberal, positivist focus on reason and belief. That Protestants found ground for growth in this period and Mormons did not is the fact that requires historiographic thought and historical explanation. It requires careful comparison with successful missionary efforts during the same time period and a clear articulation of the question about why Pratt either did not know about or rely on the means that would have led to success.

Pratt was hampered by his misreading of the civil war then in course in Chile. Generally, this circumstance is written as some variant of “Pratt arrived in Chile to find a civil war making his mission impossible.” However, I would argue that the idea is a misreading. Before leaving the United States, Pratt was in San Francisco, the sister port of Valparaíso, where Chileans were a numerous and much commented-on part of the city. News from Chile arrived faster than news from Boston and was very current.

Instead of focusing on whether Pratt did or did not know about Chile’s politics, the more important issue is the way Mormonism moved in the world. In Pratt’s rendering, Mormon success required a relationship with the state and formal liberalism that was not available under the ruling conservatives who won the war, although most people in Pratt’s worlds—those of liberal commerce in the California gold rush—seemed to expect the liberal reformers to win. Many Protestant groups, in contrast, did not depend on formal acceptance and state-sponsored liberalism to the degree Mormonism did. They found a place in Chilean society, while Pratt returned to the United States.

In other words, the issue behind Pratt’s short mission to Chile was less one of language and the conservative victory than it was of

how Mormonism fit—i.e., the kinds of social situations required in Chile for Mormonism to establish itself. The issue is also one of how cultural projects, including how ideas of ethnicity, language, and religion fit into political and economic spaces throughout the length and breadth of America. By “America,” I mean from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego and not the Anglo America (less Canada, the Caribbean, and Guyana) that became the United States. Pratt’s autobiography’s narrative of his mission to Chile, mostly drawn from letters, needs to be contextualized in the structures of the time and its scholarship. It requires a different historiography than we have mostly relied on to the present.

My point is further illustrated by Pratt’s prior, and generally unrecognized, mission to Latin America. By this I mean specifically his work in California—at the time predominantly Spanish-speaking.11 I also mean, with a bit of irony, the settlement of the Mormons on a frontier with Mexico—Missouri and later Illinois, and their later migration deep into Mexican territory—what became Utah and the Mexican West; hence my ironic placing of the word “first” in quotes. That word is a problem; it implies a clear separation between Anglo and Latin worlds that has simply not been the case in North America. Mormons moved into the territory of the Louisiana Purchase that, despite the common view of it as French, had in fact been Spanish. There is simply little work, and as a result little knowledge, of how Spanish America developed in what became greater Louisiana, or how the Napoleonic takeover created such instability throughout the rest of Latin America, or the parallel instability of the post-purchase greater Louisiana into which the Latter-day Saints moved. We know more about Spanish Texas and New Mexico, as well as the development of the Santa Fe Trail, but not nearly enough.12 Much of Mormonism’s post-Kirtland development occurred on the Anglo-Spanish frontier, where it devel-


12See, for example, David Weber, The Spanish Frontier in North America (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994); Ralph H. Vigil, Frances W. Kaye, and John R. Wunder, Spain and the Plains: Myths and Realities of Spanish Exploration and Settlement of the Great Plains (Boulder: University
oped ideas and attitudes as well as a social placement.

This Spanish-speaking world is a shadow in Mormon and much of American scholarship. Its lack of historical exploration haunts any attempt to make sense of the hesitant Mormon growth in Mexico and South America. The ways in which Mormons interacted with or built barriers against the Spanish population and the Spanish institutions of the frontier of Anglo-American expansion are critical, if we wish to understand the whys and wherefores of Mormon growth, both in what is now the U.S. West and in Mexico. Arguably it is necessary if we wish to understand Mormon growth in the twentieth century in South America and Central America. I urge scholars of Mormonism to not be befuddled by the Latin America/Anglo America conceptual separation and to tackle head-on the detailed ways in which Mormonism and Mormons interacted with the institutions and peoples of this frontier, where Spanish and English were used on both sides of national borders and even more so within what became the borders of the United States.

INDIANS, MESTIZOS, AND PARLEY P. PRATT’S CHILEAN MISSION

Jared Tamez

David Knowlton rightly asks how Spanish influence and the Latter-day Saints’ (LDS) presence on the Mexican frontier may have affected the Latter-day Saint experience in the Missouri and Illinois periods. Certainly, as the Church left Illinois and pushed into and ultimately settled in Mexican territory (if not for long politically, it remained so culturally), Latter-day Saints encountered with greater frequency not only “pure Indians” but the “mixed-blooded” (mestizo) inhabitants of the U.S. Southwest, commonly referred to by the Saints as Mexicans.

This increased interaction with mestizo populations, I argue, caused a shift in Mormon racial views. While the Latter-day Saints

---

1JARED TAMEZ {mormonhistory1830@yahoo.com} completed a master’s thesis at the University of Utah where he was the Dean L. May Fellow in Utah and Western History. His thesis examines the racial and cul-
had earlier pointed to a dichotomous Indian-white dynamic, now they
had to account for additional variables that came with mixed parent-
age and expanded cultural backgrounds. Mormons’ concept of “La-
manites” would need to expand to include these mestizo peoples—a
need illustrated by comparing and contrasting Pratt’s descriptions of
Indians on the way to California and that of mestizos in Chile in
1851–52.

Pratt’s observations about mestizos are particularly important
since they preceded by decades significant Mormon settlements in
more heavily mestizo areas such as Arizona, New Mexico, or Mex-
ico. Additionally, of particular interest is Pratt’s use of the Book of
Mormon to articulate these racial ideas. Though largely reinforcing
existing racist attitudes, the Book of Mormon also had the ability to
shape these views.

Pratt had a long history of interaction with Indians. As a Baptist
convert, he resolved at age nineteen to set out into “the great West,
among the natives of the forest” to teach them “the scriptures . . . the
arts of peace . . . to hate war . . . and to cultivate the earth” (14). After
embracing Mormonism, Pratt’s preaching to the Indians consisted
largely (as reported in his Autobiography) of teaching the Indians about
the Book of Mormon, their connection with it, and their Israelite her-
itage. The raw power of coming “unto a knowledge of their fathers,
and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ” through the Book of Mor-

---

2Significant settlements of these areas came in the 1870s and 1880s.

3For how early Mormons’ views affected their reading of the Book of
Mormon, see Grant Underwood, The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism
mon would cause the “scales of darkness . . . to fall from their [the Indians’] eyes” so that they would become “a white and delightsome people.” Miraculous and millenarian readings of Book of Mormon passages that referred to the Lamanites’ role in building Zion seem to have downplayed, at least in the LDS tradition, the practical aspects of civilizing the Indians (such as agriculture) which Pratt had embraced earlier.4

Pratt and others came to see the U.S. government’s Indian removal and relocation policies as positive mechanisms of gathering and civilizing—a precursor to the Indians’ glorious redemption. Pratt called relocation “a kind of reward” for past injustices against the Indians. Underwood notes, however, that by the mid-1840s, Latter-day Saints had become disillusioned about the miraculous transformation of the Lamanites and also about the role government and Protestant agents would play in it.5

As the Church left Illinois and moved deeper into this Spanish frontier, to which David Knowlton refers, Mormons found themselves in the midst of the Lamanites. As agricultural development and the taming of a hostile landscape assumed primary importance for the Saints, their concept about civilizing the Lamanites and their own role changed. Before the Lamanites could ever build up Zion, they themselves had to be civilized. Sociologist Armand Mauss in his All Abraham’s Children outlines generally how readings of the Book of Mormon fueled a romanticized expectation of the wholesale redemption of Indians and how this expectation gave way to disappointment. Furthermore, as noted, this entry into the Spanish frontier forced Pratt and others to expand their concepts of Lamanites past Indians to include mestizo peoples.6

Thus, as Pratt and company set out for California, they encountered a host of native peoples which Pratt found in various states of

5Ibid., 82.
6The discussion of Mormon approaches to Indians is much more complex than can be discussed in this short article. A number of good works have treated this topic in a more extensive and nuanced way. See, e.g., Armand L. Mauss, All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), esp. 41–70. As I note below, however, discussions of the place of mestizos in the discourse about Lamanites and Indians has received scant treatment.
civilization. In southern Utah, the company stopped at the Red Creek settlement (present-day Paragonah), which was buzzing with activity. Pratt observed that the Indian servants at Red Creek were “just being tamed and initiated into the first rudiments of industry” (476).

Moving out to the Muddy River toward more inviting terrain, Pratt was surprised to observe that the Indians in that area “already” grew wheat and corn. In the apostle’s mind, these Indians had advanced furthest in their progress toward “civilization” (478). A few days later, however, their camp was attacked by a barrage of arrows from “the savage mountain robbers” (478), language that is likely an allusion to the Gadianton robbers of the Book of Mormon fame who, the Mormons believed, had inhabited (and still haunted) that region of southern Utah.⁷ As further evidence of their savagery, their arrows fell “promiscuously among men, women, children, and cattle” (478). This language further echoes Book of Mormon references to the brutality of Lamanite aggressors who targeted women and children as well as men.

Pratt also tied his observations of the landscape with his views of its inhabitants. The naked, barren mountains invoke images of the nearly naked, shorn-headed Gadianton robbers and their modern descendants while the fertile, comely oases with their “tame” and industrious Indians hearken back to the Nephites and people of Alma who were “industrious” and who labored with their hands and tilled the soil in the land of Helam (Mosiah 23:5). From “savage” and “promiscuous” to “just being tamed” to “already” cultivating the ground, Pratt reveals a progression of redemption for the Indians of southern Utah—a redemption that was tied to cultural expectations about the role of agriculture in civilization.

Soon after arriving in California, Pratt attended a Catholic mass whose congregation showed “Indian blood prevailing.” He observed “the ladies in the finest dresses I ever beheld in any country. . . . In these costly robes every female knelt or sat on the filthy floor of earth in the old church for hours” (484). Certainly, the recurring theme is the “costliness” of the apparel—distinctly Book of Mormon phrasing. This image invokes similar images in other missionary writings (both Mormon and Protestant) describing the “uppitiness” of Indians who

dressed in fine clothes and who otherwise annoyed Anglo Americans by “putting on airs.”

In contrasting the dirtiness with the fine clothing, Pratt suggests that the illusions of finery were belied by the reality of the dirt floor (no doubt hard-packed earth) and its mingling with the rich robes. Pratt may have been expressing revulsion that good clothing was being misused. Such a display might have reinforced for him the notion that these Indians were not fit to wear such clothing. After all, even in the Book of Mormon, “costly apparel” is treated like costly apparel, not dragged through the dust—even if the wearer is rotten inside.

Pratt’s racial discourse shifts as he enters Chile and turns his attention to its mestizo population which he described as “a good class of . . . Chilanes.” Pratt defined “Chilanes” as being “a mixed race of Spanish and Indian blood . . . consequently coarse features . . . and in most cases copper color in its various shades and degrees, whilst a few are white and even fair and beautiful” (493–94, 501). In another city, Pratt found the inhabitants “mostly white, intelligent, and good looking” (498).

Here again, Pratt employs phrasing characteristic of the Book of Mormon to contrast the predominant coarse features and copper color with the exceptions who are white, fair, and beautiful. These three modifiers appear in the same order once in 1 Nephi as Nephi describes the Gentiles and sees that they were, “white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people, before they were slain” (1 Ne. 13:15). In this passage, Nephi effectively equates his people, the Nephites, with the Gentiles of a future day. This equation and its application to the white segment of the Chilean populace is significant. Conceptually, this comparison may have paved the way in Pratt’s mind for these fair mestizos to share in a righteous Nephite identity as well as a modern Gentile identity—an identity that many Mormons at the time embraced as their own. In this instance, rather than simply reflecting racial views, the Book of Mormon helped shape them.

Indeed, in looking around him, Pratt found that these white and intelligent peoples were far more advanced than their Indian counterparts in southern Utah who were just learning the rudiments of agric-

---

8See Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico, and Mexican Immigrants, 1880–1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); also Anthony Woodward Ivins, Diary, 257, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
culture. “The people in this town seem to be neat, plain, loving and sociable people. . . . [Their] houses are mostly neat and comely” (498). Pratt was also delighted that many of these people could read.

Pratt’s favorable outlook on the whiteness of the mestizo populations would prove more generous than that of subsequent missionaries such as Moses Thatcher and Anthony Ivins, both of whom strongly critiqued the mixing of races and held “pure” Indians in higher regard than mestizos. If Pratt’s brush with mestizos indeed represents a more optimistic view of whiteness and mestizaje than that of subsequent commenters, further studies are needed to explore the factors that led to a harsher view of mestizaje.9

In summary, Pratt’s autobiography gives readers a glimpse into how the Book of Mormon provided ideas about race that enabled Pratt to articulate his ideas about the state of Indians and mestizos which he encountered on his 1851–1852 Chilean mission and how his encounters with mestizos in Chile began to expand for him the possibilities of whiteness and racial mixing for the “redemption” of the Lamanites.

---

9Currently, even some of the best treatments of Mormon racial thought either overlook or treat only in passing the Spanish influence in the United States that David Knowlton mentions in his article, the concept of mestizaje, and how nineteenth-century LDS views about mestizos interacted with LDS scripture.
NINETEENTH-CENTURY MISSIOLOGY OF THE LDS BEDFORDSHIRE CONFERENCE

Ronald E. Bartholomew

British social historian J. F. C. Harrison, a specialist on Victorian England and nineteenth-century social movements, notes that one of the more unfortunate impressions sometimes given is that all regions in nineteenth-century England were more or less the same—that is, urban industrialized centers that were “equally smoky, soulless and horrible to live in... This is very misleading. Quite apart from obvious regional differences in traditional culture and economic and social relationships, the impact of population increase was very uneven... Virtually all towns did increase between 1831 and 1851, but in some the expansion was relatively modest... Too often our impressions of urban growth have derived from an over-concentration on the modern textile towns.”

Malcolm Thorp, a historian at Brigham Young University, points out, “In most regions... small-scale workshops and handicraft in-

---

RONALD E. BARTHOLOMEW {ron.bartholomew@byu.edu} is a full-time instructor at the LDS Institute of Religion adjacent to Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. He received his D.Phil. at the University of Buckingham near London, England, and has published peer-reviewed articles relating to missionary work, convert baptisms, and immigration in rural England during the Victorian period in both Europe and the United States.

dustries were the rule. Also, farming continued to be important in all areas of the country as the largest single employer of labor, even though the percentage of farmers compared to total population was gradually declining.  

In a similar vein, studies on Mormon missionary work in nineteenth-century England have nearly always focused on those same “modern textile towns,” overlooking the rural areas where farm laborers and those involved in small-scale home handicrafts resided. Therefore, it would be equally unwise to conclude that the circumstances for all LDS missionaries in nineteenth-century England were similar. The tools of missiology, which is the study of religious missions and missionaries, applied to the LDS Bedfordshire Conference reveals some similarities with other regions, but there are distinct differences which can be explained by local factors.

First, the socio-economic makeup of the counties in this conference was unlike that of other regions that have been the predominant focus of LDS missionary work in early Victorian England. Scholars have asserted that the majority of early British Mormon converts came from the working class who lived in industrialized urban centers. In contrast, the counties comprising the Bedfordshire Conference experienced few of the direct effects of the Industrial Revolu-

---


3In fact, Andrew Phillips has noted that a closer analysis of local factors from a regional perspective can bring a richness and color that might otherwise be missed. He asserts that “the diversity of local circumstances makes it possible to distinguish trends and conditions that do not necessarily correspond to national patterns.” Andrew Phillips, “The Essex Conference, 1850–1870,” in *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, edited by Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm Thorp (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 142. Andrew Phillips is a lecturer in history at the Colchester Institute in Essex County, England. He writes historical columns for the *Essex County Standard* and is the author of *Colchester: A History* (Chichester, England: Phillimore & Co., 2004).

