

Editor in Chief

Steven C. Harper

Associate Editor

Susan Elizabeth Howe

Editorial Board

Trevor Alvord *media*

Richard E. Bennett *Church history*

Carter Charles *history*

W. Justin Dyer *social science*

Dirk A. Elzinga *linguistics*

Sherilyn Farnes *history*

James E. Faulconer *philosophy/theology*

Kathleen Flake *religious studies*

Ignacio M. Garcia *history*

Daryl R. Hague *translation*

Taylor Halvorson, *scripture and innovation*

David F. Holland *religious history*

Kent P. Jackson *scripture*

Megan Sanborn Jones *theater and media arts*

Ann Laemmlen Lewis *independent scholar*

Kerry Muhlestein *Egyptology*

Armand L. Mauss *sociology*

Marjorie Newton *history*

Josh E. Probert *material culture*

Susan Sessions Rugh *history*

Herman du Toit *visual arts*

Lisa Olsen Tait *history*

Greg Trimble, *entrepreneurship,*
internet engineering

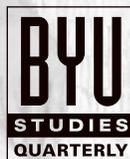
John G. Turner *history*

Gerrit van Dyk *Church history*

John W. Welch *law and scripture*

Frederick G. Williams *cultural history*

Jed L. Woodworth *history*



INVOLVING READERS
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



ARTICLES

- 4** The History of the Name of the Savior's Church:
A Collaborative and Revelatory Process
K. Shane Goodwin
- 42** Voice from the Dust
A Shoshone Perspective on the Bear River Massacre
Darren Parry
- 58** The Nauvoo Music and Concert Hall:
A Prelude to the Exodus
Darrell Babidge
- 105** Naturalistic Explanations of the Origin of the Book of Mormon:
A Longitudinal Study
Brian C. Hales
- 149** The Office of Church Recorder:
A Conversation with Elder Steven E. Snow
Keith A. Erikson

COVER ART

- 78** *She Will Find What Is Lost:*
Brian Kershnik's Artistic Response to
the Problem of Human Suffering
Cris Baird

ESSAY

- 99 Burning the Couch: Some Stories of Grace
Robbie Taggart

POETRY

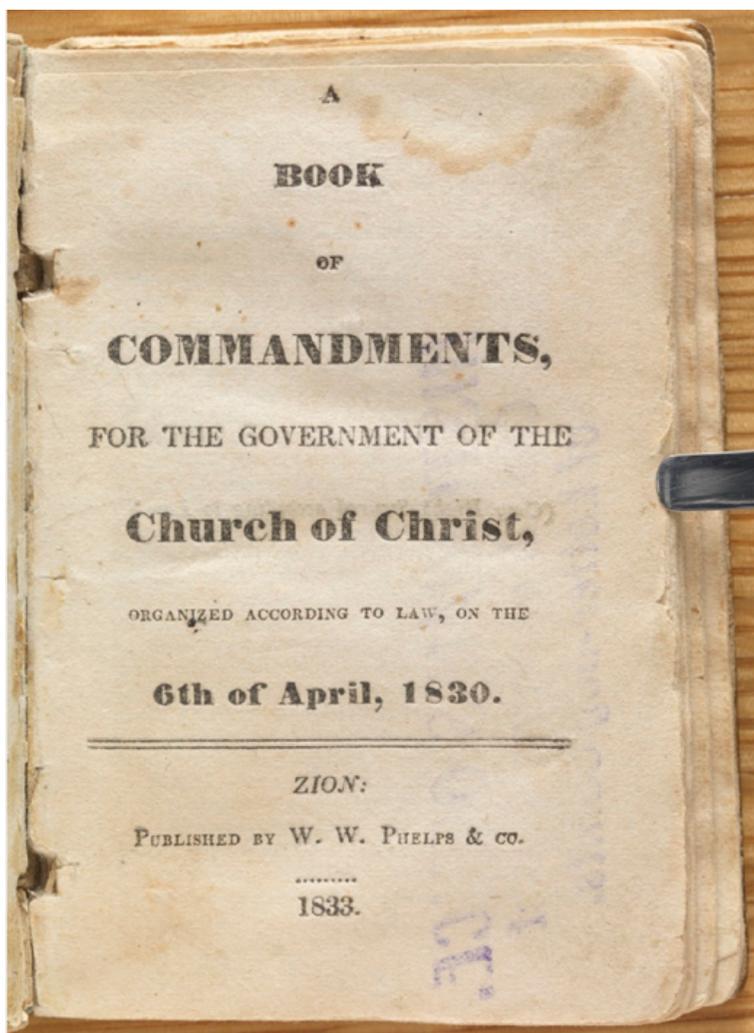
- 98 First Argument
Darlene Young

BOOK REVIEW

- 186 *Sex and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail: The Biology of Three American Tragedies* by Donald K. Grayson
Reviewed by Melvin L. Bashore

BOOK NOTICES

- 191 *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1867–1883*
Alexander Campbell and Joseph Smith: Nineteenth-Century Restorationists



When the Church was organized in 1830, it was officially known as the Church of Christ, as is noted in the opening words of section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days.” As seen in the image above, the name was still in use in 1833, when the Book of Commandments was printed. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

The History of the Name of the Savior's Church

A Collaborative and Revelatory Process

K. Shane Goodwin

Few periods in our Church history were more fraught with trial and tension than late 1837 and early 1838. There was a warrant for Joseph Smith's arrest in Kirtland, Ohio, due to practices related to the Kirtland Safety Society. Key leaders were dissenting and questioning Joseph's fitness to remain their prophet and president, leading to the painful release and later excommunication of top leadership in Missouri.¹ An ever-tightening grip of poverty and indebtedness plagued the Saints, many of whom were beginning to migrate into Caldwell and Daviess Counties.²

During these challenging times, Joseph moved his family to Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, and assessed the Saints' bleak prospects for building Zion in that social, political, and economic environment. In the revelation now canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 115 (dated April 26, 1838), the Lord addressed Joseph's concerns about these uncertainties, giving poignant and optimistic declarations that stakes in Zion would offer refuge, a temple in Far West would provide a place of worship, and,

1. In March and April, the entire Missouri presidency (David Whitmer, William W. Phelps, and John Whitmer) was replaced and ultimately excommunicated for dissension. See Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 229.

2. These counties were created by the Missouri state legislature in 1836 for Latter-day Saint settlements. See Brandon S. Plewe, S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard H. Jackson, eds., *Mapping Mormonism: An Atlas of Latter-day Saint History* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2012), 48.

as the Lord’s prophet, Joseph would be sanctified and continue to hold the keys of the kingdom (see D&C 115:6, 8, 19). In the opening verses of the revelation and prior to the Lord commanding the Saints to “arise and shine forth,” he declared that his Church should henceforth be called “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”³

Despite all the historical resources now available to members of the Church, it may still come as a surprise to many that, since its founding in 1830, the Church has had three official names (not including the fine-tuning of punctuation that came with the final refinement). Initially, it was the “Church of Christ,”⁴ then “The Church of the Latter Day Saints,” and then—as with so many other aspects of the Restoration—a line-upon-line process led to the name “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” This article charts the refining process by presenting a timeline of the Church’s official and unofficial names and explores the nature of human and divine collaboration along the way.

The Challenge of Name Convergence

The Book of Mormon tells of a challenge faced by those living during the time of Christ’s visit to the Americas. Although “they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ” (3 Ne. 26:21), we hear their petitions in the very next chapter: “Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church” (3 Ne. 27:3). The Savior then replies with directness: “Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day” (3 Ne. 27:5).

This wrestling for proper name recognition (both within and without the Church) characterized the first decade of the Restoration and continues into the twenty-first century, as noted by President Russell M.

3. “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” in *Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839*, ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2017), 114, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-26-april-1838-dc-115/2>. See also Doctrine and Covenants 115:4, 5.

4. “Articles and Covenants, circa April 1830 [D&C 20],” in *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 120, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/articles-and-covenants-circa-april-1830-dc-20/1>. For an image of a handwritten copy of “Articles and Covenants,” see <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-book-1/36>, accessed July 18, 2019.

Nelson's official statement released August 16, 2018,⁵ and then his subsequent remarks in the October 2018 general conference.⁶ President Nelson emphatically states, "The Lord has impressed upon my mind the importance of the name He has revealed for His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have work before us to bring ourselves in harmony with His will."⁷

A Collaboration of Divinity and Humanity

Reconstructing, as carefully as possible, the path of convergence to an official name for the Church affords one a wider perspective of the collaboration of divinity and humanity. In the preface to his seminal work *Great Basin Kingdom*, Leonard J. Arrington writes that revealed knowledge "at least to the Latter-day Saint, is not static, but constantly changing and expanding. Revelation is continuous and expedient—'suited to the people and the times.' . . . The true essence of God's revealed will, if such it be, cannot be apprehended without an understanding of the conditions surrounding the prophetic vision, and the symbolism and verbiage in which it is couched."⁸

In terms of the inspired combination of human and divine influences, Blake Ostler ruminates that revelation "is the synthesis of a human and divine event. The prophet is an active participant in revelation, conceptualizing and verbalizing God's message in a framework of thought meaningful to the people. Human freedom is as essential to revelation as God's disclosure."⁹

In a related way, Elder David A. Bednar teaches metaphorically that just as a light switch can immediately help us see the contents of a dark room, so too can a slowly rising sun illuminate our surroundings at dawn, albeit at a much different pace. He notes that some "revelations are received immediately and intensely; some are recognized gradually

5. "The Name of the Church," Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 16, 2018, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/name-of-the-church>.

6. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," *Ensign* 48, no. 11 (November 2018): 87–90.

7. "Name of the Church," Newsroom.

8. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), ix.

9. Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (1987): 111.

and subtly,” but that, more often than not, “revelation comes in small increments over time.”¹⁰ The revealed name of the Savior’s Church exemplifies the duality of Elder Bednar’s metaphor. The Lord clarified in both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants that his Church must bear his name, and yet one also observes the longer process of iterations and refinements (including President Nelson’s recent emphasis) that is analogous to revelation typified by a gradual dawn.

An Approximate Timeline for Official and Referenced Name Variations of the Church

For organizational purposes, table 1 outlines the four official names of the Church (the last one being an orthographical adjustment) and table 2 lists five of the most commonly referenced names, which do not meet the status of “official.” To avoid the unnecessary complexities accompanying a discussion of legal incorporation (or lack thereof) in various locations and time periods of Church history, the four different official names of the Church are defined in this article to be simply those printed on the title pages of our canon of modern revelation: “Church of Christ” (*Book of Commandments*, 1833, Independence, Missouri), “The Church of the Latter Day Saints” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835, Kirtland, Ohio), “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1844, Nauvoo, Illinois), and “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 1876, Salt Lake City, Utah).¹¹ The reason for the 1851 date (rather than 1876) in the final row of table 1 will be addressed later in the article. It should also be pointed out that the official name is completely capitalized on all four of the title pages of our modern-day scripture, obscuring the subtleties involving the definite article “the,” which will also be addressed later.

The “referenced names,” on the other hand, are titles of the Church, found in scripture, conference addresses, minutes of meetings, resolutions, journal entries, correspondence between leaders, or other historical

10. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign* 41, no. 5 (May 2011): 88.

11. This criterion for “official” status parallels that of BYU professor Richard L. Anderson and the Church History Department. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign* 9, no. 1 (January 1979): 13; and “Name of the Church,” Church History Topics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/name-of-the-church?lang=eng>.

FIGURE 1. Timeline of official and referenced names of the Church.

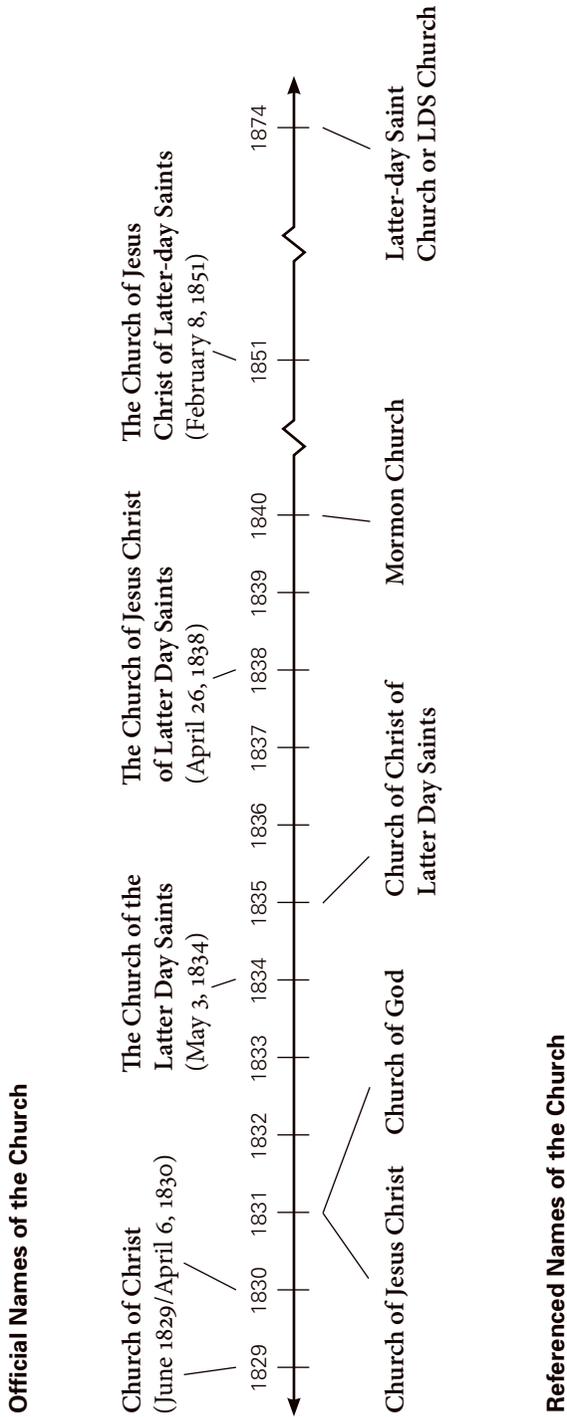


TABLE 1. A timeline of the refinements to the official names of the Church.

Official Names of the Church	Dates of Official First Use
Church of Christ	June 1829 / April 6, 1830
The Church of the Latter Day Saints	May 3, 1834
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	April 26, 1838
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	February 8, 1851

TABLE 2. An approximate timeline of the referenced names of the Church.

Referenced Names of the Church	Year of First Use
Church of Jesus Christ	1831
Church of God	1831
Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints	1835
Mormon Church	1840
Latter-day Saint Church / LDS Church	1874

records. These referenced names are not formal names adopted by the Church but, rather, titles that have been used in communication among leadership and laity over the decades. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore all the name variants used among the general membership of the Church and obviously by those outside of our faith. Instead, for a more parsimonious analysis, the focus will remain on commonly referenced names found in Church publications or communications from its leadership. For a timeline that combines the official and referenced names of the Church, see figure 1.

During the early and mid-1830s, leaders of the Church, secretaries, recorders, and clerks used an assortment of structural and spelling conventions in referencing the Church. Some forms of referenced names (whether accidental or intentional) did not gain much traction. For example, the cover page for “Minute Book 2” (fig. 2) indicates the name “Christ’s Church of Latter Day Saints,” which is not found in any other primary documents of the Joseph Smith Papers.¹²

12. “Minute Book 2,” Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/1>.

Similarly, the dates mentioned in tables 1 and 2 should not be construed as definitive or discrete points of introduction and termination of use. That is, a new iteration of a name listed in the timeline does not imply the previously listed name was immediately abandoned with later refinements. Instead, primary sources of historical documents seem to indicate an obvious overlap and fluidity over time for both official and referenced name variations. For example, the name “Church of Christ” was still being used in Church documents throughout the mid- and late 1830s, even as the other official names began to take on common usage. The first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (1835) demonstrates an example of the overlapping of names with “THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS” on the title page; “the church of Christ” in Section II, verse 1, of Part Second; and “the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints” in the Section V header.¹³

In terms of referenced names, we observe a wide variance of usage even to this day. President Russell M. Nelson counseled members and nonmembers alike to consider using “the Church,” “the Church of Jesus Christ,” or “the restored Church of Jesus Christ” when needing shorter alternatives to the official name.¹⁴ What follows is a careful description

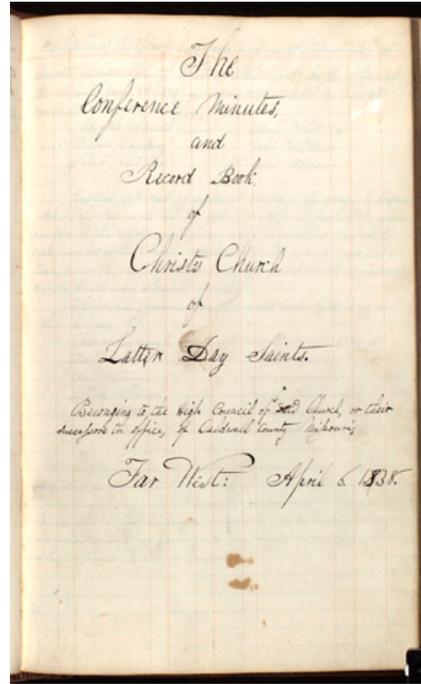


FIGURE 2. Title page of the 1838 “Minute Book 2,” in Ebenezer Robinson’s handwriting. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

13. “Doctrine and Covenants, 1835,” i, 77, 95, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835/9>.

14. See “Style Guide—The Name of the Church,” Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/style-guide>; and Nelson, “Correct Name of the Church,” 89.

of each of the names of the Church outlined in tables 1 and 2. The chronology interleaves both official and referenced names rather than treating them in two separate sections.

(1829/1830) Church of Christ

The Articles and Covenants (now D&C 20) boldly opens with “The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days”¹⁵ and serves as a revelation for the organizing and governing of the newly restored church. Preceding the Articles and Covenants, however, Oliver Cowdery wrote (in June of 1829) a key document titled “Articles of the Church of Christ,” at the request of Joseph Smith.¹⁶ In the Joseph Smith Papers image of these Articles, we see in Oliver’s hand, “The Church of Christ” (fig. 3).¹⁷

Although the historical record lacks any direct command for Joseph and Oliver to name the church “The Church of Christ,” we do read of the Lord’s acknowledgement of the name on April 6, 1830, when he tells Oliver, “that thou mightest be an Elder unto this Church of Christ bearing my name.”¹⁸ Three years later, in the earliest published volume of revelations to the Prophet Joseph, the name “Church of Christ” appears in a bold font on the title page of *A Book of Commandments*, published by W. W. Phelps in Missouri (fig. 4).¹⁹

(1831) Church of Jesus Christ / Church of God

During the first decade or two of the Church, two of the more commonly *referenced* names of the Church (those not considered official by the

15. “Articles and Covenants, circa April 1830 [D&C 20],” 120. See also Doctrine and Covenants 20:1. The header to section 20 states, “Portions of this revelation may have been given as early as summer 1829.” Also, this is the only verse in our scriptural canon with this exact title, “Church of Christ”—using the uppercase “C” (the uppercase first appearing in the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants).

16. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:1–5 for counsel given to Oliver regarding how the Book of Mormon would serve as a base for the foundational document “Articles of the Church of Christ.”

17. For a digital view of the “Articles of the Church of Christ,” see Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-3-articles-of-the-church-of-christ-june-1829/1>.

18. “Revelation, 6 April 1830 [D&C 21],” in *Documents, Volume 1*, 130. See also Doctrine and Covenants 21:11.

19. “Book of Commandments, 1833,” [1], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-commandments-1833/5>.

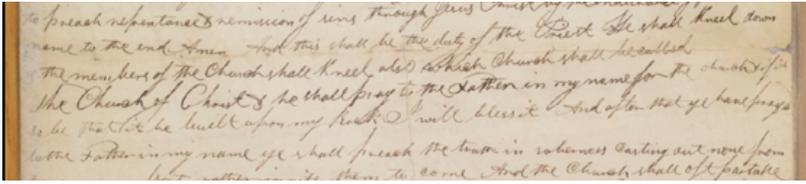


FIGURE 3. "Articles of the Church of Christ." Notice, on the left-hand side, "The Church of Christ" in Oliver Cowdery's handwriting. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

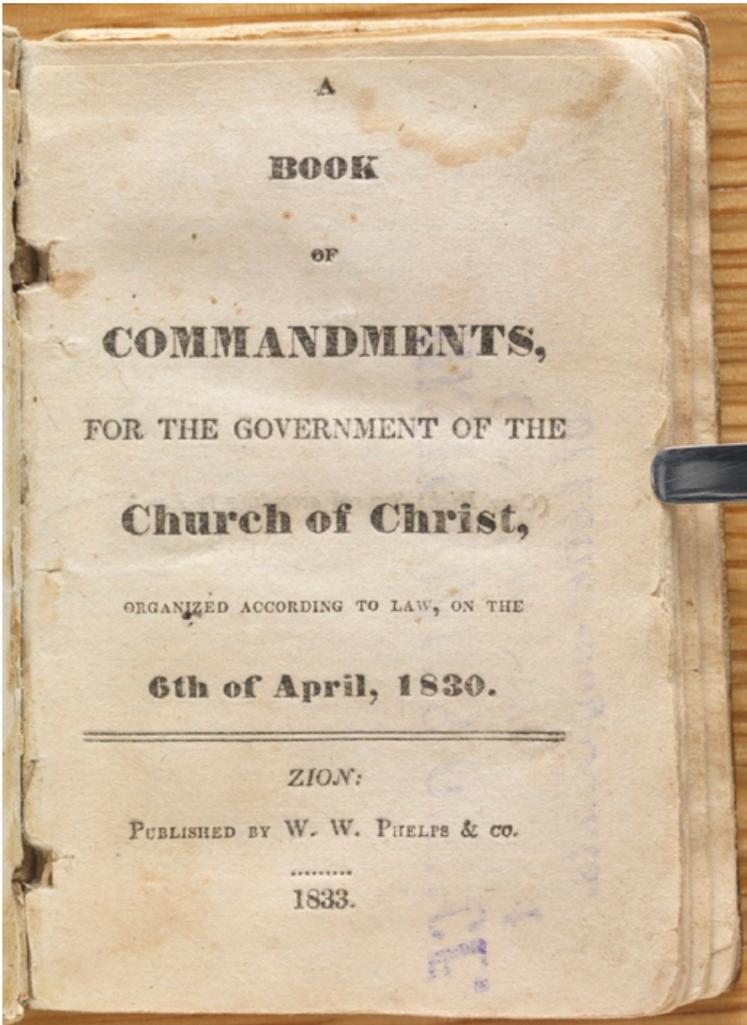


FIGURE 4. Title page of *A Book of Commandments* (1833), using the name "Church of Christ." Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

criterion previously stated) were the “Church of Jesus Christ” and “the Church of God.” To pinpoint a precise date of first use for any of the referenced names in the timeline is far more problematic than for the official names of the Church. Keyword searches through the primary sources enable estimates of first usage, though the dates could be revised should other historical documents come to the forefront.

Church historian B. H. Roberts, referring to the revelation given to Joseph regarding the Church’s official name, stated, “Previous to this, the Church had been called ‘The Church of Christ,’ ‘The Church of Jesus Christ,’ [and] ‘The Church of God.’”²⁰ Figure 5 is an example of the use of “church of God”²¹ in a revelation now canonized as section 107.²²

Interestingly, there are no verses in any of our four standard works containing the name “Church of Jesus Christ.” Figure 6 shows what may be one of the earliest extant documents of the restoration period containing this title: a license appointing Edward Partridge as a bishop of the Church in February 1831.²³

(1834) The Church of the Latter Day Saints

Unlike the titles “Church of Christ” and “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” the title “The Church of the Latter Day Saints” does not appear in any verses of our standard works and is not acknowledged, directly or indirectly, by the Lord in the revelations. This particular change for members of the Church would prove to be significant and not without controversy. The name would remain official for less than four years.

20. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 3:23–24 (see footnote for both pages). See also James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 47.

21. One can find “church of God” mentioned thirty-one times in the Book of Mormon (starting with Mosiah 18:17) and four times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

22. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:80 and “Revelation, 11 November 1831–B [D&C 107 (partial)],” in *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books (Facsimile)*, ed. Robin Scott Jensen and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 169–70, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-11-november-1831-b-dc-107-partial/2>.

23. “License for Edward Partridge, circa 4 August 1831–circa 5 January 1832,” [1], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/license-for-edward-partridge-circa-4-august-1831-circa-5-january-1832/1>.

decision it shall be had in remembrance no more before the Lord; ^{for this is the highest court of}
 the church of God & a final decision upon controversies ^{the making} ~~of~~ ^{which} ~~belonging~~ ^{belonging} to the church ^{is in}
 from this court of the Church; ^{at} inasmuch as the president of the high priest shall transgress

FIGURE 5. Revelation dated November 11, 1831 (D&C 107). Note “the church of God” on the left-hand side, second line, written in Oliver Cowdery’s handwriting. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

The church of Jesus Christ To all to whom these
 pres unto may come Truly testified that our
 beloved Brother Edward Partridge has been app-
 ointed Bishop of this church on the fourth of
 February one thousand eight hundred and thirty one
 with and by the consent of the whole church
 agreeable to the appointment of God and ordai-
 nment to this office under the hand of Sidney
 Higdon an Elder of this church of Christ
 regularly organized on the sixth of April one thou-
 sand eight hundred and thirty in witness
 whereof we have here unto set our hands

Names of Elders

Wm. E. McLain	Sidney Higdon
Young Whitlock	Joseph Smith
David Whitman	Oliver Cowdery
John Corrill	William H. Phelps
Samuel Willinger	Martin Harris
Peter Duntson	Israel Norley
Asa Weeks	Peter Whitmer
Orson Pratt	Sidney Gilbert
John Wainman	Joseph Coe
	Samuel Carter
	Hiram Smith

FIGURE 6. A document appointing Edward Partridge as bishop of the Church. Note “The church of Jesus Christ” at the top. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

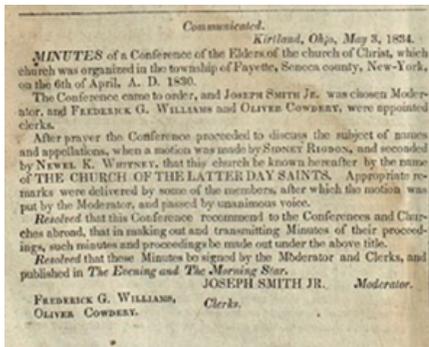


FIGURE 7. Minutes of the conference of the elders, published by Oliver Cowdery in the May 1834 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star*. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Minutes of a conference of the elders of the Church of Christ (held in Kirtland, Ohio, on May 3, 1834) show Joseph Smith acting as moderator and Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery as clerks (fig. 7). After prayer, the record states, they began “to discuss the subject of names and appellations, when a motion was made by Sidney Rigdon, and seconded by Newel K. Whitney, that this church be known hereafter by the name of THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS.

Appropriate remarks were delivered by some of the members, after which the motion was put by the Moderator, and passed by unanimous voice.”²⁴

There are at least five possible motivations for this name adjustment—the first three being the most supported by the historical record and the last two being the weakest. The name change may have come about to

(1) distinguish the Church from other churches using Christ’s name.

Church historians at the Joseph Smith Papers outline contemporaneous arguments presented by Oliver Cowdery in the May and June 1834 editions of *The Evening and the Morning Star* regarding the reasonable desire of members to distinguish themselves from other faiths.²⁵ Likewise, Richard L. Anderson wrote, “Since American Christians, including Congregationalists and reformers, frequently designated themselves as ‘The Church of Christ,’ that title did not distinguish the restored gospel from a host of Protestant sects.”²⁶

24. “Minutes, 3 May 1834,” in *Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 44, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-3-may-1834/1>.

25. “Minutes, 3 May 1834,” 43. Church historians also indicate the name change “may have occurred to avoid confusion with Alexander Campbell’s restorationist movement, which was often referred to as the Disciples of Christ or the Church of Christ.”

26. Anderson, “I Have a Question,” 13. See also “Name of the Church,” Church History Topics. For additional commentary on other faiths using the name of

(2) restore the notion of “saints” being followers of Christ.

Oliver Cowdery editorialized in June 1834, just one month after the name change, that the new name was also “meant to represent the people of God, either those immediately dwelling with him in glory, or those on earth walking according to his commandments.”²⁷ Again, Richard L. Anderson points out that since “Paul and Peter used the Greek word saint (‘a holy person’) to refer to believers in Christ, the term *Latter-Day Saints* implied that Church members were modern followers of Christ. Thus it also asserted the claim of restoration.”²⁸

Well before this major name change of the Church in 1834, the term *saints* was obviously familiar to the Prophet Joseph and his newly organized followers by way of not only biblical verses but also the twenty-nine occurrences found in the Book of Mormon. One of the earliest documents in the Joseph Smith Papers in which we observe the use of *saints* is a letter from both Joseph Smith and John Whitmer directed to the Church members in Colesville, New York, which is dated December 2, 1830. It indicates a belief in an imminent Second Coming with the statement, “Yea, even Enoch, the seventh from Adam beheld our day and rejoiced, and the prophets from that day forth have prophesied of the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and rejoiced at the day of rest of the Saints.”²⁹ This term *saints*, as well as *latter-day saints*, would gain an even greater foothold in the modern canon of revelations over the next several years.³⁰

(3) distance the Church from terms such as *Mormon* and *Mormonite*.

Sometimes it is challenging to decide whether a term is spoken out of contempt, since context, intent, and especially tone of voice have great weight. The terms *Mormon* and *Mormonite* most likely were

Christ in that era, see Charles R. Harrell, “*This Is My Doctrine*”: *The Development of Mormon Theology* (Sandy, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 47–48.

27. “The Saints.—Again,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, June 1834, 328, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP/1820-1846/id/28075>. See also “Minutes, 3 May 1834,” 43.

28. Anderson, “I Have a Question,” 13, italics in original.

29. “Letter to the Church in Colesville, 2 December 1830,” in *Documents, Volume 1*, 216, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-in-colesville-2-december-1830/7>.

30. Within the Doctrine and Covenants verses and headers, we see that the term *saints* is used two hundred times, whereas instances in the Old and New Testaments total only 172. Also, the term *latter-day saints* appears twenty-seven times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

viewed with different levels of comfort by various leaders and members of the Church, as is the case today. For example, Joseph used the terms *Mormon* and *Mormonism* occasionally, as evidenced by his reflections on July 9, 1843: “If it has been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a Mormon, I am bold to declare before heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist or a good man of any other denomination.” Later in that day’s journal entry, he states, “One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”³¹

On the other hand, some leaders were not as comfortable with the nickname, as can be inferred from Oliver Cowdery’s editorializing after the May 1834 name change, which stated that “the world, either out of contempt and ridicule, or to distinguish us from others, have been lavish in bestowing the title of ‘Mormonite.’ . . . But WE do not accept the above title. nor shall we wear it as OUR name.”³² Lest one consider that Cowdery merely considered “Mormonite” as the only derisive name of the two, we read three months later in the same paper: “Whereas the church of Christ, recently styled the church of the Latter Day Saints, contumeliously called Mormons, or Mormonites, has suffered many privations, afflictions, persecutions and losses on account of the religious belief and faith of its members.”³³

Undoubtedly, a name change alone would not necessarily dissuade critics of the Church from using derisive terms to label its followers, but the new appellation “Latter Day Saints” would definitely rise to greater public prominence. From the Joseph Smith Papers, we read, “Despite the name change, some—both within and without the church—continued to refer to the organization as the Church of Christ and its

31. “History, 1838–1856, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844],” 1666, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-e-1-1-july-1843-30-april-1844/36>. Although both terms *Mormon* and *Mormonism* have quote marks around them in the josephsmith.net rendition of these comments from the Prophet, in the original document, published by the Joseph Smith Papers (handwriting of Robert L. Campbell), there are no such marks. This, of course, only amplifies the nuance.

32. Editor of the *Star*, “The Saints,” *Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 20 (May 1834): 317, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/28070>, emphasis in original.

33. “An Appeal,” *Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 23 (August 1834): 361, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/28093>. See also *History of the Church*, 2:126; and “Style Guide—the Name of the Church.”

members as Mormonites or Mormons, but after this conference, the use of the name Church of the Latter Day Saints became increasingly prevalent.”³⁴

(4) emphasize Christ's imminent millennial return to the earth.

Considering that Sidney Rigdon was the one to make the actual motion of changing the name of the Church, his background as a former Baptist minister and follower of Alexander Campbell's movement may be worth brief commentary. Like many preachers of his era, his millennialist view of the world was shaped by biblical prophecy of the end times. In a biography of Rigdon, author Richard S. Van Wagoner writes that the “ardor of religious awakening resulting from the Reformed Baptist Movement led Rigdon and others to hope the Millennium would soon dawn.”³⁵

The May 3, 1834, conference of elders took place in the middle of preparations for the Zion's Camp march to Missouri, as members began to gather to Kirtland for the event. Joseph and Sidney spoke the next day at the Sunday services, motivating those who were leaving for the arduous trek. Van Wagoner writes that Sidney Rigdon, “in militant rhetoric, urged the men to deeds of valor” and then “announced that the prophet and high council had agreed to his suggestion to change the name of the church from ‘The Church of Christ’ to ‘The Church of the Latter-day Saints,’ emphasizing the proximity of the Millennium.”³⁶

(5) distract Church creditors and avoid potential lawsuits.

In his book *The Rise of Mormonism*, researcher and writer H. Michael Marquardt conjectures that the pressure of deep debt—acquired by the United Firm in part to fund the construction of the Kirtland Temple and Zion's Camp—could have played a role in the name change, providing a way to evade or discourage creditors. His circumstantial evidences include three primary points: (1) a new emphasis on Fayette rather than Manchester, New York, as the location of the April 6, 1830, organizational meeting of the Church; (2) an upcoming implementation (in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants) of code names to protect the identity of key leaders in the United Firm; and (3) a revelation given to Joseph just two weeks prior to the name change, in which the Lord

34. “Minutes, 3 May 1834,” 43.

35. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 51.

36. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 149.

states, “I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, that it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring affliction upon you.”³⁷

It is crucial to be aware that after articulating these arguments, Marquardt does acknowledge the “evidence is too sketchy to reach a decisive conclusion, but this is an area of research worth pursuing.”³⁸ Also, exploring these details of his conjecture reveals additional subtleties such as (1) in the same April 23, 1834, revelation that Marquardt quotes from, we read that the Lord explicitly tells Joseph, “And again, verily I say unto you concerning your debts; and it is my will that you should pay all your debts”;³⁹ and (2) the new name for the Church may have actually been used by the United Firm prior to the Rigdon proposal.⁴⁰

More than a half century after the 1834 name change to “Church of the Latter Day Saints” and less than a year before his death, the only surviving member of the Three Witnesses, David Whitmer, gave a scathing rebuke to the notion of changing the name from the original “The Church of Christ.” He reflected back on that era by stating, “We obeyed His commandment, and called it THE CHURCH OF CHRIST until 1834, when, through the influence of Sydney [*sic*] Rigdon, the name of the church was changed to ‘The Church of the Latter Day Saints,’ dropping out the name of Christ entirely, that name which we were strictly commanded to call the church by, and which Christ by His own lips makes so plain.”⁴¹ Whitmer’s comments were not made contemporaneously, reflecting a less-than-optimal objectivity and apparent bitterness after he had distanced

37. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816–1844* (Longwood, Fla.: Xulon Press, 2005), 226–28; “Revelation, 23 April 1834 [D&C 104],” in *Documents, Volume 4*, 30, accessed July 18, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-23-april-1834-dc-104/23>. See Doctrine and Covenants 104:81.

38. Marquardt, *Rise of Mormonism*, 228.

39. “Revelation, 23 April 1834 [D&C 104],” 30. See Doctrine and Covenants 104:78.

40. Historians from the Joseph Smith Papers point out that a serialized letter published in April 1834 talks about “the organization of the church of Christ, or the church of the Latter Day Saints.” “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, April 1834, 302, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/28064>. However, according to historians, it cannot be verified that this April issue was actually printed prior to the official name change made at the May 3, 1834, conference of the elders. “Minutes, 3 May 1834,” 43 n. 207.

41. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo.: n.p., 1887), 73.

himself from the Church over several decades. Also, although Whitmer's claim undoubtedly refers to the Lord's command to the Nephites, there is no extant record of a direct command from the Lord in this dispensation to adopt the name "Church of Christ."

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now known as Community of Christ, restored the words originally displayed on the entablature⁴² of the Kirtland Temple as part of a preservation project in the 1990s. The name "THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS"

(fig. 8) is clearly indicated. We also observe this same name printed on the title page of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (fig. 9).⁴³



FIGURE 8. The entablature of the Kirtland Temple. Courtesy Scott Sorensen.

(1835) Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints

An organic blending of the original 1829 name of the Church and the 1834 revised name resulted in a hybrid referenced name, the "Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints." It was never found in any revelatory text from the Prophet Joseph.⁴⁴ As mentioned previously, both names of the Church (official and referenced) are printed in the first edition of the Doctrine and

42. Barbara Walden and Lachlan MacKay, *House of the Lord: The Story of Kirtland Temple* (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2008), 37.

43. "Doctrine and Covenants, 1835" [i], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835/9>.

44. In 1838 or 1839, John Corrill recorded in his "Brief History," "In a council some three or four years ago it was agreed . . . that the church should bear the name of 'the church of Christ of Latter day Saints.'" "John Corrill, 'Brief History,' Manuscript, circa 1838–1839," accessed July 29, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/john-corrill-brief-history-manuscript-circa-1838-1839/141#facts>. It is likely that Corrill was remembering the May 1834 meeting, where the name "the Church of the Latter Day Saints" was approved.

