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JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

FALL 2011
Front Cover Illustration: The Redpath Chautauqua Bureau used this three-quarters portrait of Frank J. Cannon as the publicity photograph for Cannon’s lectures around the country from 1911 to 1918. Prominent Denver photographer Charles A. Nast took this image of Cannon and another, more familiar image that appeared in both the magazine and book versions of Cannon’s Under the Prophet in Utah. Redpath Chautauqua Collection.

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

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ISSN 0194–7342

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LETTERS

Mission Harvest in Rural Britain

I greatly enjoyed Ronald E. Bartholomew’s article “Nineteenth-Century Missiology of the LDS Bedfordshire Conference” (37, no. 1 [Winter 2011]: 205–45) and commend him for his thorough study. It is interesting to compare his findings with mine for Scotland, some 200 miles north of Bedfordshire (“Without Purse or Scrip in Scotland,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 39, no. 2, [Summer 2006], 46–69; winner of MHA 2007 Best Article of the Year). Although Bartholomew’s article covers a broader range of subjects, including how Mormonism fit into the taxonomy of religions in Victorian England and its mission philosophy, my paper, which focuses on the daily experiences of the missionaries, shares at least half of the seven items he addresses (Bartholomew, 211): Mission theology, message, use of tracts, means of travel (mostly on foot), and the small number of new converts were similar for both regions. In other respects, differences appear, although further study may show they were not significant. These include:

Definition of Missionaries: In Scotland as well as Bedfordshire, the full-time missionaries who went into rural areas were native-born rather than American men, and they were often new converts who had been quickly ordained. These were the “traveling elders.” In Scotland I found another distinction. There were also “Sunday missionaries” who went out on their one day off work each week to preach and spread tracts in surrounding towns. As they lived at home, they did not have to depend on others for shelter or food. Bartholomew’s study suggests that there was a similar category in Bedfordshire when he says that traveling elders “mobilized the local members to preach at nights or on weekends in outdoor meetings, weather permitting” (232).

Mission Periods Covered: Bartholomew’s study looks at missionary work during the entire existence of the Bedfordshire Conference, 1843–74. In contrast, I focused on the 1840s and early 1850s for several reasons: Between 1855 and 1859, membership in Scotland declined by more than 50 percent. The reasons for this falling off were the announcement of polygamy in the Millennial Star (January 1853), an announcement to which many prospective converts reacted with disgust; the Mormon Reformation in Britain (1857) with its attendant excommunications; and the ongoing “gathering to Zion.” By the late
1850s, missionary work had slowed to a trickle. The same factors impacted missionary work in England (Aird, 47).

Support for Traveling Elders: Bartholomew points out that, in the Bedfordshire area, the elders were supported by the members (238). This was also true in Scotland to some degree. But for extensive periods while laboring in rural or village areas where no Church members lived, the missionaries depended on strangers for food and lodging and their other needs.

Going without Purse or Scrip: Traveling elders in both areas described themselves as following the biblical charge to go forth “without purse or scrip” (see Luke 10:1–9). In Scotland, and probably in England, this instruction was interpreted in different ways. Some took the injunction as a general direction, riding public transportation whenever possible and lodging with Church members. Others interpreted the charge strictly and set out with hardly a penny in their pockets. These missionaries had a hard time.

The difficulty of finding shelter for the night looms large in their diaries. One regularly chose a road that had a farmer’s peat shed alongside it, into which he could sneak for the night. Three missionary companions asked a farmer for the privilege of sleeping in an old outbuilding even though their “mattress” was rotting straw. Two others were reduced to making a bed in a field with “our Bibles for our pillow and the umbrella [sic] for our covering” (Aird, 53). Another with two companions could not find anyone who would take them in and finally lay down on the moor, but it started to rain, forcing them to walk on in the wee hours of the night until they found a shed. Another was finally allowed some straw, sheets, and a blanket next to the peat fire in the center of a Highland cottage. To his great surprise and acute discomfort, mice crawled out from under the oak chest near his head to run over him until daylight came; and then while he was still dozing, a hen with her brood of chicks came out from under the same chest and “walked right over my face! This, I thought, was too bad by one half” (Aird, 54).

Food was another challenge. One elder had expected to stay in a lodging house he knew and have his sixpence cover bed, supper, and breakfast, too, but the house was full and he had to spend his sixpence just for lodging. Nevertheless, the next morning, he distributed tracts around the town, which took him until noon, before setting out to walk twelve or fifteen miles to a member’s house where he could get food. Another elder picked wild berries in the woods and at night stole green horse beans from a farmer’s field. Still another had had only a half-penny loaf of bread from Monday to Thursday, and so went into a farmer’s field where he pulled turnips and ate them one after the other. “I did not care although the man had come, I justifying myself by . . . Mark 2:23–28,” the passage that tells of Jesus defending his disciples who plucked heads of grain on the Sabbath (Aird, 55). Two in a rural part south of Glasgow reported trying to find “what virtue there was in snails and heather” (Aird, 56). (There wasn’t any.) Similar hardships were told about trying to procure clothes.
But at other times people could be generous, often giving the missionaries milk and sometimes bread or a biscuit. One elder prayed that he might get a new pair of boots as his soles were worn through; and a day or two later he received fifteen shillings from his brother-in-law, which was enough to buy a new pair so that he could walk on “in the Service of the Lord” (Aird, 57).

As in Bartholomew’s study, most of the Scottish traveling elders walked from place to place. One walked fifteen miles rather then taking the train so he could donate what he saved to the Salt Lake Temple building fund. Another man had lost a leg in a mining accident, yet often regularly managed to walk for sixteen or eighteen miles a day on his peg leg. In spite of his handicap, he took a train only once over the course of his mission.

Mission Success: I would have enjoyed anecdotes or figures from the Bedfordshire Conference on how the traveling elders viewed their missions. Bartholomew ends his paper with the generalization that the traveling elders “found their own rewards as they brought ‘strangers’ into the fellowship of the Saints” (243). But what if they had no baptisms? Did they consider their mission a failure?

In my study, I found that going without purse or scrip was not successful when it came to finding food, shelter, clothes, or money. A great amount of the missionary’s time was spent pursuing these basics, and a number had to sell overcoats, boots, or watches just to gather enough money for the train ride home at the end of their mission. They also lacked success in gaining many converts. But these same elders found that their mission had been successful as an important period in their lives. One said he gained “practical confidence” in God, and the journal of another shows an increased sense of self-worth. Peter McIntyre, who went on several missions in the Highlands in his fifties, later wrote, “I had a great deal more joy when I preached from village to village, cold and hungry, not knowing where to lay my head, than I have now, with plenty of food, raiment and ease” (Aird, 65).

I hope that future studies will look at both the broad aspects of missionary work in Great Britain, as Bartholomew has done so well for the Bedfordshire Conference, but also at the nitty-gritty of the missionary’s daily life, which brings to life these valiant men.

Polly Aird
Seattle, Washington

More on McNemar

In “Shaker Richard McNemar: The
Earliest Book of Mormon Reviewer," 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 138–45, I presented Shaker Richard McNemar’s hitherto unpublished review of the Book of Mormon. At one point in making the transcription, I was baffled by this illegible scrawl (see photograph) that immediately preceded the word “Baptist,” suggesting that McNemar was comparing Joseph Smith to a specific sect of Baptists. At the time of publication, I was unable to offer a good guess about what the word might be. Subsequently, scholars Samuel M. Brown and D. Michael Quinn have kindly offered their insights about its possible meaning.

Samuel Brown wrote: “I tentatively propose ‘Ctn’ for the indecipherable scrawl, as in Christian Baptist, which connects to Campbellites, e.g., via Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt.”

D. Michael Quinn wrote: “In the previous text, he correctly used the article ‘an’ before vowels and vowel-sounds. Therefore, the letter following ‘in the mind of a’ was NOT x, which (even as an abbreviation) requires ‘an’ before it. Thus, the letters were ctn, McNemar’s abbreviation for ‘certain.’

“The ‘certain Baptist’ he referred to was Sidney Rigdon, who lived in nearby Mentor, Ohio, and had converted to Mormonism.”

Although I have never found a reference to Sidney Rigdon in McNemar’s writings, it is quite possible that he was aware of Rigdon by 1830. McNemar was active in visiting the Shaker community at North Union, Ohio, during the period it was being established in the mid-1820s. Rigdon was then active at Mentor, Ohio, which is only about twenty miles from the site of North Union (now Shaker Heights).

If, as Brown suggests, “ctn” (or possibly “xnt”) refers to Christian Baptist, then McNemar could likely have taken that designation from the title of Alexander Campbell’s periodical The Christian Baptist, which was published from 1823 to 1850. McNemar was extremely well read and had the privilege of maintaining one of the only private libraries within the Shaker communities. The manuscript inventory of McNemar’s library compiled ca. 1837 does not list The Christian Baptist, but that does not preclude the possibility that he could have seen it on his many travels throughout the governmental and legislative centers of Ohio and Kentucky during the 1820s.

In summary, Brown’s guess that McNemar meant “Christian” by “ctn” seems a more likely possibility than “certain,” but in either case the trail leads squarely back to the Campbellite movement—and possibly by extension, to Rigdon. I thank Brown and Quinn for their thoughtful response to my article, as well as for their permission to quote their insights. Such a response is testament to the welcoming and vigorous discourse surrounding Mormon historical research—deep waters into which I respectfully wade.

Christian Goodwillie
Hamilton College
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Documentation Update

A few readers of the three-part series of articles on “Transgression in the
LDS Community: The Cases of Albert Carrington, Richard R. Lyman, and Joseph F. Smith appearing in the *Journal of Mormon History* have asked about the locations of some of the original documents I occasionally cite in copyform. The locations of the copies I reference in the footnotes are where I and others working for the Smith-Pettit Foundation personally located them. They include handwritten notes made by other researchers but since shared with me.

When beginning research on this topic in the early 2000s, I was advised by an employee of what was then LDS Church Archives not to mention the location (i.e., Church Archives) of the originals of access-restricted manuscripts, including the originals of copies I had consulted in other, non-Church Archives collections. Since these articles have begun to appear, I have been informed that the LDS Church History Library (previously Church Archives) now encourages the disclosure of the location of the originals of the access-restricted manuscripts it possesses, and I am more than happy to oblige.

These items, cited in all three articles, include: the originals of letters to and from the various apostles and other interested LDS Church members regarding Albert Carrington (which I identified as copies courtesy of Steven H. Heath, the D. Michael Quinn Papers at Yale University, or the Smith-Pettit Foundation); the originals of the diaries of Frank Evans, Heber J. Grant, Spencer W. Kimball, Francis M. Lyman, Henry D. Moyle, Franklin D. Richards, George F. Richards, Stephen L. Richards, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Brigham Young Jr. (and which I again identified as courtesy of the Quinn Papers); the originals of the minutes of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and the Salt Lake Stake High Council (Quinn Papers); the original of “Record of Excommunicated Members, Book A” (Quinn Papers); the originals of Richard R. Lyman, letters to and from various persons, usually LDS Church officials (Quinn Papers, except Lyman to Melvin A. Lyman), regarding Lyman; the original of Ruth Smith, Letter to David O. McKay regarding Joseph F. Smith (Quinn Papers); the original of Spencer W. Kimball et al., letter to Joseph Fielding Smith regarding Richard R. Lyman (Quinn Papers); and the original of Teton, Idaho, Stake High Council Record (Quinn Papers). The originals of the Journal History of the Church and the Church Census records may be found at the LDS Church History Library, as well.


*Gary James Bergera*

*Salt Lake City*
Frank Jenne Cannon, son of George Q. Cannon, achieved renegade status by breaking publicly with Joseph F. Smith, president of the LDS Church. This photograph accompanied his scorching exposé, Under the Prophet in Utah, coauthored with Harvey J. O’Higgins, in 1911. Photo by Nast Studio, Denver.
OPPOSING THE “HIGH ECCLESIASTS AT WASHINGTON”: FRANK J. CANNON’S EDITORIAL FUSILLADES DURING THE REED SMOOT HEARINGS, 1903–07

Michael Harold Paulos

Between 1904 and 1906, Congressional hearings, commonly referred to as the Reed Smoot Hearings,1 were held in Washington, D.C., challenging the legitimacy of LDS Apostle Reed Smoot’s right to serve as Utah’s senator. Mormon historian Harvard Heath

Michael Harold Paulos


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asserts that the “hearings have to rank” as one of the “top two or three most important events in Mormon history.”\(^2\) Unmistakably, the Smoot hearings significantly impacted the Mormon Church, whose doctrines and practices—not Smoot—emerged as the real focus. Almost immediately after Smoot’s election, Julius Caesar Burrows, Republican Senator from Michigan and chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, began preparing it to investigate Smoot and the Mormon Church. During this time, Burrows frequently expressed his “great friendship” with Smoot and assured his Senate allies he “was going to see that [Smoot] had fair treatment but the case was one that affected every state in the union and the petitioners were to be considered that it was not [Smoot] but the Mormon Church on trial.”\(^3\)

During his first year in office, Smoot worked diligently behind the scenes to find a political solution to deflect the hearings. But as Smoot explained to Church President Joseph F. Smith, these efforts proved futile because Burrows was embroiled in a tenuous reelection
During the first week of testimony, many eastern newspapers sent artists to Washington to produce sketches of the scenes occurring inside the committee room. President Joseph F. Smith provided formal testimony at the witness table six different days, and these are two published representations of the event. The first (left) was published in New York City and depicts a solemn Smith, wearing a long, dark coat and seated erect with a hand resting squarely on his knees. Seated behind Smith are three members of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections: left: William P. Dillingham (R-Vermont), Albert J. Beveridge (R-Indiana), and Joseph B. Foraker (R-Ohio). See “Joseph F. Smith, Mormon President, before the Senate Committee,” New York Herald, March 10, 1904. The sketch of Smith (right) was published in Washington, D.C., and shows him leaning forward tensely, gripping the chair’s arm with one hand and what is likely a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants with the other. “Joseph F. Smith: President of Mormon Church,” Evening Star, March 8, 1904.

bid in Michigan and had “made up his mind to try and strengthen himself at home by mak[ing] a fight on me.” Burrows was spoiling for that fight and got his wish to attack the Church directly in March 1904 when President Smith responded to a subpoena and arrived in

4Ibid., In this letter, Smoot referred to Burrows by the coded alias “Talmud.” To ensure privacy in his communications with the LDS hierarchy during the Senate hearings, Smoot used code names in his communications with Salt Lake City. He had four for Frank Cannon: “Tiger,” “Marcus,” “Abner,” and “Wayfaring.” See Reed Smoot “Code Book” located in Smoot
Washington, D.C., as the first witness at the Smoot hearings.

On the second day of questioning, President Smith was asked if he, the “Twelve Apostles,” and the “First Presidency” gave Reed Smoot, also an apostle, “unanimous consent” to “become a candidate before the legislature for Senator of the United States.” Smith responded in the affirmative. Seeking clarification, Senator [Albert J.] Beveridge of Indiana asked Smith whether that consent would “interfere with your giving consent to any other member of the apostolate[?]” President Smith quickly replied, “Not in the least.” Wondering about others who might have sought permission, Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts interjected, “Was similar consent given to Mr. [Frank J.] Cannon when he came to the Senate?” (Cannon had been elected Utah’s first senator, serving from January 22, 1896, to March 4, 1899, and had earlier served as Utah’s territorial delegate, from March 4, 1895, until Utah became a state in early January of 1896.) Reflexively Smith replied, “He is not and never has been an official member of the church, in any sense or form.”

Smith had previously, though inaccurately, defined an “official member of the church” as a “president of a stake, one of the twelve apostles, one of the first presidency, one of the seven presidents of the seventies, or a presiding bishop or ordinary bishop.”

Smith’s dig at Frank Cannon was a surprise to some members of the committee who had recently served with him in the U.S. Senate, including Burrows who queried, “Was he not at one time an elder in the church?” Smith dismissively retorted, “Well, that is not an official position at all. Nearly every male member of the church, Mr. Senator, is an elder.” Five days later Smith was again asked about Cannon’s relationship to the Church when Smoot’s attorney, Augustus Worthington, questioned “Is Mr. Cannon a Mormon or a Gentile?” Smith reluctantly but more accurately replied, “I am sorry to say he is classed

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Papers. For more on this code, Joseph Heinerman, “Reed Smoot’s ‘Secret Code,’” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 57 (Summer 1989): 254–63.


6Ibid., 1:163-64. Smith and his questioners were narrowly defining “official member of the church” as pertaining only to high-ranking male Church officers seeking political office.

7Ibid., 1:165.
as a Mormon; but a very poor one.”

Smith’s testimony not only revealed his knee-jerk antipathy toward Frank Cannon but also indirectly minimized the priesthood office of elder. Smith’s transparent disdain for Cannon led him to depart from his disciplined testimony and, as no minor consequence, resulted in Cannon’s angry reaction, which was tantamount to acceptance of Smith’s virtual challenge to a rhetorical duel. Over the next three years, this contest was fought publicly in the pages of the Salt Lake Tribune and Church-owned Deseret Evening News. Throughout Frank Cannon’s adult life, he gravitated toward high-minded missions and causes aimed to improve society. Although Cannon had earlier been a staunch and eloquent defender of Mormonism, once alienated from it, he found in Smith’s testimony additional incentive to join the national groundswell against Reed Smoot and the Mormon Church. As editor of the Tribune, Cannon used its “bully pulpit” to inflict damage on the reputation of the LDS Church, Joseph F. Smith, Senator-Apostle Reed Smoot, and other members of the Mormon hierarchy. Cannon’s incendiary prose earned him such descriptive nicknames as “Furious J. Cannon” and “Furious Judas C.” Additionally, Cannon’s editorial fusillades gave some Mormons justification for openly questioning whether the Church president was, in fact, a prophet of God as their faith held. Such a response was particularly consoling to Cannon, because it provided evidence that his campaign

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8Ibid., 1:366.
9In Frank Jenne Cannon and Harvey Jerrold O’Higgins’s best-selling, Under the Prophet in Utah (Boston, Mass.: C. M. Clark Publishing, 1911), 15, O’Higgins made the strange accusation: “This statement is one of the inspired Prophet’s characteristic perversions of the truth.”
10“Senseless Cartoons,” Truth, June 7, 1905; Joseph F. Smith, Letter to H. Chase Smith, July 7, 1905, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City. “Bully pulpit” was Theodore Roosevelt’s characterization of the U.S. presidency, which he actively employed to provide public leadership on favored causes.
11Carl Badger, Letter to Rose Badger, October 14, 1904, in Rodney J. Badger, Liahona and Iron Rod (Bountiful, Utah: Family History Publishers, 1985), 226, discussed the troubling influence Cannon was having on the “younger generations.” Cannon mentioned a visit from a “young man” from a “distinguished” family who withdrew from the Church because he could no longer support its leaders. “Why One Man Has Withdrawn,” Salt
against Smith was successfully changing the hearts and minds of the people he had previously represented in Congress.

Given the benefit of hindsight, President Smith certainly would have given a more careful answer. At a minimum, Smith could have tried to reflect Cannon’s opinion of himself, that he “for many years” had “been an active and loyal member” of the Mormon “community system,” but at the time of Smith’s testimony, was not a “formal member of the Church.” But Smith’s angry answer suggests the profound alienation that existed between the two men, a flash of temper that temporarily set back his carefully planned strategy of using a shrewd combination of honesty and duplicity in his testimony about plural marriage. Smith honestly admitted to his personal activities with his polygamous wives since the Manifesto but obscured the role of the institutional Church in post-Manifesto marriages. In addition to personal pique, Smith wanted to undercut the influence of Cannon’s editorials in the *Daily Utah State Journal*, launched four months earlier in November 1903 by Cannon and Major E. A. Littlefield in Ogden, Utah. A brilliant writer with a prodigious and vivid vocabulary, Cannon began writing ostensibly evenhanded editorials about the inappropriate-
ness of a Mormon apostle’s serving in the U.S. Senate.  

Cannon’s small Ogden newspaper obviously was not required reading for the political movers and shakers in Washington; however, he forced the *State Journal* into relevance by sending copies to his old friend Fred T. Dubois, senator from Idaho. The two men had developed a close friendship during the years they served together in Congress. Dubois served on Burrows’s committee and was closely aligned to him politically on the Smoot and the Mormon question, even though he was a Democrat and Burrows was a Republican. Dubois, with a long history of using anti-Mormonism for political gain, corresponded with Cannon about the best strategy to investigate Smoot and the Church.  

Cannon also requested that Dubois use his influence to prevent the committee from subpoenaing him during the hearing, since “it would most disastrous to you and myself and unsatisfactory to both sides.”  

Cannon, who had some skeletons in his closet, feared probing questions about his personal life as well as difficult inquiries into his late father’s and late brother Abraham’s controversial activities with post-Manifesto polygamous marriages. Dubois reassured him: “I have not the slightest idea of subpoenaing you, nor of bringing you in this controversy,” but then encouraged: “Make your fight in your own way and I

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15 For examples of Cannon’s *Daily Utah State Journal* editorials on Smoot, see “Are All of His People to Be Sacrificed?” November 18, 1903, 4; “The Petitions and the Charges,” December 14, 1903, 4; “If the Appointed Hour Has Come,” December 23, 1903, 4; “Does Senator Smoot Retreat?,” January 1, 1904, 4; “To Senator Reed Smoot,” January 2, 1904, 4; “A Review of the Case by Request,” January 4, 1904, 4.

16 Dubois stated that, during 1880s and 1890s, he was “absolutely obsessed with the Mormon problem.” For some of his activities, see Jay R. Lowe, “Fred T. Dubois, Foe of the Mormons: A Study of the Role of Fred T. Dubois in the Senate Investigation of the Hon. Reed Smoot and the Mormon Church, 1903–1907” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, July 1960), 1–6. See also Merle W. Wells, “The Idaho Anti-Mormon Test Oath, 1884–1892,” *Pacific Historical Review* 24 (August 1955): 235–52. For examples of correspondence between Cannon and Dubois, see Lowe, “Fred T. Dubois,” 32–33, 46, 57, 69.

17 Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Fred T. Dubois, November 21, 1903, Fred T. Dubois Collection, Special Collections, Eli M. Oboler Library, Idaho State University, Pocatello (hereafter Dubois Collection).
will make mine.” Through Dubois, Cannon influenced Burrows’s approach to the Smoot investigation.

Frank Cannon, who labeled Smith the “Enfant Terrible of the Mormon Church,” certainly did not need an excuse to loathe him. These two men stumbled through a complex relationship dating back many years. Cannon was forty-five years old in March 1904 as the hearings began, while Smith was sixty-five. No isolated event adequately explains why they despised each other so ferociously; however, a confluence of disagreements related to business, politics, Church practice, and family honor all contributed to the failed relationship. Perhaps the most important event adversely impacting the relationship was the death in 1901 of Frank’s father, George Q. Cannon. For more than twenty years, Smith had served with George Q. Cannon in four LDS First Presidencies; in three, George Q. had served as the first counselor and Joseph F. as the second.

Frank revered his father, considered him Utah’s most able and talented man, and spent much of his life trying to follow in his footsteps. Frank’s intellectual prowess, writing skills, oratorical talents, and political ambition provided many opportunities to assist his father in Church affairs—a paradox given that, for most of his adult life, Frank was not a card-carrying Mormon. Frank did not serve a mission like many of George’s other talented sons; nor was he a frequent visitor to the temple after being married there. Nevertheless in early 1888, at George Q.’s request, Frank ghost-wrote the classic *The History of Joseph Smith the Prophet* that bears his father’s byline. At another time, when George Q. was a fugitive from the federal marshals seeking to arrest him for his practice of polygamy, he fur-

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18Fred T. Dubois, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, November 27, 1903, Dubois Collection. Ironically, Smoot unsuccessfully did his best to prevent President Smith and his counselors from being subpoenaed and “being brought into the fight” in Washington. Reed Smoot, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, February 5, 1904, Smoot Papers.
tively called on Frank and asked him to undertake a lobbying mission for the Church in Washington, D.C. But before making the request, according to Frank, George wistfully “wondered if you cared anything about your religion.” Over the years, Frank’s penchant for fast living had embarrassed the family. This time, however, Frank eagerly accepted and succeeded in persuading U.S. President Grover Cleveland and Congressional leaders to defeat the onerous Cullom-Strubble Bill, intended to “disenfranchise all the members of the Mormon church,” which was then making its way through Congress. More than anything, Frank yearned for his father’s respect, and George Q.’s approbation in this episode was enormously gratifying.

Many years later, Frank provided a few reasons for his animus towards Smith in his magnum opus, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, published in 1911, after the waves caused by the Smoot hearing had subsided. Frank portrayed Joseph F. Smith as a stark opponent of both the Church’s decision to abandon polygamy and also of George Q.’s alleged internal and less public campaign to phase out plural marriage. Frank insisted that Smith’s jealousy and anger led him to sabotage George Q.’s efforts by furtively obtaining approval from President Wilford Woodruff to perform the post-Manifesto plural marriage of George Q.’s son, Abraham (“Abram”) H. Cannon, to Lillian Hamlin in the summer of 1896. One month later, Abram died of meningitis. Some members of the family, including Frank, believed Abraham’s illness resulted from his entering into this new plural marriage.

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Abram’s early death was devastating to Frank, and he took no comfort from his father’s explanation that Abram’s early death was a boon that preserved him from shame when the post-Manifesto marriage became public, as it did during the Smoot hearings. During the Smoot hearings and elsewhere, Smith consistently denied performing this plural marriage. Given Frank’s devotion to both his father and brother, he considered Smith’s denial as tantamount to kicking dirt on their graves.

However, Frank’s outrage was feigned and his facts fabricated. D. Michael Quinn, in his watershed study on post-Manifesto marriages, documents George Q.’s numerous post-Manifesto maneuverings, including the fact that Frank was “the only son who volunteered” to marry Lillian when George was looking to place Lillian (who had been engaged to David Cannon, who died in October of 1892 while serving a mission in Germany) with one of his sons to become a proxy husband for David and enable him to have children. According to Quinn, George Q. rebuffed Frank’s offer because he was too “worldly.” Bolstering Quinn’s analysis is the conclusion of B. Carmon Hardy, a respected historian of plural marriage with a special emphasis on post-Manifesto unions, who agrees that George Q. rejected Frank’s offer and, furthermore, thinks that George Q., not Jo-

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24Abram Cannon had three wives before marrying Hamlin. Smoot Hearings, 2:143. Abraham’s cousin and first plural wife, Wilhelmina C. Ellis, had the following exchange with attorney Robert W. Tayler at the Smoot hearings:

“Mr. Tayler. . . . What did Mr. Cannon say to you shortly before his death about his having married Miss Hamlin?
Mrs. Ellis. He told me he had married her and asked my forgiveness.
Mr. Tayler. What else did he say about it?
Mrs. Ellis. He said he never had a well day since he had married her. I think it killed him.”

26Smoot Hearings, 1:127–128; see also Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Reed Smoot, April 9, 1904, Smoot Papers.
seph F. Smith, performed the Abram/Lillian sealing.\textsuperscript{29} In a statement to the press a few years after the Smoot hearings, Lillian affirmed that President Smith did not perform the marriage, thus failing to provide support for Frank's allegation, but stopped short of disclosing who did.\textsuperscript{30} A few years later, George F. Gibbs, secretary to Joseph F. Smith’s First Presidency, wrote to Bernard Greensfelder, a Jewish “gentleman” then living in St. Louis who had recently heard one of Frank J. Cannon’s anti-Mormon lectures. (See the next article, “The Modern Mormon Kingdom,” by Kenneth L. Cannon II.) In 1858 as a fourteen-year-old boy, Greensfelder had visited Salt Lake and was favorably impressed with Brigham Young and the other Mormons he had met, even remarking “I have yet to find [a] better or more honorable man [than Brigham Young].”\textsuperscript{31} Gibbs wrote Greensfelder: “President George Q. Cannon told me that his son Frank had appealed to him for a special dispensation to marry a plural wife . . . in 1897, seven years after the Manifesto; and he told the same thing to Mr. Arthur Winter, also of the Mormon Church office, who, like myself, possessed the confidence of President Cannon in things pertaining to his family, as well as those of a general character. But President Cannon knew at that time, and so expressed himself to Mr. Winter and to me, that his son Frank was morally unworthy to enter into these sacred relations.”\textsuperscript{32}

Frank Cannon’s commitment to the Church seemed to ebb and flow based on political ambition and circumstance. Between 1895 and 1898, when Frank was elected sequentially, first as a territorial

\textsuperscript{29}B. Carmon Hardy, \textit{Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 220, 238.


\textsuperscript{32}George F. Gibbs, Letter to Bernard Greensfelder, November 8, 1915, copy in Kenney Papers.
delegate and then as a U.S. Senator, he appears to have been fully engaged in Church activity. John W. Hughes, the editor of *Truth*, a Gentile-run newspaper in Salt Lake City, sneered that, during his campaign “Frankie received more favors from the church and the Mormon people than any other man. He sought all the church influence he could get and more too. He let nothing pass even to carrying a ‘recommend’ from his bishop and certificate to the effect that he had paid his tithing.” 33 Given Frank Cannon’s penchant for political opportunism, he may have sought to make his father proud and enhance his standing in Mormonism’s inner circles where some leaders assumed the ban on new plural marriages would be temporary by marrying pluraly. However, it is also likely that Frank’s motives were more sensual, especially given an occasional but repeated pattern of patronizing bordellos and his seduction in 1880 of a nineteen-year-old hired girl, a Mormon convert from England, who was living in Frank and Martha’s Ogden home; the affair resulted in the girl’s pregnancy. 34

The historical record on this point is unclear, but what is clear is Frank Cannon’s short-term memory related to his own post-Manifesto attempts considering his expressions of sympathy for the “young men and women of the Mormon church” who entered post-Manifesto marriages because of “mistaken zeal.” He warned Mormons considering plural marriage of “the frightful calamity which they are invoking for themselves, and possibly for their children, when they go into plural marriage since God repealed his permission in 1890.” Frank further

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33“The Cowardly Tribune,” *Truth*, Saturday, January 21, 1905. It is probably inaccurate to ascribe all of Frank’s Church participation to cynical opportunism. While serving as Utah’s first senator, Frank gave an apparently sincere and certainly unpublicized priesthood blessing to a “Miss Barnum,” a student at Harvard University. George H. Crow, Diary, August 14, 1898, LDS Church History Library. *Truth* editor John W. Hughes testified at the Smoot hearings in 1905 when Smoot’s team of attorneys began calling witnesses. *Smoot Hearings*, 3:162–66.

cautioned that “young women” who enter plural marriages “against the law of God,” will be branded “wrong-doer[s]” by their husband and the Church, with the ultimate result that their children would lose all legal rights in the community and be consigned to a pariah’s life.  

Also at issue, according to Cannon, was an experience triggered by his dramatic behavior at the June 1896 Republican national convention in St. Louis. When he and other party members failed to persuade the convention to add “free coinage of silver in addition to the gold standard” in the party’s platform, Cannon stormed out and joined the newly formed Silver Republican Party. Then, sometime in late October or early November, Joseph F. Smith invited him to attend a General Authorities’ meeting in the temple. In that “sacred room,” Cannon claimed, Smith launched into a “violent Republican speech, declaring that I had humiliated the Church and alienated its political friends.” Cannon, outraged, considered this experience evidence that Smith’s loyalties, as well as other Church leaders’, were to the Church first and the United States second, and that they “would continue to consider . . . every public issue solely in its possible effect upon the fortunes of their Church.” Cannon further described Smith’s misplaced priorities by recounting a far-fetched story that occurred during the 1901 U.S. Senate election. Cannon asserted that Smith became incensed when he learned that LDS Church President Lorenzo Snow preferred Thomas Kearns, a successful Gentile Utah mining mogul and future owner of Salt Lake Tribune over Apostle Reed Smoot for Utah’s open Senate seat. According to Cannon, Smith confronted a “member of the Utah legislature” and forced him to “promise . . . as an elder in Israel” to never vote “for Thomas Kearns as Senator. I ask it as your

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36Godfrey, “Frank J. Cannon,” 251. This schismatic party was short lived.
38Cannon and O’Higgins, Under the Prophet in Utah, 185–88.
friend, and as a Prophet to the people.’”

These sensational charges are also controverted by other evidence. At a temple meeting during this election season, Apostle Anthon Lund chronicled in his diary a lively discussion about this Senate seat. Some General Authorities thought that Smoot “could do us the most good,” while others, including Presidents Joseph F. Smith and George Q. Cannon, “thought it best not to send a prominent Churchman.” In this case, it appears that Frank’s contempt for Smith, combined with his father’s absence (George Q. had died in April 1901), freed him to concoct a fictitious narrative.

For Smith’s part, Frank Cannon’s frequent moral lapses, intemperance, and unpredictable lifestyle caused him to view Cannon with piercing skepticism. On one notable occasion, Smith used his influence with President Snow to squelch an 1898 bond-selling transaction previously arranged by George Q. Cannon, leaving Frank unable to make good on promises he had made on behalf of the Church with eastern businessmen. Smith’s son and future Church President Joseph Fielding Smith explained in his official biography of his father that the “murderous hate” Frank (whom he never identifies by name) felt for Joseph F. Smith, “was partly due to the fact that President Smith had prevented him from dipping his hands into the treasury of the Church, and partly because of the nature of the unclean life he was leading.” Joseph Fielding Smith explained the bond-selling episode in these terms:

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39Ibid., 240; italics in original. At this time, U.S. Senators were elected by state legislatures.


41A Gentile-run newspaper in Salt Lake City made the following accusations: “The trail of the wrecked homes and dishonored women left by Cannon extends from one end of the state to the other, and there is hardly a county jail in the state of which he has not been an inmate for crimes varying from assault to murder to stealing diamonds from a prostitute. We can substantiate our statements with names and dates if necessary.” “Triumvirate Going to Pieces,” Truth, April, 29, 1905. Frank, generally speaking, had a disreputable reputation in Utah both in and out of Church circles. Therefore, I assume that each of these charges except “murder” is accurate.

42Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith: Sixth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press,
At this particular time a certain unscrupulous person [Frank] who had the ear of some of the authorities and the possession of an oily tongue, tried to convince the brethren that these bonds could not be sold locally and would have to be disposed of in the east to certain financial firms. He volunteered his services to sell these bonds, but of course, with the understanding that he was to receive a very handsome commission. By his energy and flattering persuasion he almost accomplished his purpose and was able to convert many of the brethren to his way of thinking. . . . President Smith strenuously objected: . . . "I opposed it, . . . and voted against it. I was opposed to giving a commission at all, and thought the bonds should be sold at home." Notwithstanding his strenuous objection, action was taken and it was agreed that this proposition should be accepted. Later, by earnest pleading, President Smith convinced President Lorenzo Snow that such a course was erroneous and it would be well to first try his plan, that of disposing of the bonds at home. The result was that the first issue was readily disposed of locally, and when the second issue was ready for the market it met with a like response, largely from the members of the Church and others at home, and both issues were sold before the close of the year 1899, not long after they were issued. The blocking of the scheme of this individual, who hoped to become the agent of the Church in disposing of the bonds, brought down upon the head of President Joseph F. Smith the wrath of this particular individual, who in later times joined forces with the enemies of the Church in a campaign of bitterness and hate which in some respects surpassed any expression of bitterness ever before manifested against the Church.43

Joseph Fielding Smith obviously shared his father’s animus and later obliquely referred to Frank Cannon as the “apostate who came out of one of the best and leading families of the Church.”44 By avoiding Frank’s name, Joseph Fielding Smith continued the First Presidency’s policy in the 1910s of ignoring Cannon as “unworthy of our attention.”45 Bristling over this embarrassment, Frank not unnaturally

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43Ibid., 303.
44Ibid., 349.
45George F. Gibbs, Letter to German E. Ellsworth, February 3, 1914, photocopy in Kenney Papers. German E. Ellsworth was serving as the president of the Northern States Mission and was asking the First Presidency if they objected to his missionaries distributing tracts before and after a Frank
responded with deep-seated animosity toward Smith.46

And it is true that Joseph Fielding Smith’s narrative oversimplifies the complexity of this relationship. As with any business or political dispute, there are two sides to the story, with each man able to describe legitimate grievances. Eight years after the conclusion of the Smoot hearings, President Smith’s secretary, George Gibbs, provided a detailed summary of this acrimonious relationship. Even though Gibbs is a biased source because of his long-term service to President Smith, I see his analysis as surprisingly fair and balanced. Gibbs tangentially suggests that Frank Cannon stood to gain monetarily from the bond transaction but also conceded that Frank Cannon sincerely worked to help his father and the Church find monetary relief during a time of economic pressure in 1898. Gibbs also provided inside commentary on the difficult dynamics between these men after Cannon bolted the 1896 Republican national convention. Smith bluntly informed Cannon that “he was utterly opposed to the course taken” by Cannon and that henceforth Smith vowed to “use all the influence he possessed” against Cannon, which according to Gibbs, “brought about [Frank’s] political downfall.”47 Certainly it cannot be a surprise that Cannon continued to harbor ill feelings toward Smith; and when Smith publicly derided Cannon at the Smoot hearings, it rubbed salt in still-open wounds, leading Cannon to wage a rhetorical battle on the president.

In early January 1904, a year after Smoot’s successful election, the senator reported to President Smith that “about the only thing keeping the agitation alive in the Eastern papers is the editorials of Frank J. Cannon.” Cannon was mailing his editorials to Dubois, who used them to influence eastern “newspaper correspondents” writing about the Smoot hearings. Smoot paid Frank the backhanded compliment of saying his editorials “are written in such a way that they can be read by our home people, giving them the impression that he is defending their belief and their religion, and if read in the East, the impression that he is


bitterly opposed to me."48 Smoot’s comments bespeak the efficacy and persuasiveness of Cannon’s literary skills as well as revealing Smoot’s genuine concern for the adverse influence Cannon’s editorials were having on uninformed or naive Latter-day Saints. The previous fall, Dubois expressed his confidence to Cannon that Smoot would be unseated, stating that he had “become spiteful and arrogant and he is talking too much for his own good.”49 Cannon’s writing ability also bothered Smith, who complained, “It has often seemed to me lamentable that we do not have more incisive writers [in the Church] than we do, who possess the ability and disposition and leisure to avail themselves of the many opportunities to handle in scathing terms the malicious creatures who are so atrocious in their denunciation of the Latter-day Saints.”50 Although not referring to Frank Cannon by name in this letter, a few weeks later Smith fulminated wrathfully about Frank’s “wicked, apostate, and vengeful stand” and charged, “Perhaps no viler creature than he ever engaged in the use of his surpent [sic] poisonous tongue against the Church.”51

Soon thereafter Smoot reported, “every day Frank’s paper arrives and [if] there is anything in it against me . . . [Charles Mostyn] Owen sees that each member of the committee . . . gets a copy and their attention is called to it and [Frank] is called the leading Young Mormon of Utah, a son of a former President of the Church.” Smoot also explained that Frank J. had arrived in Washington the day before (January 18, 1904) and “called on me this morning but had very little to say and I said very little to him.”52 This was not the first or last time these two men’s paths crossed in Washington. A week later an inebriated Cannon unexpectedly dropped by Smoot’s hotel to eat

49 Fred T. Dubois, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, November 27, 1903, Dubois Collection.
52 Reed Smoot, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, January 19, 1904, Smoot Papers. Charles Mostyn Owen, a Salt Lake resident, was the author and signatory of the original protest against Smoot. He also testified at the Smoot hearings. See Smoot Hearings, 2:395–405, 412–38.
dinner. Intrigued by the chance meeting, Smoot “asked [Frank] to sit with me but [Frank] refused.” Cannon may have been tight-lipped with Smoot; but when meeting with other politicians on Capital Hill, he was verbose. Meeting with Utah Congressman Joseph Howell, Cannon expressed his feelings more candidly. In a letter to Smith, Smoot reported what Howell told him about this conversation: “[Cannon] was very much disappointed in the position I had taken, claiming I should stand up in the Senate like an American and say yes gentlemen, I am a prophet, Seer, and Revelator and it is my duty to warn the world and I warn you as senators and this nation if you and it does not repent you will all go to hell. I [still meaning Smoot] should have stated boldly that the President and some of the apostles are violators of the law and never intended to keep it as far as cohabitation was concerned.”

Cannon camouflaged this visit to Washington as a business trip, even telling Utah newspapers he was not going “to take part in the fight against Smoot.” Smoot, however, knew this statement could not be true. Frank Cannon’s former newspaper, the Ogden Standard, cited an unnamed source, allegedly Frank’s friend, who described his visit to Washington as “for the purpose of aiding . . . Dubois . . . in his fight against the Mormons.” This same source described Frank as “acting in the same capacity as [an] adviser of Dubois in prompting questions to be asked of witnesses,” much like the role Charles Mostyn Owen played with the lead attorney against Smoot, ex-Congressman [Robert W.] Tayler. I have found no evidence that places Cannon physically in the committee room during any session of the hearings; and as previously mentioned, Cannon certainly did not want to be a witness at the hearings. However, since he was in the East for seven weeks beginning on January 18, he can definitely be placed in Washington for at least the first three days of Smith’s testimony.

He and Dubois would have had ample opportunity to strategize on the most politically advantageous ways to ask questions about Mor-

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53 Reed Smoot, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, January 26, 1904, Smoot Papers.
55 “Salt Lake Opinion on Smoot,” Ogden Standard, March 5, 1904, 15.
56 Cannon arrived in Utah from Washington on March 8. “Frank Cannon Hopes,” Salt Lake Herald, March 9, 1904, 7. Travel time by train be-
monism that would impugn Smoot. In fact, Dubois asked several sophisticated questions during this first week of testimony that mirror many of Cannon’s subsequent hobbyhorse topics published in Tribune editorials. These topics include post-Manifesto marriages, plural marriages outside the United States, and the Mormon notion of revelation. Cannon’s influence can unequivocally be seen when Dubois used the sarcastic phrase, “heir to the throne” to describe Francis M. Lyman, then “head of the quorum of the apostles,” and next in line to become “president of the church.” Cannon’s future editorials frequently used monarchical terms to describe the Church hierarchy, often referring to Smith as the “King,” “Majesty,” or “Monarch” who wore a “crown” and occupied a “throne” in Utah. When Smith took umbrage at the mocking language, Dubois withdrew the comment.

Smith’s “epoch-making” testimony in Washington was considered by many around the country to be controversial; however, Colonel William Nelson, then the Salt Lake Tribune’s editor, surprisingly, but “emphatically commended” President Smith for his “frank” testimony about his “marital relations as they are known here.” Nelson continued, “[President Smith’s] testimony . . . shows himself to be an honest man, mindful of the obligations of his oath . . . It is decidedly refreshing to see such testimony as this, giving the exact truth . . . That President Smith has personally made a favorable impression upon the committee, as well as upon the public . . . cannot be doubted.” This restrained editorial is also surprising given Nelson’s reputation for being a “Mormon

between Utah and Washington, D.C., was approximately three days.

57 Smoot Hearings, 1:132, 139, 150, 159, 178, 191, 318, 321.
58 Ibid., 1:209.
59 For Salt Lake Tribune examples, see: “An Address: To the Earthly King of the Kingdom of God,” February 1, 1905, 4; “An Address: To His Majesty’s Ministers, the Twelve Lords Who Serve as Advisors to the Crown, and Who Are Lords in Waiting,” February 12, 1905, 6; “An Address: To the People of This Kingdom,” February 19, 1905; “A Second Address: To the Earthly King of the Kingdom of God,” April 2, 1905, 6.
60 Smoot Hearings, 1:209.
61 “President Smith’s Testimony,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 4, 1904. 4. Smith elected to “affirm” rather than “swear” an oath to tell the truth. He explained: “We believe in the Scriptures, ‘swear not at all” Smoot Hearings, 1:387. Three other Mormon witnesses followed his example: Smoot, Joseph
eater from way back.” However, the measured response to Smith’s testimony reflected a temporary détente between the Tribune and the LDS Church that had begun as early as January of 1902. The First Presidency, headed by Smith, naturally saw advantages to this relative placidity and cautioned Charles W. Penrose, then editor of the Deseret News, not to print anything antagonistic or “unfavorable” against the Tribune, because we “can [not] well afford” to incite the “bitter opposition” or renew the old “anti-Mormon fight.” The presidency’s counsel was prescient beyond imagination, making it all the more ironic that Smith, by his perhaps involuntary candor at the Smoot hearings, set in motion the “anti-Mormon fight,” including the personal contest between Smith and his eloquent nemesis, ex-Senator Frank J. Cannon.

Frank Cannon began his political career in 1892 when he unsuccessfully ran as Utah’s territorial delegate. Both Church President Wilford Woodruff and Woodruff’s counselor, Joseph F. Smith, supported his candidacy, expressing “themselves in the highest terms of Frank’s ability, and hoped he might succeed in being elected.” This setback did not deter the thirty-three-year-old Republican, whose campaign for the same office two years later was successful. He served from March 4, 1895, until January 4, 1896, when Utah was ad-

F. Smith’s son Hyrum Mack Smith, and Charles W. Penrose.

62 “Another ‘Patriotic’ Outbreak,” Truth, September 10, 1904. Frank described Nelson as “an opponent of Mormonism as practiced, who had fought the Church hierarchy for years.” Cannon and O’Higgins, Under the Prophet in Utah, 145.


64 First Presidency, Letter to Reed Smoot, March 3, 1903, Smoot Papers. Joseph F. Smith had become Church president in October 1901 upon Lorenzo Snow’s death.


66 Lawrence Ray Silvey, “Rhetorical Functions and Communicative Roles of Oral Discourse in an Intercultural Conflict Directly Relating to the
mitted to the Union as the forty-fifth state, at which point the Utah State Legislature elected Cannon as one of Utah’s first senators.67 Parenthetically, Cannon’s election is surprising given his scandalous sexual history, which was known in Utah generally, not just in Church or family circles. Either his political opponents did not use his infidelity as a campaign issue because he had sufficiently “reformed” or else Utah’s citizenry was far more understanding of moral failings than they are today.68 However, Frank’s father used his influence during the 1892 election to silence some critics. William Seegmiller, a

During Frank’s unsuccessful 1892 campaign for delegate, a controversial pamphlet entitled the “Nuggets of Truth” was distributed widely throughout the Utah territory, including at Sunday Church meetings, promoting the Republican Party. The pamphlet contained pictures of several LDS prophets, including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Joseph F. Smith, with the final page displaying this picture of a thirty-three-year-old Frank J. Cannon. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.


68Truth, edited by John W. Hughes, a Gentile, and published in Salt Lake City, editorialized: “The moral character of ex-Senator Cannon is probably worse than that of any other man in the state. . . . He is a wrecker of homes, a despoiler of women. After his election to the United States Senate his immorality was so gross and notorious that he was asked by a multitude of his constituents to resign his seat in the senate because he was a disgrace to the state he represented in that body.” “Consummate Blackguardism,”
stake president, informed George Q. that he intended to “do all in his power to defeat Frank,” using damaging information about Frank’s habits. George Q. responded by threatening to “withdraw fellowship from Bro. Seegmiller.”

In 1896 after being elected senator, Cannon abandoned the Republican Party, proclaiming that he had not left the party but rather that it “had forsaken the principles [I] held most dear.” This move unraveled his political career; but, characteristically, it was consistent with an erratic and schizophrenic behavior pattern he repeated throughout his life. Over and over, Cannon would display fierce loyalty and fealty to a political party or institution for politically expediency. But this initial zeal would soon recede, and Cannon would spectacularly sever his affiliation with the political party or institution.

Frank Cannon’s quixotic behavior was at times troubling to his family, friends, and associates. In this case, Cannon’s denunciation of the GOP ignited Joseph F. Smith’s wrath and led to his political demise in 1898 when his reelection bid failed. A true Renaissance man, Cannon was blessed with many gifts tailor-made for public service. Not wanting to let these talents go to waste, James H. Moyle, leader of the Utah Democrats, immediately sent out feelers to ascertain Cannon’s interest in joining the Democratic Party. The ex-senator undoubtedly appreciated the attention and, by October of 1900, had joined forces with Moyle. He rejoiced publicly that he had finally found “a party which stood for all his ideals.” Within two years, Cannon was named as Utah’s Democratic Chairman and was serving in this capacity when Reed Smoot was elected to the U.S. Senate in January of 1903.

During this election, Cannon was “confined to his bed” and “seriously ill” with terrible “pains in [his] side,” and was soon rushed to

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Truth, April 15, 1905.

69Lyman, Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle, 365.
70“Senator Cannon’s Magnificent Speech at the Wigwam was Cheer ed by Thousands,” Salt Lake Herald, October 16, 1900, 1.
72“Senator Cannon’s Magnificent Speech at the Wigwam,” 1.
73“Democratic Ticket Named,” Davis County Clipper, September 19, 1902, 2.
the hospital for an emergency “operation for appendicitis.” Cannon desired “blessing and favor from God” and requested a priesthood blessing—possibly from his “intimate friend” Ben E. Rich and J. Golden Kimball. After two months of convalescence, Cannon was back on the streets of Ogden, in good health and poised to wage a fight against Smoot and the Mormon Church.

Cannon’s political turnabouts make tracking his thought fascinating but challenging, since to advance his personal and political interests he frequently made statements that contradicted previous statements. His malleability earned him the well-deserved monikers: “contortionist,” “Fake Reformer,” “Booby,” and “Tribune Liar.” Most politicians encounter credibility problems, but Cannon’s penchant for extreme rhetoric and flip-flopping was rare.

Before entering politics, Frank Cannon worked in the newspaper business for at least fifteen years. A precocious teenager, Cannon began his journalistic career by helping his father edit the *Juvenile Instructor*, his Mormon monthly magazine. After graduating from the University of Deseret, Frank worked as a reporter and editor for several years.

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75 Cannon and O’Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, 117; “Old-Time Love Is Turned to Hate,” *Deseret Evening News*, March 3, 1905, 3. Ben E. Rich had been Frank’s campaign manager when he ran as a Republican for delegate. He was the son of LDS Apostle Charles C. Rich, and, during the Smoot hearings, was the president of the Southern States Mission. His secret code alias was “Ziganka.” J. Golden Kimball was the son of Heber C. Kimball, one of the original LDS apostles. At the time of the hearings, he was serving as one of the seven presidents of the First Council of Seventy. Early in February of 1905, Frank published two editorials lauding Kimball for his courage and honesty. “Golden Kimball’s Sermon,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 3, 1905, 4; “Wanted: A Hero,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 6, 1905, 4. As Cannon’s editorials became more critical, Rich and Kimball “came to me repeatedly to suggest that if I wished to attack the leaders of the Church I should formally withdraw from the Church.” *Under the Prophet in Utah*, 329.


eral other newspapers, including the *Deseret News, San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Ogden Standard*.

In late 1893, he resigned from the *Ogden Standard* to devote his full energies to the 1894 campaign.

After ten years, while he was still serving as chair of the state Democratic Party, Cannon returned to journalism in November 1903 by launching the *Daily Utah State Journal* in Ogden. His editorials were unfriendly to Church leaders and were “covert attacks” on the Church, but used well-reasoned arguments and moderate language. Cannon, however, was unrestrained when editorializing against local newspaper competitors and political adversaries. In an ironic twist, Cannon’s new paper began to “bandy epithets” and make statements “false as hell itself” about his former newspaper, the *Ogden Standard*. Exasperated by the barrage of slanderous statements, the *Standard* declared in the summer of 1904 that it would henceforth “abstain from replying . . . to anything Frank J. Cannon . . . may say about us.”

Cannon’s tenure at the *State Journal* coincided with the first two rounds of the Smoot hearings that adjourned in early May of 1904. Soon thereafter, disappointed Democrats in Utah held a state convention in which Frank Cannon gave a “caustic and forceful” speech bemoaning the “handicaps” under which he labored as chair and the “defeat[s]” sustained over the past two years. Cannon further “disclaimed any desire to continue as chairman” but reassured the body politic that he would “stand at [the new committee’s] back and see you through.”

A month later, Cannon joined the Utah delegation at the Democratic national convention in St. Louis. Senator Dubois, also in attendance at the convention, used the political momentum against

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Mormonism generated by the Smoot hearings to propose an anti-polygamy plank advocating a constitutional amendment banning polygamy. The Utah delegation strenuously opposed the resolution.\textsuperscript{84} Ironically, Cannon cast his loyalties with the Utah delegation and agreed to be the point man in taking up “the fight” against Dubois and the anti-polygamy plank. When asked by the press if he would walk out of the convention if a compromise could not be reached, Cannon replied, “I do not want any more rainbow chasing,” adding, “Eight years ago I bolted the Republican convention in this very town, and have grown gray since that time trying to find proper political terminal facilities.”\textsuperscript{85} Because of Dubois’s “regard for Cannon, together with his unwillingness to mix in Utah affairs,” the Idaho senator decided to “forego” the contest.\textsuperscript{86} The final resolution contained watered-down language with no mention of a constitutional amendment against polygamy.\textsuperscript{87} Dubois’s original proposal had decried Church domination in Utah, a position also certainly held by Frank

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{84}“The ‘News’ at St. Louis,” \textit{Deseret Evening News}, July 5, 1904, 1;
\item \textsuperscript{85}“Dubois Wins Fight at St. Louis for Polygamy Plank,” \textit{Salt Lake Herald}, July 6, 1904, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{86}“Senator Cannon’s Views,” \textit{Deseret Evening News}, July 2, 1904, 1;
\item \textsuperscript{87}Parker the Man Says Dubois,” \textit{Salt Lake Herald}, July 1, 1904, 1.
\end{itemize}
Cannon; but in an act of loyalty, Cannon supported the weaker resolution and did not seek to profit personally from the situation.

Soon after the St. Louis Democratic convention, Cannon bowed out of the Democratic Party, resigned his position as editor of the State Journal, joined the fledgling anti-Mormon American Party, and accepted the position as editor of Salt Lake Tribune, which ironically supported the Republican Party. *88* Dubois did not take umbrage with Cannon’s abandonment of the Democratic Party because he likewise had a long record of “chameleon-like” politics in which he changed “his political coloring at will.” In fact, Dubois and Cannon were political twins, both transmuting from “Republican to Silver Republican to Democrat to anti-Mormon.” *89* Additionally, these men believed—and repeatedly explained in so many words—that they were not fighting “against the Mormon people, but for them” by holding Church leaders accountable for “violat[ing] their compact” made with the country when Utah achieved statehood.*90* * 

Another political chameleon was Republican Thomas Kearns, senior Senator from Utah when Smoot was elected and owner of the Salt Lake Tribune. A Gentile immigrant to Utah, Kearns parlayed a successful mining and business career into a U.S. Senate seat. He won his first election in 1901 with the tacit support of Church President Lorenzo Snow, who reportedly counseled Reed Smoot to skip this particular race with the assurance that there would be future political

*88* “Frank Cannon Declines,” Salt Lake Herald, October 1, 1904, 2; “Frank J. Cannon joins the American Party,” Salt Lake Herald, October 1, 1904, 1.

*89* John Brumbaugh, “Return to Anti-Mormonism: Fred Dubois and The Reed Smoot Hearings,” n.d., unpublished typescript, copy in my possession; Rufus G. Cook, “The Political Suicide of Senator Fred T. Dubois of Idaho,” Pacific Northwest Quarterly 60 (October 1969): 197. The Truth derisively alleged: “Mr. Cannon . . . is one of those Mormons who is a Mormon for revenue; he was likewise a Republican for revenue, then a silver Republican for revenue, then a Democrat for revenue, then an ‘American’ for revenue.” “Consummate Blackguardism,” Truth, April 15, 1905.

*90* Fred T. Dubois, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, November 27, 1903, Dubois Collection.
opportunities. Snow’s support of Kearns was a major factor in the armistice between the Salt Lake Tribune and the LDS Church during 1902–4. In 1903, Snow made good on his promise to Smoot and explicitly gave him permission to run for the Senate, thus joining Kearns in Washington as the junior Utah senator. Almost immediately, these men began to vie for control of the Republican Party in Utah—a fight that Smoot won. Kearns was up for reelection in 1904, and Smoot did not support him in the primary fight, instead politicking for George Sutherland. Kearns grudgingly conceded defeat when he announced in September, two months before election day, that he was withdrawing from the race.

Bitter about being forced out, Kearns turned against the Utah Republican Party, although continuing his support for the national ticket. Most ironically, Kearns blamed his political demise on the influence of the Mormon Church, the same influence that had propelled him into office, established the anti-Mormon American Party in Salt Lake City, turned the “Tribune into a liberal paper,” and waged “a bitter fight against the Mormons.” Over the next few years, the American Party established a political foothold in Salt Lake and became a cantankerous hairshirt for Smoot and the Church.

Smoot initially reacted to the American Party “with much mirth,” telling reporters that it was “not important enough to discuss.” Dubbed the “Amerikearns” Party, it made big headlines in early October 1904 when Frank Cannon announced at its first political convention, that even though it was an “inopportune” time, he was going to “board” the American Party train because the party “was
going to the place I wanted to reach.”

Persuading Cannon to join the “Amerikearns” team was a major coup because, as Salt Lake Tribune historian O. N. Malmquist explained, Cannon “had few peers in Utah in the art of persuasive and polished speaking and writing” and could effortlessly “attack or defend a cause with impressive skill.”

Cannon provided immediate evidence of this characteristic. He had previously berated the Tribune for distorting the truth, having an “utter ignorance of the facts,” and for using “elegant extravagance of diction . . . covered with . . . high-sounding sentences” but “mendaciously applied.” He had also scalded its readers: “In any other community, a newspaper could not afford . . . to lie so brazenly . . . But the Salt Lake Tribune has such unscrupulous support that it can afford to be as absurd . . . as its silliest whim or falsest purpose may dictate.”