4James B. Allen and Malcolm Thorp, “The Mission of the Twelve to
tion that transformed many other parts of Britain in the nineteenth century. There were no major industrial centers to attract large numbers from elsewhere—a pattern typical of areas where missionary work has been more closely examined.\(^5\) Moreover, it would be more correct to describe the residents of the Bedfordshire Conference dur-

England, 1840–41: Mormon Apostles and the Working Class,” BYU Studies 15, no. 4 (1975): 9, reported that most Mormon converts came from the “working classes of the urban communities.” P.A.M. Taylor, Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 149, noted that 90 percent of 1850–62 LDS converts who emigrated were from urban centers, even though the country was only about half urban: “Moreover, more than two-fifths of that emigration came from towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants.” Tim B. Heaton, Stan L. Albrecht, and J. Randal Johnson, “The Making of the British Saint in Historical Perspective,” BYU Studies 27, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 120–21, found that the major source of new converts was the population most affected by the “Industrial Revolution and associated rapid population growth, urbanization, and political reform. . . . Proselytizing efforts were more successful in certain industrialized sections” and “urban centers of the industrial heartland provided the type of people that were most inclined to join the Church.”

\(^5\)This pattern was definitely true of Buckinghamshire. Ronald E. Bartholomew, “Patterns of Missionary Work and Emigration in Buckinghamshire, England, 1849–1878,” BYU Studies 49, no. 1 (2009): 126. Neighboring Bedfordshire County remained almost completely agrarian; the chief cottage industries were lace-making and straw-plaiting. Joyce Godbear, History of Bedfordshire: 1066–1888 (Luton, Bedfordshire: Bedfordshire City Council, 1969), 480. She also notes that Bedfordshire experienced the “golden age of the great estates” from 1830 to 1870. “For their tenant farmers, things went well . . . and the political power of nobility and gentry was scarcely undermined” (465). Northamptonshire was one of two counties in this conference in the Midlands. However, while many parts of the North and Midlands had been transformed by the Industrial Revolution, it had almost completely bypassed agrarian Northamptonshire. In fact, the primary industry of shoemaking did not become a factory enterprise until the 1890s. R. L. Greenall, History of Northamptonshire (London: Phillmore & Co., 1979), 79–80. Huntingdonshire, also in the Midlands, lacked the fertile soil of other counties in this conference but provided wool for the cloth industry instead of becoming an important textile center. Michael Wickes, A History of Huntingdonshire (Chichester, England: Phillmore & Co., 1995).
ing this period as “landless laborers” or “the rural poor” rather than “working class.” John Clarke, professor of Victorian history at the University of Buckingham, observes: “Class is about more than income—it also involves values and perceptions[,] and farm workers and factory workers had a rather different take on most things.”

It has been empirically demonstrated that the success of LDS missionary work in England during this period was subject to certain geographic limitations. Missionaries laboring in the western Midlands generally reported success, while those who attempted to gain Mormon converts in the vicinity of London described a vastly different experience. They described it as “the seat of Satan,” “the great Babylon,” and “the hardest place I ever visited for establishing the gospel.” While researchers offer varying explanations for this phenomenon, they all concur that, by 1844, 93 percent of LDS converts resided in the north and west areas of England. In all these studies, the counties in the Bedfordshire Conference were included in the

95–96. In Cambridgeshire, “general and heavy industry were scarce, even in Cambridge and the larger towns. It was [also] an agricultural county.” Bruce Galloway, A History of Cambridgeshire (Chichester, England: Phillmore & Co., 1983), 93. Lastly, Hertfordshire had various small rural industries, but agriculture remained the major source of employment as it was an important food source for London. Tony Rook, A History of Hertfordshire (Chichester, England: Phillmore & Co., 1984), 100.


8Stephen Fleming found that the line from the Wash to Bristol (called the Wash-Severn line) that divides Great Britain between its northwest and southeast was the dividing line between the Mormons’ most and least receptive proselytizing areas in the Anglo world. The apostles added six thousand converts to the Church, and at their departure 98 percent of British Mormons were in the northwest. In 1844, 93 percent of British Mormons resided in the north and west. By 1851 the numbers were less stark, down to 77 percent; however, over seven thousand British Mormons had left for America by 1850, and the numbers suggest that these individuals were
"less receptive proselyting area" of southern and eastern England.

During its thirty-one year existence (1843–74), the boundary of
the Bedfordshire Conference expanded and contracted at least seven
times before it was absorbed into surrounding conferences, as the
boundaries of various administrative units in the British Mission were
under constant revision. Despite these periodic changes, the Bed-
fordshire Conference was generally comprised of six counties: Bed-

overwhelmingly Northwesterners. Thus, the percentage of total Northwestern British Mormons in 1851, the year Mormonism reached its peak in Britain, was likely higher than the percentage still remaining in Britain. While the Wash-Severn line presents no absolute dividing line between areas of Mormon success and sub-regional variance certainly occurred, the line does indicate a larger trend in early Mormon British conversions. Stephen J. Fleming, “The Religious Heritage of the British Northwest and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Church History* 77, no. 1 (March 2008): 85. John Gay found a similar geographical demarcation when plotting the success of post-reformation nonconformity. Gay examined the expansion of Roman Catholicism and Mormonism as nonconformist movements in England from a geographer’s perspective. He found that Roman Catholicism was a predominantly north-northwestern phenomenon during the post-reformation period. He attributes this to the fact that the landed gentry had the resources to establish their own churches and were farther from London which made it easier to evade the legal penalties associated with nonconformity during that time. Similarly, he found that by 1851, the peak year of Mormon conversions in England, Mormonism was also more successful in the northern and western portions of England than in the southern and eastern portions. He attributed this pattern to the fact that Mormons, intent on emigration, tended to gravitate toward seaport cities of Bristol, Southampton, and Liverpool. Gay cautioned, however, that in 1851 the Mormon movement was still in its infancy in England, and the 1851 census “must be used with considerable caution when attempting to assess the geographical distribution of Mormons.” However, he found that 75 percent of Church members lived in the northern and western regions, except for London, a figure comparable to Fleming’s for the same year (77 percent). See John Gay, “Some Aspects of the Social Geography of Religion in England: The Roman Catholics and the Mormons,” in *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, edited by David Martin (London: SCM Press, 1968): 47–76.

Whether because of the conference’s nonindustrial and rural nature or its geographic location or both, this study offers a unique perspective on LDS missiology in Victorian England. This paper will address the following issues:

1. What position in the taxonomy of religions in Victorian England did Mormonism occupy?
2. What mission theology characterized the missionaries in this conference?
3. What was the message of the missionaries? Was the theology of the message they preached similar to their mission theology?
4. What mission philosophies were the driving force behind the missionary labors in this conference?
5. Who were the missionaries that served in this conference? Were they primarily from America, or were they predominantly British converts? What was the ratio? Was the call to serve a mission extended differently to American missionaries than to native British converts?
6. What proselytizing methods did these missionaries employ? To what extent were the members involved in their efforts? What role did emigration play in their missionary labors?
7. What were their financial circumstances?

**THE BEDFORDSHIRE CONFERENCE IN CONTEXT**

Placing the Mormon missionary movement in the Bedfordshire Conference in its historical context raises an issue of taxonomy. As BYU’s Senior Librarian David J. Whittaker correctly observed, for over one hundred years, “historians of American religion have been influenced by Robert Baird’s 1844 Religion in America, which classi-
fied American religions into two groups, evangelical and non-evangelical. Mormons and Catholics were placed in the latter category.” However, Whittaker continues, this classification frustrated scholars such as Sydney Ahlstrom: “Was Mormonism ‘a sect, a mystery cult, a new religion, a church, a people, a nation, or an American subculture’? He concluded that ‘at different times and places it is all of these!’”11 More recently, scholars such as Jan Shipps have abandoned the time-honored classification of “evangelical and non-evangelical,” instead seeing Mormonism as a “new religion.”12 New Zealand historian of religions Peter Lineham also prefers the similar and more progressive classification of a “new religious movement.” However, he admits that, during the period and the location in question, Latter-day Saints would have been referred to as a “sect.”13 D. G. Paz, professor of history at the University of North Texas who specializes in religion during the Victorian period noted that, while this taxonomy of a certain sector of nineteenth-century new religious movements as “sects” is “most problematic,” he concedes that it is perhaps most appropriate, though “for want of a better one.”14 The reason this is true of the Mormons in the nineteenth-century Bedfordshire Conference is because at that time and at that place the nomenclature of “evangelical/non-evangelical,” “church or denomination” would not have been valid. This distinction is important because, as Lineham points out, in Victorian England, churches and denominations were much larger. He cites, as examples, the Church of England (a church) and the Methodists (a denomination). Baird’s classifications described American religions; and even though Mormonism originated in America, Mormonism in the Bedfordshire Conference during the Victorian period, as discussed below, was not considered “American,” much less “non-evangelical.”

Furthermore, the Latter-day Saints living and working in the Bedfordshire Conference had many things in common with other

12Ibid., 160.
14D. G. Paz, “Introduction,” in ibid., x.
Victorian religious movements that were probably most accurately referred to as “sects” during that period. For example, they were one among many groups that were electrified by Millennialism, a call to primitive Christianity, and Restorationism. According to Lineham, some of these movements looked toward “the ultimate Restorationism, the formation of communities on the New Testament pattern, where life could be lived in sectarian purity. This viewpoint attracted some interest, although the high price of land, and the extent to which agricultural production was commercialized, inhibited its development to the extent to which the Shakers and others spread it in the United States.” As a result of these real economic barriers, some “retained their intense isolationism and anti-modernism” by seeking “to preserve their lifestyle and doctrines [through] formal and informal restrictions on worldliness and contact with other churches.” The Latter-day Saints, however, were an exception: “British Mormons achieved their separation by fleeing from Babylon to the Zion in America.”

Those belonging to these religious movements were also viewed as heretical deviants from the generally accepted religious tradition; and all such nineteenth-century sectarian movements combined accounted for only 1–2 percent of England’s total population. In addition, they were exclusive, characterized by strict qualifications for membership, while churches were more inclusive. They “emerged primarily from strong lay movements, which often drew on the incipient anticlericalism of English people,” Lineham points out. “Leaders of sects were recognized for their charismatic qualities.” Because of their exclusiveness, perpetuating themselves was problematic, but “groups with tight organizations, like the Latter-day Saints, prospered.”

These groups primarily recruited their membership from the “dissatisfied members of other denominations, and their methods included vigorous attacks on the denominations in debates, pamphlets, and sermons,” Lineham continues. “They attracted people in existing churches who longed for close fellowship and commitment

---

16 Ibid., 162, 168.
17 Ibid., 148. This figure is for England only, as opposed to Great Britain.
18 Ibid., 152, 157–58.
that their denominations lacked.”¹⁹ Not surprisingly, they were extremely unpopular with established denominations. Great Britain’s newly emerging missionary societies took the Christian message to “heathen” nations and disdainfully viewed the sects as “sheep-stealing.”²⁰ In fact, they probably would not have considered the activities of LDS missionaries as “missionary work” at all, because Mormon elders generally were not involved in converting souls to Christ, but rather converting them away from mainstream Christian churches. In defense of the Mormon missionary activities at that time, however, Church leaders pointed out that LDS missionaries were preaching truths restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith after the long apostasy; therefore, their message completed the imperfect Christian message among other churches, and they functioned under the prophetic and scriptural injunction to take those newly restored truths to the whole world, regardless of their current religious status.²¹

Although the nineteenth-century missionaries of the Bedfordshire Conference would have rejected Lineham’s classification of them as “protestant,” his description of them as a “sect” in their Victorian context is remarkably accurate. The Mormons were self-proclaimed deviants from accepted religious tradition, exclusive and polemic in their relationships with other Christian organizations.²² As a strong lay movement, they welcomed disaffected members of other religious traditions and embraced the millennial and restorationist theology also espoused by other sects of the time.²³ However, regarding the taxonomy of “sect,” Ernst Troeltsch, influential German

¹⁹Ibid., 167.
Protestant theologian and writer on the philosophy of religion and philosophy of history, observed:

The word “sect”... gives an erroneous impression. Originally the word was used in a polemical and apologetic sense, and it was used to describe groups which separated themselves from the official Church, while they retained certain fundamental elements of Christian thought; by the very fact, however, that they were outside the corporate life of ecclesiastical tradition—a position, moreover, which was usually forced upon them—they were regarded as inferior side-issues, one-sided phenomena, exaggerations or abbreviations of ecclesiastical Christianity. That is, naturally, solely the viewpoint of the dominant churches, based on the belief that [their type] alone has the right to exist.24

The Mormon movement as it existed in the Bedfordshire Conference is entirely consistent with Troeltsch’s paradigm for a sect, in that (a) it originated from a relatively small group, (b) its members aspired toward personal inward perfection, and (c) they aimed at direct personal fellowship among the members of the group. Troeltsch asserted that, unlike “churches,” sectarian attitudes towards the world, state, and society “may be indifferent, tolerant, or hostile, since they have no desire to control and incorporate these forms of social life; on the contrary, they tend to avoid them; their aim is usually to tolerate their presence... or even replace... social institutions by their own society.” In addition, churches use the state and the ruling classes, becoming an integral part of the existing social order (a perfect description of the Church of England during the Victorian Era), “becoming dependent upon the upper classes. The sects, on the other hand, are connected to the lower classes, or at least to those elements in society which are opposed to the State and Society.” And finally, churches utilize the secular order as a means of preparing for the supernatural aim of life, while the “sects refer their members directly to the super-

RONALD E. BARTHOLOMEW/BEDFORDSHIRE CONFERENCE 217
natural.”25*All things considered, Mormonism in the Bedfordshire
Conference is best described as a “sect.”
MISSION THEOLOGY
The term “mission theology” describes the theological teaching
and preaching that missionaries employed in their proselytizing efforts. It generally differs from official Church or lay member theologies because missionaries, especially Mormon missionaries, often
employ the Apostle Paul’s “milk before meat” principle (1 Cor. 3:2;
Heb. 5:12; also D&C 19:22). As missiologist Justice Anderson has asserted, “The starting point of all missiological study should be missionary theology.”26**This is because the theology of missions defines
and drives the work of the missionary. The mission theology of those
working in the Bedfordshire Conference consisted of four elements:27***
1. Scriptural literalism. This characteristic included the concept
of a complete restoration of primitive Christianity, organizational
components (e.g., prophets and apostles), and spiritual elements
(e.g., miracles and the ministry of angels). Other characteristics were
a replication of many Old and New Testament themes, including a
forced migration from a wicked and corrupt society to a promised
land and the sending forth of missionaries to the world.
2. Apocalyptic millenarianism. This eschatological view stood at
the center of LDS theology.28****Combined with scriptural literalism, it
made missionaries the agents of the literal and spiritual fulfillment of
biblical prophecies about the gathering of Israel in preparation for
Christ’s second coming.
3. Continuing revelation. The Book of Mormon transcended
any attempt to make a connection with Catholicism or Protestantism,
bypassing both by synthesizing the messages of both the Old and New
*
**

25Ibid., 331.
26Justice Anderson, “An Overview of Missiology,” in Missiology: An In-

troduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions, edited
by John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville, Tenn.:
27I gleaned items 1, 2, and 4 from Price, “The Mormon Missionary of
***
the Nineteenth Century,” 20–35.


Testaments. The Book of Mormon not only burdened its believers with the awesome responsibility of gathering Israel,\textsuperscript{29} but included the egalitarian notion of the New Testament, which required preaching the gospel to all nations.

4. Evangelism. The Doctrine and Covenants put the literal interpretation and eschatology of the Bible and Book of Mormon into practical terms. This book is an evangelical document (even though it was not used for proselytizing) because it operationalized the heavenly mandate to gather Israel by sending missionaries to preach the gospel to all nations, organizing that effort through the Restoration of Jesus’s original church organization. Its pages include the callings of several individuals to this labor by God’s voice speaking through his prophet, Joseph Smith. Although later calls were not canonized, they nonetheless followed this pattern.

The driving force of this mission theology cannot be overstated; however, it was not different from that of other LDS conferences in England or the United States during that period. These similarities were inevitable, given that missionaries—both American and British—were frequently transferred within and outside of the boundaries of the British Mission. These contacts assured necessary theological cross-pollenization.

THE MESSAGE

The missionaries’ message and their mission theology were not identical, although there were many parallels. While missionaries taught that the LDS Church was a restoration of primitive Christianity, in the context of millenarianism, with a belief in modern-day revelation, etc., they had been counseled by their leaders to confine their teachings to the “first principles” of the gospel.\textsuperscript{30} Rex Thomas Price, with extensive research expertise on nineteenth-century Mormon missionaries, correctly observed the flaw in the arguments of some scholars who felt that nineteenth-century English converts were attracted to the Church because LDS missionaries incorporated into their teachings such things as temples and temple ordinances, apotheosis, the Word of Wisdom, and other doctrines that are unique to the Book

\textsuperscript{29}Grant Underwood, “Book of Mormon Usage in Early LDS Theology,” \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 17, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 60.

of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. “These interpretations err in a number of ways,” he notes, “but the fundamental flaw in this . . . approach rests in the [difference between the] doctrine expounded in the Church, as opposed to ‘strangers,’ or in today’s jargon, ‘investigators.’”