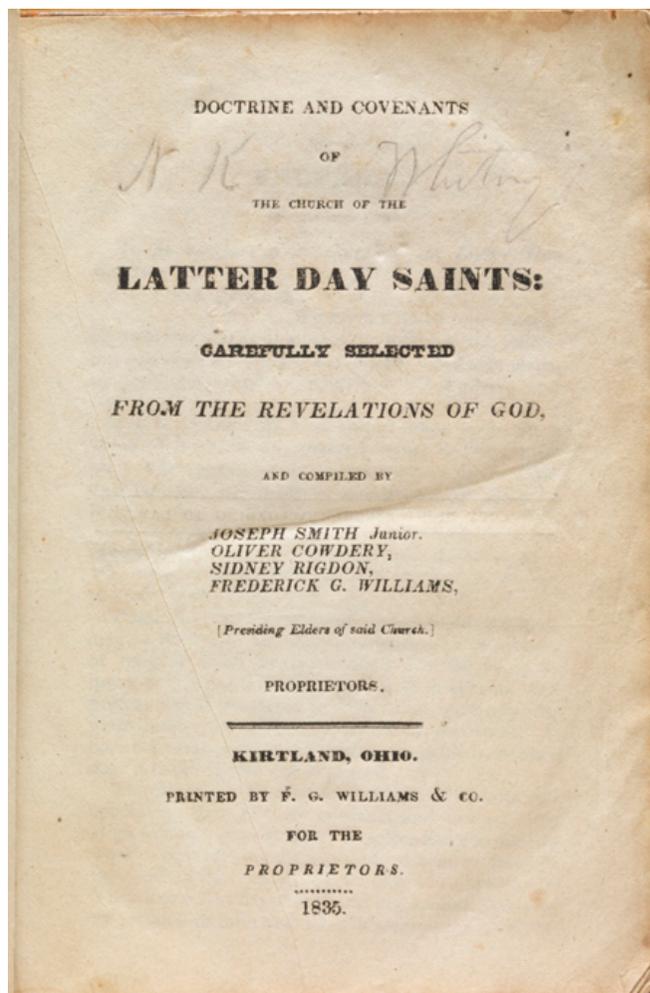


FIGURE 9. Title page of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, indicating “THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS.” Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

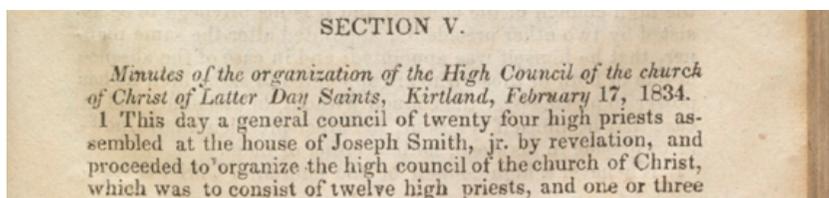


FIGURE 10. Section V headnote in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants shows the use of “the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, while three lines down in the body of the text “the Church of Christ” appears. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

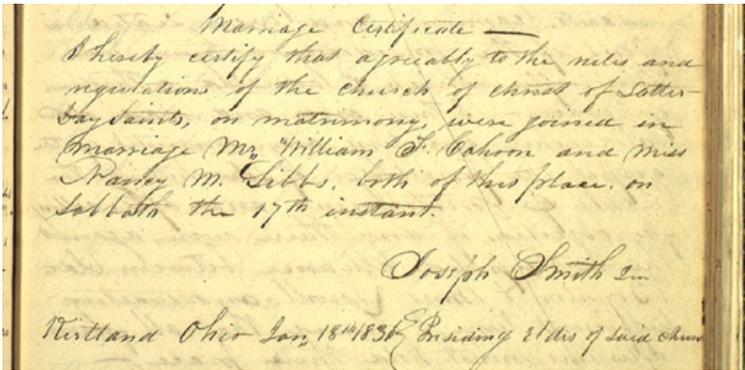


FIGURE 11. A marriage certificate dated January 18, 1836, copied in the handwriting of Warren Parrish in Kirtland, Ohio. Note “the church of christ of Latter-Day Saints.” Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Covenants (1835). That is, the title page states the 1834 name “THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS” (see fig. 9) while the Section V headnote⁴⁵ contains “the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints” and the text immediately below the headnote refers to “the church of Christ” (fig. 10).⁴⁶

Warren Parrish, acting as scribe to Joseph Smith, wrote the blended title of the Church in a copied marriage certificate (fig. 11).⁴⁷ This name served both the leadership and membership well for a few years; however, by the spring of 1838, Joseph received clarification and confirmation from the Lord regarding the official name of the Church.

(1838) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

The historical record is silent on whether the Prophet actually asked what name the Lord wanted the Church to be known by officially. However,

45. “Doctrine and Covenants, 1835,” 95, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835/103>. Section V is the “Minutes of the organization of the first high council of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 17, 1834,” and is now Doctrine and Covenants 102 in our modern edition.

46. “Doctrine and Covenants, 1835,” 95. Note that in addition to the section V header, “church of Christ of Latter Day Saints” is also found in verse 1 of section CI, “Marriage.” “Doctrine and Covenants, 1835,” 251, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835/259>.

47. “Journal, 1835–1836,” 131, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 19, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/132>.

it is clear that Joseph was grappling with disaffection throughout 1837 and early 1838 in both Missouri and Ohio. The issue of the official name of the Church may have played a role in creating tension. Historian Richard L. Bushman points out that high leaders in the Church were trying to take over the organization “under the banner of ‘the old standard.’ The title implied the dissenters held to the original restored gospel while objecting to more recent developments.” Bushman adds, “The ‘old standard’ group’s choice of the first name of the Church, ‘the Church of Christ,’ may have influenced the expansion of the Church’s name to the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints’ in April 1838.”⁴⁸ It was in this climate of opposition from within the Church and persecution from without, that Joseph was told on April 26, 1838, in Far West, Missouri, “For thus shall my Church be called in the Last days, even the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”⁴⁹

Recorder and secretary to the presidency George W. Robinson most likely copied the revelation into Joseph Smith’s “Scripitory Book” close to the time of dictation (figs. 12 and 13).⁵⁰ Six years later, and only a few months after the martyrdom of the Prophet, this official full name of the Church was printed on the title page of the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (fig. 14). The actual revelation, however, was not canonized until 1876, as section 115.⁵¹

Prior Use of the Full Name or Potential Emendations?

We read in the Joseph Smith Papers, “The [April 26, 1838] revelation sanctioned the name for the church that JS [Joseph Smith] and others had recently begun to use: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

48. Richard Lyman Bushman, with Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 340 and 627 n. 73. Also, for commentary on possible influences from Joseph’s study of the book of Daniel, see David J. Whittaker, “The Book of Daniel in Early Mormon Thought,” in *By Study and Also by Faith, Volume 1*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 173.

49. “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” in *Documents, Volume 6*, 114, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-26-april-1838-dc-115/1>. See Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.

50. See “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” 113.

51. See Robert J. Woodford, “Doctrine and Covenants Editions,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:426.

Revelation given in Far West, April 26th 1838.
 I have shown the will of God, concerning the building
 up of this place, and of the Lord's house we
 Verily thus saith the Lord unto you my servant
 Joseph Smith jr. and also my servant Sidney Rigdon,
 and also my servant Hyrum Smith, and your Coun-
 cillors who are and who shall be hereafter appointed,
 and also unto my servant Edward Partridge
 and his Councilors, and also unto my faithfull
 servants, who are of the High Council of
 my Church in Zion (for they it shall be called) and
 unto all the Elders and people of my Church of
 Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Scattered abroad

FIGURE 12. The handwriting of recorder and secretary to the presidency George W. Robin-
 son in a revelation dated April 26, 1838, which is now known as the first three verses of
 section 115 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intel-
 lectual Reserve, Inc.

89 (April 1838)
 in all the world, for they shall my Church be called
 in the last days, even the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day
 Saints, Verily I say unto you all; arise and shine forth
 that thy light may be a standard for the nations
 and that thy gathering together upon the land of Zion
 and upon her stakes may be for a defence and for
 a refuge from the storm and from wrath when
 it shall be poured out without mixture upon

FIGURE 13. More of the handwriting of Joseph Smith's personal recorder George W.
 Robinson, in a revelation dated April 26, 1838, which is now section 115, verse 3 to
 most of verse 6. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

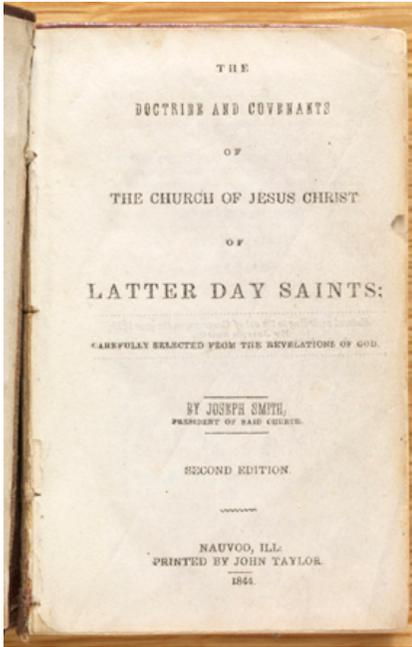


FIGURE 14. Title page of the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Saints.”⁵² Other historians, writers, and religious educators have drawn similar conclusions that the full name of the Church may have already been in use prior to the April 26 revelation in Far West.⁵³

Three documents are referenced in the Joseph Smith Papers as possible examples of the full name being used “in the early months of 1838.”⁵⁴ The first document is the minutes from a general assembly of the Church in Far West, copied by clerk Hosea Stout in Minute Book 2 and dated February 5, 1838. The name of the Church is clearly written in its full form (fig. 15). However, historians from the Joseph Smith Papers comment that the name recorded by Stout may simply have been “a combination of the first two names of the church or

may be an emendation made after the new name of the church was revealed.”⁵⁵ The biographical sketch of Stout indicates he was living in Caldwell County during this period but was not baptized a member of

52. “Journal, March–September 1838,” in *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, ed. Dean C. Jessee and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 230, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-march-september-1838/18/#historical-intro>.

53. For examples, see Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine & Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 423 and 567 n. 4; Hoyt W. Brewster Jr., *Doctrine & Covenants Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 84; and Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 620.

54. “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” 114 n. 550.

55. “Letter from Thomas B. Marsh, 15 February 1838,” in *Documents, Volume 6*, 18 n. 76. Hosea Stout’s minutes, dated February 5, 1838, can be viewed at Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/98>, accessed July 19, 2019. See also a similar conclusion in

the Church until August 24, 1838.⁵⁶ It is not clear, despite the February 5 dating, exactly when he copied these minutes into Minute Book 2.

We find a stronger case of prior use of the full name of the Church in a copy of a letter (dated March 29, 1838), which the Prophet Joseph had dictated to the presidency back in Kirtland. George W. Robinson's handwriting clearly shows "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" (fig. 16),⁵⁷ and then three pages later, signing on behalf of Joseph Smith Jr., Robinson includes "Prest of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints" (fig. 17).⁵⁸ Robinson had arrived in Far West just two weeks after Joseph's arrival (March 28, 1838) and was "immediately pressed into service. Within a day or two of arriving, he began writing."⁵⁹ Historians remind us there is not an extant original of the letter, and Robinson apparently made this transcript from a retained copy of the letter sometime in mid- or late April.⁶⁰ Therefore, the possibility of Robinson making the copy in late April leaves the door slightly open for an anachronistic emendation of the name of the Church.

The final example of the full name of the Church being used prior to the April 26 revelation is a resolution passed at the quarterly Church conference held in Far West (fig. 18).⁶¹

Considering Robinson was appointed specifically as general Church clerk and also clerk to the First Presidency on April 6,⁶² the probability that the full name of the Church was an anachronistic emendation in this document is lower than in the other examples since he most likely would have started to catch up on the backlog of documents to copy.

Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 140 n. 1.

56. See "Stout, Moses," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/hosea-stout>.

57. "Letter to the Presidency in Kirtland, 29 March 1838," in *Documents, Volume 6*, 57, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-presidency-in-kirtland-29-march-1838/4>.

58. "Letter to the Presidency in Kirtland, 29 March 1838," in *Documents, Volume 6*, 61.

59. "Journal, March–September 1838," in *Journals, Volume 1*, 229, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-march-september-1838/43#historical-intro>.

60. "Letter to the Presidency in Kirtland, 29 March 1838," 57.

61. "Resolution, circa 8 April 1838," in *Documents, Volume 6*, 75–76, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/resolution-circa-8-april-1838/1>.

62. See *History of the Church*, 3:13.

The following in the minutes of the proceedings
of a general assembly of the Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints, assembled at the following places, to
transact the business of said Church
1st. At Far West, Feb. 5th 1838: Thomas B
Marsh was chosen Moderator, and John Coleman
Clerk.

FIGURE 15. Minutes recorded by Hosea Stout indicating the full name of the Church (although dated February 5, 1838, the minutes of the meeting were copied most likely after the April 26 revelation). Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Far West March 29th A.D. 1838
To the ~~President~~ Presidency of the Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
in Kirtland

FIGURE 16. Introductory lines of a copy of the March 29, 1838, letter from Joseph Smith to the presidency in Kirtland, Ohio. George W. Robinson indicates the full name of the Church. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Very respectfully I subscribe myself your
servant in Christ our Lord & Saviour
Joseph Smith Jr
Pres. of the Church of
Jesus Christ of
Latterday Saints

FIGURE 17. Conclusion of the March 29, 1838, letter, signed by George W. Robinson on behalf of Joseph Smith Jr. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

19

Voted by a general conference of the ordained
 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
 Day Saints, assembled in Far West Mo. April
 8th 1838. That all licenses hereafter should be
 signed by one of the first Pres^{ts} of the Church
 or Pres^{ts} of the general Recorder as Clerk. and
 all others, of course will be considered fraud^{ulent} after
 this date

Far West Mo. April 8th 1838.

Joseph Smith
 Sidney Rigdon
 Hyrum Smith

(Geo. W. Robinson) Recorder General

FIGURE 18. Resolution, Far West, Missouri (about April 8, 1838). Note the full name, “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” inscribed by general recorder George W. Robinson. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

15

The Scriptory Book
 of Joseph Smith Jr.
 President of the Church of
 Jesus Christ, of Latterday Saints
 In all the World.

Far West April 12th 1838.

Kept by (Geo. W. Robinson) Recorder ~~of the Church of Jesus Christ~~

FIGURE 19. Title page of the “Scriptory Book,” in the handwriting of George W. Robinson, demonstrating the inconsistencies of naming the Church as well as the potential for emendations. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Church historians state that “Robinson probably inscribed the note shortly after the 7–8 April conference,” yet an anachronistic emendation is still possible since the “latest possible copying date was apparently 1 June 1838.”⁶³

In reality, there is only a one-word difference (the name “Jesus”) between the 1835 hybrid name “the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints” and the April 26, 1838, name revealed to Joseph—“the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” As Richard L. Anderson explains, “The final version of the Church’s name was no radical shift from the previous practice of using both ‘Christ’ and ‘Saints’ in designating the restored Church and its members.”⁶⁴

In a very visual way, the title page of the “Scriptory Book”⁶⁵ (dated April 12, 1838, by George W. Robinson) demonstrates not only this literal one-word change to the name of the Church but also the difficulty of determining emendation within these historical documents (fig. 19). The insertion of “Jesus” outside of what appears to be a fairly clear and intentional left-hand margin could indicate a later addition as Robinson was perhaps getting more accustomed to using the full name after the April 26 revelation. On the other hand, because of the same saturation level of ink, omitting “Jesus” may very well have been a simple oversight followed by a contemporaneous correction. The writing at the bottom, with a different ink saturation, hints of Robinson potentially adding the last line later. It also illustrates the challenge for clerks and secretaries of spelling the Church’s new name consistently.

Studying these primary documents for clues regarding the prior use of the Church’s name also motivates one to investigate more carefully the text that matters the most—the original April 26, 1838, revelation to Joseph. In the first two verses, we hear the Lord’s voice addressing the members of the First Presidency (Joseph, Sidney, and Hyrum), along with the bishop in Zion (Edward Partridge). It is in the next two verses where we may gain a very subtle insight. In verse 3, the Lord addresses

63. Historians also record, “The note bears the date of 6 April 1838, when a meeting was held to commemorate the anniversary of the church’s organization, to conduct church business, and to perform ordinances. However, the resolution was actually made on 8 April.” “Resolution, circa 8 April 1838,” 76.

64. Anderson, “I Have a Question,” 13.

65. “Journal, March–September 1838,” in *Journals, Volume 1*, 234, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-march-september-1838/1>.

others: “and also unto my faithfull Servants, who are of the High Council of my Church in zion (for thus it shall be called) and unto all the Elders and people of my Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Scattered abroad in all the world.” Verse 4 continues: “For thus shall my Church be called in the Last days even the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”⁶⁶

When verse 4 is read in isolation, many members of the Church get the impression that this instance is the very first time the full name of the Church was used. However, the nuanced statement in verse 3, “and also unto all the Elders and people of my Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Scattered abroad in all the world,” may suggest the Lord is actually using a name which was already in existence among his Saints. In other words, with the backdrop of verse 3, one may ask the question, “Is verse 4 a *declarative* or a *confirmative* statement from the Lord Jesus Christ, or is it both?”⁶⁷ The subtlety of verse 3, combined with the historical and documentary examples previously discussed, suggests the Lord is sanctioning the name his small group of early Latter-day Saints had already been inspired to start using while working their way through this refinement process.

(1840) Mormon Church

The origin of the commonly referenced name “Mormon Church” is difficult to pinpoint with accuracy. What might serve as a starting point is a letter between Elias Higbee and the Prophet Joseph on February 22, 1840. Higbee was a Church Historian and Recorder who traveled to Washington, D.C., seeking redress for the Saints’ grievances in Missouri. He uses the term “Mormon Church” in one of his letters to Joseph.⁶⁸

66. “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” 114.

67. At the time of writing this article, according to the LDS Scripture Citation Index (<https://scriptures.byu.edu>), forty-one different talks from general conferences cite or directly quote D&C 115:4, and only five talks cite D&C 115:3. Marion G. Romney was the only speaker to actually read verse 3 over the pulpit, which he did in both 1961 and 1979. In his April 1979 conference address, Romney states, “This name was officially confirmed by Jesus Christ himself.” Marion G. Romney, “We, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign* 9, no. 5 (May 1979): 50.

68. “Letterbook 2,” 112, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-2/117>.

A keyword search in the general conference corpus⁶⁹ reveals that one of the earliest uses of “Mormon Church” from the pulpit may have come from Brigham Young’s second counselor, Jedediah M. Grant, on March 2, 1856.⁷⁰ The use of “Mormon Church” peaked in the 1960s and 1970s with forty-seven uses in general conference in each decade and has tapered since. However, in recent years the use of “Mormon Church” has indirectly increased primarily due to the discussion of discouraging its use among our membership and striving for better alternatives.⁷¹

(1851) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The remaining adjustments to the official name of the Church were cosmetic rather than structural. After the 1844 succession crisis, the Church led by Brigham Young was the only one to adopt the British-styled spelling of “Latter-day Saints” instead of “Latter Day Saints.”⁷² This orthographical adjustment may have led some historians and religious educators to incorrectly assume that the refinement of the hyphen and the lowercasing of “day” was due to Brigham Young’s desire to differentiate the Church from other restoration groups. While the hyphen may help (even in the twenty-first century) to distinguish between the various faiths within the restoration movement,⁷³ a keyword search of the

69. See LDS General Conference Corpus, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>.

70. Jedediah M. Grant, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 3:236 (March 2, 1856).

71. A simple keyword search of “Mormon Church” in the corpus reveals, for instance, that the term was used in talks given by Gordon B. Hinckley, Russell M. Nelson, M. Russell Ballard, and Boyd K. Packer.

72. See Plewe and others, *Mapping Mormonism*, 65. Note that this is technically correct for that particular era when considering both the hyphen and the lowercase “d” of “Latter-day Saints.” However, when Joseph Smith III oversaw the organizational efforts of a small group of Saints on April 6, 1860, they adopted the title “The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” with the hyphen. The hyphen was short-lived; on October 21, 1872, church leaders in Illinois incorporated the organization with the full name “The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” Decades later, in the fall of 1994, the name was changed to “Community of Christ.” See Mark A. Scherer, “Called by a New Name’: Mission, Identity, and the Reorganized Church,” *Journal of Mormon History* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 45–52.

73. Keep in mind that currently there are a few restorationist movements that do use the hyphen and lowercase “d,” such as the “Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

hyphenated name of the Church in the Joseph Smith Papers indicates an earlier-than-expected chronology of this spelling. Numerous Church documents show the hyphen and lowercase “day” and various hybrid spellings that were in use well before the formation of other post-1844 restoration movements. For example, the very first edition of the *Millennial Star* (May 1840) includes a hyphen in the name “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints” (fig. 20).⁷⁴

In the salutation and third paragraph of the April 1849 General Epistle of the First Presidency, the name of the Church is presented as “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” rather than “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”⁷⁵ This is probably one of the earliest instances of the official use of the hyphen and lowercase “day” in a published document by Church leaders after the succession crisis. This epistle was published in May 1849 in the newspaper the *Frontier Guardian*, edited by Orson Hyde (fig. 21).⁷⁶

It is not until the legal incorporation of the Church in the February 1851 legislative session of the provisional “State of Deseret” that we see the definite article “the” as an official part of the name (fig. 22). The ordinance states that the Church was to be “incorporated, constituted, made and declared a body corporate, with perpetual succession, under the original name and style of ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.’”⁷⁷ For a demonstration of the realities of fluctuations in spelling conventions in that era, see the handwritten source document for the

74. *Millennial Star* 1, no. 1 (May 1840): 1, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=56f263fb-d74f-4db8-bb89-811260d1469e&crate=o&index=4>. I appreciate Tyson Thorpe, reference coordinator at the Church History Department, for calling this example to my attention during research.

75. For more detail on the First General Epistle, see Reid L. Neilson and Nathan N. Waite, eds., *Settling the Valley, Proclaiming the Gospel: The General Epistles of the Mormon First Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63–79.

76. “Epistle,” *Frontier Guardian* (Kanesville, Iowa), May 30, 1849, 2, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/fb7067f1-712c-4019-89a5-4f28ae83d82d/o/1>.

77. *Ordinances Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1851), 69, accessed August 27, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/ordinancespassedoodese/page/68>. A special thanks to Dr. Jedediah Rogers at the Research Center of the Utah State Historical Society and Elise Reynolds at the Church History Library for assistance locating this document.

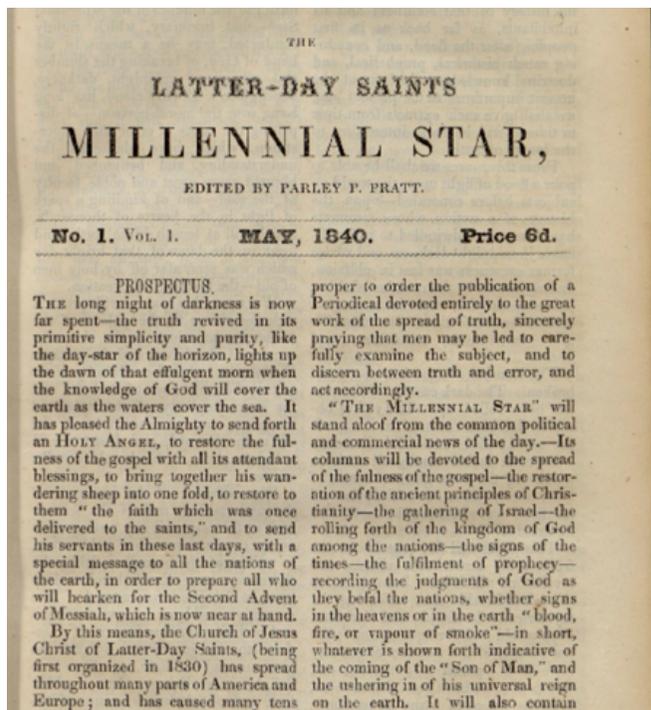


FIGURE 20. Note the use of the hyphenated “Latter-Day Saints” in the name of the newspaper and in the second paragraph (bottom-left corner) of this first edition of the *Millennial Star* (less than four years before Joseph Smith’s martyrdom and the ensuing succession crisis). Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

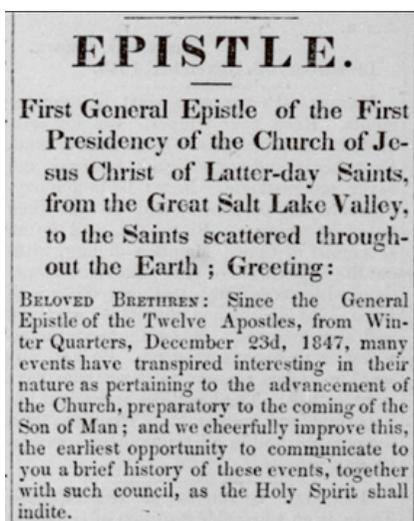


FIGURE 21. Note the hyphen and lowercase “d” in “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” appearing in the May 30, 1849, issue of the *Frontier Guardian*. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

AN ORDINANCE, incorporating the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Passed, Feb. 4, 1851.

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the General Assembly of the State of Deseret, that all that portion of the inhabitants of said State, which now are, or hereafter may become residents therein, and which are known and distinguished as "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," are hereby incorporated, constituted, made and declared a body corporate, with perpetual succession, under the original name and style of "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," as now organized, with full power and authority to sue and be sued; defend and be defended, in all courts of law or equity in this State; to establish order, and regulate worship, and hold and occupy real and personal estate, and have and use a seal, which they may alter at pleasure.

FIGURE 22. The 1851 printing of the first paragraph of section 1 of the ordinance that legally incorporated the Church in the State of Deseret. Note that the spelling and punctuation are slightly altered from the handwritten notes shown in figure 23. Courtesy archive.org.

an ordinance incorporating the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
4 Feb. 1851

1. Be it ordained by the general Assembly of the State of Deseret, that all that portion of the inhabitants of
2 said state, which now are, or hereafter may become residents therein, and which are known and
3 distinguished as "The church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," are hereby incorporated, consti-
4 tuted, made and declared a body corporate, ^{with perpetual succession} ~~and Church of Latter-day Saints~~, under the original name and style
5 of "The church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," ^{as now organized} with full power and authority to sue and be sued;
6 defend and be defended in all courts of law or equity in this state; to establish order, and
7 regulate ^{worship} ~~the same~~; and hold and occupy real and personal estate, and have a seal, ^{which} ~~may~~
8 ^{they may} alter ~~the same~~ at pleasure.

2. Be it further ordained, that said body or church, as a religious society, ^{may at a general or special conference} ~~shall~~ elect one

FIGURE 23. Original handwritten notes by Thomas Bullock, acting as clerk to Governor Brigham Young, of section 1 of the incorporation ordinance. Deseret (State) papers, 1849–1851. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

1851 ordinance of incorporation with its slightly different spelling of the name: “The church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” (fig. 23).⁷⁸

Despite the capitalization of “The” in this 1851 incorporation of the Church—stated twice in the section 1 paragraph (see fig. 22)—it remained a lowercase “the” in verse 4 of the newly canonized section 115 of the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. It was not until the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, seven decades later, that section 115, verse 4, contained the name “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” as we now recognize it.⁷⁹

(1874) Latter-day Saint Church/LDS Church

Just as the term “Mormon Church” took on its own popularity, members and nonmembers alike eventually began implementing “Latter-day Saint” or its acronym “LDS” as a descriptor in front of “Church” for an unofficial referenced name. A keyword search using the internet corpus of general conference talks⁸⁰ shows, however, that only three leaders have used the term “Latter-day Saint Church” over the pulpit in a general conference. The earliest of the three was Orson Pratt on October 11, 1874, when he stated, “Then every quorum of the Priesthood in this Latter-day Saint Church will find its place, and never until then.”⁸¹ A similar keyword search indicates a slightly more robust use of the abbreviated “LDS Church,” with twenty-three occurrences over the pulpit. The first usage was in April 1972 when Elder Milton R. Hunter remarked, “Recently in South America, a lady missionary, who impressed me greatly, told me the story of her conversion to the LDS Church and her missionary call.”⁸² More recent usage in general conferences, however, simply reflects leaders who are either counseling

78. Deseret (State) Papers, 1849–1851, Ordinances, 1850 December–1851 February, Church History Library, accessed August 21, 2019, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=682fo81b-6712-4b32-a783-0328e86ae4b5&crate=0&index=90>.

79. Heber J. Grant assigned a committee of Apostles George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, James E. Talmage, and Melvin J. Ballard to prepare a 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012) 298–99.

80. See LDS General Conference Corpus.

81. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 17:187 (October 11, 1874).

82. Milton R. Hunter, “The Miracle of Missionary Work,” *Ensign* 2, no. 7 (July 1972): 50–51.

members to consider alternative appellations or quoting someone else using this widely spread and commonly referenced name of the Church.

The Quandary of the “The”

Unless the name of the Church started at the beginning of a sentence, historical records seem to indicate the lowercase “the” was more commonly used than the capitalized “The” at the start of the name. Both Oliver Cowdery and George W. Robinson may have been ahead of their time when they inscribed the uppercase “The” (see figs. 3 and 19). The role of the definite article takes on new meaning when considering the names of other faiths that traced their origins back to the movement started by Joseph Smith. For example, with the omission of both the definite article and the hyphenated “Latter-day,” we arrive at the name “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” a restoration group headquartered in Voree, Wisconsin—informally known as the “Strangites,” since they were founded by James Strang during the succession crisis.⁸³ And if one includes “the” in front of our newly acquired website address, churchofjesuschrist.org,⁸⁴ the internet browser will load the home page of a religious group known as The Church of Jesus Christ, based in Monongahela, Pennsylvania—also informally known as the “Bickertonites,” since one of their founders was William Bickerton, a follower of Sidney Rigdon after the succession crisis.⁸⁵

For many Latter-day Saints, this definite article is a symbolic gesture of the uniqueness of their faith. President Joseph F. Smith emphatically stated in an April 1918 general conference session (later printed in the conference report as “An Authoritative Declaration”) the following preface: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is no partisan Church. It is not a sect. It is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. It is the only one today existing in the world that can and does legitimately bear the name of Jesus Christ and his divine authority.”⁸⁶

83. See <https://www.ldsstrangite.com>.

84. See “Changes to Emphasize the Correct Name of the Church of Jesus Christ,” Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 5, 2019, updated June 7, 2019, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-name-alignment>.

85. See <http://www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org>.

86. President Joseph F. Smith, “An Authoritative Declaration,” in *Eighty-Eighth Annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1918), 52, italics in original, accessed July 23, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1918a/page/52>.

Almost four decades later, President J. Reuben Clark Jr. asked about the details of the name of the Church, including the issue of the capitalization of the definite article. In response to this inquiry, Church financial secretary William F. Edwards sent him a cogent memo regarding Joseph F. Smith's statement and wrote that this authoritative declaration "may have influenced the fact that all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants since 1921 have read: '---even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.'"⁸⁷

Despite this declaration by President Smith, throughout the twentieth century, there were still inconsistencies in the capitalization of the definite article, even in official publications of the Church. For example, paying attention to the introductory page of each issue of the conference reports reveals the quandary that secretarial and publication staffs must have faced in terms of capitalization (fig. 24).⁸⁸ From the April 1966 general conference onward, we begin to see a consistent use of the uppercase "The" for the official name on the preface page, though within the body of conference talks there still may have been inconsistencies, depending on who was speaking or transcribing the talks.

Adjustment to the Church's Official Logo

A discussion of the refinements to the official name of the Church over the decades would not be complete without mentioning the December 1995 change to the logo and how it impacts name recognition. Figure 25 represents the older style (initiated in 1975), and figure 26 shows the updated version. Bruce L. Olsen, then managing director of public affairs for the Church, explained, "The logo reemphasizes the official name of the Church and the central position of the Savior in its theology. . . . The three-line design reflects the prominence of the Savior in both proportional sizing and position within the name of the Church. It not only strengthens the Church's visual identity but divides the logo

87. See Memorandum, July 19, 1957, box 272, J. Reuben Clark Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, underlining in original. I express gratitude to historian Matthew Bowman, who alerted me to the existence of this memo as well as the authoritative declaration from President Joseph F. Smith.

88. *Official Report of the One Hundred and Thirty-Fifth Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 3, accessed July 23, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/conferencereport1965a/page/n3>.

The One Hundred Thirty-fifth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, April 4, 5, and 6, 1965.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Sunday, and at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday and Tuesday. The General Priesthood Meeting was held Monday evening, April 5, at 7:00 p.m.

to these shortwave broadcasts.

For the third consecutive time, daily sessions of Sunday and Monday were broadcast early morning hours over KIRO Radio at Seattle. These broadcasts being heard by members of the Church in New Zealand, Australia, and Islands of the Pacific.

Daily sessions of the three-day Conference again were recorded and re-broadcast over KSL Radio during early morning hours to Islands of the Pacific, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico,

FIGURE 24. Note the use of both upper- and lowercase definite articles in the title of the preface page and the first paragraph of the April 1965 conference report. Courtesy archive.org.

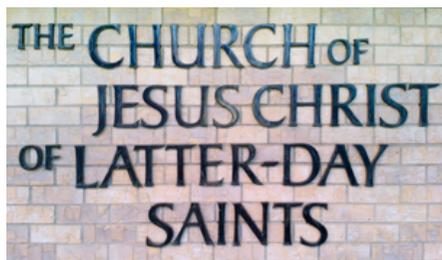


FIGURE 25. Pre-1995 Church logo, initiated in 1975. Photograph by Roger Terry.

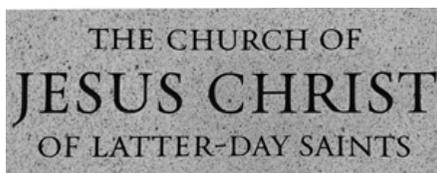


FIGURE 26. Official logo from December 1995 to the present. Photograph by Roger Terry.

into distinct elements which make it easier to read and to identify in the electronic media.”⁸⁹

A Case Study of Divine and Human Interaction

Exploring the name variations of the Church offers a panoramic view into the nuances of divine and human interaction. This exploration leads us along pathways of a living restoration, helping us to visualize and appreciate its rich history.⁹⁰ We see in the construction of the name of our faith the imprints of Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Brigham Young, Joseph F. Smith, and others. We discover that the Book of Mormon not only provided a starting point for the name of the Church (see Mosiah 18:7) but also illustrates—through the very subtitle of its name, “Another Testament of Jesus Christ”—this interconnectedness of divine and human influences.⁹¹

Amid the turbulent change of the 1830s, we witness how Joseph tried to hold together a church that for a few years had two different geographic centers, one in Ohio and one in Missouri—separated by nine hundred miles and each having its own presidency, presiding bishop, high council, and print editor. In a pragmatic way, the Lord’s April 26, 1838, revelation to the Prophet Joseph at Far West may have acted as a soothing balm for these early Latter-day Saints, even “for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm” (D&C 115:6), giving them a heavenly sanctioned name by which they could gather and unify. Mark A. Scherer, historian for the Community of Christ, put it this way: “To use the name ‘Church of Jesus Christ’ must have made the Missouri Saints jubilant since it incorporated the name they had learned in early New York. Adding ‘the Latter Day Saints’ no doubt satisfied the Kirtland Saints because it acknowledged their strong dispensationalism.”⁹²

89. “New Church Logo Announced,” *Ensign* 26, no. 10 (October 1996): 79.

90. See Richard E. Bennett and Dana M. Pike, “Start with Faith: A Conversation with Elder Steven E. Snow,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 3 (2016): 1–11.

91. This subtitle came to fruition by way of a suggestion from Heber Wolsey (director of Public Communications for the Church) to the Quorum of the Twelve and First Presidency. Hoping to help people outside our faith better understand that we are, in fact, Christians, Wolsey made the suggestion, and “it got approval in record time.” See Edward L. Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 102 n. 18. Regarding the announcement of the subtitle in general conference, see Boyd K. Packer, “Scriptures,” *Ensign* 12, no. 11 (November 1982): 53.

92. See Scherer, “Called by a New Name,” 45. Note that the Community of Christ never canonized section 115 as part of their Doctrine and Covenants.

In April 2018, with the responsibility of directing his first general conference of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson reminded us that the privilege of receiving revelation “is one of the greatest gifts of God to His children.”⁹³ He taught that personal inquiry and problem solving requires the steady and patient seeking of good information and inspiration to ultimately bring heaven’s confirmation. Later, in the fall of 2018, President Nelson instructed us about the importance of better understanding our official name and more properly using it in our conversations and publications. He noted that if “we will be patient and if we will do our part well, the Lord will lead us through this important task. After all, we know that the Lord helps those who seek to do His will, just as He helped Nephi accomplish the task of building a ship to cross the sea.”⁹⁴

In a similar fashion to how the Lord did not provide Nephi and his family a prebuilt ship for their journey, Latter-day Saints were not given a polished and official name at the outset of the Restoration. Rather, they arrived at the name “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” through a collaborative and revelatory process that continues today.

K. Shane Goodwin is a mathematics professor at Brigham Young University–Idaho. He received a bachelor’s degree from BYU–Provo, a master’s degree from the University of Oregon, and a PhD from the University of Idaho. He has a special interest in finding and discussing quantitative literacy connections within gospel and Church contexts. His wife, Gail, and three married children and their families are his main joys in life along with just a sprinkling of backpacking, peak scrambling, fly-fishing, and a Rexburg, Idaho, version of gardening. A sincere thank you is in order to family, friends, and especially colleagues at BYU–I for providing valuable feedback during the research and writing process, which started immediately following the October 2018 general conference.

93. See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* 48, no. 5 (May 2018): 94.

94. Nelson, “Correct Name of the Church,” 89.



An interpretive panel at the Boi Ogoi (also spelled Bia Ogoi) massacre site. Courtesy Darren Parry.

Voice from the Dust

A Shoshone Perspective on the Bear River Massacre

Darren Parry

Editor's Introduction

Darren Parry is the chairman of the Northwest Band Tribal Council of the Shoshone Nation. On November 8, 2018, at Brigham Young University, he presented this talk for the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies.¹

He is working to create the Boa Ogoi [Big River] Cultural Interpretive Center, an educational center that will share the story of the Bear River Massacre.² On January 29, 1863, the U.S. Army attacked the Shoshone encamped at the Bear River, near present-day Preston, Idaho, and slaughtered 250 to 500 Shoshone people, including women and children. Public reports of this massacre were officially given by the U.S. Army and by Latter-day Saint settlers, but the Shoshone survivors also kept a history.³ Parry shares that history here.