In addition to calling the Tribune a “chronic liar and venomous assailant,” he vilified an earlier editor, C. C. Goodwin: “All the Tribune’s editor needs to do in order to make an editorial on politics, is to mix in a little anti-Mormon sentiment; and the attack, however vile, passes current with the Tribune office, no matter how much dismay it may disgust every fair-minded reader of that sheet . . . All the talk of the Tribune about chaining the Gentiles to the Mormon dump-cart is so much lying twaddle printed purely to arouse sympathy abroad.”

The Desert News, edited by Charles W. Penrose, imputed pecuniary motives to Cannon’s switch, charging that the Tribune had


100 “Again the Ogden Outrage,” Ogden Standard, December 4, 1888, 2.

Cannon frequently rebuked the Gentile community in Utah for being “servile, insensate tools of priestcraft.” “It Is Time,” Salt Lake Tribune, January 15, 1905, 6. After a Utah Gentile, J. W. H. Whitecotton, testified at the Smoot hearings in defense of Smoot and the Mormon Church, Cannon called him a “jackass” and claimed that “he was only pretending servility as a joke. His apparent crawling, creeping flunkeyism was only intended to satirize other toad-eaters who had gone before. In reality he felt a haughty, domineering flippance toward Reed Smoot, his employer, and all of the
secured the "versatile political acrobat[s]" services "at an immense outlay." 101

Within twelve months, Smoot's laughter turned upside down when the new party captured victories in six out of the ten local Salt Lake elections. Back in Washington, Senator Dubois made capital out of these successful election results, leading Smoot to write anxiously to Joseph F. Smith that Dubois was "poisoning the minds of Republicans...who had been friendly in the past, by telling them that I am a dead duck politically in Utah...[and] the American party will control the state within 3 years and send the next Senator elected by a legislature" to Washington. 102 In fact, Dubois was over-optimistic. Although the American Party maintained "close control" of Salt Lake City politics between 1906 and 1912, it faded thereafter and was defunct by 1923. 103

As editor of Salt Lake Tribune, Cannon used his intimate knowledge of Mormon doctrine and history to attack Smoot and President Smith. Over his first six months, Cannon's editorials became increasingly shrill and vindictive, leading to his excommunication in March 1905. President Smith wrote angrily to Apostle Heber J. Grant, then president of the European Mission: "Never in all the history of the Church has there been an enemy so utterly conscienceless and malevolent as [Cannon] has been." 104 Cannon definitely made some legitimate points about Church leaders failing to live up to their public as-

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102 Reed Smoot, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, December 12, 1905, Smoot Papers.
104 Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Heber J. Grant, April 26, 1905, LDS Church History Library.
surances where political influence and post-Manifesto polygamy were concerned; but his use of hyperbole, half-truths, and bald-faced fictions undercut his credibility. Carl Badger, Smoot’s secretary, summed up the situation accurately: “I do not care anything about Frank J. and Kearns; we owe them nothing. They [Kearns and Cannon] belong to the Devil and are going his way as fast as they can. . . . [But] if we had not done wrong, Cannon and Kearns would be without ammunition.”

From the outset of his tenure at the Tribune, Cannon mercilessly mocked Deseret News editor Charles W. Penrose. Ordained an apostle a month after the first round of Smoot testimony, Penrose became a prime target of Cannon’s editorial ire. Labeling him a “slavish victim of ignorance” and a “poor, ignorant, flabbergasted, halfgagged . . . dandy old dub,” Cannon impugned Penrose’s character as well as his writings. Later Cannon blasted Penrose for being “false and facile,” charging that he “maunders around through two columns of his paper like old men are said to act when they are in love.” Cannon then defined what he termed the “Penrolean way”: “Many people have wondered why the Deseret News and its editor allow themselves to be placed in such frightfully humiliating positions—why the editor states things in his columns so contrary to the facts as to brand him as a common falsifier; why the paper ignores the great essential points of recent history in Utah, or treats them with such utter disregard of truth as that the sheet would not be admitted into a household which was well informed, and which did not desire to have its young people, if any, taught in the art of mendacity.”

When the Smoot hearings resumed in December of 1904, George Reynolds, who was serving as both one of the first seven presidents of the First Council of Seventy and the first assistant superintendent of the Sunday Schools, testified that he, Penrose, and John R. Winder had “assisted in writing” the Woodruff Manifesto by “chang[ing] the language slightly” and “correct[ing] . . . the grammar”

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105Carl Badger, Letter to Rose Badger, April 15, 1905, in Badger, Liahona and Iron Rod, 268.
106“Proof of Church Influence,” Salt Lake Tribune, October 6, 1904, 4.
110Smoot Hearings, 2:24.
to prepare it “for publication.” Against this backdrop, Church leaders thereafter provided nuanced interpretations of the Manifesto, upon which Cannon commented sardonically: “Is it surprising that there should be this contrariety of construction [of the Manifesto]? Not at all, when one remembers that the revelation called the Manifesto was edited by Apostle Charles W. Penrose. His skill and method are directed to treating every proposition in such a way as that he can construe his own language to suit any circumstance or whim that can possibly ever afterward arise, and so that he can defend any view or every view or all views with equal vigor.” Cannon’s comments on the Manifesto represent a change of position from his previous views. Shortly after the Manifesto was announced in September 1890, Cannon wrote the following editorial defense of the Manifesto:

When the Manifesto of President Woodruff appeared, the Salt Lake Tribune, true to its traditions, took the text of the document by sections and . . . annihilated the instrument by a general impingement of the author’s motives. . . . Reverting to the question of deceitful motives, which, so far as we have observed, is a universal argument with the Tribune against every person or body that has ever opposed its operations, the editor [C. C. Goodwin] need not go beyond his own compositions to find the most glaring evidences of dishonesty of motive to be found in existence. He is either so contented with himself as to believe that whatever comes from his pen will be swallowed without chewing by all who read, or else he conceives his readers to be a rather shallow lot. There is about as much coherence in some of his anti-Mormon raving as in the babbling of a child or the jibbering of an idiot. He is always fresh to call people liars, but he never remembers that in order to make such a stigma applicable it is proper and necessary to produce the lie. . . . To charge that the authorities of the Church are teaching polygamy in secret and carrying the impression among the people that it is still to be practiced, notwithstanding the authoritative instructions to the contrary, is [as] easy for him as falling off a log . . . . Such bald assertions as these . . . are simply an exhibition of coarse bravado.

Another topic of interest at the Smoot hearings was the authoritative nature of the doctrine as taught by Church leaders in contem-

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111Ibid., 2:52–53.
113“The ‘Tribune’ and the Manifesto,” Ogden Standard, October 5, 1890, 2.
porary books. President Smith testified that the authoritative works of the Church were “the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price” but hedged on the authority assigned to James E. Talmage’s influential *Articles of Faith* and ambiguously concluded that it was Talmage’s opinion. Later, Talmage also testified and commented that the books written by Orson Pratt or B. H. Roberts had no “binding effect upon the people as a whole or upon any individual . . . [but were] to be regarded as expressions of the authors.” Cannon ascribed ecclesiastical opportunism to these assertions:

When something occurred which caused President Smith to set Talmage aside, the president swore in Washington that Talmage’s book was not authoritative. Now Talmage goes on the stand at the capital to discredit Orson Pratt. When needed, [Orson F.] Whitney or some one else can appear to discredit [B. H.] Roberts. And as for [Charles W.] Penrose, he discredits himself. Any other sect or creed would be ashamed of this theological flim-flamming—for it is nothing more. “Now you see it, and now you don’t.” All of these writers are quoted by and to Mormons as expounders of the faith. Their works are revised by committee and published by authority. If they were not approved, they would not be on sale at the church bookstore. If any Mormon dared to contradict the utterance of any one of them in a discussion between mere Mormons, he would be immediately branded as a teacher of false doctrine. It is only when some Gentile quotes from them that they cease to be the word of God and become merely the word of an earthly and unrealizable sophist. What a tangled web the hierarchy is weaving for those persons, sincere in faith, who try to follow a straight path.

Cannon was making a fair but subversive point. From a cultural standpoint, rank-and-file Mormons considered the writings of Church leaders to be authoritative, though not having the status of scripture. But Joseph F. Smith was also correct that these works were technically not doctrinally binding because they had not been canonized—a term and process he did not try to define but which he in general terms described: “No revelation given through the head of the church ever becomes binding and authoritative upon the members of the church until it has been presented to the church and been ac-

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114*Smoot Hearings*, 1:84–86.
115Ibid., 2:24.
cepted by them." In another editorial, Cannon commented on Smith’s point, muddying the doctrinal waters by bringing up the issue of the scope of the Church president’s authority:

According to the testimony given by high ecclesiasts at Washington, a revelation from God is not binding upon humanity until after it is voted upon and accepted by the Mormon people in conference. What an astounding complexity, and what a narrow bigotry are here presented! As taught by Mormon theology there is but one man on earth at a time who is authorized to receive and pronounce the will of God. That man is the president of the Mormon church. He receives a revelation containing commands to the children of men, obedience to which commands entitles the individual to celestial glory, and disobedience to which commands consigns the individual to the loss of glory in the hereafter. The revelation, however, is not in force until some ten or twelve thousand people in the big tabernacle at Salt Lake City have voted affirmatively upon it. And then it becomes a law for the fifteen hundred millions of human being upon the face of the earth. In other words, sacrilegious as it may seem[,] this doctrine assumes that God don’t [sic] know his own mind. In still other words, his determinations are subject to revision by ten thousand human creatures, who constitute a kind of supreme court, whose conclusions are binding, not only upon themselves but upon hundreds of millions of human beings who never heard of the man through whom the law was promulgated, nor of the supreme court that sustained it, nor of the law itself. . . . Could absurdity further go?

As the Smoot hearings continued into 1905, Cannon repeatedly taunted the Deseret News for not publishing full transcripts of testimony given by Church leaders. Cannon thought the News’s reluctance to do so was a scandalous cover-up; and in one of his most effective editorials, he opined:

The various requests which come to the Tribune for a republication in full of the testimony in the Smoot case are hereby referred—

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117Smoot Hearings, 1:96.
most respectfully and urgently—to the Deseret News. During the early epoch of Christianity, when the martyrs were dragged before earthly powers, their utterances were deemed of such importance that they were cherished by the true believers; and such of them as have come to us are held in holy reverence. The exalted attitude of the disciples and the martyrs of that time has been deemed the very apotheosis of the sanctification of man, willing to die if necessary in the cause of the Divine Redeemer. Later, in the time of Joseph Smith, his sayings, when he stood in the presence of tribunals, were regarded as being special messages; they have been published as the heritage of his followers; and they are quoted as evidences of his inspiration. Still later, in the time of the present rulers of the church which Joseph Smith founded, the president and apostles were led before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections and were asked concerning their faith and practice. Here was the greatest opportunity to promulgate their mission—to speak to every kindred, tongue and people. Are their utterances held as a holy assertion of their faith and a sacred vindication of their practice? Are their testimonies proclaimed in the Sunday schools and in the meetings of the Latter-day Saints as a spiritual comfort and sustenance to believers? Hardly!120*

When the Tribune announced its plans to print the full transcript of Reed Smoot’s testimony given on Friday, January 20, Saturday, January 21, and Monday, January 23 of 1905, the Deseret News, according to Cannon, “plucked up” the courage to likewise publish the testimony. Cannon continued:

And yet that was [Smoot’s testimony] only a beginning, only an appetizer for the feast. The real testimony which the Mormon people wanted to read was that given by Joseph F. Smith, prophet seer and revelator. And this, although the News has had nearly a year in which to print it, still remains until this morning a closed book to the Mormon people and to most of the Gentiles of this State. Today the Tribune begins the presentation of President Smith’s testimony. . . . Now read his testimony and see whether it sounds like the utterance of an ambassador of Christ the King, or sounds like a cowering, equivocating, fanatical piece of mingled egotism, malice and cowardice.121*

The LDS temple ceremony was also a source of controversy in
Washington. During the hearings, Smoot’s adversaries alleged that Mormons who participated in the endowment ceremony were required to take an oath of disloyalty toward the United States. This idea was expressed by the repeated questions asked of B. H. Roberts in April of 1904 by Julius C. Burrows and others on the endowment ceremony. After this barrage of temple questions, Smoot’s attorney, Waldemer Van Cott, cross-examined: “In any of these ceremonies that took place in the Endowment House or the temple, is there anything in any way that binds you to disobey the laws of the land, or to make any agreement against the Government, or its officers, or anything of the kind?” Roberts quickly answered, “No, sir; absolutely nothing of the kind.”

In December of 1904, J. H. Wallis, a lapsed Mormon, testified about the temple ceremony, demonstrating four “obligations” and “vows,” as well as “what we used to call the ‘oath of vengeance.’” Robert W. Tayler, attorney for the “protestants who filed the first protest,” cautioned Wallis that he was not interested in “a detailed account” of the ceremony, but Wallis seemed more than eager to tell all he knew. In total, the December questions and answers regarding the temple obligations and vows occupied about two pages of the transcript, with the prosecution’s stated intent being to determine whether anything was said or done in the temple that encouraged disloyalty to the United States. Ultimately, testimony about Mormon temple rituals did not have the desired outcome for Smoot’s opponents because as Attorney Carlisle, co-counsel for the Salt Lake

Interested readers of the Tribune “asked many times to speak of the alleged oaths, concerning which witnesses have given testimony,”

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122 Smoot Hearings, 1:740–43.
123 Ibid., 1:744.
124 For more on the “Oath of Vengeance,” see Paulos, “Senator George Sutherland,” 104–8.
125 This is how Tayler described himself during his opening statement at the Smoot hearings on January 14, 1904. Smoot Hearings, 1:41.
126 For Wallis’s senate testimony on temple obligations, see Smoot Hearings, 2:77–79. For Wallis’s entire testimony, see Smoot Hearings, 2:78–85.
127 Smoot Hearings, 4:422. Carlisle further explained that “most of the
but Cannon refused to print full extracts of the testimony explaining, “under the circumstance, that is an improper subject for discussion in these columns” and “there is no need to discuss, to question, nor to admit, the alleged betrayals of oaths made by apostates from the church.”128 At the time of Wallis’s testimony, the Tribune printed in the news section the language of the so-called “oath of vengeance” but omitted the part of Wallis’s testimony where he demonstrated four of the temple “obligations” and “vows.”129 A year later in February 1906 when the Smoot hearings recommenced, another lapsed Mormon, Walter M. Wolfe, a former Brigham Young University professor, provided additional testimony on the “oath of vengeance.” At this point, Cannon reversed his previous position: “We print this morning again, the revelations of the endowment ceremonies in the Mormon Temples, as given by Professor Wolfe.” Further, the Tribune reprinted “the disclosures” about the endowment “made many years ago by a lady here, of the same, with illustrative plans of the old endowment house.”130 Frank Cannon, who had been endowed at age fourteen,131 almost certainly at his father’s encouragement, did not explain the reason for this shift of position; but his excommunication on March 15, 1905, is the most probable reason. If his earlier reticence had been lingering reverence for these most sacred rites, that inhibition had been removed.132

Semi-annual general conferences provided Cannon with addi-

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130 “Endowment Ceremonies,” Salt Lake Tribune, February 12, 1906, 4. Frank’s editorial does not identify this woman.
131 Frank was endowed on July 7, 1873, according to the LDS Ancestral File, http://www.familysearch.org (accessed May 7, 2010).
132 When Cannon served as editor of the Ogden Standard, he responded to the following statement published in the Grand Junction Star: “A good Mormon cannot be a good citizen of the United States. His allegiance
tional opportunities to lambaste Joseph F. Smith and members of the Church hierarchy. As the April 1905 conference approached, Cannon sarcastically speculated that President Smith planned to excommunicate any member who “would vote against him or possibly make a public charge against him,” an obviously autobiographical allusion. Cannon continued: “No matter what [Joseph F. Smith] does at the general conference, he will probably blunder. From the day when he first foisted his son into the quorum of apostles, without any revelation, down till now, each succeeding conference has experienced a lessening of the love which the people once had for him, and has increased the feeling of opposition to the autocracy of his reign.”

Cannon’s pugnacious tone here was a far cry from his tone while editing the *Ogden Standard* fifteen years prior. Calling the *Tribune* a “tyrant,” Cannon had lamented that it used “four full columns” to attack its “hobby” of Mormonism and to unfairly besmirch “Conference speakers.” A few days later, Cannon had extended the olive branch after the controversial conference at which the Manifesto of 1890 was read and sustained: “Differences of opinion will always exist, hence there will always be political parties and religious creeds, each more or less at variance with every other; but that does not make it necessary to be continually at war nor justify us in surrendering nothing for peace. Let us have a good, all-round understanding, one with another; then turn in and do as much for ourselves as Providence has done for us, and see how grandly we will

to his church forbids it. The oath he takes in the endowment house when he dons the ‘garments’ of his religion, is to the same effect as the oath of a foreigner when he becomes naturalized.” Cannon responded: “The editor of the Grand Junction Star is first a lying scandal-monger, and second, a fawning sycophant and an ass.” See “Anti-Mormon,” *Ogden Standard*, October 1, 1890, 2.

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135“The Same Old Tyrant,” *Ogden Standard*, October 7, 1890, 2.
glide along in the current of our destiny.”  

As these examples show, Cannon’s life was full of inconsistencies; however, he consistently wrote that sending an apostle to Washington displayed the “monstrous manner in which ecclesiasticism has violated” the covenant made by Church leaders to keep church and state separate after Utah achieved statehood. By violating these pledges, Cannon wrote, Smoot and the Smiths “set the Church up above the individual” and “arrogated to themselves the powers that belong to the people.”

Cannon was, however, inconsistent in his treatment of Smoot personally. While editing the *Ogden State Journal*, he lauded Smoot as “a good man, a moral man, an energetic man, an intrepid man.” As editor of the *Tribune*, Cannon accused Smoot of bringing shame to Utah, of being an “ecclesiastical autocrat,” of being unaware of Utah’s needs, and of failing to utter “one sentiment” that “has added one jot or tittle to the splendor of our country or its sa-

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136“Conference Thoughts,” *Ogden Standard*, October 10, 1890, 2.
cred beliefs in human freedom.”

Cannon hinted broadly in October 1904, “The Tribune does not receive revelations, and therefore cannot tell what course will be pursued in this matter, but there need be no surprise in Utah if there shall be a vacancy in the quorum of the Twelve before tomorrow morning.” Two months later, he began to demand that Smoot resign: “If you [Smoot] persist, the public will be justified in assuming that your self-righteousness is hypocrisy and that your so-called devotion to God is a malignant determination to ruin a commonwealth of his children.” In fact, unbeknownst to Cannon, Smoot had offered to resign either his apostleship or his senate seat rather than allow the investigation to continue. President Smith rejected this offer, telling Charles Nibley, who would be called as Presiding Bishop in 1907: “If I have ever had the inspiration of the spirit of the Lord given to me

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141“Will He Resign?,” Salt Lake Tribune, October 9, 1904, 6.
142“In Behalf of Utah,” Salt Lake Tribune, December 27, 1904, 4.
143Carl Badger, Journal, March 22, 1904, in Badger, Liahona and Iron Rod, 213; Reed Smoot, Letter to Joseph F. Smith November 27, 1905,
forcefully and clearly it has been on this one point concerning Reed Smoot, and that is, instead of his being retired, he should be continued in the United States Senate.”

Certainly, letting Smoot resign would have been the path of least resistance; however, despite the risk, in the long run, Smoot was successful, an outcome that was advantageous for the Church’s interests.

When Smoot finally took the witness chair in Washington on January 20, 1904, he received many pointed questions from Senator Dubois and other members of the committee on his personal beliefs about revelation. Senator Lee S. Overman, a Democrat from North Carolina, asked Smoot how he would respond if he “got a revelation from heaven” that he viewed as “superior to the law of the land.” Smoot replied, “If I believed that it was from God I would consider it compulsory on me to obey it; . . . I would move to some other country where I could obey that law.”

Back in Utah, Cannon labeled this answer “nonsensical” and “without previous thought. . . . It sounded like the utterance of a school boy.” Cannon then questioned Smoot’s sincerity, “Why did not he move to some other country years ago? His people were living in defiance of the United States and he knew it.”

Cannon then launched into a fantastic allegation:

If only the Senators and the country could have realized the significance of one of the Apostle Smoot’s utterance, it would have been the text for a thousand sermons and editorials throughout the land. . . . The elite of the church, the hierarchy, have been preparing for some years vast provinces for themselves in Mexico, in Canada and in the isles of the sea. If a crash should come, these people could flee to luxury and almost regal rulership in other lands—leaving the rank and file of the church to sweat and swelter and suffer. But what a short-sighted answer it was after all. If it is good doctrine that Senator Smoot should move from this land when the revelations contravene the laws of this country,

Smoot Papers.
145Smoot Hearings, 3:248–49.
146“They Do Not Leave This Country for That Cause,” Salt Lake Tribune, February 24, 1905, 4.
Cannon’s editorials reached a fever pitch over the early months of 1905, during which time he also wrote Senator Kearns’s farewell speech to the Senate when his term ended in late February 1905. This eloquent address began by mentioning the “long series of pledges exacted from the Mormon leaders” before “Utah was admitted to statehood.” These pledges included promises from “Mormon leaders” that they would both “live within the laws pertaining to plural marriage” and “no longer exercise political sway” among Utahns. After establishing this baseline, Kearns boldly accused Mormon leaders of “willfully and frequently” violating these pledges made to the United States; and for the remainder of the speech, Kearns chronicled in specific detail what he viewed as egregious violations of this statehood “compact.” Examples included how the Church hierarchy in Utah was unscrupulously monopolizing business and economic interests, manipulating elections to set up a “political autocracy,” and creating a self-perpetuating social system in which polygamous Church leaders enjoyed elite status.

The Associated Press reported critically that Kearns’s speech read “like a rehash of recent editorials in the paper which he con-

148Most Church authorities thought Frank Cannon wrote this speech. B. H. Roberts, who formally rebutted the speech in the Tabernacle, stated: “I want to say a word or two in relation to its authorship. It will go without saying that the ex-Senator who stands responsible for it was not its author. Those of us who chance to be acquainted with the dullness of his mind and the density of his ignorance know very well that his mind never conceived and his ignorance never fashioned the skillful, eloquent sentences devoted to so bad a cause. . . . I will not undertake to describe the contempt I feel for a man who occupies the high station of a Senator . . . dressing himself in the borrowed phrases that are made by another mind. Jewels in a swine’s snout is nothing to this. I glory that in my own heart I have this kind of pride, that I would prefer to stand in tatters through which the biting winds of winter might nip me rather than to be dressed in the cast-off clothing of borrowed finery of a prince.” “Speech of Elder B. H. Roberts,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 19, 1905, 6.
149Larsen, The Life of Thomas Kearns, 141–42.
150For the full speech, see ibid., 141–65.
Kearns biographer Kent S. Larsen notes the irony that the Tribune was “exuberant” in its praise of Kearns’s speech “because [Frank Cannon] was defending his own speech!” Carl Badger attended that session and wrote glumly to his wife:

I feel heart sick tonight. . . . Senator Kearns did his worst with a

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152Larsen, The Life of Thomas Kearns, 97.
speech written by Frank J. Cannon, before the Senate today. . . . The speech was well written, as anything which comes from the pen of Cannon is sure to be, but it was delivered very poorly. Kearns repeatedly spoke of Thatcher as the “disposed” instead of “deposed” Apostle, and he spoiled the force and emphasis by his lack of understanding of the construction of the sentences. As far as the speech having any effect on the Senate is concerned, it fell very flat. The Senators paid literally no attention to what Kearns was reading. . . . But the speech was not meant for the narrow audience in the Senate, it was intended for the country. Kearns has, no doubt, made careful preparations to have his speech printed in detail in the papers; and I am told that the Associated Press is sending it out all over the country. I counted only 28 Senators in their seats. . . . There was no applause, and I think that all the Senators felt that his was a cowardly course. When he concluded Senator Smoot arose and asked for recognition, but several other Senators had demanded recognition, and a number of Senators near him told him not to attempt a reply, and, though Senator Heyburn of Idaho said, “Now is your chance to speak,” the Senator sat down. I thought he was glad to escape the ordeal, and I cannot blame him, for it would be a very difficult thing to do anything but denounce Kearns and deny some of the things he said, for there is enough truth in his speech to furnish a pretty firm foundation on which to build a structure of exaggeration and falsehood. Well, Kearns has cost [us] dearly, and President Snow’s political temple comes down on our heads. Well, in some way, this is just what should happen. Poetic justice.\textsuperscript{153}

A few days later, Badger reported: “[Smoot] is wore out and dispirited. His failure to reply to Kearns seems to depress him very much. Well, it was a humiliating sight to me. I felt sorry for him, sorry for his State, sorry for his Church. His was a magnificent opportunity for an able man. The Senator seems to be partly conscious of the situation though he has said nothing.”\textsuperscript{154} Smoot’s inaction after the Kearns’s speech not only caused him remorse but also disappointed Church members in the Beehive State. B. H. Roberts, a prominent Utah Democrat and one of the First Council of the Seventy, publicly criticized Smoot in a speech at the Tabernacle:

I regret extremely that the speech was not answered upon the floor

\textsuperscript{154}Carl Badger, Letter to Rose Badger, March 6, 1905, in ibid., 261.
of the Senate of the United States. The gentleman upon whom that duty properly rested may have had good and sufficient reasons for remaining silent—it is not for me to say—but when I think of the serious charges that are made, and the cunning with which those charges are apparently sustained, I can conceive of no combination of circumstances that could prevent one or justify one in being silent under such circumstances. . . . Ten minutes in denouncing the falsehoods of that speech, devoted to the unmasking of the man who uttered it, would have had a beneficial effect upon the public mind.155

Roberts, a fervent Democrat, found Smoot’s joint positions as apostle-senator “intolerable,” even though he himself, a high-ranking Church official, had run successfully for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1898. (The house refused to seat him because he was a polygamist.) Roberts, an able speaker and an ardent politician, was given to rhetorical outbursts against Smoot. Smoot biographer Milton R. Merrill attributes Roberts’s opposition primarily to partisan expressions but also suggests a strain of jealousy “because [Roberts] resented a political order which retained and pampered an average man like Reed Smoot, and ousted with little ceremony a brilliant orator and leader like B.H. Roberts.”156 The hostility was well-earned, however, since Smoot, a Republican, had opposed Roberts’s congressional candidacy, and stated under questioning in the Smoot hearings: “[Roberts] would not have been elected if I could have helped it.”157 Enjoying these public barbs, Cannon pounced on this schism between two General Authorities:

B.H. Roberts . . . attacked Hon. Reed Smoot with vigor and cleverness. He contrasted what Smoot did not do to Senator Kearns two weeks ago in Washington, with what he, Roberts, would have done to Senator Kearns if he, Roberts, had been there. He admitted in effect that there might be reasons of prudence for Smoot’s cowardice, or that his intellect might be so poor as that he could not answer without longer time for preparation than was at hand. . . . Now, this sort of thing can not go on very long without trouble in the church. Brethren, we deeply deplore the dissensions among you members of the higher priesthood. . . . We propose now . . . Brigham H. Roberts be tried be-

156Merrill, Reed Smoot, 107–10.
157Smoot Hearings, 3:224.
before the bishop’s court—and tried quick and tried secretly for uttering sentiments of disrespect toward one of the high authorities . . . that he be disfellowshipped; and . . . excommunicated . . . without opportunity for introduction of defense; and that he receive his dismissal from the church by return mail . . . But possibly that is not what is going to happen. It has just been whispered to us that they are getting ready to fire Smoot from the apostolic quorum. . . . They really want to dismiss him. They have long had a quiet little wrath for him, and it has been adroitly allowed to escape the public attention. . . . even if they do charge you with un-Christian-like conduct and apostasy, and chop off your ecclesiastical head! Try to grin and bear it like a man. Other men just as good as you get this kind of a deal from the church every once in a while. And in their cases, the execution is permanent.158

The autobiographical allusions show that Cannon’s excommunication stung; and Cannon saved his most vitriolic outbursts for President Smith. These attacks also represented a flip-flop for Cannon, who in 1902 had ghost-written a “comforting and edifying” eulogy about President Smith’s accession to prophet in the Millennial Star for his brother Hugh J. Cannon, who was then the missionary-editor of the paper.159 The unsigned Star editorial warmly contrasted the historical persecutions of the past with the Joseph F. Smith rise to the presidency:

If only the dead and gone persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his sainted brother Hyrum could be back upon the earth now for a little time, how puny would seem all their purposes of hate and how utterly insufficient would seem all the murder in which they imbrued their hands or to which they gave their assent. Joseph Fielding Smith, nephew of Joseph and son of Hyrum, is President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and Joseph Fielding Smith’s son, Hyrum Mack Smith, is an Apostle of the Lord. And the Church over which the Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith now presides is established in such

159 Malmquist, The First 100 Years, 243. Malmquist explained that even though Frank was no longer “in the church fold” he promptly wrote devotional articles for his brother Hugh, then serving a mission in England and editing the Millennial Star. After reading some of his articles, Hugh asked Frank, “How can you, having lost the faith, write such convincing and moving articles in defense of the faith?” Frank reply was, “I wrote them for you, not me.”
might of numbers, wealth and power, as to be an infinite mockery to
the deeds, the threats, and hopes of the assassins, who thought that, in
the massacre of Joseph and Hyrum and the driving of the Saints across
the frozen Mississippi, they had destroyed the work and had annihi-
lated the people. What would Lilburn W. Boggs, once Governor of
Missouri, say if he were back on earth in the hour and could know that
Joseph [F.] Smith, son and nephew of the murdered Prophets, would
preside over a people so mighty as are the Latter-day Saints? What
would Thomas Ford, once Governor of Illinois, say if he could be here
to witness the ordination of a son and grandson of the martyred
Hyrum to Presidency and Apostleship in the Church, whose leaders
Ford betrayed to cruel death? What would the Laws and the Fosters,
the Higbees, and the other traitors of that awful time at Nauvoo say if
they could for one hour, visit the earth and see that the seed of the
Prophets is the fruitage of a new and a mightier power and that the
Church, grown to stupendous proportions, has encircled the world
with its message of divine salvation. . . . How little seem the deeds of
men compared with the events which are strongly exemplified in the
life of the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, Joseph [F.] Smith! . . . What a
comfort it is to the Saints, and what a comfort it must be to the Prophet
and Patriarch beyond the vail to see in the calling of Joseph [F.] Smith
to the Presidency of the Church.160

Now, just three years later, Cannon took a diametrically op-
posed position and lampooned President Smith’s character in the
Tribune: “He has no particularly refined intellectual endowment. He
has not been student of men and events. . . . Senators played with
him like wildcats playing with a mouse—letting him go once in a
while for the purpose of catching him again, and finally allowing
him to dart into his hole with the assurance that at a later time they

160“It Is God’s Work,” Millennial Star 64, no. 1 (January 9, 1902):
25–26. At a public meeting in the Tabernacle, Smoot averred that Cannon
wrote this article. See “Reed Smoot Lands on Cannon,” Ogden Standard,
October 31, 1906, 5; What may have inspired Frank to write this piece was the
“generosity of emotion” shown by Joseph F. Smith to Frank during his fa-
ther’s funeral a few months earlier. Frank comments that Smith “spoke of
my father, both privately and in public, in a way that won me to him.” Can-
non and O’Higgins, Under the Prophet in Utah, 247–48. Currently, Joseph
Fielding Smith is usually referred to as Joseph F. Smith to differentiate him
from his own son, Joseph Fielding Smith, also ordained an apostle (in 1910
by Joseph F.) and who also served as Church president (1970–72).
Cannon continued to heap scorn on Smith’s “testimony in Washington,” stating he was similar to a “mountebank fortune teller—so far as dignity or religious character is concerned.” He concluded that Smith’s “shocking . . . testimony” does not “itself demonstrate that the religion is false, but that the leader is false.” Cannon sincerely believed that President Smith and other officials were leading the Church astray and took it upon himself “to preserve the people and the State from destruction while making the most splendid fight of history against the cruel hierarchs who rule by pretended right divine!” His self-appointed mission was to topple the Church hierarchical structure, though he recognized in a private letter to David Keith, part-owner of the Tribune and long-term business partner to Kearns, that this “would be a dreadful” and “cruel thing to willfully scatter 350,000 people from their fixed fraternities with each other, and to leave them with nothing but doubt and hatred of false leadership instead.”

Cannon arrogated to himself more influence than actually ex-
isted. In hindsight, he had deluded himself into believing that he could successfully “topple” the Church with his poison pen editorials. Almost certainly, he believed that, if his father had not died in April 1901 but had become Church president when Lorenzo Snow died six months later, George Q. would not have allowed Apostle Reed Smoot to be elected to the U.S. Senate. In pursuing a campaign against this ecclesiastical power grab in Washington, Frank most likely thought he was vicariously completing some of his father’s unfinished business.

Probably the most controversial testimony recorded at the hearings came from Joseph F. Smith. The Senate committee was acutely interested in the Mormon concept of revelation and posed a plethora of questions to Smith on the topic. In response, Smith lucidly delineated the different layers of revelatory authority within the Church and the implications for lay members. Chairman Burrows asked Smith point-blank: “You have revelations, have you not?” Smith’s reply was unexpected: “I have never pretended to nor do I profess to have received revelations. I never said I had a revelation except so far as God has shown to me that so-called Mormonism is God’s divine truth; that is all.” A surprised Burrows responded, “You say that was shown to you by God?” To which Smith quickly replied, “By inspiration.” Smith’s words stunned some Church members in Utah, leaving them confused and disheartened. Inexplicably, when Smith returned to Utah, he did not publicly clarify this testimony until a year had passed. Then, he addressed the topic in tandem with Charles Penrose at the Salt Lake Stake conference held at the Tabernacle.

Penrose spoke first, explaining that “what the Mormons mean by the word “revelation” is different than what [that] “word conveys in the Old Testament,” where “Moses had revelations, saw God face to face and spoke to him mouth to mouth. . . . Mormons do not believe in such revelations at the present day,” but Mormons believe revelation is “the spirit of God working within you.” Penrose then declared, “As the prophets of the olden time had one kind of revelation from God, so do the prophets of today have another kind.” This curious delineation of prophetic revelation ignored Joseph Smith’s First Vision, which had been canonized as scripture in 1880. Kathleen Flake, in her

and see us. There are big things doing here.”

165 Smoot Hearings, 1:98–99.
landmark book on the Smoot hearings, argues that the First Vision had not been a “matter of common knowledge” in the Church and, in fact, had been largely ignored. However, spurred by the Smoot hearings, Joseph F. Smith refocused Mormonism’s distinctiveness away from polygamy and theocracy and back on landmark historical events, resulting in the acquisition and celebration of important Mormon sites in the East. As a result, Flake concludes, the First Vision became a foundational historical marker in Latter-day Saint identity and “self-representation.”

Penrose continued, “When President Joseph F. Smith said that he did not have revelations, it was in reply to a question from men who would not understand the meaning of the word revelation. They were trying to lead him into a trap. They meant the revelations such as Moses had.” While most Latter-day Saints were all too willing to ascribe “persecution” motives to Burrow’s committee, Penrose’s unsatisfactory remarks obscured more than they illuminated. However, Smith, after his year of silence, embellished Penrose’s theme:

Now with reference to the principle and doctrine of revelation, . . . For me to say—which was the very end that my critics and my inquisitors were endeavoring to get me to say, in order that I might be led into that trap which they had made for me—to say that God had given me a revelation upon some new doctrine, or theory, or principle, or precept, or anything to be written, to be observed or handed down as a guide to the Church, would have been untrue. I could not have said that, for He has not done this. But has God revealed to me His mind and His will? Has He made manifest to me a knowledge of His truth by and through the spirit of revelation? Did you ever hear of my denying that? No; no man has ever heard me deny that.

Smith then elliptically but emphatically referred to Frank Cannon:

From time to time there will be anti-Christ rise up amongst us; there will be apostates rise up in our midst, men that have vitiated their lives, men that have corrupted themselves, and so far departed from the light and from the truth that they can no longer bear the light nor the righteousness of God and of His truth; and when it comes to a cer-

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tain point they will raise their hydra heads, and will have to be disfellowshipped. You need not be surprised at it; it has always been so, and it will be so again, from time to time. It will be repeated, but God will deal with them, and not us. We will not fellowship the ungodly. We will not fellowship the anti-Christ. . . . Do we interfere with the liberty of their speech? Not in the least. We give them more liberty by withdrawing from them the hand of fellowship; for while a man is connected with a society, while he holds a standing and association with them he is under more or less restraint; but to cut him loose and let him drift, let him go, gives him the utmost liberty of speech and conduct.\footnote{168}

Cannon interpreted Smith’s address as an about-face on his Smoot testimony, termed him, “God’s Appointed Liar,” and fulminated:

President Joseph F. Smith has made an admission that he falsified in his testimony at Washington, and that he did it to present the sacred secret truth from the ungodly, and to protect God’s servants from the trap set for their feet by the wicked. This makes an absolutely square issue with the country. If Mr. Smith is right, then all the rest of the country is wrong. . . . Gentiles and Mormons, you are front to front with the proposition. Either you must accept Joseph F. Smith as the prophet of God, ordained to speak falsehoods and truth at his pleasure, ratified by God as a liar or a truthteller to meet the prophet’s needs; or, you must consider him a false, deceiving, lying, hypocritical old man, who clings to his power with selfish hands, and who fain would live out the balance of his life with his five wives and his progeny, with his power and his estates, with his adulating multitudes of blind people around him, misusing the name of God, which he says, is his inspiration, and degrading the children of God, for whose sake he claims to be inspired. . . . Mr. Joseph F. Smith is either the commander of a royal and inspired kingdom of this Republic, or he is a traitor, root and [branch]. You cannot gloss it over with words, even if you would; his own testimony stands either to condemn him before God and men, or to exalt him before God and

\footnote{168} “Conference of Salt Lake Stake,” \textit{Deseret Evening News}, March 20, 1905, 3. Smoot also used ad hominem tactics to explain “Frankie Cannon’s” opposition to Joseph F. Smith: “If [Frank Cannon] if he were an honest, clean man, he would not be writing the slush that appears each day in the Kearns organ. . . . [I]f Senator Cannon were honest and sincere he would not be where he is now. “Reed Smoot Lands on Cannon,” \textit{Ogden Standard}, October 31, 1906, 5.
men. You must be with his God and with Joseph F. Smith, or you must be with your God and against Joseph F. Smith.169

Smith’s denunciation of “anti-Christ”s inside the Church was such a clear reference to Frank Cannon that it renewed the sting of humiliation suffered when Smith had publicly scorned him at the Smoot hearings a year earlier. This new public censure provided Cannon with additional impetus to fight back:

Mr. Smith, you do well to talk of anti-Christ! You who have spent your life, according to your own testimony in misusing the name of the Almighty Father, and testifying to falsehoods with the name of Christ for a cover... Of like character is his degrading suspicion that he was

being led into a trap. Those who were examining him in Washington are high-minded gentleman; nothing further from their thoughts was possible than leading him or any one else into a trap. Their special characterizations are candor and good faith. It is an absurd libel to make the charge that they were leading President Smith into a trap, or had any such thought. The idea is the idea of the crafty fox, not of the civilized man. In giving voice to it, President Smith sinks himself to the level of a hunted animal.170

These quotations from Frank Cannon’s vituperative editorials are a representative sampling of his almost-daily attacks in early 1905. Smith responded in kind but without publicly mentioning Cannon by name. However, he was less reticent in correspondence with close friends and family.171 In a handwritten missive to his close friend and colleague, Charles W. Nibley, Smith vented:

The poor devil continues more and more to spit out his poisonous wrath against his only friends on earth. If he has any friends in hades, it is because his father is (not) [sic] there. I fear that even in heaven he has but one and he seems powerless to help him in this supreme hour of need. His sad condition of mind and spirit is most pitiful. The gentiles despise [sic] him, as a traitor, a backslider and a vengeful cur. Those who would befriend him for his father’s sake, if they could, he would slaughter if he could. It is out of their power to snatch him from the burning, and, thank God, his villainous and frantic efforts to destroy them is impotent. He has abandoned all hope and chances for redemption, and is bent only on trying, Sampson like, to pull down the pillars of the temple to engulf as many as he can in his own ruin. The Kingdom is the Lords, and He will take care of it.172

In letters of intemperate candor to Heber J. Grant, Smith referred to Cannon as a “Son of Perdition,” except that “the very devil himself must be ashamed of [Frank Cannon]. No demon could have been more vengeful or abandoned to deliberate and determined

170* * * 170 “Just a Few Remarks: TO MR. JOSEPH F. SMITH,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 21, 1905, 4.
171* * * 171 Smith was more sensitive to Frank Cannon’s barbs than was his cousin Apostle John Henry Smith. Several years earlier, John Henry had commented, “I care no more about Frank’s attack than for the barking of a dog or ‘fice.” Hatch, Danish Apostle, 51.
172* * * 172 Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Charles W. Penrose, March 30, 1905, LDS Church History Library.
wickedness. . . . He has sunk too low for any possible chance of improvement. Still [his wife] clings to him, and it is just possible, that one who has so long been besmirched by association with him, has lost all conception of the depths to which he has fallen, and to which he has dragged her down.” President Smith’s condemnation of Frank’s wife seems unnecessarily harsh. Frank had married Martha (“Mattie”) Anderson Brown in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. Mattie not only loyally maintained Frank’s home in Ogden, despite Frank’s periodic absences, and raised their four surviving children (their first child died in infancy), but remained active in the Church. Their only son served a mission. After Mattie’s death in 1908, Frank married her younger sister, May. Although the marriage no doubt had troubled moments, it was an enduring union.

In the same letter in which Joseph F. Smith denounced Mattie Cannon for her marital loyalty, he warned Grant that Frank was traveling alone (this detail was incorrect) to Europe to visit his missionary son, Frank Quayle (“Que”) Cannon. Smith’s information was based on rumors, and he concluded “I hope this is not true.” In fact, Que, Frank and Mattie’s only son, was serving a mission in Germany while Frank edited the Tribune. Approximately one month after Frank’s excommunication, he and Mattie traveled to Liverpool, England and spent five days with Que, who took a brief hiatus from his missionary labors.

To his own missionary sons over the next few months, Joseph F. Smith continued to express anger and disgust: Cannon was a “d–d lying scoundrel,” and a “Devil [who] is alarmed and aroused . . . [and] trying to make ‘Rome Howl’ so to speak against the truth.” Smith also despised the Tribune, calling it a “malignant sheet” that publishes “filth and impotent slush” and “has been debased below all things.

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173Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Heber J. Grant, April 26, 1905, LDS Church History Library.
175Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Heber J. Grant, April 26, 1905, LDS Church History Library.
An amiable Frank Jenne Cannon appears in approximately 1902 in a four-generation Cannon photograph that included his mother, Sarah Jenne Cannon (left), his daughter Dorothy Brown Cannon Hyde, and his granddaughter Dorothy Louise (“Dora Lu”) Hyde. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

previously known in newspaperdum.”178

Cannon’s editorial cacophonies had left the Church with virtually no option but to excommunicate him.179 Beginning on February 19, 1905, Cannon’s home bishop in Ogden began to investigate the authorship of two Tribune editorials viciously critical of President

178 Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Grant, April 26, 1905, and to Chase Smith, July 23, 1905.

179 Cannon retained his residence in Ogden while he temporarily lived in Salt Lake while editing the Tribune. These charges were based on two editorials he wrote in early 1905: “F. J. Cannon Finally Excommunicated,” Salt Lake Herald, March 15, 1905, 1; “Try to Stifle Free Speech,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 7, 1905, 4. For the two editorials, see “An Analysis of the Church,” Salt Lake Tribune, January 22, 1905, 6; “An Address: To the Earthly King of the Kingdom of God,” Salt Lake Tribune, February 1, 1905, 4.
Smith. Cannon’s ward teachers came directly to his home and asked him point blank if he thought “Joseph F. Smith is a prophet of God,” to which he replied, “I do not think that Joseph F. Smith is a prophet of God; I think that his idol is mammon.” Five days later, Cannon was summoned to appear before a bishop’s court; within a week, it rendered the decision that Frank Cannon be disfellowshipped “for unchristianlike conduct and apostasy” and referred his case to the stake high council. Cannon declined to attend the court, instead sending a “special messenger” to represent him. To no one’s surprise, the high council excommunicated Cannon on charges of “unchristianlike conduct and apostasy” on March 14, 1905. Adding insult to injury, Cannon’s detractors began pressuring the executors of George Q. Cannon’s estate to disinherit Frank “in accordance with a clause in the will making that possible in case of apostasy.” No source has been located confirming whether Cannon was disinherited; however, given his continued opposition to Church authorities, it seems probable that he did not receive any of his father’s estate.

News of Cannon’s excommunication quickly spread to Washington. Although closing arguments in the Smoot case were already completed, Burrows used the disciplinary action to reopen the hearings in early February of 1906. Cannon obviously was stung by being severed from the church and blamed the disciplinary action on

180 These two Tribune editorials are “An Analysis of the Church,” January 22, 1905, 6, and “An Address: To the Earthly King of the Kingdom of God,” February 1, 1905, 4.
184 “Excommunicated,” Deseret Evening News, March 15, 1905, 1; “Frank Cannon Cut Off,” Ogden Standard, March 15, 1905, 5. Under contemporary disciplinary procedures, the bishop’s court would probably have not had jurisdiction, since Cannon held the Melchizedek Priesthood; the high council and stake presidency would have heard the evidence. The decision to excommunicate would have been made by the stake president and confirmed by the high council.
the intervention of Church leaders in Salt Lake City. He argued that they were impeding his crusade to rescue the church from its self-inflicted “disintegration” under the “false [and] . . . unholy leadership.” Cannon lamented that being excommunicated would ostracize him from family and friends but concluded that the “holy” and “sacred” cause of liberty and Mormon enfranchisement was “worth it all.”

Smith, in contrast, had no doubts that the Church had acted correctly in excommunicating Cannon. Writing to a mission president in Japan, Smith closed the ecclesiastical loop on his Smoot hearings testimony by declaring, “Now the cord is cut that bound him as with a spider’s web to us, and it remains to be seen what further use the devil can make of him. I pity him and his poor mother has my sympathy for her trial compared to which death would be a welcome boon. How much the family name will suffer in consequence of his infamous course?”

If Church leaders thought revoking Frank’s membership would mute his voice, they were sorely disappointed. Within days, Cannon

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189 “A Brief Word,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1905, 4. In 1896 after Frank bolted the St. Louis GOP convention, he used similar invective to slander President McKinley: “Cannon had barely set foot in the State when he began the dissemination of the basest falsehoods against the private and public character of William McKinley. Again and again he declared . . . [that McKinley was] guilty of bribery; . . . He also denounced Major McKinley as a betrayer of the interests of the American people. He told how McKinley was the slave of corrupt monopolist. . . . was hand-in-glove with tyrants and schemers who were plotting to rob the American people of their liberties. Cannon has the ‘gift of gab’ in extended form. He is a prolix mouther. Nothing that his oily tongue could utter in the way of slandering, vilifying, abusing, misrepresenting William McKinley was left unuttered.” “Triumvirate Going to Pieces,” *Truth*, April 29, 1905.
190 Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Horace S. Ensign, March 19, 1905, LDS Church History Library. Several Church members privately regretted Frank’s Mormon heritage in the context of his *Tribune* editorials. Carl Badger lamented to his wife on April 6, 1905: “Frank J. Cannon has been saying some awful things. . . . Frank has reached the depths of villainy. . . .
was using his excommunication to capture national headlines intended, Carl Badger suggests, to stir up “a great deal of sentiment and indignation against” Mormonism. Publishing an article in the influential New York Herald, Cannon typecast himself as a victim of religious autocracy: “Joseph F. Smith, you have called me anti-Christ and apostate. I call you: First, traitor to your country and blasphemer of the name of God; and at the bar of human justice, you must answer the first charge, and at the bar of eternal justice, you will answer the second.” Cannon also began using Orwellian tactics reeking of desperation, including peddling rumors that Mormons were planning his assassination, and claiming he had been buttonholed on the street by an apostle who offered hush money to get Cannon to stop his campaign against the Church.

Despite these extreme measures, Cannon continued to maintain influence on the national Smoot debate all the way up to the non-binding committee vote on Smoot held in early June 1906. With public sentiment aligned against Mormonism, the bipartisan senators on Burrows’s committee voted 7–5 to unseat Smoot. A pyrrhic victory at best, this vote must be considered the high watermark of Cannon’s influence while editing the Tribune. But Cannon’s influ-

Certainly his parentage and birth should have saved him from that.” Badger, Liahona and Iron Rod, 267. George Albert Smith agreed: “Reproached by those of his own blood, despised by those who pay him for his services, pitied by those who tried to make him useful and who did all they could to reform him when he had disgraced himself and the name he bore, he rushes along to sure destruction, not heeding the pleading of his own family and loved ones.” George Albert Smith, Letter to Carl Badger, March 31, 1905, in ibid., 265.

191 Carl Badger, Letter to Rose Badger, April 6, 1905, in Badger, Liahona and Iron Rod, 267.
192 “Cannon Calls Smith Traitor,” Salt Lake Herald, April 7, 1905, 9.
194 “Reed Smoot Lands on Cannon,” Ogden Standard, October 31, 1906, 5. Smoot characterized Frank’s allegation of bribery as “so absurd that it is hardly worthy of notice. . . . I wish to say here I believe it to be a deliberate lie. I am willing to place my check for $500 in the hands of any honest man, provided Frank Cannon will do the same, and I will forfeit the money to any charity in the state if he can prove it is true.”
ence ultimately fell short almost a year later when the full Senate defied public opinion and voted to let Smoot remain in the Senate, thus, ending the federal government’s four-year fight against Smoot and the Mormon Church. Moreover, this vote effectively killed Cannon’s tumultuous tenure as editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*.195 A few months after Smoot’s vindication, Cannon parted ways with Kearns and the *Tribune* and left Utah many months before the expiration of his contract. Presumably his services had run their course.196

Some evidence exists from Church-friendly sources suggesting that Cannon had been miserable during the years he opposed Smoot and the Church and had used prostitutes, alcohol, and other stimulants to ease the pain.197 Although these views of Frank’s sufferings must be viewed as potentially biased, the reports of his behavior seem to be factual. Such vices were culturally unacceptable in Utah, providing Church leaders and Smoot defenders with easy ad hominem fodder that damaged Frank’s credibility locally. Unhappy or not, Frank Cannon’s demise at the *Tribune* did not end his cam-

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195 Within three months of Smoot’s vindication, Cannon parted ways with the *Tribune*. “Cannon Quits the Tribune,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 30, 1907, 2.


197 During an interview at the *Tribune* offices, Frank purportedly told Levi Edgar Young that he “did not believe the future hell could be any worse” than his current situation. Thomas A. Clawson, Diary Excerpts, October 29, 1905, *New Mormon Studies*, CD-ROM (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 2009). George Albert Smith, Letter to Carl Badger, March 31, 1905, in Badger, *Liahona and Iron Rod*, 265, wrote: “I am informed that [Frank] is using the strongest of stimulants to nerve him for the work he has sold himself to do. Poor Frank; what a splendid opportunity he had to make a record in the world for ability and for the blessing of the people amongst whom he was reared. He chose to be unclean and the result is evident in his ruined life.” President Joseph F. Smith, writing to Heber J. Grant in his angry letter on April 26, 1905, recounted rumors: “We learn that for two days the dirty scoundrel who had been furnishing the poisonous pabulum for its columns was so drunk and demoralized that he could not do duty, and where he was during those two days, this deponent saith not, but it is rumored about that a bill of some magnitude from the... ‘red light’ district was presented to the ‘Trib.’ Manager against him for settlement.”
paign against the Mormon Church; to the contrary, his departure served as a veritable springboard into a lucrative, long-term career on the national stage opposing the “high Mormon ecclesiasts.”

I have heard nearly all of the great orators and United States Senators who have been on the Chautauqua and lyceum platforms . . ., and I want to say that former United States Senator Frank J. Cannon is, to my mind, the greatest of them all . . . Senator Cannon is a magnificent character—standing for all that is clean and pure and decent in politics and government, and his story running in Everybody’s Magazine is one of the greatest narratives ever written. He has a magnificent presence, a fine delivery, and inspires, enthuses, satisfies and enlightens his audience as very few men in this country are capable of doing. —Judge Ben Lindsey

Frank J. Cannon has betrayed every trust that was ever reposed in him.

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1Redpath Chautauqua brochure on Frank J. Cannon, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City (hereafter Redpath Chautauqua Collection).
The Redpath Chautauqua Bureau used this three-quarters portrait of Frank J. Cannon as the publicity photograph for Cannon’s lectures around the country from 1911 to 1918. Prominent Denver photographer Charles A. Nast took this image of Cannon and another, more familiar image that appeared in both the magazine and book versions of Cannon’s “Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft.” Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
It is difficult to know how to classify…Frank Cannon, Utah’s first senator. Was he politician, reformer, agitator, or just a man out to earn a good living? …His speech, lashing out at polygamy, which he made sound like a threat to every American hearthside, was sensational. Whether the shocked crowds who flocked to the tents to hear him drank it in for that reason or because of his impassioned delivery, it is hard to know now.—Harry P. Harrison

In the spring of 1910, Harvey J. O’Higgins, a prominent New York muckraker, Broadway playwright, detective story writer, novelist, and, later, chief anti-German propagandist for the U.S. government during the latter stages of World War I, met Frank J. Cannon, second son of LDS Church leader, George Q. Cannon, one of Utah’s first U.S. Senators, and former financial and political

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3Harry P. Harrison and Karl Detzer, Culture under Canvas: The Story of Tent Chautauqua (New York: Hastings House, 1958), 132. Harry P. Harrison was the general manager of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau’s Chicago office and one of the most powerful men in the circuit Chautauqua world of the second decade of the twentieth century. He was also Frank J. Cannon’s principal employer for much of the 1910s.

agent for the Church’s First Presidency. At that point, Frank was a reviled excommunicant from the Church. O’Higgins was walking down a street in Denver with Judge Ben B. Lindsey, with whom he were later made into films twice, first as silent movies in 1917, then as early “talkies” by Paramount, in 1929. During the last year and a half of World War I, O’Higgins was the associate chairman of the U.S. Government’s Committee on Public Information and the author of the “daily German lie.” Michael S. Sweeney, “Harvey J. O’Higgins and the ‘Daily German Lie,’” American Journalism 23 (Summer 2006): 9–28; Harvey J. O’Higgins, The German Whisper (Washington, D.C.: Committee on Public Information, 1918).

There is no book-length biography of Frank J. Cannon and little has been written on his post-Utah life. He was the second son and second child of Apostle George Q. Cannon and the first child of Sarah Jenne Cannon, George Q. Cannon’s second wife. Frank showed extraordinary promise from a very early age and sometimes served as the financial and political agent of the LDS Church’s First Presidency in Washington, D.C., and New York in the 1890s. He was elected as Utah’s territorial delegate to Congress in 1894 and as one of Utah’s first U.S. Senators in 1896. He also had serious challenges with alcohol and marital fidelity, making some Church leaders uncomfortable with him as a high-profile representative of the Church and of Utah. Always a political maverick, he changed parties while in the Senate, from the Republican Party to the Silver Republican Party. Subsequently, he became a Democrat, then an early member of Salt Lake City’s American Party. After his father’s death in 1901, he fell from the favor of the Church’s highest-ranking officials and had a long-term bitter and acrimonious feud with Joseph F. Smith both before and after Cannon’s excommunication from the Church in March 1905. Cannon edited the Salt Lake Tribune from late 1904 until sometime in late 1907 or early 1908, writing critical, provocative editorials against the Church and its president. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “Wives and Other Women: Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Lives of John Q. Cannon, Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 43 (Winter 2010): 71–130; Michael Harold Paulos, “Opposing the ‘High Ecclesiasts at Washington’: Frank J. Cannon’s Editorial Fusillades during the Reed Smoot Hearings, 1903–07,” Journal of Mormon History 37 (Fall 2011), preceding this article. Short biographical studies of Frank Cannon include Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Frank J. Cannon: Declension in the Mormon Kingdom,” in Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Presss, 1994): 241–61; and Scott G. Kenney, “Frank J. Cannon, Mormon Muckraker,” paper given at Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt
had just collaborated on Lindsey’s autobiography, which attacked corruption in Colorado and Denver politics. Lindsey, who knew Cannon well, introduced the two men. O’Higgins was taken by Cannon’s remarkably dead face. . . . The man, as you approached him, was rather short and quite portly, erect and dignified, with a head of white hair, like Mark Twain’s, under a soft felt Western hat. He was dressed with extreme nicety according to the conventions of public men in the West. His face was absolutely colorless, absolutely composed, and his eyes as he spoke to us seemed to regard us from a great distance of thought, even while his voice was friendly and interested. I should have called it a voice and manner of a man who knew privately that he was dying of an incurable disease.

O’Higgins was intrigued and soon began collaborating with Frank on what Harvey later called Frank’s “almost unique human

Lake City, Utah, August 7, 1997.