A careful examination of historical data reveals that, for the most part, missionaries in the Bedfordshire Conference obeyed the counsel to confine their teachings to the first principles of faith, repentance, baptism, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, later canonized as the fourth Article of Faith. However, the nature of proselytizing in the Bedfordshire Conference required the missionaries to spend most of their time associating with and preaching to the members, with only the occasional participation of “strangers.” The difficulty of navigating this situation is illustrated in an entry in the missionary journal of Thomas Owen King, who served as president of the Bedfordshire Conference from April 1863 to May 1864. On July 26, 1863, he noted in his journal that he “spoke upon the first principles of the Gospel for the benefit of a few strangers for I always love when I get the chance to bare [sic] my testimony to those who have not obeyed the Gospel.” However, because of the dual nature of the audience, he also addressed the Saints in matters particular to them, with the result that “some strangers were pleased with my remarks but did

31Ibid., 309.
not like the [idea of emigrating to Utah].”32 Although “the gathering” was well underway by 1863, Bedfordshire’s rural character, coupled with the fact that missionaries did not come to this area en masse as early as other areas, explains why “strangers” would have been surprised by the encouragement to emigrate.

Whether the missionaries were teaching members only or members in the company of strangers, first-person accounts of their teachings confirm the preponderance of the “first principles” over any other topic, as summarized in the Appendix. William Bramall, who served as a traveling elder in the conference from September 1860 to December 1861, kept careful records of the places he visited and the sermons he preached. At the conclusion of his service in this conference, he recorded that he had preached 202 sermons. Of those, he noted that he spoke on the “first principles” more than any other topic.33 Robert Heyborne, conference president from June 1873–March 1874, also indicated in his personal journal that “addresses were delivered . . . on the first principles of the gospel.”34

Another interesting item for consideration is source material for these sermons, which was overwhelmingly the Bible. Price commented: “They preached about the [Book of Mormon], not from it. Its authenticity was at issue, not its didacticism, and the Elders depended upon the Bible to ‘prove’ that authenticity.”35 Grant Underwood, BYU professor of history, comments that, while there is no evidence of any official directive that nineteenth-century missionaries should give preference to the Bible, the most likely motivation for

---


their emphasis was their familiarity with and love for it.\textsuperscript{36}

Although the Doctrine and Covenants was available in England as early as 1845 and by 1869 had gone through six European printings,\textsuperscript{37} Price and Underwood both note that it was used even less than the Book of Mormon in missionary sermons.\textsuperscript{38} In 1851, British Mission president Franklin D. Richards published an early version of the Pearl of Great Price, even though this compilation was not canonized as LDS scripture until October 1880.\textsuperscript{39} I found no evidence, however, in the personal journals, mission pamphlets, or missionary letters published in the\textit{ Millennial Star} that the Pearl of Great Price was ever

\textsuperscript{36}Underwood, “Book of Mormon Usage in Early LDS Theology,” 53, 59.
\textsuperscript{37}Robert J. Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1974), 1:60–75.
\textsuperscript{39}H. Donl Peterson, “The Birth and Development of the Pearl of Great Price,” in \textit{Studies in Scripture}, edited by Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985), 2:11–23. The first edition of the Pearl of Great Price was much different than the one currently published by the LDS Church. It contained the following entries (the placement of the text in today’s LDS Church publications is noted in brackets): Ex- tracts from the Prophecy of Enoch [Moses 6:43–7:69]; The words of God, which he spake unto Moses [Moses 1:1–42]; Untitled [Moses 2:1–5, 40; 8:13–30]; The Book of Abraham including Facsimile 1, 2 and 3 from the Book of Abraham [Book of Abraham]; An extract from a Translation of the Bible [Joseph Smith—Matthew]; A Key to the Revelations of St. John [D&C 77]; A Revelation and Prophecy [D&C 87]; Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith [Joseph Smith—History]; From the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church Commandment to the Church concerning baptism [D&C 20:71, 37, 72–75]; The duties of members after they are received by baptism [D&C 20:68–69]; Method of administering the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper [D&C 20:75–79]; The Duties of the Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, and Members of the Church of Christ [D&C 20:38–44; 107:11; 20:45–59, 70, 80]; On Priesthood [D&C 107:1–10, 12–20]; The Calling and Duties of the Twelve Apostles [D&C 107:23, 33]; The Calling and Duties of the Seventy [D&C 107:34, 93–100]; Extract from a revelation given July, 1830 [D&C 27:5–18]; Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [D&C 20:1–36]; \textit{Times and Seasons}, 3:709 [Articles of Faith]; and “Truth” (a
used as a missionary tract in the Bedfordshire Conference.

Job Smith, for example, wrote of teaching strangers “the true gospel as developed in the Bible.”40 Charles Dana, who served as a pastor in charge of several conferences, including the Bedfordshire Conference, from November 1853 to December 1855, noted that “Bro. Walcott took up the subject of the Book of Mormon and tried to prove the authenticity of it by the Bible.”41 The journals of several converts also emphasize the importance of the Bible in the missionaries’ teachings. A biographical sketch of Sarah Hyder, the first woman to convert in Cambridge, recounts: “A Mr. Goates called regularly at her home with butter, eggs, and bakery products, and on occasions she would chat with him on current topics, including religion. She became so intrigued with his explanations of the Bible that she asked to what church he belonged. When he told her he belonged to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, her curiosity was aroused. He brought her literature to read. This she studied diligently, searching the scriptures to verify the truths she was seeking.”42

It was only after she had tested what he was teaching against the Bible that she joined the Church. This was also true of Hannah Tapfield King, who records: “My mind has been a good deal engrossed by what Miss Bailey has told me of the Latter-day work—I asked her many questions and she was kind and gentle in telling me in what their principles consist. Certainly there is nothing in them but what I can test by the Bible, and therefore I know they are true—They take hold of my mind wonderfully, and I seem to gain strength from them—I feel to prove them all I can, for the Bible says, ‘Prove all things

poem by John Jaques) [“O Say, What is Truth?”, #272 in LDS Church hymnal].

40Job Smith, Diary and Autobiography, 1849–77, 119, MSS 881, Perry Special Collections. Smith’s journal is extremely detailed with almost daily entries; he does not make a single reference to the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants.

41Charles Root Dana, Dairies and Autobiography, 1847, 1859, typescript, July 30, 1855, p. 31; MS 15384, LDS Church History Library.

I found three missionaries in the Bedfordshire Conference who mentioned using tracts in their proselytizing efforts. John Spiers, conference president in 1850, instructed members to go out two by two to establish the gospel in the villages surrounding their homes, and to “take the tracts with them.”

Job Smith, conference president in 1851, mentions “distributing tracts” and taking up “tract subscriptions” from the members for the purpose of “supplying the traveling elders.” The only other missionary to mention the distribution of tracts was James Henry Linford, who served as a traveling elder in the conference from 1856 to 1859. It is no coincidence that all three of these missionaries served during the 1850s. Mission presidents Orson Pratt (August 1848–January 1851) and Franklin D. Richards (January 1851–May 1852) had directed the mass printing and sales of these pamphlets as the missionaries’ major focus during this decade.

---

Ibid., 140.

John Spiers, Reminiscences and Journal, 1840–77, April 15, 1850, microfilm of holograph, MS 1725, LDS Church History Library.


However, due to the expense of this approach, particularly the drain on members’ resources, Brigham Young instructed George Q. Cannon, who became mission president in 1860, to discontinue this practice. A careful examination of known historical documents reveals that only four converts from this conference mentioned tracts as being instrumental in their conversion. They are Sarah Hyder, whose mention of “literature” doubtless referred to pamphlets; Hannah Tapfield King, wife of a wealthy tenant farmer who read Orson Spencer’s *Letters*, Parley P. Pratt’s *Voice of Warning*, and Orson Pratt’s *Divine*...
Authenticity of the Book of Mormon prior to her conversion;49 Samuel Claridge, a wealthy and prominent Methodist who was convinced of the truthfulness of the Church after reading Orson Pratt’s Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions;50 and Samuel Wagstaff whose brothers shared with him a copy of Pratt’s Voice of Warning.51 All four join the Church between 1849 and 1851. Significantly, Hannah Tapfield King and Samuel Claridge belonged to the upper or middle classes, yet conversions from these classes are extremely rare in the Bedfordshire Conference. Possibly many members of the laboring class were influenced by these tracts but simply did not keep journals. Or possibly, their lack of discretionary time to read meant that the tracts had little influence.52 There is simply no way to know without more research that would produce additional records.

49Ibid., 100.
50George Samuel Ellsworth, Samuel Claridge: Pioneering the Outposts of Zion (Logan, Utah: G. S. Ellsworth, 1987), 1.
51Bertha N. Sager, Biographical Sketch of the Life of Samuel Wagstaff, ca. 1930, 3, MSS SC 3343, Perry Special Collections. Photocopy of a microfilm copy of a typescript biography. This item was photocopied from reel 51, microfilm 920.
52Harrison, “The Popular History of Early Victorian Britain: A Mor-
MISSION PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical approach driving missionary work in the Bedfordshire Conference must also be closely examined. While “mission theology and message” are careful analyses of the theology and practice of missionaries’ teachings, “mission philosophy” seeks to study the forces behind those teachings and practices. Baptist missiologist Justice Anderson has identified nine philosophies of mission work:

1. Individualism. Responsibility for missionary work rests with each individual, separate from any organization or structure.
2. Ecclesiasticism. Missionary work is strictly a function of the hierarchical church.
3. Colonialism. Missionary work is the state’s responsibility.
4. Associationalism. Interested persons voluntarily form associations to promote the missionary effort.
5. Pneumaticism. Missionary work is carried out as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
6. Supportivism. Missionary work exists to support other divine purposes within the religious organization.
7. Institutionalism. Missionary work exists to support a single institution (for example, a church).
8. Ecumenicalism. Missionary work finds its purpose as promoting Christian unity among all believers.
9. Pentecostalism. Missionary work depends and thrives on signs, wonders, miracles, healings, etc.53+

Interestingly, at least five elements of this list operated in the Bedfordshire Conference. Many members felt a responsibility to engage in missionary activity without a formal call from the Church (individualism); however, Church authorities also extended formal mission calls to individuals (ecclesiasticism). Members and missionaries in their journals and letters referred to being led by the Holy Spirit in their missionary efforts (pneumaticism), and the express purpose of their missionary efforts included supporting the Church (institutionalism) and its aims (supportivism).

While these missionaries and their leaders may or may not have been aware of how their labors fit into this philosophical construct, the theoretical model is useful in evaluating their labors. More important, however, is the fact that, while working in a fairly regimented or-

ganization, several of these philosophical approaches stimulated their labors simultaneously, providing a broad base that was undoubtedly a factor in their success.

**THE MISSIONARIES**

William G. Hartley, a BYU history professor, correctly observed that “many of the [British] mission’s conference presidents, branch presidents and missionaries were British Mormons.”\(^{54}\) This was also the case for the Bedfordshire Conference. Although it is not always possible to determine the nativity of missionaries, I found that, of the 227 missionaries who served in the Bedfordshire Conference during its existence, only 26 can positively be identified as Americans but 164 (at least 72 percent) were British-born. The birthplaces of another 37 could not be identified. If they were all British, it would raise the percentage of British-born missionaries to 89 percent.

What accounts for this pattern? As early as 1840, during his own first mission to England, Brigham Young instructed that full-time missionaries should be chosen from among members whose circumstances would permit them to devote themselves entirely to the work of the ministry.\(^{55}\) In 1857, now as Church president, Brigham Young and his counselors reaffirmed this policy in the *Millennial Star*:

> Let the Elders go forth without purse or scrip as they did in the days of Jesus, and as they have done since the early rise of the Church. Go forth, Brethren of the Priesthood, having faith in the promise of Jesus Christ. . . . You are called upon to do a great work; great will be your reward if you do your duty. . . . Let wives and children . . . not hold them back through fear of want . . . There are many Elders located in the different branches of the European Mission, whose talents are hid: they are lying dormant. We want such to repent and arise from a state of lethargy and go forth among the Gentiles, preaching unto them the Gospel of the Kingdom. Let the Elders do something that will entitle

\(^{54}\)William G. Hartley, “LDS Pastors and Pastorates, 1852–55,” in *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, edited by Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm Thorp (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 200. He also notes that Mormon missionaries were likely to emigrate. To replace them and to train and supervise their successors presented a formidable and on-going challenge.

\(^{55}\)“Minutes of General Conference,” *Millennial Star* 1, no. 3 (July 1840): 70.
them to a glorious resurrection at the coming of the Son of Man, which draweth nigh.\textsuperscript{56}

Historians James B. Allen and Malcolm Thorp note that, as a result of this policy, “the number of missionaries was greatly expanded and most new baptisms were performed by these local missionaries.”\textsuperscript{57} This was definitely the case in the Bedfordshire Conference. Extant records indicate that 982 were baptized in this conference during its existence. Of those, 626 (65 percent) were baptized by recent converts serving as local missionaries and 356 (35 percent) were baptized by non-local missionaries. LDS historian Ronald Walker observed: “The American missionaries might take the lead, but duly ordained English converts carried the ministerial load. This [practice] allowed Mormonism to shed whatever image it might have possessed as a foreign intruder. Indeed it facilitated the conversion of former preachers . . . [to] secure Mormon membership and Mormon priesthood on the same day and continue without interruption their errand for the Lord.”\textsuperscript{58} Such was the case with Thomas Squires, who served as a traveling elder in the Bedfordshire Conference from 1844 to 1854. After preaching for the Wesleyan Methodists for many years, commencing at age fifteen, and later for the Baptists, he became dissatisfied with both of them and began preaching what he considered an “improved doctrine.” Then he came in contact with the Mormon elders and was converted. On the day of his baptism, “while the Elders were confirming him, and before taking off their hands, [they] ordained him an elder” and he immediately began preaching the gospel. He served in two branch presidencies, before “forsaking all” and serving as a traveling full-time missionary.\textsuperscript{59}

Unlike the American missionaries whose calls were typically announced by a member of the First Presidency during general confer-

\textsuperscript{56}“General Instructions to Pastors, Presidents and Elders,” \textit{Millennial Star} 19, no. 1 (April 11, 1857): 232–33.

\textsuperscript{57}Allen and Thorp, “The Mission of the Twelve to England,” 15.


\textsuperscript{59}John Paternoster Squires, \textit{Notes of Interest to the Descendants of Thomas Squires} (Salt Lake City: Eva Beatrice Squires Poelman, 1970), 139. The information about Squires’s service as a branch president comes from Robert Hodgert, “Journal of Robert Hodgert,” BX 8670.1 H664h, Perry Special Collections, photocopy of typescript, not paginated.
ence in Salt Lake City, it was the responsibility of the pastors 60 and conference presidents serving as missionaries in England to call recent converts to full-time missionary service. 61 John Spiers, who served as president of the Bedfordshire Conference from November 1849 to February 1851, recorded how his “mission call” occurred: “Elder Thomas Kington (who had been appointed presiding elder of that conference) came over to the Leigh and called on me and Brother Browell and Jenkins to give up our businesses and devote all our time to the Spirit of the work. This was a severe task for me, and I would gladly have done anything else, but as I had been counseled, I arranged my business as fast as I could and prepared to go out.” 62

Historian William Hartley noted an additional reason for the predominance of English missionaries: Utah simply could not supply enough. 63 In fact, when Brigham Young called all the missionaries serving abroad back to Utah in 1857, incident to the Utah War, only eighty-eight were serving in the British Isles, 64 spread over more than thirty conferences and almost 700 branches. No missionaries were sent to the British Mission from America in 1858 and only eighteen in 1859. As a result, more local missionaries were called. By 1874, the year the Bedfordshire Conference was dissolved, only twelve Americans were serving as missionaries in all of England. 65

Perhaps the most interesting fact about missionaries sent from America during the decade of 1850s, as BYU research historian Richard L. Jensen has observed, was that a significant portion of them were native Englishmen who were sent back to Britain after having immigrated to Zion. 66 Historian Richard D. Poll reported that, while “the mission president, almost all pastors, and some conference and

60 “Pastors” were full-time missionaries who supervised several conferences and reported directly to the British Mission president.
61 “General Instructions to Pastors, Presidents and Elders,” 232–33.
62 Spiers, Reminiscences and Journal, September 25, 1840.
64 Poll, “The British Mission during the Utah War,” 231.
district presidents were from the United States” during 1852–57, “most district presidents and branch presidents were locals.”