1. A video of this lecture is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg47Ph4LjsI&t=14s>.

2. For more information about the interpretive center, see "Boa Ogoi Cultural Interpretive Center," <https://boaogoi.org/>; see also "'Because It's Sacred Land': Shoshone Nation Chairman Is 'on a Mission' to Share Massacre Site with World," *Deseret News*, September 9, 2018, <https://www.deseret.com/2018/9/9/20653205/>.

3. The details of this history were told by Sagwitch's descendants, including Amy Hootchew Timbimboo and Mae Timbimboo Parry, to Scott Christensen, who published the history in his book *Sagwitch: Shoshone Chieftain, Mormon Elder, 1822–1887* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999).

The Work of Remembering

Not long after the final shot was heard echoing through the Preston valley and the final breath was taken, the work of remembering began. When the U.S. Army, under the command of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor, massacred a peaceful band of Shoshone Indians on that cold winter morning, they controlled, for a time, what was to be remembered, but not anymore. Have you ever had a memory that sneaks out of your eye and rolls down your cheek? I have these all the time when I think about the massacre at Boa Ogoi.

For thousands of years, our tribal elders would sit down with our young children and tell them stories about their people. The stories were always the same, never a word out of place. It had to be this way. It had to be accurate. Our children needed to hear it as the elders had heard it from their fathers because, as you know, nothing was ever written down. I went through this same process with my grandmother, Mae Timbimboo Parry.⁴ She was the most gentle and kind woman that I have ever known. Her black hair and dark skin with deep creases told of a life of a caring, nurturing tribal elder who truly loved her people. She would sit for hours and tell me stories such as “How the Coyote Stole Fire” or “How the Sun Got Its Name,” and then with reverence in her tone she would relate the story of the massacre at Boa Ogoi. There is an old saying that says, “When an old Indian dies, a library burns.” This was never as true as it was about my grandmother. As I grew older and attended school, I developed a great love of history, and then I suddenly realized something: none of the stories that my grandmother told me were in our history books. But how could this be? I had always believed that historical events were an absolute. Events that transpired over time had only one conclusion. As I have gotten older, I have come to realize that history is about perspective. Whose perspective? One day I read a quote attributed to Winston Churchill: history is always written by the victors. I guess that explains why Native American histories were seldom written.

Sagwitch and his band lived like his forefathers had lived for hundreds of years. They were hunters and gatherers, and they traveled with the seasons. He was born in 1822, at the beginning of the fur-trading era, which means he never knew a time in his life without the presence of

4. See Darren Parry, “Mae Timbimboo Parry, Historian and Matriarch of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone: What Is Your Story Going to Be?” *Better Days* 2020, <https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/bios/mae-timbimboo-parry/>. Mae was instrumental in having the Battle of Bear River be renamed the Bear River Massacre in government records.

the white man. The Shoshone referred to themselves as So-So-Goi, which means “people who travel on foot.” They looked upon the earth as not just a place to live but something so special and sacred that we called her Mother. She was the provider of our livelihood.

To my native people, the mountains, streams, and plains stand forever, and the seasons walk around annually. We traveled to different areas when the game was plentiful and the seeds and berries were abundant. It was a hard way of life; my people were never more than a few days away from starvation. But it was a happy life. Every member of the tribe played an important role in its survival. This family relationship was always sacred.



Mae Timbimboo Parry, tribal historian of the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation. Courtesy Darren Parry.

The Arrival of Pioneers in 1847

In the summer of 1847, Sagwitch received word that a group of white settlers was making its way through Wyoming toward the Salt Lake Valley. On July 31, 1847, Sagwitch and other men greeted Brigham Young and the first group of pioneers. Sagwitch did not meet with the prophet that day because of Young’s illness but instead met with Heber C. Kimball. At the conclusion of their meeting, Heber C. Kimball said, “The land belongs to our father in heaven, and we calculate to plow and plant it; and no man shall have the power to sell his inheritance for he can not remove it; it belongs to the Lord.”⁵ Within months, disputes arose between the pioneers and the Shoshone over the land and the payment of rent. Chief Sagwitch’s life was about to get complicated. For years, his only thoughts had been how he was going to feed his fast-growing family and how he could best take care of his small band. Now things were different.

5. Heber C. Kimball, *Journal History of the Church*, August 1, 1847, 2, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 16.

Over the next few years, as more and more Saints arrived, good land became harder to come by.⁶ In 1856, the Church sent Peter Maughan and others north to settle the Cache Valley for good. This would have a devastating effect on my people. Not long after, other Saints would arrive to that beautiful valley. In those early days, the Saints referred to Sagwitch and his band as “the friendly ones.” As more people arrived and resources started to become scarce, those early settlers began to describe us as thieves and beggars, which was probably true from their perspective. The irony in this is that the Latter-day Saint people themselves had suffered so much hate and injustice. It is hard for me to believe that they could be guilty of doing the same.

In Salt Lake City, the *Deseret News* reported, “With ordinary good luck, the volunteers will wipe them out. . . . We wish this community rid of all such parties, and if Colonel Connor can be successful in reaching that bastard class of humans, who play with the lives of the peaceable and the law-abiding citizens in this way, we shall be pleased to acknowledge our obligations.”⁷ With this development and the use of the California and Oregon trails, which also cut through the heart of Shoshone land, our people would soon have only three options: beg for food, starve, or steal. Here were two different groups of people leading two different lifestyles.

The Massacre at Boa Ogoi

In early January 1863, the Saints who had settled in Cache Valley and those using the California and Oregon trails made a request to the U.S. Army to put an end to the Indian depredations. Arrest warrants were issued for Chiefs Pocatello, Bear Hunter, and Sagwitch. Colonel Patrick Connor and his command of California volunteers from Camp Douglas in Salt Lake City were mustered into service.⁸ Porter Rockwell, a local

6. Cache Valley, which includes Cache County, Utah, and Franklin County, Idaho, was known to settlers for its rich soil and harsh winters. When the Latter-day Saint settlements in more arid places, such as Tooele County, failed, they turned to Cache Valley. Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 24–25.

7. *Deseret News*, January 28, 1863, reported in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 5:35.

8. Colonel Patrick Edward Connor commanded the 3rd California Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was displeased about “the military appointment that isolated him in the Great Basin. He yearned for the glory and adventure of

guide and Latter-day Saint, led Colonel Connor and his men just north of Logan, Utah, near Preston, Idaho, where Battle Creek meets Boa Ogoi, or what the white settlers called the Bear River. On the night of January 27, 1863, one of the elders of the tribe, named Tin Dup, foresaw the calamity which was about to take place. In a dream he saw his people being killed by pony soldiers. He told those in his tribe about his dream and told them to move out of the area. Some families believed Tin Dup's dream and moved, thus sparing their lives.

In the meantime, a white friend of the Indians from the nearby settlement of Franklin came to the camp and told them that the settlers from the Cache Valley had made plans to get rid of the Northwestern Shoshones and that they had sent an appeal to Colonel Connor to come and settle the Indian affairs once and for all.

Chief Sagwitch, being an early riser, got up as usual on the morning of January 29, 1863. He left his tepee and stood outside surveying the area around the camp. The hills to the east of the camp were covered with a steaming mist. The mist seemed to creep lower down the bluff until Chief Sagwitch realized that the mist was the horses' breath. The soldiers from Camp Douglas near Salt Lake City had arrived. The chief was not surprised. He started calling to the sleeping Indians. They quickly gathered their bows and arrows, tomahawks, and a few rifles. Some of the Indians were so excited that they gathered up whatever was in sight to fight with. Some picked up their woven willow winnow pans and baskets to use them for shields.

Chief Sagwitch shouted to his people not to shoot first. He thought that perhaps this military man was a just and wise man. He told his people to be brave and calm. Many of the Indians ran toward the river and dropped into the snow. They knew that they were not all guilty, but they had no choice but to fight for their lives if attacked. Some dropped into the children's play foxholes that had been dug along the river bank. Never did these grown men realize that they would be using the children's play foxholes to await real military soldiers. Colonel Connor and his men began to fire on the Indians. But what was an arrow compared to the muskets of the army? The Indians were slaughtered like wild rabbits. Indian men, women, children, and babies were slaughtered left and

leading charges in Virginia and proving himself on the active battlefields of the Civil War." Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 47. Two months later, Connor was advanced to the "rank of brigadier general as a reward for his leadership in the Indian slaughter." Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 59.

right. No butcher could have murdered any better. Most of the action took place along the river and among the willows.

The massacre started early in the morning, according to the Indians, and lasted for hours. The Bear River, which had been frozen solid a few moments earlier, started to flow. The Shoshone people jumped into the river and tried to escape by swimming across the river. The blazing white snow was brilliant red with blood. The willow trees that were used for protection were bent down as if in defeat. The old dry leaves which had been clinging to the willows were flying through the air like whizzing bullets.

Many of our women also jumped into the river with their babies on their backs. Most of them died. One Indian woman named Anzee-Chee was chased by the soldiers. She jumped into the river and went under an overhanging bank. By doing this she was saved. She watched the battle from her hiding place at the same time trying to nurse the shoulder and breast wounds she had received. Anzee-Chee carried the scars from her wounds for the rest of her life. She would often show them to the young Indian children at Washakie⁹ as she told of the massacre of their people. She also told of throwing her own small baby into the river, where the child drowned and floated down the river with the other dead bodies.

The Indians who were still alive called to their chief to escape so that he would be saved. Chief Sagwitch escaped with a wound in his hand, after having two horses shot from under him. Another Indian escaped by holding onto the tail of the horse Chief Sagwitch rode across the Bear River.

The cruelest killing was that of Chief Bear Hunter. Perhaps it was the cruelest death in the white-Indian struggle. Knowing that he was one of the chiefs, the soldiers shot Bear Hunter. They whipped him, kicked him, and tried several means of torture on him. Through all of this the old chief did not utter a word, as crying and carrying on was the sign of a coward. Because he would not die or cry out for mercy, the soldiers became very angry. One of the military men took his rifle, stepped to a burning campfire and heated his bayonet until it was glowing red. He then ran the burning hot metal through the chief's head from ear to ear. Chief Bear Hunter went to his maker a man of honor. He left a wife and many children behind.

9. An Indian settlement was created in 1880 at Washakie, Utah, as a place for Indians to farm and raise livestock.

The Indian camp was vanishing right before Chief Sagwitch's eyes. Later that afternoon the field of massacre was silent, except for the cries from the wounded soldiers being carried away. The Shoshone people who had escaped watched as the wagons left the camp. As they drove off, the wagon wheels made a very mournful sound as they squeaked along the snow.

By nightfall, the Indians who had escaped were cold, wet, and hungry. There was no food to be found, for the soldiers had done a good job of scattering their food on the ground and setting fire to it. All of the tepees were burnt to the ground except one. The lone standing tepee looked as if it was made of net. This was the tepee of Chief Sagwitch and his family. After the soldiers had left, Sagwitch made his way to his tepee. He opened the flap and found his wife lying there, dead. Beside her was his infant daughter, still alive. Sagwitch ordered some others who had come with him to take the baby girl from her mother, put her into her cradleboard, and hang her on a branch of a nearby tree. He hoped that a kindhearted settler from nearby Franklin would pick up the infant girl and raise her. He knew that without nourishment from her mother the baby girl would die anyway. That young girl was picked up by a family from Franklin and was raised as Jane Hull.

The surviving Indians could not believe what had just taken place. Sagwitch was a very stunned and shocked man, stricken and sad at heart. He stood idly and mournfully gazed at the scene. He was remembering that just the day before their camp had been a happy place. He remembered the many seasons the Northwestern Shoshones had spent in and around Battle Creek on the Bear River.

At this time, Chief Sagwitch realized that there were two different worlds in which people live. One group was greedy and wanted everything. The other group wanted only to live and travel around their land as they had done for centuries before. One group made their wishes and dreams come true by making themselves the conqueror, at the expense of a defenseless people who wanted only to be left alone.¹⁰

10. Sagwitch said, "The white man is roaming all over my country and killing my game. Still I make no objection to his doing so, and all I want is to be left alone, with the privilege of making a small farm for the benefit of my people, and to be allowed to live on it in peace. I have not gone into the white man's country and intruded on him, and I do not think it is fair for him to come into mine and drive me from my own lands without any cause, and I ask the government to take the matter in hand and reinstate me and mine on our own

As news of the massacre began reaching those living in Logan and Wellsville, some of the feelings from the local Saints began to emerge. Mary Ann Weston Maughan, wife of Peter Maughan, wrote that the residents of Cache Valley regarded Connor's efforts as "'an imposition of providence in their behalf' and commented that the Indians had caused so much trouble that 'patience had ceased to be a virtue.'"¹¹ Henry Ballard, bishop of a Logan ward, said, "This put a quietus upon the Indians, the Lord raised up this foe [in Colonel Connor] to punish them without us having to do it. We had bore a great deal from them and still had been feeding them, yet some of the wicked spirits amongst them would stir up trouble against us."¹² George L. Farrell, secretary of a Logan ward, recorded in the official minutes, "We, the people of Cache Valley, looked upon the movement of Colonel Connor as an intervention of the Almighty, as the Indians had been a source of great annoyance to us for a long time."¹³ And finally Bishop Peter Maughan, the Church authority in the Cache Valley, in a letter to Brigham Young dated February 4, soberly tabulated the number of Indians killed at the massacre and then added, "I feel my skirts clear of their blood. They rejected the way of life and salvation which had been pointed out to them from time to time . . . and thus have perished relying on their own strength and wisdom."¹⁴ It may seem naïve to expect the Saints in the outer reaches of this country to adhere to the policy preached by Brigham Young himself, that it is easier to feed the Indians than to fight them. So how did the people from Cache Valley come to terms with this tragic event, and how did they tell the story?

lands, that we may live there in peace and friendship with all men." Sagwitch, August 31, 1875, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 103.

11. Joel Edward Ricks, "Memories of Early Days in Logan and Cache County," March 29, 1924, Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 58.

12. Henry Ballard, "Private Journal, 1852-1904," Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 58.

13. "The Military History of Cache County," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine* 2, no. 1 (April 1882): 536-37, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 58; see also Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1889), 356.

14. Peter Maughan to Brigham Young, February 4, 1863, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832-1878, General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840-1877, CR 1234 1, Church History Library, quoted in Christensen, *Sagwitch*, 58.

Markers and Memory

Just north of Preston, Idaho, today you will find an old monument, just off Highway 91, close to the massacre site. This monument was erected in 1932 by the people of Franklin County. It was meant to tell the history of the events of that fateful day. This was a celebrated event. The whole community came together to tell their story, their histories. What the monument really accomplished was that it gave people a reason to forget. A monument strips us of our obligation to find out for ourselves what actually took place, and it tells us how the past is to be remembered.

Humans have great memories for what they want to remember. In commemorating “the battle,” you forget the uglier parts and focus on the heroism of both soldier and Saint. That is the message of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers plaque that exists there today, and that narrative now becomes the story. It is not a story about my people. It becomes a story about the brave soldiers and the Saints who took care of them. In constructing the monument, you firm up memory and you create history.

The plaque reads:

The Battle of Bear River was fought in this vicinity January 29, 1863. Col P. E. Connor, leading 300 California Volunteers from Camp Douglas, Utah, against Bannock and Shoshone Indians guilty of hostile attacks on emigrants and settlers, engaged about 500 Indians of whom 250 to 300 were killed or incapacitated, including about 90 combatant women and children. 14 soldiers were killed, 4 officers and 49 men wounded, of whom 1 officer and 7 men died later. 79 were severely frozen. Chiefs Bear Hunter, Sagwitch, and Lehi were reported killed. 175 horses and much stolen property were recovered. 70 lodges were burned. — Franklin County Chapter, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Cache Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America and Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association.

A plaque added in 1953 reads, “Pioneer Women: Attacks by the Indians on the peaceful inhabitants in this vicinity led to the final battle here January 29, 1863. The conflict occurred in deep snow and bitter cold. Scores of wounded and frozen soldiers were taken from the battlefield to the Latter Day Saint community of Franklin. Here pioneer women, trained through trials and necessity of frontier living, accepted the responsibility of caring for the wounded until they could be removed to Camp Douglas, Utah. Two Indian women and their children, found alive after the encounter, were given homes in Franklin. — Franklin County.”

Is this really what happened? The problem with this narrative for me is that it gives us only one point of view or one generation's perspective, sixty-nine years removed from the actual event. It is like a view from a window that has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of a beautiful landscape. You get to see only what they want you to see. The plaques also reinforce the view that Indians were savages and even went so far as to label our women and children as enemy combatants. Such words reinforce the view that violence on the frontier was a necessity for the survival of Latter-day Saint communities and show what the consequences were when both groups tried to share the same space.

But what if a plaque had been written from the perspective of the Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation? Would it read the same way? Maybe it would have said this: "The massacre of the Northwestern Shoshone Nation occurred in this vicinity on January 29, 1863. Colonel Patrick E. Connor and his California Volunteers from Camp Douglas, Utah, attacked a sleeping Indian village in the early morning hours of the day. The soldiers shot, raped, bludgeoned, and bayoneted several hundred men, women, and children to their death. The Indians fought back with the limited weapons available to them but the band was all but annihilated."

Which version of the Bear River Massacre is correct? The answer will lie in your perspective.

The events that took place on that cold January morning in 1863 have long been forgotten by most. Maybe guilt or remorse has silenced all of those who one day may have wanted to know the truth. I hope a new generation of people will have a desire to listen and to learn—not because we are looking to have things made right but because those who sacrificed so much have a God-given right to be heard. Their voices speak to us from the dust.

If you are there at just the right time in the evening, you can sit and hear the cries of our little ones calling for their mothers. Your senses tell you that you are among the spirits of more than four hundred children of that Great Spirit who created us all. You don't have to see things as they were to know that a terrible injustice had taken place. You can feel it. Someone once said, "If my pen might have the gift of tears, I would write a book and call it *The Indian*, and I would make the whole world weep." Only the most brazen soul could fail to weep when contemplating the fall of this people.



Darren Parry stands before the monument erected in 1932 at the massacre site. Courtesy Darren Parry.

The Northwest Band of Shoshone after the Massacre

For the next ten years, Sagwitch and those who had survived continued to scratch out an existence. Their way of life had been drastically altered by the coming of the pioneers.

But all of that changed in the winter of 1873. Native American leaders began to have dreams and other spiritual manifestations. One night, Chief Sagwitch was visited in a dream by three men who told him of the existence of a god who existed among the Saints. He was told that their god was the only true god, and he must send for men who would tell them what they must do. The next day, Sagwitch traveled to Ogden, Utah, to meet with his friend George Washington Hill. Hill had served a mission to the Lemhi Shoshone, in central Idaho, some seventeen years earlier and was skilled with the language. Hill told Sagwitch that there was order in the Lord's church and that he was no longer called to be a missionary. This same exchange took place for the next two days.



Sagwitch. Courtesy Darren Parry.

A week later, George Washington Hill was called to the office of Brigham Young, who told Hill that he had a great burden upon his shoulders, and it was now about to be Hill's. The prophet then called him to once again be a missionary to the Shoshone people. As Hill arrived home that evening, there sitting on his porch was Chief Sagwitch. He told the old chief that he was once again given the power to preach and that he would now come and teach them the gospel of Jesus

Christ. He told Sagwitch to give him a few weeks to get his affairs in order and he would then come. Little did they both realize that it would be much sooner than that. Just one week later, Hill, who was a night watchman at the Ogden train station, reported to work as usual. Upon arriving to work, he was notified that there would be no train from Evanston that night because of a derailment. With no work that night, he decided to hop on a freighter and head toward Corrine, Utah.

After arriving in Corrine and waiting until dawn, he headed out on foot to find Sagwitch and his band. Just outside of town, he passed a young Shoshone on horseback, who told him that he was going to town to buy some food for a big celebration. As George continued further, he passed a second brave doing the same thing. After journeying about another ten miles, he saw in the distance a man on a horse who was leading another horse. As he got closer, he could tell it was Sagwitch. As they met, Sagwitch said that he was coming to pick up his friend, who was sure to be tired. George must have looked puzzled and told Sagwitch that he had not told anyone he was coming that day. It was then that Chief Sagwitch said to his friend, “I had a dream last night, and the Great Spirit told me that you were coming today.” You see, the Great Spirit has always spoken to my people in dreams, from the time of Father Lehi and Nephi to the present day. After what Brother Hill described as the “best breakfast that a man could ever have,” he commenced with teaching them about the Creation, the stories about prophets, and a modern-day prophet the Lord had raised up in our time. The very next day, George Washington Hill baptized 102 Shoshone Indians in the Bear River near Honeyville, Utah—the same Bear River where, ten years earlier, Sagwitch had witnessed almost the entire destruction of his people.

The Northwest Band Today

Our conversion into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is now the story. It serves as a backdrop of who we are today and how that differentiates us from other tribes. Accepting an organized religion taught us principles of hard work and success. We were taught to farm, work hard, pay our taxes, and contribute to society. It made us better equipped to handle a changing world. Assimilation kept us off the government-sponsored reservations, where alcoholism, unemployment, drug abuse, and suicide run three to four times the national average. We have 559 members today. Our tribal office is located in Brigham City, Utah. We provide members with housing options, health care, and education. The vast majority of us live along the Wasatch Front.¹⁵ We are your neighbors. We are active participants in our communities.

There are twenty-eight of our children attending universities around the country this semester. We as a tribe realize that education is the key

15. The Wasatch Front extends roughly from Brigham City to Nephi, Utah, and is home to most of the population of Utah.

to our future. Our younger generations are now coming back to serve our people. Our chief financial officer, for example, has bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting and worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Boston for five years before returning home to serve his people. We have three tribal-owned companies, which help us to help our people. They also help us raise money to acquire more of the massacre site and build an interpretive center so we can protect those people who have gone before.

There is an old saying that many of you have heard: Give a man a fish, and you'll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you'll feed him for a lifetime. Sagwitch made the decision years ago to teach his people to fish.

Being a Native American, for my people, is not an entitlement program. We have chosen a different path. We as a tribe have chosen to control our own destiny and create our own histories.

We remember and honor the past because it allows us to succeed in the future. Someone once said, "Never let your past negative experiences harm your future. Your past cannot be altered, and your future doesn't deserve the punishment." We are grateful that past negative experiences didn't alter Sagwitch's future because it would have altered ours.

The most successful Native Americans today are those who can best balance *culture* and *change*. We honor our culture and honor those who have gone before. They are important to us. We honor them and their traditions, but we realize that we live in an ever-changing world, and we are preparing ourselves and our youth to change and succeed with it.

Lessons from the Massacre

The massacre at Boa Ogoi has taught me many lessons over the years.

It has taught me that bad things happen to people; how we respond to those events will determine our character and make us who we are.

It has taught me to offer unconditional forgiveness but to never forget.

It has taught me that ordinary people can effect real change. My grandmother Mae refused to accept the narrative on the plaque erected by well-meaning people in 1932, and, as a result, we now have a voice.

It has taught me that everyone has a story worthy of being told. What is your story? It is equally important.

It has taught me that as we preserve history, it is important that all views are represented and respected. The Shoshone narrative that we have today came from my grandmother, which originated from Chief

Sagwitch and his family's accounts. I am sensitive to the fact that this does not represent the families of Bear Hunter, Soquitch, Pocatello, and other Shoshone leaders. Their stories are equally important, and I am sorry that some of those stories may be lost forever.

And it has also taught me that the souls of my ancestors peer out from behind my mask of skin, and through my memories they live again. I hope we never forget where we came from.

May I close with the words of historian David Lewis, professor emeritus at Utah State University:

Ultimately the story of Bear River is their story, and in some ways we need to respect the story that they want told, as well as recognize our role in that story. History doesn't always affirm us. Sometimes history challenges us to think about an uglier past that we'd rather not have. And that's really the power and the benefit of history. It connects us to the past. It connects us to our humanity and inhumanity. And it offers us a way to move forward, especially in a circumstance like this, with the Shoshones together, moving forward in a story that connects us, not in the prettiest of ways, but to move forward to a new relationship that is a twenty-first-century relationship based on respect—respect for the truth and what happened in that past moment. That is where you get the possibility for reconciliation.¹⁶

Thank you, Redd Center, for giving my people a voice and allowing me to tell our story.

Darren Parry is the chairman of the Northwest Band Tribal Council of the Shoshone Nation. He serves on the board of directors for the American West Heritage Center in Wellsville, Utah; the Utah State Museum board; and the advisory board of the Huntsman Cancer Institute. In 2017, he received an *Esto Perpetua* Award for preservation and promotion of history in Idaho. He attended the University of Utah and Weber State College and received a bachelor's degree in secondary education with an emphasis in history.

16. David R. Lewis, interview in *Bear River*, directed by Phillip Schoen, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knXZSi5sU9E&list=FLSwsqUzRbeiKm9l2lvYbAIA&index=13>, minute 19:54.

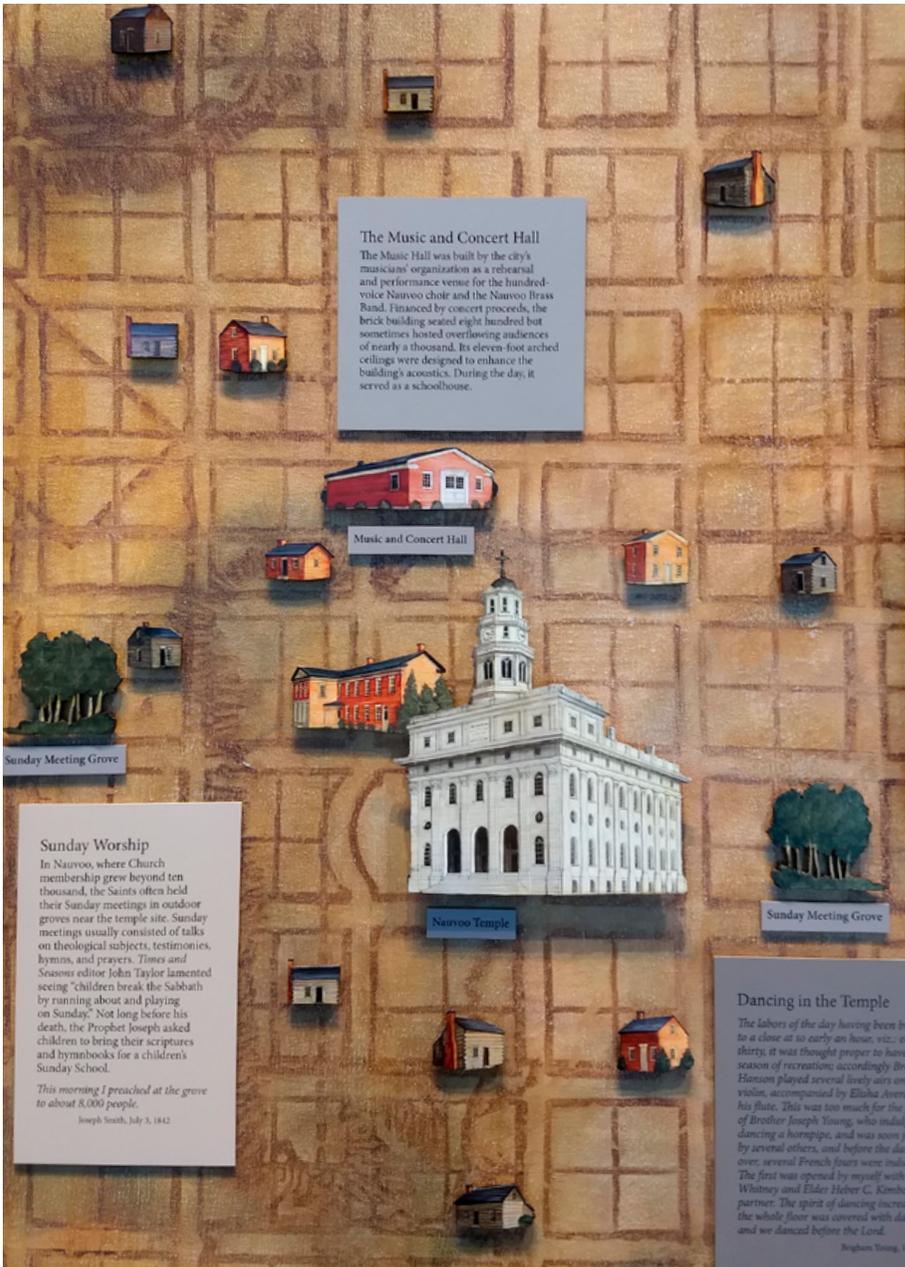


FIGURE 1. A map of Nauvoo in the 1840s shows the location of the Music and Concert Hall just north of the Nauvoo Temple. The Music Hall was thirty by fifty feet and eleven feet high. This map is found on display at the Education in Zion Gallery, Brigham Young University, and was created by students under the direction of Terry Warner. Courtesy Education in Zion Gallery, BYU.

The Nauvoo Music and Concert Hall

A Prelude to the Exodus

Darrell Babidge

On many an evening in 1845, anyone near the corner of Woodruff and Young Streets in Nauvoo, Illinois, would have heard music coming from the newly constructed Music and Concert Hall (fig. 1).¹ The following year, the music making abruptly stopped as thousands of Nauvoo residents fled from mob violence, abandoned the city, and began their journey westward to the Great Salt Lake. Today on the same corner is an empty grassy area where children often play. This article seeks to tell the history of the Nauvoo Music and Concert Hall. This hall points to the lifeblood of music and community in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints although the hall was used for only a brief time. The people of Nauvoo placed an emphasis on music that was unusual for a frontier town. They also set a standard of providing buildings for cultural refinement that continues among the Saints today.²

1. Records indicate that the hall was known variously as the Music Hall, Concert Hall, and Music and Concert Hall.

2. On appreciation for the arts among the Latter-day Saints in the 1800s, see for example Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Gideon O. Burton, “Mormons, Opera, and Mozart,” *BYU Studies* 43, no. 3 (2004): 23–29; Ronald L. Davis, *A History of Music in American Life, Volume 1: The Formative Years, 1620–1865* (Malabar, Fla.: Robert Krieger Publishing, 1982), 240. Compare the absence of music halls in the description of American frontier towns as noted in Lewis Ather-ton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 28–30.

Darrell Babidge

When I was a master's student at BYU, I enjoyed the classes I took as a music major, but what really grabbed my attention were the Church history classes I elected to take. My interest in Church history grew from that moment on, and when I joined the faculty in the School of Music at BYU a few years later, I was drawn to find a research project to align with my love of music and Church history. It didn't take me long. I kept coming across



brief journal entries about a music or concert hall in Nauvoo. This music hall was not the same building as the Masonic Hall (later known as the Cultural Hall), and so my curiosity got the better of me. This was a specifically designated building for music making, and I was compelled to find out more.

I traveled to Nauvoo to do some research. I went to the Visitors' Center, looking for the miniature building of the concert hall on the dais map, knowing it would be a block north of the temple. To my amazement there was no indication of it ever being there. This then became my quest: to put this wonderful concertizing hall back "on the map."

That Joseph Smith chose an elevated plot of land a block north of the temple for the use of vocal and instrumental music intrigued me. I would like to think that his vision of this building, which he never saw completed, was a pinnacle tribute to his love of music.

Joseph Smith's Vision for a Music Hall

Wednesday, April 19, 1843, was a busy day for the Prophet Joseph Smith. He attended court hearings for most of the day and then met with several members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the Red Brick Store on Water Street. Specific assignments to quorum members focusing on the construction of the temple and the Nauvoo House were carefully orchestrated. There had been enough on his mind that day, but there was one more item of business to be completed. In the evening, he made his way to Woodruff and Young Streets, one block north of the temple, and designated “lot 4, block 6,” for a music hall.³ Finding a place dedicated to concertizing, it seems, was a high priority for the Prophet. His vision for the city included other buildings such as the Seventies Hall and the Masonic Hall designed for use by specific groups, but the Music Hall was dedicated to musical performances.⁴ That he designated a building for the celebration of music to be so near to the temple gave the Music Hall an elevated status. The temple was being built on the bluff, and the Seventies Hall and Masonic Hall were downhill in the lower part of the city. Joseph's vision of a hall for musical performances and its lofty position of accompanying the temple site was high praise indeed for the arts and for community gathering. Joseph also desired a hall that would seat more people than the Seventies Hall or Masonic Hall could.⁵

Little if any work on the project was undertaken in 1843, and, sadly, Joseph died before the Music Hall was constructed. But four months after his martyrdom in June 1844, his desire for music to resound from a designated edifice at last began to be realized. By October 1844,

3. “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” 1540, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed May 15, 2019, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/183>.

4. All of these halls were multi-use buildings and were used for meetings, musical events, socials, and private events, as well as their specified purpose.

5. The Music Hall was the largest public gathering place in the community. Brigham Young stated, “Masonic hall will hold 300. Music Hall 500 and 70s Hall about 400 also the academy which is not yet finished.” Brigham Young, Minutes, December 9, 1845, Brigham Young Collection, 1840–1846, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. See also Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 192; Hosea Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, MSS 7418, 34, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

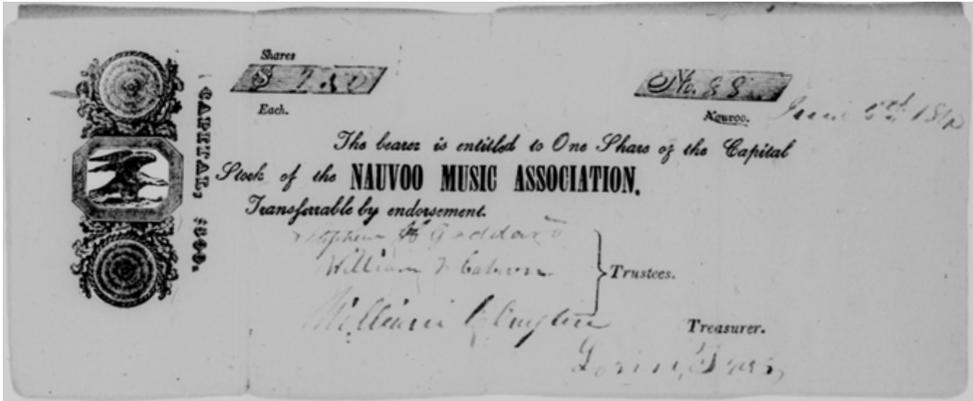


FIGURE 2. William W. Riley bought at least three shares issued by the Nauvoo Music Association. This share states: Capital \$500. Shares \$2.50 Each. No. 88 Nauvoo June 5th 1843 The bearer is entitled to One Share of the Capital Stock of the Nauvoo Music Association. Transferrable by endorsement. Stephen H. Goddard, William F. Cahoon, William Clayton, Trustees. Treasurer Lorin Farr. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

construction of the hall was under way, despite the uncertain future of the Saints in this city. On October 30, the *Nauvoo Neighbor* published a letter extolling the urgency and pride that one should take in completing an edifice of this importance and asking residents to contribute to the construction cost by buying shares⁶ (fig. 2):

Our citizens cannot sufficiently appreciate the effects that [we] are now making to finish one of the finest monuments of our city. Our choir numbering over one hundred members, whose zeal can only be made manifest by the difficult circumstances under which they are laboring, by singing in the open air and that too frequently in windy weather; that we have an imperfect idea of the thrilling delight such a body of music placed under different circumstances would produce. But Mr. Editor, taking it as it is, I would ask where are we to go for music, if we do not find it in Nauvoo? I will boldly answer no where. . . .

I am informed that the shares in the Concert Hall are not all at present taken up, something considerable yet remains to be done to complete that Hall. I would say let still a more glorious spirit of enterprise be made in finishing of that building. . . . A poor man can put five

6. These shares were issued by June 1843 (or perhaps earlier) and continued to be issued until at least January 1845. The funds may have been used to pay expenses of the Nauvoo Music Association in addition to the construction of the Music Hall.

dollars in that Hall, without grumbling, aye, and pay for it too as well as the rich man; because his hands are his fortune. . . .

I will close this epistle by urging the necessity of immediately finishing the hall, because [it is being] built for the most benevolent purpose. Our places of worship are as yet few and small. I am informed that the Concert Hall will be used for preaching during the winter. Get this Hall completed so that rising generations in coming time will look upon you as the founders of the greatest city in the west, and the greatest benefactors of the age in which you lived.⁷

The hall was to become the hub of all musical activity in Nauvoo, and it was to be competitive with other music halls in the nation. An acoustically engineered music hall was to be an admirable prospect indeed, and it was fitting since Nauvoo's population was larger than Chicago's and there was an ever-increasing influx of converts with musical talent. The Saints recognized that they might have to leave their city but continued to build despite that fear. The Music Hall was to be the oasis of Nauvoo's cultural entertainment, whereas the temple would be Nauvoo's spiritual oasis. Sadly, both were utilized by the Saints for a very short time.

Funding and Using the Unfinished Hall

Raising funds was imperative for this realization, and so finding money for the building was an ongoing crusade for the Nauvoo Music Association, which sold capital stock at \$2.50 a share.⁸ It would eventually cost nearly one thousand dollars to complete the hall.⁹ Building the Music Hall was a lower priority than building the temple, which for the Saints was the ultimate goal of their spiritual fulfillment; the font and some rooms of the temple were completed in the fall of 1844. Money for the Music Hall was eventually raised despite general poverty among the Saints. Along with monetary donations, Saints sacrificed their time to erect the Music Hall, though not as much as was sacrificed for the temple.

With the winter of 1844 setting in, the unfinished Music Hall soon became a place used not only for musical events, but for education and gospel preaching. The new hall was now to be used as a school,

7. "Nauvoo Music and Concert Hall," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 30, 1844, 2.

8. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 59.

9. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 7:363–64.