7Harvey J. O’Higgins, “Address to the Drama Society of New York on ‘Polygamy’ (Inside Story of the Play),” [1915], L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections). O’Higgins told the Drama Society that he did not know who Frank J. Cannon was at the time he met him. He assumed that, unlike him, everyone listening to his address in 1915 knew who Frank was because of Frank’s national activities during the prior few years. As noted below, O’Higgins’s play Polygamy had a run on Broadway for a time in 1914–15 to favorable reviews. O’Higgins suggested in his address that the Mormon Church and its president, Joseph F. Smith, were the cause of Cannon’s deathly pallor, having ruined him financially, excommunicated him, ostracized him, slandered him, and pushed him out of Utah politics. Frank had left Utah for Colorado to work for the Denver Times, one of two newspapers there owned by Senator Thomas Patterson.
Its publication just months later launched Frank J. Cannon onto a high-profile platform from which he led a national campaign against Mormonism lasting most of the 1910s. Over the next seven years, Cannon became the best known anti-Mormon agitator in the United States, writing important and widely read articles and books, giving hundreds of Chautauqua and Lyceum lectures and National Reform Association presentations to more than a million listeners all over the country, and heading efforts to limit Mormons’ civil rights and to enact a constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy and polygamous cohabitation. Frank brilliantly tailored his anti-Mormon message to appeal to much of Progressive America.

At the time of his meeting with O’Higgins, Cannon was an editor for Senator Thomas Patterson’s *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver. Two years earlier, he had moved from Ogden, Utah, after the death of his first wife, Martha (“Mattie”) Brown Cannon, and after his unsuccessful attempt to keep Reed Smoot from retaining his seat in the U.S. Senate. His departure left to others the editorial campaign against Joseph F. Smith and the LDS Church that he had waged with energy and virulence at the *Salt Lake Tribune* for four years.

Cannon related his life story to O’Higgins, including his roles in sensitive political negotiations on behalf of the Church and in obtaining statehood for Utah, and his election to the U.S. Senate. He also described his difficulties with the Church after the death of his father, George Q. Cannon, in 1901. He mostly blamed Church President Joseph F. Smith for the LDS Church’s broken promises to the federal government and inappropriate actions both before and after George Q.’s death.

O’Higgins was fascinated by the story and was probably looking for his next investigative work. He quickly “persuaded” John O’Hara


12The *New York Times Review of Books* obtained an advance copy of the articles and described some of Cannon’s accusations against Joseph F. Smith and the LDS Church, leveled for years to come: that President Smith “is flagrantly violating every pledge given at the time of the admission of Utah to statehood,” that “polygamy is still rampant,” and that “Mormon leaders have capitalized the religious faith of their followers, and are using the superhuman power of a religious tyranny to increase the dividends of a national plunder.” “And Now It Is the Mormons,” *New York Times Review of Books*, November 19, 1910, 1. Two articles (of three) had already appeared in *Pearson’s Magazine* by this time, and the LDS Church knew that articles by Cannon and O’Higgins and by others for different magazines were imminent because authors had been in Salt Lake City interviewing Church members and leaders as background for their articles. Various Church representatives, including Ben E. Rich, president of the Church’s Eastern States Mission, and the First Presidency of the Church, sought to publish rejoinders to the negative articles, but none of the periodicals accepted the proffered responses. Reed Smoot, Diary, October 18, 1910, Perry Special Collections; John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 441, October 18, 1910; Kenneth L. Cannon II, “The ‘Magazine Crusade’ against the LDS Church, 1910–1911,” paper given at the Mormon History Association Conference, St. George, Utah, May 2011; Ben E. Rich, *Are the Mormons Loyal to the Government? A Rejected Manuscript, An Answer to a Charge that Appeared in Pearson’s Magazine* (New York: Eastern States Mission, 1910), 3.
The cover of Everybody’s for April 1911 featured an enthroned Mormon prophet, sprawled at his ease on an elaborate wooden throne. His feet rest on an ottoman held on the shoulders of carved women, no doubt depicting the down-trodden Mormon polygamous wives. The banner above his head features an all-seeing eye, one of Deseret’s enduring icons. In an embarrassing mistake, the seated “prophet” is clearly not Joseph F. Smith, but is likely his cousin, Joseph Smith III, at the time president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
Political Priestcraft.” The magazine version was divided into the same chapters as the later book version, though the articles sometimes ended abruptly, mid-chapter. The articles also contained numerous subtitles and were richly illustrated with photographs and drawings. Occasionally, a note was included in the magazine articles that a portion of the text from the manuscript was being left out because of space limitations but that “the story will be printed in full in book form.”

The always-enterprising O’Higgins went on to publish other Mormon-themed works.

“Under the Prophet in Utah” is told as the first-person account of events Frank J. Cannon had lived through for the prior twenty-two years. The editor’s introductory note focused on Cannon’s status as a Mormon insider and helps explain why the articles were so immedi-


16After *Under the Prophet* appeared in book form in December 1911, a reviewer for the *New York Times Review of Books* assumed that “Mr. Cannon supplied the facts and Mr. O’Higgins wrote them down—a combination not
ately popular. John O’Hara Cosgrave, editor of Everybody’s, commented: “The outside world has waited many years to know the truth about the Mormons. Here it is . . . told with sympathy, with affection, by a man who steadfastly defended and fought for the Mormon people when their present leaders were keeping themselves inconspicuous. . . . This is a story told from the ‘inside.’ For the first time in the history of the Church, there has arrived a man who has the knowledge and the inclination to explain it.” Frank’s insider status was reiterated throughout the 1910s by people who relied on his allegations in justifying activities such as seeking to restrict the civil and political rights of Mormons and to enact a Constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy and the cohabitation of polygamous spouses.

“Under the Prophet in Utah” is a subversive work, particularly so in its magazine format. Although it is an important primary document and many of the events, meetings, and secret negotiations Frank writes about can be corroborated by other contemporary documents and descriptions—or perhaps more important, are not contradicted by contemporary accounts—much is self-serving in Cannon’s description of his life and experiences in “Under the Prophet.” Cannon is particularly manipulative and somewhat disingenuous about his father’s role in certain matters, and in his personal appraisals of Joseph F. Smith, Reed Smoot, and other Church leaders whom Frank had considered for years to be his mortal enemies and about whom he was anything but objective. His description of their activities is some-

only common among autobiographers, but practically universal.” “Utah in Her Chains: The Revolting Bondage in Which She Is Held under the Feet of the Mormon Prophet, Joseph F. Smith,” New York Times Review of Books, December 17, 1911, 1. It is not clear that this assumption was valid; Cannon was no mean writer in his own right and the book’s voice sounds like his. Either Frank was heavily involved or O’Higgins was sufficiently talented to mimic Cannon’s style closely.

17Cannon’s insider status stemmed from being the talented second-oldest son of George Q. Cannon, perhaps the most powerful Mormon leader in the late nineteenth century after Brigham Young’s death, and from his own service as a political and financial agent for the Church’s First Presidency in the 1890s and as a territorial delegate and U.S. Senator from Utah, also in the 1890s.

times untrustworthy. For example, Frank accused Joseph F. Smith of
reviving polygamy and argues that his father tried to stop it. In fact,
most evidence indicates that George Q. Cannon originated the plan
of permitting new polygamous marriages, mostly in Mexico but also
elsewhere outside the United States such as on ships. Although a few
marriages were probably authorized before Utah became a state, the
numbers of plural marriages increased significantly after 1896, when
Utah attained statehood.

The photographs illustrating the magazine articles reinforce
“Under the Prophet’s” manipulative message. A two-page montage of
images of Mormon Church leaders in the April 1911 issue presents a
virtual rogues’ gallery. In addition to the very-much-alive Joseph F.
Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, Hyrum Mack Smith, and Anthon H.
Lund, are the already-dead Sidney Rigdon, John Taylor, Orson Pratt,
Lorenzo Snow, and in a remarkable gaffe, Joseph Smith III, president
of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which
was entirely unaffiliated with the LDS Church. Joseph III, writing to
Everybody’s from Independence, Missouri, referred to his inclusion
among the “Mormon hierarchy” as an “inexcusable blunder, or a wil-
ful and malicious mistake” and demanded a correction and an apol-

20D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Mar-
rriages, 1890–1904,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 18 (Spring
Passage (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 293–94; Kenneth L.
8 (January-April 1983): 27–28, slightly revised and reprinted in D. Michael
Quinn, ed., The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past (Salt Lake
City: Signature Books, 1992), 202–3. Some of Frank’s criticisms, particu-
larly of Joseph F. Smith but also of Reed Smoot, are discussed in Cannon
“The New Polygamy,” July 1911, 96–98, 100, 104–7; “The Prophet and Big
Business,” August 1911, 210–15; and in “Cannon Tells How Smith Put Toga
on Smoot,” Salt Lake Tribune, April 24, 1911, 1; “Smoot Is Target of Ex-Sen.
21Cannon and O’Higgins, “Under the Prophet in Utah,” April 1911,
518–19. The cover illustration of a white-haired, bearded Church leader in
the April issue also may have been based on Joseph Smith III. Also included
among the “Mormon hierarchy” was life-long bachelor and Mormon Tabern-
cacle Choir director Evan Stephens.
ogy. He noted that he had “never been a member of the polygamous Utah Church” which was presided over by “Joseph Fielding Smith . . . the son of my uncle, Hyrum Smith.” Rather, Joseph III had been president of the RLDS Church for fifty-one years. The magazine published the letter, apologized, and explained that the error occurred

Everybody’s ran this ill-chosen “study in Mormon leaders,” a virtual rogues’ gallery, in its April 1911 issue to show those who “enslaved men and women in polygamy” and politically dominated Utah. Its effectiveness was undercut by the fact that it mistakenly included not only several dead Mormon General Authorities and at least one man who never was a General Authority, but also a highly offended Joseph Smith III, president of the RLDS Church. Some of the photographs are not well-known images and a few of the following are educated guesses. The men featured are: top row, left: Albert P. Rockwood, Tabernacle Choir director (and lifelong bachelor) Evan Stephens, Rudger Clawson, Marriner W. Merrill, Joseph Smith III, and Charles W. Penrose. Second row, left: Reed Smoot, Orson Pratt, Joseph Fielding Smith, Erastus Snow, George Teasdale, and Brigham Young, Jr. Third row, left: Anthony W. Ivins, Abraham Owen Woodruff, John W. Taylor, Franklin D. Richards, John Taylor, and David O. McKay. Bottom row, left: Sidney Rigdon, Church Patriarch John Smith, Anthon H. Lund, John R. Winder, George Reynolds, and Orson F. Whitney.
because the magazine’s “Denver photographer” had forwarded “a large collection of pictures of Utah Mormons” and the staff had been “naturally misled” by Smith’s name. Cannon, in Denver, was too far away to review page proofs and O’Higgins “was too ill to give [the photos] careful consideration.” The idea for the photo montage probably came from Frank or Harvey O’Higgins, but the specific photos had been chosen by magazine staffers.

To reinforce that Joseph F. Smith continued to cohabit with his plural wives—an admission he had readily made under oath during the Smoot hearings—five successive pages of the March 1911 issue featured photographs of the homes of President Smith’s five wives.

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22Ibid., May 1911, 713. Joseph Smith III signed his letter simply as “Joseph Smith.”
Doubtless Frank, who was familiar with Smith’s wives and their residences had masterminded the gallery of the prophet’s households.

The fact that President Smith had married all five women before the Woodruff Manifesto withdrew Church approval for new plural marriages in September 1890 was lost on the vast majority of readers. That each of Smith’s wives had her own lovely home also supported Cannon’s claims that the prophet used Church funds as he pleased.23

“Under the Prophet in Utah” was extremely popular and helped increase circulation of Everybody’s from approximately 500,000 to

23Cannon and O’Higgins, March 1911, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395. Mormons and their leaders differentiated polygamous marriages performed before 1890 (or perhaps 1904) from those solemnized after 1904, when Joseph F. Smith issued the “Second Manifesto,” which signaled a more genuine “official” end of authorizing new polygamous marriages by members of the First Presidency and Twelve. Plural marriages were generally permitted before September 1890 (although Church leaders were careful not to have such marriages solemnized in the Endowment House for a year before that) and most polygamous unions solemnized between 1890 and 1904 were approved by high-ranking Church officials even if not formally “sanctioned” by the Church itself. Most Church leaders condoned and generally encouraged continued marital relations of couples married before 1904. The distinction between marriages solemnized before and after April 1904 was lost on most Americans, who only needed to be told that the Mormon Church president was living with five wives to be convinced that Mormons continued to practice polygamy. Smith was prompted to announce the “Second Manifesto” at April general conference, 1904, after his testimony before the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Privileges and Elections. Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 64–72. An argument can be made that the “real” official end of LDS polygamy came sometime between 1909 and 1911, when the Church began excommunicating Church leaders and members who had insisted on continuing to form new plural marriages after 1904. The negative magazine articles published in 1910 and 1911 actually strengthened the leaders’ resolve to deal with new polygamy and accelerated Church disciplinary actions against offending leaders and members. Cannon and his fellow anti-polygamy agitators in the 1910s glossed over these distinctions to argue that Mormons continued to practice polygamy without discussing when the marriages were made, but anti-polygamy advocates also alleged that many new marriages were being performed. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 68–70, 248–49; Hardy, Solemn Covenant,
more than 600,000 during 1911.\textsuperscript{24} The pre-publication buzz over the articles attracted the attention of Harry P. Harrison, general manager of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau’s Chicago office and one of the most powerful men in “traveling” or “circuit” Chautauqua, which flourished during the second decade of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{25} Harrison wrote Cannon in October 1910 with an invitation: “We want to be


\textsuperscript{25}Harrison and Detzer, \textit{Culture under Canvas}, xvi–xviii. This type of Chautauqua, held in large tents a week at a time in cities and towns across America was called “tent” or “travelling” or “circuit” Chautauqua, to distinguish it from the programs held in a permanent venue in Chautauqua, New York. The inventor of circuit Chautauqua was Keith Vawter. Vawter and Harry P. Harrison were heads of two of the largest regional bureaus of the Redpath system and were also two of the four general officers of the national Redpath Bureau. Ibid.; Frank J. Cannon to Harry P. Harrison, October 28, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection (letter typed on Redpath Bu-
placed in touch and have the first call on your services as a lecturer in case you are able to take up lecture work."  

Circuit Chautauqua of the time was wildly popular in middle America. Cities and towns across the country set up tents for a week every summer when political figures, actors, entertainers, scientists, musicians, writers, and explorers would come to town. The entire community turned out to listen to these distinguished visitors for what amounted to the beginnings of adult education in the United States. Some of the “talent” from the Chautauqua programs, particularly politicians and other lecturers, also spoke to religious, community, political, and social groups in large churches, lecture halls, and university auditoriums during winter months in Lyceum lectures.

By early 1911, the Redpath Bureau was preparing a lecture tour for Cannon and was soliciting statements about Frank’s abilities as a speaker from those who knew him well for inclusion in marketing materials. Cannon became frustrated that the tour was not being organized as quickly as he had hoped, for he understood that the window of opportunity to capture the public’s sentiments was brief “in this versatile and mobile civilization of ours. And I merely want to clinch

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26 Harry P. Harrison, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, October 11, 1910, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.


28 See, for example, Harry P. Harrison, Letter to Rev. William Paden, January 13, 1911; Harry P. Harrison, Letter to Judge Ben B. Lindsey, January 13, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
the attention of the people while that attention is ready to be clinched.” Pending contractual arrangements with the Redpath Bureau, Frank accepted a promotion to managing editor of the Rocky Mountain News in January 1910, though the owner, Senator Patterson, made clear to him that he could take time off from the newspaper to lecture if he wanted to. Harrison negotiated with Cannon terms of a contract that bound Frank to give Chautauqua lectures during summer months and Lyceum lectures during colder winter months.

With his new contract in hand, Frank took a leave of absence from the newspaper and embarked on his speaking assignments beginning November 13, 1911. He titled his lecture “The Modern Mormon Kingdom” and kept the same title for several years, though he sometimes updated the lecture with new material. The title was intended to mock the LDS Church’s claim that it represented God’s kingdom on earth.

A quarto-sized brochure extolling ex-Senator Cannon’s speaking abilities and the subject of his lectures was prepared and sent to Chautauqua lecture course committees throughout middle America for publicity purposes. The brochure noted:

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31 Memorandum of Agreement, between Redpath Lyceum Bureau and Frank J. Cannon, April 7, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Cannon agreed to give up to six lectures a week, nine months a year. The nine months were to be divided into two periods and Frank was permitted to choose the time periods off. Frank’s initial compensation for nine months’ work was $10,000, worth between approximately $175,000 and $235,000 in 2009 dollars. See www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus/result.php (accessed April 2010).
32 Frank would occasionally refer to new material he was including in his lectures. For example, prior to the second season on the Chautauqua circuit, he wrote Harrison: “I am hoping that the second lecture will be far bigger in itself and more popular and effective than the first. There is a wealth of additional material now at hand which I shall seek to briefly embody without lengthening the new lecture. There will be practically none of the old detail in the second lecture.” Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, April 20, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
The entire country is stirred at the present time over the disclosures which are being made by Ex-United States Senator Frank J. Cannon in his series of articles in Everybody’s Magazine—a series on [the] present day status of Mormonism. . . . To lecture course committees is offered a rare opportunity to present to their patrons a really great man at a time when his name is daily upon the lips of thousands of readers. . . . To thousands of people who are reading the articles which have been running in Everybody’s, the disclosures there made came like a bolt of lightning out of a clear sky. [Mormons] are gaining ground rapidly and not only in religious matters, but in political circles and in the world of business as well.33

This marketing brochure identified Cannon as the person in the best position to describe what Mormon leaders and their Church were up to. Ex-Senator Cannon had been, after all, “Mormon Ambassador to Washington in 1888 and 1890” and was the son of the “first counselor of the Mormon Church.” In a now-anachronistic use of the term, it noted that Frank was “racially a Mormon.”34

As Frank began lecturing, publication drew near on the book version of Under the Prophet in Utah. C. M. Clark Publishing of Boston prepared a four-page marketing brochure and obtained Frank’s speaking schedule so that its representatives could follow him and sell books in the cities where he appeared. Frank had required the publisher to agree to this service to boost sales of the book. The correspondence between Redpath and the publisher demonstrates that, during the four and a half months from November 13, 1911, through March 30, 1912, Frank gave Lyceum lectures in 103 cities located in 22 states. Locations where Frank lectured ranged from large cities such as New York City and Chicago to places as varied as Hope, Arkansas; Coldwater, Michigan; Xenia, Ohio; Chester, Pennsylvania; Camden, New Jersey; Kingfisher, Oklahoma; Baldwin, Kansas; Peru, Nebraska; Waterloo, Iowa; Redwood Falls, Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; Missoula, Montana; Rhinelander, Wisconsin; Springfield, Massachusetts; Huntington, West Virginia; and many towns and hamlets in between. The following summer, he was booked to lecture in Chautauqua gatherings in forty-six different cities in nine Midwestern states in the two and a half months from June 16 through Septem-

33Redpath Chautauqua brochure on Frank J. Cannon, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
34Ibid.
ber 1, 1912. For the next six years, Frank J. Cannon kept up a similar frenetic pace, giving hundreds of lectures a year under the auspices of the Redpath Bureau and, later, for both the Redpath Bureau and the National Reform Association.

His lectures on religion were unusual for Chautauqua. As Harry P. Harrison himself put it, there were only two subjects that I know of [that] were barred by common consent among Chautauqua managers. No lecturer dared to advocate violent overthrow of the government nor attack the Christian religion. Looking back on it now, the persistent and exceedingly popular campaign by ex-Senator Frank J. Cannon of Utah against the Mormon church, through half the life of the tent circuits, may have come close to sidestepping that second taboo, but managers did not recognize it at that time, perhaps because of the raging polygamy issue.

In December 1911, shortly after the article series concluded in

35 Advertising brochure for “Under the Prophet in Utah—The Treasons and Crimes of the Mormon Kingdom” (Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing, December 1911), copy in LDS Church History Library; C. M. C. Atkinson of C. M. Clark Publishing, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, August 26, 1911; C. M. C. Atkinson, Letter to Redpath Slayton Bureau, September 20, 1911; C. M. Clark Publishing, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, November 10, 1911; L. B. Crotty, Letter to C. M. C. Atkinson, November 13, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. This does not include a week in January 1912, when the schedule indicated that Cannon would be “booked with our N.Y. office.” C. M. Clark Publishing, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, November 10, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. The advertising brochure identified Cannon as the “first U.S. Senator from Utah, organizer Republican Party in Utah, managing editor ‘Rocky Mountain News,’ world traveler, author, orator,” noted that he had single-handedly “won a mercy for the Mormons” but later “was excommunicated and ostracized for championing the political and social rights of the people whose statehood he had so largely secured, and for denouncing the treasonable return to polygamy which Joseph F. Smith authorized and encouraged.” Advertising brochure for “Under the Prophet in Utah.” Many of Frank’s letters to Redpath officials during this period of time are on stationery from such hotels as The Loewen in Enid, Oklahoma; Fort Pitt Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Hotel Radisson in Minneapolis, Minnesota; The Florence in an unidentified city, Hotel Frederick in Huntington, West Virginia; and The Park in Coshocton, Ohio.

36 Harrison and Detzer, Culture under Canvas, 131.
Everybody’s, Under the Prophet was published in book form. The book is slightly longer, containing material excluded from the articles because of space restrictions and with occasional changes in paragraphs, punctuation, and wording. Also dropped from the book version were the articles’ many subtitles and rich illustrations. The New York Times Review of Books immediately published a favorable review of the new book on its front page. The unidentified reviewer believed that Cannon and O’Higgins had worked hard to distinguish between the pre-Manifesto Mormon community, which was “as innocent and as virtuous as those who practiced [polygamy] under Abraham,” and the same community under the new regime of Joseph F. Smith. The pre-1890 Mormons, “as Cannon describes them, were a simple, puritanical people, up to the time the United States meddled in their affairs. . . . They lived in polygamous relations, but these relations were clean.” By contrast, the Mormon community, after it disavowed polygamy, now “practices it in lewd and vicious fashion. . . . [T]hese [marital] relations are no longer pure; they are the same relations contracted nowadays by any conscienceless libertine who wishes to seduce a trusting girl under the mask of a bogus marriage.”

According to this review, the Mormons “had solved the problem of communism and abolished poverty.” Once the “greatest experiment in communism the world ever saw,” it was now “merely a part of the scheme whereby their hierarchy has been turned into a great organization of ‘high finance.’” Before Joseph F. Smith, the Mormons were pure, genuine, and concerned about each other, even though they were misguided in polygamy, political hegemony, and communitarian living. But under the new prophet, their polygamy had become “black and filthy,” its new adherents “libertines” who would “lure” girls into plural marriage. “One man, Prophet Joseph F. Smith—rules the votes of a supposedly sovereign state of the Union.” Mormon tithes, once “devoted to the support of the community, and hence there was not a poor man in Utah—has become a great engine for the emolument of the hierarchy.” Cannon argued so forcefully about the financial misdeeds of the prophet that “all that has been charged against that favorite victim of spellbinders, the Standard Oil Company, seems feeble compared with what Cannon charges against the prophet.” Mormons’ strengths—unity and confidence in their church

and its leaders—had been taken advantage of by the new leadership.

According to the *Times*, it was the apathy of Americans and their government that permitted the degradation of the Mormons: Cannon “lays the whole blame upon a dead public sentiment and a vote-purchasing Government, both outside Utah.” The reviewer implies that he is not entirely convinced by all of Frank’s allegations and concludes with a suggestion that Cannon’s “facts” should be checked and that “Utah” should take on the following challenge: “Such is the indictment framed by Cannon, . . . the first Senator from Utah; himself an ex-Mormon; the man who, at Washington, made for Utah the pledges on which Statehood was granted to her. Is it to be denied? If it is, Utah should speak, and speak in less uncertain tones that she did before the Senate Committee that investigated the charges against Reed Smoot.”

The publisher attempted to promote *Under the Prophet in Utah*, but found itself in receivership in little more than six months. New York publisher Fleming H. Revell purchased the rights to the work, and, likely, the unsold inventory, and approached Frank on how best to sell the books. Cannon suggested to Revell that the publisher’s representatives should place copies of the book in bookstores where Frank would soon be lecturing and advertise the book because people would be more inclined to buy the book after hearing him speak. Revell also prevailed on Cannon in 1913 to co-write another book.

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38Ibid., 1, 2. The review also noted that Frank J. Cannon was the “son of George Q. Cannon, one of the great heroes of the Mormon Church.”

39C. M. C. Atkinson, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, August 26, 1911; C. M. C. Atkinson, Letter to Redpath Slayton Bureau, September 20, 1911; C. M. Clark Publishing, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, November 10, 1911; L. B. Crotty, Letter to C. M. C. Atkinson of C. M. Clark Publishing, November 13, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. David Dzwonkoski, “C. M. Publishing Company,” in Peter Dzwonkoski, ed., *American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900–1980: Trade and Paperback* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1986), 86–88. O’Higgins, “Address on ‘Polygamy,’” accused the Mormons of having put the publisher out of business, but it is more likely that the company’s effort to move into a different market by shifting from its typical romances to more controversial works such as *Under the Prophet in Utah* was not successful.

40Fleming H. Revell, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, October 12, 1912; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Fleming H. Revell, October 16, 1912, Redpath
Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire. The marketing of this book, written with George L. Knapp, focused almost as much on Cannon as Brigham Young.

The only part of *Brigham Young* relevant to Cannon’s campaign against twentieth-century Mormonism is the short last chapter, “The Kingdom Endures.” In it, Cannon described how Mormon presidents John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff, unlike their predecessor Brigham Young, “sought to exalt the devotional side of [the] church,” while Joseph F. Smith backslid from this position, returning Brigham Young’s material kingdom to the fore. Even though the Church had agreed, under Woodruff’s leadership, to withdraw permission for new plural marriages and to abandon political and economic control over its members as an accommodation for statehood, Joseph F. Smith had returned “from doctrines to dividends.” Polygamy continued as Mormon men followed the current prophet’s example, President Smith exercised control over millions of dollars in tithing with no accountability, and the Church so controlled its members’ politics that it was becoming extremely powerful in the politics of Western states. Frank even charged that “visiting presidents of the United States give to him [Joseph F. Smith] as much deference as they receive.” 41

What were Frank Cannon’s central points in his “Modern Mor-

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mon Kingdom” lectures and how did he present them? They were not much different from the material in *Under the Prophet in Utah* and the closing chapter of *Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire*, though enhanced with more rhetorical flourishes. Cannon often began his speeches by baldly demanding: “What are you going to do about it anyway?”42 This question both startled and caught the attention of those listening. Utilizing his considerable oratorical skills, Frank would then make serious allegations about the Mormon Church and its leaders, particularly Joseph F. Smith. Among his allegations was that the Mormon Church, largely through Frank’s efforts, had made a compact with the U.S. government to end the federal anti-polygamy crusade. The Church agreed to abandon polygamy and even to require members to cease cohabiting with polygamous spouses. Based on these understandings, the government made Utah a state in 1896, returned property escheated to the government under the Edmunds-Tucker Act, and legitimized thousands of children born to polygamous marriages. According to Cannon, the Church had violated this compact in a number of ways.43

The foremost violation was the Church’s continued encouragement to this series, comparing the Mormon kingdom to a “Mohammedan” kingdom and extolling “Doctor Knapp’s” courageous disclosures and analysis of the political power of the Church, the Church’s “financial tyranny maintained in the profaned name of God,” and the “re-crudescent of polygamy under the tutelage of Joseph F. Smith, the semi-divine exemplar of his followers.” Ibid., September 1917, 360.


ment of the practice of polygamy. New plural marriages were performed. Pre-1890 polygamists were encouraged, not only to continue supporting their polygamous wives financially, which was appropriate, but also to cohabit with them. Cannon charged that continued cohabitation violated the compact with the nation. From Cannon’s perspective, Joseph F. Smith was setting an example that encouraged all Mormons to continue living “the Principle.” His continued cohabitation with all of his wives (all five bore children after the Manifesto) and maintenance of five separate households was proof positive of the Church’s failure to keep its promises to the government.44

Cannon alleged that the “Prophet of the Church rule[d] with an absolute political power” over Utah and much of the West. Because of the cohesive nature of the Mormon Church, this power was greatly disproportionate to the relatively small number of Church members in most states. This new political power was even more frightening than the Church’s power exercised in Utah through the People’s Party until the early 1890s because its effect covered a much greater area. Cannon claimed that Church leaders were intent on having sufficient numbers of Mormons in both national parties to tip the balance in close elections and require favors from powerful political leaders. He

44Cannon and O’Higgins, Under the Prophet in Utah, 337–59, 397; “The Modern Mormon Kingdom,” [Sewickley, Penn.] Herald, November 16, 1912; “Crusade against Mormonism Begun,” [Wheeling, W.V.] Intelligencer, April 17, 1914, Journal History, April 17, 1914, 4; “Ex-Sen. Cannon Bitterly Assails Mormon Church,” [Trenton, N.J.] Gazette, April 20, 1914. Wilford Woodruff did not initially intend the Manifesto to prohibit continued unlawful cohabitation between polygamous couples; but in 1891, as Church leaders sought the return of escheated property and the admission of Utah as a state, they were required to testify under oath before a federal master in chancery. President Woodruff and other senior Church leaders consistently testified that the Manifesto did apply to cohabitation as well as new marriages. Woodruff explained shortly after that he had had no choice but to testify as he had, but confusion about whether cohabitation was appropriate lasted for some time. Church leaders recognized that Congress would probably require strict adherence to the law to vote to make Utah a state, and they worried among themselves about whether polygamous couples could continue to cohabit. Not surprisingly, they gave mixed signals to members about what was required. D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 18 (Spring 1985): 61–62, 70–71, 74–77, 82–86.
also charged that temple-endowed Mormons were required to take an oath of vengeance to avenge the blood of the slain Joseph and Hyrum Smith. As Cannon’s ultimate claim, Mormon leaders contemplated “superseding all civil government” with their “Kingdom of God” on earth. Smith had dictated the election of Reed Smoot to the Senate and named “the Representatives and Senators” from Utah and surrounding states, then, through these elected officials, “his ambassadors,” he had his choices appointed as “Federal officials.” Cannon was particularly critical of politicians who would not stand up to the “Mormon menace.”

Cannon also criticized the way that Joseph F. Smith controlled without accountability the Church’s new “unlimited wealth,” the alliance with Wall Street bankers and trust interests that this wealth facilitated, and the maintenance of his “absolute” autocracy through “sympathetic defenders,” and “an army of service” who stood ready to follow his command.

What could be done to remedy these unacceptable actions of the Mormons? Cannon sometimes acknowledged that loyal Americans could not engage in religious persecution, and he claimed that he was not persecuting but rather disclosing “the usurpations by the Mormon church as a polygamous empire set up in this republic.” Throughout his lecture circuit career in the 1910s, immediately after his dramatic speeches, at “the psychological moment” and at Frank’s undisclosed direction, organizers would propose a series of resolutions for the audience to adopt restricting Mormons and their activities.

Frank used different resolutions over the years. They usually came from groups with whom he associated. For example, he some-

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48Redpath Lyceum Bureau, Letter to Chautauqua managers, July 8,
times worked with Miss C. E. Mason, president of the Interdenominational Council of Women for Christian and Patriotic Service, which prepared resolutions in February 1912 proposing that Congress and the U.S. president call for the adoption of a federal constitutional amendment against polygamy and polygamous cohabitation, that the Justice Department investigate the Mormon Church under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, that Congress not admit “ambassadors of the Mormon Kingdom” as Senators or Representatives, and that the government “break ‘the new league with death, the new covenant with hell’ by which the polygamous priests are protected in their blasphemy to God, their treason to the nation, their tyranny over the minds and property of men and their degradation of women and children.”

Frank Cannon’s message of the LDS Church’s renewed polygamy, violations of its agreements with the federal government, its growing unified political power, and its participation in the monopolistic trusts played well in Progressive America. Most Americans believed that the Mormons had stopped practicing polygamy (even though many realized that it might take a generation for old plural relationships to fade into the past), that their political influence had been diluted as members joined the national political parties, and that, while Mormons may have experimented with communitarianism, they had left economic control of Church members behind.

1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. This July 8 letter, written by an operative in the Chicago office of the Redpath Bureau, instructed Chautauqua managers “to offer these resolutions to your audience for vote, at the psychological moment, immediately after Senator Cannon’s lecture.”

49 Resolutions, Interdenominational Council of Women for Christian and Patriotic Service, February 1, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. The internal quotation from the resolutions is a paraphrase of Isaiah 28:15: “Ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement . . . ” Frank sometimes worked with the Interdenominational Council and agreed to spend four weeks speaking on the Council’s “campaign” in New York, from mid-July to mid-August 1911; Miss Mason agreed that the council would pay him at least $500 and hoped to raise money to pay him more. C. E. Mason, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, April 23, 1911; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to C. E. Mason, May 4, 1911; C. E. Mason, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, May [20], 1911; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, July 5, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
Frank J. Cannon carefully chose his arguments to resonate with Progressive America and played a significant role in the anti-Mormon activities of the time.\footnote{Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment*, 240–84, describes the close association of the 1910s Chautauqua with the Progressive movement.} In response to the widespread belief of Americans that the LDS Church had genuinely abandoned polygamy, Cannon accused the Church and its president of reviving the practice after Utah received statehood, thus reigniting American ire toward Mormon polygamy. As the *New York Times Review of Books* recognized, however, Frank embellished the story by asserting that the new Mormon polygamy under Joseph F. Smith was even more sinister than it had been in the nineteenth century because now it was practiced purely for sexual gratification rather than to follow Old Testament prophets.\footnote{“Utah in Her Chains,” *New York Times Review of Books*, December 17, 1911, 1.} Allegations of a nastier “new polygamy” played into prejudices of Progressives, who, while they supported certain important reforms, maintained their distance from groups they viewed as “different” such as African Americans, immigrants, and non-Christians. In addition, the Progressive movement had been spawned in part by a desire to release women from a sort of segregation, permitting them into public life, allowing them to vote, and encouraging them to “cross social boundary lines.”\footnote{Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 214–18.} As Cannon characterized new polygamy, Mormon women were more subjugated than ever.
Mormons’ abandonment of their own political party, the Peoples’ Party, in the early 1890s, had helped convince the country that the Mormons were sincere in their desire to join the country’s political mainstream. Frank Cannon now argued that President Smith and the Church continued to control members’ politics, but for a new, broader purpose. Where before the Church had simply wanted to control Utah Territory and to obtain statehood to control its own destiny, now Mormon leaders were intent on exercising significant power in Congress and even to have a major influence in national elections. This allegation was intended to anger Progressives, who fought aggressively against “machine politics,” which they found un-democratic and un-American. Cannon described the Church as an ultimate political machine with Joseph F. Smith as its boss. Finally, Cannon appealed to the anti-big business sentiments of the Progressive movement and its distaste for Wall Street by asserting that the Mormon Church and its president were active participants in national trusts such as the sugar trust and actively courted Wall Street through inappropriate use of the Church’s supposed riches. Given Cannon’s allegations, it is no surprise that four Progressive magazines sent some of their best muckraking authors to Utah to write exposés of the Mormons and their leaders in 1910.

By April 1912, Frank had succeeded as a “headliner” on the Chautauqua circuit, been in great demand as a Lyceum lecturer, and

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55 In the context of the arguments that Frank J. Cannon and others mounted against the LDS Church and its leaders, it is not surprising that muckraking journalists, who played an important role in the Progressive movement, frequently wrote about the Mormons, including, in particular, during the “Magazine Crusade.” On muckraking, see Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 186–98; Harold S. Wilson, *McClure’s Magazine and the Muckrakers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970); Kenneth Cannon, “The Magazine Crusade against the LDS Church.” For citations to the articles produced by the four major magazines against the Church, see footnote 24.
been offered a substantial increase in his lecture fees by the Redpath Bureau. At that point, he resigned his position as managing editor of the Rocky Mountain News. Former Senator Frank J. Cannon loved the lecture circuit and everything about it. It was tailor-made for him, and he was at his emotionally charged best in front of a large, sympathetic Chautauqua or Lyceum audience. Senator Patterson, owner and editor-in-chief of the News, graciously accepted Cannon’s resignation in light of Frank’s “paramount mission [being] in this great cause which [the Redpath] bureau has opened to the intelligent conscience of the country.”56 The paper published a heartfelt farewell, expressing its “sincere regret” to part with Senator Cannon’s “splendid services.” This editorial added, “It is only because of the superior claims of what he conceives to be his life mission that The News is willing to part with him at all.”57

So Frank left his newspaper career for good and embarked full-time on his lecturing career as a headliner among the Chautauqua “talent”—those performers, entertainers, musicians, politicians, reformers, and explorers who were the lifeblood of the movement. He travelled most months of the year, by contract speaking “not more than six times each week during the Lyceum season and seven times each week during the Chautauqua season.” He maintained Denver as his residence. Occasionally, he would take his wife, May, with him for several weeks or even a month or two on the lecture tours, but

58May Brown Cannon, Frank’s second wife, was the younger sister of his deceased first wife, Mattie. Frank and May were married in June 1909, fifteen months after Mattie’s death, by the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court in the Colorado State Capitol Building. “Frank Cannon Married, the Bride Is Miss May Anderson Brown of Ogden,” Salt Lake Herald, June 30, 1909, 1. Frank asked Redpath official L. B. Crotty, who had never met May, to meet her at the Chicago train station, describing her as “rather tall—about 5 feet 5—quite stout, [and] of light complexion.” Frank J. Cannon, Letter to L. B. Crotty, November 22, 1911, Repath Chautauqua Collection. May listed her occupation as “house-wife” on a passport application she submitted prior to their voyage to Europe in October 1917. U.S. Passport Applications, 1917-1918, Certificate 69502, Record for May Brown Cannon, October 17, 1917, ancestry.com (accessed May 2011).
more frequently, she would stay alone in their Logan Court apartment directly behind the Colorado State Capitol building in downtown Denver.\textsuperscript{59}

The LDS Church and its leaders could not ignore the anti-Mormon activities of the day. In April conference in 1911, as articles attacking the Church were appearing in several major national magazines (including the Cannon/O’Higgins series in \textit{Everybody’s}), the First Presidency of the Church, at the insistence of Reed Smoot, took the rather extraordinary step of issuing a formal statement in response to what B. H. Roberts called the “Magazine Crusade” against the Church. The statement flatly denied the existence of any “pledges to the national government,” the allegation that the Church president received “millions of dollars annually by enforced levies upon the members” that were in his “absolute control, unaccounted for and at his personal service,” and the allegation that the Church president, “with a few other ecclesiasts, dictat[e] the political affairs of the state.” The declaration positively stated that “since [the Woodruff Manifesto of 1890] the Church has not performed any polygamous marriage or authorized any violation of the law thus forbidden,” though it did acknowledge that “some persons” in the Church construed the statements of Church presidents to mean that polygamous marriages could be performed in Mexico.\textsuperscript{60}

Ironically, the First Presidency’s statement may have been prompted more by the \textit{Cosmopolitan’s} caustic “Viper on the Hearth” articles written by Alfred Henry Lewis than by Cannon’s “Under the Prophet” series, but most assumed the First Presidency’s statement

The photo on May’s passport application is the only image I have located of her.

\textsuperscript{59}Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, October 28, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. The following \textit{Ballenger & Richards Annual Denver City Directories} (Denver: Ballenger & Richards, annual), cited by year and page, give this address as the Cannons’ residence: 1910, 303; 1911, 290; 1912, 289; 1913, 623; 1914, 625; 1915, 627; 1916, 629.

\textsuperscript{60}“Slanders Are Refuted by the First Presidency, Misrepresented from the First,” \textit{Deseret News}, April 10, 1911, 3, which was subsequently re-published with the memorable title of “Magazine Slanders Confuted,” \textit{Improvement Era} 14 (June 1911): 719–24. See also Roberts, \textit{Comprehensive History of the Church}, 6:413–17.
was really directed at Frank Cannon. Church leaders, through Church member and journalist Isaac Russell, even induced former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt to write a letter responding to certain allegations made against the LDS Church. In the letter, which Colonel Roosevelt permitted Russell to publish in another prominent national periodical, Collier’s Weekly, the former president flatly denied that he had entered into a “bargain” with the Church whereby he would oppose a Constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy, ensure that Reed Smoot would retain his Senate seat, and appoint federal officials in Utah and surrounding states “in obedience to the wish of the Mormon hierarchy expressed to the Federal Administration through Smoot,” in exchange for the Mormon vote. Roosevelt indicated his regard for the “unusually high” morality of many Mormons and their performance of “the highest duties of American citizenship.”

The Salt Lake Herald-Republican, controlled by Reed Smoot’s

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61Ibid. Within a few years, Joseph F. Smith changed his strategy toward Frank Cannon and his allegations, instructing Church leaders to leave Frank “severely alone” and to consider him “unworthy of our attention.” Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Walter P. Monson, president of the LDS Church’s Eastern States Mission, January 25, 1915, copy in Scott Kenney Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter Kenney Papers); George F. Gibbs, secretary to the First Presidency, Letter to German E. Ellsworth, president of the Northwestern States Mission, headquartered in Chicago, February 3, 1914, Kenney Papers. The Cosmopolitan (as contemporaries always referred to it) had higher circulation than Everybody’s in the early 1910s, though Everybody’s volume of advertising during this period exceeded even the Cosmopolitan’s. Mott, Sketches of 21 American Magazines, 82; Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1885–1905, Vol. 4 of A HISTORY OF AMERICAN MAGAZINES (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 497.

62Isaac Russell, “Mr. Roosevelt to the Mormons: A Letter with an Explanatory Note by Isaac Russell,” Collier’s Weekly Magazine 47 (April 15, 1911): 28, 36, reprinted as “Mr. Roosevelt to the ‘Mormons,’” Improvement Era 14 (June 1911): 712–18. Isaac Russell did not provide the former president with allegations from the Magazine Crusade articles; rather, he gave him an article published during the Smoot investigation alleging an improper “bargain” between Roosevelt and Mormon leaders. Roosevelt fiercely denied that he had conspired with the Mormons. On allegations
“Federal Bunch,” attacked Frank’s personal character, which had long been vulnerable. In a harsh editorial titled “The Unspeakable Frank J. Cannon,” the Herald-Republican called him “the expatriate, who left Utah for Utah’s good,” and asserted that Frank had illegitimate “children” walking the streets of Salt Lake City, and that while editorializing in the pages of the Salt Lake Tribune about the “purity of the home and the protection of womanly modesty and virtue,” he spent much of his time in the “lowest resorts” of the city. The editor concluded scathingly:

Frank J. Cannon has betrayed every trust that was ever reposed in him, religious, political or commercial, and nothing has been too low for him to stoop to if it gave him funds with which to seek the sort of perversion that most appeals to his debased and corrupted nature. He is a libertine of the worst character, a drug fiend, and a drunkard. . . . Cannon probably is the vilest man that ever lived in Utah. Unscrupulous, dishonest, a libertine, with all the decency that God may have given him blotted out by his manner of living . . .

LDS missionaries “shadowed” Frank at his lectures, seeking out those who had listened to his lectures and even asking for time on the platform to respond to his allegations. Harry P. Harrison recalled wryly that one of the memorable parts of having ex-Senator Cannon on the lecture circuits was the presence of the Mormon elders: “The press, the sober as well as the sensational, gave [Cannon] publicity, chiefly because of the Mormon elders from Salt Lake City who followed him in twos and threes into some towns, talking on street corners, occasionally entering the tent and mounting the platform at the close of Cannon’s hour-and-a-half speech, asking to be heard.” Their success seems doubtful. Audiences were probably frightened of the elders after hearing Frank Cannon’s impassioned and morally indignant “Modern Mormon Kingdom” speech.

that the Mormons were secretly continuing polygamy, he simply stated that they would ensure the “destruction” of their church if they did so. Collier’s subsequently also published Harvey O’Higgins, “A Reply to Colonel Roosevelt,” 47 (June 10, 1911): 35, and Joseph F. Smith’s reply to O’Higgins: “The Mormons To-Day,” 47 (August 12, 1911): 26–29.

“The Unspeakable Frank J. Cannon,” Salt Lake Herald-Republican, April 21, 1911, 4. Cannon had at least one illegitimate child and may have had others. Kenneth Cannon, “Wives and Other Women,” 84–85.

Harrison and Detzer, Culture under Canvas, 131. Christian Statesman
In the spring of 1914, Frank J. Cannon was employed as the spokesman for the national “crusade against the Mormon Kingdom” commenced by the National Reform Association (NRA), a Christian civil government reform organization headquartered in Pittsburgh. The association’s periodical, the *Christian Statesman*, announced: “Former senator Frank J. Cannon . . . is recognized as the best informed authority” regarding the “menace” of Mormonism. The NRA at the time numbered among its board of “vice presidents” a

articles of the next few years often included descriptions of Mormon elders attending lectures and attempting to engage Frank. See, for example, “Mormon Vagaries,” *Christian Statesman* 48 (April 1914): 146.

“A Christian Crusade,” *Christian Statesman* 48 (February 1914): 88. The National Reform Association was perhaps the fiercest critic of the Mormon Church in the 1910s. It held several “World’s Christian Citizenship” conferences and had a number of ongoing series of articles against the Mormons in its monthly periodical, *Christian Statesman*. Although it sponsored other agendas such as Bible study, temperance, education, anti-gambling, and the application of Christian principles in government, its special focus from 1913 through 1918 was the Mormon Church and (according to the NRA) its un-Christian, un-American practices. It had several continuing articles on the Mormons, titled “The Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom,” *Christian Statesman* 48 (March 1914): 130; 48 (April 1914): 183; 48 (May 1914): 232; 48 (June 1914): 280; 48 (December 1914): 514; 49 (January 1915): 30; 49 (March 1915): 128; “The Campaign against Mormonism,” *Christian Statesman* 50 (February 1916): 78; 50 (June 1916): 268, 51 (February 1917): 80; and various other titles such as “Crusade Notes,” *Christian Statesman* 50 (April 1916): 181; and “A Typical Hierarch,” *Christian Statesman* 50 (February 1916): 79. The NRA’s women’s auxiliary was called the “National Order of Anti-Polygamy Crusaders.” *Christian Statesman* 48 (June 1914): 282. The periodical referred to President Smith as the “polygamous sultan of Mormondom.” *Christian Statesman* 48 (May 1914): 235. After Cannon was employed by the NRA, *Christian Statesman* articles began acknowledging that the Mormons had suffered many hardships, were industrious, even heroic, in their development of Utah, and also noted that Mormon elders would often describe these qualities of the Saints as they approached prospective investigators. To the NRA, the recitation of these admirable traits was, however, simply a means of “evading” the “great cause of controversy which the Christian civilization of this country has with the Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom.” The same approach by the Mormons was described in another issue: “Mormon elders were at the doors of the Toledo
former vice president of the United States, five sitting or former state
governors, federal appeals and trial court judges, college presidents,
and many prominent Presbyterian, Methodist, and other Protestant
clergymen.66

One memorable confrontation in which Mormons attempted to
disrupt an NRA meeting where Frank J. Cannon was the featured
speaker occurred in New York City’s Carnegie Hall. The “mass meet-
ing” held April 23, 1914, was meant to be the largest gathering of the
NRA kicking off Cannon’s new assignment.67 Admission to the
meeting was by ticket only. Approximately 100 Mormons, including
Walter P. Monson, president of the Church’s Eastern States Mission,
missionaries, and LDS students attending Columbia College and
other New York-area colleges, somehow obtained tickets. As usual
Cannon “made a fierce arraignment of the church and its teachings.”
Social Gospeler Josiah Strong then presented and elicited the assem-
bled meeting’s adoption of resolutions calling for passage of the
Gillett Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting polygamy,
calling upon New York City Mayor John Purroy Mitchel to ban street
meetings by Mormon elders in the city, and petitioning Woodrow
Wilson to prevent practicing Mormons from holding federal office,
when a number of men approached the podium.68

According to the Times account of the meeting, “women and


67Cannon and the general superintendent of the NRA, Dr. James S.
Martin, had actually spoken at more than twenty mass meetings in smaller
cities during the prior two months, but the Carnegie Hall gathering was to
be the culmination of Cannon’s entry into the association’s “crusade.” “The
National Reform Movement, The Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom, Notes

68“Mormons Break Up Enemies’ Meeting,” New York Times, April 24,
1914, 14. Josiah Strong was one of the principal leaders in the Social Gospel
movement and had written critically of the Mormons since at least 1885,
clergymen crowded about the Senator and shielded him while he shouted stinging rebukes to his attackers.” Among the “agitators were W. P. Monson, President of the Eastern States Mission of the Mormon Church . . ., [and] Hagbert Anderson, a Police Sergeant of Ogden, Utah. . . . They called him ‘liar,’ ‘ingrate,’ and many other epithets, and called upon him to substantiate some of his sweeping statements.” A young man, identified as Ashby Snow Thatcher, son of Moses Thatcher and a student at Columbia, confronted Cannon and challenged Frank to support his allegation that Moses Thatcher had died of a broken heart after having squabbles with his fellow Church leaders. Ashby conceded that his father had had trouble with the Church but did not die of a broken heart. Ashby then shouted that his father “went to his grave sticking to his beliefs, and that is more than you [Frank] ever did.” Thatcher also announced that he knew Cannon’s son, Frank Q. Cannon, during his mission in Germany, and asked “Why don’t you try to influence your own son before you try to influence others? The Senator waved the youth aside and said he was willing to prove every assertion that he had made.”

Sergeant Anderson, who, the Deseret News reported, had been Frank’s best friend when they were children, stood on a chair and spoke against “Frankie Cannon” until women in the audience asked him whether Joseph F. Smith was still practicing polygamy. The Times noted that when Anderson confessed that President Smith still had five wives with whom he lived, the women would listen no longer and the authorities cleared the hall. According to the News account, a number of “respectful questioners” surrounded young Thatcher and asked him about the Church. The Salt Lake paper also reported that, following the meeting, Mayor Mitchel declined to impose restrictions on Mormon missionaries who held street preaching meetings in New York.

As spokesman for the NRA’s “Anti-Mormon Crusade,” Cannon would customize his presentations, with the result that his allegations sometimes became more outlandish than they were in his Cha-


69“Mormons Break Up Enemies’ Meeting.”

This illustration appearing at the beginning of the August 1911 installment of Cannon’s articles in Everybody’s stresses Joseph F. Smith’s control over business (and politics) in Utah. Though he may not have been actively involved in the day-to-day operations of each of these entities, President Smith was, in fact, president of them all, with the possible exception of the Deseret News.
tauqua and Lyceum lectures. When he may have previously asserted that the LDS Church should be required to return or at least account for assets restored to it by the federal government in the 1890s, now Cannon sometimes argued that Joseph F. Smith was in control of a trust valued at $400 million and used trust dividends as his personal whim dictated. He also now alleged that the Church was spending more than $1 million “every year in suppressing facts concerning its efforts.”

Where Frank may have asserted before that the Mormons held political control of Utah and a few neighboring states, now he alleged that there were sufficient numbers of Mormons in eleven Western states that Church leaders could sway elections however they pleased and, in fact, had made the difference in the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1916. As a result, Mormon leaders could extract whatever promises or support they wanted from federal politicians in those states. Frank previously had argued that the Mormons had agreed not only to stop performing polygamous marriages but also to cease cohabiting with polygamous wives married before the Manifesto. Now he asserted, in response to challenges that polygamists should not be forced to abandon their wives and children, that, because it was the Church that had pushed these men into polygamy, the Church should require polygamous husbands and wives to stop living together and the Church should use some of its vast financial wealth to provide financial support to these wives and children.

As previously noted, Frank was already contractually obligated

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73“The National Reform Movement, the Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom, Crusade against Mormonism,” Christian Statesman 48 (Decem-
to the Redpath Bureau to give lectures nine months a year.\textsuperscript{74} Before becoming associated with the National Reform Association, Frank would sometimes busy himself with other pursuits during his “time off” from lecturing. In 1912, for example, he took a brief leave of absence from lecturing to campaign for Woodrow Wilson.\textsuperscript{75} After he began working with the NRA, his new responsibilities to that organization took up much of the remaining months of the year. The pages of the \textit{Christian Statesman} were replete with reports about Cannon’s activities for years.\textsuperscript{76}

While Frank Cannon’s lectures to Chautauqua and Lyceum au-


\textsuperscript{75}Harrison and Detzler, \textit{Culture under Canvas}, 132.

diences generally meant traveling from one town to the next every day, lecturing, and staying in a different hotel almost every night, on the NRA circuit, he would often spend a week or two in a specific city with Dr. James S. Martin, general superintendent of the National Reform Association, speaking to various church groups in an area.

How effective were Frank Cannon’s activities? Judge Ben Lindsey, a prominent Denver judge, who was renowned internationally for his development of juvenile justice in Colorado and was himself a part-time mainstay on the tent Chautauqua circuit and an outspoken Progressive opponent of corruption in government, thought that Frank was extraordinarily talented. Lindsey commented:

I have heard nearly all of the great orators and United States Senators who have been on the Chautauqua and lyceum platforms, . . . and I want to say that former United States Senator Frank J. Cannon is, to my mind, the greatest of them all. . . Senator Cannon is a magnificent character—standing for all that is clean and pure and decent in politics and government, and his story running in Everybody’s Magazine is one of the greatest narratives ever written. He has a magnificent presence, a fine delivery, and inspires, enthuses, satisfies and enlightens his audience as very few men in this country are capable of doing.77

A newspaper in Webster, Iowa, published a grandiloquent report of Frank’s oratorical skills as a speaker at a Sunday-night Chautauqua. Noting that “the man had a burning message and in the delivery of it he unconsciously reached the region of the highest art in oratory,” the reporter continued: “As one listened one could but think of Edmund Burke at the trial of Warren Hastings, of Webster’s mighty reply to Hayne. It reminded one of Cicero against Catiline and of


77Chautauqua brochure, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Frank sometimes referred in correspondence to fighting “the Beast,” by which he meant corrupt politicians supporting the LDS Church. See, for example, Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, February 10, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Frank borrowed the term from his friend, Judge Ben Ben Lindsey, who had described corrupt government in Denver and Colorado.
Demosthenes against the tyrannies of King Phillip, for characteristics of these classics appeared in plenty in Senator Cannon’s phillipic against the Mormon hierarchy.78

Harry P. Harrison, who made Cannon a well-paid headliner for the Redpath Bureau, marveled at Frank’s ability to move a crowd: “It is difficult to know how to classify … Frank Cannon, Utah’s first senator. . . . Was he politician, reformer, agitator, or just a man out to earn a good living? . . . His speech, lashing out at polygamy, which he made sound like a threat to every American hearthside, was sensational. Whether the shocked crowds who flocked to the tents to hear him drank it in for that reason or because of his impassioned delivery, it is hard to know now.”79 Others were just as enthusiastic in their praise for Frank’s abilities. Even Frank’s enemies grudgingly conceded his talents. J. T. Goodwin, son of sometime Tribune editor C. C. Goodwin, called Cannon “the most brilliant distorter of facts this country has produced in several generations.”80

All told, Frank J Cannon spoke to more than a million people in attendance at Chautauqua, Lyceum, and National Reform Association gatherings between 1911 and 1918. He usually gave more than two hundred lectures a year, often to gatherings with several thousand people in attendance. He induced thousands of listeners to support resolutions calling for the United States to exclude practicing Mormons from holding political office, to require an accounting of “trust funds” held by the LDS Church, to exclude Mormon pamphlets and other religious writings from being transmitted through the U.S. Post Office, and to promulgate and ratify a constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy. His writings were voraciously read by hundreds of thousands more.

79 Harrison and Detzer, Culture under Canvas, 132.
Almost all supporters focused on Cannon’s background and “insider” knowledge, which made his allegations credible. Writer after writer repeated Frank’s assurances that he had checked out all his facts and knew the background, quoting words Cannon had spoken or written. For example, a small Midwestern daily newspaper, in responding to a rival paper in a nearby town that questioned some of what Cannon had stated, defensively countered: “As to the truthfulness of Senator Cannon’s presentation of the present day Mormon menace, the Freeman-Tribune believes that the mark of veracity is indubitably impressed upon both his speeches and his writings. If Senator Cannon is speaking falsely, or if he is handling the Mormon situation unfairly, we beg leave to call for a bill of particulars. The facts are easy of access. No one knows the bottom facts better than does Senator Cannon.”

Anytime the Church accused Cannon of distortion or misrepresentation, his supporters chalked the accusations up to the Church’s engaging in misinformation and protecting itself in just the ways Frank had alleged for years that it had. As Frank once expressed it privately, “by profound cunning and lavish expenditure, and by the aid of their commercial and political allies, the hierarchs are confusing the issue.”