However, Hartley countered that, of the thirty-six pastors called to supervise the mission’s fifty conferences and 700 branches between 1852 and 1855 (before the American elders were recalled), all were British natives—thirty-five of the thirty-six were only referred to as “American missionaries” because they had immigrated to the United States as converts and were returning to England as missionaries. He suggests that “it was apparently felt that a period of residence in Utah provided the advantage of more thorough initiation into Church doctrine and practice.” After this preparation, these convert immigrants were seen as invaluable assets to the missionary efforts in their mother country, and so they were called upon to return.

An example is Job Smith, who served as a traveling elder and then as president of the Bedfordshire Conference from November 1850 to December 1853. He joined the Church as an eleven-year-old in 1838 and was ordained a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, emigrated to Nauvoo in 1843, and then to Utah in 1848. Only a year later at the October 1849 general conference, he was called to return to England as a missionary.

**METHODOLOGY**

The majority of full-time missionaries initially served as traveling elders. James Henry Linford, a traveling elder in the Bedfordshire Conference, wrote: “The duty of the traveling elder was to look after the saints in his district, collect the tithing, and the individual emigration account, also to collect money for the book agents.”

The title “traveling elder” was quite self-descriptive, perhaps even more so for elders serving in this conference. William Bramall’s journal accounts of his travels are representative. During the four-month period of November 1860 through February 1861, he visited fifty-six separate locations in all six counties of the Bedfordshire Conference. He traveled to forty-seven on foot and to only nine by train, walking over 400

---


69Smith, Diary and Autobiography, 45, 49, 73–76.

miles.\textsuperscript{71} Robert W. Heyborne recorded: “During my stay in the Bedfordshire Conference I have walked, while visiting the Saints from village to village, 1,207 miles.”\textsuperscript{72} Missionaries in more densely populated LDS conferences in Britain were unlikely to have walked the same distances. However, missionaries and ministers of other faiths in Bedfordshire would have had similar challenges, except, probably, for Baptists and Methodists, who would have traveled less only because of their much greater numbers.

Thorough analyses of the extant journals of the missionaries and members who served and lived in the Bedfordshire Conference indicate that the full-time missionaries’ time was almost completely devoted to traveling across the broad expanse of their assigned district or the entire conference. Because of this, their primary contact with “strangers” was in members’ homes.\textsuperscript{73} Elijah Larkin, who served as a local missionary from July 1858 to June 1863, mentioned teaching in four different members’ homes,\textsuperscript{74} but more frequently in his own. On the other hand, Thomas Owen King, a native of this conference who had been called to return as a missionary after immigrating, mentioned teaching in twelve different members’ homes.\textsuperscript{75} Missionaries from this conference also made reference to “preaching out of doors” or on “the street corners.”\textsuperscript{76} Infrequently, missionaries would also attempt to hire a town hall, temperance hall, or other non-religious building to teach larger groups of people when resources permitted. Perhaps because they avoided denominational locales, I found no account of Mormons or their missionaries fighting with Protestants over the use of buildings in the Bedfordshire Conference, even though such conflicts with Protestants were frequent in the United States. Job Smith recorded obtaining the use of a hall in Luton and sending around fliers announcing that “Elder Job Smith of Great Salt Lake would deliver a

\textsuperscript{71}Boren, The Pride of Plumbley, 109–16.
\textsuperscript{72}Robert W. Heyborne, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, Sheffield, April 23, 1874, “Correspondence,” Millennial Star 36, no. 18 (May 5, 1874): 283.
\textsuperscript{73}See, for example, Boren, The Pride of Plumbley, 109–14.
\textsuperscript{74}Leonard Reed, Elijah Larkin: Cambridge Policeman, Utah Pioneer (N.p.: Author, 2001), 51, 60, 64–66.
\textsuperscript{75}Thomas Owen King Jr., Journal Transcripts, 1863, 57, 59, 67, 70–73, 80, 83, in possession of Leonard Reed, Cambridgeshire, England.
\textsuperscript{76}See, for one example, Linford, An Autobiography of James Henry Linford, 15–18.
course of lectures on successive Sunday afternoons." Three hundred came to the first meeting. King once asked the members in Northampton to take up a collection to hire a room to which they could attract large groups of "strangers" to preaching services. Job Smith, Charles Dana, and William Bayliss (a traveling elder in 1856), all hired the town crier to announce similar public meetings.

**MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

However, because of their travel schedule and limited financial resources, full-time missionaries in this conference, more often than not, were unable to hold public meetings in fixed locales at regular intervals as was common in more densely populated areas. To offset this limitation, they mobilized the local members to preach at nights or on weekends in outdoor meetings, weather permitting. John Spiers wrote on April 15, 1850: "Met the brethren in council and as spring was then opening, so that congregations could assemble in the open air, we made arrangements for the brethren to go out into the different villages around town to preach the gospel. . . . We accordingly appointed them to go two by two . . . all summer to establish the gospel in those villages."

Incidentally, it is also evident from journals that many new members perceived sharing the gospel as part of their divinely appointed duty. According to Richard Poll, "Most conversions occurred among the relatives and friends of active members." For example, Samuel Claridge was introduced to the gospel in 1851 by George Coleman, a "poor man with a large family, who bought his bread at [Samuel’s] bakery shop and grocery." Samuel was unusual in being an influential and fairly affluent middle-class Methodist while "poor" George Coleman was more typical. Claridge wrote: "It is true . . . it was quite a test . . .

77Smith, Diary and Autobiography, June 16 and 22, 1851, 129.
78King, Journal Transcripts, August 16, 1863.
79Smith, Diary and Autobiography, 147–49; Hartley, "LDS Pastors and Pastorates," 201; and William Bayliss, Reminiscences and Diaries, 1853–61, 47, microfilm of holograph, MS 4741, LDS Church History Archives.
80Poll, "The British Mission during the Utah War," 228.
81Spiers, Reminiscences and Journal, April 15, 1850.
82Poll, "The British Mission during the Utah War," 228.
to give up my respectable Methodist folk with their fine [new] meeting-house, to go with the very poor, despised Mormons . . . [who] met in a little old stable fitted up.” His baptism and subsequent association with the poor farm laborers who comprised most of the branch created no small stir in his community. When Claridge was ordained a priest, like Coleman and “so many Mormon converts before him,” he felt that “ordination to the priesthood was a call to preach and proselyte.” He wrote of his volunteer missionary labors: “It was soon noised abroad that Methodist Claridge was holding forth up in the old stable. Many came to hear, and I soon commenced baptizing, and our numbers kept increasing until our house was too small and the owner of the stable built us a new meeting house. We baptized him and his family and many others.”

Men ordained to the priesthood were not the only ones who felt compelled to share the gospel with their family and friends. Hannah Tapfield King was introduced to the gospel by a young woman, Lois Bailey, who had been her dressmaker for eleven years. After meeting the full-time missionaries and thoroughly investigating the Church, Hannah eventually joined and immigrated to Utah with her children and nonmember husband.

EMISSION

Emigration was not only one of the most frequent subjects of their messages to members (see Appendix), but it was also part of their methodology. Richard E. Bennett, professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, has documented that emigration was central to the missionary message of the time. The main thrust of missionary efforts in the mid-nineteenth century was on “the gathering and the plucking, rather than the planting, of membership . . . The simple purpose of the missionary was to convert and then to gather. To be converted and then not sacrifice to gather . . . was contradictory. Money was not spent on building local churches but in financing outfits for the American west.”

Interestingly, LDS missionaries in the Bedfordshire Conference (1843–74) perceived themselves and their message, which included

84Ibid., 9–14.
85Reed, Cambridgeshire Saints, 140–94.
emigration, as part of the vehicle for progressive social and religious change. Among the working classes, the doctrines of millennialism and Chartism were extremely popular. Such beliefs dovetailed with the gospel imperative to build Zion in the United States. In addition to the millennial urgency of this message, it was an extremely attractive alternative to social and economic conditions in England at the time. LDS missionaries did not create social conflict, nor were they major players in it. However, they did utilize it to promote the “cause of Zion.” They preached spiritual and economic liberation; immigration to Utah would provide spiritual fulfillment, a return to New Testament Christianity, and the private ownership of free land. They spoke the language of the common man. It was the right message, at the right time, for the right people. Hence, the vast majority of their converts came from poor factory workers who desired freedom from spiritual, economic, and governmental oppression.

Additionally (and significantly), it is obvious from correspondence of that period that middle- and upper-class Britons also saw emigration of the poorer class as desirable. Not only did they remember with apprehension the uprising of the lower classes during the French Revolution, but they also saw a reduction in numbers as likely reducing their own tax burden, imposed by the “poor rates,” which were levied against them to support the temporarily unemployed. Humphrey Bull, an agent of Aylesbury, published an open letter in the local newspaper in January 1850 to the administrators of the local poor


Chartism referred to principles of a reform movement in Britain (1838–48), which included male suffrage, payment of Members of Parliament, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments, voting by ballot, and the abolition of property qualifications for MPs. It took its name from the “People’s Charter,” the document which stated the aims of the reform movement. It was likely the first mass working-class labor movement in recorded history.

Heaton, Albrecht, and Johnson, “The Making of the British Saint in Historical Perspective,” 120.

house (“work house union”):

To the Guardians of the Aylesbury [Work House] Union: I have been repeatedly asked the cause of so few able-bodied paupers being inmates of our workhouse during the last two or three winters, which induces me to address on the important subject of Emigration, feeling satisfied that the extensive encouragement given by you to this object has been principally the cause; . . . I find the enormous number of persons who have emigrated from this Union amount to 580 souls, and the majority of them [have come] from parishes that were encumbered by surplus populations . . . but the characters of this class are now principally swept from this Union. . . . The reduction of the cost of relief to the poor is enormous. . . . I do attribute a great portion to be saved to emigration. . . . And bear in mind, gentlemen, the population gone are a portion which could be well spared. . . . I trust you may continue to support the system of emigration under which you have so materially reduced the expenditures . . . and given your Union the character of being one of the best managed in the Kingdom.90

With the abolishment of the “Old Poor Laws” in 1834, workhouse unions were established, their management carefully calculated to make the living and working conditions of those housed in them more miserable than the condition of the lowest paid worker outside. According to Harrison, this approach was justified on the grounds that public charity was incompatible with the principles of Industrial Revolution economics and that workhouse unions, which were established under the New Poor Laws of 1834, were an “application of a very simple and brutal axiom: ‘If paupers are made miserable, paupers will needs decline in multitude.’”91

Fear of temporary or permanent unemployment incident to aging, illness, or one’s trade becoming obsolete was a constant concern of the laboring poor, because they had so few resources beyond the workhouse unions. Harrison’s description underscores the cause of their concern:

When a pauper family presented itself for relief at the gates of the workhouse it was immediately broken up, men, women, and children being housed in separate parts of the building and forbidden to reunite as long as they remained. Able-bodied men were set to work at stone breaking. . . . Food was plain and monotonous: mainly bread

and gruel, with a small allowance of meat and cheese. . . . A special workhouse dress was worn . . . and any little comfort that might be considered a luxury was excluded. . . .

Such a system would have been sufficiently terrifying had all the masters and matrons, overseers and guardians been sufficiently humane and honest. But given the normal incidence of sadism, greed and petty-mindedness among mankind, and the credulity with which reports of abuse are received, it was inevitable that the horror of the new workhouses would be magnified further. There were in any case sufficient bad cases to nourish the worst of contemporary fears.92

Considering the socio-economic conditions of the time, it is no wonder that emigration was seen as such an attractive alternative. Those joining the Church in Buckinghamshire, one of the counties of the Bedfordshire Conference, were almost exclusively from the poor or laboring class.93 My analysis of local trade directories revealed that only ten of the conference’s 369 members were listed in any directory.94 This fact is a significant indicator of converts’ economic status, in that these directories included only the names of the “gentry” (none of whom joined the Church) or those with businesses or professions. Subtracting the listed ten, the remaining 359 must have come

92Ibid., 83–84.


from the ranks of the laboring classes, whether skilled or unskilled.

Another source of information regarding the economic condition of these converts is the *Mormon Immigration Index* 1840–90, a compact disk that documents the journeys of more than 94,000 LDS Church converts who crossed the Atlantic or Pacific oceans to gather in Nauvoo, Illinois, other frontier outposts, and the Great Salt Lake Valley. The largest single group of adult emigrants from the Bedfordshire Conference (45 percent) did not report an occupation. Of those who did, only 20 percent reported a “skilled laborer” occupation.95 This information is skewed in two ways: (1) The index does not contain a complete list of all Mormon immigrants, and (2) Naturally, it does not include those who were too poor to immigrate. Of the Bedfordshire Conference’s 369 members of record, I found immigration information for 179 (49 percent), in itself evidence of the poverty of these members.

For example, on February 4, 1863, missionary Joseph Bull wrote to mission president George Q. Cannon:

> In this conference, as well as in many others, the Saints are poor as in regards to the goods of this life. . . . Though surrounded by poverty and hard task-masters, with their attendant train of trying circumstances . . . many are looking forward with eager anxiety for the emigration season to open, that they may gather to the bosom of the Church.

95Fred E. Woods, comp. and ed., *Mormon Immigration Index*, CD (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000); 4 percent reported “shoemaker,” together with the 16 percent skilled group.
That they may do so, nothing is being left untried on their part which will help them to accomplish this so-much-desired object. Several, who have struggled with poverty for years, will have the privilege of emigrating themselves with their own means, having [with] a rigid economy saved out of their weekly pittances, through years of struggling, sufficient to accomplish the much-desired object.96

This letter poignantly describes both the indigence of many Saints in this conference and their near-universal desire to emigrate, at least partially for the reasons stated.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Thomas Day, who began his service as a traveling elder in 1843 (date of release unknown), and continued his service as a local missionary until 1850, recorded that he, along with the other missionaries in the Bedfordshire Conference, was required, “like the apostles of old to take neither purse nor scrip,”97 inasmuch as all missionaries were expected to proselyte following that New Testament model during this period.98 This approach left them almost completely reliant on charity for their daily sustenance. Although the Saints themselves were poor, they willingly cared for these elders, whom they saw as replicating the missions of the New Testament apostles. For example, Robert Hodgert, who served as a traveling elder from November 1846 to March 1850, recorded that the Saints “treated me very kindly and paid my expenses” including money for travel, clothing, missionary tracts, and food and shelter.99 James Henry Linford noted in his journal on December 25, 1857, that “the Saints where I had been traveling gave me money to pay my expenses to my new field of labor with expressions of good will,”100 and Job Smith recorded four different incidents where the Saints pooled their funds to buy clothing for him or the elders with whom he was serving. He also noted their generos-

---

ity in buying tracts to use in their proselytizing efforts.\textsuperscript{101}

Members were also asked to donate toward the missionaries’ emigration. Richard Jensen records that a “systematic fund-raising was undertaken in behalf of elders returning to Zion. . . . Local converts who spent their full time in the ministry were not always so fortunate . . . but they were usually able at least to borrow the means to emigrate.”\textsuperscript{102} When Thomas Squires, a local convert who served as a full-time missionary for “many years” (beginning in at least 1843) expressed a desire to emigrate, he had to wait until “the authorities of the Church . . . gave him the privilege of emigrating to Zion. The conference over which he presided furnished the means to defray the expenses of the journey.”\textsuperscript{103} He arrived in Salt Lake City September 30, 1854.

The very poverty of the Mormon missionaries endeared them to the laboring class, who as a group had become disenchanted with the formality and exclusivity of the middle- and upper-class conformists and even the increasingly middle-class nonconformist and sectarian movements.\textsuperscript{104} Samuel Wagstaff, for example, was looking for a church but was repelled by what he saw as mercenary aspects. He recounts meeting a preacher, probably either a Baptist or Calvinist, who raised the pew rent of poor parishioners, saying: “The rich can give what they want but if the poor won’t pay for their seats they will have to bring a stool and sit in the aisle.” As a result, Wagstaff stayed aloof from the established denominations until 1849 when his brother joined the Latter-day Saints. He read Parley P. Pratt’s popular tract, \textit{A Voice of Warning}, and “its message filled his soul so full” he walked two and a half miles to hear more and consented to baptism that day.\textsuperscript{105} In this new religion, he found relief from the oppressive financial demands of the mainstream churches of the day.