FIGURE 3. The home of Howard Coray in Nauvoo in 1844. Photo taken in 1890. Coray's small home was not a suitable site for the school he desired. Courtesy Historic Sites, Church History Department. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

among other things, and what greater place than under the shadow of the temple, the House of the Lord. Howard Coray (fig. 3), who was at one time a secretary to the Prophet Joseph, rented the unfinished hall in the fall of 1844. He wrote that he procured "the Music Hall for a school room; it was large enough to accommodate 150 students; and I succeeded in filling the room, or nearly so; in running the school I had my wife's assistance."¹⁰ How the building was utilized for the school is difficult to tell, since the Music Hall would eventually accommodate an audience over four times that size. It seems that construction was still under way during the late months of 1844, but there must have been some consternation over having a hundred young students running around the unfinished hall.

In December, although the dedication of the hall was a few months away, the building was taking shape, and rehearsals for upcoming events were already being held there. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Newell K. Whitney visited the hall a week before Christmas, attending

10. Howard Coray, *Journal of Howard Coray*, typescript produced at Brigham Young University Library, 1961, 19, Perry Special Collections.

“the practice of music at the Concert Hall” in the evening.¹¹

As the New Year began, more meetings were being held in the hall. Brigham Young and Newell K. Whitney met there with members of the Aaronic Priesthood on Friday, January 10, 1845. Newell “recommended that the bishops establish in their respective wards the manufacturing of palm leaf and straw hats, willow baskets and other business that children are capable of learning, that they may be raised to industrious habit.”¹²

On January 24, Brigham Young’s recorder noted, “The plasterers finished plastering the Concert Hall. This building is thirty feet by fifty and eleven feet high. The ceiling is arched and has sounding jars. It has been built amidst difficulty and discouragement in consequence of poverty, and has cost nearly one thousand dollars: much of the burden has laid on the Trustees, Stephen H. Goddard, Wm. F. Cahoon, and Wm. Clayton.”¹³ Traditionally, sounding jars were cylinders embedded into the walls to enhance the acoustics of a room by amplifying and reverberating sounds (fig. 4). This was a feature that rivaled any building in Illinois at that time; speakers and musicians alike certainly benefitted from the acoustics provided by the sounding jars.¹⁴



FIGURE 4. Sounding jars such as this one in the wall of the Chartreuse-Notre-Dame-du-Val-du-Bénédiction, in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, France (fourteenth century), were used to enhance acoustics in buildings from the classical era to the nineteenth century.

11. *History of the Church*, 7:327. Such an event is not mentioned in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

12. Brigham Young, Journals, January 10, 1845, CR 1234 1, box 71, folder 2, Church History Library; *History of the Church*, 7:351.

13. *History of the Church*, 7:363–64. William Pitt and John Pack were also on the committee. “Grand Concert,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, February 26, 1845, 3.

14. Sounding jars were used in ancient Greece and Rome and into the medieval era and were “espoused again in the 19th century in attempts to improve the acoustics of large concert and assembly halls.” Robert G. Arns and Bret E. Crawford, “Resonant Cavities in the History of Architectural Acoustics,” *Technology and Culture* 36, no. 1 (January 1995): 105.

There were at least two other meetings held during these weeks before the dedication: Heber C. Kimball spoke on “increase and expansion,” Orson Pratt “advanced an idea pertaining to the magnitude of the planetary system,” and Heber Kimball and Patriarch John Smith preached that if the Saints would adhere to counsel, they “should grow right into the Millennium.”¹⁵ The Music Hall also opened up for a city election as well as a funeral service.¹⁶

Dedication of the Music Hall, March 3–5, 1845

The dedication of the Music Hall was finally announced in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* on February 26, 1845: “Grand Concert. Of Vocal and Instrumental Music. The Nauvoo Choir and Band, propose giving a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music in the ‘Nauvoo Concert Hall’ as a dedication of said Hall, to take place on Monday and Tuesday evenings the 3d and 4th of March, and longer if necessary. The doors will be opened at 6 o’clock, and the performance to commence at half past six precisely.” Although the concerts were free, patrons were encouraged to make a liberal donation. The money was to cover the cost of lighting the hall and “to purchase some other articles necessary to finish the Hall in good style,”¹⁷ for the Saints wanted the hall to be of superior quality. The anticipation that a third performance might be needed to fill the demand was correct: a concert was added on March 5, and even then people were turned away.¹⁸

On Monday, March 3, the Music Hall opened its doors for the first time as the official hall for musical concertizing. The dedicatory concert began at 6:30 p.m. There were ten selections by the choir, seven selections by the band, a solo by celebrated singer John Kay (fig. 5), and a string trio. The choir consisted of twenty-seven female and eighteen male singers. Of significance were two new musical pieces that were premiered at these concerts. John Taylor had written a song called “The Seer” about his martyred friend and prophet, and Parley P. Pratt had

15. *History of the Church*, 7:352, 365; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “‘All Things Move in Order in the City’: The Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 301.

16. Heber Chase Kimball, Diaries, photocopies, February 3, 1845, MSS SC 1859, Perry Special Collections; Stanley B. Kimball, *On the Potter’s Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 95.

17. “Grand Concert,” 3.

18. “Elder Kimball’s Remarks,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 7, 1845, 2.

also written a dedicatory hymn called “Sacred to Truth This Hall Shall Be,” which was performed by the band and choir at the beginning of each dedicatory concert.¹⁹

Truth is our theme, our joy, our song,
How sweet its numbers flow;
All music’s charms to Truth belong,
To Truth ourselves we owe.

’Twas Truth that brought us from afar,
’Twas Truth that placed us here;
Union and Truth without a jar
Can halls and temples rear.

’Twas Truth first formed our band and choir,
On Zion’s western plains;
’Twas Truth that tuned our earliest lyre
In sweet, harmonious strains.

Sacred to Truth this Hall shall be,
While earth and time remains;
Where the Band and Choir in harmony
Shall swell their sweetest strains.

By Truth our union is complete,
Our songs in concert rise;
And by the power of Truth we’ll meet
To sing amid the skies.

Hosannah to the Prince of Peace!
His Truth has made us free;
All hail the day of full release—
The earth’s glad Jubilee!²⁰

The programs also included “Lamentation of Zion,” by William Clayton, sung by John Kay and Susan Divine; a glee sung by William Cahoon “and lady and Mrs. Bayles”; and “Maid of Judah.”²¹ Zina D. H. Jacobs attended on March 4 and noted that the concert was “wonderful to tell.”²²

19. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 59–60.

20. “Hymn for the Dedication of the Nauvoo Concert Hall,” *Contributor*, March 1880, 137; see also William E. Purdy, “They Marched Their Way West: The Nauvoo Brass Band,” *Ensign* 10 (July 1980): 21.

21. L. O. L., “The Concert: ‘Music Hath Charms,’” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, March 12, 1845, 2.

22. Beecher, “Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs,” 305.

On Wednesday, Heber C. Kimball gave a sermon about music and the building up of Nauvoo:

Brethren and Sisters—Agreeable to Br. Goddard’s request, I arise to address you for a short time. I hope the congregation will be as still as their crowded situation will allow. . . .

I am an admirer of music. I am fond of variety, and when I say this I consider that I am not, in the least, stepping aside from the laws and character of the Creator. Look over this vast congregation and you will be convinced that God is a God of variety. Here are near a thousand persons before me, and my eyes do not rest upon any two persons who are alike in features, or the lineaments of countenance; . . . Here are many different kinds of instruments, and a great number of tunes can be played, and a variety of sounds may be sounded from a variety of strings on an instrument (for instance the piano,) whereby music may be varied to suit the different tastes and feelings of the mind, and thus can a sameness or monotony be avoided, and different interest be excited.

There is an order in the kingdom of God; there is an order in the creations of God; there is an order in music, and there is an order and law adapted to the government, regulation, and creation of all things.²³

Heber C. Kimball, although waxing lyrical, seemed to have been stirred by the evening’s music.

A review by Lyman Littlefield of the third and final night of these concerts adds information on the structure of the building and gives us an idea of the proceedings of the evening:

The late Concerts, which came off at the new Music Hall, in this place, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights of last week, was attended with great interest on each evening. The Music Hall is a large and commodious brick building, suitable to convene some seven or eight hundred persons. It is finished at the north end with a raised floor or platform, furnished with seats and desks for the accommodation of singers and musicians.

On Wednesday evening I was in attendance to see what *music there was in Nauvoo*. At sun-down the house was filled beyond convenience, and it was found impossible for more to enter. At dusk the house was lighted with three chandeliers, which spread an ample light over the vast assembly disclosing hundreds of happy and smiling faces exhibiting the beautiful and intelligent faces of Nauvoo.

23. “Elder Kimball’s Remarks,” 2.

The choir consisted of twenty-seven female singers, and eighteen gentlemen. There were twelve of the band present.²⁴

Heber C. Kimball was voice for the dedicatory prayer after the band had performed, and the choir sang a piece called "Strike the Cymbal." What followed was a four-and-a-half-hour concert of music and addresses delivered by Brigham Young and Kimball.

Performer John Kay (fig. 5) was a convert from England with a fine baritone voice. He worked in iron and brass and was also a policeman in Nauvoo; he had a large personality and cheerful disposition. Joseph had often asked John to sing as entertainment for visitors who came to Nauvoo.

Littlefield wrote of his performance at the inaugural concert, "Mr. Kay as a singer, would do credit to any Eastern concert. His voice is full, soft, and well cultivated, and he varies it with harmony and skill."²⁵ William Pitt, another English convert, with his accomplished band of instrumentalists, played seven selections, and the choir sang ten selections. Of the choir, Littlefield wrote, "The room was filled with intense and burning melody. The harmony of so many cultivated voices, all seemingly tuned to the high aspirations of sublimity, at once captivated the musical mind, and filled the ear with the refined tones of modulated music."²⁶ Heber C. Kimball's address on this final night of concerts stirred the audience with a sermon on the divine order of music, to which he concluded, "This is the third night that this hall has been filled to overflowing, and you may continue these concerts for thirteen or twenty nights to come and the same interest will be excited, and the hall will be as crowded every night, with a new congregation, as it is now."²⁷

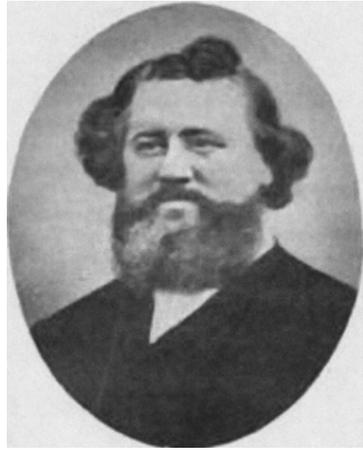


FIGURE 5. John Moburn Kay (1817–1864) was a celebrated singer in Nauvoo and Utah.

24. L. O. L., "The Concert: 'Music Hath Charms,'" 2; italics in original.

25. L. O. L., "The Concert: 'Music Hath Charms,'" 2.

26. L. O. L., "The Concert: 'Music Hath Charms,'" 3.

27. "Elder Kimball's Remarks," 2.

Of anecdotal interest is an article written in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* a few weeks later, where a disgruntled reviewer addressed the discomfort of sitting in an unventilated hall:

If public speakers do not wish to injure their lungs, they should be cautious about speaking in unventilated rooms or halls.

When the Music hall was dedicated, why did brother Goddard and many others say on the third evening that the music and singing was better than it had been the two previous evenings? The reasons are obvious; on that evening the upper part of the windows were taken out, which supplied the musicians and singers with pure air.

The windows to the Masonic, Seventies, and Music halls, should be so fixed that they can be dropped down from the top from four to eight inches, which should always be done, when they are filled with a congregation, though the weather might be as cold as Greenland. I hope those who have the care of these buildings, if they regard the health of this people, will immediately fix them so they can be properly ventilated.²⁸

The complaint seems somewhat pedantic, but it helps us get an idea of the setting of the concerts.

Continued Musical Events and Meetings, 1845

The following Saturday no music was performed, but a ladies' meeting was held.²⁹ The next Monday there was a choir rehearsal at which Orson Spencer was asked by the choir director, Stephen H. Goddard, to speak about the education and edification of music. Some of the Apostles were also to speak but apparently did not turn up.³⁰ In mid-March there seems to have been a disturbance among the choir members because Heber C. Kimball met with them for two nights in a row—the second night being accompanied by Brigham Young as backup.³¹ There is no indication of what the dispute was about, but Goddard, it seems, wanted to make sure there was harmony in the soul as well as from the voice. The Apostles also held a meeting there to ordain bishops for “a Bishop

28. J. H., “On the Laws of Nature,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 23, 1845, 1.

29. Charles C. Rich, Journal, March 8, 1845, *Charles C. Rich DVD Library* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and BYU Studies, 2005): “Saturday 8th. Attended a Ladies meeting at the Music Hall in the forenoon and the High Council in the afternoon.”

30. “Remarks of Elder Orson Spencer, on Monday Evening, the 10th Ult.,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 7, 1845, 3.

31. Kimball, Diaries, March 17, 1845; Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, 98.

**GRAND
CONCERT.**

The inhabitants of Nauvoo and its vicinity, are respectfully informed that a Grand Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, will be held at the

HALL

In this city, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, APRIL 7, 8, & 9, 1845, at 6 o'clock, p. m., as follows:

PROGRAMME.

Monday Evening. PART 1.

- 1 Overture. Mrs. Colson, Mrs. Taylor, Messrs. Park and Colson.
- 2 Anthem—"Great Lamentation," Miss Devine and Mr. Kay.
- 3 Song—"Glorious Songs," Mrs. Devine, Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 4 Glee—"The Married Band," Mrs. Park, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 5 Glee—"Society of Liberty," Mrs. Kay.
- 6 Solo—"Pain," Mr. W. Pitt.
- 7 Grand March. Band.
- 8 Glee—"Hail Pleading Moan," Mrs. Pitt, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 9 Glee—"The Stars," Mrs. Kay, Mrs. Colson, Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 10 Flute—"God save the land," Choir and Band.

PART SECOND.

- 1 Overture. By the Band.
- 2 Glee—"Pleasant Breeze," Mrs. Bayle, Mrs. Colson, Messrs. Park, and Colson.
- 3 Song—"I'll Adore," Mrs. Devine, Messrs. Kay, and Park.
- 4 Anthem—"Old Time," Mrs. Pitt, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 5 Glee—"The Pilgrimage," Mrs. W. Pitt.
- 6 Solo—"Pain," Band.
- 7 Grand March. Band.
- 8 Song—"The Lady's Darling," Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 9 Anthem—"Catholic Prayer," Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 10 Song—"Presidential Extraneous," Mr. Kay.
- 11 Grand March. Band.

TUESDAY EVENING. PART 1.

- 1 Overture. Band.
- 2 Glee—"Hail Joseph Smith," Mrs. Pitt, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 3 Song—"I'll Adore a Man that never lov'd," Mr. Kay.
- 4 Glee—"Fragrant Broom Sheds," Mrs. Devine, Messrs. Kay, and Colson.
- 5 Song—"Glorious Time," Mrs. Colson.
- 6 Solo—"Pain," Band.
- 7 Grand March. Mrs. Devine, Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 8 Song—"O Adam," Choir and Band.
- 9 Flute—"God save the land,"

PART 2.

- 1 Overture. Band.
- 2 Glee—"Pleasant Breeze," Mrs. Bayle, Mrs. Colson, Messrs. Park and Colson.
- 3 Glee—"Hark to the Lark," Mrs. Pitt, Mrs. Colson, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 4 Anthem—"Hark the Pilgrimage," Messrs. Park, Colson, and Colson.
- 5 Solo—"Pain," Mr. W. Pitt.
- 6 Grand March. Band.
- 7 Song—"The Lady's Darling," Mrs. Colson.
- 8 Anthem—"Catholic Prayer," Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 9 Grand March. Mr. Kay.
- 10 Song—"For a Gallant Soldier," Band.
- 11 Grand March. Band.

WEDNESDAY EVENING. PART FIRST.

- 1 Overture. Band.
- 2 Glee—"Hail Joseph Smith," Mrs. Pitt, Miss Devine, and Mr. Kay.
- 3 Song—"I'll Adore a Man that never lov'd," Mrs. Colson, Mrs. Bayle, Messrs. Park and Colson.
- 4 Glee—"The Married Band," Mrs. Park, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 5 Glee—"Society of Liberty," W. Pitt.
- 6 Solo—"Pain," Band.
- 7 Grand March. J. Kay.
- 8 Song—"Hail of Jubah," Mrs. Devine, Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 9 Song—"O Adam," Mrs. Kay, Mrs. Colson, Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 10 Glee. Choir and Band.
- 11 Flute—"God save the land,"

Part 2.

- 1 Overture. By the Band.
- 2 Glee—"Pleasant Breeze," Mrs. Bayle, Mrs. Colson, Miss Devine, and Mr. Colson.
- 3 Song—"The stars of Liberty," J. Kay.
- 4 Anthem—"Society of Liberty," Mrs. Devine and Mrs. Pitt.
- 5 Glee—"The Pilgrimage," Messrs. Park, Colson, and Colson.
- 6 Solo—"Pain," W. Pitt.
- 7 Grand March. Band.
- 8 Song—"The Lady's Darling," Mrs. Devine and J. Kay.
- 9 Grand March. J. Kay.
- 10 Anthem—"Catholic Prayer," Messrs. Kay and Colson.
- 11 Anthem—"Presidential Extraneous," J. Kay.
- 12 Grand March. Band.

W. PITT, Superintendent of the Orchestra—Violins, Messrs. Pitt, Colson, and Hutchinson—Violoncello, Baptiste—Clarinet, Bunting and Park—Flute, D. H. Colton, A. Colson, and Smith—Cornet, S. Hales—Trumpet, Kay and Devine—Trombone, C. S. Hales.

Doors open at 6 o'clock, p. m.; performance to commence at half past 6 o'clock. Admittance 12 1-2 cts. The proceeds to be appropriated to the Nauvoo Band.

FIGURE 6. Handbill for a concert on April 7, 8, and 9, 1845. It listed the program with performances by small groups, the Nauvoo Band, and the full choir. Courtesy Church History Library © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

and Deacons Guard,” which was made of “quorums of twelve deacons under the leadership of a bishop” to keep watch in all parts of the city.³²

Four weeks after the inaugural concert series, another series of concerts was announced. From the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, great music was promised: “There will be a three days’ concert (April 7th, 8th, and 9th) at the Music Hall. Our musicians and ‘sweet singers’ will give a specimen of ‘rich licks,’ and expect a ‘little rhino’ in return. For further particulars see hand bill, and for *reality* step in and snatch a taste beyond the reach of art.”³³

It seems that there were now high expectations for these music marathons. Examining the handbill that advertised the event (fig. 6), we can see that the program changed nightly. This was an adventurous undertaking. The choir was not so heavily featured this time, singing only once before each intermission, and accompanied by the band. Sixteen glees in total were performed throughout

32. John Lee Allaman, “Policing in Mormon Nauvoo,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 89, no. 2 (1996): 94; *History of the Church*, 7:388; Kimball, *Diaries*, April 20–21, 1845.

33. “Three Days’ Concert,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 2, 1845, 2; emphasis in original. “Rhino” is a slang term for money.

the three-day event. These were unaccompanied vocal trios or quartets that harmonized to secular songs of the day. As well as playing overtures and grand marches with his band, William Pitt also played solo numbers on the flute and violin. There were a few vocal duets and solos, John Kay taking the spotlight. Hosea Stout attended all three evenings with his wife, Louisa, and on the first night wrote, "I went with her to a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music at the Concert Hall at six o'clock P.M. We were well entertained until about 11 o'clock and came home."³⁴ The *Nauvoo Neighbor* published this review:

Our Concert: The concerts at the Music Hall, last week, were excellent. The compositions and music, most of which was the natural production of the city of JOSEPH, (for so it is the intention to call Nauvoo,) was first rate, and does great credit to the genius and talent of the saints. . . .

It was made up of the *sacred, sentimental, and comic*, and done up to the very sense of the heart.³⁵

This series of concerts set a different tone than the previous one. There were at least three more concerts later in the month (April 20, 21, and 22), although they were not advertised in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.³⁶

The hall became a hub of activity for other events throughout the next few months, as well as the continued use by the school. During the summer, the hall was also occupied from time to time by the "female association for the manufacturing of straw bonnets, hats, and straw trimmings," in fulfillment of Bishop Newell K. Whitney's admonition a few months earlier that straw hats be made.³⁷ To celebrate the Fourth of July, another concert was held, in which the proceeds went to the "old police." William Pitt's band, as well as John Kay's popular solo voice, were prominent features of the concert.³⁸

Reportedly, another grand concert of vocal and instrumental music was held in the Music Hall at which the Nauvoo choir and band performed. The choir sang "Strike the Cymbal," "Heavenly Visions,"

34. Hosea Stout, Journal and Letters 1829–1915, MSS 7418, Perry Special Collections.

35. "Our Concert," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 16, 1845, 2; italics in original.

36. Kimball Diaries, April 20–21, 1845; Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, 105–6; "Singing," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 23, 1845, 2.

37. "Notice to the Ladies," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 21, 1845, 3.

38. "Concert," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 25, 1845, 2.

“Jerusalem,” and the “Dedication Hymn.” Included were a violin trio, a grand slow march, and an overture.³⁹

The Hall Used as a Place of Preparation for the Exodus

The heat of enemy conflict against the Saints grew to a fever pitch by the fall of 1845.⁴⁰ Instead of being a place of concertizing, the hall was used as a place of refuge for Saints who had been living in the many settlements outside the city. The Seventies had used the Music Hall for meetings⁴¹ but were now forced to meet elsewhere so that the refugee Saints, along with their furniture, could be housed in the hall. Soon the hall joined the list of buildings that the Saints were hastily trying to sell. On October 31, 1845, the Twelve sent a letter to Catholic Bishop John B. Purcell in Cincinnati, Ohio, offering to sell the Music Hall with various other buildings if they wanted them.⁴² At the end of November 1845, at a Sunday meeting in the Music Hall, Thomas Bullock wrote, “The day was very cold, with thick ice on the river. At 11 a.m. the seventies met in the Concert Hall. Brigham Young met with the captains of the emigrating companies and gave them instruction to prepare themselves for the journey to the west. It was reported that 3,285 families had been organized into companies, 1,508 wagons were on hand and 1,892 wagons were being built.”⁴³ The finality of knowing that they were to abandon their beloved city and its newly constructed buildings must have been devastating to them. By mid-December there must have

39. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 80.

40. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 508–621.

41. Seventies Quorum Records Volume 1, Second Quorum Minutes, September 27, 1845, CR 499, reel 1, Seventies Quorum Records 1844–1975, Church History Library; Brigham Young Journals, January 10, 1845, CR 1234 1, box 71, folder 2, Church History Library; *History of the Church* 7:549; Greg R. Knight, ed., *Thomas Bullock Nauvoo Journal* (Orem: Grandin Press, 1994) 50, 77; Samuel H. Rogers, *Reminiscences and Journal, 1841–1886*, MS 883, reel 1, Church History Library.

42. Lisle G. Brown, “A Perfect Estoppel’: Selling the Nauvoo Temple,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (2002): 61–85; *History of the Church* 7:508–9.

43. *History of the Church*, 7:532; see also Knight, *Thomas Bullock Nauvoo Journal*; “Note of Preparation,” *Times and Seasons*, November 15, 1845, 1031.

been some respite because the Seventies resumed their meetings in the Music Hall.⁴⁴

On December 6, a meeting was held in the hall to discuss the exodus westward, and subsequent meetings were held there as Saints frantically tried to find the means to leave.⁴⁵ These meetings held by the Seventies continued until the exodus from Nauvoo.

Pitt's Nauvoo Brass Band also kept minutes of their meetings, and their records indicate that they met in the Music Hall often. A record called "A Book containing the Minutes of Joseph's City Band" existed at one point but may no longer be extant. Horace Whitney, reporting in the *Contributor*, had access to it in 1880, and what he transcribes from some of its pages reveal a few more particulars, including the last three performances that the hall hosted. The transcribed minutes report that there would be "a grand concert" at the Music Hall on January 17, 1846. Interestingly, tickets were sold to pay off a debt for instruments that the band had purchased in St. Louis.⁴⁶ The height of concern for most people at this point was to sell their homes and use all their resources to purchase necessities for the journey west, but this pressing need did not deter crowds of people from attending the concert. The band minutes offer a glowing report of the proceedings and note how the money was also used for other purposes. "The concert appears to have been a decided success; it was given three times, on the last occasion for the benefit of the Temple hands, and each evening drew a crowded house."⁴⁷ This concert series marked the end of Nauvoo's cultural spectacle at its very best, and what better way to celebrate than in the hall their beloved Joseph had planned. Although the future was precarious for everyone in attendance, this was their last chance to unify their souls in song and merriment. At each concert, twenty-four pieces were performed. The mood varied from the comical to the serious. It was a poignant moment when a vocal trio sang, "Satan, Spare the Saints," as the snow fell that final night.⁴⁸

44. *History of the Church*, 7:441; Seventies Quorum Records Volume 1, Second Quorum Minutes, September 27, 1845.

45. Nauvoo Brass Band Records, cited in Horace G. Whitney, "An Interesting Record," *Contributor* 1, no. 9 (1880): 196.

46. Later, out on the plains of Iowa, William Pitt and his band played these instruments to help unify their fellow Saints as they slowly crossed the muddy grasslands of Iowa.

47. Whitney, "Interesting Record," 197.

48. Nauvoo Brass Band Records, cited in Whitney, "Interesting Record," 196.

As the final chords were struck and final notes sung from within the Music Hall on January 19, 1846, attendees knew that they would not enjoy the luxury of listening to the Saints' musical best in the comfort of this hall anymore. The success of these music extravaganzas, which fulfilled Joseph Smith's vision for the hall, were short-lived. Within two weeks, the first group of Saints left Nauvoo. During the few short months that the hall was filled with music, it became a haven from the oppression the Saints felt.

The building continued to be used for gatherings. The 25th Quorum of the Seventies met in the Music Hall during the first few weeks of 1846, while hundreds were departing from Nauvoo daily. These gatherings included parties as well as sober meetings. On January 26, they held a feast for themselves and their wives.⁴⁹ On March 2, the Seventies met again in the hall, where it was announced that those who had not yet received their endowments would receive them in the wilderness.⁵⁰ A week later, on March 9, knowing they were meeting for the last time, the Seventies asked the Nauvoo Brass Band to play for them.⁵¹

The Abandoned Music Hall

By April 1846, the hall was on the market to be sold. In a new local weekly paper, the *Hancock Eagle*, the Music Hall was advertised for sale (fig. 7). It was eventually sold to the Methodist Episcopal Church for \$310 in February 1847.⁵² A search through extant land and property records provides no indication that the hall was still standing by the end of 1848.⁵³ It may be possible that the 1850 tornado that toppled most of the temple also damaged the Music Hall. Interestingly enough, a journal entry from George A. Smith in 1856, when he and Erastus Snow traveled through Nauvoo, mentions the Music Hall apparently still standing:

Went to Nauvoo Put up at the Mansion. . . . Elder Snow & myself Waked the Town in the Dark & mornd over the desolation of Joseph City & the hard hearted condition of his fmily Slept in Room No & Mansion,

49. Seventies Quorum Records Volume 1, Twenty-fifth Quorum Minutes, January 26, 1856, CR 499, reel 79, Seventies Quorum Records 1844–1975.

50. Seventies Quorum Records Volume 1, Twenty-fifth Quorum Minutes, January 26, 1856.

51. Seventies Quorum Records Volume 1, Twenty-fifth Quorum Minutes, March 9, 1846.

52. Land Deeds, Carthage County Hall Offices, Carthage, Illinois.

53. Archives Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

NOTICE.

 THE undersigned wish to purchase one thousand Yoke o Cattle, from four to eight years old for the removal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. A ready market will be found here for all the working Cattle and Mules that may be brought in.
BABBITT, HEYWOOD & FULLMER,
 Trustees.
 no. 2—tf.
 Nauvoo, April 10, 1846.

FOR SALE.

 THE "Masonic Hall," located on Main Street, four stories high, with one half acre of ground. Well adapted for a Seminary, &c.
BABBITT, HEYWOOD & FULLMER.
 April 10, 1846—2-tf

FOR SALE.

 A large public building, one square north of the Temple, built by the Musical Association of this city; known as "Concert Hall."
BABBITT, HEYWOOD & FULLMER
 April 10, 1846—2-tf

FOR SALE.

 THE large new Stone Building, three stories high, one square west of the Temple; known as the Arsenal.
BABBITT, HEYWOOD & FULLMER.
 April 10, 1846—2-tf

FOR SALE.

 THE large Brick buildings on the corner of Main and Kimball streets, built by James Ivins. Said buildings are new and built in the most substantial style, and will be sold low for cash.
BABBITT, HEYWOOD & FULLMFR.
 April 10, 1846—2-tf

FIGURE 7. From the *Hancock Eagle*: "For Sale. A large public building, one square north of the Temple, built by the Music Association of this city; known as 'Concert Hall.' Babbitt, Heywood, & Fullmer April 10, 1846—2-tf." From Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, 598. Used by permission.

Room Dirty, Nauvoo Look desolate the Site is vary handsome the Best Buildings are standing mostly out of Repair The Mason hall is dilapidated Seventy hall & Concert Hall Look the Worse for Wear the Mansion house was not kepe in order has not bene cleand up Lately or Repanted Since Joseph Smith Done it the old Temple Looks sorry.⁵⁴

And in a letter to T. B. H. Stenhouse, Smith wrote,

We also made a flying visit to Nauvoo or the city of Joseph. I should judge that about three fourths of the Mormon buildings had been torn down, removed, or destroyed. Many of the best buildings remaining, show clearly the effects of ten years neglect. Although most of them are inhabited, few appear to be kept in repair. . . . My mind imperceptibly drew a contrast between Nauvoo in its glory and Salt Lake City, and from looking at the Masonic Hall, Seventies and Concert Halls, and Arsenal, my conclusion was that Salt Lake City is so far ahead of Nauvoo, that the latter could be better compared with Provo, more properly in its public buildings, machinery &c; but not in population.⁵⁵

By 1976, the National Register of Historic Places listed the Concert Hall as "no longer extant."⁵⁶

54. George A. Smith, Journal, October 30, 1856, MS 1322, box 2, folder 10, George A. Smith Papers 1834–1877, Church History Library.

55. George A. Smith, "Cor[r]espondence of Hon. Geo. A. Smith," *The Mormon*, November 15, 1856, 3, <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel/sources/8736/smith-geo-a-cor-r-espondence-of-hon-geo-a-smith-the-mormon-15-nov-1856-3>.

56. National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, 3, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/f8f12647-0a4d-4a83-ae21-1do6bode1540>. The

We often recount the loss of the Saints' homes and the pinnacle of their spiritual worship, the temple they had so painstakingly built, but they had also left behind the nucleus of their musical yearnings. Fortunately, just as they could make temporary homes and perform religious rituals out on the plains, they could also create music with unified voices and instruments. The music was a lifeline for the Saints and was the something they could carry with them that could not be spoiled. This legacy has been handed down, and today we obtain the same response as we unify our voices and hearts to lift us spiritually and socially to a higher plane.

Darrell Babidge was a member of the BYU Music School faculty from 2006 to 2019 and will begin teaching voice as a faculty member at the Juilliard School in New York City in fall 2019. He will also teach at the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. He earned a bachelors in vocal performance at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, United Kingdom; a masters at Brigham Young University; and a professional degree at the Manhattan School of Music. He has performed at the Metropolitan Opera and as a soloist at Carnegie Hall and has sung throughout Europe, Asia, and America. Students he taught at BYU and privately now sing at opera houses throughout the world and record for major labels.

form notes only twelve structures in the section "Representation in Existing Surveys" in 1934, and the Music Hall was probably not among them.



Brian Kershnik and *She Will Find What Is Lost*, April 3, 2014, the day it was installed in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City. All photos courtesy Cris Baird.

She Will Find What Is Lost

Brian Kershnik's Artistic Response to the Problem of Human Suffering

Cris Baird

“I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken.” (Ezek. 34:16)

In March 2014, my wife, Janae, and I purchased Brian Kershnik's masterpiece *She Will Find What Is Lost* and immediately loaned it to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for display in the Church's Conference Center in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah.¹ In this essay, I tell the story of how we came to own the painting, what it means to us, and why I believe the painting has a spiritually important and universally applicable message.

It is rare for a painting to enter the collective artistic consciousness of the Latter-day Saint people with such speed and force as *She Will Find What Is Lost* has. In six short years, the painting has become iconic. I've lost track of how many social media posts, blog posts, and online reviews I've read where people who have seen the painting share their love and appreciation for it. There are simply too many to count. I have seen dozens of photographs of people standing in front of the painting at the Conference Center, and I've read stories of people gifting prints of the painting as a message of hope or as an expression of gratitude.² It

1. Janae and I owned the painting from March 2014 through January 1, 2018. The Church now owns the painting via a partial gift/partial sale.

2. For example, see “Conference Weekend: Personal Experiences from Members, Visitors,” *Church News*, updated April 11, 2017, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archive/2017-04-11/conference-weekend-personal-experiences-from-members-visitors-45692>; “Finding What Was Lost,” May 13, 2014, *Leaves with*

has even inspired Latter-day Saint author Terryl Givens to discuss his thoughts about the painting in a public setting on at least two occasions.³

What is it about this painting that makes it so unique? Why does this image seem to resonate on a profoundly personal level with so many people? What explains its power?

She Will Find What Is Lost is a contemporary figurative painting completed in 2013 in Brian Kershnik's characteristic method, which has been described as a "primitive-realist style."⁴ The painting depicts a woman in profile. Her head is bowed, as if she is lost in thought. There is a multitude of angels above her, some of whom are gently touching her head, neck, and shoulder. Their touch is ambiguous. She may be unaware of their presence, but she may also be quietly responding to their presence. The angels are all depicted wearing white clothes, and the background is a muted and indistinct blue-green color. The original painting is impressively large—eleven feet tall and eight feet wide—which means that the woman who is featured in the image is life-size. Because reproductions in various sizes are widely available, most viewers have seen only a reproduction, not the original painting. As of the date of this essay, the original painting has been on display at the Conference Center for over five years.⁵

Janae and I have heard several interpretations of what the painting may mean. Many people see the helpful influence of their ancestors as they engage in family history research.⁶ Some see the process of divine

Tree; You with Me (blog), <http://somethingsgotogether.blogspot.com/2014/05/finding-what-was-lost.html>.

3. Terryl Givens, "Forging the Mormon Identity," Center for Latter-day Saint Arts, July 19, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol4kE3eNUV0>; "MI Conversations #5—Brian Kershnik with Terryl Givens, 'Surprising Angels,'" Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, <https://mi.byu.edu/mic-kershnik/>.

4. Noel A. Carmack, "Mormons and American Popular Art," in *Mormons and Popular Culture: The Global Influence of an American Phenomenon*, vol. 2, ed. J. Michael Hunter (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2013), 99.

5. It is axiomatic to say that original art is best experienced in person. The reason the painting now hangs in the Conference Center is to allow more people to see it than if it were hung in our home.

6. The explanatory placard placed next to the painting when it was originally installed said, in part: "In this painting, angels descend from heaven to comfort a woman and assist her. No matter what has been lost in our lives—a loved one, the name of an ancestor during genealogical research, our health—we are not left alone, for the veil is thin and spirit world is close to us."

inspiration.⁷ The image appeared on the cover of the February 2017 *Ensign* magazine to illustrate an article about how Church members can overcome heartbreak in marriage.⁸ I have previously argued that the image is a unique artistic depiction of Latter-day Saint theology regarding the sociality that exists between the heavenly and earthly realms.⁹

Even so, the artist is reluctant to tell people exactly what the painting was intended to mean. In a blog entry published on his website, Kershnik explained:

The circumstances that drove me into this piece are, as usual, particular and personal and not necessarily needed to have a personal reaction and use for this piece yourself. I have often said that my paintings are a kind of mythological autobiography whether the subjects are men, women, animals, buildings, etc. It was not, for example, intended as a painting about being a woman, but rather a human. Humans have gender and for fairly specific, but not exclusive, reasons, I chose to paint a woman. I do believe that in art, very often that which is most personal taps into currents that are most general. In this way great art of the distant past can continue to inform and illuminate very current issues. Finding these “big subjects” involves a kind of dumb luck and often has little or nothing to do with an artist’s conscious intention.

The painting *She Will Find What Is Lost* has been used to underline and illustrate a good number of private and public experiences as well as political or social agenda. This has led to a notion of my endorsing certain views. Of course, I agree with some of these views, some of these views I am ignorant of, and others I actually disagree with. Most of the stories I hear are completely consistent with the hopes I retain for the usefulness of this picture which is an extremely and intensely personal sort of usefulness. I cannot pretend to be able to dictate how people are to feel about my work or the narratives that they will bring to it. That is in fact anathema to my understanding of how art works and should work. If I may ask it of you, I ask that you respect that my intention for this piece was to speak to the most intensely private and intimate kind of supernatural interference, influence, and assistance, whatever your particular experience. I don’t have to agree with you to

7. Claudine Bigelow, “Creativity” (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 4, 2015), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/claudine-bigelow_creativity/.

8. “Heartbreak and Hope: When a Spouse Uses Pornography,” *Ensign* 47 (February 2017): 34–39.

9. Micah Christensen, “Cris Baird on His Collection of Contemporary LDS Art,” August 29, 2017, in *Zion Art Podcast*, <https://www.zionartsociety.org/podcast/2017/8/29/cris-baird-on-his-collection-of-contemporary-lds-art>.

believe that whatever your gender, circumstance, or issue, many unseen forces are interested in you, love you, and work to influence matters for your profound benefit. Most of what we all do is resist it, misinterpret it, or mess it up, but my experience indicates that these unseen efforts persist impossibly. I thank God for that.¹⁰

Personally, I think Brian's decision to allow viewers to reach their own conclusions about the meaning of the painting is wise because it allows viewers to bring their own experiences to the painting and engage with it on their own terms.

Janae and I have visited the Conference Center to see *She Will Find What Is Lost* many times since the painting was first hung there in April 2014. We have affectionately referred to these trips as an exercise of our "visitation rights" with respect to the painting because when the painting didn't come home, it felt like a part of our family had been separated from us. When we tell the Conference Center hosts who we are and our relationship to the painting, they inevitably share some of the experiences they have had when showing *She Will Find What Is Lost* to other Conference Center visitors. This particular stop on the Conference Center tour is a highlight for many visitors.