Nevertheless, neither Cannon nor other anti-Mormon agitators were able to summon sufficient support for Congress to vote to pro-

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81 “The Mormon Question,” *Webster City Daily Freeman-Tribune*, July 30, 1914, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. In other words, the best source of information on the Mormons was Frank J. Cannon and when he provided information, that was all the checking that needed to be done. When pressed by its rival newspaper for information on the Mormons, the *Freeman-Tribune* referred to the four-volume report on the Smoot investigation. *Ibid.*

82 Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Miss C. E. Mason, May 4, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Miss Mason was the president of the Interdenominational Council of Women for Christian and Patriotic Service, which was organized in 1896 to “wage a fight against the Mormon religion.” “Anti-Mormon Mass Meeting,” *New York Times*, January 3, 1912, 8; C. E. Mason, Letter to Frank J. Cannon, June [20], 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Ballard, “Open Letter,” expressed what was likely a widely held view when he stated that Cannon “is the man who is the authority for most of your [anti-Mormon] statements.”
pose ratification of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning polygamy nor did Woodrow Wilson ever restrict Mormons or their supporters from holding federal office or sending pamphlets through the mails.83

What were ex-Senator Frank J. Cannon’s motivations in waging his national campaign against the LDS Church and, particularly its president, Joseph F. Smith? The answers to this question are complicated. Frank’s younger full brother, Joseph J. Cannon, provided critical insights into Frank and his enmity toward the Church and Joseph F. Smith in a letter published in the Deseret News in April 1917. The forty-year-old Joseph, a writer for the News, was responding to an inquiry from a Toledo resident received by the LDS Church’s First Presidency asking about the “reliability of Mr. Cannon’s accusations.” Joseph, an active Mormon, had recently attended one of Frank’s fiery speeches in Pittsburgh. In his perceptive reply, Joseph responded as ably as anyone in the Church had previously to Frank’s central allegations, addressing from his perspective the distortions in which his brother engaged.84

Replying to Frank’s assertions that the Church continued to approve new marriages, Joseph Cannon stated that “the Church ceased solemnizing such marriages” in 1890, and “on account of some evidence that a few of the members had not conformed to the rule, an absolute prohibition on pain and [sic, of] expulsion was adopted by

83Supporters of the amendment occasionally came close. Hardy, Sol-
emn Covenant, 296. Many people who opposed polygamy saw little legal rea-
son to seek a Constitutional amendment prohibiting it. For example, the Detroit Free Press, though finding Cannon’s eloquence in supporting such an amendment “stirring,” reasonably queried: “What more could be accom-
plished by an amendment to the federal constitution? Why cumber that
document with additions and alterations which are unnecessary? If the peo-
ple of the United States object to polygamy they already have plenty of legal
machinery to aid them in rooting it out; or if they think more laws are
needed it should be easy to pass them without tinkering with the constitu-
tion.” “Why Cumber the Constitution?” Detroit Free Press, February 28,
1914, 4.

Letters Dealing with the Anti-‘Mormon’ Crusade Led by Frank J. Cannon,”
the Church in 1904.85 Joseph addressed the more complicated allegation that the Church encouraged continued cohabitation of polygamists married before 1890, candidly acknowledging that most Mormon polygamist husbands had, in fact, continued to support and cohabit with their wives. He viewed it as “unfortunate . . . that such a harsh interpretation was ever insisted on or made a part of the understanding between Mormon leaders and the people of the country.” Most non-Mormons were not overly concerned about continued cohabitation because, although “it was a violation of the civil law [and] it was a failure to heed the interpreted rule of the Church, . . . it was in harmony with the weightier laws of justice and nature.” He did not believe that Americans expected husbands to abandon their wives nor fathers to disavow their children.

Frank J. Cannon had argued that the Church had not used escheated assets returned to it by the federal government for the purposes mandated by Congress and should be required to account for those assets. Joseph responded that the Church had, in fact, used the real and personal property assets that had been taken from it by the government under the Edmunds-Tucker Act and then returned to the Church by Congressional act in 1893 and 1896 for precisely the purposes mandated by Congress. The Church had used those assets to pay its debts, educate its children, provide for its poor, and repair its houses of worship, the purposes required by Congress. Not only had it used these assets for these purposes but it had also expended “20 times” the value of those assets for such purposes during this period; and as a result, “it seems rather idle to ask for an accounting. . . . [T]hat is evidently the view of the government, for no accounting has ever been requested.” With respect to leaders’ accountability for Church funds, Joseph carefully listed large amounts that the Church had donated to charitable causes having nothing to do with Mormons, including relief efforts in war-torn Europe, and the Church’s

85Ibid. Church leaders have often asserted that the “Church” did not authorize or “solemnize” post-Manifesto polygamous marriages. Given the clear evidence that members of the Church’s First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles did authorize most of these marriages (and performed and entered into many of them), these assertions require a problematic distinction between actions approved (and encouraged) by counselors in the First Presidency (and even the president) of the Church and actions of the “Church.”
More interesting, however, is Joseph Cannon’s analysis of the reasons his brother had decided to attack the Mormon Church. He discussed how Frank’s “restless temperament” and “keen intellect” had led him at first into “mild opposition” against leaders of the Church. Frank had suffered from “political disappointment, lack of success in financial ventures, [and] the passing away of Church leaders who had found use for his talents and bestowed on him their confidence.” This mild opposition increased into open hostility through “misunderstandings” with Church leaders after the deaths of his father, his brother Abram, and Wilford Woodruff between 1896 and 1901.

Joseph J. Cannon acknowledged that these Church leaders were human and subject to human weaknesses. Others, such as Heber J. Grant, had earlier noted that Smith had found it inappropriate for Frank to represent the Church and the First Presidency during the 1890s because of Frank’s sometimes unseemly personal life and because of what Smith perceived as Cannon’s greed and bad business judgment. President Smith was also an ardent Republican who was offended when Cannon bolted the party and became part of a new party, the Silver Republicans, during his brief tenure in the U.S. Senate. Further, Frank may have blamed Joseph F. Smith for his failure to win reelection to the Senate in 1899, although Frank’s opposition to

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86Ibid. Personal property had been returned in late 1893; real property assets were returned after Utah’s statehood, in March 1896. The assets escheated to the government had diminished in value over the years that government-appointed receivers had handled them. Ibid.; see also Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 369–79.

87Joseph Cannon, “An Inquiry and a Reply.”

88Ibid.

89Heber J. Grant, Letterpress Diary, December 22, 1897, as quoted in Heber J. Grant, Diary Excerpts, 1887–99, www.signaturebookslibrary.org/journals/grant4.htm (accessed September 2008). I have been permitted to review copies of the original typed diary entries (and, in some cases, correspondence) from the Heber J. Grant Papers in the LDS Church History Library and believe the entries quoted and/or cited herein are accurate.
the Dingley Tariff bill likely had more to do with it.\footnote{90} In Smith, Cannon found the reasons for his fall from grace—the Church president did not appreciate his gifts and would not utilize them for the benefit of the Church. In fact, it is certain that President Smith would not employ Frank J. Cannon on the same assignments that George Q. Cannon or even Wilford Woodruff would have given him. As Joseph Cannon argued, “Always intensely emotional and always finding it necessary to occupy himself with matters that brought his emotions into play, [Frank] was now swept away by their intensity.”\footnote{91}

Joseph did not expressly identify the central focus of his brother’s intense emotions, but it was clearly Frank’s animosity toward Joseph F. Smith. Frank needed to be actively engaged in a cause, and the Church cause was no longer available to him. He needed to find another. Not only did he need a cause to engage his emotional intensity, but he needed a cause to make a living, and Frank liked living well. Frank was always at his best when actively engaged in a cause. When he was not passionately involved, he tended to lapse into binge drinking and inappropriate personal behavior. Frank’s favorite cause had been serving Utah in the U.S. Senate. Not only had he been deprived of this cause, but his enemy Joseph F. Smith had installed the despised Republican Reed Smoot in that position. Frank’s next favorite cause had been his self-chosen causes of ending polygamy, obtaining statehood, and returning the Church to financial security.

Left without the Church cause or political appointment, he became involved in “mild opposition,” to use Joseph’s gentle term. He served as chair of the Democratic Party in Utah, slightly tweaking Smith’s nose (though many prominent Mormons were also Democrats). His mild opposition hardened after Reed Smoot was elected to the Senate. Frank worked behind the scenes of the Senate Select Committee on Privileges and Elections’ investigation of Smoot, providing editorial comment from his small paper, the \textit{Daily Utah State}.

\footnote{90}{Godfrey, “Frank J. Cannon: Declension in the Mormon Kingdom,” 251–52. Cannon remained an ardent bimetallist throughout his life and in the late 1920s and early 1930s chaired the International Silver Commission. The Frank J. Cannon Collection, Stephen H. Hart Library, Colorado State Historical Society, Denver, Colorado (hereafter Colorado Historical Society) contains a relatively large number of documents from the last few years of Frank’s life, when he was actively involved in lecturing on silver and bimetallism.}

\footnote{91}{Joseph Cannon, “An Inquiry and a Reply.”}
In October 1904, Frank’s opposition became more high profile and more critical after he was employed by Thomas Kearns (also angry at the Church and Joseph F. Smith for not supporting his own reelection bid to the Senate) to attack Smith and the Church in the pages of the *Salt Lake Tribune*.92

The animosity was mutual. President Smith referred to Frank J. Cannon as “Furious Judas” as well as a number of other unpleasant epithets including “Son of perdition,” “dirty scoundrel,” and “filthy

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92Paulos, “Opposing the ‘High Ecclesiasts at Washington.’"
cur," and made sure that Frank was excommunicated after particularly vicious editorials appeared in the *Tribune* in early 1905. Smith found Frank’s personal life extremely distasteful and had probably not trusted him for years. Ironically, in Frank J. Cannon’s unsuccessful 1892 campaign for Territorial Delegate, Joseph F. Smith master-minded the publication of *Nuggets of Truth*, a pamphlet that suggested that Frank J. Cannon’s political views were more consistent with those of Church presidents and other Mormon leaders than those of his opponent, Joseph L. Rawlins. The pamphlet was printed by the *Deseret News*, then under the control of Frank’s brothers, Abram and John Q. It aroused controversy because the men pictured were Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and, startlingly, Frank J. Cannon. The controversy caused Frank to withdraw the pamphlet and distance himself from it, which may have alienated Joseph F. Smith.

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93 Ibid. President Smith used “Furious Judas” in private correspondence, but also publicly. Joseph F. Smith, Letter to George C. Smith, October 27, 1906, Joseph F. Smith Letterpress Copybooks, in *Selected Collections of the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by Richard E. Turley, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002), 1:30. In remarkably purple prose, Joseph F. Smith wrote on April 26, 1905, to Heber J. Grant, copy in *Selected Collections*. Grant was then serving as president of the Church’s European Mission and avoiding a subpoena to appear before the committee investigating Smoot. Smith inaccurately predicted that the relationship between the “Son of Perdition” (Frank Cannon) and the “dirty sheet” (the *Tribune*) was coming to an end. “For two days, the dirty scoundrel [Cannon] who had been furnishing the poisonous pabulum for [the *Tribune*’s] columns was so drunk and demoralized that he could not do duty [that is, writing for the paper].” Cannon had been in the “‘red-light’ district” for those two days, and the manager of the *Tribune* had received a “bill of some magnitude” for Cannon’s activities. The *Tribune* manager had either been sufficiently annoyed with Frank or concerned about his welfare that “the Rio Grande No. 2 train, eastbound pulled out from this city last evening, freighted with all the maliferous odors of the drunken debaucher and his unfortunate wife, ticketed . . . for Europe.” Smith was warning Grant that the Cannons planned to visit their son, Frank Q. (nicknamed “Que”), then serving a mission in Germany. Que spent five days with his parents in Liverpool, and one can only imagine their conversations. “Frank J. Cannon Back, Former Senator Returns from Trip to Europe,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 30, 1905, 3.

94 *Nuggets of Truth and Gems from the Speeches and Letters of the Leading
In a second ironic episode, two unsigned letters appeared in January 1902 in the *Millennial Star*, the Church’s official periodical in Great Britain, which were extremely complimentary of Joseph F. Smith. In 1905, the *Deseret News* identified the author of these two letters as Frank J. Cannon. Apparently, Frank wrote the letters to curry the favor of President Smith to aid his efforts in returning to the Senate or otherwise to receive benefit from the Church. In the first letter, Frank wrote warmly, “What a comfort it is to the Saints, and what a comfort it must be to the Prophet and Patriarch beyond the veil, to see in the calling of Joseph Fielding Smith [Joseph F. Smith] to the presidency of the Church—a Church enlarged in power and in numbers throughout all the world—a rebuke to every persecutor of the work and to every traitor who sought by the slaughter of men to destroy the purposes of Almighty God.” Several weeks later, he wrote in his second letter: “Strong as they [Church leaders] are in their authority and in their power as Prophets, Seers and Revelators, they are yet as humble as children in obedience to the commandment which calls them to their high field of labor.”

The Church published both letters in a tract called *Ex-Senator’s Frank J. Cannon’s Opinion of the Mormon Prophet Joseph F. Smith*, and missionaries handed it out in towns where Frank Cannon was speaking on the Chautauqua circuit. The tract included “Frank J. Cannon” at the bottom of each letter, even though there was no such by-line in the original *Millennial Star* versions. Interestingly, Frank obtained one of the tracts, sent it to Harry Harrison in Chicago, and asked Harrison for the addresses of mission offices of the LDS Church. Harrison then supplied the addresses of the missions.

For his part, Cannon probably sincerely believed most of his crit-

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*Minds of Utah* (pamphlet) (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1892), copy in Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City.


icisms of Smith. The two were almost entirely different in personality. Heber J. Grant once referred to President Smith as "a plain blunt man [who] is lacking in cunning and the ability to shape things to suit his opinions." Frank J. Cannon may have been blunt when it suited his purposes, but he was anything but plain. He was also clever, cunning, and manipulative. His greatest skill may have been his ability to shape things precisely to suit his opinions.

After his excommunication in March 1905, Frank became even more set on waging war against the Church and its president. Opposition to the Church and those whom he blamed for his exclusion from it became his new cause. He began referring to his actions against the Church and its president as a "Great cause" and even a "Holy cause." He joined the fledgling anti-Mormon American Party in late 1904, giving it some needed credibility. The next two years showed reverses. In early 1907, the U.S. Senate voted to retain Reed Smoot in his seat, despite strenuous efforts by Frank Cannon and others. In early 1908, Frank suffered the further blow of the unexpected death of his wife, Mattie. At that point, he left the state. He appears to have taken a brief hiatus from his anti-Mormon activities, but meeting Harvey O’Higgins introduced him at a crucial moment to a larger stage from which to wage his crusade against Mormonism and Joseph F. Smith. The Redpath Bureau and the National Reform Association permitted Cannon a new, far wider platform from which to orchestrate his holy cause and he referred in correspondence to “our Great Cause” and the “crusade” in which he was engaged.

Critics of Frank J. Cannon such as the Salt Lake Herald-Republican often focused on his personal peccadilloes and unconventional behavior in attempts to undermine his credibility. Occasionally, Salt Lake City newspapers described Frank’s meetings with wealthy women to raise funds for the National Reform Association’s anti-polygamy crusade with the insinuation that such meetings had a less wor-

Kenneth L. Cannon II/Frank J. Cannon’s Campaign 109

Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, December 20, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.

97 Grant, Letterpress Diary, January 4, 1898.
98 Frank J. Cannon, “A Brief Word,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 7, 1905. Frank recognized that he might not be “permitted to retain the fraternity of his old friendships” as he embarked on this “Great cause.”
99 See for example, Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, November 9, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
thy purpose. Did Frank’s drinking and carousing continue during his national campaign against Mormonism? Or was he sufficiently engaged in the “chase” of his cause during this period that he had no need for artificial stimulation (or perhaps self-medication) while actively involved in a pursuit he craved? For a period of seven years, Cannon was on the lecture circuit almost full time, traveling constantly. If Frank lapsed into binge-drinking during this period, it should have shown up in a periodic inability to keep appointments or perform adequately on the stage. Earlier in his life, whether from inactivity, financial difficulty, political disappointment, or even stress on the job at the Tribune, Frank would lapse into drinking sprees, often being seen with prostitutes at the same time.

It is impossible to know whether Frank Cannon’s drinking and marital infidelity continued while he was on the lecture circuit, but little evidence can be mustered to indicate that he failed to appear for his lecture appointments on the Chautauqua or Lyceum circuits or as a speaker for the National Reform Association or that he was impaired at any of his lectures. Though Harry P. Harrison, Keith Vawter, and other leaders of the Chautauqua bureaus may have had little concern about Frank drinking or visiting prostitutes (at least as

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101 The fictional Sherlock Holmes sometimes used a “seven-per-cent solution” of cocaine for artificial stimulation when he was bored between cases. See, for example, Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Sign of Four,” in The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1930), 89. Similarly, Frank may have been high-functioning when he was actively engaged “in the chase” of a cause but may have self-medicated with alcohol between times, when he suffered from ennui or depression.

102 Most of the direct evidence of Frank’s earlier dalliances comes from his brother Abram’s diaries—certainly a reliable source—while other incidents are reported by political and ecclesiastical enemies. Abram’s death in 1896 curtailed that important source of information, further complicated by Frank’s residence in Colorado (1908–33). In short, sources are far from complete, but I have found only one instance of Frank’s missing a lecture (Lake Charles, Louisiana, in 1912). His letter of apology to Harry P. Harrison attributed the problem to missed railroad connections when “men mules and motors all gave out.” Frank Cannon, Letter to Harrison, January 24, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.
long as those activities did not interfere with his lectures), it is less likely that NRA leaders such as James S. Martin, a prominent Protestant official, would have been so tolerant.\(^{103}\) In addition to being radically anti-polygamy, the National Reform Association was passionately in favor of temperance and supported prohibition. Many knowledgeable early twentieth-century observers would have applied a "double standard" to Frank J. Cannon and other men of his social class with respect to marital indiscretion, but NRA leaders are unlikely to have been among this group. Frank Cannon spent weeks at a time with Martin, general superintendent of the NRA, and with other leaders of the group. Though the governing board of the NRA consisted entirely of men, the association actively involved women in its causes. Thus, given the absence of direct evidence to the contrary, it appears that Cannon may have avoided both bottle and infidelity during most of this period of his life.

Did Frank believe what he was telling his readers and listeners? Joseph J. Cannon believed that his brother had found ways to justify his accusations against his former Church and its culture: "In his own mind he surrounded himself with the glamour of a crusader. He knew he was making bleed the hearts of his kindred and of the best friends he would ever have. But he persuaded himself that such sacrifice on his part only sanctified his course. He could not turn back; that would have seemed to him an acknowledgement of being wrong. . . . His perceptions of fairness and truth grew dull, sophistry became his intellectual nourishment."\(^{104}\)

This characterization has some merit. Frank’s increasingly outrageous allegations, from Mormons somehow tipping the balance in elections in eleven Western states so that their twenty-two Senators obeyed instructions from Salt Lake City, to Joseph F. Smith having at his personal disposal hundreds of millions of dollars in trust to use as he chose without meaningful accountability, to increasing numbers of new polygamous marriages being performed annually, to Mormon missionaries teaching polygamy to European war widows—such lurid charges find little support in the historical record.

And, finally, what about the money? Cannon’s enemies always

\(^{103}\)Many of the directors of the National Reform Association were ministers or other officials in Presbyterian, Methodist, and other Protestant churches and presidents of Protestant colleges.

accused him of doing virtually anything for money. Even Harry Harrison wondered if what Frank was doing all those years was simply trying to “earn a good living.” Joseph Cannon noted Frank’s lack of financial success earlier in life as part of what had motivated him in pursuing his crusade against Joseph F. Smith and the Church. Harvey O’Higgins thought Frank to be partly dead because of the “financial ruin” the Church had caused him. The Salt Lake Herald-Republican in 1911 accused Frank of constantly selling his soul to the highest bidder, though it also asserted that he “never would stay bought.” With an annual income of over $20,000 and as high as $25,000 from lecturing alone, Frank was indeed making a very “good living.” When adjusted into today’s dollars, Frank was sometimes making the equivalent of over $500,000 per year. There is no doubt that the income and the financial security it provided to him and May were very attractive.

As 1917 closed, Chautauqua became less vital as the country became obsessed with the Great War. Frank learned that his lecture fees and schedule would both decrease. He and May visited war-torn western Europe, braving possible U-boat attacks, to interview possible speakers for the National Reform Association’s next World’s Christian Citizenship Conference. Cannon gave a new keynote speech in June 1918 to the National Reform Association not long after he and May returned from Europe. The speech, “Under Which King,” is almost entirely a call to the country to apply Christian principles to government. Only one paragraph is devoted to the “false religion” of Mormonism. For a short time, Ex-Senator Cannon gave speeches about applying Christian principles in government rather than about

107“Under Which King,” Christian Statesman 52 (October 1918): 433–41. Not surprisingly, that single passage was a vituperative one: Frank praised the earlier poverty of the Mormons, their humble circumstances, and their lack of political power and contrasted these with the Church’s “hundreds of millions of wealth,” its continued teaching and practicing of polygamy, its preaching “that its destiny is to supplant our government and establish a polygamous hierarchy,” “its priests sit[ting] in senate and house in Washington,” “its money control[ling] monopolistic industries, pro-
the Mormons. His crusade against the Mormon Church had been long and furious and it had captivated part of Progressive America, but it was running out of steam. Frank may have been a bit tired of his own message. He had also gotten older and his health was not always good. Traveling nine or ten months a year, staying in a different hotel most nights no doubt took a toll on him. He had waged his national crusade against Mormonism and Joseph F. Smith and had made a good living doing it. He was ready for something new.

Cannon’s last years can be summarized quickly. After retiring from the Chautauqua and Lyceum circuits, Frank J. Cannon became the president of a promising mining venture in Montana, a new cause. For two years in the mid-1920s, he and May lived in Pittsburgh where he chaired the Publications Committee of the National Reform Association. When Pittsburgh’s climate did not suit May, they returned to Denver where Frank became engrossed again in the silver issue, became national chair of the International Silver Commission, and spent his last few years writing and lecturing on the benefits of returning to bimetallism. Cannon and other commission directors even wrote to President Herbert Hoover, arguing that the free coinage of silver would bring the United States out of the Great De-

108 Christian Statesman 52 (October 1918): 480. This article also reported that one “preacher” who heard Cannon’s speech said, “For the first time I have heard the whole gospel. I have heard before the gospel of the individual. Now I have heard the gospel for the nation.”

109 Frank J. Cannon to William A. Colledge, February 27, 1925, Redpath Chautauqua Collection; R. L. Polk’s Pittsburgh City Directory 1924 (Pittsburgh: R. L. Polk & Co., 1924), 658. Colledge was the director of the educational department at the Redpath Bureau. In the letter, Cannon remembered “the very happy time spent by me on your platforms” and included signed copies of Under the Prophet in Utah and Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire. Frank’s oldest daughter, Dorothy Cannon Hyde, was associate editor of the Christian Statesman at the time, likely living in Pittsburgh.
pression. In July 1933 at age seventy-four, Frank J. Cannon died from complications of surgery.

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“War and Confusion in Babylon”: Mormon Reaction to German Unification, 1864–80

Zachary R. Jones

In the summer heat of 1866, as tens of thousands of Austrian and Prussian soldiers faced each other on the muggy battlefields of continental Europe and as their comrades lay wounded and dying, the England-based Mormon periodical *Millennial Star* denounced the Austro-Prussian War: “All eyes are turned towards the theater of war . . . [and] the German states.”¹ American-born LDS Apostle Orson Pratt (1811–81), president of the European Mission, zealously prophesied that these nations would be destroyed “with consuming fire” because they had rejected LDS missionaries and their message. Pratt angrily called down heavenly wrath to “thresh the nations . . . as chaff before the whirlwind; break them to pieces, as a potter’s vessels, dashed on the rocks.” Since great wars served as harbingers of Christ’s second coming, with millennial urgency Pratt urged European Mormons to “flee to Zion” and escape the “angel of death” looming over Europe.²

Mormons in Europe had previously chastised Prussia for the Second Schleswig War of 1864 and now condemned Prussia as it en-

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gaged in the Austro-Prussian War, which would result in approximately 110,000 casualties. Still to come was the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71. With apocalyptic and millennial fervor, Mormons in Europe voiced strong opposition against these wars, which they believed pointed to the second coming of Christ’s imminent return and millennial reign. While the Millennium did not begin in response to these three wars, in central Europe the loose conglomerate of German states, duchies, and independent cities combined in 1871 to form a unified and powerful Germany. In addition to the theological meanings LDS leaders associated with wars leading to German Unification in 1871, the Unification was also a transforming event for LDS missionary work in Germany.

This article examines, for the first time, the Mormon reaction to the events leading up to and following German Unification in 1871. The analysis provides telling information about nineteenth-century Mormon worldviews and culture in a European setting. For this study, I have examined the three European LDS periodicals being published during this period: the *Millennial Star* (England), *Der Stern* (Switzerland),3 and the *Skandinaviens Stjerne* (Denmark).4 Importantly, this study examines primary sources—numerous letters, diaries, and other papers—produced by Mormons residing in Europe.

3The Swiss-German Mission began publishing *Der Stern* [The Star] in 1869 in Zürich, Switzerland. It provides coverage only of the last war contributing to German Unification, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, but it did contain a great deal of information about missionary work in post-1871 Germany. During this period of study, *Der Stern* was published once a month with issues being around sixteen pages in length, and the periodical was edited by the then Swiss-German Mission President, which for the war period included German-born Karl G. Maeser (president 1868–70) and German-born Edward Schoenfeld (president 1880–72). Most of the content in the *Stern* during these years consists of translated portions of the Doctrine and Covenants, articles from the *Millennial Star*, conference reports from Utah, and published letters from missionaries, members, and Church officials. It did contain more opinion pieces during this period than the LDS Danish organ, *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, but they were few and generally short. Unlike the *Millennial Star*, Michael Mitchell argued that the editors of *Der Stern* had to tread a “more cautious path between religious enthusiasm and an apparent effort not to disturb the various German governments,” accounting for less frequent political and religious rhetoric. Michael Mitchell, “The Mormons in Wilhelmine Germany, 1870–1914: Mak-
during the period of study. Many Mormons in Europe had a worldview differing from that which often emanated from Mormons residing in Salt Lake City. As Malcolm Thorp has argued, “The farther from Church headquarters, the more filtered and adapted the message.” Thorp has also noted that British Mormons held different perceptions of some LDS theologies than American Mormons, and the sources I examined in this study show a similar finding also across continental Europe.

Studying perceptions held by Mormons in and from Europe of wars occurring in Europe between 1864 and 1870 provides insight into the decidedly different perceptions that Latter-day-Saints in America held of, for instance, the American Civil War (1861–65). Historian Richard E. Bennett argued that Mormons in the United States primarily viewed the Civil War as a war of revenge or “retributive justice,” by which God punished the United States for its cruelties against the LDS Church in Missouri and Nauvoo. In Europe, the Mormon view of war in general was not revenge based. Mormons per-

4The Scandinavian Mission published the Scandinaviens Stjerne [Scandinavian Star] in Copenhagen during this period but included disappointingly few opinion pieces on these wars, even when Denmark itself was at war. The Scandinaviens Stjerne, compared to the Millennial Star, was much more carefully written, more conservative, and much shorter than the Millennial Star, which published about three times the volume of the Stjerne annually. Ironically, the Stjerne’s content consisted almost exclusively of articles from the Millennial Star, Deseret News, addresses by Church authorities, and doctrinal excerpts available in English, with only a few letters from missionaries or the mission president. Its purpose seems to have been providing LDS material in Danish to new converts. I hypothesize that editors feared that the Danish government might frown on opinions about these wars, even to the point of closing down their press. This periodical, too, was edited by the president of the Scandinavian Mission.


6Ibid.

7Richard E. Bennett, “’We Know No North, No South, No East, No
ceived these wars as manifestations of God’s anger against nations that rejected LDS missionaries and their message. They also viewed these wars as forces to move the righteous from Europe/Babylon and to Utah/Zion.

Mormons in Europe, either new converts, long-time members, or missionaries of European or America descent, were all immersed in and part of European society, and thus encountered Europe’s history in a fashion unknown to the American Latter-day Saints who formed the majority of Mormon communities in the American West. Of the LDS missionaries mentioned in this study, 80 percent were European-born, with American-born missionaries accounting for the remaining proselytizers. Many of the European Mormons and new converts were more prone to formulate their own opinions and LDS worldview about the events close to home as they read local papers...
and interacted with the local community in its native tongue. With Church headquarters in Salt Lake City and given the attenuated dominance of American opinions and worldview in Europe, Mormons in Europe provide a model case for historical study.

The sources for this study also capture Mormon reactions to German Unification and the wars that led to Unification, thus elucidating various aspects of nineteenth-century Mormon culture in Europe. Mormons in Europe held some diversity of opinion toward war; for example, some Mormons were highly anti-war and a small minority dodged their respective nation’s military drafts, while other European Mormons fought in these wars with pride for their home country. While Mormon opinions could be diverse, most Mormons expected these wars to occur because they accepted scriptural teachings that violent conflicts would precede Christ’s return and millennial reign. To Latter-day Saints, warfare in Europe demonstrated that Europe was a modern Babylon from which the Saints should flee, seeking refuge in Zion before God poured out apocalyptic wrath upon rebellious nations, wiping them from the face of the earth. According to this LDS perspective, it was not kings and ministers who caused these wars; rather, it was God who toppled thrones and allowed the wicked to punish the wicked in Europe. God controlled the fate of humankind.

Additionally, these wars affected Mormon missionaries proselytizing in Europe by adding an apocalyptic urgency to the LDS message. Importantly, European Mission presidents like Apostles Albert Carrington and Joseph F. Smith, both Americans, saw the wars leading to German Unification, and the political transformations that accompanied Unification, as forces that prepared Germany for

be as high as 89 percent (p. 222). Bartholomew also reviews the historiography of Europeans conducting missionary work in their homelands. Other studies, such as my past work on Mormonism in Russia, and a more comprehensive work on the topic by Kim Östman, show that most of the missionaries preaching in Russian Finland during the latter nineteenth century were European-born. Zachary R. Jones, “Conversion amid Conflict: Mormon Proselytizing in Russian Finland: 1860–1914,” *Journal of Mormon History* 36 (Summer 2009): 1–44; and Kim Östman, *The Introduction of Mormonism into Finnish Society, 1840–1900* (Åbo, Finland: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2010). Östman’s book is available online at http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/66629.
As argued by Craig Livingston, a specialist in the 1848 revolutions of Europe, Church leaders perceived in those semi-failed upheavals and the progressive reform that emerged briefly from them that some areas of Europe were now prepared for the LDS message. As a result, Church leaders opened missions in Scandinavia, France, the Italian states, Switzerland, and the Germany states between 1849 and 1852. Excluding missionary work in Scandinavia and, in part, Switzerland, these missions eventually failed or came to a standstill within a few decades because laws, political culture, and socio-religious culture inhibited Mormon proselytizing. Still, such hope for new mission fields on continental Europe demonstrates that Mormon leaders perceived the 1848 revolutions and subsequent continental wars as refiner’s fires—forces that could usher in favorable conditions for missionary work.

Perhaps the most conspicuous success in renewed missionary work occurred in Germany. In 1875 American-born Apostle Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), then president of the European Mission, saw the progressive reforms that emerged from German Unification and the new constitution’s religious tolerance laws as reasons to refocus missionary efforts in Germany. Four years earlier, his predecessor, Apostle Albert Carrington, had urged renewed missionary work in German lands; but it was Smith’s visit to the Swiss-German Mission in 1875 and his commanding directive that pushed the work forward:

Craig Livingston, “Eyes on “the Whole European World”: Mormon Observers of the 1848 Revolutions,” *Journal of Mormon History* 35 (Fall 2005): 78–112.

 Unified Germany adopted a progressive (for the period) constitution that was applied to all of the states in Germany. Some states followed these laws differently than others, but the constitution granted religious toleration to all Christian sects and disbanded the former state church, Catholicism, in some German states. Apostle John Taylor had launched missionary work in Hamburg, Germany, in 1851, but they soon had to terminate operations in Hamburg. Mormonism was officially banned in Prussia in 1853. At that point, responsibility for missionary work in German lands was transferred to the Swiss-German Mission, but little missionary work occurred in the German states until the 1870s. Gilbert W. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany between 1840 and 1970* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970).
“The day of religious liberty has dawned in the mighty Empire of Germany.” He ordered proselytizing to begin anew in Germany notwithstanding opposition, current or previously forecast by the Swiss-German Mission. However, missionary work did not meet with the same success in Germany as it had in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, for reasons which I also briefly examine.

While a fair amount has been written about some aspects of Mormonism in twentieth-century Germany, scholarly studies of how European history affected Mormonism in Germany prior to World War I are sparse and usually date from the 1960s and 1970s. D. L. Ashliman’s 1967 survey of the image of Mormonism in nineteenth-century German literature briefly summarizes some—but not all—prominent German travel accounts through the Rocky Mountain region but concludes that most German authors found Mormonism to be a radical sect, not suited to German culture. Two subsequent studies examined LDS populations in specific German cities, Bremen and Wilhelmine, but both primarily focus on post-1882 events, a decade after Unification. Gilbert Scharffs’s 1970 Mormonism in Germany remains the only, now outdated, general survey in English of Mormon history in Germany, but it largely fails to accurately describe nineteenth-century Mormonism, place Mormonism in the historical context of nineteenth-century Germany, and present an objective narrative. Although also dated, perhaps the best study on Mormonism in early Germany is Albert Riedel’s 1971 Die Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Missionen der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage

11“Our Visit to the Danish and Swiss Missions,” Millennial Star 37 (June 21, 1875): 394; and “Bericht einer Conferenz, geholten in Bern, 6 June 1875,” Der Stern 7 (June 1875): 103.

(History of the German Speaking Missions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), but it does not examine the effects of German Unification on Mormonism in detail. Thus, this study breaks new ground on the history of Mormonism in Germany and Europe in general.

Although no scholar has examined the Mormon response to German Unification in detail, perhaps findings from my study most closely link with ideas examined in Grant Underwood’s *The Millennial World of Early Mormonism*. As Underwood demonstrates, nineteenth-century Mormonism was saturated with apocalyptic millennial belief. As premillennialists, Mormons believed the world would be “cleansed” by the destruction of the wicked before Christ’s return and millennial reign. Mormons were apocalyptic about this event because they felt that “the suffering righteous will be vindicated and their evil oppressors vanquished.” Mormon worldviews were religiously framed: Opposition was of the devil, forces that aided them were divine. Mormons believed “that they would act out Biblical narratives in their own lives” and gather Israel before Christ’s return. Underwood also describes the Mormon view that “power structures” were “fully controlled by the adversary” but that “divine intervention” would “dramatically, even cataclysmically,” redress that balance as “superhuman forces square off in the final showdown of good and evil.”

As this study documents, Mormons in Europe viewed the wars leading to German Unification with apocalyptic millennial urgency. In the words of Orson Pratt, if European nations failed to accept the LDS message, “their governments [would] be broken to pieces . . . [and God would] blot them out from under heaven.” While Pratt’s prophecy proved incorrect, his words and those of other Mormons in Europe tell scholars a great deal about Mormonism in nineteenth-century Europe.

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BACKGROUND ABOUT GERMAN UNIFICATION

The Unification of Germany took place on January 18, 1871, as the North German Confederation and its allies from the southern German states met at the Palace of Versailles in France and King Wilhelm I was proclaimed the new German emperor. The road to this meeting was long, complex, and years in the making. Although many were involved, Unification had been largely orchestrated by Otto von Bismarck, Prussian prime minister and chancellor, who served in the Prussian government from 1862 to 1890. While scholarly opinion is divided on whether Bismarck aimed from the beginning of his rule to unify the German states, it is clear that he used political power, strategic rumor, calculated negotiation, and industrial and military might to successfully provoke and win a series of wars between 1864 and 1871 resulting in the political unification of the German states. Throughout this state-building process, Bismarck managed to position Prussia in ways that avoided interference by the greater nations of Europe, such as Britain, Russia, or (with one exception in 1871), France.16

Before Unification occurred, as historian David Welch states: “The term Germany had no real political significance at the beginning of the nineteenth century” primarily because a German nation did not exist.17 Prior to 1806 the territories that comprise Germany today were actually a loosely organized collection of nation-states, duchies, or independent cities (often referred to as German states), within an eclectic entity known as the Holy Roman Empire. There was, as some contemporary historians enjoy remarking, nothing holy, Roman, or empire-like about the Holy Roman Empire, since all of these political entities generally operated autonomously with their own individual laws, political culture, and governing structures. During the Napoleonic wars, the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved in 1806, various German states were organized, and the ideas of the Enlightenment penetrated these lands more fully.

In 1848 a series of liberal revolutions unseated several govern-


ments in the German states. In Frankfurt a group of private citizens sought to organize a united Germany by constitutional methods but failed because they lacked the political power to bring such an event to fruition. They also failed because German culture was “sober, orderly, and respectful” toward authority and much of the German populace was “insufficiently revolutionary.” Built upon some concepts of *Alldutsche Bewegung*, or Pan-Germanism—a nineteenth-century political movement that sought unity among the German-speaking people of Europe, this ideological movement spread the concept of a united German nation. During the coming years, these ideas remained alive—and sometimes flared with intensity—amid political and cultural change.

Within a decade and a half of the 1848 revolutions, Prussia, one of the more populous, industrialized, and militarized northern German states—with a parliamentary government (Reichstag)—selected conservative Otto von Bismarck as its prime minister. Bismarck, an intelligent politician with a middle-class background, managed Prussia with his political ideology of *Realpolitik*, which claimed to focus on governing by practical rather than ideological methods. During this period, other small groups of nation-states—such as modern Italy and Denmark—were working to unify and expand.

In 1864 Denmark sought to annex the nation-state of Schleswig on its south border, which had both a German and Danish population. Bismarck saw an opportunity. The German people and a German confederation in the Schleswig government did not wish to become part of the Danish empire and called on Prussia for protection. Not wishing to act alone, Bismarck secured Austria as an ally and quickly defeated the Danish in what has come to be known as the Second Schleswig War (February to October 1864), a conflict that caused approximately 4,000 casualties. In the resulting 1864 Treaty of Vienna, Denmark ceded the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and

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Lauenburg to Prussian and Austrian administration.21

The joint oversight by Prussia and Austria almost immediately ran into political strife, as each nation had different ideas about the governance of these new territories. As one historian put it, “From 1864 to 1866, Prussia and Austria behaved a little like boxers seeking a good sparring position in the ring.”22 After nearly two years of political posturing and disparaging political dialogue, in the spring of 1866 Prussia attacked Austria and its allied neighboring German states in what has come to be known as the Austro-Prussian War, or Seven Weeks War, which accounted for approximately 110,000 casualties, mostly on the Austrian side. Prussia’s new needle-gun rifle technology, robust military strategy, and new railway system gave it overwhelming advantages.23 At the Peace of Prague on August 23, 1866, Prussia annexed most of Austria’s former allies and all German states north of the Main River. Prussia formed these new acquisitions into the semi-unified North German Confederation, making Prussia the dominant power in the North German Confederation and providing the new political nation-state with a constitution. German nationalism and fear of French aggression later compelled the remaining small independent states to the south to ally with the North German Confederation at the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War.24

The origins of the Franco-Prussian War (fought July 15, 1870, to February 1, 1871) are complex, but telling. In 1870 a revolution in Spain unseated its monarchy there, and the provisional government asked Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, cousin of the king of Prussia,
to take the Spanish throne. French fears of being surrounded by German influence prompted the French to open negotiations with Bismarck in hopes of discouraging such a move. In a rather typical and diplomatically phrased dispatch, a French diplomat explained France’s position; but Bismarck doctored this dispatch to make it appear that the Prussian king had been insulted and the French minister snubbed. He then mailed copies of this tailored letter to newspapers in France and the German states. As Bismarck expected, the angry public called for war, and the weaker and smaller German states in the south allied with Prussia. The brief war that followed resulted in approximately 415,000 casualties. Nearly half a million French soldiers were taken prisoner. Most dramatically, at the Battle of Sedan, Emperor Napoleon III was taken prisoner, and France erupted into revolution, known as the Paris Commune. The Unification of Germany took place on January 18, 1871, as the North German Confederation and its allies from the southern German states met at the Palace of Versailles and euphorically proclaimed King Wilhelm I (1797–1888) as the new German emperor.

In the succeeding years, the newly created Germany struggled to rebuild its economy after a collapse in 1872 and to consolidate the state’s power by attacking Catholic influence in Germany. This undertaking, known as Kulturkampf (“culture struggle”), confiscated property held by the Catholic Church, reduced its power in secular affairs, and expelled the Jesuit order. Kulturkampf produced nationalist fervor among German Protestants, a strong anti-Catholic rhetoric across Protestant regions of Germany, and further discrimination against some religious groups, such as German Jews.

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25La Commune de Paris (the Paris Commune) was a revolutionary government that ruled Paris from March to May 1871 consisting of socialists and anarchists who took over France’s government after Napoleon III’s capture, and was hailed as the first government take-over by the working class. For the Mormon response to this event, see Livingston, “From Above and Below,” 233–43.


MORMON RESPONSE TO THE WARS OF GERMAN UNIFICATION, 1864–71

In the wake of these turbulent events, Mormons in Europe responded to the Prussian wars and German Unification in a variety of ways. Most Mormons in Europe during this period were located in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia and a few other pockets within Europe. Only a few hundred Mormons lived in Switzerland and German lands. Mormons in Europe responded to Prussian wars in several ways, but many reacted with apocalyptic millennial fervor, called for God to punish Prussia, and argued that Prussia was at war because its government had rejected the LDS message. Orson Pratt was typical in warning that the earth was ripe with wickedness and nearly prepared for Christ’s millennial return and reign. He therefore called on the “elect” of Europe to be baptized into the restored Church and “flee to Zion for safety.”

An examination of the Mormon response to the Second Schleswig War (fought February to October 1864) reveals Mormon worldviews and shows how the war impacted the LDS ministry in Europe. The mobilization of troops in 1863 and the political turmoil that led to the war in 1864 did not go unnoticed by missionaries laboring in Europe. Missionaries, such as those serving in the Swiss-Italian-German Mission lamented the mobilization of troops in 1863 and the political turmoil that erupted into war the next year. John Lyman Smith (1823–93), an American-born Mormon who was proselytizing in Geneva, Switzerland, penned in his diary in July 1863 that George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), a British-born apostle then serving as European Mission president, was slow in deploying additional missionaries to the Swiss-Italian-German Mission on account of the “prospects of war, war, war.” Smith understood Cannon’s reluctance, since “ev-

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29The Swiss Mission was named variously the Swiss-Italian Mission (1856–61), Swiss-Italian-German Mission (1861–68), and Swiss-German Mission (1868–97), often reflecting areas of jurisdiction.
ery prospect bids fair for a general war to commence in Europe . . . [and] all the powers of Europe seem to be taking sides."

The military mobilization of Prussia and Denmark most seriously impacted missionary work in Denmark where LDS missionaries had seen substantial success. In December 1863, Jesse Nathaniel Smith (1834–1906), the American-born president of the Scandinavian Mission, reported from Copenhagen to George Q. Cannon that "great preparations are being made for a war with Germany, . . . a number of the brethren have already been drafted as soldiers for the standing army," and "several of our missionaries, including not less than three Conference Presidents, have thus been drafted." Smith reported general reactions by Mormon men to the draft in Denmark: "Some endeavor to escape by flight, while others submit tranquilly to their fate." In consequence, mobilization left "the Mission thus deprived of its Elders." Of particular interest is his nonjudgmental description of Mormons as both participating in the army and as dodging the draft. Yet looking on the positive side, Jesse N. Smith predicted that, "should the war break out, it will no doubt have the effect to awaken the indifferent and the careless . . . and bring many into the Church." Although Smith believed warfare was something to be avoided, nonetheless, he felt that military conflicts bolstered conversion potential by humbling the masses and preparing them for the LDS message.

During the course of the eight-month war that followed, the Skandinaviens Stjerne made regular, though short, reports on how Denmark fared in the war. These reports described battles, troop movements, and casualties, and expressed dismay at the calamities of modern warfare. Reflecting on this bloody conflict, Carl Widerborg

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31 Though sources are limited about draft dodging, it seems to have been somewhat common. Andrew Jenson, History of the Scandinavian Mission (1927; rpt., New York City: Arno Press, 1979), 180, stated that many converted Danes hurried to "emigrate to Utah before they were drafted."


33 For examples from the Skandinaviens Stjerne, see "Ruheder," 14
(1814–69), the Swedish-born president of the Scandinavian Mission and editor of the Stjerne, saw an apocalyptic meaning in the war, warned that “the people [of Denmark] have given themselves to this dangerous cause without oil in their lamps,” and urged them to accept the LDS gospel message. Also, because of the war, Widerborg gave strong counsel for converts to flee from “Babylon” and immigrate to Zion. Since LDS missionaries felt they were gathering the children of Israel and thereby fulfilling a biblical prophecy of the last days, they strongly preached that converts had little time to waste before the earth was devastated before Christ’s return.

During the war, Widerborg published a special address to the Scandinavian Saints, counseling them on how to react: “At this time war and turmoil transpire on the earth, and nations tremble, moving toward an apocalyptic battle, you should gather with your kindred in thousands, yes millions—gather as God’s people in the Rocky Mountain valley in the faraway west, and there grow gradually into a nation. . . . Peace is better than war, to build up is better than to break down, and to plant and bring forth is better than to destroy and obliterate.”

At the end of 1864, two months after the war’s end, Widerborg reported to George Q. Cannon on the war’s impact. The number of baptisms “this year has not been so large as in former years, on account of the unhappy war, which tore many of our best Elders from their fields of labor” and drafted them into the Danish army. Though missionaries in Europe used the war to encourage baptisms and migration, in point of fact, during and after the war, numbers dropped significantly.
The war also impacted Mormonism in Denmark in other ways. According to the *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, because of the problems and fears associated with the Prussian army’s advance toward Denmark, the quarterly Scandinavian Mission Conference meetings for the spring, summer, and fall of 1864 were held in Malmö, Sweden, rather than the traditional site in Copenhagen. Writing in 1927, Danish-born LDS historian Andrew Jenson (1850–1941) reported in his *History of the Scandinavian Mission* that in May 1864 Prussian soldiers broke through at Aalborg. These “troops took possession of the Saints’ meeting hall, and thus prevented meetings from being held there for some time.” Near the town of Fyen, where Danish troops were stationed, a number of LDS missionaries preaching in the area were “taken prisoners and tried as spies, followed by a short imprisonment.” Overall, the war negatively affected Mormon missionary efforts, congregational life, and the LDS message from Church leaders in Denmark.

Writing from European Mission headquarters in England, George Q. Cannon in December 1863 discussed this “European crisis” and how “war . . . [was] trembling in the balance.” He hoped France could calm the various European powers poised for war by forming a European Congress that could “decide upon the Schleswig-Holstein question.” Despite this hope, he admitted feeling that “war is imminent between Germany and Denmark.” Shifting from political to religious views, Cannon asserted with scriptural allusion: “Babylon, of which the nations of Europe form so large a part, must fall” and “war will be one of the agencies by which that fall will be brought about.” Clearly, as Cannon argued, “war is to be poured out upon all nations” as part of God’s plan for ushering in the Savior’s second coming. Since Europe could not avoid being subjected to God’s wrath, Cannon quoted portions of Revelations 18:4 and wrote that “the voice from heaven” could be heard through LDS missionaries calling upon “the people of God to come out of her [Babylon/Europe], that they might not be partakers in or receive of the calamities
and evils with which she is to be visited.”

Two months later, the war began, and Cannon reported how “the prospects for the gathering of the Saints from Scandinavia have been rather gloomy . . . through the seizure of those provinces by the German Powers, the route by which the Saints usually traveled.” But for those “who wished to escape from the war and confusion in Babylon,” the Lord would open doors. As Malcolm Thorp has observed, the concept of “the gathering” was a distinct way in which the Mormons were able to advance the coming kingdom,” and missionaries during this war preached the message of gathering with urgency. Mormons in Europe during this period thus perceived the political situation in spiritual terms—as a heavenly scene playing out before the eyes of God. LDS teachings on Europe, with its complexities, ideologies, and conflicts, perceived Europe as Babylon, a den of wickedness controlled by Satan. LDS missionaries saw themselves as preaching in Babylon, a place outside Zion; and their God-ordained duty was to rescue souls through baptism and send them to Zion in the Utah Territory.

Cannon published another editorial in July, during the sixth month of the war, in which he urgently drew on apocalyptic scripture to describe the “signs of the times.” During the confusion and terrors of war, the “fearful are looking” to the Lord; the “abyss . . . is yawning at their feet” and the “clouds of war darken the horizon.” Loosely quoting portions of Doctrine & Covenants 87, Cannon wrote that those who correctly read the signs of the time understand that “the time seems to be very near at hand when the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn and be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God.” But despite this ripening wickedness, the righteous perceive the escape offered by a millennial worldview. Quoting Psalms 33:12, Cannon argued the Saints could “exclaim with heartfelt joy ‘Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord;
and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.” Mormons need not fear these tumultuous times, for the Lord would protect them and Christ would soon return to reign on earth.

The Second Schleswig War ended in October 1864 with the signing of the Treaty of Vienna; but for the next year and a half, relations between Prussia and its former ally, Austria, deteriorated. Mormons watched these developments alertly. In March of 1866 as the opposing powers poised for war, Latter-day Saints in England saw these military preparations as a sign that “the world is retrograding.” In Norway, Danish-born missionary Christopher Olsen Folkmann (1827–1915) reported to President Carl Widerborg that a local earthquake had rocked Trondheim’s church, causing its bells to ring. Reflecting apocalyptically on this “divine omen,” Folkmann stated: “The Lord is fulfilling his words, ‘There shall be signs in heaven and on earth, and earthquakes in divers places.’ I fully believe that we are on the threshold of great events, and that the nations on the Continent will soon be involved in a burning war.” One month later Abraham Hatch, an American missionary working in Birmingham, England, penned in his diary that “war seems inevitable in Europe.” These assumptions proved correct as the Austro-Prussian War broke out in June 1866. After June 1866, the editors of LDS periodicals in Europe regularly reprinted news articles from leading European papers that denounced past wars and voiced opposition to the Austro-Prussian War. Mormons in Europe held fast to an anti-war agenda during the 1860s, especially vocal individuals like Apostle Orson Pratt.

In June 1866, Pratt set the tone for the Mormon position in his Millennial Star headline address: “War.” As historian Grant Underwood has described, for premillennial Mormons, “humanity was differentiated not by race or rank but its response to the gospel mes-

45“How We View It,” Millennial Star 28 (March 24, 1866): 185.
46Christopher O. Folkmann, Letter to Carl Widerborg, Trondheim, March 21, 1866, Millennial Star 28 (April 7, 1866): 220–21. Folkmann’s first name was also often spelled “Christoffer.”
Since the participants in this war had rejected the LDS message, Pratt’s lengthy editorial, in tones that were, by turn, melancholy, prophetic, revolutionary, apocalyptic, and millennial, called for the brutal destruction of these warring nations, their soldiers, and their civilian populations.

Pratt began: “When the Almighty determines to punish nations for their sins, he not infrequently accomplishes his purposes through the medium of war.” Rhetorically addressing Prussia, he asked: “Why are your borders menaced with strong and powerful armies?” He answered: “It is because you, through the wickedness of your rulers, and your unrighteous laws, rejected the great message which God sent you by his faithful servants...[and now] God has rejected you.” That rejection had unleashed a punishing whirlwind: “Christians are drunken with the blood of Christians! Madly raging, with demonic yells...brothers plunging the deadly steel in each other’s hearts...and their spirits dragged down to hell, to suffer the dreadful vengeance of eternal justice.” He prophesied that Prussia “will cease to be a kingdom; and if you still persist to fight against God and cast out his servants, you shall be utterly overthrown.”

Since Austria had also rejected the LDS gospel, Pratt chastised them as sinners facing God’s wrath; “Your sins have reached the heavens!...[and] woes, fearful desolations, and raging pestilences, will sweep over your guilty provinces, and the end thereof shall be with consuming fire.” The allied German states would fare no better: “Let Saxony be called desolation...Let the kingdoms of Hanover, and Bavaria, and the minor states of Germany, be seized with trembling; let their hearts be faint; let sorrow and mourning enter their habitations, and let the angel of death persecute them.” If these nations continue to “thrust the servants and Prophets of God into their loathsome prisons...let their thrones be cast down, and their governments be broken to pieces...[S]cart them as chaff before the furious whirlwind; break them to pieces, as a potter’s vessels...[and] blot them out from under heaven.”

An apostolic condemnation and invocation of divine wrath against warring nations held great weight with Mormons in Europe. A month later, the Millennial Star followed up with an article enumer-

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49 Underwood, The Millennial World of Early Mormonism, 43.
51 Ibid.
ating the number of soldiers each warring nation had mustered and a chronology of the war to date.\(^{52}\) Despite terrible casualties, however, the war lasted only seven weeks and ended with increased lands and power for Prussia, the creation of the North German Confederation, and peace concessions in the Treaty of Prague that dealt leniently with Austria.\(^{53}\) This outcome left Pratt’s predictions obviously incorrect, and the *Millennial Star* remained silent about the war’s outcome except for reprinting occasional anti-war articles from various European national newspapers.

In the years that followed, as German power increased and France began to fear the changing balance of power, relations between the two powers deteriorated. In July 1870 war erupted. By the end of hostilities in May 1871, the Franco-Prussia War resulted in approximately 415,000 casualties, nearly half a million French soldiers were taken prisoner, Paris had been shelled by the German army, and Paris erupted into revolution. British-born missionary John Jaques (1827–1900), who edited the *Millennial Star* (1870–71), wrote in August, one month into the fighting, how the new military technology assured that these battles were a “mutual destruction... with armies mowing each other down like ripened grain.” He concluded that the “wicked will continue to slay the wicked.”\(^ {54}\)

In a second Jaques article published that same month, Jaques saw the war, with “France and Prussia hard at work at the gory business of destruction” and struggling in “the deadly vortex of strife,” as proof of Christ’s imminent return. It was therefore incumbent on the people of England to repent, “obey [the] divine command” to be baptized, and “come out of her [Babylon/Europe], my people.” Only in Zion could one “escape the judgments which He has determined to pour out upon the wicked world.”\(^ {55}\)

Although Mormon converts in Europe were encouraged to flee to Zion, in a reply to correspondence from Swiss-German Mission leaders who had expressed anxiety about the ongoing war, Joseph U.

\(^{52}\)“German States” and “Chronology of the War in Germany,” *Millennial Star* 28 (July 21, 1866): 459–64.


Oheim, a Munich Latter-day Saint, confessed: “I, too, at the outbreak of the war looked to the future with a troubled heart.” Oheim then reported that a Brother Riedl, “perhaps . . . the only Mormon in the German army in France,” had luckily “become a valet to a ranking commissioned officer and so he doesn’t have to go into the fray.” For Oheim, the warmongers who created this conflict were “proud men in a delusion of darkness.” Oheim concluded with expressions of joy about the resurrection and his testimony that “Earth will be a paradise” when Christ returned.56*

While some Mormons in Europe expressed anxiety over the Second Coming, mission leaders also commented on how the war had practical consequences for Latter-day Saints in Europe. In 1870 Edward Schoenfeld (1838–1914), German-born president of the Swiss-German Mission, lamented the depressed wartime economy to the American president of the European Mission, Horace S. Eldredge (1816–88), and the resultant suffering of the Saints: “Their work is stopped and their little savings have to be spent for bread.” Schoenfeld “kept telling them, however, that they must do the best they can, that it is our Father’s business to provide for His children here, that He will deliver every one from Babylon in His own time.”57** According to Schoenfeld in another letter to Eldredge, to reinforce the faith of Swiss Mormons “I tell the Saints to look around upon their neighboring countries and upon the destruction there going on.” Such comparisons will help them “begin to realize that in the time of such kingdoms, God in Heaven has set up a kingdom which shall stand forever.”58***

During the winter of 1870–71, as German and French forces fought, Swiss Latter-day Saints felt surrounded because “war rages like a ring around us.”59**** In January 1871, Schoenfeld’s New Year’s message in Der Stern tried to present a positive message to the isolated Saints in the region, even though he acknowledged that the war made him long for the safety of “Deseret in the Mountains of Zion,” and he

56*Joseph A. Oheim, Letter to Der Stern, Munich, October 13, 1870, Der Stern 2 (December 1870): 192.
continued to encourage converts to immigrate to Zion.\textsuperscript{60}

As the war continued into 1871, John Jaques editorialized in the 
\textit{Millennial Star} on the outlook of the war and his religious worldview.
Jaques expressed his longing for the Second Coming and Christ’s removal of war and wickedness from the earth with four words, “Alas for the millennium.”\textsuperscript{61} For Jaques, the tumult of war demonstrated that secular knowledge did not improve society. Speaking of Prussia’s and France’s supposed scientific accomplishments, he posed the rhetorical question; “Did science teach those two nations how, or not to, murder each other? Did science save France from unprecedented disaster and ruin? . . . No.” Rather, “the true Messiah to come, and his Gospel is [sic] the only means of obtaining a correct knowledge.”\textsuperscript{62}

As these wars ended, and Mormons in Europe continued their missionary labors, their words on these conflicts provide important information on the worldviews of Latter-day Saints in Europe. Sources show that most Mormons in Europe were highly anti-war, viewed wars as signs that Christ would soon return for his millennial reign, and that only God could and did control the fate of mankind. Some Latter-day Saints argued that advances in secular society were less significant than the saving knowledge of the LDS gospel. However, as this study documents, convincing Germans of the importance of the LDS message proved very difficult.

\textbf{CONDITIONS IN THE SWISS MISSION PRIOR TO 1871}

Although the 1871 Unification of Germany ushered in a new period of dealing internally with religions and changed LDS perceptions on the possibility of missionary work within Germany, between 1852 and 1871, proselytizing in the German states often encountered or resulted in public opposition, termination of LDS operations, or stagnation of missionary work. Before discussing aspects of Mormonism in post-1871 Germany, it is important to briefly elucidate the background of LDS efforts in German lands from 1852 to 1871.