\textsuperscript{101}Job Smith, Diary and Autobiography, April 25, 1852; June 26, 1852; February 6, 1853; July 10, 1853; April 4, 1851, 155, 167, 182, 187, 121.
\textsuperscript{102}Jensen, “Without Purse or Scrip?,” 4–5.
\textsuperscript{103}Squires, \textit{Notes of Interest to the Descendants of Thomas Squires}, 139.
\textsuperscript{105}Sager, “Biographical Sketch of the Life of Samuel Wagstaff,” 2, MSS SC 3343, Perry Special Collections.
Although joining the LDS Church certainly involved certain financial sacrifices, including donations to the missionaries and even tithing, these were free will offerings and were not a requirement of Church membership or Church attendance, unlike the oppressive pew rates required by the Church of England and other Protestant sects and denominations. In his careful treatment of the financial arrangements of the missionaries and Mormon converts in Europe during the nineteenth century, Richard L. Jensen asserted that the key to the donations of these poor converts was “individual generosity” and “spontaneous donations.” In fact, he notes several incidents of missionaries who preferred to endure suffering rather than cause hardship for the Saints,106 while mission leaders expressly asked missionaries not to unduly burden the Saints. For example, Elias Hicks Blackburn, who served as a traveling elder and president of the Bedfordshire Conference from November 1859 to September 1861, received a letter dated December 28, 1860, from Amasa Lyman, Charles C. Rich, and George Q. Cannon, the presidency of the British Mission. It instructed: “Make yourself familiar with the condition and circum-

106Jensen, “Without Purse or Scrip?,” 4–5. He gives as examples in the European nineteenth-century context, George Halliday, a native Englishman, who preferred walking on blistered feet over asking the Saints for money for shoes, or C. C. A. Christensen who “not wanting to ask too much of the few initial converts in the city, chewed ginger to quiet their hungry stomachs.”
stances of the Saints in your district, and see that they are not op-
pressed by the collection of tithing, or donations." 107

**CONCLUSION**

Latter-day Saint missionaries who worked in the Bedfordshire
Conference did not experience the same dramatic successes numeri-
cally that their colleagues encountered in certain more industrial ar-
eas of England in the middle to latter years of the nineteenth century. One explanation has been the demography of these rural counties. Heaton, Albrecht, and Johnson assert that the major source of new converts in nineteenth-century England was the population most af-
fected by the “Industrial Revolution and associated rapid population
growth, urbanization, and political reform” with the result that “ur-
ban centers of the industrial heartland provided the type of people
that were most inclined to join the Church.” Susan Easton Black has
shown that most of these converts were in their twenties or early thir-
ties and unmarried, suggesting they may have felt free to accept a new
religion and even a new citizenship, being unrestrained by the ties of
marriage or a settled life. 108 According to branch records for the Bed-
fordshire Conference specifically, the average age at baptism was
twenty-eight; 55 percent were female and 45 were male. Bedfordshire
converts were better described as “landless laborers” or “the rural
poor” rather than the “working class,” farm workers, and factory
workers. It seems likely that Bedfordshire converts may have had dif-
ferent values and perceptions than factory converts.

Another explanation is the conference’s location in the south-

---

107 Amasa Lyman, Charles C. Rich, and George Q. Cannon, Letter to
Elias Hicks Blackburn, December 28, 1860, p. 2, Elias H. Blackburn Collec-
tion, B61-1, fd. 1: Correspondence.

108 According to Susan Easton Black, “A Profile of a British Saint,
1837–1848,” *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: The British Isles*,
edited by Cynthia Doxey (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007),
103–4, 111–12, the most typical LDS member in England during 1837–48
was an unskilled and therefore impoverished, unmarried woman, age
thirty, whose Church activity was minimal. She did not hold leadership po-
sitions or emigrate, nor is there any evidence that her posterity continued
in the Church. See also Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical
Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837–1860* (Salt
east, near London, a city that George A. Smith described as “the seat of Satan” and that Wilford Woodruff called “the Great Babylon.” Woodruff, who had experienced remarkable success as a missionary in other areas of England, wrote that “London is the hardest place I have ever visited for establishing the gospel.”\footnote{109 Wilford Woodruff, quoted in Allen and Thorp, “The Mission of the Twelve to England,” 8.} Despite the major urban/rural difference, local landowners in Simpson, Buckinghamshire County, did everything possible to frustrate missionary activities, including preventing public meetings and acquiring a meeting place. Job Smith commented on April 23, 1851, that “the landlords of all the saints houses here [in Simpson] positively forbid any meetings being held therein, consequently I had to get the saints together in a covert manner and teach them.”\footnote{110 Smith, Diary and Autobiography, 123.} On March 7, 1852, in nearby Aylesbury, he wrote: “A very dull prospect presented itself, but . . . I concluded to organize a branch. . . . I endeavored to get a congregation to preach to, by sending the bellman round town, etc., but could not get anybody to come.”\footnote{111 Ibid., 147–49.} By March 24, he concluded: “I found that the elements were not there for a good branch of the Church.”\footnote{112 Ibid., 158.} Nineteenth-century British missionaries encountered opposition regardless of where they served, but extant historical documents and other studies confirm that the southeast region was particularly unreceptive.

This resistance was no doubt reinforced by the Bedfordshire Conference’s significantly smaller and scattered population, especially when compared to the densely populated counties with urban industrial centers. For example, in 1851 the population of Lancashire County was 2,031,236; and according to the 1851 religious census, despite steady LDS out-migration, more than 3,000 Church members were still living there.\footnote{113 Gay, “Some Aspects of the Social Geography of Religion in England,” 59–60, comments “absolute numbers tell us very little; they need to be related to the total population base” which is why “the large numbers of Mormons . . . did not have much effect on the general total for Lancashire.”} In contrast, Buckinghamshire, one of the rural counties in the Bedfordshire Conference, had a population one-twelfth that of Lancashire: 167,095. Although the 1851 religious census recorded only 242 Mormons for the county, Buckinghamshire
and Lancashire actually had the same LDS membership per capita that census year.114

Unlike studies that have focused on prominent American missionaries who proselytized in industrial cities, this study has highlighted a different group: native Englishmen who were either called into the service in their homeland by other missionaries or were sent back to England after they had immigrated to America. Bedfordshire Conference was largely rural, with the result that elders did more walking than teaching, met with smaller groups, and ministered to a different socio-economic class who were less receptive to their message. Despite these challenges, they pressed on, driven by the same mission theology as missionaries in other conferences. As they taught the members and strangers of this conference the same message, embraced the same mission philosophies, and did so under comparable financial circumstances, they found their own rewards as they brought “strangers” into the fellowship of the Saints.

114Attempting to ascertain church membership per capita in the county of Buckinghamshire during this time period can be approached from one of two ways. John Gay utilized the 1851 Religious Census, even though only one of the four branches for which records are extant was included. For example, see “Map 7: Distribution of Mormons 1851” in Gay, “Some Aspects,” 74. This map shows “Mormon Attendance on Census Sunday 1851 per 1000 population,” indicating that Mormon membership in Buckinghamshire was less than 0.2% of the total population of the county at that time. I came up with the same percentage per capita, 0.2%, even including all four branches for which records are extant. This is because the Edlesborough branch constituted the majority of Buckinghamshire membership, being over four times larger than any other branch. Use of the composite 1851 census data is another way to estimate members per capita. Providentially, all four branches were extant in 1851, and only 14 of the 266 members had emigrated before the 1851 census. Therefore, approximately 242 members of Buckinghamshire branches would have been citizens of this county on March 30, 1851, the day of the census. The population of Buckinghamshire on that same date was 167,095; therefore, Church membership per capita would have been less than 0.2%, by this measure. Either method produced similar results (between 0.1% and 0.2%), even though using the composite census data included the membership of all four branches for which records are extant. This is because the Edlesborough branch constituted over 61% of the total membership of Buckinghamshire membership. Bartholomew, “Patterns of Missionary Work and Emigration in Buckinghamshire,” 142.
### Missionary Sermons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members with strangers</td>
<td>“First principles”: faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restoration of primitive Christianity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truthfulness of latter-day work (Church/Joseph Smith)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of kingdom of God on earth</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eschatology (surrounding last days/second advent)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atonement of Jesus Christ/resurrection</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>God and Jesus as separate beings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book of Mormon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members only</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reformation/faithfulness/being active in your religion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tithing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duties of the priesthood</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need for unity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ordinances for the dead</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plurality of wives</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word of Wisdom</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fasting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trials, stewardship, and sacrament</td>
<td>1 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Not all missionaries noted giving sermons. Those who did were not, with the exception of William Bramall, comprehensive in listing their numbers and/or topics. Nor was it unusual for a sermon to cover more than one topic. However, the data above are based on 114 sermons in which topics were identified.

William Bramall recorded preaching 202 sermons but mentioned topics for only eighty: first principles of the gospel (8), obedience (6), second coming (6), priesthood duties (3), duties of Saints (3), principles of “our holy religion” (3), unity (2), tithing (2), principles of eternal life (2), and one time each for effects of the gospel, emigration, gathering of Israel, gospel preached to dead, growth of the kingdom, history of the Church, living our religion, fasting, living as Saints, restoration of the gospel, and resurrection of the dead. These topics total forty-four topics, leaving the subjects of the other 138 sermons unnamed (and likely he addressed more than one topic per sermon).

Collectively, the other missionary journals cited in this article noted preaching on a specific topic only eighty times. I have therefore added Bramwell’s forty-four to these eighty. The total of 124 in the table includes sermons in which the missionary
says he preached on more than one topic.

REVIEWS


Reviewed by Blair Dee Hodges

In 1996 when Mormon Tabernacle organist John Longhurst saw architectural drawings for the newly proposed Conference Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he was impressed by its sheer enormity. Naturally, what attracted his attention most was the absence of any sort of visible pipe organ in the original plans. “The rostrum’s rear wall was to be some sort of attractive curtain or grille to be designed later. They called it a ‘screen wall,’” Longhurst recalls (46). Since musical accompaniment would have to be amplified electronically anyway, given the size of the auditorium, an electronic organ made financial and logistical sense. Still, Longhurst couldn’t hide his disappointment. Admitting his “prejudice” for pipe organs over electric, Longhurst began, with encouragement from LDS Church Architect Leland Gray, investigating the possibility of including a pipe organ. The beautiful organ which now serves as the backdrop of the Conference Center rostrum is the result of nearly a decade of consultation, design, and construction previously unmatched in the world of organ making.

Longhurst, who retired as Tabernacle organist in 2007 after thirty years of service, has crafted a biography of the mammoth musical instrument. It contains the detailed analysis of an expert insider written in a style suitable for the interested novice. Recognizing that his readership (and listening audience!) will include many organ aficionados outside of the LDS Church, Longhurst begins the book with a brief description of the Church’s historical geography and structure to the present.

Chapter 2 situates Mormon music in the religious atmosphere of the nineteenth century. From Emma Smith’s 1835 hymnbook (23) to the Taber-
nacle Choir’s National Medal of Arts awarded by President George W. Bush in 2003 (28), Longhurst sees music as a crucial element of Mormon worship, recreation, and public image, a heritage which justified the money, time, and effort it took to make the new organ possible.

Longhurst narrates a history of the organs at Temple Square, as well as some of the key figures in constructing the instruments, in Chapter 3. The story of Joseph Harris Ridges leads off with a harrowing tale of danger at sea. Ridges, a British convert, constructed his first church organ in Australia, an ambition he had formulated as a young boy in London (31). The Saints in Australia wished to make a gift of it to “the Church in Zion” and presumably paid for its shipping to the Salt Lake Valley. One of the Saints accompanying the organ recorded a terrible storm en route during which he prayed fervently for protection. The miraculous answer saved the passengers and the precious organ from certain shipwreck (32–33). This organ was set up in the “Old Tabernacle,” a large frame building which preceded the now-famous turtle shell-domed Tabernacle. Pieces of this original organ were incorporated into the (new) Tabernacle’s organ, which was expanded again in 1885.

“Few organs, anywhere, are as well known and highly regarded,” writes Longhurst, listing its technical dimensions with the specificity of an expert lover of organs (36). He also describes the construction and make of organs at the Assembly Hall and the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, accompanied by color photographs. However, the Conference Center organ would surpass all of the others in terms of logistical difficulties and pioneering effort.

When President Gordon B. Hinckley announced plans to build a new and much larger meeting place for the Saints on April 7, 1996, Longhurst played the session’s postlude, his mind filled with the new organ: “I was trying to visualize in my mind a room the size he described. If general conference were to be held there, surely an organ would be needed, but what would that organ be? . . . How were the Tabernacle organists and the rest of the Choir staff to become involved in decisions regarding not only an organ, but configuration of the choir loft and other music-related issues?” (43).

Several days later he found himself looking at the organ-less plans for the new center and went to work to discover the feasibility of a pipe organ for such a large auditorium. “Certainly no organ builder would want to risk tarnishing his reputation by attempting to install an instrument in an impossible situation” (46). Here the reader is introduced to the consultants, considerations, and culture of the organ-building world with its architects, acousticians, and stage designers (47). Longhurst and his allies presented a report of their initial findings to President Hinckley with considerable trepidation, since the price-tag was an estimated $5 million. To Longhurst’s delight, Hinckley told them to keep on with the research. After trips to California to test organs in large auditoriums, Longhurst was thrilled with consultant Jack
Bethard’s assertion that “a pipe organ will work in the auditorium as presently designed, without compromise to itself or to other architectural or performance elements.” Bethard further asserted, without qualification, “A pipe organ should be [the] musical backbone of the new assembly building” (52). Bethard’s conclusion and estimated cost of $3.5 million went to the First Presidency and, after “several suspenseful and prayer-filled days,” was approved (53). The catch was that the Tabernacle Choir was asked to contribute “about a million and a half dollars out of their private funds,” President Hinckley announced on July 24, 1997, and, with characteristic tongue in cheek, added that the choir would have “to not travel so much, to stay home and make that money available to us for this great building” (54).

In the remaining chapters, Longhurst discusses the nuts and bolts of the organ’s design and construction. Meeting with potential builders, traveling the country to hear different types of organs, designing its façade, or face design, and “refining the stoplist” kept the planners and builders busy. The stoplist, Longhurst explains for outsiders, is like the “window sticker” for a new organ, identifying the “various sets of pipes . . . couples and accessories,” and other elements (81). Longhurst includes the actual stoplist in the main text in addition to an appendix of the pipe specifications. (Other appendices include a map of the console with its buttons and pedals, a timeline of the construction, an article on the Conference Center project from The American Organist, a record of project worker graffiti found inside the organ case, and a glossary of organ terms).

Longhurst describes the console of the organ as being similar to the “cockpit of an airplane,” from which the “organist operates the instrument’s various controls and plays the keys, which finally enables the organ to make music” (99). His description conceives of the organ as an organic whole rather than a separated console and set of pipes. I imagine the console itself as the mere passenger seat on the body of the instrument, the organist as a person riding the back of a great whale.

Color drawings and photographs of the console give the reader a sense of intimate connection to the organ. Longhurst’s detailed story includes changes made to the console from its original plan and the considerations that made the changes necessary. They included jettisoning the “Stand By” and “On Air” lights which had been incorporated into the Tabernacle organ’s console “as a carryover from the early days of radio broadcasting” (109).

Chapter 9 describes the four-plus-year setup of the organ as the Conference Center was built around it. Employees of Schoenstein, the organ maker contracted to build the organ, spent “well over” an estimated 6,000 man-hours completing the project, which Longhurst describes with a true insider’s detail (141). The organ was not completed in time for the first general conference held in the Conference Center in April 2000. Instead, an
electric organ "performed competently, and the newly completed pipe façade added visual luster to its sound" (119). For President Hinckley’s ninetieth birthday celebration in June, the Temple Square audio technicians piped in the organ from the Tabernacle. "I happened to be at the console and was most comfortable performing in my shirtsleeves, the only person in the dimly lit Tabernacle" Longhurst recalls (122). The workers were thrilled when the organ played for the October 2000 general conference, as non-Mormon organ consultant Jack Bethards wrote: "We can only conclude that the Conference Center in all regards is nothing short of a miracle!" (128).