Janae and I recall one experience in particular. In October 2014, after the painting had been in the Conference Center for about six months, we stopped by for a visit. While we were having a quiet moment enjoying the painting, a small tour group came through. Janae and I looked at each other and smiled as the group lingered for a while. After a few minutes, we introduced ourselves to them and asked what they thought about the painting. The visitors were not members of the Church. They told us they were in town for only a few days, and they were visiting the building as tourists. They began to ask questions about the painting, how we came to own it, and how it came to be on display in the Conference Center. Janae answered their questions and briefly shared our experience with the painting up to that point.

As we told the story to the visitors, we both felt that we should tell it to a wider audience and in more detail. This is our story.



10. Brian Kershnik, "A General Note about *She Will Find What Is Lost*," *Brian's Blog*, June 28, 2014, <https://www.kershnik.com/w-o-r-d-s/2017/7/7/a-general-note-about-she-will-find-what-is-lost>.

Seven months earlier, in March 2014, Janae and I were visiting Salt Lake City, and we stopped by the downtown Deseret Book flagship store. We had been collecting art by Latter-day Saint artists for several years at that point, and we loved to see the original art on display there. The limited-edition print of *She Will Find What Is Lost* was prominently positioned, and I recognized it as an image I had seen somewhere before. Struck by the beauty of the image, I called Janae over to take a look. As soon as she looked at the print, her eyes widened, and with a look of surprise on her face, she turned to me and said, “This is it—this is what I saw!”



In the summer of 1982, when Janae was only twelve years old, she was inadvertently exposed to toxic industrial solvents that had been illegally dumped near a residential area in Phoenix, Arizona. She discovered, after the fact, that those chemicals had shocked her immune system, causing her bone marrow to stop producing enough blood cells to fight infection and carry oxygen throughout her body. A year later, Janae began to experience light-headedness and was taken to see a doctor. Her doctor discovered that her blood cell counts were dangerously low and diagnosed her with a rare medical condition called aplastic anemia. The only effective treatment was a bone marrow transplant, which was a very complicated and dangerous medical procedure made even more complicated and dangerous by the fact that Janae was a young teenager and the only suitable bone marrow donor was her youngest sister, who was only nine months old at the time. Janae and her sister were rushed to Los Angeles, where she underwent the procedure at the pediatric oncology center at UCLA Medical Center. She was hospitalized for two months, and the treatment required many units of donated blood. But thanks to the skill of the many doctors and nurses who cared for her and a few miracles along the way, she survived both the illness and the radiation and chemotherapy treatment. After several years of carefully living with a compromised immune system, she was given a clean bill of health.



In November 2013, Thomas B. Griffith, a federal appellate court judge and former general counsel of BYU, stayed in our home in Arlington, Texas, for a few days. Tom and his wife, Susan, were in town so that Tom could speak at several different engagements in the local area. We were very fortunate to be able to spend some down time with the Griffiths, and we quickly discovered that we shared a deep admiration for the artwork

of several Latter-day Saint artists, including Brian Kershnik. In fact, Tom told us that he had visited Brian in his studio several months earlier when Brian was working on, but had not yet completed, *She Will Find What Is Lost*. Tom was so enchanted by the image that was still unfolding in Brian's studio that he asked for permission to take a photograph of the work in progress. Brian granted that permission. Later, when Tom was visiting us, he showed us that image on his smartphone. We enjoyed seeing the image, but it was difficult to appreciate the full glory of the painting on such a small screen, and the painting was still incomplete when Tom took the photo. I didn't think anything more of the painting until a few months later, when I noticed that reproductions of the painting were being offered for sale by Deseret Book. I assumed, wrongly, that if prints of the painting were available for purchase, the original painting must have already been purchased, and I wondered who the lucky buyer of the original painting might have been. I was disappointed that I had not been able to see the original painting before it had been purchased and presumably removed from public view.



Full-body radiation treatments can have long-term effects for girls and women. Women are born with all of the eggs they will ever produce, and radiation treatment can potentially damage the eggs. If those eggs do get damaged, the effects are not reversible. As a result, some women who have undergone radiation treatments are not able to give birth to healthy children. Before we were married, Janae and I visited a genetic specialist who informed us that if Janae were to become pregnant, it was possible, though not certain, that her eggs had been so damaged that a developing fetus would likely not be born alive. We were in love and were married knowing that we might not ever have children, yet we still hoped that it would be possible.

About six months later, Janae received an ominous letter from the American Red Cross. They notified her that one of the people who had donated blood products used in her bone marrow transplant in 1983 had been diagnosed with HIV III, a blood-borne disease for which there was no test in 1983. The Red Cross could not determine if the donor had the condition when the blood products were donated in 1983 or if the person contracted the disease later. And while HIV III is not the strain of HIV that develops into AIDS, it was still a serious medical condition. The letter from the Red Cross advised Janae to have her blood tested immediately. Though, thankfully, the test came back

negative for HIV III, the joy of that good news was short-lived. About a year into our marriage, Janae's first pregnancy spontaneously miscarried after only a few weeks. We spent the next eighteen months wondering if Janae would be able to give birth to healthy children and mentally and spiritually preparing ourselves for the possibility that she would not be able to do so. Our prayers were full of gratitude when, in November of 1991, after thirty-two hours of labor, Janae gave birth to our first child, a beautiful—and completely healthy—eight-pound baby girl.



Shortly after Janae gave birth to our fourth child in 2001, we began to wonder if her childbearing years were over. Janae has a small frame, her children had all been between seven and nine pounds at birth, and her last pregnancy was more difficult than the earlier ones. After a period of intense prayer, Janae told me she felt strongly that one more child was meant to join our family. I agreed. In August 2004, a nine-pound, fifteen-ounce healthy baby boy joined the family, but this pregnancy was to be Janae's last. Janae's internal organs had been somewhat damaged during her earlier pregnancies, and while delivering her fifth child, the earlier injuries were aggravated. Full pelvic reconstruction surgery was necessary. The lengthy surgical procedure required several pints of blood, so medical professionals drew and stored Janae's own blood in the months leading up to the surgery so they would have it on hand when needed. Janae woke up from the surgery with good news. The surgery was a success! There was, however, also some bad news. A routine blood test performed prior to the surgery revealed traces of hepatitis C in Janae's blood. Her doctors explained that hepatitis C did not have a name or testing protocol in 1983, so one of her earlier blood donors must have been infected. The disease had lain dormant in her body for over twenty years until it was finally detected in connection with her pelvic surgery. Further testing revealed that the disease had been detected before significant liver damage had occurred. Nevertheless, her blood was infected with a disease that could, over time, lead to liver cancer or liver failure. Janae had an important choice to make. She could either wait to see if the disease worsened over time, and risk liver damage in the process, or begin treatment soon in an effort to avoid permanent liver damage and live a longer, healthier life.

The most effective treatment at the time required that she take medication that was known to have the devastating side effect of inducing suicidal ideation. The side effects of the treatment were much worse than the symptoms of the illness itself, but because Janae was relatively young,

her doctors were concerned that her liver might be damaged at a later point in her life when she would not be able to tolerate the treatment at all. She delayed the treatment for several months as she diligently researched the side effects of both the treatment and the antidepressant medications she would be required to take. She began treatment for hepatitis C in 2006, with a willingness to trade what she thought would be serious but manageable side effects for a short time in exchange for a longer, healthier life. As it turned out, the effects of the treatment were much worse than either of us could have ever imagined. In fact, they were even worse than I knew at the time. I knew that Janae was struggling through a dark and difficult time during her treatment, but she did not tell me exactly how dark and difficult it was until a few years later.



While Janae was undergoing treatment for hepatitis C, she was serving as a counselor in the ward Relief Society presidency. I was a lawyer, working hard to realize my career ambitions at a large real estate company, and I was also serving as a counselor in our ward bishopric. We had five children who were fourteen or younger, including three very active boys who were six, four, and two. The stress and workload that fell on Janae's shoulders was simply overwhelming. I knew that she was in a constant state of exhaustion, but I did not fully understand that the treatment was slowly killing not only the disease that was coursing through Janae's bloodstream but also the hope and the faith that had illuminated her life up to that point in time.

A few years after her successful recovery, she admitted to me that she had regularly prayed that her suffering might end. When I wasn't home to help her, she sometimes crawled on her hands and knees from one room in the house to another because the physical pain of her treatment was so excruciating. And if that wasn't bad enough, she felt that the medication she was taking had been blocking the influence of the Holy Ghost in her life. She was numb. She was full of despair. She felt impressions suggesting that she was not good enough, that she was a burden to her family, and that she was not worthy of having her good health restored. The messages that she heard in her own mind would taunt her by saying that if she was really courageous, she would end her own life. As a tragic consequence of her suffering, she lost her faith in God. When she prayed at night, she would occasionally attempt to test him by saying: "God, if you're real, you won't make me wake up in the morning." When she woke up, her despair was only amplified as she faced another

day of pain. It was another sign, at least in her tortured mind, that Heavenly Father did not exist, and if he did, he didn't care enough about her to take away her pain—or let her die.



And then one day in 2006, about six months into her eleven-month treatment, something happened. Janae's prayer was answered in an unexpected way. She told me how, in the midst of her pleading with Heavenly Father for some indication that he was aware of her loneliness, her mind recalled a scripture from 2 Chronicles. In this verse, the Assyrians are attacking the people of Judah, and Hezekiah counsels his captains to "be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (2 Chr. 32:7–8; see also 2 Kgs. 6). As she contemplated the verse that had sprung unexpectedly to her memory, a thought occurred to her: there were more with her than were against her. And she perceived a chain of spirit beings stretching out above her who she understood to be family members. These were people she had known who had already died and people who had not yet been born but who were interested in her welfare. She could sense that they were aware of her loneliness—they knew her and cared about her. They loved her. She understood from them that it was not time for her to die and that she had much to live for, including a young family who also loved her. Her mortal experience was not over and should not end. She still had more life to live on earth.

Janae later told me of another experience she had about a month later as she was praying again. This time, she had been praying for several minutes to know if God understood how hard it was for her to carry on. Her suffering was so great, she didn't think she could bear it alone. She prayed to know if God really knew what she was going through, and if he knew how hard it was for her. And then the answer came. She heard a calm voice say to her simply: "I do. I know this is hard. And I'm sorry."

She said that experience has been as a single droplet of cool water falling onto her parched spirit. The memory of the brief answer to her prayer began to revive her spiritually and emotionally. Both experiences combined to give her hope that she just might have Heavenly Parents who loved her and that there were others who were interested in her well-being. Her suffering did not end that day, but instead of constantly being filled with doubt and self-loathing, she occasionally allowed

herself to want to believe that she mattered and that she might actually survive long enough to be healed. That desire was just enough to help her get through the remaining dark hours and days of her treatment.



When Janae said, “This is it—this is what I saw!” on the day we entered the Deseret Book store in 2014, she recognized that this painting portrayed what she had felt: a chain of spirits who loved her stretched out above her. She was overwhelmed as she stood in front of the image and recalled how her prayer had been answered in 2006. I also felt the image speak to me powerfully. I was prepared to purchase a print of the image, but then we learned from Linda Howard, the employee in charge of the fine art department there, that the original painting was still for sale at an art gallery in Park City, Utah.

Because I had received an unexpected financial windfall, Janae and I had been thinking of adding a significant artwork to our collection. Could this be the piece for us? The news that the painting was available for sale astonished me. We immediately started to investigate and soon discovered just how large the painting is. We guessed that its size was why it had not sold, but we believed we could fit it in our home since we have high ceilings. We went to the Meyer Gallery in Park City and met with Susan Meyer, who told us that the painting had been on display for a few months, but when it had not sold, Brian Kershisnik took it back to his studio so that some of his other pieces could be displayed.

Janae and I spent the rest of the day talking about the painting. We talked about our reactions to it. We talked about her illness and her recovery. We talked about how the painting felt significant to us. We talked about the unique financial circumstances that would allow us to buy a once-in-a-lifetime painting for our collection. And we both prayerfully considered making the purchase. We felt good about moving forward, but it was late in the evening when we reached this decision. I barely slept that night. I called Susan the next day and told her the happy news. We placed the check in a mailbox as we drove out of town and returned to Texas.

When we got home, we realized that for the painting to fit in our house, we would have to remodel and move some things around. We knew this would take several months. We contacted Brian and explained our predicament. Brian told us that before we had purchased the painting, he had contacted a few owners of large buildings to see if they might be willing to display it until it sold. He was still waiting for one of those



Brian Kershnik, Cris Baird, and Janae Baird at Brian's studio in March 2014.

people to get back to him. A few days later, Brian revealed to us that he had been consulting with Laura Hurtado, the global art acquisition curator for the Church, and, if we were willing, the painting could be hung for a time in the Church's Conference Center.

This news was simply stunning. Brian was telling me that the painting I had just purchased could be displayed at the Conference Center—the gathering place for Latter-day Saints who come from all over the world to participate in general conference. As I mentally processed what he had told me, it occurred to me that the April general conference was just a few days away. I asked him when he could actually hang the painting if I agreed to make the loan. In my mind, the painting would be at the Conference Center for about a year, so hanging it immediately would mean that people attending the next three general conferences could see the painting before it came home to Texas.

The following day, Brian received permission to hang the painting in the Conference Center on Thursday, two days before the start of general conference, assuming I agreed to make the loan. We quickly worked



Clockwise from left: Faith Heard, Brian Kershnik, David Ericson, and Steve Vistaunet, placing the canvas on a frame before hanging *She Will Find What Is Lost* in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City.

through the paperwork, and I arranged to fly to Salt Lake City so I could be present when Brian hung the painting. We were joined by some of Brian's friends and my two daughters. A reporter and a photographer from the *Salt Lake Tribune* joined us too.¹¹ The process of hanging the painting took a few hours, and I felt the suspense building as Brian rolled out the painting face down and then stretched the canvas and tacked it to the stretcher bars. This was my first time seeing the painting in person. Because the painting was so large, Brian asked if I would help. Holding this majestic painting in my hands and helping to lift it onto the wall of the Conference Center was one of the highlights of my life. I felt tears of joy as I stood back to experience the beauty and power of the original painting for the first time. It was a moment I will never forget.

11. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Angelic Painting Reminds Mormon Mom She Is Not Alone," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 5, 2014, <https://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=57772059&citytype=cmsid>.



Steve Vistaunet holding the left corner, Cris Baird holding the middle, Brian Kershisnik holding the right corner, and David Ericson holding the back as they hang *She Will Find What Is Lost* in the Conference Center.



Janae's physical recovery from the hepatitis C treatment was long and difficult. Her body had been weakened, and she had lost most of her hair. Her energy was low. But rebuilding her spiritual life took even longer than her physical recovery. Shortly before Janae started her treatment, a friend of ours who had left the Church began to send her information that was critical of the Church and its leaders. The simple faith of her childhood had been devastated by mind-altering medication and grueling medical treatment, and whatever foundation she had left was under attack by mean-spirited and inaccurate criticisms. One of Janae's strongest memories from that period was of her visit with the stake president in connection with the renewal of her temple recommend. She told me that when the stake president asked if she believed in God, she answered honestly: "For the first time in my life, I'm not really sure." Being fully aware of what Janae had gone through to that point in her life, the stake president's inspired follow-up question was simply, "Do you want to believe in God?" Janae replied with a tearful "Yes." That desire was enough for her to begin reconstructing a new spiritual foundation.

Within a year or so, as the effects of the medication wore off, she told me that she felt her ability to feel the Spirit grow. But she wasn't yet sure how to rebuild her faith in God. She wanted to return to the simple faith of her childhood, but her recent life experiences seemed to be preventing that. She remembers another experience very fondly. Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy visited our stake to speak at a stake conference, and in a brief conversation with Janae afterward, he listened as she asked how she might regain the faith of her childhood. With kindness, he encouraged her to look forward rather than backward and to see her difficult experiences and questions as tools that could help her expand her perspective. She would no longer see the world from a child's perspective because she was no longer a child. But armed with these new experiences, she could have a wonderful new perspective that was built on a stronger and more mature faith. His wisdom opened the door to another approach. Rather than dwell on the disappointments of the past, she would try to look forward with faith. She would try to find ways to harness her experiences for the benefit of others.

Another experience that helped her strengthen her newly budding faith was accepting a call to teach Relief Society lessons on the life and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She told me how as she studied in preparation to teach her lessons and as she learned more about Joseph Smith's life

and ministry, her appreciation for the divinity of his calling grew. While the emails from our friend may have opened her eyes to new information about Joseph Smith, the man, Janae realized that the negative conclusions that her friend had reached about Joseph Smith, the prophet, were flawed and incomplete. Janae knew that Joseph Smith, the man, was not perfect. Yet Heavenly Father was able to use Joseph Smith, the prophet, to accomplish his work. She related to me that she came to see that the Lord works through imperfect people, like her. And that dawning realization became a source of comfort. It gave her the courage she needed to continue to look for the answers to her questions, “in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:5).



In the summer of 2013, Janae was asked to lead our stake’s effort to host a series of Christmas concerts. She reached out to several schools and community organizations and made countless arrangements to welcome the community into the stake center as we celebrated the season of Jesus Christ’s birth. She dedicated ten to fifteen hours a week to this effort for five months. When the weekend of the performances finally arrived, a huge ice storm shut down the entire Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Schools, businesses, and churches were closed because roads and bridges were covered in two to three inches of solid ice. The stake Christmas concert series was canceled. A few weeks later, she was invited to visit with the stake presidency to discuss, she believed, how to improve planning for next year’s concerts. Much to Janae’s surprise, as the meeting was coming to a close, the stake president extended a new calling to her. Would she be willing to serve as the stake director of public affairs? She had never heard of the calling before, and she felt unprepared to reply. She asked for some time to consider the request.

When Janae came home and we began discussing the responsibilities of the calling, she was initially reluctant to accept it. She had no formal training, had not finished her college degree, and continued to feel overwhelmed at times with four children at home and a husband who was serving as the bishop at the time. But as our conversations continued, she realized that she had emerged from her physical and spiritual journey with a newfound faith built on a testimony of the atonement of Jesus Christ and that she had an entirely new perspective on what the Lord expected of her. He did not want perfection from her—he wanted the benefit of her life experiences. Janae decided to accept the calling.



The growth that Janae experienced during many dark months of health challenges allowed her to empathize with people who were going through similar experiences, and she found joy in lifting and supporting them. In her new calling, she became a bridge builder—someone who bridged the gap between our stake and various community service and governmental organizations. For many nonmembers, she became the face of the Church. For many members, she became the face of the community. She worked hard to establish the JustServe initiative in the stake and to teach members and nonmembers alike how to more effectively work together to strengthen the community. Janae told me how over time she realized that the questions that previously motivated her religious curiosity were now focused less on historical claims (because she had received satisfactory answers to those questions) and more focused on goodness claims. How could living the gospel of Jesus Christ improve her own life and the life of her family? How could loving her neighbor strengthen the Church and the community? She was able to see, with more clarity than ever before, how the gospel of Jesus Christ could help her accomplish those objectives. Perhaps more importantly, she could see how the experiences to that point in her life had laid a strong foundation for her new personal ministry of service to the community and the Church. Just as the title of the painting had suggested, Janae had finally found what she had lost.



Returning to the questions I posed at the beginning of this essay: What is it about *She Will Find What Is Lost* that makes this painting so unique? Why does this image resonate on a profoundly personal level with so many people? What explains the power of this painting? I believe that the first hint at the answer to those questions is found in Brian's observation: "That which is most personal taps into currents that are most general."¹² To that observation, I would add these rhetorical questions: What could be more personal than the suffering a person experiences? And who has not experienced suffering? Thus, human suffering has the dual qualities of being both universal and unique. We have all experienced it.

The problem of human suffering has been around from the moment Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. And humans have been searching for answers to the problem of suffering for just as

12. Kershishnik, "General Note."

long. Many ask, “If God loves his children, why does he allow them to suffer?” One of the best answers to that question came via revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith when he was experiencing his own suffering in Liberty Jail:

If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea; If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb; And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that *all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.* The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not *what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever.* (D&C 122:5–9, emphasis added)

These verses found in modern-day scripture contain the most succinct answer to the problem of human suffering I have been able to find. Suffering is a necessary part of our human condition. It is how we experience growth. That growth can and should be harnessed for good. Both for our good and for the good of those within our sphere of influence. But we don't need to fear suffering because God will be with us, even in our suffering.

And that is the power of *She Will Find What Is Lost*. The image speaks to our souls because it speaks to our suffering. It answers in the affirmative the question of whether or not God is aware of our concerns and if he is willing to do anything about them. And it expands the answer to include the love of additional ministering angels, perhaps our own ancestors, who also love us enough to visit us in our trials. It illustrates God's ability to reach through the veil that separates the mortal from the

immortal, his desire to assure us that our suffering has meaning, and his promise that he will not forsake us. We are never truly alone.¹³



We bought *She Will Find What Is Lost* because it allowed us to follow the first rule of collecting art: buy what you love. We loved that the painting was beautiful. We loved that it spoke so eloquently to Janae's experience. We loved that it answered one of life's most important questions in a way that was consistent with our faith. But we quickly discovered that this very special painting has a power that is completely independent of our nominal ownership of it. The story of *She Will Find What Is Lost* is not just our story. Our story is just one of many stories, and I'm confident there are many more stories that are waiting to be told about this painting.

The April 2014 general conference was held just two days after the painting was hung in the Conference Center. I stayed in Salt Lake City that weekend to attend general conference, and after the first session concluded, I stopped by to see the painting for a few minutes. I enjoyed watching as conference-goers walked past the painting. Most people were in a hurry to leave, but several lingered and looked. After a few minutes, I noticed someone taking a photo of a family member in front of the painting. A few minutes after that, I saw another young woman crouching down in front of the painting, turning to one side so that from the perspective of the camera, she was eclipsing the woman in the painting. I realized what she was doing right away. The resulting photograph would appear to show that the angels from the painting were reaching down to touch her. Several others followed suit and took similar photos, with each one appearing to receive a blessing from the angels hovering over them. I was pleased to see the power of the message in the painting being manifest on the first day it was viewable by conference goers.



Janae and I both went to Salt Lake City a few days before the October 2014 general conference began. It was on that trip that we met and talked to the tourists I mentioned earlier in this essay. Janae answered their questions and shared a short version of her experiences as they related to the painting. It was obvious to us that they understood the

13. On God being with us, see Joshua 1:9; and John 14:18–19.

message and felt the power of the painting even though they were not members of the Church and had never seen the image before. Before we said our goodbyes, they asked if they could take some photos with Janae in front the painting. Janae gladly obliged, and our new friends continued on their way. We left the Conference Center a few minutes later, and then went to the Church History Museum for a brief visit. As we were leaving Temple Square for the day, we crossed over South Temple Street. To our great surprise, we saw the family we had met in the Conference Center earlier in the day. They were in the checkout line at the Deseret Book store, waiting to buy a print of *She Will Find What Is Lost*. We were touched that they, even though they were not members of the Church, found sufficient meaning in the painting to want to take a print of it home with them. We wish we could have shared with them the full story as we have shared it here. But we are thrilled that because of this painting, they, like many others, will now be reminded every day that God will never forsake us.

Cris Baird is a commercial real estate lawyer. He earned his JD from the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University. He and his wife, Janae, live in Arlington, Texas, and they enjoy collecting original art created by Latter-day Saint artists.

First Argument

An ache like a seed
caught in teeth, acrid after-
taste of unripe fruit;

astonishment. *That
is not what I meant.* Sudden
drop of a gaze, new

heaviness. *Where are
you going?* Strange entrapment
within skin, like the tree-

gum that had to be
cut from Eve's hair. *I
just didn't hear you.*

The twitch of a brow.
She remembers the bitterness
of a beetle crunched

accidentally, hidden in the spinach;
she remembers
the first rasp of ivy rash on the wrist.

*Look at me
when I'm talking.* Heart pounding
in her ears. A shoulder

shrugs away from a hand. Skin
is not just for pleasure; it
can chafe. She is learning

what a weed is,
and what it does.

—Darlene Young

This poem won second place in the 2018
Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest spon-
sored by BYU Studies.

Burning the Couch

Some Stories of Grace

Robbie Taggart

One day when I was a snarling baffled holy teenager, four friends and I found a lonely-looking couch on the side of the road. It had a sign on it that said, “Free.” Our minds immediately began to scroll through the brilliant possibilities presented by such a couch, such a gift. Someone thought we could hike it to our favorite camping spot up the mountain and sit upon it amid the trees and weeds and clouds and bird-song and rejoice in the incongruity of it all. But the thought of mountain snails and mildew sharing our couch led us in different directions. We thought of hiking it up to the top of some cliff and hurling it off like an enormous brown baby bird that hasn’t yet learned the art of flight. Someone wisely interjected that we might perhaps unwittingly hit some unsuspecting hiker and spend the rest of our adolescence behind bars. Which was remarkable wisdom if you stop to consider that there wasn’t a fully developed prefrontal cortex among us. Finally, someone suggested driving it down by the lake, slicing it up with knives, dousing it in gasoline and setting it on fire. Of course, the sense and beauty of this idea descended on all of us in unison, like a shared revelation. Burning a couch and taking a baseball bat to a toilet were two dreams that had long been high on my bucket list, and here was a golden opportunity shining before our very faces. We borrowed my mother’s minivan, emptied it of the back seats, loaded the couch, and drove down toward the marshy land near the lake.

We sought a spot away from public eyes. We found a perfect little stand of cottonwood trees, dry with summer thirst. We took our knives to the couch with gusto. We slashed and laughed, wild with the joy of it.

We jumped and howled and threw pieces of couch stuffing into the air. It was like a scene from *Lord of the Flies*. Then we drenched the erstwhile couch in gasoline, lit a match, and stepped back smiling. The flames and smoke immediately ascended like the pillar that guided the Israelites through the wilderness. The couch crackled like some ancient burnt offering. One friend had the sagacious forethought to bring a fire extinguisher from home. When the flames were almost twenty feet high and licking the trees, my friend rushed forward with the extinguisher. He pressed down the lever and expected a spray. Instead, disappointment dripped out—a few meager droplets. Someone had broken the seal, and the extinguisher had no pressure. The couch sizzled and blazed in the dry summer heat, and I began to fear the trees would catch.

A school bus drove by on the road that was just visible through the trees. A few minutes later, it drove by again, this time more slowly. We began to scramble, looking for a way to put out the fire. We grabbed a towel from the van. We whipped at the flames, but this just served to fan them higher. We tripped over weedy plants ripe with burs, scooping up mud and flinging it at the couch. We dipped the towel in the little water we could find and tried to wring it out over the blaze. The fire grew hotter and angrier and higher and wilder. I began to feel the despair of powerlessness. Then we heard the sirens. My heart sank, imagining the angry face of the police officer as he cuffed me and threw me into the back of his car like some petty criminal. I pictured my father's frustration at finding his delinquent son on his doorstep accompanied by the police.

We waited in scared silence. The flames raged on. The sirens got closer and louder. We winced. But it wasn't a police car that hove into view. It was a fire engine—a single small red truck from the small local town. A burly fireman came trampling through the trees with an enormous fire extinguisher in his arms. He walked past us without speaking. For two minutes, he silently stood, spraying the couch, the trees, and the surrounding weeds with fire retardant until all that was left was a black, smoldering frame with some burnt springs sitting in a scorched field. The air hung heavy with smoke. The firefighter turned to look me full in the face and said, "So. What's going on here?" "I, uh," I stammered, "we were just being idiots." He smiled broadly and said, "Well, sometimes being an idiot catches up to you." And then he walked away. He got in his truck and drove off. We stood for a moment waiting for the fist to fall, for the police sirens, for the handcuffs and the condemnation. But they never came. We looked at each other for a moment, stunned. Then we jumped in the van and drove away at exactly the speed limit, my friends lying flat in the back, laughing and astonished.

When I was younger, I thought of God as an austere figure waiting to catch me messing up, a god who never laughed. I imagined him as angry and eager to punish. I no longer picture him that way. My God sings and laughs and blesses and gives and forgives seventy times seven times and then some. Perhaps the reality that wickedness never was happiness is not a threat. It is simply an eternal truth. Sometimes we light our lives on fire. Sometimes being an idiot catches up to you. We scramble and worry. We get burned and scratched, and we lose hope. Then God shows up, like that firefighter that day by the lake, ready to help and wearing a smile. Into our desperation and anguish, grace arrives to put out the flames and then hands our lives back to us, somehow restored and shining, aflame with a new holy light that does not consume but only warms and illuminates. Grace is a gift, unmerited and always surprising.



I sense that grace arrives not only for our foolishness, but for our brokenness as well. Fires rage that we never started. Sometimes the world feels so broken, and my heart is broken, and I don't see how God's heart is not broken, except that he is God and even when his heart is broken, he knows it will not always be broken, because he heals all things and wipes away all tears from all eyes, personally and one by one, and yes, I believe that. But in the meantime, we live in the face of heartache and hurt, of meanness and menace. The world burns around us, and we stand powerless. For these reasons, we need grace.

One time a friend of mine called me, shaken and raging. He told me that his daughter had been raped by a boy who had been a friend of the family. I went over to his house to mourn with him, and he fell into my arms, sobbing. He said he had a fifty-cent solution, and he shook in rage and grief. He told me he was going to put a bullet in the boy. Then, without warning, he asked me for a blessing. He wanted to hear the words of God. I laid my hands on his head and waited. What do you say at such a time? Why do daughters get raped? Why do friends shake in our arms? How does such darkness exist in a world that has shown itself to me so often in so much splendor? How does one offer any real comfort, any real hope when you can't fix it, can't take it back, can't change the world? Into that moment, the voice of God came. Grace came. Peace came. Not a cheap peace, but the peace that passes understanding. A grace-given gift. After the blessing, we cried together and we ached and we hoped. And that hope tasted like grace. Grace can transfigure bitterness into a something shining with the subtle sweetness of hope.



Here is another grace story. My friend Brandon was born to drug-addicted parents. His mom was fourteen. His dad was fifteen. He had an older brother. You can do the math. By the time Brandon was three, he was smoking marijuana. By five, he was doing cocaine. He said that when he went to school, the other kids would make fun of him because he didn't have any underwear and he was dirty and hungry and smelled like cigarettes and drugs. He would eat maybe once a day, at the local food shelter or at the school. His parents were dealing to fuel their addictions. One day in first grade, he told his dad that he wasn't feeling well and didn't want to go to school. His father, an enormous, burly, bearded man, punched my friend in his sweet six-year-old face, breaking his nose and making him bleed and vomit. Then he told him to go to school. The little boy went. What else could he do?

As a small boy, Brandon watched one day as eight police officers attacked his father, trying to arrest him. His dad sent three of them to the hospital before they finally subdued him with tasers, batons, and a bean-bag round. One officer led Brandon away to another room so that he would not witness the brawl. He told me that by second grade he was so tired of life that he began to consider suicide. He wondered if he would always hurt, always be lonely, always be unloved. He felt worthless. No one cared about him. By second grade, he was stealing and doing heavy drugs, and his second-grade teacher pulled him aside and asked what was happening. Brandon refused to speak. His father had threatened to seriously hurt him if he ever told about home, and Brandon believed his dad. This teacher told him she wasn't going to let him leave the room until he told her what was going on. She told him that everything would be all right. She told him she cared about him and wanted to help him. For the first time in his life, he felt a faint glow of hope.

I love that second-grade teacher. I wonder if she knows what her career meant. If all it meant is that Brandon is okay, it is enough. Every morning that she woke up and got herself out of bed and walked into that school to wrangle the wild, holy, beautiful children before her was worth the effort. Sometimes grace is disguised as a second-grade teacher with her own problems and her own heartache, a teacher who is probably worried and weary over a thousand things, but who reaches out in love to a small, broken boy.

Brandon got taken into foster care, and he began to believe that life could change. He had more teachers who encouraged him, especially in his artwork. He became a sterling scholar in art with a 2.3 GPA. He has

become a teacher and an artist. He teaches ceramics and makes pots with his feet and does one-handed pull-ups and wins rock-climbing championships and changes lives. And his students love him because he loves them and he has a catching laugh and a lot of joy. And he knows that love matters and love saves us. That love, even human love, is one of the faces of grace.

As a teenager, once his life had been reclaimed by astonishing grace and he had been adopted into a real family, he saw his mom one day on the side of the road. He said her face was melting away from meth abuse. The friends he was with made some offhand comment about this ragged and shabby woman, and he told them it was his mother. He stopped to pick her up, and after a painful conversation, he dropped her off in government custody, hoping against hope for an outpouring of grace for his mom.

After not seeing his father for years, Brandon went to the mental hospital where his dad was staying. He had destroyed his mind with drugs. “He was like a three-year-old,” Brandon says. After a few minutes of helping his dad remember who he was, his father brought him a worn t-shirt and a small bag of beans. “I’ve been saving these for you,” he said, “for five years. I wanted to give them to you for Christmas.” Brandon said that his heart cracked and he felt grace heal his hatred for this man who had destroyed his childhood.

There are many flavors of grace. Its light shines everywhere, on every anguish and in every heart.



Bruce R. McConkie understood the ubiquity of grace. He wrote, “All things that exist are manifestations of the grace of God.”¹ Everything is grace. Every single thing. This world is riddled with grace, shot through with God’s mercy and love and light. A child’s eyes staring back at you in the mostly-darkness of the morning. Leaves and leaflessness. Clouds and clear skies. Hope and light and joy and forgiveness and peace and strength. The air we breathe and the lungs that drink the air. These are all gifts of grace. Grace stands at the door and knocks, leans in the doorway and smiles, sits at the dinner table after the meal has been finished, pushes back the chair and roars with laughter. Grace makes the meal. Grace is the meal. The requirement for the reception of grace is ultimately simply the acceptance

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 338.

of grace. It is always already there, like a gift waiting to be opened. We cannot earn it, but we might put ourselves in the pathways of grace. Acknowledgment of brokenness and need, hunger and thirst, the realization that our lives are on fire and we need help—these open the floodgates of grace. The requirement is open eyes and an open heart. It is open arms and an embrace. To see grace is to experience grace.

I am reminded that one day the air will begin to shimmer and shake and hum with a music that is not of this world. And a light will come from the east, growing in intensity and brightness, causing the air to shake, to undulate and roll, to swell and to sing, causing the grass to reach and to sing and the trees to shiver with music. And I will feel myself becoming lighter, sorrow and heaviness melting away like snow in spring, will feel the joy I have always known myself capable of, will look around to see others, to find ourselves soaring through the air. To meet the Lord in the clouds, the scripture says. A new song. We will come singing a new song. A song beyond words but created with human voices. And the voices of others, of angels and gods. I will know the words or the nonwords, the motions of the mouth and the movement of lungs, even though I have never heard it, yet I know somehow that I have heard it, have known it. I was born from this song, brought forth from this light. And the Lord will wipe away all tears from off all eyes. There will be no more sorrow and no more death. I will know as I am known. I will rise. The earth will become new. Grace will triumph. All things will be new. All things. All things.

One of my favorite scriptural passages is found in Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” I love the image of God resting from the anguish of watching his children hurt, sighing in gratitude when his grace has finally accomplished its full work. God will rejoice over redeemed Creation with joy, his relief will burst forth as music, and he will sing. What will that song sound like? What is the sound of grace? When sirens turn to symphonies, when the only cries are rapture, when the fire only sanctifies and heals, when God opens his mouth to sing, I want to be there.

This essay by Robbie Taggart won first place in the 2019 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

Naturalistic Explanations of the Origin of the Book of Mormon

A Longitudinal Study

Brian C. Hales

In early 1830, an unknown farmer in upstate New York burst upon the world's book-publishing scene. The Book of Mormon rolled off the Grandin Press in Palmyra, New York, with Joseph Smith listed as “author and proprietor” on the title page.¹ That same year, a few other authors produced new titles, including *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* by Mary Shelley, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* by Thomas Moore, and *Six Sermons on the Study of the Holy Scriptures* by Samuel Lee.² If grouped with books classified as “fiction” in 1830, the Book of Mormon may have been the longest, with approximately 269,320 words.³

1. Joseph Smith Jr., *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi* (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830), title page.

2. Mary Shelley, *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck: A Romance*, 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830); Thomas Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of His Life*, 2 vols. (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1830); Samuel Lee, *Six Sermons on the Study of the Holy Scriptures* (London: James Duncan, 1830).

3. On February 18, 2019, Book of Mormon scholar Stanford Carmack wrote: “The 1830 first edition has 6,852 full stops in 269,318 words . . . if we count the first instance of ‘me thought’ as two words (18, 41; the second is spelled as one word) and the second instance of ‘for/asmuch’ as two words (111, 32; no hyphen; the first is spelled as one word), then we get 269,320 words.” Stanford Carmack, comment on Brian C. Hales, “Curiously Unique: Joseph Smith as Author of the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 31 (2019): 151–90, <https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/curiously-unique-joseph-smith-as-author-of-the-book-of-mormon/>. Other 1830

Then, as now, authors often sought to stir up interest in their publications in the weeks and months prior to their release. Joseph was no exception; although his techniques were poorly coordinated, they proved to be moderately effective. The fanfare surrounding the printing of the Book of Mormon arose from his claims that he had translated the book from an unknown language (inscribed on ancient metal plates) by the “gift, and power of God.”⁴ With storylines discussing religious themes intermingled with a history of ancient American peoples, the Book of Mormon claimed significance for all inhabitants of the world. And the fervor surrounding the book’s printing expanded as missionaries promoted sales by declaring it was scripture just like the Bible (see D&C 42:12; and A of F 8).