After the Revolutions of 1848, Christian churches with mis-

\textsuperscript{60}Edward Schoenfeld, “Das neue Jahr,” \textit{Der Stern} 3 (January 1871): 10.
\textsuperscript{61}“The Outlook—What the Papers Say,” \textit{Millennial Star} 33 (January 17, 1871): 33.
sionary programs based in America, England, and some within continental Europe perceived that conditions in Germany would be more favorable for proselytizing. For example, although American Baptists had evangelized in German lands since 1834, Baptist leaders believed the “1848 revolution helped in the Baptist struggle for religious freedom.” It was an optimistic view that buoyed them up despite encountering political opposition for the next half century.63

The LDS European Mission presidency, headquartered consistently in England, also hoped that the 1848 Revolutions foreshadowed a more welcoming environment for the Mormon message.64 As a result, the German Mission was opened in 1852 with a short-lived proselytizing venture headquartered at Hamburg, where the German language periodical *Zions Panier* (Zion’s Banner) was published for approximately one year before being discontinued. The German Mission struggled to find converts as local German authorities zealously stamped out Mormon activities, convinced that Mormonism was a radical religion. Prussia issued a formal ban on Mormonism in 1853 for similar reasons,65 which prompted the German Mission to close in 1855. The German Mission did not reopen again for approximately four decades, until 1898.

After 1855 missionary work in the German states, though fleeting to occasionally nonexistent depending on the time, fell under the responsibility of the small Swiss Mission headquartered in Switzerland. At times the Swiss Mission was named the Swiss-Italian Mission (1856–61), Swiss-Italian-German Mission (1861–68), and Swiss-German Mission (1868–97), the name usually reflecting areas of jurisdiction. Switzerland remained the mission headquarters because it was the lone nation in central Europe generally known for its ideological and religious tolerance (although Mormonism did not find warm acceptance there either). From 1856 to 1861, the Swiss-Italian Mission was headquartered on a rotating basis at Geneva, Bern, and Zürich, moves prompted by political opposition. Mission leaders published another short-lived (1855–61) German lan-

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64Livingston, “Eyes on ‘the Whole European World,’” 78–112.
language LDS periodical, *Der Darsteller der Heiligen der letzten Tage* (The Protagonists of the Saints of the Last Days).*66*

The Swiss-Italian-German Mission’s headquarters then moved back to Geneva where it operated from 1861 to 1864 before rebounding to Zürich.*67* During its Geneva period, the mission published another German language LDS periodical, *Die Reform* (The Reform), from 1862 to February 1864.*68* Nearly all of the proportionally few missionaries sent to either preach or reconnoiter conditions in German lands between 1855 and 1871 were arrested on the grounds that they were proselytizing illegally or fled the area to avoid arrest. Although these efforts produced a small number of converts and the establishment of short-lived branches in a few towns like Oldenburg and Karlsruhe, as late as January 1867, mission leaders still “did not risk going into Germany.”*69*

In mid-1867, German-born convert Karl G. Maeser (1828–1901) was made head of the Swiss-Italian-German Mission (renamed the Swiss-German Mission in 1868) and sought, against repressive conditions, to renew missionary efforts in his native land. Maeser orchestrated the beginnings of the first enduring German-language LDS periodical, *Der Stern* (The Star, published 1868–1971).*70* In many ways, the stability of LDS periodicals in Europe is representative of mission stability. But compared to work in the United Kingdom or in the Scandinavian Mission, the Swiss Mission was surely a small, unstable,

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*67* This mission was also, on rare occasions, assigned responsibility for France and the Netherlands. Such reorganizations were the decision of ranking Church leaders when the mission was yielding few converts and encountering stiff opposition. For headquarters locations and mission names, see Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, appendices.

*68* I also reviewed portions of *Die Reform* for this study, but did not find any content concerning the wars, partly it seems, because the Second Schleswig War started after this periodical was terminated.


*70* This periodical—and nearly all others like it—were terminated in 1971 when Church headquarters in Salt Lake City centralized the publication and content of all Church periodicals. Mission newspapers like *Der Stern* and the *Millennial Star* discontinued publication, and the *Ensign* or *Liahona* took their place thereafter.
and high-risk LDS missionary outpost, to which few missionaries were assigned and from which only about a hundred converts emerged annually during the 1860s. Since there was, as William Wollerton Ritter, president of the Swiss-Italian-German Mission, mentioned in an 1864 letter to European Mission President George Q. Cannon, a “spirit of persecution” from political spheres toward Mormons in the German states, very little proselytizing occurred in the German states between 1855 and 1871.

When missionaries did enter German lands to reconnoiter conditions between 1861 and 1864, they encountered the commonplace but discouraging difficulties prevalent in many other German cities and states. In 1861 two missionaries, Swiss-born Peter Fredrick Goss (1840–1919) and German-born Carl Christian Schramm (1838–1909), ventured into German lands and were imprisoned for five days in the village of Olligen (near present-day Durlach, Germany) for distributing tracts without legal permission. The following year another attempt was made by German-born missionary Johannes Gottlieb Beck (1836–1920) near Stuttgart, but he was incarcerated three times. That winter at Adorf, when German-born missionary Fredrick Ernst Mueller (1830–1904) held a meeting, he afterwards claimed that some members of the audience “had come to assassinate him, but were mellowed by his message.” As Ritter reported, “In Germany all is at a standstill and it seems that only the Almighty can break the iron laws” that inhibit LDS missionary work. While the arrests and problems were partly a result of the missionaries’ ille-

71Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany. As a priority, Church headquarters called missionaries to the Swiss Mission who were German- or Swiss-born and fluent in German or French, though Americans or British converts also served as missionaries.

72I have been unable to find definitive biographical information about W. W. Ritter, but sources indicated he was of Germanic birth.


74Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 23.

75Swiss-German-Italian Mission Manuscript History, December 31, 1862, LDS Church History Library, quoted in Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 23. The sources are unclear if this step was motivated by personal, religious or political forces, but I would suspect it was either personally or religiously motivated—surely not political.
gally proselytizing, the depressive effect was a moratorium on sending missionaries in significant numbers into German lands.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, missionaries and their leaders laboring in the Swiss Mission, and the German-speaking converts, possessed a resolute outlook. Missionaries spent hours proselytizing with little success and traveling through areas where they remained unwelcome—conditions that contributed to the spiritual worldview held by missionaries and members in these lands. During this period, the Swiss-German Mission began reissuing German-language copies of the Book of Mormon and *A Voice of Warning*. These missionaries knocked on hundreds of doors, held public meetings, conversed with people on the streets, were imprisoned, banished, and traveled great distances by boat and train all in search of the “true disciples of Christ.”

Converts, too, in the Swiss-German Mission shared the message with their friends that led to baptisms. Especially notable were the efforts of Latter-day Saint German women. According to Swiss-German mission leader Charles H. Wilcken, who spoke at a European Mission conference in England “Many owed their conversion partly to the quiet labors of some of the sisters, . . . by inviting their neighbors to their houses, and when opportunity offered, introducing them to the Elders.”

In an 1864 letter to George Q. Cannon, European Mission president, William W. Ritter, president of the Swiss-Italian-German Mission, interpreted the political and legal institutions repressing LDS proselytizing in the German states as evidence that “the Devil is busy as work to counteract the efforts of God’s servants.” The Mormon missionary worldview was framed around the perception of a struggle between good and evil, a battle between God and Satan, which was typical of LDS missionaries across Europe in the nineteenth century. Ritter was energized by the belief that “if God is for us, who can be against us?” and that if the Lord inspired the German states to institute religious liberty laws, “it would yield a rich harvest of souls.”

Missionary work in German lands, however, was not easy for any

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76Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 23.
faith. American Baptists who were seeking to find converts in Germany during this period met with fierce resistance. By using the “every Baptist a missionary” slogan, Baptists found many converts prior to 1871, but ran into a recurring problem: “The local authorities tried to stamp out the work by forbidding meetings under penalty of fines and imprisonment.” In some ways, Baptists were subjected to more intense persecution than Mormons. For example, in Hanover “the police took newborn children from their [Baptist] parents and forcibly had them baptized in the official Lutheran Church, while members were dragged from their beds in the middle of the night and interrogated.”

Although Mormon missionaries felt they were bringing God’s message to Europe, Mormonism had a low reputation in Germany. The most popular scholarly studies were *Die Mormonen: Ihr Prophet, ihr Staat und ihr Glaube* (The Mormons: Their Prophet, Their State, and Their Beliefs) (1855) by philosopher and literary critic Dr. Moritz Busch, and *Die Mormonen: oder, Die Heiligen vom Jüngsten Tage von ihrer Entstehung* (The Mormons: or, the Latter-day Saints and their Origins) (1874) by explorer and University of Giessen Professor Robert von Schlagintweit. Both, republished in subsequent editions, examined Mormonism as a social movement from the scholarly perspective of the time. The descriptions of Mormon prophets, angelic visitations, millennial fervor, polygamy, blood atonement killings, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the Utah War, and other topics made Mormonism an interesting religious movement but not an attractive religious alternative. Other literature on Mormonism, such as the popular German travel accounts reviewed by scholar D. L. Ashliman, took the general position that Mormonism was a radical religious

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81 Ibid.

82 This book, however, led to the conversion of a German educator and aristocrat who later became an important figure and educator in the LDS Church. See A. LeGrand Richards, “Moritz Busch’s Die Mormonen and the Conversion of Karl G. Maeser,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 46–67.
movement and not suited to German culture. Based on the written information about Mormons available in German lands, it is understandable why Germans did not look favorably upon LDS missionaries preaching in the German states leading up to the Unification of 1871.

**MORMONISM IN UNIFIED GERMANY, 1871–80**

The 1871 Unification of Germany impacted LDS involvement in Germany by encouraging LDS leaders to increase missionary activity in Germany. From 1871 to 1875 Swiss-German Mission leaders, under the direction of the European Mission president, reconnoitered conditions in Germany for a possible larger-scale mobilization of LDS missionary work. While four additional missionaries were allocated for work in the Swiss-German Mission between 1871 and 1875, and some baptisms began to materialize, 1875 represented a turning point. In that year, Apostle Joseph F. Smith, the European Mission president, assigned two more missionaries to the Swiss-German Mission and ordered its president, John U. Stucki, to have his missionaries push headlong into Germany for missionary work regardless of the forecast consequences and opposition. While this move resulted in problems for missionary work in the short term, the slight increase in missionaries committed to proselytizing in Germany had long-term results—eventually resulting in making Germany the next stronghold for greater numbers of LDS members and more successful missionary work in continental Europe.

During the 1871 to 1875 period Mormon leaders took new interest in Unified Germany because they knew Germany’s new constitu-

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84 During the 1860s, an average of two to four missionaries worked in the Swiss-German Mission, most of them preaching in Switzerland. Unification allotted four missionaries to work in Germany. By 1880 there were ten missionaries in the Swiss-German Mission, with a focus turning toward Germany. Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 30–34.

85 Before 1875, the major areas of LDS population and missionary work in Europe were the United Kingdom (primarily Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England) and Scandinavia (primarily Denmark, Sweden, and Norway). Missionary work producing baptisms outside of these regions prior to this period was small to non-existent with a few other pockets in Eu-
tion contained clauses about religious tolerance. As result the Swiss-German Mission began a program of reconnaissance between 1871 and 1875, with most visits occurring during 1873–75, to gage proselytizing potential in the various regions of Germany. The mission had only six elders at the time; two continued their efforts in Switzerland, but four were rerouted into Germany. German-born missionary Henry Eyring’s (1835–1902) revealing report and subsequent letters provide an overview of how this reconnaissance was carried out. In a March 1875 letter to Joseph F. Smith, he described his objective: a “test of the liberality” of Germany’s new constitution. Eyring also reported how he “enquired of well-informed men, in relation to the laws of the German empire, as regards to religious liberty” and “was told without an exception, that they thought there would be no objection to our preaching; provided we gave due notice to the police.” Eyring commented skeptically, “This of course needs to be proven, before we can fully rely upon it.” His assessment that acceptance of Mormonism in Germany “will depend upon the popular feeling in the different settlements” proved to be correct.86

From 1873 to 1875, these regional reports became commonplace. In October 1874 John U. Stucki (1838-1918), a Swiss native serving as Swiss-German Mission president, received reports from his missionaries in Germany and passed on their essence to Joseph F. Smith: “I learned that in Wuertemberg [sic] and Baden they enjoy religious liberty, that all sects are tolerated, and to a certain degree are sustained by law.” This feedback allowed Stucki to recommend to Smith that he could “see nothing to hinder our Elders from going to work” in the state of Baden-Württemberg. Yet in Bavaria, Stucki reported, laws “are very strict as regards religion and anything that is done there has to be done secretly.”87

Stucki, Eyring, and other missionaries discovered that Germany’s new constitution, even with its language on religious toleration, did not often work in their favor. Local German authorities and some civic leaders did not interpret the new constitution’s statement
on religious toleration as applicable to sects deemed hazardous to the public well-being. Since religious ministers, such as LDS missionaries, had to register before they could legally preach, Mormon missionaries attempting to obey this regulation encountered city officials or judges who interpreted the written law, then balanced their interpretation of it against their knowledge of Mormonism. Since most of the information available concluded that Mormonism was a radical and dangerous sect, some officials rejected LDS applications to preach in their areas of jurisdiction. This situation left leaders of the Swiss-German Mission in a difficult situation. In areas like Bavaria where missionary activity had to occur, in Stucki’s words, “secretly,” it meant that the missionaries were acting illegally, making them subject to arrest.

A larger problem was the religious environment generally. Germany was the attributed birthplace of the Protestant Reformation, beginning with Martin Luther’s catalyst actions and his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517. German history was a record of wars of religion in which tens of thousands of Germans killed other Germans in the name of Christianity. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, segments of German (and European) culture shed religious worldviews and embraced progressive reform, science, and a host of other ideals of the Enlightenment. These progressive social movements tended to look on religion as the equivalent of superficial superstitions that comforted the weak and dimwitted but which hindered social progress. Elements of the LDS message such as millennialism, polygamy, prophets, new scripture, and the gathering of Israel seemed laughable.

Many of the reports missionaries generated captured the attitudes of Germans toward the LDS message. These explanations provide important information on the reception process—or rather, the non-reception process—of the LDS message in Germany. For example, in 1874 Henry Eyring reported rather directly in a letter that “the great majority [of Germans] have business which seems to them of greater importance than religion.” German-born missionary Charles H. Wilcken (1830-1915) reported sarcastically that “Germans are too ‘smart’ to believe in angels appearing and men having revelations in these days.” In Holstein “I was told that such stuff would do to

88Ibid.
tell the Indians, but to an enlightened people, they laughed at it.”91 In another letter Wilcken simply concluded: “Religion is out of fashion.”92 As Henry Eyring put it, there was an “indifference in the people” toward religion.93 Swiss-born Johannes Huber (1840–1914), president of the Swiss-German Mission, reported to European Mission President Albert Carrington (1813–89) that Germans were generally “filled with the spirit of unbelief.”94 From these missionaries’ descriptions, the LDS message failed to prove relevant or intellectually sound for many Germans of the 1870s. Malcolm Thorp found that British Mormons, when they encountered the American-style millennial message, were “considerably less enthusiastic and more selective” in what they believed.95

In many cases those who accepted Mormonism were the uneducated and poor. German-born missionary Johannes Keller wrote to Albert Carrington that the converts he baptized and knew were from “the laboring classes,” and German-born missionary Heinrich Reiser also reported to Carrington that converts “with very few exceptions, are mostly poor.”96 Not surprisingly, many of these converts could not take the next step of gathering to Zion “on account of their poverty and circumstances,” as Stucki explained to Joseph F. Smith in 1875. They would “have to look to Zion for deliverance” through the Perpetual Emigrating Fund or other means.97

As these missionary reports have shown, Mormonism was accepted, tolerated, or rejected on a regional basis regardless of Ger-

92Charles H. Wilcken, Letter to Albert Carrington, Holstein, June 8, 1871, Millennial Star 33 (June 20, 1871): 395.
96John Keller, Letter to Albert Carrington, Zürich, October 24, 1872, Millennial Star 34 (November 5, 1872): 714; and Heinrich Reiser, Letter to Albert Carrington, Winterthur, January 23, 1873, Millennial Star 35 (February 4, 1873): 75.
many’s constitutional language on religious toleration. It also appears that generally few Germans were interested in the LDS message, aside from the uneducated and destitute. Ironically, the unintended benefit was that a small LDS population remained in Germany during the early 1870s, a factor that seems to have allowed Mormonism to remain outside of scrutiny during the Kulturkampf movement—that short-lived but turbulent contest between liberals and Catholics. As German liberals took action to secularize the new nation, they clashed with the conservative Catholic Church, which told German Catholics that their first loyalty should be to the Church and not to the state. German liberals used this position to stamp out conservative religious influence. Though scholars have argued that liberals betrayed their own tenet of tolerance during Kulturkampf, educated Catholics agreed the Church’s actions were a “death sentence” for Catholics in Germany, triggering serious persecution.98 Thousands of Catholic priests and clergy were arrested, and many fled the nation. Efforts were also made to expel the Jesuit order, feared for its supposed efforts to influence political opinion.99

Although the Kulturkampf movement was a short-lived effort (it had basically ended by 1879) and thousands of Germans retained their religious convictions, this religious-political conflict set the tone for German culture during the 1870s, unquestionably making a more hostile environment for Mormon missionaries. To my surprise, I found no evidence that Mormons were persecuted alongside Catholics or even discussed as part of Kulturkampf.100 It seems likely that the overall cultural movement impacted Mormonism indirectly, perhaps influencing the opinions of civic officials; but again, I could find no sources documenting this factor. Presumably, the LDS presence in Germany was so limited that liberals

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99Gross, The War against Catholicism.

100The exception is two articles in the Millennial Star about Kulturkampf: “The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Germany,” 34 (August 6, 1872): 507; and “The German Empire and the Pope,” 34 (October 8, 1872): 643–44. These articles, however, were overviews about the movements and did not report how it impacted Mormonism in Germany.
overlooked it in their focus on Catholicism.\footnote{101}

Considering the marked lack of German interest in Mormon-ism, it is ironic that, in mid-1875 Joseph F. Smith, European Mission president, traveled through Germany, and without mincing words mandated how work by the Swiss-German Mission would be conducted in the future. In a telling statement, Smith announced: “We confidently believe that the day of religious liberty has dawned in the mighty Empire of Germany.” Despite the legal issues and bias against Latter-day Saints, Smith ordered missionaries to begin aggressively preaching in Germany regardless of the consequences: “Hereafter the Elders will not stop to ask permission of the authorities of Germany to preach the Gospel there, but they will go and do it. . . . The law gives them the legal right and if denied by the bigotry of priests or rulers, contrary to the law, we will claim it at the hand of God, for it is His Work.”\footnote{102} Smith was replaced a few months later by Apostle Albert Carrington; but his apostolic edict launched missionary work in the Swiss-German Mission onto a new course.

The practices of missionary Henry Eyring, and others, document how missionaries tried to implement Smith’s counsel. Some applied to civic officials, which Smith had not counseled, while others did not call themselves to officials’ attention. Four months after Smith’s directive, in October 1875 Eyring submitted an application to city officials to preach in Mannheim, Baden, Germany. The next day, Eyring wrote to President Carrington that he had been “summoned to appear” before a city judge who informed Eyring that “he could not give me permission to hold public meetings” and subsequently “read a paragraph from the law, which prohibits the teaching of immoral doctrines . . . polygamy.” Eyring tried to convince the judge that polygamy was not immoral, but the judge reaffirmed his verdict that polygamy was an immoral practice and dangerous to the public. It would not be preached in an area under his legal jurisdiction. The judge informed Eyring that he could, if he desired, appeal to Baden’s high

\footnote{101} I was honestly surprised that Kulturkampf did not affect Mormon-ism directly, but no sources left by missionaries, aside from the articles listed, mention the movement or its outcome.

\footnote{102} “Our Visit to the Danish and Swiss Missions,” \textit{Millennial Star} 37 (June 21, 1875): 394; emphasis in original. See also the minutes from the Swiss-German Mission, “Bericht einer Conferenz, geholten in Bern, 6 June 1875,” \textit{Der Stern} 7 (June 1875): 103.
Although I have found no documentation that Eyring made such an appeal, he obtained legal permission and certification a few months later to preach in Mannheim. It appears that a pattern of dogged determination—and sometimes political reasoning—advanced LDS missionary work. It is not surprising that it took several years for Germans to apply some of the laws that had accompanied the political reforms of 1871. Well-informed Mormon missionaries learned to cite the German constitution to bolster their case. For example, in 1878 Henry Flamm (1837–1913), a native German serving as Swiss-German Mission president reported that a German newspaper refused to print LDS meeting notices until missionaries reminded him that the law “requires public journals to insert any notices for which the parties interested were willing to pay.” The editor yielded on constitutional grounds and began printing LDS notices. Such interactions moved missionary work forward in Germany.

Growth of the LDS Church in Germany during the 1870s was slow, but it set the stage for future growth. In 1877, forty-seven were baptized in Germany, followed by fifty-five the next year. By 1880 branches were established in Berlin, Halberstadt, Munich, Regensburg, and Ludwigshafen; ten full-time missionaries were laboring in the Swiss-German Mission, 280 Mormons were on record in Germany, a sum that did not include immigrants to Zion and excommunicants. The following year 107 baptisms occurred in Nuremberg alone, and additional missionaries were allocated to the Swiss-German Mission. Over the next two decades, these numbers continued to grow, leveling out at an average of 300 German converts annually. In 1898, Apostle George Teasdale, then president of the European Mission, divided the Swiss-German Mission and reestablished

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103 Henry Eyring, Letter to Albert Carrington, Bern, October 8, 1875, Millennial Star 37 (October 18, 1875): 668. A local newspaper, the Ludwigshaven Tageblatt, reported how “the Mormons are thriving and preaching polygamy.” Quoted in Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 30. It is unclear if LDS missionaries actually preached polygamy.

104 Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 30.


106 Scharffs, Mormonism in Germany, 33.

107 Ibid., 34.
Ironically, as Mormonism grew in Germany under the German Mission’s leadership with a hefty roster of approximately a hundred missionaries, the German public—especially clergy of other faiths—became more aware of Mormonism’s presence. In response, around 1900, these clergy united against Mormonism, working through local police and judicial officials. Political opposition reached a zenith. In 1901 missionaries were “put in jail and led through the streets chained together” before being expelled from Germany. Soon, in areas where missionaries had previously ministered unmolested, local clergy shifted public and political opinion against Mormon efforts, and the police cracked down on the LDS Church. Dresden passed laws making it illegal to attend or hold a LDS worship service, under the penalty of either a steep 300 mark fine or six months in prison. All across Germany LDS missionaries met with harsh conditions; and in 1904 the German Mission was closed and reunited with the Swiss Mission. Not surprisingly, Mormonism’s growth in Germany slowed somewhat after the reorganization, and LDS missionaries did not find converts in large numbers until after World War I.

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, based on sources produced by Europeans during this period of study, Mormons viewed these European wars as apocalyptic catastrophes that were preparing the world for Christ’s millennial return. This view had the energy and the urgency of life-and-death simplicity. Time was of the essence. Europeans stood in danger of losing both their salvation and their physical lives. The world could end soon—a calamitous and terrifying prospect—but those who accepted the divine message could rejoice. After the scourging and cleansing, Christ would return and inaugurate a thousand years of peace and plenty.

For believers who saw the signs of the times as pre-Millennial energy, the Unification of Germany in 1871 opened the door for proselytizing. Although LDS missionaries anticipated an immediate end to the world, their work laid the groundwork for enduring congregations and the next century’s preaching. Overall, looking at the com-

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108 Ibid., 49.
109 Ibid., 49–51.
plexities of European society and the Mormon perception of these turbulent events sheds light on both the broader and more specific aspects of Mormon history in Europe. European society was in transition and often turbulent. Mormons had their own religious views of this turmoil and an interpretation that explained how they saw themselves and their work in that context.

At the end of 1878, a *Millennial Star* article likely authored by President Joseph F. Smith, then serving his second term as European Mission president, reflected that the past year’s labors would “no more be recalled save upon the pages of history.” He continued: Surely “each year brings new causes of alarm,” and the coming year would likely bring forth little good “save those who are seeking to develop the principles of truth and righteousness in the earth.” As missionaries labored in Europe and across the world, Smith argued that they looked forward to “the full establishment of a theocracy that will, as time rolls on, supplant every other form of government under heaven.”

Mormons in Europe talked about, dreamed about, and preached about Christ’s imminent return. This was especially true as European armies met each other on battlefields amidst the fear, death, and smoke. For Mormons in Europe it was war and confusion in Babylon.

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AMERICAN PROPHETS: MARK TWAIN AND JOSEPH SMITH REVISITED

Nicole Amare and Alan Manning

There has been a general tendency to characterize Mark Twain as having anti-Mormon sentiments comparable to those of most nineteenth-century Americans. However, Maxwell Geismar writes that Twain was unusually captivated by the Mormons, “fascinated by their society, their history, their peculiar institutions, and their power, as by the Mormon Bible” referred to famously by Twain in Roughing It as “an insipid mess of inspiration,” and “chloroform in print.” Therefore, Twain allows that whether Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon from an ancient metal codex, as claimed, or whether he composed it himself, “the act was a miracle.”

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3Mark Twain, Roughing It, edited by Harriet Elinor Smith and Edgar
In this paper, we further explore dimensions of Twain’s apparent fascination with the Mormons beyond what has been noted by previous scholars. Our rereading of Twain’s satirical work on the Mormons suggests a Twain who is neither pro- nor anti-Mormon but something much more complex. At the very least, Twain should be recognized as what folklorist Eric Eliason refers to as an “obnoxious advocate” of Mormons, naturally willing to poke fun at Brigham Young’s theocratic state but, very unlike his contemporaries, absolutely committed to the Mormons’ right to their divergent views and practices.

We further suggest that Twain was personally aligned with Joseph Smith’s disaffection with mainstream Christianity and that this alignment is apparent in Twain’s writings and public persona. Though Twain seemed at odds with religion in general and the idea of God in general, he could not help but defend the right of Mormons to stand apart from mainstream American religious tradition, as Twain in his private beliefs stood apart. Additionally, we find in Twain’s writings, if not direct influences from Mormon history and theology, at least parallel historical influences. Inasmuch as Twain and Mormonism’s founder Joseph Smith both wrestled with logical inconsistencies in the common religious beliefs and practices of their time, one might reasonably expect—and we do in fact find—common logical solutions: Joseph Smith’s ostensibly revelatory solutions that developed into a serious theology and Twain’s humorous but also half-serious and wistful solutions that are woven into his religious satire.

We thus find that previously unnoticed parallels can be drawn


Ibid., 127.


between the lives and outlook of two leading “prophets” of the American nineteenth century: Joseph Smith and Mark Twain. We begin with an exchange of letters between Mark Twain and Kate Field (1838–96). Field made her reputation, like Twain, as a journalist, travel writer, and lecturer. Unlike Twain, Field included active political criticism of Mormon polygamy in Utah among her major themes. Also unlike Twain, Field was an advocate of destroying the “Mormon Theocracy” by political and military means. The correspondence below, dated 1886, occurred only two or three years after Twain finished writing *Huckleberry Finn*.

Field requested Twain’s help, as director of the American Publishing Company of Hartford, in publishing the material from her anti-Mormon lectures in book form and explained: “I’m told you have a very poor opinion of me because I have lectured against Mormonism. . . . I think if you had ever heard me you would revise this opinion, as my lectures are against the treason of the political machine, called a religion to blind the unwary.” Twain replied:

DEAR MISS FIELD, —Oh, dear me, no. That would be the same as saying that because you differ from me upon the rights and equities of a subject, I am at liberty to hold a “poor opinion” of you for voicing your sentiments in the matter. Your notion and mine about polygamy is without doubt exactly the same; but you probably think we have some cause of quarrel with those people for putting it into their religion, whereas I think the opposite. Considering our complacent cant about this country of ours being the home of liberty of conscience, it seems to me that the attitude of our Congress and people toward the Mormon Church is matter for limitless laughter and derision. The Mormon religion is a religion: the negative vote of all of the rest of the globe could not break down that fact; and so I shall probably always go on thinking that the attitude of our Congress and nation toward it is merely good trivial stuff to make fun of. Am I a friend to the Mormon religion? No. I would like to see it extirpated, but always by fair means, not these Congressional rascalities. If you can destroy it with a book,—by arguments and facts, not brute force,—you will do a good and wholesome work. And I should be very far from unwilling to publish such a book in case

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my business decks were clear. They are not clear now, however, and it is hard to tell when they will be. They are piled up with contracts which two or three years—and possibly four—will be required to fulfill. I have even had to rule myself out, and am now an author without a publisher. My book is finished and ready, and I have spent nearly ten thousand dollars in its preparation; but it is pigeon-holed indefinitely, to make room for other people’s more important books. (In this line of business we generally publish only one—and never more than two—books in a year.) I think I could write a very good moral fable about an author who turned publisher in order to get a better show, and got shut up entirely.\footnote{Ibid.}

As Scharnhorst points out, Twain’s reply is a less-than-honest brush-off.\footnote{Scharnhorst, “He Is Amusing,” 201.} Twain had no finished manuscript of his own at the time. It’s also quite likely that Field had heard correctly from third parties that Twain had indeed expressed a low opinion of her, not for speaking against Mormons on theological and philosophical grounds but rather, as his letter clearly states, because he held both Field and the nation at large in disdain for advocating the destruction of a people’s freely chosen religious practice by force.

This legal and political hostility to Mormons which Twain decries persisted in America throughout his main career as a writer, rising in intensity at the end of the Civil War and falling off after Utah was granted statehood in 1896. We should therefore not be surprised to find signs and clues of Twain’s personal opposition to that general American attitude toward Mormons at several points in his writings.

Other scholars have acknowledged in Twain’s writings indications of his desire to become a kind of missionary\footnote{Geismar, Mark Twain: An American Prophet; Michael Levine O’Connor, “Mark Twain and the Missionary” (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1997), printed, Ann Arbor: UMI; Joe B. Fulton, “Mark Twain’s New Jerusalem: Prophecy in the Unpublished Essay ‘About Cities in the Sun,’” Christianity and Literature 55, no. 5 (2006): 173–94; Joe B. Fulton, The Reverend Mark Twain: Theological Burlesque, Form, and Content (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006).}—not a Christian missionary per se but rather a man of letters who rebels against the American religious and political status quo by expounding on the evils of all forms of oppression accepted and institutionalized by
mainstream America. What has previously been overlooked, we argue, is the degree to which Twain’s adopted persona as an anti-missionary and counter-cultural prophet might naturally develop attributes parallel with, if not directly borrowed from, an actual American counter-culture of missionaries and prophets.

Joe Fulton describes Twain as a kind of prophet-writer, who uses satire within a genre of prophecy “for purposes of social criticism.”

Both Twain’s perception of humankind’s inherent dishonesty and his belief that orthodox Christians possessed an unreasonable view of God were the catalyst to his missionary-like efforts against conventional nineteenth-century Christianity and other depredations of the powerful against the powerless. In Mark Twain and the Missionary, Michael O’Connor discusses at length how Twain was inspired by the missionaries he met in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) in 1866. Though Twain disagreed with their message, he was determined to emulate missionaries’ proselyting spirit in his traveling lectures and writings, though he promoted a morality and theosophy rather sharply at odds with orthodox Christianity. Twain himself wrote in 1865, “I never had but two powerful ambitions in my life. One was to be a [riverboat] pilot, & the other a preacher of the gospel. I accomplished the one and failed at the other, because I could not supply myself with the necessary stock in trade— i.e. religion.”

But roughly forty years later, looking back on his career as a humorist, Twain also wrote, “Humor must not professedly teach and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever. . . . I have always preached. That is the reason that I have lasted thirty years. If the humor came of its own accord and uninvited I have allowed it a place in my sermon, but I was not writing the sermon for the sake of the humor.”

Evidently, Twain had found some kind of religion to sermonize about. Louis Budd quotes an 1886 Dutch critic who said of Twain: “He is a prophet of truth, dedicated to the task of revealing truth, of peeling off the layers that hide it.” Budd further observed: “More

11 Fulton, “Mark Twain’s New Jerusalem,” 175.
than his writings, the speeches kept scoffing at ossified piety, dull or plagiarized sermons, biblical fundamentalism, the doltish singing of hymns, and superficial notions of virtue.”

It is through humor that Twain was able to be the type of preacher or “prophet” he desired to be.

We thus see a growing recognition among academics that Twain consciously or unconsciously constructed himself, not merely as a preacher in the mainstream American Christian tradition, but rather as a prophet in the biblical mode, “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Matt. 3:3) against corrupt traditions. Fulton describes Twain as “embrace[ing] the prophetic form in his later years, creating burlesque jeremiads.”

Our goal here is to reexamine Twain’s figurative prophetic persona as it might have been at least partly shaped by an isolated and persecuted American religion that claimed to be led by actual prophets: the Mormons. We will review, in light of recent analyses of Twain as prophet, various textual details in *Roughing It*, in *Huckleberry Finn*, and in *Letters from the Earth* as well as biographical convergences between Twain’s personal evolution into a figurative kind of American prophet and compare them with elements of Mormon history and faith as developed by a man considered an actual American prophet. These convergences suggest, at a minimum, the shaping power of a common historical context shared by Joseph Smith and Mark Twain alike, but these convergences might also indicate, on occasion, a Twain who was willing to directly borrow a few theological tropes from Joseph Smith, someone he may have (very privately, perhaps not even consciously) considered a peer and fellow outcast from the mainstream.

**TWAIN’S PECULIAR RELIGION**

Twain’s interactions with Mormons are well documented in his writings and in scholarship that discusses Twain’s religious views. On the one hand, the Mormons had religious aspirations that Twain surely did not share; but on the other hand, they certainly were, like

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16Fulton, “Mark Twain’s New Jerusalem,” 177.
Twain himself, devoted to proselytizing for their perception of truth despite the risk of being spurned by the larger society for their “strange” beliefs and their unwillingness to follow more traditional patterns of worship. The Church’s founder, Joseph Smith, was like Twain himself, figured as a prophet against the grain of orthodox Christianity/Christianities. Smith’s official autobiography told of going to the woods at age fourteen, intending to pray and ask God which of all the different religious sects that he should join. Smith claimed that God answered his prayer directly: “I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof’” (JS—H 1:19).

On this principle, the unacceptability of all traditional Christian sects, Twain and Smith had something in common. Twain had surely heard of Smith’s account, if not in boyhood Hannibal, Missouri (sixty miles from Nauvoo, the Mormon capital from 1838 to 1846), then on his trip through Utah in 1861. On October 27, 1838, Missouri’s Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an Extermination Order ordering the expulsion of all Mormons anywhere in the state. Twain, who was born in Missouri, would have been only three at the time, but these events would have been recounted for years afterwards, especially when Boggs was almost assassinated, reputedly by a Mormon assailant, in 1842, when Twain was seven, and again when Joseph Smith was actually assassinated in 1844, when Twain was nine.

Eliason similarly points out the argument of proximity: that “Hannibal lay only about sixty miles away from Nauvoo and the Carthage, Illinois, jail where Joseph Smith was murdered.”17 In 1838 and 1839, the Quincy Whig and the Argus, two popular Illinois newspapers, published several original articles and reprints from larger national papers, such as the Philadelphia Focus, about the plight of Mormons exiled by Boggs’s order.18 Quincy, Illinois, where they first sought refuge, is barely twenty-five miles north of Hannibal, where Twain’s family was living at the time. Twain’s father, John Marshall

18Steve Wiegenstein, “The Role of Newspapers in Shaping Public Opinion during the Period of Mormon Arrival in Quincy, 1838–39,” Mor-
Clemens, was a lawyer and merchant in Florida, Missouri; the family moved to Hannibal in 1839. The senior Clemens died when Twain was twelve, forcing Twain and his brother Orion to leave school and work as apprentices to a printer named Ament for room and board. Moreover, from 1846 on, emigration researcher Fred Woods notes that several thousand Mormons moved upriver toward staging points that would take them to Utah, passing through Hannibal en route.\textsuperscript{19} Articles about the Mormon migration frequently appeared in Illinois papers such as the weekly \textit{Quincy Whig Republican} and the \textit{Quincy Daily Herald} but also in the \textit{Hannibal Weekly Messenger} and \textit{Hannibal Daily Messenger}, as well as several other local papers throughout Missouri and Illinois.\textsuperscript{20}

During Twain's boyhood apprenticeship in the newspaper shop, Twain likely heard Smith's story repeatedly; he certainly heard it again during the 1870s when he secluded himself in Elmira, New York, to write \textit{Roughing It}. New York newspapers, such as the \textit{Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser}, frequently published articles about "Joe Smith" and Brigham Young and their "Mormon sect."\textsuperscript{21} Elmira is about seventy-five miles south of Palmyra, New York, the boyhood home of Joseph Smith and the site of Smith's claimed vision, where God told him to avoid all the established religions of his day. Smith's newstorry circulated in papers such as James Gordon Bennett's \textit{New York Herald} and as local folklore, naturally to be told but derided by any and all pious churchgoers of the area. For Twain, though, this was also the very time when he concluded that he could not be the churchgoer that his wife and father-in-law had wanted him to be.\textsuperscript{22}

It is difficult to imagine how Joseph Smith's story could not have resonated strongly with Twain, the claim that God Himself had rejected what Twain felt compelled to reject, and it seems that this resonance between Twain and Smith could conceivably have reached its highest amplitude during Twain's retreat to Elmira. Jeffrey Steinbrink

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\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 124.


\textsuperscript{22}O’Connor, “Mark Twain and the Missionary,” 76.
argues that, during Twain’s stay in Elmira, Twain’s best-known public persona,23 in the parallel mode of modern prophet, had indeed emerged and flourished. O’Connor concurs and further argues that this public image was being built on Twain’s private determination to become a kind of anti-missionary, a missionary against mainstream dogma and religious practice in America: “It is no coincidence that at this very time, Twain was using his material from his Sandwich Islands trip to complete *Roughing It...* [and] found [that] his own missionary-like qualities, of being both a commentator on innocence and a secular moralist, could prove quite valuable to his persona and his career, and certainly enhance his own quest for, on the one hand, personal respectability in the public’s eyes, and on the other hand, personal loyalty to the truth as he knew it.”24

Twain and Joseph Smith would have disagreed about many things—the possibility of moral choice, for one thing, the value of prayer, and the reality of divine visitation, for another—but these were not the sole features of Twain’s personal religion. Even if moral choice were illusion, for Twain the feeling of right action versus wrong action, the morality of choosing truth over pretense or error must have felt real enough. Otherwise, why would he sermonize?

**TWAIN THE PROPHET**

Twain’s burlesque sermonizing is quite evident in his treatment of the Mormons in *Roughing It* (chaps. 16, 17, and Appendix A) and manifests itself in two currents. On the surface, Twain’s Christian readership would find a critique of Mormons laced with Twain’s trademark humor because, as Hill notes, Twain would never “publicly sermonize against his popular audience.”25 He too desperately needed their cash. Nevertheless, beneath the surface are subtle but distinct moments where Twain inverts the usual criticisms of Mormons and instead praises them while redirecting his sermonizing against mainstream America.

Because Twain’s readership would be primarily anti-Mormon and because polygamy among Mormons in America was such an easy

24O’Connor, “Mark Twain and the Missionary,” 78.
and obvious target of humor, Twain’s anti-Mormon critiques are quite to be expected, but as Eliason notes, “His barbs are not unlike those one might hurl at a dear old friend or a respected adversary. There is little in Twain’s humor that a Mormon of the time could not have laughed along with, and there is some evidence that indeed they did, since the memory of his visit to Salt Lake City is maintained in Mormon oral tradition to this day.”

Twain’s comic jabs at Utah Mormons have quite a different tone from the bitter and humorless reports sent back to the East Coast by most of Twain’s contemporary travel writers. This revealing contrast is noted by Herman Nibbelink in “Mark Twain and the Mormons”: “For these writers America represented the triumph of Christianity and democracy; its existence was evidence of man’s moral progress. The Western frontier suggested the next stage for progress, and it is no wonder that Mormonism, which clearly contradicted their hopes, was ‘a dark spot’ on the face of democracy.”

Mark Twain deflates the moral tone of such travel accounts while simultaneously poking fun at the Mormons in Roughing It: ‘The man that marries one of [the ‘homely’ Mormon women],’ he says, ‘has done an act of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure—and the man that marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity so sublime that the nations should stand uncovered in his presence and worship in silence.’

Twain also presents cleverly good-natured treatment of the Book of Mormon in Roughing It, according to a French critic:

Mark Twain otherwise avoids any personal theory concerning the origins of the Book of Mormon. He has no patience with people who presume to condemn Mormonism with no appeal, without any serious involvement themselves in the issue. [Now quoting Twain:] ”All our ‘information’ had three sides to it, and so I gave up the idea that I could settle the ‘Mormon question’ in two days. Still, I have seen newspaper correspondents do it in one.” We thus may consider his heckling of The Book of Mormon as a minor venting only. Twain, in private, could be much more savage regarding the Bible, as his Letters from the Earth dem-

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27Nibbelink, “Mark Twain and the Mormons,” 1.

28Twain, Roughing It, 117–18.
onstrates, being published long after his death, and for which America would never have forgiven him during his lifetime.\textsuperscript{29}

Choleur and Nibbelink each identify a distinct axis of contrast which reveals Twain’s covert and relatively positive stance toward the Mormons. Twain writing on Mormons contrasted with Twain writing on the subject of orthodox Christianity, further revealing that Twain is much harder on Christianity. And finally, Twain contrasted with contemporary writers—both literary and newspaper—on the subject of Mormonism reveals that Twain is much easier on Mormons. For example, the \textit{Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser} published this commentary on the Book of Mormon in 1875:

Mr. Spaulding shortly after died and nothing was done with it until Mr. Rigdon fell in with Joe Smith, who borrowed the manuscript. He [Smith] was a shrewd, credulous adventurer who needed everything and was as willing to impose upon others as he was to be imposed upon himself. He invented the story that the golden plates from which the book of Mormon were said to have been translated, were found in a bluff hill situated on the road between Shortsville and Palmyra, and that he was directed to dig for them in a certain place by revelation, and this is still pointed out where the excavation was made.\textsuperscript{30}

As this newspaper article illustrates, the typical commentary on Mormonism of the 1870s characterized Mormon founder Joseph Smith as “a shrewd, credulous adventurer” and the Book of Mormon as plagiarized. Twain in \textit{Roughing It} makes neither of these moves, despite the inherent potential for humor.

As Fulton observes in \textit{The Reverend Mark Twain: “Mormonism, with its ‘western peculiar institution’ of polygamy, was an exotic for Twain, and in \textit{Roughing It} he time and again contrasts the two classes in the West, the Mormons and the ‘orthodox Americans.”}\textsuperscript{31} Thus, given Twain’s consistent resistance to orthodoxy and consistent support of social underdogs, it is not surprising that Twain’s underlying sympathies would rest with the Mormon rank and file, if not with


\textsuperscript{30}“The Mormon Bible—Its Origin.”

\textsuperscript{31}Fulton, \textit{The Reverend Mark Twain}, 20.
their leaders. On the subject of Mormon leadership, a further revealing contrast is apparent in Twain’s treatment of Brigham Young versus his treatment of Joseph Smith. In the Appendix to *Roughing It* (where he recounts a history of Mormonism), Twain carefully (though quite inaccurately) places the whole blame for the practice of polygamy on Brigham Young and speaks of Joseph Smith in distinctly sympathetic terms:

One of the last things which Brigham Young had done before leaving Iowa, was to appear in the pulpit dressed to personate the worshipped and lamented prophet Smith, and confer the prophetic succession, with all its dignities, emoluments and authorities, upon “President Brigham Young!” The people accepted the pious fraud with the maddest enthusiasm, and Brigham’s power was sealed and secured for all time. Within five years afterward he openly added polygamy to the tenets of the church by authority of a “revelation” which he pretended had been received nine years before by Joseph Smith, albeit Joseph is amply on record as denouncing polygamy to the day of his death.32

In fact, Smith’s denunciations of polygamy were directed only at those who practiced it without divine sanction and permission; furthermore, Smith had married more than thirty plural wives. It would be difficult to understand Twain’s desire to think and argue otherwise except for consistency with our hypothesis that Twain intuitively aligned himself with Joseph Smith. Both men were self-proclaimed “prophets,” preaching against corrupt religious traditions; Smith might have been a subtle but relevant influence, perhaps giving Twain, as he reflected on his life in Elmira in 1870, the impetus to finally break overtly with orthodox Christian ideologies.

Any genuine defects in Mormon practice Twain was willing to ascribe to Smith’s successor Brigham Young as a kind of literary scapegoat, but the Mormon people as a whole continued to have his admiration and sympathy as oppressed underdogs, relative to orthodox American society at large. Twain states in *Roughing It*:

In 1849 the Mormons organized a “free and independent” government and erected the “State of Deseret,” with Brigham Young as its head. But the very next year Congress deliberately snubbed it and created the “Territory of Utah” out of the same accumulation of mountains, sage-brush, alkali and general desolation,—but made Brigham

32Twain, *Roughing It*, 547.
Governor of it. Then for years the enormous migration across the plains to California poured through the land of the Mormons and yet the church remained staunch and true to its lord and master. Neither hunger, thirst, poverty, grief, hatred, contempt, nor persecution could drive the Mormons from their faith or their allegiance; and even the thirst for gold, which gleaned the flower of the youth and strength of many nations was not able to entice them! That was the final test. An experiment that could survive that was an experiment with some substance to it somewhere. 33* *

In short, here we find Twain beginning to assume his own prophet-persona, gently chiding not just America but “many nations” for their “thirst for gold,” and subtly praising the Mormons for their ability to resist that general thirst, greed being identified in several of Twain’s other writings as the main source of the world’s ills. If Twain were influenced in this figurative prophet persona, either directly borrowing it from Joseph Smith or at least being inspired in it by the common historical context they shared, we would expect to find now and then further hints of this influence in Twain’s writing where it touches on religious themes. We will now consider several possible signs of this influence in *Huckleberry Finn*.

**A LITERARY ALLIANCE**

It was Twain’s perception that, as often as not, a person’s very natural and innate sense of right and wrong can run counter to the artificially contrived, greed-driven mores of a society, enough so that a person may struggle whether to follow a natural and correct impulse or to corrupt that impulse for the sake of pleasing society. Twain’s dialogue in “What Is Man?” between “a young man” (Y.M.) and an “old man” (O.M.) also touches on this dilemma:

O.M. Public opinion can force some men to do ANYTHING.
Y.M. ANYTHING?
O.M. Yes—anything.
Y.M. I don’t believe that. Can it force a right-principled man to do a wrong thing?
O.M. Yes.
Y.M. Can it force a kind man to do a cruel thing?
O.M. Yes. 34

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33Ibid., 545.
34Twain, *What Is Man?: And Other Philosophical Writings*, edited by
Under these conditions, morally innocent people could think of themselves as “damned” in opposing public opinion when in fact they are on the side of a higher good. In other words, Twain spent his life in conflicted pursuit of “the nature of God beyond Christian Theology,” a nature that is obscured or “frozen within . . . Christian narrow boundaries.”

Twain’s own spiritual conflict is perhaps most notably and eloquently expressed by Huck Finn, torn between the instinctive morality of helping Jim to freedom and the corrupt social norm (driven by the greed of wealthy slaveholders who controlled the Southern churches of the time) that would have required Huck to turn Jim in:

And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn’t try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn’t come. Why wouldn’t they? It warn’t no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from ME, neither. I knowed very well why they wouldn’t come. It was because my heart warn’t right; it was because I warn’t square; it was because I was playing double. I was letting ON to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth SAY I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to that nigger’s owner and tell where he was; but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can’t pray a lie—I found that out.

If we substitute the issue of religious orthodoxy for that of American slavery, then we may very well find an apt description of Twain’s own dilemma in the late 1860s and early 1870s. To please his new wife and her family, Twain had tried to live a more orthodox Christian lifestyle but found that doing so violated his personal morality. We see this paradox through Twain’s words in the voice of Huck Finn. The bracketed interpolation below is our imagined rewording of the famous Huck Finn passage as it reflects Twain’s real-life religious dilemma: “I was trying to make my mouth SAY I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and [go to church and put money in the plate and say I believed in all the traditional things;]


but deep down in me I knewed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can’t pray a lie—I found that out.”

This reading is backed up by a further structural parallel between this same Huck Finn passage where he tries to pray and Joseph Smith’s account of his first prayer, which led to his decision not to join any church:

It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. (JS—H 1:14–15)

We thus find parallels between Joseph Smith’s account (where his tongue was bound), between Twain’s own parallel choice to reject Christian orthodoxy (about which he could not speak openly), and the passage in Huckleberry Finn (where “the words wouldn’t come”). In each case, Smith, Twain, and Finn find themselves in the same difficult situation, where their private sense of right conflicts with public expectations.

In “The New Historicism and the Old West,” Robinson discusses Twain’s ambivalent portrayal of American slavery through Huck and the other characters’ ambivalent treatment of Jim as both friend and slave, and of Huck’s being both right and wrong in helping Jim escape. Although American slavery is the dominant theme analyzed by Robinson, he recognizes religious hypocrisy as another theme that Twain developed using similar strategies of paradoxical description. He specifically cites the shooting scene in Bricksville as a case in point:

The large Bible that is placed on the chest of the expiring victim, and that seems to press the last breath out of his failing body, is richly emblematic of the epidemic of paradoxes at large in the village culture. Public professions of piety and righteousness are not simply hollow and harmless; rather, they are silent but very substantial contributors to much that is unholy in Bricksville. Cruelty and violence are staples of the local diet, yet the citizens of Bricksville . . . have contrived to indulge their weakness for spectacles of lawless violence and at the same time
persist in the delusion that they are a just, righteous people.  

In this same shooting scene and the character of Boggs, we can also find the possibility of a covert reference to Joseph Smith and his conflict with anti-Mormon, mainstream society. This, we suggest, may be figured by the conflict between Colonel Sherburn (as Smith) and drunken Boggs, whose name suggests Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, who issued his infamous “extermination order” to drive out the Mormons. Seventeen Mormon men and boys, who were at a mill with their families, were killed by a vigilante group who suffered no fatalities themselves. The forced exodus of the Latter-day Saints during the winter of 1838–39, inflicted more casualties and much suffering.

Colonel Sherburn’s shooting of Old Boggs in this scene is also partly based, as Dixon Wecter contends, on a biographical event during Twain’s adolescence. Twain records in his Autobiography a shooting that clearly parallels Boggs’s in Huckleberry Finn:

The shooting down of poor old Smarr in the main street at noon-days supplied me with some more dreams; and in them I always saw again the grotesque closing picture—the great family Bible spread open on the profane old man’s breast by some thoughtful idiot and rising and sinking to the labored breathings and adding the torture of its leaden weight to the dying struggles. We are curiously made. In all the throng of gaping and sympathetic onlookers there was not one with common sense enough to perceive that an anvil would have been in better taste there than the Bible, less open to sarcastic criticism and swifter in its atrocious work. In my nightmares I gasped and struggled for breath under the crush of that vast book for many a night.

However, the sheer symbolic weight of the Bible, both in Huckleberry Finn and in Twain’s nightmares, suggests that this scene is not only a literary recounting of Twain’s memory. The scene amalgamates the Smarr killing, with the subsequent attempt to lynch Sher-

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37 Forrest Glen Robinson, In Bad Faith: The Dynamics of Deception in Mark Twain’s America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 121.
burn, with the attempted assassination of Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs followed by the shooting of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum while they were incarcerated in Carthage, Illinois, awaiting trial. Carthage was just sixty miles from where Twain lived at the impressionable age of nine, five years before he witnessed the Smarr murder. Whether Twain was conscious of the connection or not, Lilburn W. Boggs is a possible root for the Old Boggs character in *Huckleberry Finn*. Twain elsewhere used real-life names for fictional characters, such as Andrew Jackson and Daniel Webster in “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.” In that same Bricksville episode of *Huckleberry Finn*, the character of Colonel Sherburn might be read as a fictionalized version of Joseph Smith, one who gets revenge (paralleling the novel) on the “Christian” Governor Boggs who had ordered the extermination of all Mormons in Missouri, paralleling old Boggs’s threats against innocent bystanders in Bricksville.

Significantly, given the obvious parallels between Joseph Smith’s actual lynching and the attempted lynching of Sherburn, Twain instead describes Sherburn as someone very like Twain himself, “a proud-looking man about fifty-five—and he was a heap the best dressed man in that town [Bricksville].”* Stephen Railton notes: “Sherburn resembles ‘Mark Twain’ a lot more closely than does Huck, who hates attention and good clothes. And the way Sherburn steps onto his porch roof and faces the crowd evokes the way Twain often began his lectures: ‘Sherburn never said a word—just stood there, looking down . . . [and] run his eye slow along the crowd.’”* This well-dressed Twain-persona scoffs at the mob that is there to lynch him:

> The idea of you lynching anybody! It’s amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to Lynch a man! Because you’re brave enough to tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come along here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands on a man? Why, a man’s safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind—as long as it’s daytime and you’re not behind him.

> Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and raised

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41 Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 848.
in the South, and I've lived in the North; so I know the average all around. The average man’s a coward. In the North he lets anybody walk over him that wants to, and goes home and prays for a humble spirit to bear it. In the South one man all by himself, has stopped a stage full of men in the daytime, and robbed the lot.

Your newspapers call you a brave people so much that you think you are braver than any other people—whereas you’re just as brave, and no braver. Why don’t your juries hang murderers? Because they’re afraid the man’s friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark—and it’s just what they would do. So they always acquit; and then a man goes in the night, with a hundred masked cowards at his back and lynches the rascal. Your mistake is, that you didn’t bring a man with you; that’s one mistake, and the other is that you didn’t come in the dark and fetch your masks. You brought part of a man—Buck Harkness, there—and if you hadn’t had him to start you, you’d a taken it out in blowing.43

Speaking as Colonel Sherburn, Twain gets to denounce the mob as moral cowards and watch them slink away. Huck, who has been significantly silent in these Brickville chapters, suddenly resurfaces with the statement: “I could a staid, if I’d a wanted to, but I didn’t want to. I went to the circus,”44 This is the only episode in the entire novel where Huck, the narrator character, entirely disappears and the voice of Twain (as Sherburn) entirely takes over. Its effect is to strongly suggest that this episode held particular significance for Twain. It is known, for instance, that Twain set aside the Huckleberry Finn manuscript for several months, having stopped on this very episode, evidently considering whether Sherburn would be lynched or escape.45 In Twain’s solution to the problem, Twain/Sherburn speaks in his prophet persona, denouncing the mob for its moral weaknesses. The outcome reveals Twain’s sympathy for what he must have considered to be true moral courage.

A Theological Alliance

Twain asked that many of his writings remain unpublished until after his death. Some were collectively published in 1939 under the title Letters from the Earth, where Twain’s burlesque of orthodox Chris-

43Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 190.
44Ibid., 191.
tian views is particularly harsh. In the title story, Twain imagines that God and other characters mentioned in the Bible are actual beings but that common human perceptions of their nature and agenda are badly skewed. Satan, for instance, has not been utterly banished from heaven but merely banished into space briefly as punishment for having made some sarcastic remarks about God’s various construction projects. During his exile, he visits Earth and sends back to his fellow angels Michael and Gabriel a summary of how deeply misguided the general view of heaven is there. “For instance, take this sample: he has imagined a heaven, and has left entirely out of it the supremest of all his delights, the one ecstasy that stands first and foremost in the heart of every individual of his race—and of ours—sexual intercourse! . . . His heaven is like himself: strange, interesting, astonishing, grotesque. I give you my word, it has not a single feature in it that he actually values. It consists—utterly and entirely—of diversions which he cares next to nothing about, here in the earth, yet is quite sure he will like them in heaven.”

Satan then describes how much the common view of heaven resembles a traditional American Christian church service, how grateful and glad the average churchgoer is when the service finally ends, and yet how they imagine heaven as a service of prayer, singing, harp-playing, and sermonizing that goes on without end. Passages from Roughing It show Twain definitely aware that the Mormon vision of heaven is very different from that of traditional Christianity and that it is rather more like what is identified as “our view” by the “true angels” in Letters from the Earth, in that, among other things, the Mormon heaven does indeed include sexual intercourse. “The hope of every faithful Mormon [man] is to have a heaven of his own hereafter,” claims Twain, “and that he will be its God, and his wives and children its goddesses, princes and princesses. Into [this version of heaven] all faithful Mormons will be admitted, with their families, and will take rank and consequence according to the number of their wives and children.”

Twain’s burlesque Letters theology aligns with serious Mormon theology on other points as well. His Satan notes that the mainstream

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47Ibid., 15–16.
48Twain, Roughing It, 547–48.
Christians prize and reward reason and intelligence in actual life (much as they prize sexuality in actual life), but mainstream Christianity tends to discourage intellectual pursuits in religious worship and makes no mention of intellect or reason in its heaven:

“Lo, what the mind of man can do! he cries, and calls the roll of the illustrious of all ages; and points to the imperishable literatures they have given to the world, and the mechanical wonders they have invented, and the glories wherewith they have clothed science and the arts; and to them he uncovers as to kings, and gives to them the profoundest homage, and the sincerest, his exultant heart can furnish—thus exalting intellect above all things else in the world, and enthroning it there under the arching skies in a supremacy unapproachable. And then he contrived a heaven that hasn’t a rag of intellectuality in it anywhere!”

For his part, Joseph Smith had taught that “the glory of God is intelligence,” (D&C 93:36) and that “it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance” (D&C 131:6), common Mormon aphorisms that Twain could easily have heard or overheard on his passage through Utah.

Given all of humanity’s bizarre traits, Twain’s Satan explicitly calls into question the idea that God actually is their original creator:

“Here in the earth all nations hate each other, and every one of them hates the Jew. Yet every pious person adores that heaven and wants to get into it. He really does. And when he is in a holy rapture he thinks that if he were only there he would take all the populace to his heart, and hug, and hug, and hug!