Even then, the work was not complete, the voice of the organ required much fine-tuning to keep it up to Longhurst’s meticulous standards. It was difficult to find time to tune while tourists poured past and finishing touches were put in place in the Conference Center. Adjustments for temperature and humidity, an unpleasant odor in the blower room, and other considerations remained.

In Chapter 10 Longhurst explores the variety of pipes, the intricate wind system pumping air through the instrument, and the overall "action" of the organ—"the entire chain of events that must occur between the pressing of a key and the resultant sound from the pipes" (153). Photographs of the many pipes give readers a backstage tour. Finally, with a precision perhaps only an organist can appreciate, Longhurst compares the Conference Center organ with the Tabernacle organ, claiming that "asking which organ we prefer is like asking a parent to name a favorite child" (158). He admits that the room in which the organ is held is a key determinant, and so the Tabernacle organ is better suited for recitals and concerts, although "we are always happy for another opportunity to play the Schoenstein organ" (158).

After being educated about the logistics of such an instrument, readers will never look at the organ in the same way again. Longhurst, who received bachelor and master of music degrees from the University of Utah and his doctor of musical arts degree from the Eastman School of Music, includes enough of the technical, but also the trivial: the pipes hidden behind the façade, the dummy pipes on the front of the façade to create symmetry, and the affectionate graffiti written inside the organ case ("[we] built this organ for the future enjoyment of our families," and "Let’s go home"). Listeners will never hear the organ the same way again either, after experiencing the guided "tonal tour" of the organ, presented by organists John Longhurst, Clay Christiansen, and Andrew Unsworth on a CD-ROM included inside the back cover of the book. The CD demonstrates the different tones and sounds the organ can produce and includes recital pieces written by Bach, Mendelssohn, and others. A color wheel appendix can be used with the CD to identify the intended sound of the organ, adjustable by the organists depending on the piece and performance. *Magnum Opus* is a true insider’s view of organ origins.
BLAIR DEE HODGES {BlairDHodges@gmail.com} received his bachelor’s degree in mass communications with a minor in religious studies from the University of Utah. He currently serves as choir director for the Porter Lane Third Ward (Centerville, Utah) and sings with the Utah Symphony Chorus. He blogs at lifeongoldplates.com.


Reviewed by Robert M. Hogge

If the reader is a member of Minert’s primary audience (one of 40,000 returned German-speaking missionaries and/or one of 250,000 members who descend from East German Latter-day Saints), then this encyclopedic history of the East German Mission during World War II (1939–45) will be an invaluable resource.

This comprehensive history is actually a series of histories of each of the thirteen districts (alphabetically arranged from Berlin to Zwickau) and their seventy-nine branches and groups (the Breslau Center Branch through the Waldenburg Group, arranged alphabetically under the Breslau District). The book is organized with fairly traditional but not wholly predictable subdivisions, beginning with acknowledgments (that should have been expanded into a preface), an introduction (divided into thirteen topics, some of which should have been included in the preface), an explanation of the *Gedenkbuch* or Memorial Book (vital statistics on more than 600 Latter-day Saints who did not survive World War II, included in the “In Memoriam” sections at the end of each chapter), a chronology of the war’s major events, an opening chapter on the history of the East German Mission, ninety-two unit histories (district, branch, and group), a conclusion (again with thirteen topics, many of which should have been included in the introduction as an overview), a glossary, and an index of personal names (by far the most valuable resource in the book for those trying to piece together the often fragmented accounts of specific individuals).

Since most readers of unit histories are selective about their areas of greatest interest, Minert’s rigid chronological arrangement of materials from 1939 to 1945 may seem almost natural and maybe even unobtrusive. For instance, if a descendant of people who lived in Hindenburg picks up this book, he or she will see, in the table of contents, a Hindenburg District that contains four units (Deutsch Rasselwitz Group, Gleiwitz Branch, Hindenburg Branch, and Ratibor Branch). Reading the district history reveals...
that it “was the smallest district in the mission both in area and population” (275). The information provided locates the district geographically and describes when it was organized, when the first district conference was held, the political importance of the town of Gleiwitz (giving Hitler “justification” for invading Poland), a statistical table of district membership (from the number of “Elders” to the number of “Female Children,” with listings for 1939 and 1940, but with nothing for 1941 and 1942), an acknowledgment of the scarcity of information, and the historical reality that “the Hindenburg District territory was ceded to Poland following World War II” (276). The unit history concludes: “After the Polish government forced the evacuation of German citizens from the region in late 1946, all traces of the presence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there were lost” (276). At the end of the history are source notes to East German Mission Quarterly Reports and the Presiding Bishopric’s “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” sources which may or may not add significantly to the material presented.

The history of the Hindenburg Branch itself was pieced together only from mission records because, according to Minert, “No surviving eyewitnesses from the Hindenburg Branch have been identified, nor have historical writings of deceased eyewitnesses come to light” (279).

Though unit histories in the Hindenburg District are skimpy, materials related to the Berlin District (and other large districts) are extensive indeed. The strength of these more robust histories is based, to a great extent, on Minert’s thorough research into all available materials (published and unpublished), along with supervising twenty-two research assistants who interviewed “hundreds of eyewitnesses who agreed to share their stories” (ix). Those whose research interest is in Berlin (or in many of the other larger districts) will find much valuable information which will document how the Church operated in the mission, even under the increasingly oppressive Hitler regime, the eventual occupation by Soviet forces, and the Allied bombing campaigns. An entry from the Dresden District history shows how resilient and faithful the Latter-day Saints in that area were: “Despite the condition of Dresden after the catastrophic firebombing of February 13–14, 1945, a district conference was held there on Sunday, April 29, 1945” (227).

For thirty-five years, Minert has been researching the history of the Church in Germany and is currently at work on a second volume focused on the West German Mission, presumably spanning the same time period. Minert adds: “The archival collection that emerged is monumental and will likely be transferred to the Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah” (4). When that goal is achieved with, I hope, online search capabilities, those who wish to explore the East German Mission beyond the selected materials contained in this book will be able to do so.
During his research, Minert sought answers to these questions: “How many priesthood holders were lost? How many branch meeting places were damaged or destroyed? How many Latter-day Saint families lost their homes? What happened to the branches in territories later ceded to Poland and the Soviet Union? What happened to Primary classes, Relief Society work meetings and bazaars, and Young Women and Young Men programs? How was the missionary effort sustained, if at all?” (3)

Though Minert does focus on membership numbers and statistics in 1939 when the war began, he does not directly compile the numbers to answer many of these questions, nor would I wish him to. But in his series of questions, one struck me as significant: How was the missionary effort sustained, if at all? I linked that key question with one of his primary objectives: “My goal from the beginning has been to describe in great detail the lives of typical Latter-day Saints” (3). To see how he did this, I re-read the first main chapter, the history of the East German Mission, searching for information about missionary work. After the evacuation of American missionaries in 1939, missionary work was sustained primarily by five native German sister missionaries: Erika Fassmann, Edith Birth, Irmgard Gottschalk, Johanna Berger, and Ilse Reimer (27). How they served in the mission office in Berlin is effectively summarized in five or six pages from the mission history.

But since I had already read the entire book from cover to cover, I knew that much of the most interesting information about some of these missionaries is scattered throughout the book. For example, although the experiences of “Erika Fassmann of Zwickau” (27) are summarized in this introductory chapter, there are also references to Erika Müller, her married name, mentioned in the Breslau Center Branch history (119). She also appears in a photograph of Gleaners and Beehives at the Königsberg District Conference (285). But the three most interesting stories about her mission are in the Zwickau Branch history: her five years of travel throughout the mission to “conduct training sessions for the auxiliary programs of the Church” (503); the momentary interruption of her mission while she married Rudi Müller and spent a three-day honeymoon with him before sending him off to the German navy (507–8); and a dangerous experience aboard a train carrying soldiers. When Allied airplanes bombed the train, everyone fled from the cars and hid near the tracks. According to Erika, “I preached the gospel to these soldiers, but they didn’t want to listen. . . . I asked if I could pray. They said yes, so I prayed loudly enough to be heard. Not one bomb hit the train. Then we got back into the train, and I continued to preach the gospel, and this time nobody protested” (509).

As Erika’s example shows, each unit history is arranged according to a strict chronology from 1937 through 1945. (There are a few exceptions, such as the 1950 entry on the chronology: “The last surviving LDS soldier returns
from a Soviet POW camp” (22), while the chapter summarizing the history of the East German Mission contains a few references to the early 1950s.) A consequence of this rigidly chronological organization is that episodes of a given individual’s story are often scattered throughout the book. The index of personal names therefore becomes invaluable in piecing these stories together.

But even then, the reader must be alert. Minert has included an extensive headnote for his index, describing many of its unusual features, such as his different way of alphabetizing women’s names: If a woman is married before 1939, she is listed under her married name; but if she is married after 1939 she is listed by her maiden name as well as her married name—Fassman Müller, for example (533) Minert’s explanation is sufficient for those who study headnotes before using the index. But for those general readers who read the text, find a name, and then immediately look up that name in the index, Minert’s system might seem a bit confusing. For example, Erika’s birthname is Fassman. A general reader would expect to find her name listed alphabetically before Fritz Fassman, but it is not. It appears with the other women’s compound names (Helga Fassman Kupitz and Irmgard Fassman Messina Schwartz) at the end of the ten “Fassman” entries.

Nathan N. Waite recently reviewed this encyclopedic mission history (“Steadfast German Saints,” BYU Magazine, Winter 2010, 52–57), beginning with the detailed January 30, 1945, story of Margarete Hellwig and her daughter Gundrun who had fled from their home in East Prussia, securing passage on the Wilhelm Gustloff to cross the Baltic Sea to Germany and safety. Since the ship was overloaded, a voice over the loudspeaker announced that they were looking for some passengers who would be willing to take another ship. Margarete felt a strong spiritual impression that she and Gundrun should leave. They boarded another ship sailing at the same time. At sea, Margarete watched while Soviet torpedoes sank the Wilhelm Gustloff, killing 9,000. Waite concludes: “Mother and daughter arrived safely in Berlin, where they were taken in by Church members.”

This story has a satisfying, self-contained shape, but it is not really typical of Minert’s text. First, because this episode occurred at the end of the war (1945), the reviewer was spared the necessity of piecing together a story that may have begun in one district in 1939, changed to a different district in 1941, followed by evacuation to another branch in 1943, and concluding with the climax of their saved lives in 1945. Second, Waite’s conclusion was not completely accurate. According to Minert’s summary, based on Gundrun’s recollections, “They landed at the harbor of Kiel, Germany, and made their way inland. Being some of the first refugees to arrive in the rural province of Schleswig-Holstein, they had no problem finding a place to stay on a farm near Krummberg. There they waited out the end of the war, hoping to be united with their relatives” (304). In short, the Hellwigs did not ar-
rive “safely in Berlin.” This example again provides evidence of the reader’s need to use the index to find scattered references to individuals, and then to piece them together into the full story.

General readers hoping to find even a brief reference to President Thomas S. Monson and his work behind the Iron Curtain, leading to the construction of the Freiberg Germany Temple, will be disappointed because these events lie outside Minert’s strict 1939–45 time frame. This valuable book is probably not for the general reader; still, for those interested in unit histories from the East German Mission, this book is a landmark text.

ROBERT M. HOGGE {rhogge@weber.edu} is a professor of English at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. With three coauthors, he published The Stone Rolls Forth: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Southeastern Colorado (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1988), along with several family histories.


Reviewed by Larry E. Morris

When Lewis and Clark launched their expedition a year and a half before Joseph Smith’s birth, they did not go overland with horses and pack mules but boarded boats in what Lewis called a voyage and headed up the Missouri, the great American river (with apologies to Huck and Jim and their Big River). The captains labored upstream in a keelboat and two large pirogues (dugouts), but they had scarcely returned to St. Louis when news came from the East of a marvelous invention by Robert Fulton. It was no surprise that “soon after he demonstrated the practicability of steamboating by trial-running the Clermont on the Hudson River in 1807, Fulton turned his attention to the West” (38–39). In little more than a decade later, steamboats were making their way up and down the Missouri, ushering in an era that would last for more than a century. In Navigating the Missouri, William E. Lass tells the fascinating history of steamboats on the Missouri from 1819 to 1935, when the last commer-

---

¹One of Fulton’s ardent supporters was the impressive Samuel L. Mitchill, one of the scholars with whom Martin Harris discussed the Book of Mormon early in 1828. Richard E. Bennett, “Read This I Pray Thee: Martin Harris and the Three Wise Men of the East,” Journal of Mormon History 36, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 197.
cial steamer on Lewis and Clark’s river closed up shop. And although Lass’s discussion of Mormonism is quite limited, *Navigating* offers valuable background in understanding both the Mormon experience in Missouri and the westward movement as a whole.

With its source at the edge of the Continental Divide in southwestern Montana, the Missouri is 2,540 miles long, the longest river in the United States, winding its way past present Great Falls, Montana; Bismarck, North Dakota; Pierre, South Dakota; Sioux City, Iowa; Omaha, Nebraska; Leavenworth, Kansas; and Jefferson City, Missouri. It flows into the Mississippi just north of St. Louis.²

One hundred and fifty miles downstream from St. Louis, the Ohio rolls in from the east, and these three water highways—the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri—offered an incredible transportation system to the explorers, beaver trappers, buffalo hunters, soldiers, vagabonds, gold-seekers, entrepreneurs, and pioneers storming west in the nineteenth century, interconnecting the Appalachians, the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and the Rocky Mountains. Up to the time of Fulton, these pilgrims rowed, paddled, sailed, pulled—and poled—their way up or down rivers in dugout canoes, hide canoes, bateaux, pirogues, flatboats, mackinaws, and keelboats. But as Lass points out, all of these craft had their flaws. Indeed, some were suitable only for downstream travel. “The steamboat was the outcome of long experimentation to find bigger, faster, two-way vessels. . . . The shortcomings of its predecessors added to the appeal of the steamboat, which offered unprecedented speed and efficiency” (29).

Late in 1811, the steamboat *New Orleans* departed Pittsburgh on the Ohio River, reaching its namesake city by way of the Mississippi in 1812. By 1815, Henry M. Shreve and others had shown that steamers could effectively travel upstream from New Orleans to Pittsburgh. Then, in 1817, eleven years after Lewis and Clark’s return, the *Zebulon M. Pike* reached St. Louis, the first steamboat to do so. “The voyage demonstrated the extension of the new technology to the very edge of the frontier,” comments Lass (39). By 1819, Stephen H. Long was making final preparations to head a military and scientific mission going up the Missouri on board a steamboat called the *Western Engineer*. He and “other steamboat boosters assumed that the federal government would pioneer Missouri River steamboating. Much to their surprise, they were upstaged by a civilian promotion”—the *Independence*, which

---
steamed halfway across present Missouri that spring (45).

Was it mere coincidence that the development of the Missouri Territory shifted into high gear just as steamboat commerce got established? Missouri was admitted to the Union in 1821; and as Lass notes, “Settlement followed the Missouri across the state,” as towns like Jefferson City, Rocheport, Franklin, and Lexington sprung up along the river. Lass further shows how several dynamics converged to form and shape a hamlet with the same name as the first commercial steamer on the Missouri: Independence, a community—and an ideal—that has loomed large in Mormon consciousness for a century and four score years.

“In the fall of 1821,” writes Lass, “William Becknell and several companions left Franklin with pack animals to trade with the Comanche Indians. On the distant western plains Becknell chanced to meet some Mexican troops who invited him to take his goods to Santa Fe. There Becknell was cordially greeted by the governor, who encouraged further trade” (64).

Becknell’s timing had been perfect. He arrived only weeks after Mexico won its hard-fought independence from Spain; and American traders, often arrested by Spanish authorities, were now more than welcome. “New Mexico, which could be supplied easier from Missouri than from points in Mexico, was chronically short of dry goods, hardware, and other household goods” (64). In the course of filling this need, Becknell had founded the Santa Fe Trail.

On his return to Franklin in 1823, Becknell reportedly “dumped ‘heaps of dollars’ on Franklin’s sidewalks and paid one townsman a $900 return on a $60 investment. The next year, Meredith M. Marmaduke led a Santa Fe expedition of “eighty-one men with an assortment of twenty-five dearborns [light, four-wheeled wagons], carts, and freight wagons. With returns of $180,000 in gold and silver and $10,000 in furs, its economic benefits to Missouri were enormous” (63, 64, 65).