NATURALISTIC EXPLANATIONS FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON APPEARED IMMEDIATELY

Joseph Smith and his followers declared the Book of Mormon’s supernatural origin—that it was a divinely inspired translation of an ancient-American record, acquired by Joseph through visions and the help of an angel. This explanation was widely rejected by outsiders from the outset. Within weeks after the Book of Mormon’s first pages came off the press, critics promoted “naturalistic explanations”—so called because they are based on scientific observation or natural phenomena—that rejected the possibility of a divine, supernatural origin of the Book of Mormon. To varying degrees, these naturalistic theories continue to be perpetuated today. Although skeptics have mixed and matched explanations at times, the following five naturalistic theories have emerged as the most popular:⁵

publications with over one hundred thousand words include Jeremy Bentham, *Constitutional Code; for the Use of All Nations*, vol. 1 (London: Robert Heward, 1830), which has 187,270 words; William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (London: By the author, 1830), which has 165,920 words; and Charles Lyell *Principles of Geology*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1830), which has 161,040 words.

4. “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842): 707; see also Joseph Smith, journal, November 9–11, 1835, in *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashhurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 88–89; and “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” 72 (October 1830), *Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/78>.

5. See Louis C. Midgley, “Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Critics and Their Theories,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The*

1. Solomon Spaulding penned a manuscript that Joseph Smith plagiarized.
2. Collaborators assisted Smith in writing the Book of Mormon.
3. Mental illness expanded Smith's abilities to write the Book of Mormon.
4. Smith created the Book of Mormon through automatic writing.
5. Smith's intellect was sufficient for him to dictate the words in the book.

There is much at stake in these theories. Each one challenges the divinity of the Book of Mormon, which Joseph Smith taught was the “keystone of our religion.”⁶ He declared: “Take away the Book of Mormon, and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none.”⁷ Despite the ongoing influence of these theories, no publication has yet traced and explicated them.

This article examines the most popular naturalistic explanations for the Book of Mormon longitudinally, which will enable readers to better understand them and why they have waxed and waned in popularity over time.

SOLOMON SPAULDING THEORY

Born in 1761, Solomon Spaulding (also spelled “Spalding”) composed a manuscript in 1812 describing a Hebrew origin for the Native Americans. Naming his work “Manuscript Found,” he proudly shared it with family and friends. Then, hoping to see it published and to realize some financial gain, Spaulding sent it to a printer named Lambdin, but Spaulding died in 1816 without seeing it published.⁸

Evidence for Ancient Origins, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 101–39; Daniel C. Peterson, “In the Hope That Something Will Stick’: Changing Explanations for the Book of Mormon” *FARMS Review* 16, no. 2 (2004): xi–xxxv; and Tad R. Callister, “The Book of Mormon: Man-Made or God-Given?” (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, November 1, 2016), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/tad-r-callister_book-mormon-man-made-god-given/.

6. Woodruff, journal, November 28, 1841, in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–85), 2:139.

7. “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 19 (December 15, 1845): 1060.

8. Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 290; Samuel Williams, *Mormonism Exposed* (n.p., 1838), 45.

Nearly two decades later, in 1834, Eber D. Howe printed *Mormonism Unveiled*, which was highly critical of Joseph Smith. In the book, Howe reproduced eight affidavits from Spaulding acquaintances who recalled remarkable similarities between “Manuscript Found” and the Book of Mormon.⁹ Howe’s additional research convinced him that Joseph Smith obtained the manuscript through an intermediary, Sidney Rigdon: “We are, then, irresistibly led to this conclusion:— that Lambdin, after having failed in business, had recourse to the old manuscripts then in his possession, in order to *raise the wind*, by a book speculation, and placed the ‘Manuscript Found,’ of Spaulding, in the hands of Rigdon, to be embellished, altered, and added to, as he might think expedient; and three years’ study of the bible we should deem little time enough to garble it, as it is transferred to the Mormon book.”¹⁰

Thereafter, the Spaulding theory became popular with other authors and investigators. For example, Origen Bachelier wrote confidently in 1851, “Solomon Spaulding wrote the romance entitled ‘The Manuscript Found,’ which has since been metamorphosed by Rigdon, Smith, and others into the Book of Mormon.”¹¹

Acceptance of the Solomon Spaulding Theory

Between 1834 and 1884, no one was able to compare the actual document entitled “Manuscript Found” with the Book of Mormon. Only the recollections of Spaulding’s friends could be examined, and they posited a direct connection between the two books. The whereabouts of “Manuscript Found,” however, were likely known to some people who “got the manuscript from Spaulding’s widow sometime in 1833 or 1834, but since it was not as close to the Book of Mormon as they had hoped, it was quietly stored away.”¹²

9. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 278–90.

10. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 290, italics in original.

11. Origen Bachelier, *Mormonism Exposed, Internally and Externally* (New York: n.p., 1838), 5; see also Henry Mayhew, *The Mormons: or Latter-day Saints, with Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the “American Mahomet”* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1852), 30.

12. Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Joseph Smith’s Plagiarism of the Bible in the Book of Mormon*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 2010), 238.

The document surfaced in 1884, and when comparing it to the text of the Book of Mormon, most observers quickly identified problems:¹³

- At 50,840 words, “Manuscript Found” is less than a fifth the size of the Book of Mormon.
- The overall writing style and composition of the two books are vastly different. For example, while the text of the Book of Mormon is similar to the language of the King James Version of the Bible, the text of “Manuscript Found” is not.
- The two books do not contain identical or similar names of people and places.

In addition, no credible historical documentation has been found showing that Sidney Rigdon was an acquaintance of Spaulding or knew of “Manuscript Found” prior to Howe’s book making the allegation.¹⁴ Also, strong documentation demonstrates that Rigdon’s conversion to the Church was a direct result of his reading the already published Book of Mormon.¹⁵

After the Spaulding manuscript was found, most critics abandoned the theory. For example, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, who wrote critically of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, rejected the theory: “We do have the original Spaulding manuscript and the Book of Mormon, which do not appear to have enough in common to insist that the latter came from the former.”¹⁶ However, because the original Howe depositions claimed the presence of identical names and exact parallels between the Book of Mormon and Spaulding’s writings, some theorists allege that “Manuscript Found” was not the document the early readers actually

13. See Matthew Roper, “The Mythical ‘Manuscript Found,’” *FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005): 7–140; Matthew Roper, “Oliver Cowdery and the Mythical ‘Manuscript Found,’” in *Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness*, ed. John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2006), 123–31; Matthew Roper, “Myth, Memory, and ‘Manuscript Found,’” *FARMS Review* 21, no. 2 (2009): 179–223; Matthew Roper and Paul J. Fields, “The Historical Case against Sidney Rigdon’s Authorship of the Book of Mormon,” *Mormon Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2011): 113–25.

14. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 58–63.

15. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 58–63.

16. Tanner and Tanner, *Joseph Smith’s Plagiarism*, 38; see also 243; see also Adam Jortner, “Solomon Spaulding’s Indians, or, What the ‘Manuscript Found’ Really Tells Us,” *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 246–47.

saw. Rumors of another Spaulding creation, called “Manuscript Story,” were circulated. The theory of a second, undiscovered manuscript is still promoted by some today.¹⁷

COLLABORATOR THEORIES

Allegations that Joseph Smith worked with collaborators popped up soon after the Book of Mormon was published. His contemporaries were convinced he could not have produced the volume alone. William Harris explained in 1841 that “coadjutors” helped:

Here, then, is direct evidence from Smith, himself, of what the Book of Mormon really is—namely, a mere fiction, conjured up from the brains of Smith, or his coadjutors. . . . We are asked, if Smith was an unlettered youth, is not the fact of his producing a work, such as the Book of Mormon, a proof of inspiration. I answer, that the style and matter of the book is nothing superior; but admitting that it was more than a youth like Smith could produce, is it not well known that he had coadjutors of acknowledged talents—fully ample to produce such a work!¹⁸

Several individuals have been promoted as possible assistants. Though Sidney Rigdon is most often associated with the Spaulding theory, a few writers have suggested that he is the real author of the Book of Mormon. For example, Leslie Rumble penned: “Not Joseph Smith, but the ex-Baptist, ex-Campbellite revivalist preacher Sidney Rigdon, who did not lack the necessary knowledge of history, literature and Scripture, was the real author of this fraudulent book in which Campbellite doctrines and phraseology abound.”¹⁹

Oliver Cowdery has also been proposed as a collaborator. Daniel P. Kidder wrote in 1842, “Cowdery had been the principal amanuensis

17. See Howard A. Davis, Donald R. Scales, and Wayne L. Cowdrey, *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Vision House Publishers, 1977), 3–4, 154–55, 161.

18. William Harris, *Mormonism Portrayed; Its Errors and Absurdities Exposed, and the Spirit and Designs of Its Authors Made Manifest* (Warsaw, Ill.: Sharp and Gamble, 1841), 9.

19. Leslie Rumble, *Mormons or Latter Day Saints* (St. Paul, Minn.: Radio Replies Press, 1950), 11; see also “Mormonism,” *Miners’ and Farmers’ Journal* [Charlotte, N.C.], April 7, 1831, 2; James Gordon Bennet, “Mormon Religion,” *Morning Courier and Enquirer*, September 1, 1831, quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, “James Gordon Bennet’s 1831 Report on ‘The Mormonites,’” *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (July 1970): 362.

hitherto, and having been a schoolmaster, it is presumed that his pedagogical talents found ample scope, as well in giving lessons to ‘the author,’ as in transcribing the book.”²⁰ Nineteenth-century critic Pomeroy Tucker also acknowledged Cowdery’s assistance to Smith: “From all the evidence possessed, there can be no doubt that the plan of founding a new system of religion was concocted by these two shrewd and unscrupulous persons.”²¹ More recently, psychiatrist Robert D. Anderson assured his readers “that Cowdery brought with him the over-arching conceptual plans and some of the important details that made it possible for Smith to complete the Book of Mormon.”²² Richard S. Van Wagoner echoed this view, writing that shortly after Oliver arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania, “Smith and Cowdery started their partnership.”²³ Van Wagoner also added a lively imaginary description: “It is easy to envision Smith and Cowdery, two zealous young men, forestalling their bedtimes nightly with brains locked in heady conversation about the unfolding of Joseph’s book.”²⁴

Meredith Ray Sheets and Kendal Sheets advanced a unique, speculative theory, alleging that the primary contributor to the Book of Mormon was Joseph Smith Sr.:

Copying various texts, changing them, and passing them off as *The Book of Mormon* was a Smith family enterprise. Joseph Smith Sr. intended to create a new religion and have his namesake son gain recognition as one of God’s true prophets. Both objectives require the faith and trust of others. Junior and Senior’s ultimate goals was [sic] to benefit financially and provide for their future. . . . Joseph Sr. gave his boy a head start on the project. He began compiling *The Book of Mormon* in 1811, when his son turned six years old. When Junior was old enough, he assisted with the project and became the front man for the conspiracy.²⁵

20. Daniel P. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons: A Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-Styled Latter-day Saints* (New York: G. Lan and P. P. Sandford, 1842), 63.

21. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867), 123.

22. Robert D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 96.

23. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Natural Born Seer: Joseph Smith American Prophet 1805–1830* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2016), 338.

24. Van Wagoner, *Natural Born Seer*, 336.

25. Meredith Ray Sheets and Kendal Sheets, *The Book of Mormon: Book of Lies* (McLean, Va.: 1811 Press, 2012), 13, 15, italics in original.

Acceptance of Collaborator Theories

The theory that Joseph Smith worked with collaborators to create the Book of Mormon has never gained strong traction for several reasons. A primary problem is the lack of historical support. The most popular candidates, Rigdon and Cowdery, were not physically close to Smith until their historically documented introductions to him. Cowdery arrived at the Smith household on April 5, 1829, and began his scribal work on the Book of Mormon two days later. Baptized in November 1830, Rigdon traveled to New York soon thereafter to meet Joseph Smith in December.²⁶ Historical evidence does not corroborate collusion between Smith and either of these men or any other person to create a pre-existing manuscript (like Spaulding's "Manuscript Found").

Nor is there evidence of a conspiracy to compose the entire Book of Mormon between April 7 and the end of June 1829. Cowdery penned most of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon during that period. What remains of the original manuscript contains no evidences of extensive editing or revision.²⁷ Multiple witnesses, both friendly and unfriendly, related that Joseph dictated as Oliver wrote. Witnesses said nothing of any attempt to write and rewrite different versions until completing the final draft.²⁸ The complexity of the Book of Mormon also raises the question of whether the combined skillsets of Joseph and Oliver could have been sufficient to generate all the words in so short a time.

Lack of confirming evidence has kept collaborator theories from becoming more popular. Skeptical author Earl M. Wunderli declared succinctly: "There is apparently no evidence that Joseph Smith conspired

26. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, eds., *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 184, 186 n. 9, 249, 255 n. 8.

27. See Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001), 13–33, 62–553.

28. Eyewitnesses include Martin Harris, David Whitmer, William Smith, Isaac Hale, Joseph Knight Sr., Emma Smith, Alva Hale, Elizabeth Whitmer Cowdery, and Michael Morse. Other contemporaries who left similar reports include Joseph Lewis and Thurlow Weed. All indicated the process involved Joseph Smith dictating while looking at a seer stone in a hat. See accounts in John W. Welch, "The Miraculous Timing of the Translation of the Book of Mormon," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820–1844*, 2d ed., ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017), 141–227.

with anyone else to write the book.”²⁹ The primary weakness of these collaboration theories is illustrated by critic David Persuitte. Though he first states that “all things considered, it seems likely that Joseph did have at least one collaborator,” Persuitte concludes that “despite the hints suggesting that there was a collaboration, it cannot be categorically proven that such a collaboration existed. For these reasons, and for the sake of simple convenience, we shall accept Joseph Smith as ‘author and proprietor’” of the Book of Mormon.³⁰

MENTAL ILLNESS THEORIES

Several authors have speculated that Joseph Smith’s supposed supernatural experiences and his ability to dictate the Book of Mormon can be explained by mental illness. Proposed illnesses include paranoia, dementia, parathy, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, disassociation, and narcissistic personality disorder.

One of the first diagnoses of a mental illness for Joseph Smith came in 1930, when historian Bernard DeVoto proposed Smith had a “paranoia personality”:

Unquestionably, Joseph Smith was a paranoid. Intensely religious during adolescence, he began to experience auditory hallucinations. Voices which he identified as Jehovah’s, as well as those of prophets and angels, informed him of his divinely appointed mission—to establish the True Church and lead it to domination over the whol[e] world. To these hallucinations were added others of a visual character in which he beheld the holy Personages who talked with him. His religious mission became the obsession to which he related every item of his experience, and as it developed the prophet expanded in grandeur.³¹

Harry M. Beardsley reported a different pathology: “*The Book of Mormon* is a product of an adolescent mind and a mind characterized by the symptoms of the most prevalent of mental diseases of adolescence—dementia praecox.”³² Dementia “is characterized by a loss of

29. Earl M. Wunderli, *An Imperfect Book: What the Book of Mormon Tells Us about Itself* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013), 50.

30. David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon*, 2d ed. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000), 18–19.

31. Bernard DeVoto, “The Centennial of Mormonism,” *American Mercury* 19, no. 73 (January 1930): 4.

32. Harry M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 81, italics in original.

intellectual abilities, especially memory, judgment, abstract thinking, and language skills—together with marked changes in personality and impulse control.”³³ And *praecox* refers “to the appearance of symptoms during the teens or twenties.”³⁴

Over two decades later, Kimball Young posited a novel explanation, labeling Joseph Smith a *parapath*: “There is some historical and psychological evidence that he was a parapath, that is, one who cannot always tell fact from fantasy. . . . As parapathic behavior is common enough among the formulators of religions the world over, of magic makers, and the proposers of all sorts of social utopias, we should not be surprised, then, that Smith, as a product of his time, was caught up in this kind of psychological climate.”³⁵ The symptoms Kimball Young describes for a “parapath” depict a form of psychosis in which a patient struggles to distinguish between the real and the imaginary.³⁶

Puzzling over how Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon, Klaus J. Hansen suggested that Smith suffered from schizophrenia. “Because auditory hallucinations are very common among schizophrenics,” Hansen wrote, referring to Smith’s visions and revelations, “it has in fact been suggested that Joseph Smith may have suffered from this mental disorder.”³⁷ And throughout the pages of a 1993 article, Lawrence Foster recalled his conversations with Jungian psychoanalyst Jess Groesbeck, who suggested that Joseph Smith may have suffered from a bipolar disorder.³⁸

Plastic surgeon William D. Morain hypothesized dissociation in his 1998 book, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith Jr. and the Dissociated Mind*. Morain theorized that Joseph Smith’s childhood knee operation was his “maiden voyage into ‘dissociation’” and that “there would be

33. Jerrold S. Maxmen and Nicholas G. Ward, *Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 114.

34. Maxmen and Ward, *Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment*, 8.

35. Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt, 1954), 82–83.

36. David A. Tomb, *Psychiatry for the House Officer* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1981), 16.

37. Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 19.

38. Lawrence Foster, “The Psychology of Religious Genius: Joseph Smith and the Origins of New Religious Movements,” *Dialogue* 26, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 9–10.

many more” instances of dissociation during his lifetime.³⁹ Though Morain admits that “it cannot be known how successful Joseph’s dissociation was in blotting out the pain,” he insists that “the fantasies arising through his dissociations” tormented Joseph for the rest of his life.⁴⁰ Ostensibly, many “issues seen in *The Book of Mormon* have risen to primacy as a result of Joseph’s childhood trauma.”⁴¹

And in 1999, Robert D. Anderson focused his clinical skills on psychoanalyzing Joseph Smith. Diagnosing him with a narcissistic personality, Anderson described how Smith “used the Book of Mormon to express those [narcissistic] tendencies.”⁴² Based on the idea that stories in the Book of Mormon reflected Joseph Smith’s life, Anderson sifted through the book’s references to detect parallels between the stories and Smith’s life experiences.

Acceptance of Mental Illness Theories

Mental illness–based explanations for the Book of Mormon have yielded several alternative theories but no conclusive diagnoses. The number and variety of these explanations have probably weakened the appeal of any one of them. In addition, none of these theories is widely accepted because the diagnoses do not concur either with the historical record or with current psychological research.

The diagnosis of schizophrenia, for example, is not widely accepted by historians. Hansen himself acknowledged that such a diagnosis was weak, since aside from what could be regarded as hallucinations, “Smith clearly did not exhibit any of the other symptoms of schizophrenia.”⁴³

Other proposed conditions similarly conflict with modern diagnostic standards. DeVoto’s description of a “paranoia personality,” for instance, is probably inconsistent with today’s definition of a “paranoid personality disorder.” Its essential features are “(a) pervasive and unwarranted suspiciousness and mistrust of people, (b) hypersensitivity, and (c) emotional detachment.”⁴⁴ Patients manifesting these characteristics consis-

39. William D. Morain, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith Jr. and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998), 25.

40. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 25, 72; see also 95–96, 105, 109, 113, and 172.

41. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 105, italics in original; see also 95–96, 109, 113, and 172.

42. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith*, xxxviii.

43. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 19.

44. Maxmen and Ward, *Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment*, 391.

tently alienate those around them. As a general rule, people “keep their distance from paranoids.”⁴⁵ This explanation has largely been rejected because of Joseph Smith’s well-documented ability to gather followers.⁴⁶ Even more problematic is the label of *parapath*, which is not a medical diagnosis. The term was first suggested by German physician Wilhelm Stekel as a general classification for “neuroses and neurasthenia” but never became generally accepted.⁴⁷

To those who seek a natural explanation for the Book of Mormon, the appeal of these theories is also tempered by the inherent futility of diagnosing any historical figure based strictly on available documentation. Dr. Roy R. Grinker, who served as the chief editor of the American Medical Association’s *Archives of General Psychiatry* for seventeen years, explains:

Freud started the fashion of analyzing writers as well as historical characters such as Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, and even Moses. Many of his students have followed this pattern in writing—often brilliantly—imaginative interpretations of the neuroses and psychoses of authors, playwrights, and artists which are based on a minimum of evidence. . . . Psychoanalytic theory has contributed to literary criticism, which in itself can be an aesthetic literary exercise. Carried to excess or based on biased reports of life histories of the authors, it becomes ridiculous.⁴⁸

British cognitive psychologist Michael J. A. Howe added, “From the perspective of many scientific psychologists, this approach is regarded as outmoded, lacking a firm foundation of hard facts, based upon empirical evidence, and involving sometimes implausible theorizing.”⁴⁹

Another reason mental illness–based explanations for the Book of Mormon have not been more compelling is that mental illness generally diminishes a patient’s capacity to consistently perform complex cognitive operations. This problem arises, for instance, with the diagnosis of bipolar or manic-depressive disorders. According to the American

45. Maxmen and Ward, *Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment*, 393.

46. See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 231, 437, 557.

47. “Psychoneuroses,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 54, no. 13 (March 26, 1910): 1095.

48. Roy R. Grinker, “The Psychoanalysis of Historical Characters,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 16, no. 4 (April 1967): 389.

49. Michael J. A. Howe, “Early Lives: Prodigies and Non-Prodigies,” in *Genius and the Mind: Studies of Creativity and Temperament*, ed. Andrew Stepotie (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 99.

Psychiatric Association, a manic episode is characterized by at least three of the following symptoms:

- Increased self-esteem or grandiosity
- Decreased need for sleep
- Increased talkativeness or pressure to keep talking
- Flight of ideas or the subjective experience that thoughts are racing
- Distractibility
- Increased goal-directed activity or psychomotor agitation
- Excessive involvement in pleasurable activities with a high potential for painful consequences⁵⁰

If Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon in 1829 during a manic phase of a bipolar disorder, symptoms like a decreased need for sleep and an increase in confidence and energy would have been beneficial. However, most of the other symptoms—including a flight of ideas, racing thoughts, psychomotor agitation, and so forth—would have competed with the cognitive function and creativity needed to produce a lengthy, coherent text on the fly. The text of the Book of Mormon is too coherent to be the product of one or more manic episodes, and none of the witnesses of the translation process left evidence that mania played a role. Psychiatrist Robert D. Anderson rejected this theory in a 1994 article.⁵¹

A similar problem arises with dissociative conditions. Though they can arise from a trauma,⁵² which Joseph Smith may have experienced, such disorders predominantly feature “a disturbance or alteration in normal integrative functions of consciousness, identity, or memory.”⁵³ The resulting pathologies include multiple personalities, amnesia,

50. Steve Titmarsh, “Characteristics and Duration of Mania: Implications for Continuation Treatment,” *Progress in Neurology and Psychiatry* 17, no. 3 (May/June 2013): 27.

51. Robert D. Anderson explained: “How does any form of Bipolar Affective Disorder explain the Book or [of] Mormon, Smith’s revelations, or the Book of Abraham? At best, it only provides Smith with thoughtful introspection when depressed and energy when hypomanic. It contributes little to the explanation for these ‘miracles.’ . . . I do not think any single personality type will adequately explain Joseph Smith.” Robert D. Anderson, “Toward an Introduction to a Psychobiography of Joseph Smith,” *Dialogue* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 270–71, see also 268.

52. Dianne Hales and Robert E. Hales, *Caring for the Mind: The Comprehensive Guide to Mental Health* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 443–44.

53. Maxmen and Ward, *Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment*, 311.

depersonalization, and fugue (forgetting one's own identity).⁵⁴ Any of these symptoms would have hindered, not helped, Smith's ability to create the Book of Mormon.

In summary, though some conditions could enhance a person's native abilities by diminishing feelings of stress related to reality testing or by manically energizing their systems, such disorders could not bestow the individual with capabilities he or she did not already have. Additionally, evidences that Joseph Smith manifested a psychiatric pathology while dictating the Book of Mormon are absent from the historical record.

AUTOMATIC WRITING THEORY

Automatic writing, sometimes called "trance writing," has also been advanced as a theory to explain the origin of the Book of Mormon.⁵⁵ According to psychiatrist Ian P. Stevenson, who served as the chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, "The term 'automatic writing' is used to designate writing that is done without the writer being conscious of what he is writing. . . . Usually the writing proceeds rapidly, sometimes far more so than the subject's normal writing does."⁵⁶ Consistent with these observations, Lawrence Foster wrote, "The Book of Mormon is probably best understood, at least in part, as a trance-related production."⁵⁷ Harold Bloom seems to agree, affirming that "magical trance-states were involved" while Joseph was dictating the Book of Mormon.⁵⁸

For some automatic writing advocates, the seer stone or Urim and Thummim was a key component. T. B. H. Stenhouse wrote: "Joseph Smith gazed upon that Urim and Thummim until his mind became psychologized, and the impressions that he received he dictated to his scribe." More recently, G. St. John Stott expressed the same opinion, quoting W. N. Schors: "Staring for some time at a shiny surface . . . [induces] a loss of conscious and voluntary activity." Stott added, "At

54. Hales and Hales, *Caring for the Mind*, 443–63.

55. See Scott C. Dunn, "Spirit Writing: Another Look at the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 10, no. 6 (June 1985): 17–26.

56. Ian Stevenson, "Some Comments on Automatic Writing," *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 72, no. 4 (October 1978): 316.

57. Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 296; see also 294–97 n. 15.

58. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 86.

this stage of withdrawal from conscious thought [Smith's mind] threw up hypnagogic images which were beyond words. Smith found more substantial inspiration: moments of clairvoyance which let him (he believed) reach out in space and time; and, when he emptied his mind, words which he thought were the word of God."⁵⁹

The term *automatic writing* is used to describe two potentially different phenomena, one of which is supernatural and the other natural. For hundreds of years, automatic writers have applied the term to spontaneous writing they attributed to supernatural sources. More recently, the term has also been used as a label for a psychological diagnostic process. Both theories will be discussed here.

Supernatural Theory of Automatic Writing

For centuries, spirit mediums have reported that processes they call "channeling," "spirit writing," and "automatic writing" could be used to contact supernatural forces.⁶⁰ Irving Litvag explains, "One type of psychic activity, known as 'automatic writing,' began to attract attention through the activities of a group of mediums, mostly English, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Automatic writing involves the reception and transcription of various types of communications in written form. The medium claims to have no control over the writing that is produced."⁶¹

Studies show that some instances of automatic writing have similarities to Joseph Smith's dictation of the Book of Mormon.⁶² The books and manuscripts produced through automatic writing, for example, may be long and intricate. Automatic writers have universally attributed their words to otherworldly sources like deity, deceased persons, ancient records, spirit guides, or nondescript mystical communications. The complexity

59. G. St. John Stott, "The Seer Stone Controversy: Writing the *Book of Mormon*," in "Literature and Altered States of Consciousness (Part I)," special issue, *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 47.

60. Robert A. Rees, "The Book of Mormon and Automatic Writing," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006): 5, 9.

61. Irving Litvag, *Singer in the Shadows: The Strange Story of Patience Worth* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 24.

62. Dunn, "Spirit Writing," 21–23; Scott C. Dunn, "Automaticity and the Dictation of the Book of Mormon," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 27–30.

of the automatic writings may greatly transcend authors' apparent intellectual abilities, as indicated by their education and writing experience.⁶³ Lastly, such a process does not follow the normal writing methodology in which the author prewrites by first researching and perhaps making an outline, then writes, and finally rewrites, including editing and revising sometimes multiple drafts. With automatic writing, the words are instead produced instantly, with no obvious prewriting preparation or later revisions, and go to the publisher with minimum modification.

The most common comparison between Joseph Smith's creation of the Book of Mormon and automatic writing involves Pearl Curran, who wrote *The Sorry Tale* in 1917. Four years earlier, Curran had experimented with a Ouija board, and among the messages spelled out were communications from an entity calling herself Patience Worth: "Many moons ago I lived. Again I come—Patience Worth my name."⁶⁴ In July 1915, Patience began communicating the text of *The Sorry Tale*, with Pearl Curran as medium. Casper S. Yost described the process:

[Pearl Curran] sits down with the ouija board as she might sit down to a typewriter, and the receipt of the communications begins with no more ceremony than a typist would observe. Mrs. Curran has had no experience in literary composition and has made no study of literature, ancient or modern. Nor, it may be added, has she made any study of the history, the religions, or the social customs of the period of this story, nor of the geography or topography of the regions in which it is laid. . . .

But as *The Sorry Tale* progressed she gave more and more time to it, producing on many evenings from 2,500 to 3,500 words of the tale in a sitting of an hour and a half or two hours. In one evening 5,000 words were dictated, covering the account of the Crucifixion. At all times, however, it came with great rapidity, taxing the chirographic speed of Mr. Curran to the utmost to put it down in abbreviated longhand. . . .

Each time the story was picked up at the point where work was stopped at the previous sitting, without a break in the continuity of the narrative, without the slightest hesitation, and without the necessity of a reference to the closing words of the last preceding instalment.⁶⁵

63. See Brian C. Hales, "Automatic Writing and the Book of Mormon: An Update," *Dialogue* 52, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 1–35.

64. Litvag, *Singer in the Shadows*, 18.

65. Patience Worth, communicated through Mrs. John H. [Pearl] Curran, *The Sorry Tale: A Story of the Time of Christ*, ed. Casper S. Yost (New York: Henry Holt, 1917), iii–iv.

The book was published later that year apparently with little or no editing. Concerning *The Sorry Tale*, a reviewer wrote: “The long and intricate tale is constructed with the precision and accuracy of a master hand. . . . It is a wonderful, a beautiful, and a noble book, but it is not easy to read. . . . Its archaic language and its frequently indirect modes of expression make necessary constantly the closest attention.”⁶⁶

Several specific parallels between the creation of *The Sorry Tale* and that of the Book of Mormon can be identified. The books are of similar length and involve Christian themes. Each process was facilitated by a mystical instrument through which words were conveyed—a Ouija board for Pearl Curran and a seer stone for Joseph Smith. The dictation speeds are also similar. While Curran spaced out her sessions, the number of words generated on her most productive days are similar to the average number of words dictated by Joseph Smith and recorded by Oliver Cowdery. Witnesses reported that neither Pearl Curran nor Joseph Smith required scribes to read back the previous portion before continuing on where they left off. The lack of editing is another parallel. Neither Pearl Curran nor Joseph Smith would regard those facts as indicative of a natural explanation for their writings, however, since both believed they were empowered supernaturally.

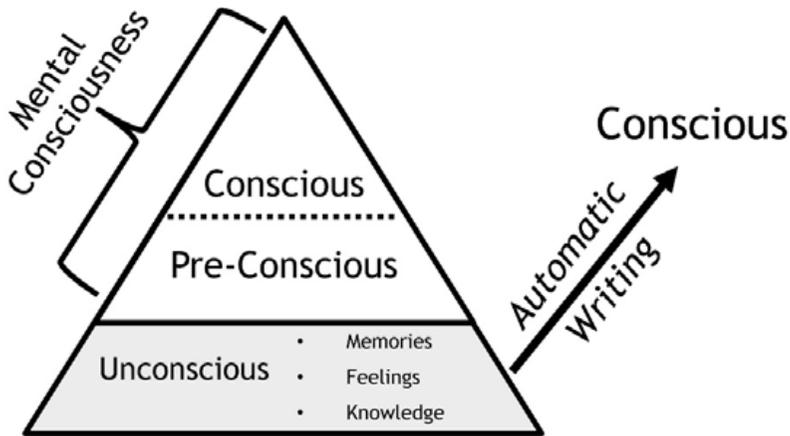
Natural Theory of Automatic Writing

In the late nineteenth century, the burgeoning field of psychology sought to both explicate automatic writing and adopt it as a diagnostic tool. Sigmund Freud, who posited that the human mind has three parts,⁶⁷ described how mental consciousness can be thought of as existing in two sections: the *conscious*, which we use to actively think, and the *preconscious*, which stores information that is readily available to the *conscious*.⁶⁸

66. “The Sorry Tale,” *Theosophical Outlook*, August 11, 1917, 250–51. Richard Lloyd Anderson reviewed the content of *The Sorry Tale*. See “Imitation Gospels and Christ’s Book of Mormon Ministry,” in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1986), 65–67.

67. See Sigmund Freud, *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 49–50.

68. Calvin S. Hall, *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* (New York: Mentor, 1954), 57.



Automatic writing can supposedly reveal the contents of the unconscious.

A third area of the mind, called the *unconscious*, is a “repository of personal guilt feelings and forbidden wishes.”⁶⁹ A controversial topic in the field of psychology, the unconscious was initially described as a portion of our minds that is continually inaccessible to our consciousness, and “any attempt to get at its content is met by more or less strong resistances.”⁷⁰ This view is considered overly simplistic by more modern researchers, but the basic model has been used to explain the origin of lengthy automatic writings, including the Book of Mormon.

The earliest researchers on hypnosis and the unconscious were the first to connect these topics to automatic writing. In 1923, psychotherapist J. H. van der Hoop explained that a useful “means of enquiring into the contents of the unconscious mind was afforded by automatic writing.”⁷¹ Several years later, Anita M. Muhl, author of *Automatic Writing*, further explicated: “The use of automatic writing in conjunction with psychoanalysis is invaluable in getting at unconscious processes quickly.”⁷² “Automatic writing (with either a planchette on a Ouija board, or a pencil on a paper),” wrote psychologist Herman H. Spitz in 1997, “is an outlet for thoughts that are consciously unexpressed.”⁷³

69. T. L. Brink, “Joseph Smith: The Verdict of Depth Psychology,” *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 79.

70. William A. White, “The Unconscious,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 2 (1915): 23.

71. Johannes Hermanus van der Hoop, *Character and the Unconscious: A Critical Exposition of the Psychology of Freud and of Jung* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923), 6.

72. Anita M. Muhl, *Automatic Writing* (Dresden: Theodor Steinkopff, 1930), 96.

73. Herman H. Spitz, *Nonconscious Movements: From Mystical Messages to Facilitated Communication* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), 76.

Expanding on this theory, Scott Dunn, author of “Automaticity and the Dictation of the Book of Mormon,” declares, “Just as individuals under hypnosis have been able to quote lengthy passages in foreign languages which they heard at the age of three, so have automatic writers produced detailed information from books that they have read but in some cases cannot remember reading.”⁷⁴ In a hypnotic state, it is theorized, a person’s unconscious is more than sufficient to generate lengthy texts like *The Sorry Tale* or the Book of Mormon.

In her 2016 book, *Revelatory Events: Three Case Studies of the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths*, Ann Taves, professor of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, explicates this theory in greater detail than ever before. She acknowledged that Joseph Smith’s dictation came as a “flow of words that seem[ed] to arise outside consciousness.”⁷⁵ For Taves, the seer stone “triggered” a “formal hypnotic induction,” prompting Joseph Smith to enter “an imaginative storytelling mode” that greatly enhanced his “imaginative skills.”⁷⁶ Thereafter, he was able to “dissociate control over the flow of words and automate the process so that it flowed quickly and smoothly.”⁷⁷ Through hypnosis, a person like Smith “could tap into levels of mental activity that were not available to the consciousness” while awake.⁷⁸ In the “imaginative storytelling mode,” Joseph Smith’s abilities transcended what he “would have been able to do volitionally,” or consciously.⁷⁹

Acceptance of Automatic Writing Theories

Although hypnosis can provide mental relaxation to overcome inner anxieties hindering a subject’s creative output,⁸⁰ the naturalistic theory of automatic writing is not widely accepted. Scholarship has demonstrated that task proficiency, creativity, cognition, and memory are

74. Dunn, “Automaticity and the Dictation of the Book of Mormon,” 34.

75. Ann Taves, *Revelatory Events: Three Case Studies of the Emergence of New Spiritual Paths* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 256; see also 249–50.

76. Taves, *Revelatory Events*, 253, 258–59.

77. Taves, *Revelatory Events*, 257–58.

78. Taves, *Revelatory Events*, 252.

79. Taves, *Revelatory Events*, 253, 258.

80. According to James R. Council and others, “Hypnosis facilitates deep involvement with an activity and allows us to lose ourselves in the creative process, ignoring distractions.” James R. Council and others, “Hypnotic Enhancement of Creative Drawing,” *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* 55, no. 4 (2007): 469.

generally not improved by accessing the unconscious through hypnosis. Regarding task proficiency, for instance, J. F. Kihlstrom of the University of California explains: “In general, it appears that hypnotic suggestions for increased muscular strength, endurance, sensory acuity, or learning do not exceed what can be accomplished by motivated subjects outside hypnosis.”⁸¹

The effect of hypnosis on creativity has been studied by University of Waterloo Professor Patricia Bowers, who reported, “Although a feeling of effortless writing might accompany creative work, it does not itself cause the work to be more creative.”⁸² Intellectual capacity is also not improved through hypnosis: “Although concept activation and primitive associative learning could occur unconsciously, anything complex requiring flexible responding, integration of stimuli, or higher mental processes could not.”⁸³ And finally, several scholars have reported on hypnosis’s inability to improve memory. For example, Graham F. Wagstaff and his coauthors concluded, “Hypnotic procedures do not reliably improve the accuracy of memory to a level above that achievable under nonhypnotic conditions.”⁸⁴

81. J. F. Kihlstrom, “Hypnosis,” in *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*, 2d ed., ed. Howard S. Friedman (Oxford: Academic Press, 2016), 363; see also Devin B. Terhune and others, “Hypnosis and Top-Down Regulation of Consciousness,” *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 81 (2017): 64.

82. Patricia Bowers, “Hypnosis and Creativity: The Search for the Missing Link,” *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 88, no. 5 (1979): 569; see also Steven Jay Lynn and Harry Sivec, “The Hypnotizable Subject as Creative Problem-Solving Agent,” in *Contemporary Hypnosis Research*, ed. Erika Fromm and Michael R. Nash (New York: Guilford Press, 1992), 332; and Julie Regan, “Painting Like Picasso: Can Hypnosis Enhance Creativity?” *Australian Journal of Clinical Hypnotherapy & Hypnosis* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 7.

83. John A. Bargh and Ezequiel Morsella, “The Unconscious Mind,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3, no. 1 (2008): 74; see also Randy Drue Cole, “Increasing Reading and Test Taking Skills with Hypnosis and Suggestion” (PhD diss., Texas A&M University, 1976), iv; Peter Farvolden and Erik Z. Woody, “Hypnosis, Memory, and Frontal Executive Functioning,” *The International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* 52, no. 1 (2004): 19; Peter W. Sheehan, “Memory and Hypnosis—General Considerations,” in *International Handbook of Clinical Hypnosis*, ed. Graham D. Burrows, Robb O. Stanelly, and Peter B. Bloom (Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons, 2001), 58; and Anthony G. Greenwald, “New Look 3: Unconscious Cognition Reclaimed,” *American Psychologist* 47, no. 6 (June 1992): 775.