He is a marvel—man is! I would I knew who invented him.”

Mormon theology likewise maintains that God created only the earthly bodies of humankind, but not their core intelligence (D&C 93:29), which means in turn that God is not responsible for any of humanity’s rather perverse choices, solving a theological problem that Twain returns to again and again in the Letters.

Subsequent stories in the 1939 Letters from the Earth collection are accounts of ancient prophets/patriarchs (Adam and Methuselah in particular), ostensibly translated from ancient records discovered or acquired by Twain. His editor, Bernard DeVoto, notes,

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49Twain, Letters from the Earth, 19.
50Ibid.
partly tongue in cheek:

The items here brought together were translated from the Adamic at different times but approximately in the sequence I have given them. In an unpublished philosophical work dated a thousand years after his death Mark Twain refers to himself under two titles, Bishop of New Jersey and Father of History. Both as a theologian and a historian he had a lifelong interest in the private archives of the oldest human family. He nowhere tells us how or when the Adam family papers came into his possession, but his first translation from them appears to have been the two extracts from Methuselah’s diary. I cannot date it exactly but it apparently belongs to the 1870’s; that is, it precedes the translation and publication of Adam’s Diary by at least fifteen years. A note of Albert B. Paine’s says that he began Shem’s diary even earlier, in 1870, but if he did, the translation has been lost.51

We have previously noted the significance of 1870 in Twain’s life. At the same moment when Twain consciously began his own career as literary prophet, he also began playing with the idea of presenting to the world “translations” of ancient texts. Twain humorously appropriates for himself exactly the feat seriously attributed to Joseph Smith and no other religious figure of nineteenth-century America: the translation of ancient religious texts previously unheard of. Ironically, Twain apparently began this project in nearly the same geographic location as Joseph Smith—i.e., upstate New York.

In Twain’s “translation” of the writings of Methuselah, Methuselah discusses the decrees of his father (i.e., the patriarch Enoch), as the leader of a great city called Enoch.52 This city of Enoch (founded by a righteous patriarch, as opposed to a city founded by another Enoch, the son of Cain [Gen. 4:17]) is a unique feature of Mormon scripture. This Enoch appears in Joseph Smith’s Book of Moses, which was canonized as one of several items in the Pearl of Great Price in 1880, but is mentioned nowhere in the Bible or by mainstream Christian writers. Except for the brief mention of Cain’s son, Enoch, a city governed by the patriarch Enoch is (as far as we can tell) discussed at length only in texts originating with either Joseph Smith or Mark Twain.

51Twain, “Extract from Methuselah’s Diary,” in Letters from the Earth, 56.
52Ibid., 64, 66–69.
CONCLUSION

We might indeed wonder why Twain’s epistolary response to Kate Field was so scathing or why Twain would invest with such importance a character rather like himself (Sherburn in *Huckleberry Finn*) with possible parallels to Joseph Smith and why he would write, on the whole, a rather sympathetic portrayal of the Mormons in *Roughing It*, a sympathy highlighted when compared to Twain’s trenchant satires of orthodox Christianity.

We suggest that the answer lies in Twain’s own missionary/prophetic impulses, as detailed by O’Connor and Fulton, as well as the strong parallel between Twain’s own struggle against Christianity and the story of Joseph Smith, to which Twain had been exposed at key points in his life: first as a boy in Hannibal, Missouri, later on as a young man on his way west through Salt Lake City, possibly during his encounters with missionaries (both mainstream and Mormon) in Hawaii, and finally when the prophetic persona and counter-Christian philosophy of Mark Twain took shape in Elmira, New York, so close to Mormonism’s birthplace.

As time went on, Twain’s personal theology dwelt less on the hopeful, natural instincts for good, as illustrated by Huck Finn, and more on the hopelessness of a lone man’s struggle against the greed and hypocrisy encouraged by social conventions. But through all of these transformations, from *Roughing It*, to *Huckleberry Finn*, to the final cynicism of his unpublished essays, such as “Corn Pone Opinions”\(^5\) and *Letters from the Earth*, we find the shadows of sympathy, the countercurrents of a covert literary alliance between Twain and his compatriot American prophet, Joseph Smith.

TRANSGRESSION IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT COMMUNITY: THE CASES OF ALBERT CARRINGTON, RICHARD R. LYMAN, AND JOSEPH F. SMITH

Part 2: Richard R. Lyman

Gary James Bergera

RICHARD ROSWELL LYMAN WAS BORN on November 23, 1870, in Fillmore, Utah, to Francis M. Lyman and Clara Caroline Callister Lyman. (Lyman’s grandfather, Amasa Mason Lyman, served as an LDS apostle from 1842 to 1867; his father, Francis Marion Lyman, was named an apostle in 1880 and appointed quorum president in

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GARY JAMES BERGERA is managing director of the Smith-Pettit Foundation, Salt Lake City. He appreciates the assistance of Donald Bradley Sr., David R. Hall, Loretta L. Hefner, Tiffany Lundeen-Frost, E. Leo Lyman, Ardis E. Parshall, Scott H. Partridge, D. Michael Quinn, John R. Sillito, Penni West, and the advice of Martha Taysom and the journal’s three anonymous reviewers. All errors and misjudgments of fact, interpretation, and sensitivity are Bergera’s own.

Part 1, on Albert Carrington, appeared in the Journal of Mormon History 37, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 119–61. Part 3, on Joseph F. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will follow in the winter 2012 issue.

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Richard R. Lyman, the son and grandson of apostles, was excommunicated for “unchristian like and immoral conduct” in 1943 and rebaptized eleven years later. “I am nearly 80 years old,” he wrote in 1949, “and since the Lord knows my heart and all the facts concerning my case, it may be wisest and best... to wait and let the Lord over there give me what I deserve.” Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society. All rights reserved.
Richard Lyman graduated from Brigham Young Academy in 1891, then attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he earned a B.S. degree in 1895. He returned to Utah and was briefly principal of Brigham Young Academy high school, a professor at Brigham Young Academy, and a Provo City engineer. In 1896, he married Amy Cassandra Brown (b. 1872); they were the parents of two children. From 1896 to 1922, Lyman taught at the University of Utah, founding and then chairing the school’s civil engineering department. In 1903, he received a master’s degree at the University of Chicago, and two years later a Ph.D. in civil engineering from Cornell University.

On April 7, 1918, Lyman was ordained an apostle by President Joseph F. Smith. Following this, he served on the governing boards of the Sunday School (1918–19), LDS Religion Classes (1918–22), the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association (1918–34), the Church Board of Education (1919–43), LDS University School of Music (1921–25), University of Utah (1923–25), LDS University, LDS Business College, Correlation Committee (1931), and Brigham Young University (1939–44). He was also Assistant Commissioner of LDS Church Education from 1919 to 1924, and president of the Church’s European Mission from 1936 to 1938.1

Amy Brown Lyman graduated from Brigham Young Academy in 1890, then studied at the University of Utah, University of Chicago, and Cornell University. From 1940 to 1945, she presided over the Church’s all-female Relief Society, on whose board she had served since 1909. She also served in the Utah State Legislature and was an

officer in the National Council of Women. As president of the Relief Society, she promoted its social outreach and welfare programs.\(^2\) According to her biographers: “Amy Brown Lyman had herself become an ‘imposing woman,’ much like those [other Relief Society leaders] whose presence had somewhat intimidated her over thirty years before. A confident and decisive manner gained through decades of meeting challenges in public life settled easily upon her.”\(^3\)

By inclination and experience, Richard Lyman favored his church’s practical teachings and, as an apostle, championed programs for the betterment of LDS youth and the health benefits of the Word of Wisdom. He appreciated that his strengths lay primarily in educational and intellectual arenas. “Perhaps the most important matter discussed [at a meeting of the Twelve],” he recorded in early 1929, “was my appeal for greater charity toward our church members whose views are not strictly orthodox. I say if 100 of the most successful, most ambitious, most prosperous, most studious, and most successful church members . . . are being pushed out of ward activity if not out of the church, then there may be something wrong with the leadership somewhere.”\(^4\) Friends reported finding him “cultured, congenial, good humored . . . delightfully companionable. He is

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\(^4\) Richard R. Lyman, Diary, January 7, 1929, holograph, L. Tom Perry

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kind-hearted, high minded, sympathetic and wholesome; wholesome in his thinking, in his habits of living." His "large, frank, tolerant nature," another admirer wrote, "has made for him a host of friends at home and abroad." "Verbose, friendly, warm, outgoing, trusting and generous," is how his secretary remembered him, adding that he was also "possessed with drive, ambition."

“A Temptation I Did Not Resist”

During his early years as apostle, Lyman, like other LDS leaders, confronted the challenges of abolishing completely the Church’s decades-long, controversial practice of plural marriage. Previously, the Church had publicly issued two separate declarations prohibiting plural marriage: the first in September 1890 withdrawing support for new plural marriages, and the second in April 1904 threatening excommunication to the disobedient. “Imagine how I would feel if some bishop were to marry my only daughter to some man without my knowledge or permission,” Lyman recorded in mid-1919, then quoted his father: “Nothing good, nothing lasting can be built upon a falsehood.” Lyman also knew that Church officials had not always been entirely forthcoming about their practice of polygamy. In 1921, he noted Anthony W. Ivins’s admission that, while in Mexico in the 1890s, “he was instructed to tell the Mexican Government he was not there to perform plural marriages and at the same time he was instructed to perform plural marriages.” (In Mexico, Ivins had been a stake president; in 1907, he was made an apostle and in 1921 was named second counselor to Church President Heber J. Grant.)
In 1922, Lyman was asked to help investigate the case of Danish immigrant Victor C. Hegsted, who had married a second plural wife, Anna Sofie Jacobsen, sometime after 1904. (Hegsted’s first wife had died in 1886. He married a second wife, Ada Martin, in 1890, and took his first plural wife, Hannah Grover, in 1904.) Jacobsen, born in 1872 in Denmark to LDS parents had joined the Church there and migrated to the United States. The fifty-six-year-old Hegsted told Lyman that he and Jacobsen had married before 1904, but Jacobsen had not arrived in the United States until 1905 and had not begun living with Hegsted until 1907. To avoid excommunication, Hegsted confessed, agreed to leave Jacobsen, and relocated to Arizona.\(^{10}\) (He died in 1941 in Salt Lake City.) Jacobsen, unlike Hegsted, was excommunicated in 1921\(^{11}\) and moved to Salt Lake City where she worked a variety of jobs, though her Church records remained for a time in Idaho.

Lyman had helped to investigate Hegsted’s plural marriages, and was later asked to supervise Jacobsen’s return to Church activity. “The woman involved came here from a foreign land a convert to the Church,” Lyman wrote in 1956 to Stephen L Richards, then first counselor in the First Presidency. “Thinking it was proper for her to do so...

\(^{10}\)Lyman, Diary, February 10, 11, 16, 1922. “We are all agreed,” Lyman recorded on February 17, 1922, of his meeting with Hegsted’s stake presidency, “that if Bro[ther] Hegsted will make a full confession of his guilt to the satisfaction of the Council of the Twelve the stake presidency are not only willing but wish to have him handled with the least possible publicity. The presidency will be pleased if this matter can be handled here quietly so that Bro[ther] Hegsted can begin anew in Arizona without the hardship that this would give him if it were known.” For Hegsted’s marriages, see B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), Appendix, s.v. “Hegsted, Victor C.” Hardy does not include Jacobsen. For another of Hegsted’s wives, see Jill Hemming Savage, “Hannah Grover Hegsted and Post-Manifesto Plural Marriage,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 109–17.

\(^{11}\)See B. R. Harris (bishop of the Salem Ward, Fremont [Idaho] Stake), and Alma B. Larsen and D. Rolla Harris (members of the Fremont Stake High Council), Letter to the Teton Stake, October 16, 1921, in Stake President’s Meeting, November 8, 1921, Teton Stake High Council Record, typed excerpts in D. Michael Quinn Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut (hereafter Quinn Papers). Jacobsen resided in the Fremont Stake, Hegsted in the Teton Stake.
she married in polygamy and for so doing was excommunicated from the Church. President Ivins thought she was unfairly treated and he put on me the responsibility of getting her back into the Church. I did this. Since she had had her Church membership in Idaho this took a long time and it required my holding many intimate interviews with the woman.”12 (The date of Jacobsen’s rebaptism is not currently available, though it probably occurred sometime in 1922–25.) In a letter written in 1963, Lyman remarked on his interaction with Jacobsen in Salt Lake City: “While I was considering her case, I took her often in my auto to her home on 7th East but I never went into her apartment there.”13

Lyman remembered Jacobsen as “wonderfully unselfish and helpful” but that she was concerned because she “was getting along in years with little or no hope of having a husband even in the great beyond.” As their meetings continued, the two fell in love; and on November 9, 1925, they agreed, according to Lyman, “that when death took either of us the other would undertake to have us sealed to each other in a temple ceremony.” (Lyman was fifty-four, Jacobsen fifty-three at that point.) Lyman reportedly looked upon Jacobsen as a “prospective plural wife.” He encouraged her to remain active in the Church, visiting her only during the day and never, he insisted, in the privacy of her apartment.14

In what may be the fullest extant account of their relationship, written ten months before his death, Lyman continued:

During the years in which I handled this case Miss J[acobsen] explained repeatedly how greatly she was disappointed to be getting so far along in years with no husband. This woman had so many virtues and had done so much in an unselfish way for others that she and I agreed that while the present practice of the Church would not permit her to become my plural wife I began regarding her as my prospective Plural Wife with the mutual understanding that when by

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13Richard Lyman, Letter to Melvin A. Lyman, February 16, 1963, photocopy in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation. Lyman prefaced his letter: “You may use this information in any way which to you seems wise and proper.” During the period of time Lyman narrated in this portion of his letter (the late 1920s), Jacobsen lived in the Lorraine Apartments at 677 South 700 East, Salt Lake City.
14Lyman to Richards, April 10, 1956.
death or any other cause it would be possible for her to be my plural wife the ceremony would be performed.  

For years I picked her up near her residence on [401] Center Street [apartment no. 2] and we rode together around the [Bonneville] boulevard to the east end of 3rd Ave where she took the bus for home and I came home in my auto to 1084 3rd Ave. While our trip thus made together was nearly always in the daylight I did go near her home on Center Street a few times, but very few times at night. 

Following Lyman’s presidency over the Church’s European Mission (1936–38) and “the long separation and the fiery nearness of her being my prospective plural wife,” however, Lyman eventually accompanied Jacobsen to her small Center Street apartment. “This,” he later confessed, “led to a temptation I did not resist.” Their clandestine relationship continued over the next few years, until November 1943. 

An element of Lyman’s attraction to Jacobsen was undoubtedly

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15Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power, 819, suggests that Lyman and Jacobsen’s promise to marry functioned as a “plural marriage by mutual covenant.” Quinn’s suggestion recalls Willard Richards’s method for performing his own plural marriage in 1845: “At 10 P.M. took Alice L........h [Longstroth] by the [hand] of our own free will and avow mutually acknowledge[d] each other [as] husband & wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity for time & for all Eternity.” Richards, Diary, December 23, 1845, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers. While Lyman and Jacobsen may have viewed their relationship as a kind of crypto-engagement, I am unable to assert—from the available sources—that they believed they were or had in fact married.

16According to Polk’s Directory (s.v. “Jacobsen, Anna S.”), Jacobsen had arrived in Salt Lake City by 1922, boarded at 321 South 800 West, and worked as a clerk. Two years later, she was living at 129 North 700 West and employed as a janitor. In 1925, she lived at 43 West North Temple Street, and by 1927 she had moved into the Lorraine Apartments. Three years later, she relocated to north Center Street; her Church membership records evidently remained in the First Ward, Park Stake, Salt Lake City. She lived in the same Center Street apartment until her death in 1959. In 1932, Polk’s identified her as “(wid[ow] Victor)” (a reference to Victor Hegsted) and in 1934 as “(wid[ow] Arvil).” Orville was Hegsted’s middle name. It should be recalled that Hegsted did not die until 1941.

17Richard Lyman to Melvin Lyman, February 16, 1963.

18Lyman to Richards, April 10, 1956.
sexual, particularly in the encounters confined to her apartment. But physical attraction was not the only component. Although Lyman’s marriage to Amy may have been mutually satisfying in the beginning, their many years together and increasingly dissimilar temperaments had slowly driven a wedge between them; by the mid-1930s, if not earlier, their relationship had evidently turned strictly platonic. Lyman’s secretary remembered that the Lymans had “separate bedrooms and that you could tell that RRL’s room was his own and not shared with Amy.”

Where Lyman “was far more outgoing than Amy” and “craves[d] attention and affection,” writes Amy’s biographer David R. Hall, Amy “was reserved and not particularly demonstrative,” except within a very small circle of friends. Hall suggests that the couple’s remoteness and “lack of communication” may have contributed to Lyman’s involvement with Jacobsen. Within LDS society, especially at the upper echelons, divorce was an unacceptable response to an unhappy marriage. “It seems likely,” Hall notes, “that the attitudes brought by the couple to their marriage from their upbringing made it impossible for an open discussion to be held before Richard’s excommunication forced the issue.”

Also impacting the state of the Lymans’ marriage was the 1933

19 Johnson, Interviewed by Sillito. A relative of Lyman observed: “According to one family member, once Amy had brought forth two children, she informed Richard that their relationship from that point on would be celibate, living in amiable harmony in the same house more or less like brother and sister. Amy, incredibly active and busy in her numerous civic and church responsibilities, may not have had, in her opinion, time or energy or inclination to devote much attention to her husband.” Lyman once reportedly advised a woman preparing to marry “to be sure and demonstrate affection towards her new husband, because if she did not, there was always the possibility that he would look elsewhere for the love he could not get at home.” Statements courtesy of Scott H. Partridge; used with permission.

20 “All of my marriages have to be a success,” Lyman told a young couple in 1929. “The knots I tie cannot be untied and the marriage ceremonies I perform must not result in divorce.” Richard Lyman, Diary, July 26, 1929.

21 David Roy Hall, “Amy Brown Lyman and Social Service Work in the Relief Society” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, December 1992), 167. Hall, “A Crossroads for Mormon Women,” 240, adds: “By temperament, Amy and Richard were very different. His open manner con-
death of their only son, thirty-five-year-old Wendell. Born in 1897, Wendell married twenty-five-year-old Rachel Ballif in 1924. Rachel died unexpectedly two years later, and Wendell sank into a serious depression. By the early 1930s, according to Hall, Wendell had begun to drink “socially and had some other minor Word of Wisdom problems which created strains in their [i.e., his parents’] relationship with him. Richard felt these matters of such import that shortly before departing on [a] lengthy tour on Church business in April [1933], he gave Wendell an ultimatum to straighten up or face being cut out of the family business.” The following month, Hall continues, “Richard was settling down to a quiet afternoon at home when he was startled by

trasted with her personal reserve that some mistook for coldness.” Lyman’s situation recalls that of LDS Apostle George Teasdale (1831–1907), who married plurally after the 1890 Woodruff Manifesto banning polygamy because “his [first] wife and he were not living together as man and wife and had an understanding together in this regard.” John Hatch, ed., Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2005), 264.

Amy running into the house in hysterics. She had just found Wendell dead in the garage. The newspaper accounts indicated that he had been working on his car with the engine running and was asphyxiated by carbon monoxide fumes when he closed the door to keep dry during a rain shower. Reportedly he had a wrench in his hand which led Richard to later speculate that he had been looking for a leak in the radiator when the accident occurred.23

The Lymans were overwhelmed with grief—and guilt. Amy “felt the pain but held her emotions out of the public view.”24 Lyman stopped keeping a diary for a year. The sadness of the loss, the method of Wendell’s death, and probable anger over responsibility all combined to further alienate husband and wife.

“In the Midst of Sadness”

Word of Lyman and Jacobsen's affair first surfaced in late October 1943, when J. Reuben Clark, first counselor in the First Presidency, received reports that one of the Church’s apostles had been seen evidently acting suspiciously. For the previous several years, Clark had encouraged the use of covert surveillance, including undercover infiltration and police involvement, to prosecute modern-day Mormon polygamists. Lyman and Jacobsen’s liaison probably came to light during such operations.25 Church President Heber J. Grant had suffered a stroke in the early 1940s; and given Grant’s frail health, Clark had assumed practical management of the Church.

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25See D. Michael Quinn, Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 248–54. For the involvement of the Salt Lake City Police Department in investigating possible polygamists, see Fred E. H. Curtis, Letter to the First Presidency, February 25, 1941: “I had an interview with Police Chief [Reed] Vetterli, recently and he informed me that he did not know that the former [Salt Lake City police] chief had been conducting an investigation [of possible polygamists]. He stated that the two men who had been making this investigation had been assigned to other work. I explained to him that these men had collected some very valuable information, and he stated that he wanted to cooperate in every way possible.” Letter in J. Reuben Clark Papers, Perry
Clark immediately notified Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, who recorded in his diary on November 2: “One minute after I arrived in the house I was called to the phone by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. who said he wanted to see me on a very important matter. I, therefore, made arrangements as soon as possible and we went to the office where I was assigned to a very disagreeable task but one which seemed to be necessary. I was asked to have one of the brethren help me and chose Elder Harold B. Lee.”26 Smith and Lee were instructed to investigate the allegations and, if necessary, to gather proof of

J. Reuben Clark, first counselor to ailing LDS Church President Heber J. Grant, assigned two apostles the task of investigating Richard R. Lyman’s rumored transgression. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society. All rights reserved.


26Joseph Fielding Smith, Diary, November 2, 1943, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers; see also J. Reuben Clark, Diary, November 2, 1943, Clark Papers. Seven months earlier, Joseph Fielding Smith had recorded his surprise at some of Lyman’s views: “I spent the day with the Apostles in the Temple in the quarterly meeting. We had a very good meeting, with the exception of the remarks by Richard R. Lyman which I could not approve and which I think shocked some of his brethren as he dealt with matters of the most delicate and private nature regarding sex and sex relations.” Smith, Diary, March 23, 1943. Lyman believed that engaged couples should be fully advised about the place of sex and family planning in marriage. See, for example, Nicholas Groesbeck Smith, Diary, October 13, 1943, in Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., Nicholas Groesbeck Smith, 1881–1945: A Documentary History (Salt Lake City:
Lyman’s transgression. Two days later, they met first with Clark, then with unidentified “others,” to discuss strategy. George Albert Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve and Lyman’s second cousin, was not told of the situation until a week later, on November 9. “Shocked,” he recorded simply. “I hope and pray the charges are unfounded,” he added the next day. Lyman died believing erroneously that “the First Presidency, Presidents Grant, Clark and [David O.] McKay had not been consulted concerning my case.”

Clark, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Lee soon decided that only eyewitness testimony of Lyman and Jacobsen’s adultery would afford the evidence needed to prove conclusively Lyman’s guilt. The three officials concluded to enlist a number of Salt Lake City policemen, including forty-year-old police chief Reed Vetterli, to accompany Smith and Lee to Jacobsen’s Center Street apartment after the next regular weekly meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve. After assuring themselves that Lyman was inside, they would enter the apartment—forcibly, if necessary—to confront the couple. This confrontation occurred in the early evening on Thursday, November 11, 1943. Smith recorded in his diary later that day: “I was engaged with Brother Harold B. Lee and others including officers of the law which resulted in

Privately published, 2000); electronic file courtesy of Nicholas Groesbeck Smith Jr. Why Clark bypassed the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, George Albert Smith, in charging Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee is open to conjecture. Clark may have felt that Joseph Fielding was the more objective investigator.

27Joseph Fielding Smith, Diary, November 4, 1943.
28George Albert Smith, Diary, November 9, 1943, photocopy in Special Collections, Marriott Library.
29Ibid., November 10, 1943.
30Richard Lyman to Melvin Lyman, February 16, 1963. McKay was Grant’s second counselor.
31Vetterli was born in Salt Lake City in 1903 to John and Annie Vetterli. He graduated from George Washington University and was admitted to the Utah Bar in 1925. From 1928 to 1940, he worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He joined the Salt Lake City police department as chief in late 1940 and retired five years later in late 1945. He died in 1949 at age forty-five of a heart attack. See “Former Police Chief Dies at 45 in S[alt]. L[ake].,” Salt Lake Tribune, June 17, 1949, 2. J. Reuben Clark had consulted with Vetterli on earlier occasions. See, for example, Clark, Diary, September 8, 1941.
bringing charges against Richard R. Lyman of a most serious nature. With the evidence in hand, the two Church authorities dutifully “presented to the First Presidency and President George Albert Smith of the Council of the Twelve an accusation against Richard R. Lyman and asked that a trial be held.”

The next day, Friday, November 12, the Twelve were “called together and the charges against Richard R. Lyman were presented and sustained,” recorded Smith. “He admit[t]ing the charge as being true which was in our complaint. The council took action and Richard R. Lyman was excommunicated by the Council, in the midst of sadness and heavy hearts. Two of the members of the Council, Elders Charles A. Callis and Ezra Taft Benson were absent and excused. Brother Callis was returning from the East Central States mission and Elder Benson was on leave in Washington, D.C.”

“It was a most saddening experience,” Harold B. Lee added, “with most of the Twelve in tears as Brother Lyman was asked to leave the meeting and shook hands with each brother in parting those sacred premises and that choice companionship for the last time.”

“Charges admitted by Richard,” wrote George Albert Smith. “A sad occasion. He made no defense. Admitted more than known before. I am shocked & grieved. R[ichard]. R. seemed not to realize his wrong. All brethren in tears. Excom-
municated R[ichard] R[.] Decided to publish notice in [Deseret] News[.] The Devil has surely done his worse."36 Later that afternoon, Clark informed Heber J. Grant, then confined to his home, of the quorum’s action.37

In subsequent reports of their activities, Lyman’s colleagues

has quit wearing her [temple] garments,” Lyman noted in his diary on April 28, 1919. Lyman recorded meeting Roberta again seven years later (May 31, 1926), although he did not provide details. In having herself sealed to Lyman after his death, Roberta may have hoped for a happier marriage in eternity. It is also possible that Lyman, as he did with Anna Jacobsen in November 1925, may have given Roberta some indication of his willingness to be her heavenly spouse. The information regarding Lyman and Roberta is courtesy of Donald Bradley Sr.; used with permission.

36George Albert Smith, Diary, November 12, 1943; terminal punctuation added.

37See Grant, Diary, November 12, 1943, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers. “Pres[ident]. Grant has been in tears for days,” reported Nicholas G. Smith, an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve and George Albert Smith’s half-brother, “and says it is the most terrible thing that has befallen him in his life.” Qtd. in Anderson, Nicholas Groesbeck Smith. Grant subsequently asked Lyman to visit him. According to Lyman: “Soon after that notice appeared in the [Deseret] NEWS on Saturday Pres[ident]. Grant sent for me. I’m sure no other man was so much like a son to pres[ident]. Grant as I was. I had cared for his team and buggy. I had met him at Lake Point and had ridden with him to his Stake Conference in Tooele Stake while he was Stake President. I had slept in the same bed with him and we had done our praying together. At the age of 12 I slept at his home as a ‘protection’ for his city wife and her two baby daughters who were afraid to be left alone in their new Country Home while Pres[ident]. G[rant] was in S[alt]. L[ake]. City attending to his regular City Business.

“Well in any event Pres[ident]. G[rant] sent for me soon after that notice of my excommunication from the Church appeared in a brief notice on the front page of the NEWS. I went down stairs in the Ch[urch]. Office Building to see him. He was prostrated, for what cause I do not know. It may have been because of what had happened to me. I had only looked at him for a moment when in apparent real distress he said: ‘No, I cannot see him.’ I have not seen his face nor have I heard his voice since then. What he wanted to say to me or wanted me to say to him I can never know. He died soon after this experience.” Richard Lyman to Melvin Lyman, February 16, 1963.
commented on the painful development. “Attended most sorrowful and tragic meeting of the Twelve in the Temple Friday where our associate, Richard R. Lyman, was excommunicated. Saturday evening visited his family and talked with him. Most grievous experience of my ministry,” wrote Stephen L Richards. “On Friday afternoon I attended a very sorrowful meeting of the C[ouncil] of T[welte] at which we lost one of our vigorous members,” noted Joseph F. Merrill. “For the past several days, from the 2nd of November until Friday the 12th,” recorded Joseph Fielding Smith in his diary:

I was engaged in some special work with Elder Harold B. Lee, which work was assigned to us by the First Presidency in relation to the actions of Elder Richard R. Lyman which required some investigation.

I was present with the Council of the Twelve Friday afternoon when Elder Lyman was brought before that body and tried for his fellowship. Elder Harold B. Lee and I entered the complaint upon which Elder Lyman was tried, convicted and cast out of the church, which action brought great sorrow and mental pain upon all of the brethren.

“In company with Joseph Fielding Smith,” Lee wrote of November 11, “interviewed Richard R. Lyman and Anna S. Jacobsen as to their alleged illicit association.” The next day, he “attended a special meeting of the Council of the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple, where Rich-
ard R. Lyman was excommunicated from the church."^{38} Nicholas G. Smith, who was in Salt Lake City preparing for a stake conference the following day, described his own shocked reaction: “I was informed

^{38}Quotations courtesy of John R. Sillito; used with permission. Recently appointed LDS Apostle Ezra Taft Benson, who still presided over the Washington D.C. Stake at the time, recorded: “Yesterday and today I have been saddened because of the great calamity which has come to our beloved brother Richard R. Lyman who has been excommunicated for the breaking of the Christian law of chastity. Yesterday [November 13] a wire from Geo[rge]. Albert Smith stated he had ‘been relieved from his position and that an airmail letter follows.’ Then as the [stake] services were about to start tonight someone handed me a United Press dispatch from Salt Lake clipped from a local paper telling of the terrible action by the Q[uorum] of Twelve after hearing and his own confession.

“Sorrow surged thru my soul as I read the sad and sorrowful news. Altho[ugh] the meeting was starting I could not hold back tears of sorrow for my brother who had committed this grievous sin. I do most earnestly pray that he may fully humble himself, seek and obtain forgiveness of the Lord and seek again admission into the Church of Christ. With all my heart I pray a kind Providence to have compassion on His son Bro. Lyman. I know the brethren will, insofar as possible, treat him kindly.” Ezra Taft Benson, Diary, November 14, 1943, photocopy of holograph in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.
by Joseph Anderson [secretary to the First Presidency] to not present the name of Richard R. Lyman to Malad [Idaho] Stake Conference as one of the General Authorities as he had been excommunicated from the Church for Adultery. I am heart sick. I cannot understand. I went home and Florence [Nicholas’s wife] & I had our cry out. Lee Palmer came and took me to Malad and he was broken hearted. We met with the High Council & Bishops and I pleaded with them to be charitable in their feelings toward one who has sinned but remember the Church has done right for the same rule that governs the lay man also governs the Apostle. All must be clean in thought and action for they can have no place otherwise in this Church. The Malad people were stunned as he was their favorite apostle.”

The two most detailed accounts available of the proceeding are those recorded by Elders George F. Richards and Spencer W. Kimball. Second only to George Albert Smith in seniority among the Twelve, Richards wrote:

Am feeling the effects of having 8 teeth extracted yesterday. I had a phone call from the office informing me of a special meeting of the Twelve, called for 2:00 P.M. in the Temple today. I answered that my gums are still bleeding and that I thought I better not attend. Later, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith phoned saying the meeting of the Twelve called to meet in the Temple was of great importance and it was desired that all the members be present, so I responded to the call. It was there that I learned that Richard R. Lyman was to be tried for his standing charged with immoral conduct. Evidence showed that he had been discovered in bed with a woman not his wife, this by officers of the law and certain brethren accompanying them. He confessed his guilt and stated that it had been carried on for ten years or more, and that he had similar associations with other women before he was made an Apostle. As senior apostle next to the President of the quorum I felt it my duty to make the motion for excommunication which I did between sobs of sorrow. The motion was as follows: I move that Richard R. Lyman be excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for Unchristian like and immoral conduct. The motion was seconded by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith and carried unanimously.

At age forty-eight, Kimball was both one of the youngest and

39 Diary, November 13, 1943, in Anderson, Nicholas Groesbeck Smith.
40 George F. Richards, Diary, November 12, 1943, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.
one of the newest members of the quorum. (Only younger and less se-
nior was Ezra Taft Benson.) “It was a terrible experience that came to
me today,” Kimball recorded.

I think I can never forget the scene. We were called to a special meet-
ing of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Earlier in the day when I
asked Bro[ther]. Lee if it was a report meeting he solemnly told me
that it was not and that I should get my feet firmly on the ground antici-
pating it. The next two hours were filled with wonder and fear. . . . The
slow, deliberate and saddened approach of some of the brethren as
they came to the Temple presaged something ominous was ahead of
us. As soon as we were all seated the meeting was called to order and
announcement was made by Pres[ident]. George Albert Smith who
was almost overcome, that there was a very serious charge against one
of our brethren. He then directed that the charge be read. Our hearts
stood still as we heard that Richard R. Lyman, for 26 years a member
of the Council of the Twelve was accused of immorality. His written
confession was read and he being present did not deny the accusation
nor the confession. He told also of the situations. He had little to say.
He was as pale as could be. He minimized his act and seemed to feel
that it should be overlooked but showed no repentance and expressed
no sorrow for his sin. He tried to link his sin with polygamy but the evi-
dence gave no corroboration to the story. It was a terrible ordeal. To
see great men such as the members of this quorum all in tears, some
sobbing, all shocked, stunned by the impact was an unforgettable
sight! No tears from him but plenty from the rest of us and what a
heart-rending experience. After considerable discussion a motion was
made, seconded and we voted unanimously to excommunicate him
from the Church. When he retired he said goodbye and shook hands
with each of us and left the Temple, his quorum, his Church. Still
stunned almost beyond recovery, the members seemed to be yet un-
able to believe the terrible truth.41

When published on November 13, 1943, on the front page of
the Church-owned Deseret News, the official announcement of Ly-
man’s punishment read:

41Spencer W. Kimball, Diary, November 12, 1943, typed excerpts in
Quinn Papers; also, in part, in Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball
Jr., Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-
ter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 209.
Notice of Excommunication

Notice is hereby given that after due hearing before the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and upon his own confession, Richard R. Lyman has been excommunicated from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for violation of the Christian law of chastity.

By order of the Council of the Twelve Apostles,

GEORGE ALBERT SMITH,
President.42

Three months later, on February 14, 1944, the Twelve formally excommunicated Anna Jacobsen. “Met with 8 of Twelve,” recorded George Albert Smith, “on the Case of Anna Jacobsen R Lyman—admitted guilt.”43 (George Albert Smith had earlier suggested to his quorum that Jacobsen should not be tried; but, as J. Reuben Clark later reported, “the Council had overruled him.”)44 “At 3 P.M. I attended the special meeting of the council of the Twelve in which we excommunicated the woman in the Lyman case,” Kimball wrote. “Bro[ther] [John A.] Widtsoe and I were appointed to talk further with her and to hear her story which we did immediately after

42 Mark E. Petersen, at the time managing editor of the Deseret News, later recalled that on a very fateful day, Joseph Anderson [secretary to the First Presidency] came over to the office at the Deseret News and told me that President [Heber J.] Grant wanted the little notice that was in the envelope which he handed me placed on the front page of the newspaper. He spelled out exactly how he wanted it used—that it was to be placed in a two-column box at the upper left-hand corner of the page, and that was all. It was a plain announcement, but no news story was to accompany it. When I read it, to my horror I saw that Brother Lyman had been excommunicated from the Church.

I followed the directions and put the box on the front page in the upper left-hand corner. The Brethren asked also if I would see to it that the [Salt Lake] Tribune got the notice, but John Fitzpatrick [the publisher] refused to run the story until after we printed it. He couldn’t believe his eyes. After we had published it, the Tribune ran it the next day. Qtd. in Peggy Petersen Barton, Mark E. Petersen: A Biography (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 85–86.

Petersen, who reported experiencing a premonition of Lyman’s “death,” replaced him in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles the following April 1944.

43 George Albert Smith, 1944 Yearbook Diary, February 14, 1944, photocopy in Smith Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

44 J. Reuben Clark, Diary, February 11, 1944.
meeting. It was a sad story full of pathos. My sympathy went out to her in her distress. "Excommunicated by Council of the Twelve," explained the notice of Jacobsen’s excommunication. The twice-excommunicated Jacobsen remained in her small Center Street apartment for the rest of her life.

"WHAT I DESERVE"

News of Lyman’s expulsion “spread like wildfire.” Clark recorded hearing from non-Mormons that the incident “showed we lived up to our professions” and actually “increased their faith, as it showed we insisted on our standards no matter who was involved.” Clark feared, wrongly, that Lyman might align with ex-Mormon polygamists. The effect on the Lymans, however, was shattering. When first informed of the incident, Amy could only say, “I do not believe it. I do not believe it.” She absolutely did not believe it,” continued one of her associates. “She was very crushed. They [i.e., the Lymans] didn’t go anywhere together after that.” Just pray that I won’t grow bitter and just pray that the depth of my under-

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45 Kimball, Diary, February 14, 1944.
46 In Park Stake, First Ward, “Transcript of Record of Members (Genealogical Report Form E., 1944),” notes in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.
48 Clark, Diary, November 15, November 16, 1943.
49 Ibid., December 31, 1943. See also the entry dated December 4, 1951: “report that Richard R. Lyman had joined the Fundamentalists.” Of ex-Mormon polygamists, Clark had earlier written: “Knowing how these people are willing to falsify in order to protect themselves and their kind, I have little faith in any mere statement or promise which they make. It seems to me the promise should be followed by a rather extended period of right living before they are welcomed back in the fold.” Clark, Letter to David O. McKay, January 13, 1939, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.
50 Vera W. Pohlman, Oral History, interviewed by Loretta L. Hefner,
standing of the gospel will carry me through," another of her friends quoted her saying.51 She told a third supporter she "feared that she might 'lose her mind.'"52 "When it came out about her husband," a fourth recalled, "she was home, and I went up to see her. We didn't even talk about it. She kept going to the [Relief Society] office. You can imagine what she went through."53 "The couple went into seclusion for several weeks," writes David Hall, "and saw only a few very close friends and family members. . . . Some of their friends among the Church leaders advised [Amy] to get a divorce and move to California to make a fresh start, but she refused to do so. . . . She still loved Richard and knew that he loved her."54 "[Amy] is prostrated," George Albert Smith recorded after visiting the couple. "R[ichard] R seems in a dream."55 "She [i.e., Amy] is crushed," Smith added nine days later.56

Lyman's secretary worried that the ex-apostle was not fully

1980–81, typescript, 48, notes in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.


52David O. McKay, Diary, January 18, 1944, photocopy, Special Collections, Marriott Library.


54Hall, “Amy Brown Lyman,” 168. According to Hall, “A Crossroads for Mormon Women,” 241, “Amy made the decision to stay both with him and in Salt Lake City, telling family members that in ‘every other way he had been an ideal husband and father’ and ‘she was not going to leave him now.’” “All will agree that the first and most important duty of women is to keep the homes intact and the families together,” Amy had counseled publicly eight months earlier. “Women and the Home Today,” Church News, March 20, 1943, 7–8. Amy’s decision to remain with Richard suggests a shift in how the LDS hierarchy viewed adultery in marriage. In the nineteenth century, Church officials believed that adultery effectively dissolved a marriage and that husbands or wives who chose to remain with their adulterous spouses were essentially guilty of adultery as well. Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1839–1900 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 359. By the mid-twentieth century, these views had changed, thus permitting the non-transgressing spouse, such as Amy Lyman, to remain with her husband without running the risk of official sanction for doing so.

55George Albert Smith, Diary, November 13, 1943.
“aware of the gravity of what he had done.” Although a “brilliant man,” she explained, “he lacked common sense and . . . he got himself into situations that he shouldn’t.” In fact, Lyman returned to work in the LDS Church Office Building the next week, asking that he be allowed to keep his office. He was informed that his continuing association with Church headquarters was impossible. A few weeks later, on December 8, 1943, Lyman requested rebaptism—the first of several such attempts—and was denied. In contrast, when Amy returned to work at the Relief Society, David O. McKay, second counselor to Grant, “escorted her to the Relief Society offices so that her return after the excommunication of her husband would not be so difficult.”

Initially, Richard Lyman tried to rationalize his relationship...
with Jacobsen as a kind of proto-marriage and could not understand his colleagues’ harsh reaction, especially their decision to expose him publicly. As with Albert Carrington in the mid-1880s, the response of Lyman’s quorum was perhaps driven as much by his obfuscation as by his actual adultery. Over the next several years, as Lyman worked to salvage his life, his resentment festered. He was convinced that his punishment did not fit his offense. “Deep down in my heart,” he wrote on November 12, 1949, to Stephen L. Richards, then a member of the Twelve, again petitioning, albeit somewhat indirectly, for readmission,

I feel as if I had no trial. I think I was in the presence of the Brethren fewer than ten minutes. Brother Joseph Fielding said “We desire to give this serious matter as little publicity as possible” then came that terrible publicity the very next day that was read all over the world. My Michigan classmates (and I had been made president for life of the class of 1949) heard it everywhere. My engineering friends, some of them the greatest engineers in the world, began discussing it.

Does it not appear to you to have been a strange way to treat a friend after being in session with him all day under such conditions that at the slightest whisper he could have been held and he would gladly and quickly have explained his conduct. I say does it not seem to have been most unkind to have sent after him, not an automobile full but a bus as large as a streetcar full of armed officers who split and

sively oriented toward the home, “likely saw [Amy] Lyman’s continued presence as Relief Society general president as a highly visible reminder of the scandal brought upon the Church. . . . Under the circumstances, it would not have been surprising if Clark had viewed Amy Lyman as Exhibit A for what might happen in a marriage when women leave their appropriate sphere.” Hall, “A Crossroads for Mormon Women,” 241–42.

When a little later I was invited to speak to a group of friends in a near by stake,” Lyman wrote shortly before his death, “I purchased a copy of the [Deseret] NEWS to read on the train and I told the former Stake President whose home I visited that I would leave my copy of the NEWS in his home he very promptly replied: ‘Do not leave the Deseret NEWS in my house. I have not subscribed to it nor have I read anything from it since that little excommunication notice appeared on its front page.’ And a life-long friend of mine living in that same neighborhood said: ‘Richard, I want you to know that I think more of you than I do of all the rest of the General Authorities put together.’” Richard Lyman to Melvin Lyman, February 16, 1963.
mashed down the door as if they were endeavoring to capture the worse kind of wicked armed and fighting criminal. The Chief of Police, Reed Vetterli, told me immediately afterward that if he had known that I was the one involved he would not have permitted the officers to do it to say nothing of his leading it himself as he did. He was only told that they were after a “Big Shot.”

More than six years have now passed since this tragic affair happened. Many have forgotten it and I am treated by my school and engineering friends as if nothing had ever happened and many Church people, apparently thinking I was harshly treated, pay me more attention than they ever did before. I went to Midvale [Utah] today to the home of a friend who has lost his wife and the people flocked around like a long lost brother and one woman insisted on my going to her home to see her father and mother. I feel as if I cannot go to any chapel except in my own ward. I never miss my sacrament meeting but of course regret having to refuse to partake of the sacrament.

Now as to my offense. For reasons that seemed to me to justify it I agreed to regard that woman as my wife and she agreed to regard me as her husband. While no written note was made of this agreement at the time the date I feel sure was Nov[ember], 9, 1925. This relationship had gone on for 18 years in a most quiet way before the publicity of more than six years ago. It seems to me therefore, now that I am nearly 80 years old, and since the Lord knows my heart and all the facts concerning my case, it may be wisest and best, as I stated above, and after these six long years, to wait and let the Lord over there give me what I deserve....

Lyman continued: “If anything could possibly be done, without publicity, to induce the Brethren to extend to me the hand of welcome and friendship in the Church Office Building and in our vari-

65“These officers did not knock at the door,” Lyman repeated several years later, “but they smashed the door down, came in and took me and Sister Jacobsen down to the Church Office Building.” Ibid.

66Lyman subsequently elaborated on his quotation of Vetterli’s statement, phrasing it as: “Richard, had I known that you were the individual involved I would have done my utmost to have warned you and no officer would have gone to that apartment where I was told only that a ‘big shot’ was involved. I regret greatly that I did not and could not warn and protect you.” Ibid. “I ordained Reed Vetterli a High Priest,” Lyman added. “His father B[isho]p. John Vetterli was also a close and intimate friend of mine. And so was his mother.” Vetterli’s father, John Jacob Vetterli (1865–1944; born in Switzerland), married Annie Mary Naeff (1863–1948; also born in Switzerland) in 1890 in Salt Lake City. They were the parents of eight children.
Some one has said: ‘If a man has not done anything for which he ought to be ashamed or sorry he is not a very bad man.’ I hope this is the case with me. Can I ever be forgiven for saying that? Lyman’s former colleagues declined to act on his request.

“A LITTLE MORE MELLOW”

During the next two and a half years, Lyman struggled to come more fully to terms with the meaning and consequences of his trans-
gressive actions. He also continued to call, though infrequently, on Jacobsen. In April and May 1952, he wrote to McKay, now Church president, expressing his “regret, remorse, and sorrow for his transgression, and stated that he would like to make restitution and be admitted back into the Church.” McKay passed the matter to the Twelve.68

"Regular council meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve," Joseph Fielding Smith, now quorum president, recorded on May 15, 1952: “Richard R. Lyman’s letter to President McKay asking for reinstatement in the Church was read and referred to the Council of the Apostles. It has been 8½ years since he was excommunicated.”69

The Twelve decided to invite Lyman to appear personally before them three weeks later. The encounter did not go well. According to Smith:

At 2 P.M. the Council of the Apostles met with Richard R. Lyman who has asked to be permitted to come back into the Church. He spoke for one hour telling some of his life’s history, and his faithfulness in his early days and his accomplishments and associations with some of the most prominent engineers of the United States. He also abused the members of the Council, especially those who were present at the time he was excommunicated, feeling that they had treated him harshly. His entire time was spent in abuse of the brethren and an attempt to justify himself in his wrong-doing. I informed him that he was not ready to return the Church and was sustained by my brethren. He admitted continued adulterous relations since his excommunication. It is a sad case.70

Also disappointed was Kimball:

Then the interview with Richard R. Lyman. Excommunicated in Nov[ember] 1943 he is now seeking re-admission into the Church. He was referred to the Twelve by the Presidency. We were all present. His plea was most disappointing and disconcerting. Instead of a subdued and quiet and humble appeal, he launched forth on an extended dissertation on his own activities of the years, showing his virtues, his powers, his influence, pointing out the damage his excommunication did the Church, naming people who had given him comfort saying he had

68McKay, Diary, May 15, 1952.
69Joseph Fielding Smith, Diary, May 15, 1952.
70Ibid., June 3, 1952.
been badly treated and should never speak to any of the Twelve again—casting the Deseret News for publishing his excommunication and excoriating the Twelve. He said he was willing to leave his case in the hands of the Lord and felt secure in standing up with any and all of the Twelve. He excused his trouble on the grounds of plural marriage claiming that he and the woman had an arrangement (this she denied) for their eventual sealing for eternity. He admitted the sexual experiences but seemed to feel they were “not so bad” in view of the circumstances. After his extended outbursts and explosions he calmed down, apologized partially, at least explained, then sat submissive in a sense, expressing a willingness to do anything required of him. There was little or no evidence of repentance, but much of self-justification.

. . . Pres[ident] Joseph Fielding Smith expressed our feelings in telling him that he was not ready. We denied his request for re-instatement on the grounds that he was not repentant nor had he forsaken his wrong doing—he was told to bring better evidence of true repentance.\footnote{Kimball, Diary, June 3, 1952.}

One of the newer quorum members, sixty-three-year-old Henry D. Moyle, ordained an apostle in April 1947, noted: “The Twelve met with R[ichard]. R. Lyman to act on his request for reinstatement in the Church—we were satisfied he was not repentant nor had he forsaken his wrong doing—he was told to bring better evidence of true repentance.”\footnote{Moyle, Diary, June 3, 1952, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.}

Six months later, Joseph Fielding Smith arranged for Kimball, Moyle, and others to visit privately with Lyman. Again, Lyman was defensive. “Pursuant to your assignment,” Kimball reported,

we kept the appointment you made for us with Richard R. Lyman, on Wednesday, October 8, 1952. . . .

Our discussion brought out the fact that since his excommunication . . . he admits to having gone to the home of [blank] on at least three occasions, the last time being about nine months ago during the early spring of 1952. On each of these occasions he admits to having had illicit relations with her. . . . He has had these further associations with [blank] without any knowledge of Sister Lyman or other members of his family.

He vigorously resists the characterizing of these associations as adultery and continues to press the fact that he and she have consid-
ered themselves as “almost” husband and wife. His attention was called to the fact that at the time of his excommunication both he and she denied that their association had been under the guise of plural marriage or in anticipation of it.\textsuperscript{73}

Moyle added: “2 P.M. Bro[thers] [Harold B.] Lee, [Mark E.] Petersen & I met Richard R. Lyman according to appointment we found him to be a little more mellow than on previous occasion[s] but not ready to come into [the] church.”\textsuperscript{74}

The apostles decided to table discussion of the issue, and another year passed before Lyman and members of his former quorum met to review his status. Following a meeting with Stephen Richards “concerning [Lyman’s] petition for reinstatement in the Church,”\textsuperscript{75}—Lyman had written another letter, a third, “asking for his re-baptism and restoration,”\textsuperscript{76}—Joseph Fielding Smith, Lee, Kimball, and Mark E. Petersen met with Lyman on December 15, 1953.\textsuperscript{77} Once again, according to Kimball, “the visit was not satisfactory.” The four apostles subsequently met with the rest of their quorum who concluded “not [to] recommend re-baptism.”\textsuperscript{78} The following Monday morning, December 21, during a joint meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve, “the Presidency,” Kimball reported, “sustained us.” Elders LeGrand Richards and Kimball were also “appointed to represent the Presidency and Twelve and visit with Richard R. Lyman and read to him the long and complete statement made by the Twelve to the Presidency. We were asked also to read it to his son-in-law Brother Alexander Schreiner.”\textsuperscript{79} That same afternoon, they dutifully “called Richard R. Lyman to repentance and urged and implored him to make his adjustment. He said he had

\textsuperscript{73}Kimball et al., Letter to Joseph Fielding Smith, October 8, 1952, typed excerpts in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.
\textsuperscript{74}Moyle, Diary, October 8, 1952.
\textsuperscript{75}Stephen L. Richards, Diary, November 13, 1953, typed excerpts in Quinn Papers.
\textsuperscript{76}Kimball, Diary, December 21, 1953.
\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., December 15, 1953.
\textsuperscript{78}Ibid., December 21, 1953; see also the entries dated December 17 and December 19, 1953.
\textsuperscript{79}Alexander Schreiner (1901–87) had married the Lymans’ only daughter, Margaret (1903–85), in 1927, and served as Mormon Tabernacle organist from 1939 until his death. See Daniel Frederick Berghout, Alexan-
repented as much as a man could, but we pointed out that he had hardly started his repentance. We implored him to make good this time. This was the second denial to him. It is over ten years since he was excommunicated."80 The next week, Kimball met with Clark to review "the interviews on the LYMAN case."

"DAYLIGHT AT LAST"

What members of the Twelve had come to learn was that some of Lyman's correspondence had not been composed by Lyman but by concerned family members and friends who believed that he had not been treated fairly. This fact, coupled with Lyman's own attitude which seemed less than fully repentant to the quorum, formed decisive arguments against rebaptism without evidence of significant change. Finally, sometime toward the latter half of 1954, Lyman decided to swallow what remained of his pride, to acknowledge his transgression, and to explicitly seek the forgiveness of his wife and colleagues. Writing on September 21, 1954, Kimball recorded:

At 2 o'clock Elder LeGrand Richards and I, according to assignment from the First Presidency, visited with Richard R. Lyman, excommunicated in November, 1943 for adulterous practices. This happened shortly after I came to Salt Lake City eleven years ago. A long time elapsed before any word was heard from him officially then perhaps three or four years ago [i.e., 1949] a letter came ostensibly from him asking for re-baptism. An interview was granted by the Twelve and it was most obvious that he was not repentant. His request was denied. After another rather long period another letter came [i.e., 1952] and another interview with members of the Twelve which again was unsatisfactory. There had been subsequent occasions when sin had occurred. Another long time then in December, 1953 another letter came purporting to be his earnest request and after being read in the council meeting of the Presidency and the Twelve, Elder LeGrand Richards and I were assigned to call him in and tell him of the denial of his request by the Presidency and the Twelve, the letter having been composed as were the others by others, his friends and not by himself. We had a long interview with him and felt him still unrepentant. We

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80 Kimball, Diary, December 21, 1953.
81 Ibid., December 29, 1953.
warned him and we carefully explained to him what would be necessary in repentance if he were ever to be forgiven and re-admitted to the Church. We also talked to his son-in-law Brother Alexander Shriner who has always been loyal to the Church. No further word came then until September 1954. Elder Richards and I were again assigned on September 16 to ascertain if his letter was of his own composition. Accordingly today the 21st we interviewed him again and felt that he had come a long way and had earnestly tried to meet all requirements. We interviewed Sister Lyman also and found that she stated that she had forgiven him fully, knowing all the facts and that she would be happy if he could be given membership. Accordingly we felt to report the situation and personally I hoped the Brethren would accede to his request, this having been his own letter and it and his remarks revealing a considerable degree of repentance.82

Two days later, Kimball wrote, “President [David O.] McKay called for our report, on the [Richard R.] Lyman case. I reported and felt that he was repentant and justified re-baptism. There were some questions but finally a vote was taken and baptism into the church was made possible to him after eleven years.”83

The next month, on October 16, McKay telephoned the Lymans, speaking first to Amy and then to Lyman, informing them of the decision to readmit Lyman into the Church. Eleven days later, on October 27, Lyman was rebaptized and reconfirmed a member of the East 27th Ward of Salt Lake City’s Emigration Stake. He was one month shy of his eighty-fourth birthday.

Responding to the turn of events, Lyman wrote to McKay on November 3:

> The voice of an angel would have been no more welcome than was your voice when you called first Amy B[rown], and then me to the telephone Saturday evening, October 16th. And no voice could have delivered a more welcome and sweeter message than did you when you said that by unanimous vote the First Presidency and the Twelve at the regular weekly council meeting held Thursday, September 23, 1954, granted my appeal to be readmitted to the Church.

> With tears in our voices and in our eyes we both tried to say: “A thousand thanks President McKay and God bless you!!” Your good will and kindly feelings toward me, reported by our mutual friends, have been a source of great encouragement.

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82Ibid., September 21, 1954.
83Ibid., September 23, 1954.
Complying with your instructions written October 22nd, I called Bishop Harrison who came to our home at once after I gave him the good news. He and Sister Lyman and I agreed that it would be most appropriate and fitting to have my good friend Dr. Irvin Hull, who is our Stake Mission President, perform the ceremony of baptism.

Arrangements for having this done at the [Salt Lake] Tabernacle Wednesday, October 27th were made by Marion Hanks and Alexander Schreiner. I was confirmed by my childhood companion, my life-long intimate friend, my beloved classmate, President Bryant S. Hinckley, assisted by Marion Hanks, Alexander Schreiner, Irvin Hull, and Russell Harris, the other brethren present.

With the ceremony completed I had these brethren gather around me and I said to them: "I hope you will remember these words of mine. Eleven years of darkness and daylight at last."

During those eleven years I have not closed my eyes in sleep in any day until I have, on my bended knees, in secret, prayed, with all the faith at my command, that my short-comings might be forgiven, that I might have a spirit so repentant and humble that I would be worthy of being admitted to membership in the Church. Finally, the Lord has heard and there is "daylight at last."84

Rebaptism did not include a restoration of Lyman's Melchizedek Priesthood, temple endowment, and eternal marriage sealing; these required additional effort. Eighteen months later, on April 10, 1956, Lyman wrote to Stephen Richards, first counselor to McKay, asking about the restoration of these blessings. After briefly reviewing the history of his case, Lyman offered an explanation of his past relationship with Jacobsen, perhaps in an attempt to deflect any possible criticism or condemnation of her:

For my sinning I am more to blame than she is. I am sorry to the very last degree.

... I leave it to your imagination to picture the consuming anguish that rankles in my heart and soul to think that in the declining years of my life I should show such weakness.

For a time after I was found in her home, I saw her occasionally. I felt as if I ought not to abandon completely a prospective plural wife. But the brethren thought differently. For a short time therefore I called a relative of hers simply to find out if she was well. Objections were raised to this and therefore for nearly three years I have not spoken a single word to her and it is four years since, on one occasion, I sat with

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84 Lyman, Letter to McKay, November 3, 1954, in McKay, Diary, October 22, 1954. Albert Carrington had had to wait two years to be readmitted into the Church, Lyman eleven.
Lyman also contacted J. Reuben Clark, who replied:

With reference to the other matter to which you refer, it is a consolation to know that however much we who are here may err in our judgment and decisions, nevertheless the Lord knows all and in the Hereafter He will see that all wrongs are righted and all proper restorations accomplished.

My own formula with reference to these matters I have often expressed as follows: I believe that the Lord will bestow upon us all the rewards that it is possible for Him to bestow, having in mind in connection with His infinite mercy and love and charity, the absolute demands of justice. On the other hand, I think that He would impose the least penalty for our errors and misdoings that it is possible to impose, having in mind His love, charity, and forgiveness, that the demands of justice absolutely require.