As T. Edgar Lyon points out, “At identically the same time the Santa Fe trade was growing, the [Missouri and Rocky Mountain fur trade] was developing. . . . While not bringing to the United States the much needed gold and silver as was the case with the Spanish-American trade, still its monetary value was about equal.”

The Rocky Mountain fur traders naturally hoped to take full advantage of the latest technology, and Lass notes that Kenneth McKenzie, “one of the key men in the Columbia Fur Company, which merged with the American Fur Company in 1827,” concluded that the “company’s transportation would be made faster, cheaper, and more efficient by using steamboats in-

---

stead of keelboats from St. Louis to Fort Union [in present western North Dakota]” (81). By 1830, he had convinced company partners to authorize the construction of a steamboat at Louisville, Kentucky; the resulting “extension of steamboating...to the mouth of the Yellowstone” proved to be the “most dramatic [steamboat] development in the 1830s” (80).

Lyon relevantly notes: “Perhaps the most pressing problems which both the Santa Fe trade and the [Rocky Mountain] fur traders faced was getting their trade goods as far westward as possible by water transportation and getting the results of their efforts to the Mississippi Valley markets where they could realize a profit on these goods.”

Since the Santa Fe Trail and the Missouri River diverge in western Missouri—with the trail going toward New Mexico and the river going toward Montana—Missouri’s frontier counties were undoubtedly the best site for a commercial center that could serve both interests. As Lass explains, however, “south of the river, settlement in westernmost Missouri was temporarily blocked by a twenty-four-mile-wide strip of unceded Indian land running from the Missouri River to the state’s southern boundary.” Fortuitously, at least for the traders, “the United States acquired the tract in 1825 by two treaties [that] William Clark negotiated with Indian representatives at St. Louis...The next year, the state legislature formed Jackson County, and...the first lots in Independence [the newly named county seat]...were sold in 1827” (63).

Lass’s thorough research thus casts the January 1831 arrival of Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Frederick G. Williams in Independence in a rich historical context.5+ First, it’s clear that Cowdery and his fellows had ventured into territory that been largely a wilderness only a decade earlier. As Alex Baugh comments, “When Mormonism first appeared in Jackson County, Missouri was not only the newest state in the Union, it was also the westernmost state, situated literally on the edge of the American frontier and only sparsely settled.”

Second, Independence was hardly a settlement of minor importance, or

---

4Ibid., 13.
5The Mormon elders walked most of the way from New York to Independence. Describing the trek across Missouri, Parley P. Pratt remembered passing “through vast prairies and through trackless wilds of snow—no beaten road; houses few and far between; and the bleak northwest wind always blowing in our faces with a keenness which would almost take the skin off the face.” Still, they completed at least one leg of the trip via steamboat. “About the 20th of December,” wrote Pratt, “we took passage [at Cincinnati] on a steamer for St. Louis.” At the mouth of the Ohio, however, they found the Mississippi blocked with ice and proceeded on foot. Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (1874; rpt. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000 printing), 58, 57.
6Alexander L. Baugh, A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Mis-
one in decline, as Franklin, Missouri, was by the late 1820s. Instead, as Lamar C. Berrett explains, its “strategic location near the northwest bend of the Missouri River and its position on the Santa Fe Trail established it as an important commercial center in the development of the American West.”

Third, Independence was the kind of place likely to attract all kinds of folk, from enterprising families and businessmen seeking new opportunities to trappers, traders, and outlaws wanting to get as far away from civilized society as possible. Founded by government entities, Independence was what Ezra Booth described as a “new town, containing a court-house built of brick, two or three merchants stores and 15 or 20 dwelling houses, built mostly of logs hewn on both sides; and . . . situated on a handsome rise of ground.” At the same time, a Presbyterian missionary who arrived a year or two before Cowdery and his companions wrote, “Such a godless place, filled with so many profane swearers, would be difficult to imagine. . . . There are many suspicious characters who headquarter here, but when intelligence arrives that a federal marshal is approaching this country, there is a hurried scurrying of many of this element to the Indian territory on the west side of the Missouri.” Independence, then, was ripe with potential for both prosperity and trouble.

One accident of history brings the historical setting into even sharper focus. On April 10, 1831, three months after the Mormon elders arrived in Independence, Jedediah Strong Smith, the great American explorer (with apologies to Lewis and Clark, John Charles Frémont, Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, et al.), departed from St. Louis with David E. Jackson, Bill Sublette, and seventy or eighty other frontiersmen. Trekking along the Santa Fe Trail in twenty-two mule-drawn wagons loaded with goods and supplies, they were headed to New Mexico on a trading mission, hoping to reap the same kind of profits garnered by Becknell, Marmaduke, and others. They stopped and restocked their supplies at Independence.

Next they camped briefly near the Big Blue River. This was Kaw Townshipship, the very area where the Mormon elders had settled, with Cowdery and Williams finding work as schoolteachers. One has to wonder if Cowdery

---

8 Ezra Booth, quoted in ibid., 14.
made contact with these traders—or others in the area—because on May 7, three days after Jedediah Smith and his contingent departed, Oliver wrote to Joseph Smith: “I am informed of an other Tribe of Lamanites lately who have abundance of flocks of the best kinds of sheep and cattle and manufacture blankets of superior quality the tribe is very numerous they live three hundred miles west of Santafee and are called navahoes.”10 Who better to provide such information than those who traveled the Santa Fe Trail? One must also wonder if Jedediah Smith, a religious man “modest and unassuming, quiet and mild of manner, one who never smoked or chewed tobacco, never uttered a profane word, and partook of wine or brandy only sparingly on formal occasions,”11 heard about the Mormons or even heard one of them preach. If not, he never had another opportunity because three weeks later, on May 27, Smith went alone in search of water on a parched plain in the Cimarron Desert (in present Kansas) and surprised a Comanche hunting party. Thirty-two-year-old Jedediah reportedly killed the chief before being slain himself.12

As for Oliver Cowdery’s state of mind, he was hardly encouraged by his experience in Independence. “We <can> also rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name,” he wrote in his May 7 letter, “for almost the whole country which consists of Universalists Atheists Deists Presbyterians Methodests <Baptists> and professed christians Priests and people with all the Devels from the infernal pit are united and foaming out there own shame God forbid that I should bring a railing accusation against them for vengeance belongeth unto him who is able to repay and herein brethren we confide.”13

The irony was that the disparate elements of Independence—the religious and godless, businessmen and fugitives—would unite in their efforts to expel the Mormonites. Lass hardly overstates the case when he says the Missourians “abhorred Mormon doctrines” (95).

Lass’s research also provides valuable background to subsequent events in Missouri that summer of 1831. As Richard Bushman recounts, “With the

---

10 Oliver Cowdery, Letter to “Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,” May 7, 1831, Joseph Smith Letterbook, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church History Library, transcription in my possession courtesy of Richard L. Anderson and Scott H. Faulring.

11 Dale L. Morgan, Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 8. Jedediah Smith had been born in 1799 in Bainbridge, New York, where the family remained for the next dozen years, possibly becoming acquainted with the Josiah Stowell and Joseph Knight families, both of whom lived in the area.


13 Cowdery to “Our Dearly Beloved Brethren,” May 7, 1831.
founding of a city in mind, [Joseph Smith] left [Kirtland] for Missouri on June 19 with a party of eight, taking wagon, canal boat, and stage to Cincinnati. . . . The party went on to St. Louis by steamboat, traveling down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi. Finding no waiting vessel in St. Louis, Joseph and four others walked the 250 miles to Independence in the summer heat.14 Easy finding passage from Cincinnati to St. Louis but not from St. Louis to Independence was not surprising, because, as Lass makes clear, Missouri steamboating was still developing at this time, while traffic on the Ohio/Mississippi system had been quite heavy for several years.

Reaching Jackson County in mid-July, Joseph Smith proclaimed Missouri to be the site “appointed & consecrated” by the Lord “for the gathering of the Saints.” “The place which is now called Independence,” the revelation continued, “is the centre place, & the spot for the Temple is lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the court-house.”15

Then, on August 9, about a week after Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith dedicated the land of Zion and the temple site, respectively, the Mormon elders, including Oliver Cowdery, boarded sixteen canoes, intending to navigate the Missouri River all the way to St. Louis. By the second day, however, “a spirit of animosity and discord” had overcome the group. Oliver Cowdery prophesied that “if you do not behave better, some accident will befall you.”16 Then, W. W. Phelps “saw the Destroyer, in his most horrible power, ride upon the face of the waters,” although, as Steven C. Harper notes, “What that means is not certain.” As Harper summarizes subsequent events, “Contention continued the next day. Joseph was frustrated. Some of the elders refused to paddle, and at least one of the canoes hit a submerged tree and nearly capsized. Joseph urged the frightened group to get off the river.”17

The next day, August 12, a revelation (now D&C 61) advised the elders, “It is not needful for this whole company of mine Elders to be moveing swiftly upon the waters whilst the inhabitants on either sides are perishing in

unbelief nevertheless I suffered it that ye might bear record Behold there are many dangers upon the waters & more especially hereafter for I the Lord have decreed in mine anger many distractions upon the waters yea & especially upon these waters.18* Phelps and Sidney Gilbert were told they could travel by land or water, but Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery were to avoid water travel until they reached the safe Ohio canal system.

This series of events on the Missouri proved to be the breaking point for Ezra Booth, a former Methodist minister who had converted a few months earlier and whose faith was faltering even before the trip west. After he and three others safely continued in canoes to St. Louis and took a steamboat from there all the way to Wellsville, Ohio, he concluded that “the great dangers existed only in imagination” and that Joseph, Sidney, and Oliver “twist and turn the commandments to suit their whims.”19* * *

Phelps, by contrast, took the warning about dangers upon the waters quite seriously. In an editorial the next year in the *Evening and the Morning Star*, he reminded the Saints that traveling by land from Ohio was “generally the quickest and cheapest. Besides the saving of time and money, you save risks and many dangers: Firstly, of disasters upon the waters, and secondly in some degree, the fear and trouble of the Cholera, which the Lord has sent into the world.”20* * * *

As Lass shows, such claims were hardly hyperbole. Steamboat accidents were surprisingly common, and they were most often caused by snags, half-submerged trees and branches that had floated downstream and lodged in the riverbed. Lewis and Clark and other early boatmen had feared these “sawyers” because they could tear a keelboat or pirogue open and sink it without warning, so they were even more dangerous to the faster-traveling steamboats. Mark Twain, who earned his license as a Mississippi steamboat pilot in 1858, knew these hazards as well as anyone and did not name one of his key characters Sawyer by accident.

“The *Trenton*,” writes Lass, “was snagged and sunk near St. Charles in April 1833. The following year the *Halcyon* was lost by snagging in the same vicinity. The boat settled in only eight to ten feet of water. . . . Five of the thirteen boats on the Missouri in 1836 were lost” (80). The famed missionary Father Pierre-Jean De Smet went up the Missouri in 1839 and wrote: “I fear the sea, I will admit, but all the storms and other unpleasant things I have experi-

19* Booth to Partridge, November 24, 1831.
enced in four different voyages did not inspire so much terror in me as the navigation of the somber, treacherous and muddy Missouri” (quoted p. 98).

Even though snagging was the “leading cause of western steamboat losses,” it “generally failed to arouse emotions” because “passengers and crew were usually evacuated as the boat settled in the stream. But emerging unscathed from a boiler explosion was another matter,” notes Lass. “The explosions came with little or no warning, and many who were not scalded to death were blown into the river. The greatest accidents, replete with details of human suffering, were often the leading newspaper stories of their day. ...Steamboat explosions were particularly rife on the western rivers because its steamboatmen invariably used boats with high-pressure engines.”

Just a few years after Phelps wrote his editorial, three steamboat explosions in particular “shocked the nation. At about 1:00 A.M. on May 8, 1837, the Ben Sherrod, while racing another steamer up the lower Mississippi, was destroyed by fire and explosions. The next spring, the Oronoko exploded about a hundred miles above Vicksburg, Mississippi, and only four days later, on April 25, 1838, the Moselle was devastated by a boiler explosion after steaming down the Ohio for about a mile from the Cincinnati levee. ... All of the boats were heavily loaded with passengers, [and] the loss of life was unprecedented” (112–13).

The Saints came to know such a disaster firsthand when the Saluda exploded near Lexington, Missouri, on April 9, 1852, and twenty-seven Mormons on their way to Utah were killed, with Sarah Brown, a future wife of Wilford Woodruff, among the survivors.21 Nor was Mark Twain personally unaffected by such tragedy. His younger brother Henry was killed when the Pennsylvania exploded on June 21, 1858.

Lass also provides context for Phelps’s warning about cholera: “An Asiatic disease that spread westward through Eurasia, cholera was first introduced into the United States by ship passengers in 1832. It abated” within a few years, reappeared in New Orleans in December 1848, and “was quickly carried up the Mississippi by steamboat passengers.” By May of 1849, an “epidemic was raging” through St. Louis. In May alone, the city saw “about 500 cholera deaths and in June a staggering 1,259.” The epidemic “peaked in mid-July, when 639 victims were interred in one week” (151–52).

Nor was Phelps unusual in believing that cholera was the Lord’s scourge. “Although the [St. Louis] Committee of Public Health encouraged sanitation,” writes Lass, “its members were also influenced by the unfortunate

---

21William G. Hartley and Fred E. Woods, Explosion of the Steamboat Saluda (Salt Lake City: Millennial Press, 2002). Although Lass cites Hartley and Wood, he gives twenty-seven as the total number of dead. This figure is of the Mormons only. Hartley and Wood list and identify by name fifty-two total fatalities.
widespread assumption that cholera victims had incurred God’s wrath. In St. Louis and other American cities, the epidemic’s greatest toll was on the poorest people living in vice-ridden slums. To some prosperous churchgoers who lived in clean neighborhoods and were not affected by the disease, it seemed that cholera was divine punishment of sinners” (151–52).

Lass’s research, while most valuable to Mormon studies related to the 1831–39 Missouri era, serves other topics as well. He shows, for example, how Utahns in the 1860s “became suppliers of the Montana gold rush” and supplemented Missouri River freight to Fort Benton (in present Montana) by shipping flour and other goods overland to Montana (246–47).

All in all, Navigating the Missouri is a solid resource for students and scholars of nineteenth-century Western and Mormon history.

LARRY E. MORRIS {mlemorris@yahoo.com} is a senior editor with the Joseph Smith Papers and has published articles on Mormon history in BYU Studies, the FARMS Review, the Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, the Ensign, and the New Era. He is coeditor, with John W. Welch, of Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2006). He is also the author of The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004) and has published articles on the exploration of the West in such periodicals as the Missouri Historical Review, We Proceeded On, and American History.


Reviewed by Blair G. Van Dyke

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, called in 1958 to the First Council of the Seventy and later to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1976, served a mission to the Northern States Mission from 1939 to 1941. He lamented in an interview in the mid-1970s that he did not do much missionary work because “we were gleaners. The harvest had been made by Wilford Woodruff in the early days of the Church, and in 1939 and 1940 we were gleaners. There were a few left of the children of Israel and we’d find them. . . . So we weren’t supposed to baptize very many, because there weren’t very many to glean” (34). Elder William Grant Bangerter, called in 1975 to serve as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and in 1976 was sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy, served a mission to
Brazil from 1939 to 1941 and in an interview in the mid-1970’s, maintained the same perspective for Brazil that Tuttle held for the Northern States. Bangerter explained: “We knew that it was necessary to present the message before all nations, but we don’t really expect that many people will respond anymore. The gathering is really over; we’re doing the gleaning now. If anyone wants to come, we’ll wave the message before them, and they’ll respond if they have the right spirit and the blood of Israel” (110). Bangerter continued, “We thought that the blood of Israel meant blond, European people, and that we wouldn’t expect much success among Latin peoples because they probably didn’t have the proper lineage. So under these conditions we weren’t too serious about the great overall purpose of missionary work in the Church. And according to our vision, so was our success. We had very little of either.”

Grover refers to this perspective as “British Israelism” and “Anglo-Saxon Triumphalism”—which mean, in essence, that a high percentage of descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, Ephraim in particular, had settled in what would become England and the nations of northern Europe. This folk demographic helped explain the success of early Mormon missionaries to these regions in the nineteenth century and also helped to explain the lag in convert baptisms in the first half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, it stifled missionary labors among Latin American natives because they were not “blond,” “European” and of the “proper lineage.” Not all Church leaders espoused this teaching but Tuttle’s and Bangerter’s depiction of their missionary service as “gleaners” indicate that this perspective was widely held.