84. Graham F. Wagstaff and others, “Facilitating Memory with Hypnosis, Focused Meditation, and Eye Closure,” *International Journal of Clinical and*

These brief citations are representative of dozens of additional references supporting the conclusion that hypnosis does not endow the subject with memory or cognitive abilities that are not present consciously. These overall limitations weaken the natural automatic writing theory.

JOSEPH SMITH'S INTELLECT THEORY

The fifth theory—the “intellect theory”—posits that the Book of Mormon text was produced completely or almost completely through Joseph Smith’s intellectual ability. This was the first naturalistic explanation that critics actively promoted; between the Book of Mormon’s 1830 publication and 1834, naturalists attributed the text to his intellect, usually by berating both. Their argument could be summarized as “Joseph Smith is dumb, and the Book of Mormon is dumb.”

A major difference between the intellect theory of Joseph Smith’s day and the one promoted today is that today the Book of Mormon is generally acknowledged as a complex text that could not have been produced without some intellectual labor. Historian Daniel Walker Howe reflected this view when he said, “True or not, the Book of Mormon is a powerful epic written on a grand scale with a host of characters, a narrative of human struggle and conflict, of divine intervention, heroic good and atrocious evil, of prophecy, morality, and law. Its narrative structure is complex. . . . The Book of Mormon should rank among the great achievements of American literature.”⁸⁵

Recognizing the Book of Mormon’s inherent literary complexity requires an elevation of Joseph Smith’s presumed intellectual abilities. Fawn Brodie explained, “Never having written a line of fiction,

Experimental Hypnosis 52, no. 4 (2004): 434; see also Reed Maxwell, Steven Jay Lynn, and Liam Condon, “Hypnosis, Hypnotic Suggestibility, Memory, and Involvement in Films,” *Consciousness and Cognition* 33 (2015): 172; Joseph Barber, “Hypnosis and Memory: A Hazardous Connection,” *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 19, no. 4 (October 1997): 306; Kihlstrom, “Hypnosis,” 363; Steven J. Lynn, “Hypnosis,” *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 2d ed. (Boston: Elsevier, 2012), 378–84; and Terhune and others, “Hypnosis and Top-Down Regulation of Consciousness,” 64.

85. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848*, Oxford History of the United States (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 314; see also Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830–1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 19–20; and Gordon S. Wood, “Evangelical America and Early Mormonism,” *New York History* 61, no. 4 (1980): 381.

he [Joseph Smith] laid out for himself a task that would have given the most experienced novelist pause. But possibly because of this very inexperience he plunged into the story.”⁸⁶ More recently, the intellect theory is reflected throughout Dan Vogel’s 715-page biography, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*.⁸⁷ These biographers are impressed by the intellectual challenges Joseph Smith would have encountered and do not question whether he had the ability to overcome them. “The Book of Mormon was a remarkable accomplishment for a farm boy,” Vogel observed.⁸⁸

Vogel’s description of the intellect theory portrays the dictation of the Book of Mormon as “more-or-less [a] stream-of-consciousness composition,” recited “mostly impromptu and without the aid of notes.”⁸⁹ This is supported by multiple accounts that describe the dictation.⁹⁰

- Joseph Smith and his scribes worked with dictations of twenty to thirty words at a time.⁹¹
- The scribe immediately read back the text to ensure accuracy.
- No books, manuscripts, or other documents were consulted during the dictation.⁹²
- After breaks, he would start where he left off without reading back the previous portion.⁹³

86. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 49.

87. Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

88. Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, 466.

89. Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, xix, 120.

90. See Welch, “Miraculous Timing of the Translation,” 126–227.

91. Royal Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 67–84.

92. David Whitmer, quoted in *Chicago Times*, October 17, 1881; Emma Hale Smith, quoted in Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, February 14, 1879, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Mo.; and in Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald* 26, no. 19 (October 1, 1879): 289–90.

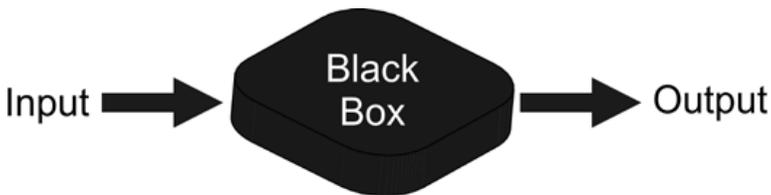
93. See Emma Smith’s comments in Edmund C. Briggs, “A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856,” *Journal of History* 9, no. 454 (October 1916): 454.

- The vast word strings of the original draft were eventually typeset into approximately 6,852 sentences averaging 39.3 words each. Joseph afterward did not rearrange the sequence of a single sentence.⁹⁴
- No rewriting or content editing occurred prior to sending the manuscript to the printer.⁹⁵

The intellect theory posits that Smith created the text in the same way other authors have produced long fictional works, except that he recited the words to scribes, rather than writing them on paper. This theory presumes that the required conscious and unconscious workings of his mind as he spoke the text would have resembled the general mental activities of writers in the past as they composed their books and narratives.

Joseph Smith as a Black Box

By denying the possibility of supernatural influences, naturalists promoting the intellect theory use the Book of Mormon as evidence that Joseph Smith must have possessed the necessary abilities to create the book, even though they do not address *how* he created it. A potential weakness of this approach is that it treats Smith like a “black box”—an object understood in terms of its inputs and outputs in which the internal workings remain a mystery.⁹⁶



A black box is evaluated in terms of inputs and outputs.

94. Carmack, comment on Hales, “Curiously Unique: Joseph Smith as Author of the Book of Mormon.”

95. Brian C. Hales, “Why Joseph Smith’s Dictation of the Book of Mormon Is Simply Jaw-Dropping,” *LDS Living*, November 10, 2018, <http://www.ldsliving.com/Why-Joseph-Smiths-Dictation-of-the-Book-of-Mormon-Is-Simply-Jaw-Dropping/s/89568>; see also Brian C. Hales, “Changing Critics’ Criticisms of Book of Mormon Changes,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 28 (2018): 49–64.

96. In his 1926 doctoral thesis, the German scientist Wilhelm Cauer may have been the first to describe a black box. See Emil Cauer, Wolfgang Mathis, and Rainer Pauli, “Life and Work of Wilhelm Cauer (1900–1945),” *Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Symposium of Mathematical Theory of Networks and Systems* (Perpignan, France: Université de Perpignan, 2000), 4.

The black box approach to Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon emphasizes input elements like the KJV Bible (including multiple chapters from Isaiah) and other publications such as the 1823 book *View of the Hebrews*.⁹⁷ It also posits that Smith borrowed storylines from his environment and parallel phrases from books he had presumably read.⁹⁸ Naturalists also find evidences in the output side that, for them, demonstrate the Book of Mormon could not be historical and could only have been produced by a nineteenth-century author. The most common critiques involve DNA, archeology, and alleged anachronisms.⁹⁹



Joseph Smith as a black box.

97. Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews; Exhibiting the Destruction of Jerusalem; the Certain Restoration of Judah and Israel; the Present State of Judah and Israel; and an Address of the Prophet Isaiah Relative to Their Restoration* (Poultney, Vt.: Smith and Shute, 1823). Other publications that reportedly influenced Joseph Smith include *The Golden Pot* by E. T. A. Hoffmann (Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002], 135–74); the Apocrypha (Jerald and Sandra Tanner, “Book of Mormon Challenge,” *Salt Lake City Messenger* 107 [October 2006]: 10); and Captain Kidd stories (Ronald V. Huggins, “From Captain Kidd’s Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing *Dramatis Personae* in Early Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: 17–42).

98. See, for example, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Joseph Smith’s Plagiarism of the Bible in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 2010); Palmer, *Insider’s View of Mormon Origins*, 36–93; Wunderli, *Imperfect Book*, 69, 82–95, 106–7, 279–315, 325; David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of The Book of Mormon*, 2d ed. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000), 86, 106–19, 209, 285; Rick Grunder, *Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source* (LaFayette, N.Y.: Rick Grunder Books, 2008), 38.

99. See Simon G. Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004); Thomas W. Murphy, “Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics,” in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 47–77; Deanne G. Matheny, “Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography,” in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 269–328; Wunderli, *Imperfect Book*, 154–55, 171–72, 279–99.

Ignoring the black box avoids the labor of opening it to ask how Joseph was able to produce all the words in such a short period of time. The writing and dictation models discussed below are examples of what might be going on inside the black box in Smith's case. Naturalists who dismiss the applicability of the creative dictation model will need to replace it or acknowledge their willingness to leave the black box unopened.

A Creative Writing Model

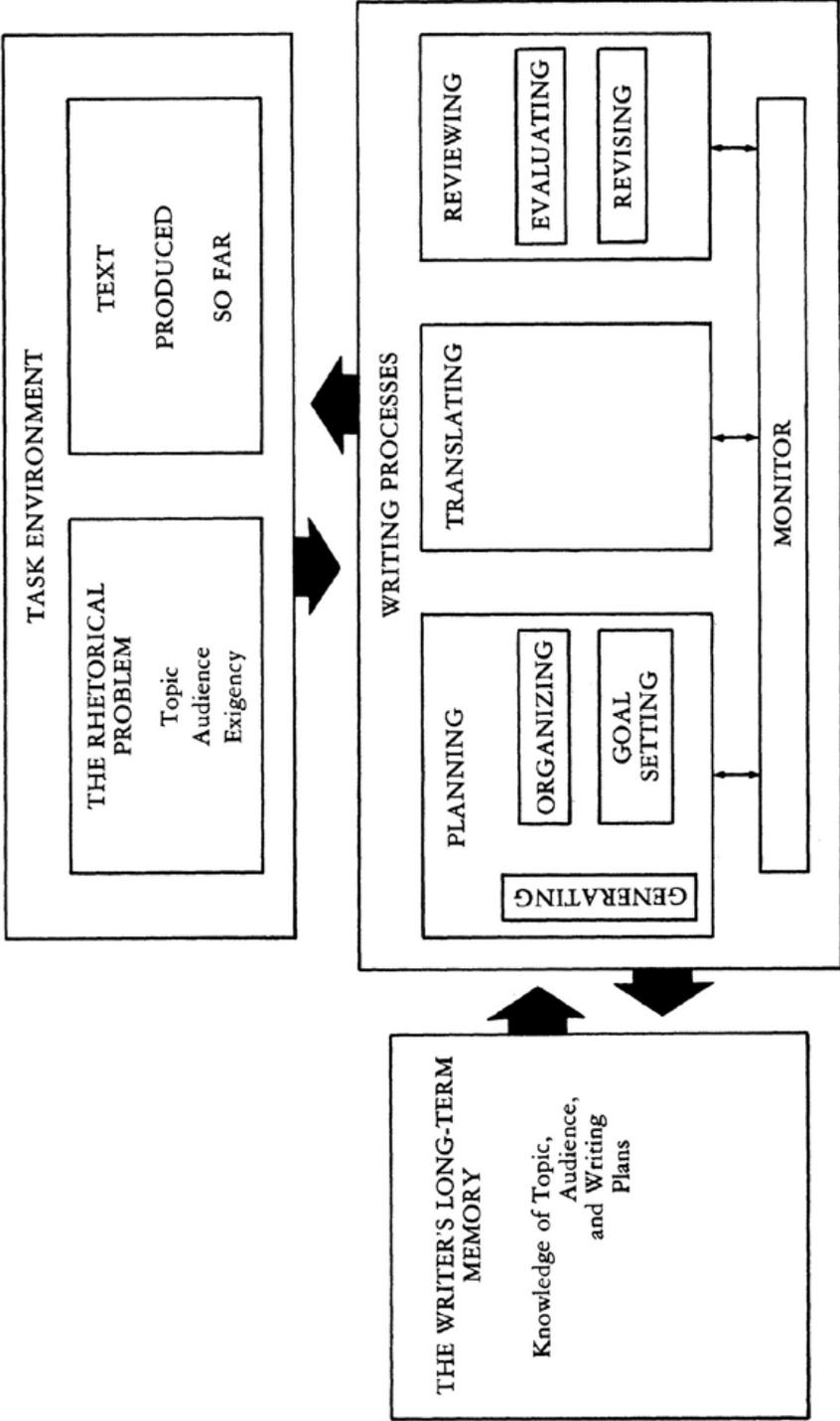
The intellect theory may be better understood by looking at models for how writing is created. Traditionally, the process through which authors create their lengthy novels is called *creative writing*. The term *creative* in these instances refers to works that are imaginative or fictional, as well as a person's ability to create or generate writing or dictation that could be of any genre. Creative writing has been studied extensively in recent decades, and researchers have produced sophisticated psychological theories that describe the mental activities of authors writing their manuscripts.

In a landmark 1981 article entitled "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," Linda Flower and John R. Hayes—professor and emeritus professor, respectively, at Carnegie Mellon University—reported on a study in which they asked writers to "verbalize everything that goes through their minds as they write." They recorded what the subjects said and later analyzed the findings.¹⁰⁰ They theorized: "The process of writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes, which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing."¹⁰¹ The intellect theory assumes Smith employed these "distinctive thinking processes," or something similar, while composing and dictating the Book of Mormon.

To illustrate their findings, Flower and Hayes created a model that uses boxes and arrows to identify specific cognitive activities and to show how they might interact within the mind of an author who is composing written text.

100. Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 32, no. 4 (December 1981), 368.

101. Flower and Hayes, "Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," 366.



Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 32, no. 4 (December 1981): 370. Copyright 1981 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted with permission.

The Flower-Hayes writing model comprises three boxes. The *Task Environment* “includes all of those things outside of the writer’s skin”¹⁰²—that is, nonmental components of writing that exist external to the author’s mind. It includes two sub-boxes: the “rhetorical problem” and the “text produced so far.” The “rhetorical problem” represents the specific questions that “writers attempt to ‘solve’ or respond to.”¹⁰³ It also identifies the overarching topic to be addressed, while taking into account the needs of the target audience and “the writer’s own goals in writing.”¹⁰⁴

Once the mental ideas are translated into sentences, they become what Flower and Hayes call the “text produced so far.” That text is continually evaluated for pertinence concerning the “rhetorical problem,” but more importantly, it is also constantly affecting “writing processes,” including provoking evaluation and revision. Revising the text that has already been written is “an important part of writing [because] it constantly leads to new planning or a ‘re-vision’ of what one wanted to say.”¹⁰⁵

The box titled *Writing Processes* circumscribes the interactions occurring within the author’s mind as words are created and become the “text produced so far.” Four specific parts are illustrated: planning, translating, reviewing, and the monitor.

Planning: According to Flower and Hayes, “In the **planning** process writers form an internal *representation* of the knowledge that will be used in writing.”¹⁰⁶ The planning process encompasses three specific activities that interact with one another.

- **Generating:** Ideas are “generated” from information that may already be “well developed and organized *in memory*.” On the other hand, “one may generate only fragmentary, unconnected, even contradictory, thoughts.”¹⁰⁷ Ideas in the generating phase exist across a wide range of development, from rudimentary ideas to refined sentences.

102. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 369.

103. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 369.

104. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 369.

105. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 376.

106. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 372, bold and italics in original.

107. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 372, italics in original.

- Organizing: “The process of organizing,” contend Flower and Hayes, “appears to play an important part in creative thinking and discovery since it is capable of grouping ideas and forming new concepts.”¹⁰⁸
- Goal setting: Goal setting is a “little-studied but major, aspect of the **planning** process” because “setting goals is an important part of ‘being creative.’”¹⁰⁹ As they write, authors continually generate and achieve a large variety of goals. Smaller goals come and go as they motivate the author to complete each mini-step on the way to completing a text.

Translating: Translating “is essentially the process of putting ideas into visible language.” This box represents what might be called (using computer language) the author’s *central processing unit* (or CPU). Here, input from all the processes and subprocesses are integrated within the mind of the writer to create the text that will be recorded in an external document. Flower and Hayes explain: “The process of **translating** requires the writer to juggle all the special demands of written English.” Those demands lie “on a spectrum from generic and formal demands through syntactic and lexical ones down to the motor tasks of forming letters.”¹¹⁰ The heavy lifting of creative writing occurs here.

Reviewing: Flower and Hayes state, “**Reviewing** depends on two subprocesses: **evaluating** and **revising**.”¹¹¹ It occurs in two stages during creative writing. *Internal* reviewing happens continuously as words are being chosen and translated into phrases in the author’s brain. Mental subprocesses constantly evaluate and revise that content before it is written. *External* reviewing occurs consciously as a “process in which writers choose to read what they have written [text produced so far] either as a springboard to further translating or with an eye to systematically evaluating and/or revising the text. These periods of planned reviewing frequently lead to new cycles of planning and translating.”¹¹²

Monitor: “The **monitor** functions as a writing strategist,” assert Flower and Hayes, “which determines when the writer moves from one process

108. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 372.

109. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 372–73, bold in original.

110. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 373, bold in original.

111. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 374, bold in original.

112. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 374.

to the next. For example, it determines how long a writer will continue generating ideas before attempting to write prose.”¹¹³

The third box—*The Writer’s Long-Term Memory*—is located external to the *Writing Processes* box because it includes “outside resources such as books,” as well as the writer’s acquired knowledge and experiences. It exists as “a storehouse of knowledge about the topic and audience, as well as knowledge of writing plans and problem representations.”¹¹⁴

A Creative Dictation Model

In order to reflect Joseph Smith’s creative process of reciting the Book of Mormon, as predicted by the intellect theory, I have adapted the Flower-Hayes model to describe an author’s experience of dictating, instead of writing, a book.

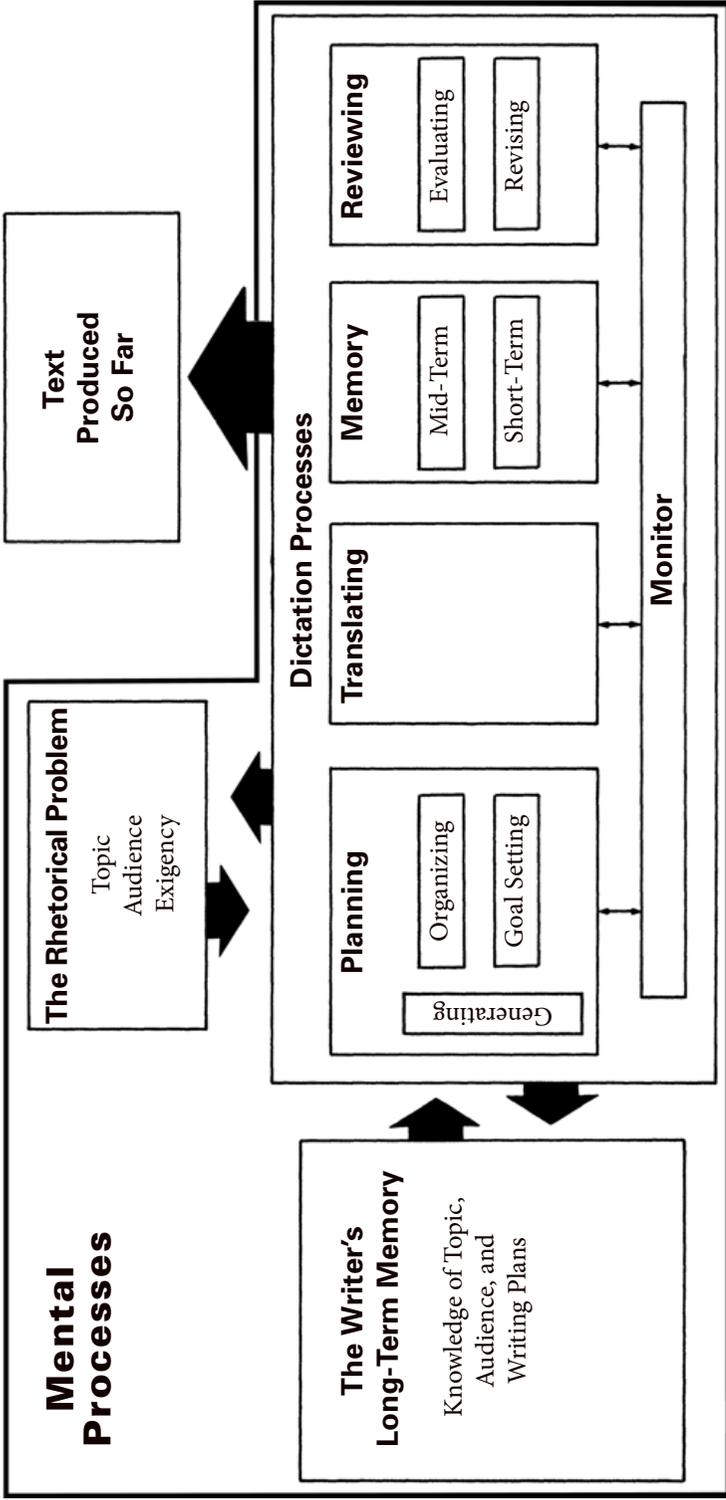
Many of the mental activities identified by Flower and Hayes—generating, organizing, goal setting, evaluating, and revising—seem to apply to both writing and dictation. Similar to the writing model, dictation begins by addressing the rhetorical problem (the author’s goals and the needs of the audience) while the author’s long-term memory provides basic outlines and pertinent information. Once the recitation begins, a complex interaction ensues in which ideas are simultaneously generated (through planning), modulated (based on data from the mid- and short-term memory), and mentally reviewed and revised before being translated into spoken words and sentences. The dictated text is recorded and then exists outside of the author’s brain and is not modified further.

Despite the similarities, there are several differences between the creative dictation model and the Flower-Hayes diagram. First, the former brings all of the boxes and processes except “text produced so far” into a new box labeled “mental processes” since all the steps of composition must occur in real time within the mind of the author. The new diagram also relocates the rhetorical problem inside the author’s mind.

A second modification is the increased reliance on memory, including short-term, midterm, and long-term memory. During dictation, anything interjected into the text must be recalled at the time it is needed. This unavoidably increases the memory burden at every level of text synthesis. An additional memory process box has been inserted into the dictation model to represent this expanded cognitive function.

113. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 374, bold in original.

114. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 371.



A creative dictation model, modified from Flower and Hayes's creative writing model.

Creative dictation also taxes long-term memory more than creative writing because it eliminates access to external sources, such as outlines, research materials, notes, quotations, books, and maps. While the quantity of the material recalled will vary by genre and length of the work being composed, the role of long-term memory can be significant. Eighteenth-century lexicographer Samuel Johnson explained a general principle: “The greatest part of a writer’s time is spent in reading, in order to write: a man will turn over half a library to make one book.”¹¹⁵ To be successful, creative dictation may require preloading vast amounts of information into long-term memory prior to beginning the recitation.

Beyond the enhanced responsibilities of long-term memory, the first words of the dictation trigger additional memory activity. Mid-term memory begins storing all of the “text produced so far,” a small database at first, which expands with every new phrase spoken. Flower and Hayes explain that “each word in the growing text determines and limits the choices of what can come next.”¹¹⁶ In order to create a coherent narrative, the dynamics of choosing the two hundred thousandth word cannot completely ignore the twenty thousandth word, the two thousandth word, or any word that has been spoken up to that point. As the dictation enlarges, the midterm memory is increasingly tasked with maintaining a consistent message throughout the fabric of the text.

In forming the very first words of the manuscript, the short-term memory in the author’s brain activates. Its role is to retain in the author’s consciousness the words and sentences just spoken long enough for them to be cross-referenced with the potential lexical and syntactic choices the author confronts in wordsmithing the phrases about to be spoken. In other words, short-term memory’s primary responsibility is maintaining word-to-word and sentence-to-sentence coherency.

The third important difference between creative writing and creative dictation is illustrated by the large one-way arrow from the “dictation process” box to the “text produced so far” box. In the dictation model, when “translating” finally creates the verbalized text, its work is done. No revising of the spoken narrative occurs. This unburdens the translating process thereafter but intensifies the need to get the dictation right the first time.

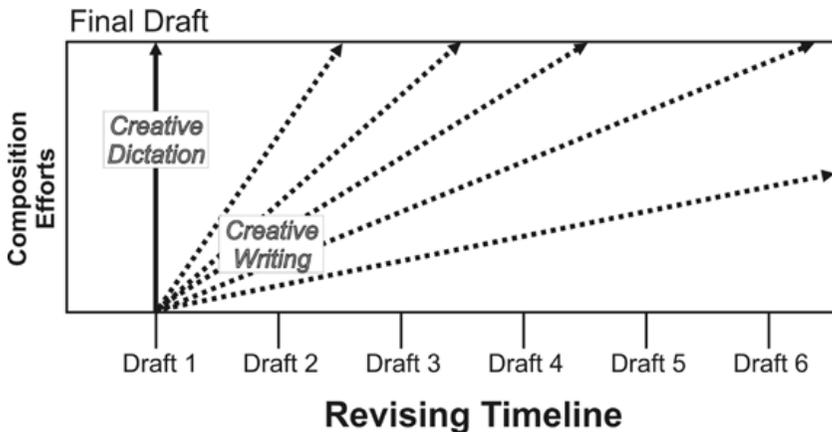
115. Samuel Johnson, quoted in James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (London: Henry Baldwin, 1791), 476.

116. Flower and Hayes, “Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” 371.

Eliminating the external revision stage of composition is a somewhat dramatic deviation away from standard creative writing techniques. In her college textbook, *Steps to Writing Well*, Jean Wyrick explains:

The absolute necessity of revision cannot be overemphasized. All good writers rethink, rearrange, and rewrite large portions of their prose. . . . Revision is a *thinking process* that occurs any time you are working on a writing project. It means looking at your writing with a “fresh eye”—that is, “reseeing” your writing in ways that will enable you to make more effective choices throughout your essay. . . . Revision means making important decisions about the best ways to focus, organize, develop, clarify, and emphasize your ideas. . . . Virtually all writers revise after “reseeing” a draft in its entirety.¹¹⁷

Though not reflected in the diagrams, the lack of an editing stage in creative dictation changes the inherent timing of the final draft deadline when compared to creative writing. Writers may have a cutoff date for their manuscripts from publishers or college instructors. With creative dictation, however, the final deadline occurs at the moment each word is communicated.¹¹⁸



Contrasting creative dictation and creative writing composition timelines.

117. Jean Wyrick, *Steps to Writing Well*, 9th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2014), 91–92, italics in original.

118. Though Joseph Smith made numerous grammar and spelling changes in the 1837 and 1840 editions of the Book of Mormon, neither he nor others did any content editing or even minor reworking of the paragraphs. See Hales, “Changing Critics’ Criticisms of Book of Mormon Changes,” 49–63.

For several reasons, creative dictation is more challenging than creative writing. The associated memory burden and the inability to revise the previously composed text are constraints that may explain why other authors (with the possible exception of automatic writers and Joseph Smith) in the past have evidently never chosen creative dictation as a way to compose lengthy volumes.

To cohere to the demands outlined in this dictation model, the intellect theory speculates that in the years prior to 1828, Smith was involved with multiple undocumented activities that preloaded his long-term memory with data. Ostensibly, he memorized parts of the King James Bible and multiple other books, from which he could later recall parallel phrases. Visits to bookstores and libraries to view maps and encyclopedias along with his frequent attendance at religious revivals and camp meetings provided information that was mentally stored. By mentally synthesizing this information, he conceptually archived and materialized outlines of the eventual content of the Book of Mormon.¹¹⁹

The intellect theory then affirms that once dictation began on April 7, 1829, the elements stored in Joseph Smith's memory fed into the cognitive-processing part of his brain, where he manipulated multiple levels of data simultaneously to produce coherent sentences without subsequent revisions. He repeated this process until mid-June, when all of the 269,320 words had been spoken and recorded by scribes.

The dictation process would have also required Joseph Smith to manifest a vigorous short-term memory capable of rapidly transferring information. Creating each phrase and paragraph in succession without the need to resequence any sentences of the Book of Mormon after dictating represents a high level of short-term memory function. Joseph's midterm memory would have been responsible for keeping track of more than 425 geographical relationships of over 175 individuals and groups who existed in at least 125 different topographical locations.¹²⁰ Accompanying these are hundreds of doctrinal discussions. Since Smith did not refer to notes or the previously dictated text, the midterm memory would have been responsible for keeping track of who was talking or journeying, as well as maintaining the progression of religious topics as they unfolded in the text.

119. Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, 120–21.

120. See John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 217–326; Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Book of Mormon Names," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:186–87.

Acceptance of Intellect Theories

In the years since the Book of Mormon was published, other naturalistic theories have waxed and waned in popularity, but similar to the early 1830s, Joseph Smith's intellect theory is today the most accepted naturalistic explanation for the origin of the Book of Mormon. Although the intellect theory is the most popular, it is not universally accepted by naturalists. Observers disagree over whether Joseph Smith possessed the creativity, the cognitive abilities, and the experience with composition and rhetoric needed to recite the text as described.¹²¹

Some evidence in the historical records indicates Joseph Smith had a fairly sophisticated intellectual capacity. Lucy Mack Smith recalled his creativity, saying that in 1823, "Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined."¹²² Pomeroy Tucker wrote that Joseph was an active reader of "dime novels,"¹²³ and Orsamus Turner remembered that Joseph helped "solve some portentous questions of moral or political ethics, in our juvenile debating club" and "was a very passable exhorter" at Methodist camp meetings.¹²⁴ When learning Hebrew in 1835, Joseph Smith was surpassed only by Orson Pratt in his ability to memorize the language.¹²⁵

Certainly Smith was smart and innovative, but overall, recollections in the historical record are mixed. Pomeroy Tucker also wrote that Smith was "uneducated and ignorant."¹²⁶ Orsamus Turner believed Smith "possessed of less than ordinary intellect."¹²⁷ Isaac Hale, Emma Hale Smith's father, recounted in 1834 that "I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825. . . . His appearance at this time, was that of a careless young man—not very well educated."¹²⁸ Similarly,

121. See Michael Morse, quoted in William W. Blair to editors, May 22, 1879, in *Saints' Herald* 26 (June 15, 1879): 190–91; and John H. Gilbert, quoted in William H. Kelley, "The Hill Cumorah, and the Book of Mormon," *Saints' Herald* 28 (June 1, 1881): 165–66.

122. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 85.

123. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 17.

124. O. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris' Reserve* (Rochester, N.Y.: Erastus Darrow, 1851), 214.

125. Matthew J. Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original': Joseph Smith's Study of Hebrew in Kirtland," in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2015), 266.

126. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 120–21.

127. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement*, 213.

128. Isaac Hale, quoted in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 262–63.

John H. Gilbert, who typeset the Book of Mormon in 1830, remembered: “We had a great deal of trouble with it [the Book of Mormon manuscript]. It was not punctuated at all. They [Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery] did not know anything about punctuation.” When asked, “Was he [Joseph Smith] educated . . . ?” he responded, “Oh, not at all then.”¹²⁹ There is also no evidence that Joseph visited local libraries, and Emma Smith, David Whitmer, and Lucy Mack Smith reported that his knowledge of the Bible was limited.¹³⁰

Though naturalists have made few attempts to explain how Joseph Smith created the Book of Mormon using his own intellect, new technologies enable almost anyone to attempt to try to replicate his efforts. For example, the advent of smartphones allows virtually anyone, independent of psychological or historical research, to duplicate Joseph Smith’s book-dictating activities as described by the intellect theory. By using voice-to-text apps, the need for a dedicated scribe is eliminated. Instead, an author could recite a series of text messages of twenty to thirty words each to a recipient who would then compile them to create a manuscript. To more closely emulate Smith’s efforts, the text blocks should be consistently spoken in a vernacular that is different from the author’s daily speech.¹³¹ Then before hitting “send,” spelling and grammar could be corrected. Once sent, the sequence and meaning of the sentences would not be altered. After repeating this sequence around ten thousand times to create a continuous string of words of about 270,000, the text would be delivered directly to a publisher for typesetting and printing.

Completing such an exercise could validate the intellect theory by providing additional examples of complex texts produced through purely natural means, similar to the historical descriptions of the Book of Mormon dictation. Current research has yet to identify any successful projects, but new experimental models could be constructed in the future.

129. John H. Gilbert, quoted in William H. Kelley, “The Hill Cumorah and the Book of Mormon,” *Saints’ Herald* 28, no. 11 (June 1, 1881): 165–66.

130. Emma Smith, in Briggs, “Visit to Nauvoo in 1856,” 454; M. J. Hubble, interview, November 13, 1886, located at Missouri State Historical Society, Columbia, Mo., cited in *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness*, ed. Lyndon W. Cook (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 210–11; Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 84.

131. Stanford Carmack, “How Joseph Smith’s Grammar Differed from Book of Mormon Grammar: Evidence from the 1832 History,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 25 (2017): 239–59; Royal Skousen, “The Archaic Vocabulary of the Book of Mormon,” *Insights* 25, no. 5 (2005): 2–6.

CHARTING THE FIVE PRIMARY THEORIES

Charting the writings of over 170 secular authors published between 1830 and 2018 shows general shifts over time among the most popular naturalistic theories.¹³²

Year	Author	Theory				
		<i>Solomon Spaulding</i>	<i>Collaborators</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Automatic Writing</i>	<i>Joseph's Intellect</i>
1829	Jonathan Hadley					X
1830	Abner Cole					X
	S. A.					X
	Editor of the <i>Cleveland Herald</i>		X			X
	Editor of the <i>Rochester Republican</i>					X
	Editor of the <i>Auburn Free Press</i>					X
1831	Alexander Campbell					X
	David S. Burnett					X
	Editor of the <i>Morning Courier N.Y.</i>		X			
	William Owen		X			
	Gimel					X
	Editor of the <i>Cleveland Advertiser</i>		X			
1832	N. Y. Evangelist					X
1833	Editor of the <i>Wayne Sentinel</i>	X				
1834	Editor of the <i>Sacket's Harbor Courier</i>		X			
	Eber D. Howe	X				X
	Editor of the <i>Chardon Spectator</i>	X				
	Isaac Hale					X
	Editor of the <i>Painesville Telegraph</i>	X				
	J. A. Briggs	X				
1836	Habitator Montium	X				

132. For source documentation, see Brian C. Hales, "Articles Describing Naturalistic Origins of the Book of Mormon," Mormon Polygamy Documents, accessed August 27, 2019, <https://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/articles-describing-naturalistic-origins-book-mormon/>.

Year	Author	Theory				
		Solomon Spaulding	Collaborators	Mental Illness	Automatic Writing	Joseph's Intellect
1838	William S. West	X				
	Samuel Williams	X				
	Richard Livesey	X				
	Origen Bachelier	X				
1840	"John Robinson"	X				
	W. J. Morrish	X				
1841	Barber and Howe					X
	Justus	X				
	Tyler Parsons	X				
	E. G. Lee	X				X
	William Harris		X			X
1842	LaRoy Sunderland					X
	Daniel P. Kidder	X				
	J. B. Turner					X
	H. J. A.	X				
	John A. Clark	X				
1843	Henry Caswall	X				
	George Peck	X				
1844	Editor of the <i>Congregational Magazine</i>	X				
	D. E.	X				
	James H. Hunt					X
1851	Orasmus Turner	X				
	Charles Mackay	X				
	John L. Dunlop	X				
1852	Joseph Mayhew	X				
1853	W. Sparrow Simpson	X				
	Benjamin G. Ferris	X				
1854	William John Conybeare	X				
1855	O. S. Belisle	X				
1856	John W. Gunnison	X				

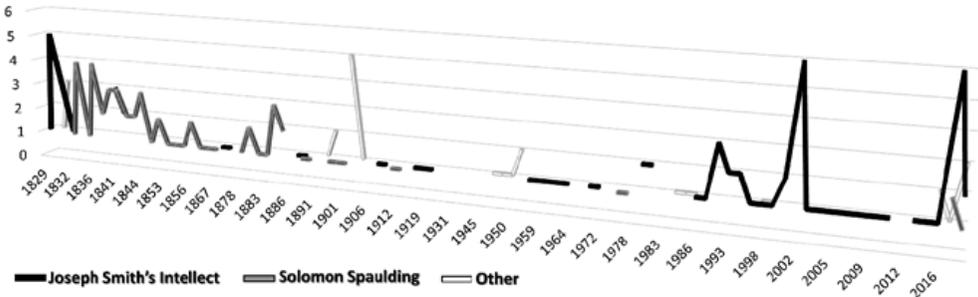
Year	Author	Theory				
		<i>Solomon Spaulding</i>	<i>Collaborators</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Automatic Writing</i>	<i>Joseph's Intellect</i>
1857	Samuel M. Smucker	X				
	John Hyde	X				
1860	H. L. Williams and others	X				
1867	Pomeroy Tucker	X				
1873	Charles Marshall	X				
	T. B. H. Stenhouse				X	X
1877	William D. Purple					X
1878	William S. Sayre		X			
1880	Ariel McMaster	X				
1881	John Codman	X				
1882	Mrs. Horace Eaton	X				
	Robert Patterson	X				
1883	Daniel S. Tuttle	X				
1884	Clark Braden	X				
1885	Ellen E. Dickinson	X				
	William H. Whitsitt	X	X			
1886	Wilhelm Wyl	X				
	L. L. Rice	X				
1887	Martin Thomas Lamb	X	X			X
	Robert Welsted Beers					X
1888	James H. Kennedy					X
1890	M. W. Montgomery	X				
	Thomas Gregg					X
1891	William H. Whitsett	X				
1897	D. H. Bays		X			
1899	Lily Dougal			X	X	
	Lu B. Cake	X				
1901	Edgar E. Folk	X				
1902	I. Woodbridge Riley			X	X	X
	William A. Linn	X				
	G. B. Hancock					X
	William James				X	
	W. L. Crowe		X			X

Year	Author	Theory				
		<i>Solomon Spaulding</i>	<i>Collaborators</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Automatic Writing</i>	<i>Joseph's Intellect</i>
1903	Joseph Jastrow			X		
1906	Theodore Schroeder	X				
	Daniel Sylvester Tuttle	X				
1909	Josiah F. Gibbs					X
1910	Samuel Traum					X
1912	Eduard Meyer	X				
1914	Charles Shook	X				
1916	Robert C. Webb				X	
1917	Walter F. Prince					X
1919	William Earl La Rue					X
	George Seibel			X	X	
1926	James H. Snowden					X
1930	Bernard DeVoto	X				
1931	Harry M. Beardsley			X		
1932	George Arbaugh	X				
1944	Alice Felt Tyler			X		
1945	Fawn Brodie					X
1947	Joseph Welles White	X	X			
1948	James Black			X		
1950	L. Rumble		X			
1954	Kimball Young			X		
	Dwight C. Ritchie			X		
1957	Thomas F. O'Dea					X
1959	Leslie Rumble			X		
	Arthur Budvarson					X
1962	Jack Free					X
1963	Hal Houghey					X
1964	Wesley M. Jones					X
1970	Howard J. Booth				X	
1971	Dale L. Morgan					X
1972	Sydney E. Ahlstrom					X
1977	David Techter				X	
	Howard Davis and others	X				

Year	Author	Theory				
		<i>Solomon Spaulding</i>	<i>Collaborators</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Automatic Writing</i>	<i>Joseph's Intellect</i>
1978	Walter Martin	X				
1979	John R. Kruegar					X
	Floyd C. McElveen					X
1981	Klaus J. Hansen					X
	Wesley Walters					X
1983	Vernal Holley	X				
1984	Ernest H. Taves					X
	Sterling McMurrin					X
	Lawrence Foster				X	X
1985	Scott C. Dunn				X	
1986	G. St. John Stott				X	X
1989	Nathan O. Hatch					X
1992	Robert N. Hullinger	X				X
	D. I. Holmes					X
	Harold Bloom				X	X
1993	Brent Metcalfe					X
	Anthony A. Hutchinson					X
1994	John L. Brooke					X
	W. Walters–M. Marquardt					X
	Byron Marchant		X			
1997	Marvin W. Cowan					X
1998	William D. Morain			X		X
1999	Robert D. Anderson		X			X
2000	David Persuitte					X
	Lamar Peterson					X
2002	Richard Abanes					X
	Grant H. Palmer				X	X
	Edwin Firmage Jr.					X
	Susan Staker					X
	David P. Wright					X
	Robert M. Price					X

Year	Author	Theory				
		<i>Solomon Spaulding</i>	<i>Collaborators</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Automatic Writing</i>	<i>Joseph's Intellect</i>
2003	Jon Krakauer					X
2004	Dan Vogel					X
	Jon Gary Williams					X
2005	H. Michael Marquardt					X
2007	Ray Anderson					X
	Dale Broadhurst	X				
2008	Rick Grunder					X
2009	Latayne C. Scott	X				X
	Craig Criddle					X
2010	Lee B. Baker					X
	Jerald and Sandra Tanner					X
2011	Thomas Riskas					X
	March Van Outen	X				
2012	Meredith and Kendal Sheets		X			
2013	Earl M Wunderli					X
2014	Elwood Grant Norris	X				X
2016	Ann Taves				X	
	Richard Van Wagoner		X			X
2017	Joel H. Allred					X
	Chris and Duane Johnson					X
	Wayne Cowdrey and others	X				
	Rafael Martinez					X
	Michael W. Goe					X
	C. B. Brooks					X
	Paul A. Douglas	X	X			X
2018	Jeremy Runnells					X
	MormonThink	X	X	X	X	X

Graphing the data from this chart over time demonstrates the initial popularity of the Joseph Smith's intellect theory, followed by the predominance of the Solomon Spaulding theory, which disappears around 1884, when the Spaulding manuscript was discovered. During the past few decades, the vast majority of proponents of a natural explanation of the Book of Mormon have embraced the intellect theory.