Though sympathetic, Church officials declined to act on Lyman’s request, and the former apostle evidently did not pursue the matter further. But if the general tone of the letter he wrote to a relative shortly before his death is any indication, he seems still to have harbored some lingering bitterness over his brethren’s treatment of him twenty years earlier.

During Lyman’s declining years, Amy helped to nurse him through some health problems. “When he was in the hospital,” remembered Belle Spafford, Amy’s successor as Relief Society general president, “that dear soul Amy sat right by his bedside as faithful as any wife could be and he was the sweetest thing in the last years of his life you ever could imagine. Margaret [Lyman Schreiner] used to say to me, ‘I’ve never seen a more patient man than my father when he was in the last of his life.’”* Amy, suffering complications from a fall, succumbed on December 5, 1959; Lyman attended but did not participate in her funeral. Jacobsen, who never married, had passed away of natural causes eight months earlier, on March 28, 1959, in a Salt Lake hospital. The status of her Church membership is not known.

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85Lyman to Richards, April 10, 1956.
87Richard Lyman to Melvin Lyman, February 16, 1963.
88Spafford, Oral History, 51.
Lyman died four years after Amy on December 31, 1963, from “obstructive jaundice” and a “duodenal ulcer.” He was ninety-three and left an estate valued at just over $48,000. Hugh B. Brown, of the First Presidency, spoke at Lyman’s funeral four days later. He praised Lyman as a prominent educator and engineer, as well as “a great missionary.” “The action of the church against him,” privately wrote one of Lyman’s supporters shortly afterwards, “seemed to me to be very harsh and cruel. It hurt a man who was my friend by making him an outcast in the community and destroying confidence in him and also undermining his capability for useful service. However, I have never heard him say a word of criticism against the action they took.” Spencer W. Kimball would not have agreed with this statement about Lyman’s lack of criticism: “I kept hoping through the years that he would make another serious attempt to receive his [priesthood and temple] blessings back but apparently it did not seem important enough to him, or he didn’t have the energy or the courage or something. At any rate, he died a lay member of the Church without Priesthood, without endowments, without sealings, and it was sad indeed.”

Lyman’s priesthood and temple blessings were eventually re-

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90 Lyman had been afflicted with bleeding ulcers since at least the late 1920s.
91 Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power, 670.
93 Calvin S. Smith, Letter to Mrs. D. R. Pingree, January 8, 1964, notes in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation. Calvin Schwartz Smith (1890–1966), the son of Joseph F. Smith and Mary Taylor Schwartz and a half-brother to Joseph Fielding Smith, was a prominent Utah educator, serving as superintendent of the Granite School District during the 1930s. He dedicated Lyman’s grave.
94 Kimball and Kimball, Spencer W. Kimball, 346. Lyman’s secretary also commented that when she “looked down at him [in his coffin] in a regular business suit [and not in his temple clothes] she cried.” Johnson, interviewed by Sillito. Kimball subsequently summarized his views on sin, repentance, and forgiveness—beliefs that stemmed, in part, from his experiences with Lyman—in The Miracle of Forgiveness (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969).
stored in about 1970, six years after his death. Approving the action were newly installed Church President Joseph Fielding Smith and his first counselor, Harold B. Lee.  

[Part 3, “Joseph F. Smith,” Patriarch to the Church, follows in the next issue.]  

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According to Lyman’s granddaughter: “One of the first things that President Joseph Fielding Smith did when he became president was to restore Grandfather’s [temple] blessings to him.” Engar, “Amy Brown Lyman,” 20.
THE CHURCH FAMILY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA: MORMONISM AND THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE DIVIDE

Christine Talbot

In 1852, Mormon Church Apostle Orson Pratt publicly announced that Mormons practiced a unique marital and family structure, plural marriage (also called celestial marriage, or, simply, the Principle).¹ That announcement declared nationally that Mormons understood the family and its place in society very differently from the dominant cultural paradigms that shaped anti-Mormon under-

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¹Orson Pratt, August 29, 1852, Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 1:53–66. I rely on the Journal of Discourses because it represents not only the largest collection of nineteenth-century Mormon public address but also because it was deliberately selected by Brigham Young and other Church officials to represent a canon of Mormon doctrine and theology. While many other written and oral Mormon sources exist, the Journal of Discourses forms the bulwark of early Mormon thought, and
standings of Mormonism. In this article, I argue that, over the nineteenth century, plural marriage functioned at the center of Mormonism’s communitarian mission, undermining and challenging the ways in which increasing numbers of white, middle-class Americans arranged their domestic, cultural, social, and political lives. White, middle-class Americans spent much energy articulating a separation between what they considered “private” (the self, property, and the home) and what they considered “public” (community life, the political sphere, the polity, and the marketplace). Anti-Mormons in particular demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the division of public from private. Mormons, on the other hand, as part and parcel of their communitarian project, disavowed, reinvented, and inverted categories of public and private to suit their own needs. This dynamic, I contend, was at the center of the nineteenth-century Mormon question.

Several historians have attempted to elucidate the nature of the nineteenth-century Mormon communitarian project. Variously, these accounts have argued that Mormonism was like (or unlike) its contemporary religious utopians or mainstream Protestantism, an authoritative religion rooted in obedience to patriarchal leadership, a democratic church that attracted and empowered common men, or a progressive forward-thinking community that advanced women’s rights sooner than the rest of America. What distinguishes my study is that it examines Mormonism in the context of broader conversa-

most (though not all) of the sermons published in it were given at the semi-annual general conferences, when Mormons gathered to hear the revelations they believed God had bestowed on his prophet and other General Authorities. Those sermons were widely reprinted in newspapers and as pamphlets and papers in Utah and abroad. While nineteenth-century Mormons likely saw the sermons included in the journal as doctrinal treatises, the contemporary Church has posted on its official website that members should understand the Journal of Discourses as “a compilation of sermons and other materials from the early years of the church, which were transcribed and then published. It includes practical advice as well as doctrinal discussion, some of which is speculative in nature and some of which is only of historical interest.” http://lds.org/study/topics/the-journal-of-discourses?lang=eng#, accessed May 11, 2011.

2Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900 (1958; rpt., Lincoln: University of Nebraska
tions about the nature of the family and the state and the relations between them. Broadly, many nineteenth-century, white, middle-class Americans imagined an impermeable boundary between the public affairs of state, polity, and government and the private affairs of home and family. Mormonism, however, envisioned the relationship between family and state very differently and used that vision to establish its utopian, millenarian community in the American West.

Mormonism troubled the public/private distinction in three central and contradictory ways, disavowing, reinventing, and inverting the categories of public and private on Mormons’ own terms. In one sense, Mormons disavowed the divide between public and private by amalgamating religion, family, civic life, economics, and government as a single entity in God’s kingdom. Plural marriage stood at the center of that unity, situating the family in God’s political order, not the nation’s. Middle-class American political culture attempted to separate the ideals that the practice of polygamy and its attendant theological and political commitments brought together. Ideally, Mormons sought to “publicize” the family in that they made no

distinction between the private family and the broad Mormon community.

In a second sense, Mormons simultaneously accommodated the public/private divide by reinventing it. While at one level, Church leaders made no distinction between public and private life within their own community, they also represented that community as a kind of private sphere writ large—the family of God, tied together by the bonds of plural marriage. They juxtaposed this “private” sphere against both a broader American “public” sphere and also against the “public” institutions of American government. In this sense, Mormonism located the public/private divide at the boundary of God’s family—Church membership—thus making the entire church community “private,” juxtaposed against a larger American “public.” Mormons also imagined God’s family as a polity—God’s polity—in the kingdom of God.

In a third sense, Mormons troubled the public/private divide, inverting its meaning. Figuring the entire community as God’s family (as well as His polity) at once publicized the family and constituted Church authority over the Mormon community as a private affair. In Utah, publicized families were governed by a “privatized” government, the Church, inverting the ways in which white, middle-class Americans considered the family private and the government public. Because God’s government was private, Mormons claimed, it could and must coexist with American public government. Mormon attempts to lay claim to American citizenship required them to position themselves as citizens in both the privatized kingdom of God and the public U.S. state.

**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IN U.S. POLITICAL CULTURE**

Public and private have always been conflicted and contested terms both in history and in scholarship. Perhaps the only characteristic most formulations of public and private share is that each is a binary opposition in the strictest sense: Each term can acquire its meaning only in relationship to the other.\(^3\) Indeed, the categories “are continuously re-articulated in a manner that the two reinforce each

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The terms have acquired several meanings over the course of American history and within feminist historiography. One scholar had claimed: “There are as many feminist ‘takes’ on the private-public distinction as there are versions of feminism.” Since the American Revolution, Americans have invested great political capital in the protection of the private individual and his or (less so) her property rights from public government intervention.

Moreover, as Gordon Wood points out, the American Revolution revolutionized not only politics, but the family as well. In monarchical society, Wood asserts, “The household, the society, and the state—private and public spheres—scarcely seemed separable.” Personal relationships structured social and political dependencies. Moreover, “sometimes colonial communities seemed to be only enlarged families. Inbreeding and intermarrying . . . often created incredibly tangled webs of kinship. Some of these kinship networks grew in time to permeate or encompass entire villages, counties, or even colonies.” Embedded in some of these kinship networks were the public duties of gentlemen patriarchs in monarchical society. As gentlemen, heads of eighteenth-century genteel households were expected to provide political leadership; as Wood claims, government “was regarded essentially as the enlisting and mobilizing the power of private persons to carry out public ends.” Gentlemen patriarchs of notable genteel families owed the community public service “because


of their talents, independence, and social preeminence.”

Over the latter half of the eighteenth century, Wood continues, family dynamics shifted from hierarchical, patriarchal families to more “republican” families, in which “the family core of father, mother, and children became more distinct . . . and affection became more important than dependency in holding the family together.” As a result, “families cut some of their ties to the outside world and became more insular.” Late eighteenth-century families in the Western world, French historian Philippe Ariès holds, “raised the wall of private life between the family and society” which “satisfied a desire for privacy and also a craving for identity: the members of the family were united by feelings, habits, and their way of life.”

Historian Jay Fliegelman points to a new contractual model of family voluntarily established by the mutual consent of husband and wife. Indeed, women were supposed “to find . . . ‘liberation’ through marriage,” and their primary act of liberty, under this model, was to choose whom they would marry. The revolutionary family became more privatized in its revolution against patriarchy, a revolution Wood calls “a century-long affair at least” that “was never complete, never undisputed, never final.” Despite revolutionary changes in the family, older models of patriarchal families endured into the nineteenth century. Particularly in genteel families, patriarchy and relations of dependence continued alongside and in tension with the newer middle-class models of “republican” or, later, “contractual” families.

In the early and antebellum republic, as the market revolution increasingly moved production outside the home, nascent industrial

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7Ibid., 148.
11For an examination of contractual families in the mid-to late nineteenth century, see Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor,*
capitalism produced a new middle class seeking an identity distinct from the wealthy and the poor, which seized upon the home as the location from which that identity emerged. Increasingly, though incompletely, middle-class Americans set the private home apart from the rest of the “public” world outside it—the public world of the street, the market, the polity, and the affairs of state and government. They projected the domestic realm as a “haven from a heartless world.” At the same time, white, middle-class Americans used their cultural, economic, and political capital to try to make their visions of public and private nationally normative. The private home acquired a new significance to evolving middle-class American political culture.

The categories of public and private were understood not only as separate, but also as gendered. Middle-class Americans imagined that men transacted the “public” matters of the household—property transactions and politics—in public, while women maintained the home in private. Catharine Beecher, in her best-selling 1841 *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, defended the relegation of women to the private sphere: “If on the one hand an American woman cannot escape from the quiet circle of domestic employment, on the other hand she is never forced to go beyond it.” Although the gendering of public and private was as contested and incomplete as the division itself,


12Although this phrase was first used in 1977 by Christopher Lasch, historians have since incorporated it as an identifying feature of the idealized nineteenth-century home. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Norton, 1977).


Americans nonetheless fantasized that what women did was private while what men did was public. As literary scholar June Howard points out, “When we speak of ‘separate spheres’ we are not describing a fact of social life but an organizing pressure within it.”

Projections of proper domestic life and the configurations of gender and public and private that accompanied it became increasingly central to nineteenth-century nation-building, setting not only the terms of what it meant to be American but also the political status of members of various normative and deviant families. Especially in the mid-nineteenth century, in the wake of challenges from many directions, marriage became a kind of lightning rod that attracted debates about who exactly constituted “the people.” In the wake of Reconstruction, the private family unit constituted by monogamous marriage became a central mechanism through which difference was to be either assimilated into the nation or barred from it. Lengthy debates about the nature of appropriate marriage and family articulated arguments that only certain kinds of families could legitimately give rise to American citizens. Deviation from a white, single-household, Christian, monogamous family model could variously and categorically disqualify the head of a deviant family from the rights and privileges of full citizenship. Moreover, as American studies scholar Amy Kaplan has demonstrated, the imposition of the public/private divide was part of American imperial ventures both in the West and overseas.

By mid-century, the juxtaposition of the domestic private home to the public political and economic world outside it projected public
and private as though the one could be set off from the other. However, the projections upon which this vision of Americanism rested had no stable foundation. Indeed, as Kathleen Flake has pointed out, “With the benefit of hindsight . . . we know that [marital and family] norms were not as stable or even as traditional as they seemed at the time.”

Recent feminist scholarship has shown quite clearly, on one hand, that despite the rhetorical force of public and private, any division between them is necessarily incomplete; the categories are always dependent upon and inseparable from one another. First, the home became a central location “in which individuals [could] exercise their choices freely and create a subjective moral vocabulary” that, theoretically, upheld their participation in the political public sphere. The public depended on the private. Second, Mary P. Ryan, Linda K. Kerber, and others have shown that early Republican women asserted a political role for themselves in the private household. While men theoretically represented the interests of the household in the public, American women asserted that it was women who exacted civic virtue from their husbands and reared the future citizens of the nation in the home.

As if to illustrate the slippage between and interdependence of public and private, middle-class American women often exercised their voices in public affairs within the confines of the domestic sphere—what Ryan has called the “Empire of the Mother.” In this formulation, marriage took on a new political importance beyond establishing a man as a head of household: It linked him to the refining influence of a republican wife, whose interests he was (theoretically) bound to represent and whose virtue ensured his political morality.


Marriage also established the proper context for the political instruction of future citizens, carried out by republican mothers at the hearth. By the early nineteenth century, civic virtue had come to depend on “true women’s” domestic influence in the private home. Men’s public political life relied on women in the private sphere.21

Feminist scholarship has also shown that public and private were never so straightforwardly gendered as previous scholars, and perhaps their nineteenth-century counterparts, imagined. Men crossed into the private sphere of the home, engaged in domestic activities, and sometimes invoked characteristics of a domestic sentimentality often marked as feminine.22 Moreover, feminist historians in search of a woman’s public life have shown that, although they did so in the name of their roles as wives and mothers expressing their political voices in the interest of their families, women entered the fray of what Estelle Freedman has called the “female public sphere” as reformers and activists.23 So while all nineteenth-century men and women were subject to and implicated in the divide between the


home and the world outside it, they were never entirely captured by it. Public and private were subject to co-opting, resistance, and subversion. Many Americans—even some white, middle-class Protestant Americans—carved out domestic, social, community, and political lives that contested and subverted the meanings of public and private.

Clearly, despite the nineteenth-century ideological separation of public and private, the categories were already contested, fluid, and blurred. In Kathleen Flake’s terms, “What is most strongly held is often clutched by an anxious hand.” Nonetheless, while nineteenth-century Americans, as much as the historians who study them, disagreed about the nature of and distinction between what and who was properly public and what and who was properly private, there was widespread agreement that there was a distinction between public and private, that maintaining the private home was central to national culture, and that the polity and political sphere were properly “public” and distinct and separate from the private home.

These visions of public and private were not uncontested, of course, but they were widespread, and anti-Mormons seemed to have believed in these ideals wholeheartedly. Benjamin G. Ferris, secretary to the territorial government of Utah for six months in 1852–53, for example, claimed in his anti-Mormon treatise, *Utah and the Mormons:* “States are made up of families and cannot be strongly compacted where the family is not a unit.” Anti-Mormon travel writer W. F. Rae asserted the importance of domestic privacy when he claimed: “If there be one point on which Americans and Englishmen are thor-

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oughly agreed . . . it is that their homes are sanctuaries and their houses castles; sanctuaries into which no stranger can enter unbidden; castles into which no stranger can demand admission.” He continued: A “home in the English and American sense of the word, has no existence among the Saints of the Great Salt Lake.”26

Indeed, the betrayal of these ideals was quite troubling to anti-Mormons. The Mormons in the West established a political subculture rooted in an ideal of a polygamous communitarian ethos that undermined public/private distinctions. In constructing the curious merging and inversion of public and private that Mormon officials prescribed, nineteenth-century Mormons imagined an ideal world much different from the visions of public and private that nineteenth-century, middle-class Americans envisioned. Mormons preached lifestyles and political philosophies that disavowed, reinvented, and inverted those visions. It was those disavowals, reinventions, and inversions that set the stage for decades of cultural and political conflict over plural marriage.

PUBLICIZING THE FAMILY/PRIVATIZING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

On January 12, 1868, Brigham Young described his ideal vision of the Mormon community:

I have looked upon the community of latter-day saints in a vision and beheld them organized as one great family of heaven, each person performing his several duties in his line of industry, working for the good of the whole more than for individual aggrandizement; and in this I have beheld the most beautiful order that the mind of man can contemplate . . . and the grandest results for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God and the spread of righteousness upon the earth. . . . Are [the Saints] now prepared to live according to that patriarchal order that will be organized among the true and faithful before God receives His own? . . . [W]hen our spirits have returned to God who gave them, we will be subject to every requirement that he may make of us, that we shall then live together as one great family; our interest will be a general, a common interest. Why can we not so live in this world?27

This statement epitomized Young’s vision for social, economic, politi-

cal, and familial order among Mormons. As his ideal suggests, Mormons attempted to unite the entire community under the rubric of family, dissolving the boundary between the private home and the broader community outside it. Moreover, by understanding this broad family organization as synonymous with the political kingdom of God, Mormons privatized politics and undercut the private individual Americans placed at the center of good government.

In many senses, the dissolution of public/private boundaries among Mormons relied on the broad, all-encompassing nature of Mormon religious belief. In the words of one scholar, Mormonism “disintegrated . . . that distance that separates the sacred and the profane.”

Mormon theology and practice shaped family relations and structure, community order, the ownership and management of property, and the practice of politics among Mormons. On one hand, this ordering meant that, viewed from the perspective of anti-Mormons, the Church intruded on and even dominated the rights of the private individual. Church leaders influenced (if not determined) individuals’ choices about how and with whom to transact their property, for whom to vote, whom to marry, and with whom to associate. The extension of Church authority into the most intimate of the individual lives of Church members convoluted the borders American revolutionaries had carefully constructed between public politics and the private individual.

While to Mormons the multiple functions and authority of the Church looked like the unity of all things under God, under more mainstream American rubrics, Mormonism looked like the absence of any semblance of a domestic private life and the intrusions of Church authorities into the domain of the private individual—religious belief, domestic life, private property, and political conscience. One anti-Mormon claimed that in Utah households “there is no privacy—no oneness of sentiment—no home.” Another reflected that the practice of plural marriage “has separated the people from Amer-

29See, for example, Brigham Young, April 8, 1879, Journal of Discourses, 20:172–73.
30Dudley Chase Haskell, Mormonism and Polygamy: An Address Delivered by D. C. Haskell of Kansas, at Central Music Hall, Chicago, June 8, 1881, be-
ican homes.” Among anti-Mormons’ central objections to Mormonism was that the Mormons had no private sphere in the home.

At its root, the Mormon challenge to the division between public and private was grounded in the most fundamental of the faith’s theological premises—a profound belief in the unity of all things. Indeed, unity was perhaps the most defining characteristic of life in the kingdom of God. God required that the Saints be “united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom” (D&C 105:4), the term Mormons applied to how they would live in exaltation and eternal life. In its quest for unity, the Mormon community attempted to bring together the very things various configurations of the public/private divide insisted should remain separate. In ideal terms, Mormonism made no distinction between the domestic private and the world outside it and subsumed the private individual, private property, religious and political conscience, and the private home into a broad, communitarian spiritual-political order. Mormons envisioned the kingdom of God they created as a religious, filial, social, civic, economic, and political institution in which Church, family, society, polity, economy, and state became indistinguishable from one another. At every turn, Mormon religionists worked to enact unity: of God’s family with God’s polity, of the sacred with the mundane, of religion with politics, of the individual with the political community, and of public and private.

No institution of Mormonism more completely prefigured and embodied the principle of unity than polygamy, figuring into all the ways Mormons imagined the unity their God required. Plural marriage framed the many syntheses Mormonism attempted in that it obfuscated the boundaries between the public and the domestic private.

foe the National Convention of the American Home Missionary Society (Lawrence, Kans.: Republican Journal Steam Printing Establishment, 1881), 25; emphasis his.


32 Injunctions to unity are multiple in Mormon scripture. For a few additional examples, see D&C 38:27: “Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine”; and Mosiah 18:21: “Look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love towards one another.”
Polygamy united God’s people and remade Mormon society as a broad, communitywide family that was also a political community: God’s polity. In a sense, Mormons at once “privatized” the kingdom of God by making it a family and “publicized” the family by making it a polity. As such, Mormons divorced ideas about marriage and family from American civic contexts and reconstituted them in the unique terms of the kingdom of God. In effect, polygamy placed marriage in the service of the privatized kingdom of God. In the same way that middle-class Americans imagined monogamous family life to prefigure and enable virtuous American citizenship, polygamy prefigured and enabled political unity in the kingdom of God.

Polygamy created the feeling and experience among Mormons that their community was a family writ large, “privatizing” the kingdom of God by extending the domestic private into the public. As Dean L. May briefly pointed out, “Plural marriage extended the concept of family to incorporate all of society.”33 The practice both informed and, to a certain extent, actualized a view of the Church as an intermixture of family and community that constituted the polity of God as a kind of extended family. Heber C. Kimball, a counselor in Brigham Young’s First Presidency, was fond of referring to Mormonism as “a household of faith,” over which Brigham Young, God’s representative on Earth, presided: “This is his [Young’s] house, and this is his people, and he is our leader, our Governor, he is our Prophet, and he is our Priest.”34 Wilford Woodruff remarked that a bishop “is called to be a father to the people of his ward.”35 As Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr state, “Mormons were a community of believers, a literal household where members addressed one another as brother and sister. Those who were outside the covenant were clearly outside the family, a separation apparent to Mormons and non-Mormons alike.”36 U.S. Army Captain John W. Gunnison, traveling in Utah in 1849–50, noticed the familial privatized flavor of Mormon society: “The influence of their nomenclature

34Heber C. Kimball, October 8, 1852, Journal of Discourses, 1:207. See also D&C 121:45.
36Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900
of ‘brethren and sisters’ is apparent in their actions, and creates the bond of affection among those who are more frequently thrown together. It [filial affection] is impressed on infantile minds by the constant repetition and induces the feeling of family relationship.”  

As Gunnison noted, Mormonism understood all Mormons to be part of its divine family, extending filial relationships well beyond the private home.

At a practical level, for practitioners of plural marriage, the nomenclature of early Mormonism, calling each other “brother” and “sister,” had at least some grounding in real, practical plural family relationships. Among those Church members whose lives most approximated the millennial kingdom, complex plural marriage relationships tied the community together, as polygamy sealed male leaders to one another’s sisters, daughters, mothers, widows, and sometimes even ex-wives. These marital relations also created complex networks of extended kin relations among polygamous Mormons.

In extending the domestic private sphere into the public sphere, plural marriage constituted a powerful alternative to the romantic, companionate models of marriage then emerging among middle-class Americans, models dependent on notions of personal and family privacy. Karen Lystra’s book, Searching the Heart: Men, Women, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America, describes “love” as “at the core of Victorian family culture.” Arguably the most complete and authoritative study of nineteenth-century romantic love, Lystra’s work explicates an idealized defining model of the romantic relations between men and women to which white, middle-class Americans aspired. Romantic love and domestic privacy depended on a sense of in-
teriority that could emerge only out of the separation of the private home from the world outside it. Victorian romantic ideologies rooted romantic love in a vision of a true and essential private self that all men and women possessed. The sharing of the self’s truest and best expressions with another marked the meaning of intimacy and defined the private meaning of nineteenth-century marriage: “Privacy was essential to nineteenth-century middle-class romantic love,” she points out, “because the meaning of love was so deeply rooted in acts of protected and exclusive self-revelation.” Public prudery served to deepen private love, making its expressions all the more intimate, romantic, and sacred, because they “attained a special and privileged meaning in private precisely because of the public prohibitions.” Allowing the outside (public) world into the private sanctity of the marital relation would violate the very essence and meaning of romantic love, intervening in the sacred, intimate sharing of private selves between lovers. This vision of romantic love preconditioned nineteenth-century, middle-class Americans to adopt particular ways of approaching the self and the beloved. Romantic love, Lystra maintains, bolstered the emergence of nineteenth-century American individualism because it “enriched and sharpened [the] separate subjectivities” of its participants. Romantic relationships helped formulate “identity distinct from social roles.” Moreover, for its most impassioned advocates, “romantic love contributed to the displacement of God by the lover as the central symbol of ultimate significance.” Nineteenth-century Americans in love “made deities of each other in the new theology of romantic love.”

If Lystra is correct, one could hardly imagine a vision of relations between the sexes more different from nineteenth-century America’s than that of the Mormons. Although husbands and wives often loved each other, as a culture Mormons resisted the romantic, companionate visions of sex relations emerging in middle-class nineteenth-century American culture. Downplaying the role of romantic love in marriage, Mormons ideally married more out of love for God

40Lystra, Searching the Heart, 18, 17, 54, 31, 8. In the scheme of romantic love, children were understood to be tokens or symbols of a couple’s love for one another. Children were not the end of sexual expression, but rather the badges that marked its import. “Sex was seen, not primarily as the ultimate gift of heirs, but as the ultimate gift of themselves.” Ibid., 80.
than for each other.41 Theirs were often marriages of spiritual economy and purpose, means to spiritual ends more than ends in themselves.42 The Church actively discouraged the one-on-one dynamics of romantic courtship and self-disclosure, and hoped that plural marriage worked against the bonds of intimacy that constituted romantic love in nineteenth-century formulations.43

As Mary Isabella Horne declared to Elizabeth Kane during her visit to Utah, “Plural marriage destroys the oneness, of course.”44 Martha Hughes Cannon once declared that a polygamous woman was not as “completely absorbed as one wife is in her husband.”45 Love, Mormons believed, involved not just the mutual private sharing of self that nineteenth-century Americans prized but also mutual commitment between husbands and wives to righteous living as part of God’s privatized kingdom/family. Plural marriage, as Flake points out, was to purify the Saints and render them priests and priestesses unto God through temple rituals and covenants.46 Helen Mar Kimball Whitney declared that she “could say truly that [polygamy] had done the most

towards making me a Saint and a free woman in every sense of the word... [I]t has proven one of the greatest boons—a blessing in disguise."\(^{47}\)

Choosing a mate, for Mormons, was choosing someone worthy to participate in sanctifying temple rituals. Nancy Abigail Clement Williams found her future husband “to be a true Latter Day Saint, and had great respect for him.” When he proposed a plural marriage, she “sought unto the Lord earnestly to know if it was his will.” Apparently it was, and Williams accepted the proposal the next evening.\(^{38}\) Marital success hinged not upon finding one’s soul mate but on joining a broader Church family and tying oneself to someone righteous enough to ensure eternal exaltation. Even Ellis Reynolds Shipp, whose autobiography and journal are filled with declarations of love for her husband, subjected that love to the higher purpose of plural marriage. When her husband took a third wife, she declared that she would “not allow myself to become low spirited,” for “I know there is but one way to be happy in a polygamy and that is to keep burning in our hearts the spirit of God.”\(^{49}\)

While most Mormon marriages were not entirely devoid of romantic love (though some seem to have been), Mormon theology subjected that love to another, higher purpose in God’s kingdom. Plural marriage especially marked not one’s private devotion to a beloved, but one’s devotion to God and dedication to the building of God’s kingdom. Kathleen Flake describes Mormon love as “a love subordinated to religious devotion and ordered by religious, not romantic, ideals.”\(^{50}\) Many Mormon women’s private reflections indicate that they entered plural marriage for religious, not romantic, reasons. Martha Cragun Cox, for example, wrote in her autobiography:

> When the final decision [to enter plural marriage] was made known to my family that I could not recede from my purpose the storm broke upon my head. It was not a marriage of love, they claimed and in saying so they struck me a blow. For I could not say that I had really loved the man as lovers love, though I loved his wives and the spirit of

\(^{47}\)Helen Mar Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884), 24.

\(^{48}\)Quoted in Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, *Women’s Voices*, 360.


\(^{50}\)Flake, “The Emotional and Priestly Logic of Plural Marriage,” 15.
their home. I could not assure my family that my marriage was gotten up solely on the foundation of love for man. The fact was I had asked the Lord to lead me in the right way for my best good and the way to fit me for a place in his kingdom. He had told me how to go and I must follow in the path [sic] he dictated and that was all there was to it.51

Cox, like many Mormon women, selected her mate based not on affection, but on spiritual worthiness.52 Another Mormon woman, Mary Lois Walker Morris, married her second husband because she had pledged to her first on his deathbed that she would marry his brother, Elias. She knew that “Elias was worth all of the confidence and love that his brother had reposed in him.”53 Mormon marriage solidified one’s membership in the family/polity of God more than it established a private household, it connected its participants to the broader community rather than establishing a couple’s privacy and intimacy, and it established community and identity boundaries between the broad Mormon family and non-Mormons more than between the family and the world outside it.54 Moreover, it worked less to reify the interior subjectivity of its participants than to make them subjects of (and subject to) God’s kingdom. Mormon marriage shaped and served the ends of God’s polity more than the individual, making the marriage relation more public than private, but public only within the context of God’s private family.

For Mormons, sexuality was also more religious than romantic, first and foremost a service to the kingdom of God in bearing children. The purpose of sexuality, though likely not devoid of expressions of love, was the production of children. Mormons believed that “the love which man possesses for the opposite sex came from God . . . in order to carry out, so far as the world was concerned, His great and

51Quoted in Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, Women’s Voices, 278–79.
eternal purposes pertaining to the future.” As Orson Pratt declared, sexual desire existed, “namely, that the human species might be propagated on this creation, that the earth might teem with population.”

His sister-in-law, Belinda Marden Pratt, agreed, in her “Defense of Polygamy, by a Lady of Utah”: “What then appears to be the great object of the marriage relations? I answer: the multiplying of our species—the rearing and training of children.” Mormons rooted the purpose of sexuality in reproductivity more than romance and hence viewed children not as tokens of love, but as its final and divine end. Children were a gift to the kingdom, and sexuality worked the purposes of God, serving Him first, and romance only secondarily, if at all.

Mormon marriage moved the self and the home into the public sphere, making them subject to God’s government (the Church) within the privatized kingdom. For Mormons, imagining the whole community as a family prefigured their unity with God, the Father of the Mormon family, in divine perfection. Speaking of the last days, Brigham Young asked on February 10, 1867: “Will the time ever come that we can commence and organize this people as a family? . . . Do you think we will ever be one? When we get home to our Father and God, will we not wish to be in the family? Will it not be our highest ambition and desire to be reckoned as the sons of the living God, as the daughters of the Almighty, with a right to the household and the faith that belongs to the household, heirs of the Father, his goods, his wealth, his power, his excellency, his knowledge and wisdom?” Church leaders viewed the privatized kingdom of God as a family contingent upon and shaped by plural family relations: The kingdom was a community that was also a family, a state that was also a home.

The ideal visions of plural marriage described by Church leaders were often quite different, as ideals often are, from the ways polygamy was lived on the ground. The ways plural marriage ideally functioned to undermine the public/private divide were enacted among practitioners of plural marriage only in limited ways. Perhaps this is because plural marriage was practiced for only a few generations and,

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as Jesse L. Embry points out, “Mormons did not have time to establish rules on how husbands, wives, and children should relate to each other.” Plural families had a variety of living arrangements; some wives shared living spaces, while others each had their own homes. Most husbands created various ways of rotating visits to each household or to each wife’s private space. Moreover, Mormon husbands were often away on business or on missions. Some women were relatively untroubled by the absence of their husbands while others experienced heartbreak. Ellis Reynolds Shipp’s autobiography and diary, for example, describe missing her husband terribly when they were apart.

Moreover, some Mormon women established good marital relations between wives, while others experienced jealousy. Some loved their sister wives as sisters. Shipp wrote in her diary, for example: “I truly believe our embraces [between Shipp and her sister wife, Maggie] and caresses linked our hearts in an indissoluble union. Maggie and I have lived together for years—our aims, desires, thoughts, and interests have been the same, and although there has been an occasional discord in our feelings I truly believe the holy relationship existing between us causes us to feel a sympathy and love for each other that two souls under other circumstances could never experience.”

Other plural wives experienced significant tension and struggled to keep jealousies at bay. Mary Jane Mount Tanner wrote in letters to her family that polygamy “is a severe trial to our fallen nature” and that “there is some jealousy and many weaknesses to overcome.” However, like many Mormon women, Tanner saw those jealousies as human frailties to be overcome. “[I] rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake, that I may receive a glory and exaltation in the celestial kingdom of our God.” As Dr. Romania Pratt Penrose declared, “[Polygamy] will prove the one thing needful to cleanse and purify our innermost soul of selfishness, jeal-

59 Shipp, While Others Slept, esp. 55–56.
60 Ibid., 80–81.
62 Ibid., 6.
ously, and other mundane attributes.”

Plural marriage purified women of their weaknesses, and Mormon women who struggled with jealousy seem to have seen that struggle as indicative of personal weakness, not as a problem with polygamy itself.

Despite some Mormon women’s private misgivings about plural marriage, most defended it passionately in public. Emmeline B. Wells, for example, often bemoaned her husband’s lack of attention in her diary but wrote in the Woman’s Exponent, a women’s newspaper (1872–1914) and among the first of its kind, that plural marriage “gives women the highest opportunities for self-development, exercise of judgment, and arouses latent faculties, making them more truly cultivated in the actual realities of life, more independent in thought and mind, noble and unselfish.” Women defended plural marriage in the Exponent, in a series of mass meetings in opposition to anti-polygamy legislation, and sometimes in conversations with non-members. On a train ride from Salt Lake City to Omaha, Louisa Barnes Pratt met some men who “generally railed [sic] me about our peculiar doctrines. The principle of polygamy they were loud in condemning.” Pratt answered them with biblical arguments, claiming that David and Solomon’s plural marriages sanctified the practice. She “found it the better way to avoid argument as much as possible, but would testify boldly to what I knew to be true,” the practice of plural marriage.

It is impossible to know how Mormon ideals of plural marriage may have played out, given more time, but there are indications that plural marriage ideals undercut public and private spheres with important consequences for Mormon women. Perhaps the Mormon undermining of public and private translated most conspicuously into women’s lives by upsetting separate-spheres ideology, allowing Mor-

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64 Emmeline B. Wells, “Woman against Woman,” Woman’s Exponent 7, no 23 (May 1, 1879): 234.

mon women to participate in the public sphere much more than the Victorian ideology of their eastern sisters. Brigham Young, for example, called on Mormon women to work outside the home: “Women are useful not only to sweep houses, wash dishes, make beds, and raise babies, but that they should stand behind the counter, study law or physic [sic], or become good book-keepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large.”  

Sinah P. Bishop, a plural wife in Salt Lake City, was called to be a midwife in 1880 and in a patriarchal blessing was “set apart to this profession of obstetrics in as much as it is your desire to practice.”  

Susa Young Gates asserted that polygamy would usher in a “millennium of usefulness and happiness” for women because it allowed each woman, “at the end of her child-bearing period,” to “launch out into her chosen vocation, ready to add the mite of her experience to the great problem of humanity.”  

Unlike monogamous wives, Gates asserted, “the plural wife may, from her own threshold, look out into the broad world and choose such enterprise as she feels herself adapted to.”  

By 1874, one observer noted that women in Utah constituted a “respectable class of professional and highly literate women.” Another claimed that “they close no career on a woman in Utah.”  

By these accounts, plural marriage enabled women’s activity in the public sphere, loosening the associations between women and domesticity. In God’s kingdom, women enlarged their sphere of usefulness beyond the private sphere. So while ideals undercutting public and private were inconsistently lived out among Mormons, they did have important consequences for the women whose influence, with the blessing of Church hierarchy, stretched beyond the domestic.

The kingdom of God also had an economic dimension that

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66 Brigham Young, July 18, 1869, Journal of Discourses, 6:1.
67 Sinah P. Bishop, October 4, 1880, Patriarchal Blessing, copy in my possession.
69 Quoted in Gail Farr Casterline, “In the Toils’ or ‘Onward for Zion’: Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890” (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 1974), 76–77.
70 Elizabeth Wood Kane, Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona (Philadelphia: n.pub., 1874), 5.
worked against American notions of private property that accompanied and partly constituted the private individual. Polygamy served as a central organizing metaphor for Mormonism’s communitarian economic vision, Joseph Smith’s 1831 revelation, “the law of consecration and stewardship,” although it was never lived universally or successfully for long periods of time. Still Mormons believed that in the last days they would all live the law of consecration under what Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young called the United Order or the Order of Enoch.\footnote{Enoch was an important prophet in one of Mormonism’s four books of scripture, the Pearl of Great Price. His city exemplified such righteousness and unity that it was taken bodily from the earth (D&C 38:4; Moses 6:26–7:69).} Just as plural marriage undercut the privacy of the individual and the home, consecration worked against American middle-class concepts of private property and the heads of household who possessed it on behalf of the private family. No doubt influenced by other communitarian experiments that infused the milieu of early Mormonism, Smith’s vision of the law of consecration, as initially articulated, began with the assertion that all property belonged to God.

According to the 1831 revelation, consecration, when strictly observed, first required each Church member to “consecrate” his property to the Church. Mormon bishops would then redistribute the property in “stewardships” to each male adult according to need and ability. Ideally, each adult priesthood holder received a stewardship of “as much as is sufficient for himself and family” (D&C 42:32). In conjunction with their priesthood authority, male Saints functioned as stewards over God’s property, intended to hold it on behalf of the community of Zion. Nineteenth-century Church leaders were fairly clear that stewardship was not the same as ownership. Orson Pratt clarified: “What is a steward? Is he a bonafide [sic] owner of property? No. If I were called upon to be a steward over a certain farm or factory, the business is not my own, I am only as an agent or steward to take charge of the concern, and act upon it, as a wise steward, and to render up my account to somebody.”\footnote{Orson Pratt, August 6, 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:153–54.} Mormon men managed God’s property on behalf of His kingdom/family and rendered up their account to God through His agents on earth, priesthood authorities. Ideally, as Pratt declared, “each person in the church possess[es] the
whole,” constituting among God’s kingdom a “union of property.”\textsuperscript{73} 

As Mormons intended it, the law of consecration would institute equality among its participants. Poverty and inequity would vanish under social cooperation.\textsuperscript{74} Consecration intended to create relationships of interdependence and mutual economic interest in God’s kingdom. Through consecration, as through polygamy, Mormons posited themselves as a broad, collective, private family that was also at once a political community, and consecration lay over that community a communitarian economic system. Orson Pratt declared, “These laws, if adopted, were calculated to make this people of one heart and mind, not in doctrine alone, not in some spiritual things alone, not in a few outward ordinances alone, but to make them one in regard to our property.”\textsuperscript{75} Ideally, in God’s kingdom there could be neither private families nor individuals with interests separate from the interests of the kingdom; the two mutually constituted each other.

From its inception, Smith had intended the law of consecration to end private property ownership among the Saints, since the revelation commanded: “In your temporal things you shall be equal” (D&C 70:14).\textsuperscript{76} In part, Church leaders reconciled the stratified economics of the Mormon community with the practice of consecration by claiming that the “equality” Smith intended was not a blanket, absolute sameness. Rather the distribution of goods made “every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (D&C 51:3). As Brigham Young declared, just as “our features will differ from one another,” so would “our acts, dispositions, and efforts to accumulate, distribute, and dispose of our time, talents, wealth, and whatever the Lord gives to us.”\textsuperscript{77} Nonetheless, the equality the Saints imagined under the law of consecration would enable them to live in accordance with Smith’s most important principle: unity. Consecration enabled the Saints to “be one” in temporal as well as spiritual affairs—to be “united according to the union required

\textsuperscript{73} Orson Pratt, “The Equality and Oneness of the Saints,” \textit{The Seer} 2, no. 7 (July 1854): 294.
\textsuperscript{75} Orson Pratt, August 16, 1873, \textit{Journal of Discourses} 16:153–54.
\textsuperscript{76} See also D&C 78:6: “For if ye [the saints] are not equal in earthly things, ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things.”
\textsuperscript{77} Brigham Young, June 6, 1867, \textit{Journal of Discourses}, 12:56–57.
by the law of the Celestial Kingdom” (D&C 105:4). As plural marriage unified the community as a family, consecration fulfilled economically God’s commandment that the Saints be one, creating material unity. As Apostle George Q. Cannon explained, “One of the first teachings or revelations that was given to this church after its organization, was to the effect that we would dwell together as one family; that there should be an identity of interests among us,” a unity of interest created by communal ownership under the law of consecration. Through the law of consecration, Mormonism undercut notions of private property that sustained the private individual.

Although most Mormons never lived the United Order and those who did frequently failed, Church leaders nonetheless expected plural families to live the law of consecration on familial levels. Indeed, the polygamous family served both to train Mormons for the economic cooperation of the millennial future and as an economic model for living under the United Order. Arrington, Fox, and May describe polygamous families as striving “to perfect the art of cooperation, both in organizing the labor to sustain the household and in sharing the collective product of household production.” Some families were particularly successful at living the law of consecration;

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78 George Q. Cannon, October 8, 1874, *Journal of Discourses*, 17:233. It is important to recognize that Church leaders were reticent about using “equality” to describe the unity of interests of the Saints. The distribution of goods under the United Order was not “equal” *per se*, but dependent on individual and family particularities. For example, in theory, some members whose business endeavors required more capital than others might receive it, in the overall interests of building the kingdom of God.

79 In post-World War II America, the Church has largely contended that the United Order maintained the concept of private property. However, I contend that this claim can only be understood as a consequence of World War II and the Cold War era in which it was produced, as Mormons worked diligently to distinguish the United Order from Communism. For an example typical of the Church’s mid-twentieth-century perspectives, see “Message of the First Presidency to the Church,” April 6, 1942, 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), 6:151–52. The First Presidency then consisted of Heber J. Grant (then only a month from his death), J. Reuben Clark Jr., and David O. McKay.

80 Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building
Martha Cragun Cox declared, for example, that “We had in our home an almost perfect United Order.” She described labor and resource sharing among wives, such that “whoever needed most was served first.”

The plural family was intended not just to shield its members from competition in a public marketplace but also to draw them into economic cooperation in God’s kingdom. As middle-class Americans increasingly relied on heads of household for economic support and attempted to shield the home from the competitive capitalist market, the family economics of life in plural marriage necessitated precisely the kind of consecrated economic cooperation that would occur in the kingdom of God. It required that each family member contribute to the sustenance of the whole and that economic resources be shared among wives and children. Moreover, a man married to multiple wives had to consecrate more of himself to a number of women, more of his priesthood to their spiritual maintenance, and more of his stewardship to their temporal sustenance. Larger families also allowed economic and labor specialization among family members. In these ways, polygamous families especially lived a kind of family-based practice of consecration intended to draw Mormons into economic cooperation in God’s privatized kingdom.

The connections between plural family economics and the law of consecration became increasingly clear during the 1870s, as Brigham Young began instituting United Order communities in Utah. The United Order referred to the perfected economic system within which the Saints would live under God. As “a stepping stone to . . . the Order of Enoch,” Young called several Church members and their families to begin living consecration in small communities that he wished to “live as a family.” The order should, the First Presidency declared, “be conducted on the system of a well-regulated family.” Under the United Order, Young declared, “A city of one hundred thousand or a million people could be united into a perfect family. . . .

81Quoted in Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, Women’s Voices, 286.
82Brigham Young, April 7, 1869, Deseret News, June 2, 1869, 199.
83Brigham Young, April 7, 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:8–9.
84Brigham Young, George Albert Smith, and Daniel H. Wells, “To the President, Vice Presidents and Board of Directors of the United Order at St.
Why, we could organize millions into a family under the Order of Enoch.”85 United Order communities like those in Kanab and Orderville (aptly named) referred to the community as “the little family,” “the big family,” or “the family order,”86 and described their experiment in terms of “living as a patriarchal family, and in common, according to their circumstances fare alike.”87 In the United Order, every participant was a member of the family, and divisions between family and civil society became meaningless.

Those who lived the United Order took the polygamous family as their model. As historians Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May assert, “The ideal Order as described by the president [Brigham Young] bore a striking resemblance to his own family. The perfected Mormon society would possess the social dynamics, the economic structure, and the physical appearance of his own sizeable domestic establishment. Mormon society was to be his family writ large.”88 Even Young’s prescriptions for the physical structures and domestic arrangements of the United Order bore a striking resemblance to his household, with large common rooms for eating and prayer, but on a much larger scale. In one sermon he declared:

I will tell you how I would arrange for a little family, say about a thousand persons. I would build houses expressly for their convenience in cooking, washing and every department of their domestic arrangements. Instead of having every woman getting up in the morning and fussing around a cookstove or over the fire . . . she would have nothing to do but to go to her work. Let me have my arrangement here, a hall in which I can seat five hundred persons to eat; and I have my cooking apparatus—ranges and ovens—all prepared . . . [A]joining this is our prayer room, where we would assemble perhaps five hundred persons at one time, and have our prayers in the evening and in the morning.89

Young’s ideal was much like his own home, with large common rooms for eating and prayer, but on a much larger scale.

George,” in Clark, Messages of the First Presidency, 2:252.
85Brigham Young, August 31, 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:170.
86Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, 254, 203.
88Ibid., 203.
89Brigham Young, October 9, 1872, Journal of Discourses, 15:221.
While many polygamists preferred to house each wife in her own home, a few Church leaders—especially wealthy ones—lived in homes specially designed for polygamous living. These families produced a “distinctively Mormon architecture that became a genuine source of wonder to contemporary travelers.”\(^{90}\) With rooms for several wives who shared common spaces, these communally run households enacted Young’s United Order ideal. Especially under the United Order, ideal Mormon architecture served to unite family with community, not separate it.

The Saints as a community lived the law of consecration to a greater or lesser extent in response to a number of social, historical, spiritual, and economic variables. Consecration in most respects remained a utopian ideal that Mormons found quite difficult to enact in practice. Most attempts to live the Order collapsed, and significant inequalities among Mormons remained in place throughout the nineteenth century.\(^{91}\) Nonetheless, it remained an ideal central to Mormons’ understandings of themselves and their millennial project.

In economic and architectural senses, the United Order was the polygamous household functioning at the level of God’s kingdom. In the idealized kingdom of God, just as there could be no difference between political and filial relationships, neither could there be between community and domestic economies, between public and private spaces. Economically and spatially, plural marriage and consecration extended the private sphere into the public, creating a family and a marketplace that encompassed the whole community of Zion. Together, interconnected practices of polygamy and consecration undercut any notion of the private—be it the private individual, private property, or the private home—among Mormons. Ideally, plural marriage constituted God’s polity as a family, while Mormon economic


\(^{91}\)Throughout the late nineteenth century, various attempts at the United Order failed dismally and, for Mormon officials, marked the unfortunate unpreparedness of the Saints for the millennial coming of Christ. D&C 104. For a detailed account of the Mormons’ various attempts to live the law of consecration in various guises, see Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God.
cooperation united the economic interests of the individual with that of the community. Mormons accompanied the ideal unification of public and private within Mormondom with a unique vision of divine politics that consolidated the individual political consciences of the community under the direction of Church leaders.

THE PRIVATE KINGDOM IN THE PUBLIC STATE

When the Mormons planned their move to Utah in the mid-1840s, they intended to build the kingdom of God in the West. They carried with them a well-developed political philosophy rooted in their eschatological vision of God’s literal kingdom on earth. A participatory utopian faith, Mormonism taught early in its history that human history moved inevitably toward the establishment of a literal political kingdom of God that would emerge to govern the entire world as human society perfected itself under Mormon tutelage. The Mormon Church regarded itself as the partial fulfillment of the divine political future that Mormons imagined and worked diligently throughout the late nineteenth century to gather Zion together, speed the world along its millennial political track, and usher in God’s reign over His kingdom.

Although Joseph Smith used the term “kingdom of God” “with some lack of precision,” according to one scholar, in strict theological terms Mormons equated the political arm of the kingdom of God with the Council of Fifty that Joseph Smith had established in 1844.92 The Council of Fifty was a model of God’s perfect government, composed mostly of Mormon leaders but with three non-Mormon members. They made decisions only by unanimous vote. More practically, though, as historian D. Michael Quinn has pointed out, the Council of Fifty was “only infrequently active”; and despite having a few non-Mormon members, “LDS church leaders dominated and directed it when it was active.” Quinn also points to “the insignificance of the Council of Fifty in practical terms,” arguing instead that its primary role was “to symbolize the other-worldly world order that would be established during the Millennial reign.” So in a sense, Church authorities understood the Church itself to be separate from the institutions of God’s government; in technical terms, the Church was not the gov-

92Hansen, Quest for Empire, 5.
ernment of God. However, the Council of Fifty was mostly a symbolic organization, and the Church most often behaved as though it was the political organization of God’s kingdom. As Quinn points out, “In theory, theology, and reality, the LDS Presidency and apostles always governed the Council of Fifty when it was functioning, and in the absence of the Council of Fifty, they continue as the apex of both church and Kingdom on earth until the perfect order of the Millennium is established.”

The Council of Fifty, then, seems to have had little relationship to the practical functioning of God’s kingdom in the nineteenth century. Moreover, Church officials embraced the multiple functions of the Church at ecclesiastical, social, economic, familial, and political levels. Brigham Young declared in 1875 that “with regard to the kingdom of God on the earth—Here is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized with its rules and regulations and degrees, with the quorums of the holy priesthood, from the first presidency to the teachers and deacons…. This is what we are in the habit of calling the kingdom of God.” While not precisely equated with the political arm of the kingdom of God, the Church nonetheless served a dual purpose in Mormonism’s communitarian ethos. That is to say, Mormons understood the Church as both a religious and a political institution—both a Church and a kingdom. More broadly, though, the Church assumed many of the functions Americans believed should be performed by public government.

Initially, the relationship between God’s kingdom and the U.S. government was ambiguous. In 1847, when Young led the first emigrants west, the territory they settled was part of Mexico. After the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the certainty that the kingdom would remain within the boundaries of the United States


95Brigham Young, August 9, 1874, *Journal of Discourses*, 17:156.
forced Mormons to reconcile the political institutions of God’s kingdom with membership in an already existing political entity: the United States. In 1849, Congress made Utah a territory entitled to self-government only so far as Congress allowed. Because territories were formally under the jurisdiction of the federal government, from that point on, it was clear that the government of God would perform its political function, at least until the Millennium, under the watchful eye of federal authority.

In this context, Mormonism’s preferred relationship to the U.S. government was ambiguous. On one hand, Mormons demonstrated a remarkable desire to remain part of a nation that seemed not to want them. They petitioned for statehood immediately after Congress authorized a territorial government in 1849. From that application until 1894, Congress either denied or ignored no fewer than six applications for statehood. Most historians have seen the quest for statehood as a paradoxical attempt to withdraw from American influence by achieving more local autonomy.96

While this claim is certainly true, most scholars overlook another important aspect of Mormons’ investment in becoming a state, which was theological. First, the freedom of religion protection in the U.S. Constitution was the sacred context for the restoration of the Church (D&C 101:76–80). Second, God had revealed to Joseph Smith that the United States, or, more specifically, Independence, Missouri, was the divinely ordained location at which the city of Zion, “the center place” of God’s kingdom would emerge (D&C 57:2–3). These theological agendas encouraged Mormons to remain part of America to protect

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their religious freedom and to prepare the way for the city of Zion. Yet Mormons seem to have wanted to be in the American republic, but in many regards not of it. Even while they desired statehood, they also maintained a separate political system—the Church—which they intended to operate separate from American government.

After the public announcement of plural marriage in 1852, a cacophony of anti-Mormon literature articulated middle-class Americans’ multiple objections to the privatized kingdom of God in the West. Not the least of these was the observation that Mormons understood themselves as citizens in God’s kingdom first and of the United States second. For anti-Mormons, the practice of polygamy was proof that Mormons’ loyalties to the kingdom of God precluded good American citizenship. J. M. Coyner, founder of Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, a Presbyterian mission school in Salt Lake City, maintained, for example, that “he, and he only, is fitted to become a citizen of our commonwealth who strives to be an independent thinker, and who follows no guide but his own conscientious sense of right and wrong; while he, and he only, is regarded as a Mormon who obeys counsel without question or gainsaying.” For Coyner, while republicanism “opposes the centralization of power, and makes the individual the king,” Mormonism “has for its chief corner-stone the dogma of central power, and blind submission to that power.”

Although anti-Mormons were wrong about Mormons in a number of ways, they were especially astute at connecting the various unity Mormonism tried to enact to what anti-Mormons saw as treasonous political theocracy. Anti-Mormons connected plural marriage to the political despotism they saw in the undercutting of the private individual. Plural marriage, for anti-Mormons, lent itself to the “strictest obedience to the will of one person, and that person [is] the head of the church.” Mormons, they argued, simply could not and must not be allowed to persist as members of the American body politic. They were, quite simply, un- or even anti-American.

As anti-Mormon rhetoric became increasingly acerbic and Congress became increasingly committed to legislating against the multiple evils they saw emerging from the Utah Territory, Mormons were

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increasingly pressed to defend themselves against federal political intervention and discursive assaults. They employed a series of practical political tactics, filling territorial government offices with Church leaders and relying on Church government to regulate their affairs. At the same time, Mormons struggled to articulate their unique political philosophy in ways solicitous of political acceptance in an American body politic. Mormons outlined a kind of political dualism through which they tried to demonstrate the compatibility of the kingdom of God with American political institutions. They defended the kingdom as a privatized government that could, and indeed must, be allowed to exist under American rubrics.

At a practical level, the line between Church government and Utah’s territorial government was thin. Mormons captured much of the political force of territorial government by electing Church leaders to territorial government positions, infusing U.S. government with the spirit of God’s politics. In particular, they filled the territorial legislature with Mormons and passed legislation that facilitated and protected plural marriage and Church government in Utah. For most of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Church had its own political party, the People’s Party, and the Mormon polity voted nearly unanimously for that party’s candidates. Brigham Young served as governor until 1858, when President James Buchanan replaced him with his own appointee, Alfred Cumming. Especially after 1857, the federal government filled every appointed territorial position it could with hand-selected officials, most of whom were hostile to Mormonism.

The Mormons’ first act of defense was the passage of legislation in 1851 that gave the Church broad governing authority in Utah to make laws and punish and forgive offenses consistent with its own doctrines that were “not inconsistent with or repugnant to the Constitution of the United States or of this State.” It also granted the Church “the Constitutional and original right . . . to solemnize marriage compatible with the revelations of Jesus Christ, . . . that the pursuit of bliss, and the enjoyment of life in every capacity of public association and domestic happiness, temporal expansion, or spiritual increase upon the earth [presumably through polygamy] may not be legally questioned.”99 This act removed Mormon marriage from legal supervision in Utah, placing it largely under Church authority. While Mormons understood celestial marriage to be solely under Church con-

99 Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Passed at the Several Annual Sessions of
trol, a parallel legal system of state-sanctioned marriage did exist in Utah; but such unions were, for Mormons, peripheral to the Church-regulated marriage system.100 From 1852 until 1890, when the Church officially withdrew support for new plural marriages, the issues of plural marriage and politics in Utah became inextricably intertwined. Mormon attempts to ward off U.S. intervention in Utah were largely intended to protect the practice of plural marriage.

As Church representatives occupied the territorial legislature and nearly all elected offices, the Church itself filled significant political roles in Utah, directing public opinion and enacting public and community practices such as managing natural resources and resolving social and interpersonal conflict that most Americans found better served by public government.101 Perhaps most egregiously, however, the Church evaded federal judicial authority by instituting an ecclesiastical court system that established the Church as the foremost judicial authority in Utah until the 1890s. Church courts essentially supplanted significant portions of federal territorial court authority, resolving community and interpersonal disputes among members in church courts, rather than civil. This raised the hackles of mainstream America; nowhere more clearly did the Church exercise the sort of political authority Americans required to be public.102

Tremendous political tensions racked territorial government in Utah as the Mormon Church and Mormon-elected officials contended with federal appointees. For Mormons, federal interventions in Utah government constituted a perversion of Constitutional principles; and they viewed federal officials, in the words of Brigham Young, as “some of the most corrupt, damnable, mean

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the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah (Salt Lake City: Joseph Cain, 1855), chap. 17, sec. 3, para. 104.

100Daynes, More Wives Than One, 65–66.
curses . . . that have ever disgraced the earth.”103 This sensibility increased Mormons’ faith in Church (rather than civil) government, and Church administration of political affairs in Utah flourished. One Utah Supreme Court Justice, James McKean, a federal appointee, in 1871 called the Church an “imperium in imperio,” an empire within an empire, and in many respects he was right.104 Apostle John Taylor declared in 1857: “It is true we have had a church government and church laws, church discipline, and by the holy Priesthood associated with this church we have governed the people. Still we have been subject to another government, power, and authority, to Gentile rule, Gentile domination, Gentile laws, to Gentile usages and customs, to which we have been willingly subject, so far as they were righteous.”105 In essence, Utah had two governments—the Church leadership and the territorial government administered under the guidance of the U.S. government.