This view waned in the latter half of the twentieth century. Mark L. Grover’s “A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960–1965” is a narrative history of key leaders and programs that moved the Church in Latin America beyond the Euro-centered missionary efforts that had dominated missionary work in the region until A. Theodore Tuttle’s arrival to tour South America with Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith from October 1960 to early January 1961. Grover acknowledges:

> It is dangerous to suggest that the evolution of the Church in South America belongs to one person or one period. The growth of the Church is the result of a complex combination of factors. But in history there are always pivotal and important moments. Those events are rarely as dramatic as historians often suggest because there is always significant change that began before and a continuation of change afterward. But

---


certain times, persons, or events do signal the end of an era and the begin-
ning of the next. The Tuttle period can be considered one of those impor-
tant periods. (11–12)

How important? Grover’s projections indicate that, by 2020, more than 51 percent of the Church will live in Latin America. A great harvest emerged
where only gleanings were expected.

A Land of Promise and Prophecy consists of an introduction, eleven chap-
ters, appendices, and a biographical sketch of Al and Kathleen Gardner,
who were very close friends of Ted and Marne Tuttle and were “instrumental
in bringing [Tuttle’s] life story to print” (345). Chapter 1 recounts Elder
Tuttle’s prayer dedicating South America for the preaching of the gospel on
June 28, 1962. The prayer was offered at Machu Picchu in the company of
the six presidents of the Argentine, Southern Brazil, Brazil, Chilean, Ur-
guayan, and Andes (Peru) missions. This chapter also provides a historical
overview of the Church’s involvement in South America and a summary of
Tuttle’s impact on the headquarters’ vision of South America, missionary
work, and Church administration in Latin America during these pivotal
years.

Chapter 2 is a biographical sketch of Tuttle’s youth, college, mission, mar-
rriage, Marine Corps service, teaching career, and call to the First Council of
Seventy. Chapter 3 describes Tuttle’s initial exposure to South America as a
General Authority including his first tour of its missions with Joseph Fielding
Smith in 1960. Chapter 4 lays a historical framework for the Church’s pres-
ence in South America and an overview of Mormon missionary efforts before
Tuttle’s arrival in South America to live in Uruguay in 1960.

Chapter 5 looks closely at the Church in Brazil under the direction of five
different mission presidents between 1958 and 1965. In September 1959 El-
der Harold B. Lee split Brazil into two missions (north and south). This
chapter explores challenges associated with the growth of the Church in
Brazil, the significant cultural and racial differences between southern and
northeastern Brazil and the challenges and opportunities these differences
posed for Mormonism in the country.

Chapter 6 considers the work of J. Thomas Fyans, president of the Ur-
guayan Mission (December 1960–July 1964) and, in 1976, a member of the
First Quorum of the Seventy. He instituted step-by-step programs designed to
prepare the Saints of Uruguay to be organized into stakes. As an impetus to
this process, three Latter-day Saints from Uruguay traveled to Utah to attend
general conference and stake and ward meetings in Logan, Utah. In their
words, “We did not visit the United States, we visited the Church” (177).

---

Chapter 7 describes the Church’s construction program in Argentina and how full-time construction missionaries were called, beginning in 1961, for the express purpose of building chapels for members who had been meeting in private homes for decades. This program evolved, and eventually chapels and mission homes throughout South America were constructed by volunteer missionary laborers.

Chapter 8 focuses on Peru and Elder Tuttle’s efforts to ensure that the gospel was preached to the indigenous people. For over a decade, the Church had sponsored a fairly robust program to assist the “Lamanites”; however, the program focused almost exclusively on Native Americans in the United States. Shortly after Tuttle’s return to the United States from South America in 1965, he was assigned to serve as a member of the Lamanite Committee under Elder Spencer W. Kimball’s direction. Elder Tuttle “often became frustrated by this focus and would regularly remind the other members of the committee that ‘for every Lamanite in the United States there were sixteen in South America—in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador’” (260). Ironically, missionary work throughout South America had initially focused on the European populations that had colonized the region, not on its indigenous peoples. This chapter describes the initial shift in focus toward preaching the gospel to Peru’s native peoples.

Chapter 9 rehearses significant events in the North Argentina Mission with a specific emphasis on public relations measures instituted to raise awareness and positive perceptions of the Mormon Church. Decades of opposition from some leaders and members of the Catholic Church meant that Mormonism in Argentina was looked upon with great suspicion; but sports programs, chapel construction, traveling LDS music groups, and radio programs creatively improved relations between Mormons and non-Mormons in the Argentina.

Chapter 10 reviews the emergence of Church-operated schools in Chile and how they contributed to the Church’s evolution in that country. Chapter 11 is a synthesis of Elder Tuttle’s contribution to the growth of the Church in South America and the contributions of the mission presidents with whom he served and over whom he presided as a General Authority.

Grover notes in his introduction that his book focuses on “the personalities and programs of the mission presidents, with a particular emphasis on the activities of Elder Tuttle” in an effort to “just tell the story” of a five-year period of the Church’s history in South America (vi–vii). One strength of this approach was that Grover could convey a broad spectrum of the Church’s undertakings in South America during this period. The respective vignettes were generally interesting and easy to follow. The calling of full-time missionaries, not to proselytize, but to build meetinghouses in Argentina, and the establishment of Church schools in Chile are two examples of
very informative and interesting aspects of this book that might not have been included had Grover employed a less panoramic design that demanded a narrower focus on fewer aspects of the history.

A second strength of the narrative approach was how clearly Grover communicated the sensitive or controversial issues that faced the Church in South America. For example, strained Mormon-Catholic relations before 1965 and the firmly established belief paradigms of the Mormons at that time about who was, and who was not, Israel (and therefore deserving of an opportunity to hear the gospel message) are two examples that Grover identifies throughout the book. Both topics could be the subject of whole volumes of research in relation to Latin America. Grover’s goal, however, was not to launch into a detailed explication of either of these topics but to let the reader know they were part of the general conditions with which the Church had to deal and to describe their development through the story he intended to tell.

However, a weakness of this approach was that some of the stories did not seem salient to the book’s purpose. For example, Grover quotes Sister Marne Tuttle’s description of her first meal in Chile: She had “artichokes on a skew [sic] of braised beef tongue, fish, bacon wrapped around a prune, and shrimp” (299). Then she “watched [a] change of guard in the plaza (below our window) in front of the Royal Palace. A fine band played while Ted and I danced to a few bars of the Nt’l anthem in our room. First dancing in a long time” (299–300). She described another view from her room: “As I look out on the square through the hotel window I see a feather duster salesman talking to the taxi men trying to sell them his wares. They [the feather dusters] look like a pom pom on a stick. People seem to spend a lot of time dusting off their autos” (300). Another example is a November 1960 shopping spree by Jessie Evans Smith in Buenos Aires, during which she spent all of Joseph Fielding Smith’s available cash and emptied the pockets of the mission president and the mission secretary who were accompanying her. The narrative lists her numerous purchases as well (73–74).

While stories involving women are often the first to be squeezed out of a narrative history and these accounts are delightful reactions to South America by Sisters Tuttle and Smith, and these particular stories meet Grover’s goal of focusing on personalities, for me they crossed an intangible line of diminishing returns. These vignettes, and others like them, did not enlighten me concerning the history of the Church in South America, even though they do provide a “first reaction” to a colorfully different environment. Still, they could have happened anywhere. Even though I knew I could refer to Grover’s other writings on the history of the Church in the region, I still would willingly have traded these accounts for more commentary on sensitive or controversial topics like Mormon-Catholic relations, compelling gender issues, and preselecting potential investigators based upon concep-
tions of Israelite descent.

And my yearning is based on a strong appreciation of the commentary that Grover provides. For example, he notes:

The first Europeans to Peru were white but definitely did not have a positive effect on Andean society as the Incas had hoped. . . . The Spanish conquest was catastrophic to the local population. . . . The religious changes were equally devastating. The close relationship between church and state in Spanish rule resulted in the attempted destruction of the native religions in favor of Catholicism. Places of native worship were destroyed, and Catholic churches were built on the ruins. Forced conversion occurred, and the physical evidences of pre-Columbian worship disappeared. The outward acceptance of Catholicism, however, hid the continuing practice of some native beliefs within the rituals of the Catholic Church. (236–37)

In my view, this book would be stronger if Grover had used his space to address in greater detail the seemingly wholesale Mormon acceptance of British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon Triumphalism in a way commensurate to his treatment of the Spanish conquest and Catholic-sponsored oppression (102–3). Furthermore, at least one, but preferably a series, of maps identifying the nations of South America, its principal cities, its commerce and economy, its major geographic regions with their influence on transportation routes, and especially mission headquarters and boundaries would have been helpful in locating the stories accurately. Finally, a graph portraying key demographic figures related to Mormonism from the nineteenth-century to the present would also have been helpful to frame up the historical storyline.

Even with these lapses, however, Mark Grover has generally opened a fascinating window on a critical period of Mormon history. I found *A Land of Promise and Prophecy* to be engaging overall. Without question, he has impressive expertise on the history of the Church in South America. His stated goal was to tell the stories of the primary figures of this history from 1960 to 1965 in their own words as much as possible. In this goal, he has succeeded and must be commended for conducting the many interviews necessary to construct this history. At least half of the mission presidents who served in South America during this period have since passed away (vi). I recommend the book and encourage readers to more thoroughly acquaint themselves with Grover’s additional research and publications on the subject.

BLAIR G. VAN DYKE (blairvandyke@msn.com) is an instructor at the LDS Orem Institute of Religion and is an adjunct professor at Utah Valley University. He received his Ed.D from Brigham Young University specializing in education in the Middle East. He is the co-author of *Holy Lands: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Near East* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2005).

Well-known for his expertise about the land and people of the Four Corners region of the American West, Robert S. McPherson, an instructor at the College of Eastern Utah, is the author of many books about Navajo culture and history. He describes the geological formation of rock known as Comb Ridge:

Comb Ridge is unique. The rock’s massive serrated edge jabs the blue sky with knife-like points, prodding the clouds for rain. Heated in the summer and doused with snow in the winter, this tempered blade stretches for one hundred miles, cautioning people to cross its sharp two-hundred-foot cliffs carefully. A barrier, a place of protection, a sentinel, the rock has figured significantly in the pre-history, history, and current events of the region. (1)

According to McPherson, Comb Ridge is more than a spectacular monocline; this exposed geological fold with one steep side stretching more than a hundred miles west of the Four Corners and east of the Colorado River is as much a part of San Juan County, Utah, as it is a part of the history and culture of the peoples surrounding it. He asserts that the ridge “has been a place of power. Here power resides in religious, cultural, economic, and political senses that inform people’s views” (8). McPherson’s thesis is: “That power has been captured and utilized, shared and disputed is the story of the rock. Its lesson is not one of cowering individuals dwarfed by the landscape but the struggle and triumph of those who made this their home” (9). His publication is an account of the historical, spiritual, and practical significance of this grand geological specimen. It is “a brief glimpse of PaleoIndians hunting mastodons, archaic groups adapting to the changing environments, ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi) leaving riddles for archaeologists, Navajos and Utes intensely loving and depending on the land, and the newest, briefest occupants, white men, exacting change” (2). It is a vision of the “constant unfolding and revising of the stories of life in southeastern Utah . . . who these people were, how they lived, and what they felt was important as they existed in
the lands surrounding Comb Ridge” (34).

Thus, McPherson illustrates that although “the direction and extent of change may shift and accelerate, Comb Ridge will remain a constant . . . its canyons and washes mute witnesses to centuries of concerns, its unique visual and topographical features giving a distinct quality to the landscape of southeastern Utah and northeastern Arizona” (217).

McPherson’s large-format book reports the Comb Ridge Survey Project, a major, federally funded cultural history. Under the direction of Winston Hurst, the project began in 2005 with “the objective to implement a five-year cultural resource inventory of Comb Ridge and its environs, encompassing approximately sixty-six square miles” as carried out by “a four-person team of archaeologists and volunteers who provided much of the onsite labor and one lone historian who assumed the responsibility of gathering the ethnographic and historical documentary background of the survey area” (3). The result was a “well-researched survey, based in varying levels of intensity, that identified prehistoric and historic cultural resources spread throughout the length of Comb Ridge” (3).

Enhanced by more than a hundred photographs, both color and black and white, of the region and its inhabitants, the book synthesizes the research findings in nine chapters, beginning with creation myths and continuing with the lifespan of the ancestral Puebloans, Ute and Navajo dominance, and the addition of Anglo and Mormon societies, “each having a separate role to play, each affecting the other” (106).

Chapter 1 discusses the physical and philosophical creation of the Comb followed in Chapter 2 by a description of discovering the Comb and “the earliest evidence of inhabitants, the Paleo-Indian (12000–6000 B.C.), that emanates from the final ice age of the Pleistocene epoch” (34) and the rise and decline of this culture.

The third chapter explains how “for the Utah Navajo, Comb Ridge is a special place of power and protection through prayer” (81), while Chapter 4 describes the settlements of Navajos, Utes, and Mormons on and near Comb Ridge from 1860 through 1887. Chapter 5 “looks at the three separate cultures during this period of intense conflict and social change (between the 1880s and the 1920s)” (106), and the question of land ownership and economic developments (1887–1930) in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 “is a fascinating study of values and worldviews that provide answers as to where these Puebloan people came from, what they did, and why they disappeared” (150) and seeks to interpret the Comb as understood by Indians, travelers, and archaeologists.

Chapter 8 examines the Comb at the mid-twentieth century and the consolidation of control over food and water for livestock after World War I. The final chapter explores the contention between recreationalists and environmentalists: “The last quarter of the twentieth and first glimmer of the twenty-first centuries heralded unprecedented change in
the canyons and washes surrounding Comb Ridge . . . the ‘me-ification’ of the individual that gave birth to contemplation of man’s relationship with the environment” (194). McPherson presents the modern deadlock between the recreation or preservation of historic information, stating: “Both sides are well meaning . . . [but] neither side [is] willing to budge an inch” (216). He then concludes by showing the connection between the modern issues surrounding Comb Ridge and past, that “each era brought its own concerns . . . [that] have all been a part of the rock’s prehistory and history. What has happened in the past will never be repeated, given the changes in society and technology, but what lies ahead can also be similar. . . . Above it all sits Comb Ridge” (217).
New from the University of Utah Press

Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901–1924
Reid L. Nelson
6 x 9, 280 pp., Paper $29.95
978-0-87480-989-3
Utilizing a case study of the ill-fated 1854 LDS mission to China, Neilson provides an understanding of why the standard LDS missionary approach of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was so ill suited for evangelizing the non-Christian, non-Western peoples of Japan.

Mormons as Citizens of a Communist State
A Documentary History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in East Germany, 1945–1990
Raymond Kuehne
7 x 10, 600 pp., Paper $39.95
978-0-87480-993-0
Scholar Raymond Kuehne has written the first objective study of the history and experiences of the thousands of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints living in communist East Germany between 1945 and 1990.

“A significant contribution to scholarship and the mission history of this era. The work will be important to those interested in comparative mission history, early modern East Asia, and the rise of the international LDS church.”
—Greg Gubler, Brigham Young University–Hawaii

“Kuehne has written the book for an impartial, curious reader who wishes to form his own opinion about what took place with the members of this little religious organization in the GDR. . . . This exciting book should not only be read, it should be studied.”
—Joachim Heise, Institute for Comparative State-Church Research, Berlin
President Thomas S. Monson, called as a bishop at age 22 and an Apostle at age 36, has spent his entire life serving and leading others. In this newly released biography, To the Rescue, you’ll discover accounts you’ve never heard before about the modern-day prophet who has “traveled across the globe to minister to a single soul.”
Within These Prison Walls: Lorenzo Snow's Record Book, 1886–1897

Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

Lorenzo Snow's record book perfectly captured his thoughts and correspondence while he was incarcerated. Especially important are Elder Snow's teachings about the pre-earth life. This book is also an invaluable resource in gaining an understanding of how the Saints in the 19th century viewed the anti-polygamy persecutions and found the nerve to carry on despite increasing difficult circumstances.

Hardcover  $21.99

Through the Lens: The Original 1907 Church History Photographs of George Edward Anderson

Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

Visualize how historically significant sites looked during events in early Church history with these photos taken by Utah-born photographer George Edward Anderson.

Hardcover  $49.99