The institutions of God’s government and the Church’s exercise of political authority in Utah extended the religious into the political in the kingdom of God, a mixture of Church and state that flew in the face of both the public/private divide and American disestablishmentarianism. Sarah Barringer Gordon contends that, by the 1840s, American law, though “far . . . from advocating a separation of religious principles from government,” had become increasingly committed to disestablishing religion—i.e., formally separating church from state. She shows how antebellum jurists “reconfigured the relationship of religion to American law and government,” contending that “disestablishment itself became a Christian concept. Liberty of conscience and its corollary, uncoerced belief, were central to Protestantism as they were to free will as a political matter.”106 This separation of church and state made religious conscience a private individual matter. Religion became an affair for the private home and con


106Sarah Barringer Gordon, The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America (Chapel Hill: University of
science, not one for the state. Driving this movement were pluralist
demands to disestablish religions from the states. But as Gordon
points out, “Disestablishment was a practice, but not a rule, nation-
wide by 1850.” She claims that only in the wake of the Mormon ques-
tion “did Americans discover that separation of church and state was
a fundamental component of all republican government.”

Mormon political philosophy articulated a political dualism
that facilitated the existence of a privatized kingdom within a public
republican state, a dualism that hinged on the construction of the
kingdom of God as a privatized family/church (that was also a gov-
ernment) juxtaposed to a public American government. In an early
articulation of this claim, Heber C. Kimball, a counselor in Brigham
Young’s First Presidency, claimed that “as President Buchanan, the
President of the United States of America, holds the keys of the gov-
ernment of this whole nation, so Brigham Young holds the keys per-
taining to this Church and people.”

To Mormons, the privatization of the kingdom of God made sense out of the institutions of God’s
government in American terms. As Mormons understood it, the gov-
ernment of the kingdom of God was a sacred, private context in which,
as long as Mormons followed the laws of the United States,
American civil government had no right to intervene. Apostle Taylor
argued that the kingdom of God, “both Church and State, to rule
both temporally and spiritually,” could and must exist within U.S.
boundaries: “The kingdom of God is higher and its laws are so much
more exalted than those of any other nation, that it is the easiest thing
in life for a servant of God to keep any of their laws; and, as I have said
before, this we have uniformly done.”

Mormonism reconstituted public and private into a consoli-
dated private sphere, the privatized kingdom, all under the rubric of
a private family that was also at once both a church and, albeit oxymo-
ronic in American terms, a private state. As Apostle Orson Pratt
maintained, the U.S. Constitution “gives every class of people,
whether few or many, the privilege of organizing themselves, and es-
tering whatever laws they please to govern them in a church capac-


107 Ibid., 77.


Mormons situated the privatized kingdom in juxtaposition to the public American state and contended that the two not only could but must coexist, at least until God saw fit to replace the latter with the former. As Mormons imagined it, the Church would function as a privatized political institution independent of American political control but appropriately within the bounds of American political institutions.

Ultimately, Mormons asserted, not only was the kingdom of God compatible with and a perfection of American government, but the two political systems worked toward the same goal—government by the people. Mormons articulated the meaning of government by the people in communitarian terms. They intended government by the people to bring the Mormon community together as one, molding individual conscience through a divinely inspired and ordered consensus. The people together would govern in equality and common consent. Joseph Smith had established the principle of consent very early. The first revelation on Church government established in April 1830: “No person is to be ordained to any office in this church where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church” (D&C 20:65). Smith commanded that all canonized doctrine, advancements in the priesthood, and Church callings be sustained by the affected Church body. Three months later in July 1830, Smith reaffirmed that “all things shall be done by common consent in the church” (D&C 26:2). Mormons believed that, in a community in which all individuals had direct access to the divine, consensus would emerge organically as God’s will became clear to all. The more perfect and unified the Saints became, the more accessible God’s will would be, until God’s desires became apparent to all citizens of God’s kingdom, naturally replicating God’s political order. As the Saints modeled God’s perfected government to the people of the world, they would see its advantages and eventually unite in one great, worldwide kingdom under God.

In the meantime, however, Mormons also reconciled their political separatism with their membership in an American polity by contending that the political arm of the kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty, was now and always would be a perfection of American political principles. For Mormons, the government of God indicated the essential validity of American government. Mormons imagined that

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the Council of Fifty embodied American principles: “The Kingdom of God will protect every person, every sect and all people upon the face of the whole earth in their legal rights.”111 As Orson Pratt claimed, “All the great and glorious principles incorporated in this great republic will be incorporated in the Kingdom of God and be preserved. I mean the principles of civil and religious liberty, especially, and all other good principles.”112 The council would preserve complete individual civil liberty and total religious freedom for all mankind, and do it even more effectively than the United States. As Brigham Young claimed, “Even now the form of the Government of the United States differs but little from the Kingdom of God.”113

While Mormons expressed their belief in the superiority of American political institutions (if not that of the officials who filled them), arguing that the U.S. Constitution represented humanity’s highest political achievement, they nonetheless maintained that, in the last days, God’s government would supersede it. Orson Pratt suggested that the U.S. Constitution figured as “a stepping stone to a form of government infinitely greater and more perfect—a government founded upon divine laws.”114 The Church’s “theocracy” brought together republican ideas and divine order, and Mormonism’s millennial government would perfect American government. Apostle Parley P. Pratt embraced a vision of “theocracy,” claiming that “it is because of the ignorance that is in the world that two terms—‘political government’ and ‘religious government,’ are used.”115 For Pratt, God’s government in the last days would be both political and religious—indeed, the two would be inseparable—and with God’s assistance, Mormonism would give its consummate form to the world at large. The kingdom of God was a sanctified and perfected America that would govern the entire world. What more American project could there be?

Accommodating human weakness, Mormons believed that the role of Church hierarchy was to reveal God’s political truth to His polity, directing and enacting community consensus. While to “direct” consensus may seem counterintuitive to a modern reader, to Smith,

111Brigham Young, August 9, 1874, Journal of Discourses, 17:156.
113Brigham Young, July 31, 1859, Journal of Discourses, 6:342.
Brigham Young, and their followers, the concept made perfect sense. Mormons believed that the Church was an instrument of millennial purification, and its leadership lent order to the chaos of personal freedom, showing the direction in which divine personal revelation ought necessarily to point. Consequently, Mormons’ vision of the kingdom of God prefigured the absence of dissent. In Young’s understanding, community consensus could occur only in unity with God, and those outside of community consensus would mark themselves as out of harmony with divine will. Only repentance, faithfulness, divine revelation, and alignment with inspired consensus could bring them back into the fold. 

Mormons contended that nearly universal agreement on Church leadership marked not the absence of individual conscience,
but the unity of God’s kingdom. In Mormons’ estimation, only a community driven wholly by the will of God and following a divine model could avoid social discord, legal corruption, and the kind of political missteps that had led even the most perfect of human governments—American democracy—so far astray. According to Mormons, Church government represented popular government at its very best.

Despite their best attempts, the nineteenth-century Saints never completely realized their vision of the kingdom of God; human imperfection proved remarkably resistant to Smith’s millennial vision. Perhaps Mormonism naively overestimated human capacity for cooperation and consensus. Perhaps doctrine relied too much on the knowability of God’s will, or perhaps leaders over-appraised the willingness of individuals to come to an understanding of it. Indeed, a long history of apostasy attests that members did disagree about the meaning of God’s will. Consensus failed. Perhaps, too, the Church attempted too communitarian an experiment in a national milieu grounded in individual liberties. The conceptual vision of the kingdom of God as the perfected American republic often lay uncomfortably over the political institutions and practices of Church government in Utah, and Mormon government was never as free of its coercive aspects as Smith imagined it would become. In the absence of consensus, Church leadership often diverged from Smith’s doctrinal ideals of equality, democracy, community, and freedom. Yet despite its failures, Mormon political philosophy cannot be properly understood outside the context of Mormonism’s vision of the unity of the kingdom of God. To take seriously Mormonism’s perception of itself is to understand the theocratic aspects of Church government as attempts to accommodate the divergence between heavenly ideals and human weaknesses. Mormonism simply failed to see a contradiction between government by God and government by the people. For Mormons, theocracy and democracy were cut of the same cloth, and the kingdom of God was a republican institution that the rest of the nation should emulate.


118 See *Journal of Discourses*: Jedediah M. Grant, March 2, 1856, 3:234; Brigham Young, June 7, 1857, 5:35; John Taylor, November 1, 1857, 6:19–23.
While Mormons articulated their compatibility with and importance to American politics, they also defended Church government with two conceptual tools that had great political clout in nineteenth-century America: first, that “the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience . . . is the broad platform upon which our government has been founded,” and second, that local self-determination in Utah was necessary to ensure all of the freedoms American government was designed to protect. Strikingly, at the center of both of these claims was the most reviled institution of Mormonism, plural marriage. Mormons took the position that marriage in Utah was a private religious practice, as opposed to a civic union (which may or may not also be religious). Thus, it was rightfully placed under Church control, enfolding marriage in the domain of religious freedom. Casting plural marriage as a religious practice protected by the First Amendment, Mormons stripped marriage of its civic role in republican thought, even while they emphasized the role of polygamy in ensuring both religious freedom and local sovereignty.

Mormons went to great lengths to demonstrate the importance of Mormonism to the preservation of religious liberty under what they saw as an increasingly repressive federal government. In the words of Brigham Young, “Whenever the iron hand of oppression and persecution has fallen upon this people, our opposers have broken their own laws, set at defiance and trampled under foot every principle of equal rights, justice, and liberty found written in that rich legacy of our fathers, The Constitution of the United States.”

Mormons contended that polygamy in particular occupied a special place in the American legacy. Opposed by Americans on nearly every front, polygamy signified the religious liberty that needed protection from American tyranny. In defense of their absolute religious freedom, most often couched as the right to practice plural marriage, Mormons claimed they were more American, even, than Americans. Arguing that God “then operated on the Puritans and other men in England and other places to come to this land” in search of religious freedom, Mormons placed themselves in an American

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120 Widtsoe, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, February 18, 1855, 361–62.
121 Beginning with the initial defense of polygamy by Orson Pratt, August 29, 1852, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:54, Mormons articulated this position.
legacy of that freedom. Pointing to the legacy of America’s forefathers who, Mormons claimed, rebelled in the name of religious freedom, Church leaders identified freedom of religion as the genius of the American experiment.

As Brigham Young announced, “We believe that the Lord has been preparing that . . . there might be a place upon His footstool where sufficient liberty of conscience should exist that His Saints might dwell in peace under the broad panoply of constitutional law and equal rights.” He continued: “We consider that the men in the revolution were inspired, by the Almighty, to throw off the shackles of the mother government, with her established religion.”

Young then recited a history of the persecution of the Mormons that framed Mormonism as a bulwark of the defense of religious freedom. Mormons contended that, like the revolutionary patriots, “we have the spirit of ’76; we are patriots and we are true to our cause”—the preservation of religious liberty. For Mormons, the establishment of Zion in the West preserved religious liberty against a corrupt American government that refused the very principles that made it special.

Important as polygamy was to Mormonism’s articulation of religious freedom, the practice also served as a kind of symbolic site upon which the Church ensured its right to privatized self-government over the family/polity of God more generally. By claiming virtually everything about Mormon life as a religious practice, Mormons articulated the constitutionality of private Church government. If religion encompassed all of life, then the Church should be protected by the First Amendment in its management of affairs in Utah. True American principles, grounded in religious freedom and filial privacy, should support privatized Church government of God’s family, not undermine it. At the same time, Church control over marriage became a kind of test case for Church control over broad affairs in Utah and a symbolic platform upon which Mormons justified privatized, local self-determination.

consistently.


123 Brigham Young, February 18, 1855, Journal of Discourses, 2:171.

Mormons claimed that American political traditions justified the role of Church government in the privatized kingdom of God in the name of local sovereignty. In the early republican and antebellum periods, the most powerful national incarnation of arguments favoring local sovereignty came couched in the discourse of states’ rights. The Constitution had left ambiguous the balance between state and federal power, and debates about states’ rights and federal powers persisted throughout the nineteenth century. However, early constitutional law placed jurisdiction over the legal category known as “domestic relations”—those laws regulating relations between masters and servants or slaves, parents and children, and husbands and wives—firmly in the jurisdiction of state governments. Early Americans considered domestic relations, in the words of one legal historian, “matters for local debate and local disposition.” Citizens of the early republic reasoned that placing domestic relations under the decentralized control of the states offered domestic privacy and the private individual the most protection from government intervention. Leaving an institution as important as marriage under local control demonstrated both the importance of the domestic private sphere and the power of local self-determination in antebellum America.

The problem for Mormons was that Utah was a territory, not a state, and thus subject to as much federal authority as Congress wished to exercise. Nonetheless, Mormons mobilized arguments for local sovereignty, claiming that, despite its territorial status, Utah nonetheless had the right to select its own government. Somewhat troubling for Mormons, the claim to self-government in the territories smacked of the idea of “squatter sovereignty.” Southern Democrats contended that, in Western territories, the “squatters” who settled the area should decide whether slavery should be allowed. Initially, this linkage placed Mormons somewhat uncomfortably on the side of slaveholders in arguing for self-determination in the territories. In 1849, in the wake of a failed campaign for Utah statehood, Democratic senator from Illinois and local-sovereignty advocate Stephen A. Douglas helped Mormons petition the federal government for ex-

127 Ibid., 110–11.
plicit permission to elect their own territorial officials. As the Civil War approached, debates over states’ rights and local sovereignty became more contentious, especially as the concepts were used to defend the practice of slavery. These national debates made matters much more difficult for Mormons, especially after 1856, when the national Republican Party platform linked polygamy and slavery as the “twin relics of barbarism” that Republicans called on the federal government to suppress. After a failed military campaign to subdue Mormon “treason” in 1857, the federal government asserted much more control over territorial government in Utah, placing its own appointees in many positions. As already noted, the federal government first replaced Brigham Young as governor by Alfred Cumming and filled numerous territorial offices and judgeships with federal appointees. On the one hand, this sequence of events enabled Mormons to point to the tyranny of federal government in prohibiting popular government in Utah.

On the other hand, however, the links between slavery and polygamy that justified federal intervention in Utah made plural marriage much more difficult to defend. Anti-Mormon reformers and government officials contended that polygamy enslaved white women as slavery enslaved black Americans, and so justified federal intervention. The first of those interventions came in 1862, when the Morrill Act declared “bigamy” a crime and formally made Mormon family structure illegal. However, as the end of the Civil War settled the issue of slavery, Mormons increasingly relied on the idea of local sovereignty to defend Church government.

It is no surprise that, after the Civil War, plural marriage figured centrally in Mormons’ claims to the right of Church government in the name of local self-determination. If domestic relations were matters of local concern and territorial government was under the tutelage (or, in Mormon terms, tyranny) of federal authority, the Mormons saw this pattern as all the more reason that the privatized kingdom of God should institute its own extralegal marriage regulations. This view protected domestic relations from federal authority by bypassing territorial government. Moreover, in the interest of promoting self-government more broadly, Mormons contended that a local population inherently possessed the right to submit to a government of its own choosing, even if that government was also a church. Was not the right to select one’s own government, after all, the legacy of the American Revolution? Mormons contended that, if members
freely opted to submit their affairs to an authority that was completely separate from and irrelevant to civic government, the consent of the governed protected that choice as long as it was also consistent with the U.S. Constitution.\footnote{128} Moreover, as a government (theoretically) guided by common consent and guided by the will of the people as directed by Church authorities, Mormons argued, Church government was consistent with American principles, even if it was private.

Despite the political role of the Church in Utah, as the century unfolded, Mormons increasingly maintained that the establishment of a privatized church government did not preclude their participation in a public American state. Orson Pratt declared in 1879: “We came here as a religious people. We had a civil government, and a religious government; we had civil authority and ecclesiastical authority, before the gentiles came here in any numbers. Both of these principles of government were in existence in this Territory in the early rise thereof.”\footnote{129} Mormons imagined Church government to be entirely compatible with civic government and maintained, as Wilford Woodruff did, that “Church government and civil government are distinct and separate in our theory and practice, and we regard it as part of our destiny to aid in the maintenance and perpetuity of the institutions of our country.”\footnote{130}

While Mormons believed in the unity of Church and state in the privatized domain of God’s kingdom, now and in the future, they also embraced the more immediate need for a public civil state. In a sense, Mormon political dualism provided for a private government, the Church, to operate alongside a public one. Mormons located the boundary between public and private at the division between the privatized family/church/state and the public institutions of U.S. government. Mormons did not find it particularly problematic that the former performed many of the functions of the latter; they saw their right to Church government as a constitutionally protected republican right, protected by religious freedom and local self-determination.

Despite their near monopoly over local elected offices, Mormons maintained that church and state were separate in Utah and that the nearly universal election and appointment of Mormon officials was merely a local particularity emerging from a Mormon majority. Orson Pratt, for example, claimed the year after announcing the practice of plural marriage: “The Latter-day Saints, in Utah, have no more liberties or privileges granted to them by the civil power, than any other denomination who may choose to settle there. If they constitute the majority of population, they can elect such individuals as they see proper to the legislative departments: this is not oppression, but is precisely according to the practice of all the other Territorial and State governments. The majority rules—the majority elects. This is the very essence of our national institutions.”

As Pratt claimed, Mormons viewed the phenomenon of Church leaders in government office not only as an artifact of local democracy but also as a demonstration of its greatest strength: In Utah, public government would represent its people, the citizens of the kingdom of God. For Mormons, that the private Church predetermined the officers of public government was as it should be, not only because majority ruled, but also because the common interests of the Church family could be appropriately represented only by Church representatives in the public government.

Here again, Mormonism transposed American political concepts to Church contexts. In the same way that citizens filled public roles representing private families in public government, Church leaders in civic positions represented the common interest of the privatized Church family in civic life. The Church family paralleled the private family and, like the private family, must be represented in civic government. While ordinary Americans were “apostatizing fast from the principles that the fathers of this nation instituted,” John Taylor declared, “a republican government . . . in the hands of the righteous . . . is everlasting, while its power reaches to heaven.”

As George Q. Cannon, then Taylor’s counselor, asked rhetorically, “What better people can be found . . . to take charge of the affairs of mankind in the earth and establish righteous principles and maintain laws under which all men can dwell in peace and be entirely free from oppression

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131 Orson Pratt, “Celestial Marriage,” *The Seer* 1, no. 6 (June 1853): 128.

and everything of this character . . . than the men who understand the
principles of truth?” Mormons claimed that Church leaders in
civic roles represented the interests of the righteous, which were also
the interests of the Church, which were also the interests of the nation.

Demonstrating the essential compatibility of Mormonism and
republicanism, nineteenth-century Mormons constituted themselves
as citizens of both the kingdom of God and the American republic.
They articulated a model of dual citizenship, in both Church and state
polities, one private and one public. They saw nothing incongruous
between membership in the polity of God and U.S. citizenship and,
by extension, nothing problematic about the integration of polygamy
with Americanism. This vision enabled them to claim access to politi
cal Americanness even as they asserted a divine political role for the
Church. They found the privatized kingdom of God and the public
American state not only fundamentally compatible, but also necessarily
contingent upon each other. So central was this vision of government
and family to Mormons that they endured decades of persecution,
the passage of several anti-polygamy laws, fines, arrests, and lives
on the underground to maintain it.

Anti-Mormons believed none of the arguments Mormons made
and, in the 1880s, attacked Mormons vigorously. In the polygamy test
case Reynolds v. United States, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1879
that religious freedom did not extend to the protection of polygamy.
Congress then mobilized federal power over the Utah Territory two
decades after the enactment of the Morrill Act when Congress passed
the Edmunds Act in 1882. The Edmunds Act put legal teeth into the
Morrill Act and made “unlawful cohabitation” a crime, disenfran
chised polygamists, and barred them from serving on juries or in
public office. The act also created the Utah Commission, five feder
ally appointed officials to oversee elections in Utah. Five years later,
the Edmunds-Tucker Act strengthened the Edmunds Act, disincor
porated the Church, and escheated all Church property in excess of
$50,000. In 1890, Wilford Woodruff, who was then Church president,
issued what became known as the Manifesto officially advising
Church members to refrain from contracting illegal marriages. Although polygamists continued to live with their plural wives and at
least some General Authorities continued to authorize, perform, and

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personally contract new plural marriages in secret until at least the “Second Manifesto” of 1904, the Woodruff Manifesto of 1890 effectively ended federal persecution of Mormons for the practice of plural marriage.\textsuperscript{135}

That the Mormons ultimately failed to permanently establish their ideals of plural marriage or the law of consecration as part of their utopian experiment does not make the attempt any less significant. The theological and political implications of plural marriage disturbed white, middle-class Americans enough to provoke decades of cultural and political conflict and volumes of anti-Mormon literature declaring the unfitness of Mormon homes and the anti-American character of Mormon politics. The ways in which plural marriage disrupted the public/private divide were central to Mormon religious ideals and were focal points of anti-Mormon rhetoric. Critical to understanding debates over the Mormon question in the nineteenth century, then, is how Mormons disavowed, reinvented, and inverted the categories of public and private. These disavowals, reinventions, and inversions called into question the very meaning of Americanness; and for so doing, the Mormons paid dearly.


Reviewed by William G. Hartley

Warning: this book is meat, not milk. Lengthy and deep, it presents a comprehensive history of Amasa Mason Lyman, a prominent early LDS apostle, whose disaffection in his later years shoved him into disfavor and hence into the background of Church history. Had he died ten years sooner, his life and works would rank him on a par with Orson and Parley Pratt and Orson Hyde. Devout Mormons seem loathe to credit apostates for their earlier contributions.

Author Leo Lyman, a great-great-grandson of Amasa Lyman, is a foremost scholar in Mormon and western U.S. history, having authored major studies of Utah's quest for statehood, the San Bernardino LDS colony, and the southern trail to California. Now retired, Leo taught history at California Polytechnic in Pomona and Cal State in San Bernardino.

New Hampshire-born Amasa Lyman converted to Mormonism in 1832, entered the First Quorum of Seventy in 1835, filled numerous missions, was called as an apostle in 1843, lost his place in the quorum to the readmitted Orson Pratt, then rejoined the quorum in 1844. Joseph Smith called Amasa as an additional counselor in the First Presidency, but Amasa was never sustained to that position by a conference. In Nauvoo he entered plural marriage, and in time had eight wives and thirty-eight children. In the West, Amasa filled Church assignments to the California gold rush colonies and, with Apostle Charles C. Rich, founded the San Bernardino colony. After working three years with southern Utah settlements, he served with Apostles Rich and George Q. Cannon as the presidency of the European Mission, 1860–62.
There, he publicly questioned the Atonement’s efficacy, which led to his being stripped of his apostleship in 1867 and excommunicated in 1870. By then he had embraced the Godbeite revolt against Church economic policies and engaged in spiritualism. He died in 1877 in Fillmore, out of the faith. In 1909 he was posthumously reinstated as Church member and apostle. Amasa’s son Francis M. Lyman, grandson Richard R. Lyman, and great-great-grandson James E. Faust became LDS apostles.

To do justice to Amasa’s many life stages and high-level assignments, Leo gives us twelve basically chronological chapters averaging forty pages each, made workable by useful headings throughout. Leo drew from Amasa’s thirty-nine diaries (his journal is unfortunately devoid of self-analysis), a brief autobiographical sketch, letters, an enormous number of recorded or summarized sermons, as well as contemporaries’ records, LDS First Presidency papers, Church letterbooks, and Brigham Young Papers. Leo demonstrates a sturdy command of Church history facts, issues, and personalities, evidenced in fourteen pages of bibliography and nearly a hundred pages of endnotes. Only a lifetime of research and awareness of sources allowed Leo to understand and proffer explanations regarding Amasa’s multiple involvements.

For those writing biographies of relatives, “close personal ties are a threat to objectivity”; the “sympathetic biographer” must not hide the hero’s faults, pass over discreditable episodes, or “stifle the comments of unfriendly witnesses,” as John A. Garraty, has trenchantly noted in *Nature of Biography* (New York: Vintage, 1964, 158–64). Leo, with balance and forthright discussion, doesn’t hesitate to challenge family accounts, confront Lyman’s faults, nor for that matter disagree with Amasa’s contemporaries and with current historians, particularly earlier Amasa scholar Lori Hefner. Leo announces in his introduction that he makes no pretense of veiling his admiration for Amasa but asserts that his study “maintained a firm commitment to recounting only what the source documents disclose and authenticate” (xvi). A standard history of Amasa by Albert R. Lyman, later edited by Leo’s uncle Melvin A. Lyman, falls short, Leo says, because it omitted the crucial last decade of Amasa’s life and his dedicated “protests” as a Godbeite (xv–xvi). Leo does not hesitate to disagree with the more hagiographical Albert Lyman history (611). Leo offers conclusions and counters others’ conclusions. Where evidence is cloudy he offers opinions, using such phrases as “it is still possible that” or “I hypothesize that . . .” This book is a deeply researched, thoughtful, careful, responsible history motivated by but not unfairly swayed by Leo’s family ties to Amasa.

Speaking of families, accounts of prominent people all too often slight the person’s family, livelihood, and home realities. Leo, while dealing with Amasa’s weighty engagements in events and controversies, regularly brings in the Lyman family’s situations. The narrative lacks even simplified family charts but Appendix 1 has seven pages listing the seven (of eight) wives who pro-
duced his total of thirty-eight children, along with their vital data. Leo makes clear that Amasa’s demanding Church assignments caused his continuous “inability to provide” for his families. Vital for this study, Leo notes how Amasa’s family members dealt with his apostasy.

Leo identifies several important but slighted contributions that Amasa made: (1) He was the Church’s most popular, persuasive, forceful speaker of his generation (307–18). (2) San Bernardino was one of the Church’s most successful settlement ventures due primarily to Amasa, while Brigham Young “allowed his biases to dictate a destructive policy that resulted in killing what might have been the Mormon Church’s most flourishing regional center outside of Utah” (244). (3) “Without undue defensiveness,” comments Leo, “I can point out that Amasa Lyman has never received any particular recognition as a significant colonizer,” which he was. (4) His “signal accomplishments” as one of the leading pioneers of the southern Utah region “has never received its just due” (297). (5) Amasa’s greatest achievements of his southern Utah tours between 1857 and 1860 “were his vehement denunciations of the beliefs and practices of vengeance which underlay the tragedy at the Mountain Meadows Massacre” (297). And (6) Amasa’s ideas and experiences influenced the formulation of the Godbeite intellectual revolt more than has been recognized; he was the movement’s “foremost spokesman” for nearly three years (421).

The core question this book tackles is why Amasa disaffected. Leo’s answer requires him to disagree with Lyman family opinions and with Hefner. He concludes, for example, that Amasa’s involvement in spiritualism “does not adequately explain his defection” and finds a more satisfactory answer in a combination of factors.

First, Amasa’s sermons downplayed Christ’s blood atonement while focusing on “seeking truth through knowledge.” Hefner’s claim that Amasa worshiped universal truth instead of seeing Jesus as central to salvation is, Leo said, an “absurdity.” Amasa’s fervent sermons show he was not the “irreligious humanist” that Hefner sees. “She was wrong to assume that he had no belief in Jesus Christ or his divinity” (334–35), asserts Leo. He finds only very circumstantial evidence for Hefner’s position that the universalist teachings of Amasa’s maternal grandfather Perez Mason were decisive in shaping the apostle’s position that salvation came from knowing truth (57). Nor does Leo find evidence that, as Hefner asserts, Amasa’s views came from an immersion in liberal theology (371).

According to Leo, Amasa crossed publicly into unorthodoxy on March 16, 1862, when he preached a sermon in Dundee, Scotland: “The life and glory we seek is not in the ordinances any more than in the blood shed on Calvary. It is in the knowledge of God awakened in the soul, in the light that leads us onward and upward to exaltation and happiness. There deliverance and glory
are found” (330). Later, on January 21, 1867, Amasa was brought before the Quorum of the Twelve to answer for those heretical words. He confessed to error and published a public apology; but within weeks he reversed his “exacted” recantation (376) and began publicly preaching the same ideas. In response, the Twelve stripped him of the apostleship on October 6, 1867. His excommunication followed May 12, 1870. As in a tragedy drama, Leo concludes, Amasa’s fatal flaw perhaps was “his persistent assumption that the actual blood of Jesus Christ was not essential in the otherwise important and personally accepted mission of the Savior in redeeming mankind” (xi).

The second factor that Leo finds influential in Amasa’s disaffection from the LDS Church was his shock and dismay at the fanatical beliefs that spawned the Mountain Meadows Massacre. At a time when covering up and denying the massacre was the only acceptable position for orthodox Mormons, he urged southern Utahns “to cease violent retaliation and revenge against outsiders for past wrongs done Mormons and to stop inciting Native Americans to do the same” (xii–xv).

A third major factor was a personality clash between the apostle and the Church president. “Young’s lack of empathy and compassion toward Lyman is both perplexing and chilling,” Leo finds. Young had “a persistent dislike, amounting at times almost to repugnance, for Lyman,” (229) primarily because of the San Bernardino venture. Amasa’s “mounting antagonism toward Brigham Young, fully reciprocated, looms as the primary factor leading to his ecclesiastical demise” (xi).

A related fourth factor was Amasa’s growing discomfort about restraints being imposed on Saints, tighter than in Joseph Smith’s day. Amasa rejected a “misled dominance of the Church membership by President Brigham Young” (xii, xiii).

Leo summed up the causes of Amasa’s disaffection this way:

Lyman had denied the need for an atonement through Jesus’s blood, but he still taught that Jesus’s salvation of mankind was absolutely essential in all other ways. Therefore, I conclude that personal friction between Lyman and Brigham Young at least partially underlay the rupture. Earlier elements include Lyman’s status in the church hierarchy shortly before Joseph Smith’s death which Young may have still seen as a possible threat; Young’s resentment at the alleged disobedience of the large and successful San Bernardino settlement, despite its loyalty, proved by its faithfulness in tithing and its rapid dismantling when he summoned its members back to Utah; and Lyman’s outspoken resistance to violence on the part of both whites and Indians in southern Utah, along with his willingness to hear confessions by Mountain Meadows participants. Any or all may have been factors in the unfortunate rupture in the formerly conciliatory, if not warm, relationship. (385)

Despite family and scholarly claims that Amasa imbibed spiritualism be-
fore his defrocking, Leo concludes that “there is absolutely no evidence he practiced spiritualism in Utah before 1870” (393). After affiliating with the Godbeites, however, “he participated extensively in a large variety of spiritualist gatherings, essentially for the rest of his life” (441).

Occasionally a few factual errors pop into the narration. For example, it says that in 1814 the Erie Canal was being built (2), but canal work did not start until mid-1817. It says the Book of Mormon was first published in 1829 (5), but should say 1830. It says the 1847 pioneer company crossed the Platte River on April 19 (139), but they crossed the Platte only near Fort Laramie on June 4. I wish Leo had delved more into Amasa’s embracing (or not) of the Book of Mormon, which the text indicates Amasa rarely mentioned in his sermons. And, when the text notes Amasa’s lack of preaching in the 1860s, is not a comparison needed that shows how often other members of the Twelve did speak?

Fine history. Rich meat to chew on. Much top-notch history to digest and enjoy here.

WILLIAM G. HARTLEY {billhartley1@juno.com}, a past president of the Mormon History Association, retired in August 2009 as an associate professor of history at Brigham Young University where, among other specialties, he taught seminars on writing family biography. He is co-editor of two forthcoming volumes of the Joseph Smith Papers.


Reviewed by Lisa Olsen Tait

In 1857, Eliza R. Snow composed the following tribute to Wilford Woodruff, inveterate Mormon diarist:

With heart inspired rich matter to indite
In Zion now your business is to write
With skill you wield the ready writer’s pen
Tis yours to immortalize the deeds of men

Full many a righteous act and gifted word
By Saints performed—from lips of Prophets heard
Had slipped mem’ries of Judicious men
But for the promptings of your faithful pen. (565)
These lines could almost as readily be applied to Eliza R. Snow herself. While she did not literally record as much as Woodruff in the way of sermons and historical events, her poetry provides a broad and important supplement to the narrative histories of the nineteenth-century Mormon experience. As Emmeline B. Wells wrote about Eliza, unconsciously echoing Snow’s own words about Woodruff, “There has scarcely been an event in the history of the Church which has not been faithfully delineated by her gifted pen,” and through her poetry “the names of many of the actors in the drama of Mormonism, will be handed down to posterity” (quoted xx).

Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson have accomplished an impressive feat in producing this massive volume, which collects all the known poems of Eliza R. Snow, drawing from both published and manuscript sources. The first appeared in 1825 when Snow was twenty-one; the last in the Woman’s Exponent a few weeks before her death in 1887 (xiii). Simply identifying and compiling all of these poems is a significant achievement. The book also includes extensive critical apparatus—its three indexes, for example, cover titles and first lines, scripture references, and general topics, and the over 200 pages of textual notes account for textual variants and editorial regularizations for all poems—rivaling anything published about better-known poets such as Emily Dickinson or Walt Whitman. Particularly interesting is the appendix noting “Poems of Misattributed or Doubtful Authorship” in which the editors demonstrate that Snow did not write the verse to the well-known hymn “Truth Reflects upon Our Senses,” a correction that will need to be incorporated into future editions of the LDS hymnal (1045).1

A brief but thorough introduction places Snow in appropriate historical and poetical contexts and gives an overview of her life. The biographical context is developed further in the short introductions to each of the nine chronological chapters and in the headnotes to individual poems. These headnotes provide rich information about Snow herself and about the people mentioned in her poems, preserving names and relationships that might otherwise be lost and reminding us that Eliza R. Snow associated closely with many Saints who are today virtually unknown.

For example, the headnote to poem 340, titled “Inscribed to Sister Howard,” informs us that Elizabeth Anderson Howard and her husband emigrated to Utah from Ireland in 1853, settling in 1856 in Big Cottonwood where they built “an elegant country home” and became “distinguished for their wealth and their generosity.” Elizabeth Howard was a “treasured friend” of Eliza R. Snow, and they worked together in the Relief Society, where

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1Derr and Davidson report that the verses have been traced to early Protestant hymnody under the title “The Mote and the Beam,” citing two mid-nineteenth-century hymnals in which the text appears (1045).
Howard served as president of the Big Cottonwood ward and later as secretary of the Salt Lake Stake Relief Society and as a member of the board of directors of the women's Deseret Hospital (670). In this brief introduction to a single poem, the editors cite three disparate sources, giving an indication of the depth and breadth of research that went into compiling this volume. In short, it is difficult to imagine that a more authoritative collection of Snow's poetry could be produced.

Given the amazingly thorough research and lovely writing that characterizes the editorial contributions to the volume, the most difficult aspect of the book for readers today may be the poems themselves. The poetic traditions, the oral and textual worlds, and the theories and practices of poetry out of which Snow's poetry grew are largely lost to us now. These poems, once a regular feature of public discourse and a familiar aspect of private expression, have become historical artifacts in and of themselves—a fact which invites us to ask questions about the broader context for Snow's poetic practice. To begin with, what was the place, literal and figurative, of poetry in nineteenth-century Mormondom?

On this question, Derr and Davidson's collection offers a few answers. Poetry was located within both public discourse and private reflection. Snow's published poems appeared primarily in official LDS publications; they were often recited or sung at public gatherings and offered as representations of Mormon opinions and theology. Moreover, many of Snow's poems appear in diaries—her own, to be sure, which is as far as some of them ever went toward publication, but also in the diaries of others, where they were carefully copied. This widespread dissemination of Snow's poetry suggests not only her acknowledged position as "Zion's poetess," but also speaks to the ubiquity and centrality of poetry itself in the lives of nineteenth-century people.

This fact, in turn, raises questions that Derr and Davidson leave largely unanswered. Why was poetry so popular? What, in fact, constituted "poetry" as it was understood by Snow and her audiences? In what ways was it a category of expression that was available to all, and in what ways did it represent a privileged discourse or status? In other words, why did notable public occasions and wrenching private griefs alike call forth poetry as a meaningful response? To be fair, most discussions of nineteenth-century poetry, even of popular women poets, treat "poetry" as a self-evident category and do not address these questions, but work such as that of Eliza R. Snow—ubiquitous but often pedestrian—makes such questions visible. In order for Snow to be recognized beyond Mormon circles, such questions would need to be addressed more directly.

Moreover, the category of female poet begs for further contextualization and theorizing. Derr and Davidson do briefly contextualize poetess Eliza R. Snow in terms of the prophetic poetic tradition, the public or journalistic poets, sentimental discourse, and religious poetry, but they do not explicitly discuss the meanings of female poetic practice in the nineteenth century. Collections such as Walker’s, cited above, begin to address this issue, but there is much yet to be considered about the connections—both perceived and actual—between gender and poetic expression. What might the work of Eliza R. Snow add to such discussions?

Related to these questions is a material concern. Did Eliza R. Snow make any money from her writing? Derr and Davidson are inexplicably silent on this matter. Mormon periodicals did pay their contributors. Could the advent of the Juvenile Instructor in 1866 and Eliza R. Snow’s new line of children’s poetry that appeared around the same time be related—not just ideologically, as Derr and Davidson suggest, but financially (701)? It is well known, as Walker notes, that the ability to earn money by publishing poetry in popular journals induced many women to write verse; and since juveniles tended to be among the most popular and remunerative outlets for writers, many women turned to writing children’s poetry. It would be interesting to know more about the material and financial aspects of Snow’s poetic practice.

I note these unanswered questions not so much by way of criticism as to point out the potential for much more exploration of Snow and her texts as artifacts of both Mormon and American culture in the nineteenth century. In a volume of this size, it is certain that Derr and Davidson had to be judicious in deciding how much critical theory to include. Their focus is clearly on Eliza R. Snow herself and on her “constant effort to place events, ideas, and people within the context, the community, and the fabric of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ” as she understood it (xxi). This collection will undoubtedly make it possible for others to more fully explore the cultural and theoretical ramifications of Eliza R. Snow’s poetic work.

What of the historical value in Snow’s poetry? As I have noted, Snow’s poems were frequently a featured aspect of Mormon public occasions (see, for example, the many patriotic poems written for Fourth of July celebrations), and historians attempting to reconstruct those events should consider the color and texture those verses added to the proceedings. It should be noted, as well, that Snow’s poetry contributed a female voice to the public discourse of those days, which was otherwise conducted by men—a fact which could not have been lost on the participants even if Snow herself did not often foreground her gender in her work.

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3Ibid., xxii.
Moreover, some of Snow’s poems contribute memorable descriptions of events as they unfolded. For example, in her 1841 piece on “The Funeral of Brig. General Smith,” Snow provides, as Derr and Davidson write, “perhaps the most complete description” we have of the funeral of Don Carlos Smith, brother of Joseph Smith (175). Running to more than 150 lines, Snow’s poem describes the “martial music” (ll. 19-22), the “grand procession” (ll. 26–39), the sermon of Joseph Smith (ll. 74–122), and the “parting scenery” as “The Legion, one by one, deposited / Within the grave, a green unwither’d bough, / And passing onward left the trophied urn!” This scene was followed by “a voice” slowly pronouncing, “‘Earth / to earth—Ashes to ashes—Dust to dust, / Return this body to its mother earth;’ / While on the coffin, fell the parted clod” (ll. 132–138). Besides offering a description of this particular funeral, this poem hints at how other funerals of the time may have proceeded. Snow likewise provides a memorable description of the funeral of Brigham Young at which “All Israel were mourners” (902).

All of the major events of Mormon history are here—the expulsion from Missouri, the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the exodus to the West, the subsequent conflicts with the federal government, and many organizational and theological developments. Snow also treats such momentous national events as the Civil War and the completion of the transcontinental railroad—always, of course, with a Mormon spin. For the most part, Snow does not treat these events journalistically, but her poetry provides an important counterpoint to the recorded histories of these events by expressing the subjective response of the Saints to those events. Angrily addressing “Missouri,” Snow writes, “Thou art already associated with Herod, Nero and the ‘bloody / Inquisition’—thy name has become synonymous with oppression, / cruelty, treachery and murder” (279). Such expressions both reflected and created Mormons’ feelings about their experiences. Likewise, when they sang her song, “The Camp of Israel” (“Tho’ oppression’s waves roll o’er us, / We will praise our God and king; / We’ve a better day before us— / Of that day we proudly sing”), the singing had the power to create the optimism it expressed (320).

“Missouri” illustrates another important historical aspect of Snow’s poetry: its role in Mormon myth-making. That poem was written in 1843, five years after the events it denounces; to the last years of her life, Snow continued to invoke the collective memory of previous sufferings. “Three Hundred Graves in Pisgah,” for example, is the next-to-last poem published in the collection; it was composed in July 1887, five months before Snow’s death. Recalling the “wilderness” where the “mob-driven Saints of God,” having fled Nauvoo, were camped in preparation for their exodus forty years earlier, Snow writes as if in present tense, in honor of the Saints who died in that place of loss and privation:
We'll stop and drop a loving tear
O'er those we leave in sacred trust;
Three hundred graves are huddled here,
And each enwraps a sacred dust.

Robb'd of our wealth, and driven forth
From homes, and lands, and country dear,
As exiled wanderers in the earth,
We stopp'd to rest a season here. (1039)

By 1887, a new generation of Latter-day Saints, along with scores of convert-immigrants, no longer had any firsthand recollection of the traumatic experiences that Snow and other pioneer Mormons had endured. Poems such as this one facilitated the appropriation of those memories and their enshrining as the mythic essence of the Mormon experience—all part of the process Davis Bitton has called "the ritualization of Mormon history."4

Derr and Davidson observe that their chronological presentation of Snow’s poems “juxtaposes serious poetry and ephemera of little merit” (xvii). We could also say that it juxtaposes public and private discourse, the theological and the sentimental. In so doing, however, it powerfully demonstrates how these categories were inextricably enmeshed in Eliza R. Snow’s life and thinking. Her countless poems marking births, deaths, departures, reunions, and marriages make visible the longue durée of Mormon history and, as Emmeline Wells predicted, preserve names and biographical details that would otherwise be lost. This is perhaps the most important gendered aspect of Snow’s poetry, evidencing her immersion in the female world of family, home, and friendship that formed the ever-moving backdrop to the momentous events she chronicled.

Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry is a landmark achievement. It is an essential contribution to our understanding of this monumental but still-enigmatic figure, and it is a model of the kind of work we have yet to do in recovering, reassessing, and reconstructing both the cultural and narrative history of Mormonism.

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*Presidents of the Church* consists of sixteen biographies averaging twenty-some pages each, one for each of the LDS Church presidents. They have been written and compiled with the intention of giving the LDS reader a greater appreciation for “each of these leaders who were most certainly prepared from the foundations of the world” (ix).

All sixteen biographies are contributed by current or retired religion instructors, all of whom were educated at Brigham Young University (BYU) and hold graduate degrees. These instructors and their respective biographies are: Craig Ostler (Joseph Smith), Charles Swift (Brigham Young), Paul Hyde (John Taylor), Lawrence Flake (Wilford Woodruff), Arnold Garr (Lorenzo Snow), Craig Manscill (Joseph F. Smith), Kent Brooks (Heber J. Grant), David Boone (George Albert Smith), Mary Jane Woodger (David O. McKay), Blair Van Dyke (Joseph Fielding Smith), Clyde Williams (Harold B. Lee), Matthew Richardson and Timothy Merrill (Spencer W. Kimball), John Livingstone (Ezra Taft Benson), Cynthia Doxey (Howard W. Hunter), Lloyd Newell (Gordon B. Hinckley), and Michael Goodman (Thomas S. Monson).

Each biography begins with a brief preface containing a time line and biographical highlights from the prophet’s life. For example, “President David Oman McKay was ordained and set apart as the ninth President of the Church on April 12, 1951, after serving forty-five years as an Apostle, including seventeen years as a counselor in the First Presidency. He remained the President for nineteen years. In total, President McKay served as a General Authority for nearly sixty-four years—longer than any previous man—and his service extended over much of the twentieth century. Recognition of the Church as a worldwide organization, phenomenal growth, and development of modern new programs marked this prophet’s administration” (223).

Next comes a section about each man’s most notable teachings and their impact on Church membership. Each of these sections emphasizes the importance of the prophetic calling by placing the teachings in their historical context and illustrating how Church members benefited from following them. President Lorenzo Snow’s 1899 talk on tithing to members living in St. George is an example. He promised the drought-stricken Saints that, if they would pay a full and honest tithe, they would be blessed finan-
cially and spiritually. The Saints began to pay their tithing and rains returned to Saint George, saving the year’s crops (135).

The biographies themselves are fairly broad in their scope, keeping mostly to the major incidents of each prophet’s life. They are richly supplemented by paintings and photographs. The family life of all Church presidents, including those who practiced plural marriage, is discussed, but not as a central topic. The most common subjects are secular careers, missions, and priesthood assignments with the overall goal of demonstrating how each man was prepared for the prophetic mantle throughout his life.

Each biography also includes a number of sidebars which highlight prominent quotations, go into greater detail on events mentioned in the main text, or tell anecdotes. For example, “[Joseph Smith] was preaching once, and he said it tried some of the pious folks to see him play ball with the boys. He then related a story of a certain prophet who was sitting under the shade of a tree amusing himself in some way, when a hunter came along with his bow and arrow, and reproved him. The prophet asked him if he kept his bow strung up all the time. The hunter answered he did not. The prophet asked why, and he said it would lose its elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was just so with his mind, he did not want it strung up all the time” (16).

Bibliographies for both the biographical and teachings sections allow the reader to further explore topics of interest.


This compilation of stories of faith among LDS servicemen and servicewomen in all military branches focuses on how their faith helps in their work in war-torn Afghanistan and Iraq. According to editor Chad Hawkins, “The stories featured in this book remain largely in the words of the individual, with only minor editing. I hope readers will sense the tender feelings mingled within each story” (xxiv). The scope covers 2003 to 2008.

Hawkins explains his purpose: “Our common freedoms are not so common. The high quality of life we enjoy in the United States is the extreme exception, not the norm. Jesus Christ is the author of our freedom. Whether we are fighting the battle against terror or struggling with our own personal battles, the gospel of Jesus Christ can provide safety and an assured victory. May the lessons our brothers and sisters learn in the battlefield be of great strength to us as we apply them to our lives back home” (xxviii).

The book is organized into four sections: “Events Downrange,” “Liv-
ing the Gospel in Desert Fatigues," "Chaplains in the Service," and "The Home Front." The stories are recorded as interviews and also by letter and email—a total of sixty-nine stories from forty-three contributors, six of whom are women, including three wives of active-duty servicemen. Five are chaplains. As can be seen by the ratio of contributors to stories, several individuals have more than one account, leading to a slight lack of diversity.

In keeping with the title, the stories focus primarily on experiences that sustain and confirm faith. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jared Kimber describes a sacrament meeting with several other soldiers outside a Blackhawk: "We read from the scriptures and shared our testimonies about what a blessing it is to hold the priesthood. To bless and partake of the sacrament in such an ancient and holy land [Iraq] was truly amazing to us. We observed that it may have been thousands of years since priesthood holders had performed ordinances in this historic region. It was great to share that memorable experience with some wonderful guys who were trying their best to honor the priesthood—even during a war." (110).

These contemporary accounts of the experience of American Mormons serving in the Middle East comprise historical events for the future, perhaps parallel to the personal diaries kept by participants in the Mormon Battalion.

Captain Tom Beckstrand, like many of the contributors, found great worth in the difficult experience of going to war: "My time in the service has given me an unshakeable testimony, a testimony that has come with a price but one that I willingly paid. Besides, how do you put a price on a relationship with the Lord? The risks or hardship required to come to know the Savior seem insignificant compared to the knowledge and the happiness that I've received in return. My hope is that I'll use what I've been given in a manner that is pleasing to him." (87).


After Doug Robinson, a columnist and feature writer for the Deseret News, wrote a profile about Larry H. Miller for the paper, Miller invited Robinson to help write his autobiography. During the last seven months of Miller’s life, they “began meeting two or three times a week at his hilltop mansion . . . his home office, . . . in the hospital while he underwent dialysis, . . . in the upstairs bedroom of his home until he fell asleep in the middle of a sentence. . . . We talked until he could talk no more—until, finally, he was forced to spend all his energy fighting for his life” (x). Fulfilling Miller’s dying wish, Robinson completed the project, adding
“Postscripts” to each chapter that fill in missing pieces through interviews with Larry’s friends and family. *Driven* is the story of how a college dropout became one of Utah’s most influential entrepreneurs.

The seven-part autobiography begins with Miller’s turbulent childhood. His mother twice asked the police to remove him from the home and eventually kicked him out when he was sixteen. He graduated from high school with a 1.77 cumulative grade point average and went to a university, only to drop out six weeks later.

Miller’s only sense of security came from Gail Saxton, whom he met for the first time in seventh grade: “When I was with Gail, I felt safe and comfortable, and I was aware of this even as a young man. It was in sharp contrast to my home life. She was a life preserver for me” (50). Even after dating on and off throughout high school and three years after graduation, Larry did not take the initiative to propose because he just “didn’t seem to know how” (51). So Gail gave him an ultimatum, and they were married March 25, 1965.

Throughout high school, Larry worked in a book bindery, framed houses, mixed and carried mortar, drove delivery trucks, and picked strawberries. He found his first job with a car dealership through a newspaper ad. After being cheated by five different employers, he learned a valuable lesson that made him a successful employer in the future: “Treat your employees well, and it will pay off in many ways” (79). While he was working for a car dealership, he had an epiphany that changed his life forever: “It was March 1971, and I was at work, managing the parts department at a Toyota dealership in Colorado. . . . Here I was, soon to be 27 years old, married, with two children and one on the way, and I was responsible for raising and supporting those children, providing food and shelter and college and housing and much more, while preparing for old age and retirement, and I realized I had nothing to fall back on. I had no college education, no special training. All I had was my energy and whatever talent I had been blessed with.

“It scared me. The feeling was so overwhelming that I stopped what I was doing to ponder the matter. “I decided I had to be extremely good at something, and the thing I was best at was being a Toyota parts manager. That night I worked until 10:00. It was the start of my 90-hour-a-week work schedule. From that moment on, I began working from 7:30 in the morning until 9, 10, or 11 at night, six days a week. I did this for 20 years” (21–22).

With hard work and his “driven” character, he set out to be his best in everything he was involved with. He analyzes his own personality: “For whatever reason, I have always had an intensity about the things I do, even when I was a kid practicing for marble tournaments or softball. . . . It’s about doing a job so meticulously
and so in-depth that you really do control the outcome. It’s about doing your best work and discovering our own capacities. That passion or intensity drove me to work the long hours. It drove me to find better time-management systems, even as a kid working in a book bindery. It drove me to learn everything I could about whatever I was doing, whether it was perfecting new softball pitches or understanding movie theater design or memorizing the serial numbers of automobile parts and where they were stored” (261).

This approach influenced such key events as risking everything to keep the Jazz basketball team in Utah, developing his car dealership empire from humble beginnings, and his great influence throughout Utah in providing funding for such projects such as the Energy Solutions arena, baseball fields, a race track, movie theaters, a college campus, and much more.

Miller also talked about his involvement with the Joseph Smith Papers, a project of keen interest to readers of The Journal of Mormon History. Ronald O. Barney, an administrator in the LDS Church Historical Department, and other Church historians were working on a gigantic project: everything Joseph Smith personally wrote (e.g., his diaries), which was produced under his direction (e.g., the never-before-published Book of Revelations and Commandments), and public records involving him (e.g., lawsuits in which he was involved).

The story of their association began when Miller’s former bishop, David Brown, was called on a mission to direct the LDS Visitors’ Center in Kirtland, Ohio, and, to prepare himself, asked Barney for a “crash course.” Barney willingly agreed, and Brown invited Larry and Gail Miller to accompany him to the presentation. Miller was blown away at being able to see “original manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith’s diaries, the Book of Commandments, and Eliza R. Snow’s hymnbook” (176). After returning home, Miller felt impressed to make an appointment to meet with Barney. The meeting occurred but left both men perplexed. Miller then recounts:

A few days later, I called Ron and told him, “We need to meet again.”

“I know why I am here,” I said when we met.

“So do I,” Ron replied.

“Why?”

“You go first,” Ron said.

“It’s the Joseph Smith Papers.”

“You’re exactly right.” (176)

What Miller did was provide “funding for the project and hire a great team of scholars, archivists, manuscript experts, and so forth to examine Church history documents. We gave BYU a donation of $10 million worth of bonds. The interest mostly supports the Joseph Smith Papers project. We make up the difference that the interest doesn’t cover each year” (176–77). Miller was proud of the project’s ongoing success: “In the case of most scholarly historical books, you’re successful if you sell 1,500 over a lifetime. Our
The first volume sold more than 60,000 at a cost of $50 per book. The next volume, which was bigger and pricier, at $100, received more than 2,900 orders before it even came off the press. The books themselves are beautiful and the contents are mind-boggling. The researchers have found some fantastic stuff. They have discovered some things no one knew. The project has also included a companion TV series that airs on Sunday evenings. We have completed 40 of the 100 episodes we plan to produce” (177).

Miller also mentioned his interest in Mormon arts. In one of Robinson’s postscripts, he states that Miller “funded movies such as God’s Army II and Brigham City” and some of Lee Groberg’s PBS Church-related documentaries, “projects he considered to be enlightening for many” (246). Miller was especially active in filming The Work and the Glory, films based on The Work and the Glory, a multi-volume series of novels by Gerald N. Lund set in the Joseph Smith period. Miller’s name appears in the credits as one of the producers. According to Robinson, “The story goes that during a company meeting Larry was informed that he had lost $18 million on The Work and the Glory movies. During that same meeting, a letter was read aloud from a woman who thanked Larry for the movies. She explained that she had been inactive in the Church, but the movies had caused her to return to full activity. ‘Now we know what the worth of a soul is,’ Larry quipped. Those close to Miller love to tell this story” (247).

Miller also tells of his joy using his wealth to help others because, to him, “Money was the means to an end, and that end [was] to help others” (237). For example, he brought a Russian couple to the United States so that the wife could be treated for cancer and helped many others with financial problems behind closed doors. When asked to speak to a group of junior college professors one time, he was asked to name his three greatest attributes. As evidenced by his many actions, he told them that he was a man of “integrity, reliability, and hard work” (279).

Miller provides many other lessons learned through his experiences: including paying tithing, not going to his own basketball team’s games on Sundays, keeping his promises, the importance of reputation, trust, and loyalty, and his regret at not spending more time with his children. “If there is one thing I’d do differently—only one—it’s this: I would have been there for the Little League games and the scraped knees and the back-to-school nights. . . . Instead of working 90-hour weeks and missing all that stuff, I’d work a more balanced schedule, 55 or 60 hours, and the important things would still get done” (221). According to Robinson, “Miller will be remembered for many things, but when he was asked how he wanted to be remembered, he choked up and said, ‘I want to be remembered as a man who loved Utah’” (6).

*A Train to Potevka* is a spiritual autobiography that highlights parts of Mike Ramsdell’s life. It is not, however, traditional autobiography. Rather it is creative nonfiction, and Ramsdell himself warns in his prologue that his book is not an “academic narrative of historical fact” (vi). The result is a book that can be read as fiction or nonfiction, sometimes leaving the reader uncertain about how seriously to take a given passage.

The book primarily deals with one of his missions in Soviet Russia, where he is tasked with taking into custody a member of the mafia that embezzled money from the U.S. government during the construction of the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Throughout the novel, Ramsdell will often flash back to previous experiences and also periodically provide historical background about Russia that will contextualize events for the reader. For example, after his cover is blown and he is ordered to take the Trans-Siberian railway to escape, he explains the railroad’s history.

The book’s beginning is suspenseful—a dangerous encounter with the Russian mafia after his mission went sour: “With my eyes fixed on his stiletto, I continued to back away up the stairs from my attacker. The critical moment came as I slowly moved away from the top stair railing towards the attic door, five of six feet behind me. Pinching his nose with his thumb and index finger to stop the bleeding, the lug clumsily moved towards me. When my back finally came in contact with the attic door, I carefully reached behind me and turned the handle. My heart sank. The door was locked!” (31)

After his escape from the mafia “lug,” the biggest challenge that Ramsdell faces is hunger. Aboard the railway and headed for a safe house in Potevka, he is headed for a four-day ride. What little food he brought with him was stolen on the train. The safe house has no food. The local market is closed for days because of a celebration in Moscow. The only food he gets is from a package from his sister, but how it got to him is a mystery, for no one should have known where he was at. This was a spiritual experience for him, for he knew that God must have had a hand in saving him from starvation: “It might sound trite in today’s world, but on that frozen winter night, standing alone outside the izba in that small Russian village—undeserving as I might have been—I truly believe that for one brief moment the Lord touched my soul. And for that once-in-a-lifetime experience, I will forever be grateful” (257).

From a Mormon historical perspective, Ramsdell’s journal shows how he was prepared to encounter Mormonism by the spiritual experiences he had throughout his intelligence mission in Russia. “Mission” takes on new meaning, however,
near the end of the book where Ramsdell details the first openings of the Church in Moscow, how he accidentally encountered Mormon missionaries, and their first experiences in Russia.

The front matter includes both a preface and a prologue. The preface details how Ramsdell came to be writing the book while the prologue mostly contains information about the aims of the book. At the book’s end is a section on highlights of Russian history that can help the reader better understand the setting. A glossary contains unfamiliar words: Russian terms that appear in the conversation, political terms describing Russian units and organizations, and the “insider” jargon of intelligence groups.
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