Charting naturalistic explanations for the Book of Mormon over time.

As illustrated by the figure above, no single theory has consistently dominated secular viewpoints.¹³³ The most popular naturalistic theories regarding the origin of the Book of Mormon have been disputed within secular circles since its publication. “Over that book and its origin there hangs yet a mystery,” wrote James H. Kennedy, editor of *The Magazine of Western History* from 1888 to 1890, “which many able men and women have sought to solve, which some have solved to their own satisfaction, but which none have removed altogether from the region of doubt.”¹³⁴

In his 1899 critique, entitled *Peepstone Joe*, humorist Lu B. Cake demonstrates his frustration with the lack of a plausible naturalist explanation:

One of these fool questions is: “How could ignorant Joe Smith, scarcely able to read and write, how could he produce the Book of Mormon?”

133. An additional potential weakness of all five naturalistic theories is that none address the declarations from the Three and Eight Witnesses (and several others) describing angelic visions or tangible ancient artifacts. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981); and Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1983), 131–68.

134. James H. Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism: Palmyra, Kirtland, and Nauvoo* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1888), 43.

That is your side of the case, Mister Mormonism! On you is the burden of proof, and it is for you to *prove* how he got it. You have the affirmative, that Joe got the Book of Mormon from God. You fail to make a *prima facie* case that he *did*, and I conclusively show that he *didn't!* You show where he got it, for that is your business, not mine. You trickily try to throw up your job by giving me one to do. Then you want to bedevil me all the time I am doing it so that I will never get the job done and get back to Joe.¹³⁵

Fast-forwarding a century, Mark D. Thomas acknowledges that the subject is still controversial: “There are good reasons for bracketing the issues of authorship of the Book of Mormon.”¹³⁶ Bracketing avoids the question of whether the Book of Mormon is historical as well as the tension among the various naturalistic theories, none of which seems to dominate in persuasiveness.

CONCLUSION

Even before Joseph Smith received the gold plates, critics called him a deceiver. The problem is that deceivers are actors, and the Book of Mormon turned out to be much more than a simple stage prop.

Skeptics immediately responded to the Book of Mormon with naturalistic explanations. The Spaulding theory garnered huge support until the manuscript was rediscovered, showing overwhelming dissimilarities. The collaborator theory requires complicated subtheories to explain a hidden, prolonged alliance with a second author and Joseph’s ability to sneak the manuscript into the process or memorize thousands of sentences. While a manic phase of a bipolar illness could increase energy, and narcissism could improve confidence, mental illness could not augment cognitive function sufficient to explain Smith’s intense three-month creative output.¹³⁷ Automatic writing shares similarities to the Book of Mormon production, but it does not constitute a naturalistic explanation unless the authors’ automaticity is first explained naturally. Lastly, the intellect theory assumes Joseph Smith possessed

135. Lu B. Cake, *Peepstone Joe and the Peck Manuscript* (New York: By the author, 1899), 48, italics in original.

136. Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 2.

137. For more on the timing of the translation of the Book of Mormon, see John W. Welch, “Timing the Translation of the Book of Mormon: ‘Days [and Hours] Never to Be Forgotten,’” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 10–50.

exceptional intellectual capacity and innate abilities, assumptions that have yet to be verified.

What is the most plausible of all naturalistic theories of the origin of the Book of Mormon? This longitudinal study does not isolate a single answer. Neither does it attempt to prove a supernatural component. However, it affirms a Joseph Smith revelation that declared that the coming forth of the book is “proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old” (D&C 20:11; see vv. 6–10). Compared to the variety of naturalistic explanations, the documented divine process that produced the Book of Mormon can be as faith sustaining as the book itself.

Brian C. Hales is the author of seven books dealing with the restoration of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints—most notably *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013). His *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006) received the 2007 Best Book Award from the John Whitmer Historical Association. Brian works as an anesthesiologist and has served as the president of both the Utah Medical Association and the John Whitmer Historical Association.

The Office of Church Recorder

A Conversation with Elder Steven E. Snow

Keith A. Ereksen

Elder Steven E. Snow served as the Church Historian and Recorder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from August 1, 2012, to July 31, 2019. During this time, he oversaw significant developments in the work of Church history, from record keeping to publishing to developing historic sites and exhibits. Two years into his tenure, I joined the Church History Department as director of the Church History Library. One of my assignments in this role eventually involved participating in ongoing discussions about the office of Church Recorder. Over the years, there had been much discussion about the role of Church Historian, with far less about the role of Church Recorder.

The conversation that follows is a distillation of dozens of conversations that took place over many years. Its content draws on the research of many who worked before I joined the Church History Department and others who joined later. I present the conversation as an interview with Elder Snow both to emphasize his leadership into uncharted areas and to reflect our real-time process of asking, discussing, and pushing issues forward over time. In the footnotes, I supplement the conversation with citations to relevant sources and resources. Though we explored the variety of topics addressed herein in order to understand and guide our work, I hope the information will also be of value to the wider historical community.¹

1. I gratefully acknowledge the guidance and feedback I received for this article from Elder Steven E. Snow, Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., Matthew J. Grow, Reid L. Neilson, Jennifer L. Lund, Alan Johnson, Joseph Monsen, and

The conversation opens with reflections on Elder Snow's service before moving to his process of learning about the office of Church Recorder. A brief history of Church record keeping is presented, beginning in the nineteenth century, when the offices of Church Historian and Church Recorder were separate and each was held by a different person. We then trace the modernization of record keeping during the twentieth century, the years spent without a Church Recorder, and the work in the twenty-first century. We close with a discussion of recent efforts that define the work of the Church Recorder today.

Reflections on Snow's Service

Keith A. Erikson: You are wrapping up several years of leading the Church History Department as the Church Historian and Recorder. It has been an exciting period for Church history, marked by many significant accomplishments.² One of the most visible developments involves the publication of materials from our collection. What are some of the highlights, in your view?

Elder Steven E. Snow: It has, indeed, been a great privilege to serve as the Church Historian and Recorder for the past seven years.³ During

Wayne Crosby. The research and feedback from Brandon Metcalf, Tyson Thorpe, Robin Jensen, and Mark Buchanan have proven invaluable.

2. Elder Quentin L. Cook described some of the Church History Department's public accomplishments during Elder Snow's tenure and observed, "Under his wise leadership, we have collected more records than ever before and shared more of our history than ever before." Quentin L. Cook, "Out of Obscurity: How Merciful the Lord Has Been" (devotional address, Brigham Young University–Idaho, Rexburg, June 12, 2018), <https://www.byui.edu/devotionals/elder-quentin-l-cook-spring-2018>.

3. Elder Steven E. Snow (1949–) served as a member of the Seventy from 2001 to 2019, including a period in the Presidency of the Seventy (2007–12). He was announced as Church Historian and Recorder on January 10, 2012, and sustained on October 6, 2012; Joseph Walker, "Elder Snow Appointed as New LDS Church Historian," *Deseret News*, January 12, 2012, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700215000/Elder-Snow-appointed-as-new-LDS-Church-Historian.html?pg=all>; Henry B. Eyring, "The Sustaining of Church Officers," *Ensign* 42 (November 2012): 25. On Elder Snow's approach to Church history, see Richard E. Bennett and Dana M. Pike, "Start with Faith: A Conversation with Elder Steven E. Snow," *Religious Educator* 14, no. 3 (2013): 1–11; Steven E. Snow, "Balancing Church History," *New Era* 43 (June 2013): 20–23; Steven E. Snow, "Remember" (commencement address, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, April 23, 2015), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/steven-e-snow_remember-2/; and Steven E. Snow, "Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days,"



Keith A. Ereksen (*left*) is the director of the Church History Library. Elder Steven E. Snow served as Church Historian and Recorder from August 2012 to July 2019. Courtesy Ereksen and Snow, respectively. Snow photo © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

this time, we've seen many projects come to fruition that were years or even decades in the making. The Joseph Smith Papers Project has continued to publish volumes at a steady pace.⁴ We've also published other significant documents from our past, including items from

Ensign 48 (February 2018): 58–59. Church history often infused his devotional addresses; see, for example, Steven E. Snow, “Stepping-Stones and Stumbling Blocks” (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 11, 2012), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/steven-e-snow_stepping-stones-and-stumbling-blocks/; and Steven E. Snow, “Be Thou Humble,” *Ensign* 46 (May 2016): 36–38; see also Steven E. Snow, “Skipping the Grand Canyon,” in *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community*, ed. Terry Tempest Williams, William B. Smart, and Gibbs M. Smith (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1998), 242–44.

4. The Joseph Smith Papers Project is a comprehensive effort to gather, transcribe, annotate, and publish documents created by or under the direction of Joseph Smith. Many of the papers will be published in more than two dozen print volumes. The documents published in print as well as additional documents and reference materials are available online at <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/>. Between 2012 and 2019, the project published two volumes of histories (2012), one volume of journals (2015), the Council of Fifty minutes (2016), volumes on the Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon (2015) and Book of Abraham manuscripts (2018), and eight volumes of documents (2013–19).

the Relief Society’s first fifty years of history,⁵ sermons by Latter-day Saint women from the 1830s to the twenty-first century,⁶ and the journal of George Q. Cannon.⁷ We’ve also made many more of our materials available through the online Church history catalog. Since 2012, we’ve digitized more than fifteen million images and continue to add about three hundred images per hour. Earlier this year, we released a new version of our catalog to make it easier to find and view digital images.⁸

Erekson: How has increased accessibility to these materials benefited Church members?

Snow: All of these records, and the Joseph Smith Papers Project in particular, have provided us clearer views into our history. As a result, we prepared adjustments to the introductory headings to the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants in 2013.⁹ We also prepared a series of essays that put the revelations into historical context and linked the essays to the online Gospel Doctrine curriculum materials during 2017.¹⁰ A different series of “Gospel Topics Essays” was

5. Jill Mulvay Derr and others, eds., *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women’s History* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016). Document transcriptions and reference materials are available at <https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/the-first-fifty-years-of-relief-society>.

6. Jennifer Reeder and Kate Holbrook, eds., *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2017). Document transcripts, reference materials, and extant audio recordings are available at <https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit>.

7. The journal of George Q. Cannon spans from 1849 to 1901 and provides significant insight into the activities of the Church and Church leaders in the late nineteenth century. The journal’s transcription together with reference materials is available at <https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/george-q-cannon>.

8. The catalog is available online at <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/>. The Church History Library’s blog, *The Historical Record*, features a monthly series on “Recently Digitized Collections,” at <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/blog/the-historical-record>.

9. See “Church Releases New Editions of English Scriptures in Digital Formats,” Scriptures, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/scriptures/press>; *Summary of Approved Adjustments for the 2013 Edition of the Scriptures* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012), 10–12, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/english/pdf/scriptures/approved-adjustments_eng.pdf.

10. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds., *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: The

published between 2013 and 2015 to provide answers about some of the more difficult aspects of our past.¹¹ A third initiative has been to write histories, called “Global Histories,” of the Church in individual countries.¹²

But the most significant publication for Church members is a new history of the Church, titled *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. Volume 1 was published in September 2018 in fourteen languages, and work is under way on the remaining volumes. In addition to the narrative, we also published more than one hundred essays on historical topics to supplement the reading.¹³

Erekson: We’ve talked about publishing, but many people don’t know that the Church Historian and Recorder is also responsible for the Church’s art collection and historical museums. How have they developed in recent years?

Snow: We closed the Church History Museum for more than a year in order to install a new exhibit called *The Heavens Are Opened*, which corresponds with volume 1 of *Saints*. The exhibit features historical documents and artifacts as well as interactive experiences, such as a

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016). The essays are also available at <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/landing/revelations-in-context>.

11. The essays are available online: “Gospel Topics Essays,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/essays>; see also “New Essays Address Topics on Women, Priesthood, Mother in Heaven,” Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 23, 2015, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/new-church-essays-women-priesthood-mother-in-heaven>.

12. The global histories are available online: “Global Histories,” Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/global-histories/introduction>.

13. *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), available online at <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/saints-v1/title-page>; the historical topic essays are available at Church History Topics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/adam-ondi-ahman>; see also Snow, “Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days,” 58–59.

new video about the First Vision shown on a wraparound screen.¹⁴ We also opened a new history center in Hamilton, New Zealand, with exhibits about the history of the Church in the Pacific.¹⁵ And we placed rare and priceless historical documents on display in the Church History Library.¹⁶

Erekson: You also serve as chair of the Church’s Historic Sites Committee, a group that brings together representatives from multiple departments at headquarters—including the Church History, Missionary, Temple, and Meetinghouse Facilities Departments—as well as the director of temporal affairs for historic sites. What are some of the highlights regarding historic sites during your time?

Snow: The most visible development was the creation of a new historic site in Pennsylvania that commemorates the priesthood restoration.¹⁷

14. An interactive map of the new exhibit is available online: “The Heavens Are Opened—an Interactive Map,” Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/maps/the-heavens-are-opened>; the video on the First Vision is available at “Ask of God: Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” Gospel Media, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media-library/video/2017-01-0100-ask-of-god-joseph-smiths-first-vision>.

15. Learn more at “Matthew Cowley Pacific Church History Centre,” Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/section/matthew-cowley-pacific-church-history-centre>.

16. High-resolution images of the documents may be viewed online at “Foundations of Faith,” Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/exhibit/foundations-of-faith>; see also “New Church History Library Foundations of Faith Exhibit,” Church News, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/events/new-church-history-library-foundations-of-faith-exhibit>; R. Scott Lloyd, “Foundations of Faith’: Church History Library Exhibits Treasures from Its Documents Collection,” *Church News*, September 7, 2014, 8–9, 13; and Keith A. Erekson, “New Treasures Added to Church History Library ‘Foundations of Faith’ Exhibit,” Church News, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 9, 2016, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/new-treasures-added-to-church-history-library-foundations-of-faith-exhibit>.

17. Information and directions to the Priesthood Restoration Site are available at “Priesthood Restoration Site,” Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/subsection/historic-sites/pennsylvania/priesthood-restoration-site>; see also “President Nelson Dedicates Priesthood Restoration Site,” Newsroom, The

We've done a lot of master planning at many of our sites throughout the United States. Close to my own heart and heritage, the historic tabernacle in St. George, Utah, was renovated.¹⁸ And most recently, the responsibility for operations of the Church's historic sites has shifted from the Missionary Department to the Church History Department—a move that we welcome.

Erekson: It is always the case that public actions like these are the result of largely invisible work behind the scenes. Are there any less visible developments that you'd like to mention?

Snow: Yes. We have done a lot to globalize the work of our department. Since 2010, we have been calling area Church history advisers throughout the world, who have collected records, conducted oral histories with living Saints in their home countries, and helped increase the submission of annual histories by 20 percent. Since 2012, we've established secure record preservation centers in more than two dozen places around the world to store records according to local laws and customs. We also began hiring Church History Department employees who live and work in their home countries. The first three were hired in Peru, South Africa, and Mexico, and we'll add more in the coming months. These volunteers and employees have helped create exhibits, host commemorative events, and prepare online publications in their countries. They have also helped us collect far more international records than ever before. In any given year, we collect records about the Church in sixty to seventy different countries.

A second, less visible area in which we've made great strides involves our digital-record storage. In 2015, ten years of planning culminated in retrofitting two chambers of the Granite Mountain Record Vault with servers to house the Church's digital-record preservation system that we administer. The facility reopened in December of that year with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and addresses by Elder Quentin L. Cook and Bishop Dean Davies. We also strengthened our

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 19, 2015, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/president-nelson-dedicates-priesthood-restoration-site>.

18. Information and directions to the St. George Tabernacle are available at "St. George Tabernacle," Church History, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/subsection/historic-sites/utah/st-george/st-george-tabernacle>; see also Jeff Richards, "Newly Renovated St. George Tabernacle Opens to Public Tours," *St. George [Utah] News*, July 23, 2018.

digital preservation efforts by storing copies of our records on servers located outside the Intermountain West.

Learning about the Office of Church Recorder

Erekson: Underlying all of these public accomplishments and behind-the-scenes developments, you wrestled with a question about the office of Church Recorder. How did you encounter this question?

Snow: It's actually a question that I inherited from my predecessor, Elder Marlin K. Jensen. He frequently told the story of his call as Church Historian and Recorder and said, "As President Hinckley extended the call, I had the presence of mind to ask him what his expectations of me as Church Historian were. He said crisply, 'That you read the scriptures and do your duty!' I then asked, 'And what about the office of recorder?' He replied, 'I haven't given that a bit of thought, but you'd better!'" Elder Jensen did study the scriptures and gave the subject a lot of thought. As a result, he oversaw the revitalization of the Church's records management program and the institution of electronic systems for preserving digital records.¹⁹ But he felt there was still more to the question, and when I was called, he urged me to continue to think about the office of Recorder.

Erekson: How did you then take up the quest?

Snow: In the beginning, I mostly just worried about it. I knew that the records of the Church were being created all around the world. When I served as the Area President of the Africa Southeast Area, headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, I inherited a closet full of records, which we shipped back to Church headquarters for safe-keeping. I also knew that the majority of the records being created in the twenty-first century are digital. I wondered how we would collect and preserve all of the emails, electronic documents, information in

19. Marlin K. Jensen, "Minding the House of Church History: Reflections of a Church Historian at the End of His Time," *Journal of Mormon History* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 81; see also 86–87. On Elder Jensen's tenure in the office, see Marlin K. Jensen and David F. Boone, "A Historian by Yearning: A Conversation with Elder Marlin K. Jensen," *Religious Educator* 8, no. 3 (2007): 1–13; Marlin K. Jensen, "There Shall Be a Record Kept among You," *Ensign* 37 (December 2007): 28–33; and Marlin K. Jensen, "Making a Case for Church History," in *Preserving the History of the Latter-day Saints*, ed. Steven C. Harper and Richard E. Turley (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2010), 1–18.

databases, and web materials that are created or updated every day. For me, the turning point from worry to understanding came during a meeting in December 2015.

Erekson: I remember that meeting very well. You gave me advanced notice to gather all of the information we could find about the office of the Church Recorder, the people who had held it, what they had done, and the current status of all significant Church records.²⁰ Then, for three hours, you, the assistant executive director of the department, and the Assistant Church Historian—three trained lawyers—cross-examined me about the past, present, and future of Church records!

Snow: Yes, it was an intense three hours. But I came out of that conversation feeling much more hopeful.

Erekson: I see in the meeting's minutes that Richard Turley said, "This will be a meeting we look back on as being important." You summarized the information as being "more than I've learned about the Recorder's office in four years."²¹ What are some of the insights that struck you as being most important?

Snow: I came to see the office of Church Recorder as being complementary and connected to the office of Church Historian. The recorder operates in the present by looking forward to the future; he records modern transactions (such as ordinances), decisions (in meetings), and activities (such as missionary or temple service). The recorder ensures that records are kept now and certifies that what has been kept is accurate and complete. The historian also operates in the present and fulfills his role by looking back on the gathered records to discern trends over time and offer retrospective analysis. What is gathered under the recorder function can later be put to service under the historian function.

20. The gathering of materials was supported by the research and conversational guidance of Brandon Metcalf, Tyson Thorpe, Richard Turley, Robin Jensen, Richard Jensen, Mark Buchanan, Daryl Downs, Josh Bullough, Jim Madsen, Audrey Spainhower, Mary Teresa Anderson, Vivian Wellman, Jennifer Barkdull, Bruce Searle, Joseph Monsen, Wayne Crosby, Alan Johnson, Patrick Dunshee, Jared Mackey, Aly Conteh, Gary Jestice, James Findlay, Reid Neilson, departmental records coordinators, and many others past and present.

21. Minutes of December 2015 meeting in possession of author. At the time of the meeting, Turley was serving as an Assistant Church Historian and Recorder.

Erekson: So the recorder does his work in the present moment, making official records of current transactions, whereas the historian looks back over the long-term, making retrospective interpretations and finding future uses.

Snow: That's right. Gathered records can be used in leadership and decision-making, to inspire or motivate, to defend the Church against legal challenges, or to publish the truth through historical research and writing. We see this pattern illustrated in the Book of Mormon as Nephi, Jacob, Alma, and others made records, often without knowing all of the reasons why. Then, hundreds of years later, Mormon drew from those records to compile an abridged history, sometimes quoting directly from previous writings, sermons, and letters and other times offering his own commentary and analysis.

Erekson: As your comment about the Book of Mormon suggests, our sacred records inform our modern record-keeping practices. In Church history, we take a rather broad definition of the term *record*, going back to the day the Church was organized.

Snow: Yes. On that day Joseph Smith was told, "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you" (D&C 21:1). That was the initial message that forms the foundation for all our work.

Erekson: Over time, we have come to see in that scripture the guidance for keeping artwork, artifacts, physical places, historical manuscripts, photographs, printed materials, audiovisual materials, and day-to-day records generated in the course of Church business. What other scriptures have informed your understanding of the work of the Recorder?

Snow: The year after the Church was organized, John Whitmer was commanded to "keep the church record and history continually," to "travel many times from place to place, and from church to church, that he may the more easily obtain knowledge," and to do it "for the good of the church, and for the rising generations that shall grow up on the land of Zion, to possess it from generation to generation" (D&C 47:3; 69:7-8). The Saints were commanded to record the names of Church members, "that which the prophets and apostles have written," questions asked and decisions made, accounts of personal ministry and stewardship, and genealogical records (D&C 20:82; 52:9; 69:5-6; 70:3-6; 72:5-6; 102:23; 128:24). Local clerks were instructed to record "a history, and a general church record of all

things that transpire in Zion,” including donations, receipts of assistance, and notes on the “manner of life, their faith, and works,” and those who left the Church (D&C 85:1–2). After the Saints were expelled from Missouri, they were commanded to collect magazines, encyclopedias, and histories published about our experiences and history (see D&C 123:1–6). And, of course, temple ordinances: “When any of you are baptized for your dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eye-witness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord; That in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven” (D&C 127:6–7). The last part of that verse emphasizes that for the work of salvation to be complete, its records must be kept.

Erekson: So there is a theology behind our record keeping. We believe that records are part of the expression of our faith.

Snow: When Joseph Smith spoke of the final judgment, he taught that the dead would be judged from records kept in heaven and on earth. “Whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven,” he said. And significantly, “Whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven” (D&C 128:6–8). It is imperative that we keep records.

Erekson: After that important first meeting, we continued to meet each month. How did your thinking unfold?

Snow: We began by identifying every significant type of record that we would want to preserve in our archives. We also continued to explore the history of the office, looking at the work done by previous Church Recorders and the precedents they established for today. One of the most important precedents arose while Joseph Smith lived in Nauvoo and Church members lived throughout the eastern United States and Canada, the British Isles, and the isles of the Pacific. In that context, Joseph observed that “it would be very difficult for one recorder to be present at all times, and to do all the business.” Thus, he instructed that “there can be a recorder appointed in each ward of the city. . . . Then, let there be a general recorder, to whom these other records can be handed, being attended with certificates over their own signatures, certifying that the record they have made is true” (D&C 128:3–4). This translates into a twenty-first century need for the Church Recorder to teach good principles of record keeping to all who create and use records worldwide.

Erekson: Why don't we take each of these significant topics in turn? We'll begin with a brief history of record keeping, then look at the efforts to define the work of the Church Recorder in the twenty-first century.

A Brief History of Record Keeping

Erekson: We've done a lot of research and have the results, so let's go back to the beginning.²² The terms *clerk*, *scribe*, *secretary*, and *recorder* were used by the early Saints as well as by their contemporaries.²³ How did record keeping occur in the earliest days of the Church's history?

Snow: Joseph responded to the commandment to keep a record by appointing temporary record keepers who were often called clerks. For example, at the Church's first conference in June 1830, Oliver

22. A full history of the Church's historical record keeping has not been prepared, though many helpful studies have been made, including A. William Lund, "The Church Historian's Office," *Improvement Era* 38, no. 4 (April 1935): 216, 245–46; Charles P. Adams and Gustive O. Larson, "A Study of the LDS Church Historian's Office, 1830–1900," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (Fall 1972): 370–89; Donald T. Schmidt, "The Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Genealogical Journal* 2, no. 2 (June 1973): 62–65; Glenn N. Rowe, "The Historical Department and Library of the LDS Church," in *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 154–71; Marlin K. Jensen, "Church History: Past, Present and Future," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 20–42; Richard E. Turley and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Preserving the History of the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2010); Reid L. Neilson and R. Mark Melville, eds., *A Historian in Zion: The Autobiography of Andrew Jensen, Assistant Church Historian* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2016); and Robin Scott Jensen, "Archives of the Better World: The Nineteenth-Century Historian's Office and Mormonism's Archival Flexibility" (PhD diss., University of Utah, 2019).

23. The editors of the Joseph Smith Papers observed, "In early Mormon usage, though the distinctions were not always clear, a 'scribe' usually kept records such as revelations, translations, correspondence, and journal entries; a 'clerk' kept minutes of conferences, councils, and other meetings; and a 'recorder' created or certified official institutional documents. The title of 'recorder,' with its legal implications, was probably borrowed from the contemporaneous terminology of government record keeping." "Joseph Smith's Historical Enterprise," n. 7, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/series-introduction-for-the-histories-series>.

Cowdery was appointed to “keep the Church record and Conference minutes until the next conference.” When Oliver was called on a mission in October, the assignment passed to others including John Corrill, Newel K. Whitney, Orson Hyde, and William W. Phelps.²⁴ This practice of calling temporary clerks continued even after John Whitmer was appointed in 1831 “to write and keep a regular history.”²⁵

Erekson: Because of his assignment, John Whitmer has been viewed as the first Church Historian.²⁶ But the task of record keeping did not fall entirely to him. What other record-keeping activities happened at this time?

Snow: For one thing, the practice of appointing temporary record keepers at conferences continued.²⁷ Sometimes John Whitmer served as the temporary clerk of a conference. Oliver Cowdery’s name appears often in the records. And, in time, as the Church grew and moved to Ohio, record keepers began keeping the minutes of council meetings, records of ordinations and licenses, membership records, and the text of patriarchal blessings.²⁸

24. “Minute Book 2,” 1 (June 9, 1830); 6–7 (August 2, 1831); 7 (September 24, 1831); 7–8 (October 10, 1831), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/3>; “Minutes, 1 October 1831,” Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-1-october-1831/1>.

25. In March 1831, John Whitmer was appointed to “write and keep a regular history” and “to keep the church record and history continually; for Oliver Cowdery I have appointed to another office.” Doctrine and Covenants 47:1, 3; see also “Historical Introduction” to “John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847,” Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/john-whitmer-history-1831-circa-1847/28#historical-intro>.

26. See, for example, Marlin K. Jensen, “LDS Church History: Past, Present, and Future,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 20–42; Dean C. Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 439–73; and Dean C. Jessee, “Joseph Smith and the Beginning of Mormon Record Keeping,” in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 138–60.

27. For examples of conference record keepers, see “Minute Book 2,” 6 (September 6, 12, 1831; October 1, 1831), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/8>.

28. Cowdery identifies himself in 1834 as the “Clerk and Recorder” in a patriarchal blessing. “Blessing from Joseph Smith Sr., 9 December 1834,” 5, Joseph

Development of the Office of Church Recorder

Erekson: When and how did the shift occur from temporary appointments to a standing appointment?

Snow: In September 1835, Oliver Cowdery was appointed as the “recorder for the church.”²⁹ He had been the first person appointed to a temporary record-keeping role in 1830, and he held this new Churchwide position for two years.

Erekson: The existence of a formal record keeper added a dimension of authority to the Church’s records. Every institution needs to be able to trust its records in order to carry out its day-to-day work. What kinds of records did Oliver Cowdery create and use?

Snow: During his time, Oliver kept minutes of general conferences and the Kirtland high council; he wrote entries in Joseph Smith’s journal, and he recorded patriarchal blessings.³⁰ He also published historical records while serving as editor of the *Evening and Morning Star*.³¹

Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-from-joseph-smith-sr-9-december-1834/3>, underlining in original.

29. “Minute Book 1” (Kirtland High Council minute book), 107–8 (September 14, 1835), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-1/111#X5DC3AFA7-7FC3-4682-A442-EAA9E3053E51>. Cowdery was released from the role on September 17, 1837, but was later appointed as a “standing Clerk” for a high council. “Minute Book 1,” 242 (September 17, 1837), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-1/246>; “Minute Book 2,” 87 (December 6–7, 1837), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/89#X2AF669EC-9801-4919-B092-7FE1B8339A24>.

30. Jesse, “Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” 441–42. Cowdery had written for Joseph Smith since April 1829. “Revelation, April 1829–D [D&C 9],” 20, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-april-1829-d-dc-9/1>.

31. Cowdery had previously authored eight letters on the early history of the Church, which were published serially in the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* and may have been based upon a narrative history written by Cowdery. The letters have been republished in Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844*, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 38–89.

Erekson: Looking back from your position in the twenty-first century, what precedents were established during Cowdery's tenure as the first Church Recorder?

Snow: The most important precedent was the establishment of a Church-wide office that continued to be filled after Oliver was released. He created records, and he also cared for general Church records, such as general conference minutes, official communications, and the revelations. I also think it is significant that he began to use the records to help publish correct information. We don't keep the records just to keep them. We keep them to advance the work of the Church.

Erekson: Cowdery was followed in the office of Church Recorder by George W. Robinson (1837–40),³² who helped gather affidavits about the expulsion from Missouri, and by Robert B. Thompson (1840–41),³³ who helped prepare the redress petition to Congress.³⁴ But through all this, the parallel office of Church Historian was held

32. Robinson was sustained as "General Clerk & recorder of the whole Church" on September 17, 1837. "Minute Book 1," 242. No surviving record documents his release.

33. Thompson was sustained as "general church clerk" on October 3, 1840, at which time it was noted that Robinson intended to move to Iowa. "Minutes of the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Held in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Ill. Oct., 3rd 1840," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 12 (October 1840): 185. Thompson died in office on August 27, 1841; WM. Law, "Death of Col. Robert B. Thompson," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 21 (September 1841): 519. Thompson was succeeded by James Sloan, who was sustained as "general church clerk" on October 1, 1841, and served until leaving for a mission to Ireland on July 30, 1843; "Minutes of a Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Held in Nauvoo. Ill., Commencing Oct. 1st, 1841," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 24 (October 1841): 577; Andrew Jensen, "Sloan, James," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1901–36), 1:254.

34. The petitions, also known as the "Missouri Claims," listed grievances suffered by the Saints in Missouri, 1833–1839. "Mormon Redress Petitions, 1839–1845," Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; some were compiled in *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict*, ed. Clark V. Johnson (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992).

successively by John Whitmer (1831–38),³⁵ John Corrill (1838–39),³⁶ and Elias Higbee (1838–42).³⁷ How did the two offices come together?

Snow: They came together during the tenure of Willard Richards (1842–54). He had been called as an Apostle in 1840, and then in quick succession he was appointed the Nauvoo city recorder, the clerk of the Nauvoo municipal court, and the recorder for the Nauvoo Temple.³⁸ Then in late 1842 he was appointed as Joseph Smith’s private secretary

35. Whitmer was called as Church Historian on March 8, 1831; sustained on April 9, 1831; and released on March 10, 1838, when he was excommunicated. “Revelation, circa 8 March 1831-B [D&C 47],” 79, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-circa-8-march-1831-b-dc-47/1>; “Minute Book 2,” 3 (April 9, 1831), accessed August 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/5>; “Minute Book 2,” 105 (March 10, 1838), accessed August 19, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/107>; see also “Historical Introduction” to “John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847,” accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/john-whitmer-history-1831-circa-1847/5#historical-intro>.

36. Corrill was sustained as Church Historian on April 6, 1838, and served until November 1838 (when he apostatized) or March 1839 (when he was excommunicated). “Minute Book 2,” 114 (April 6, 1838), accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/117>; “History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1,” 899, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/80>.

37. Higbee was sustained as Church Historian on April 6, 1838, and served until his death on June 8, 1843. “Minute Book 2,” 114 (April 6, 1838), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/117>; Andrew Jenson, “Higbee, Elias,” in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:253.

38. See Nauvoo (Ill.) Recorder Marriage Certificates, 1842–1846, MS 16824, Church History Library; “History of Willard Richards,” *Deseret News*, June 30, 1858, 77; and “Notice, 15 December 1841,” 638, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/notice-15-december-1841/1>. In July 1843, Joseph M. Cole was appointed recorder for baptisms of the dead and Jonathan H. Hale was appointed assistant temple recorder. Joseph Smith, Journal, July 30, 1843, in *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rodgers, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2015), 69; and “Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 3, 15 July 1843–29 February 1844,” [24], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 29, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-3-15-july-1843>

and historian and the following July as the Church Recorder.³⁹ Richards retained both roles until his death in 1854, even while becoming a member of the First Presidency and serving as secretary of Utah Territory.⁴⁰

Erekson: So now that the two roles were united, what did Elder Richards do?

Snow: Between the time of Richards's call as temple recorder and his call as Church Recorder, Joseph sent a letter, dated September 6, 1842, and now found in Doctrine and Covenants 128, that instructed local clerks "in each ward of the city" to create precise records of things for which they were "eye-witness." These records were to be handed over with signatures to the "general church recorder," who would "enter the record on the general church book."⁴¹ Elder Richards

-29-february-1844/30; Nauvoo Ninth Ward High Priests minutes, November 1844–February 1945, 3, Church History Library.

39. Joseph Smith, "Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 1, 21 December 1842–10 March 1843," 1 (December 21, 1842), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-1-21-december-1842-10-march-1843/7>; Willard Richards, journal, vol. 9, December 21, 1842; July 30, 1843, Willard Richards journals and papers, 1821–1854, Church History Library.

40. He was sustained as both on October 6, 1845, and died in office on March 11, 1854. See "Historic Men Served as Church Historians," *Church News*, February 14, 1970, 15; and Orson Spencer, "Death of Our Beloved Brother Willard Richards," *Deseret News*, March 16, 1854, 2.

41. Doctrine and Covenants 128:2–4, from "Letter from Joseph Smith," September 6, 1842, published in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 23 (October 1, 1842): 934. Traces of the practice date to August 1838, under the tenure of George W. Robinson, when membership records kept by branches were to be forwarded to stakes for the "general Church Record." "To the Saints gathering into Zion," *Elders' Journal*, August 1838, 62, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/elders-journal-august-1838/14>. Also in 1838, the First Presidency and Church Recorder began signing priesthood licenses and maintaining a record of licenses issued and revoked. "Resolution, circa 8 April 1838," 19, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/resolution-circa-8-april-1838/1>; George W. Robinson, "Notice," *Elders' Journal*, August 1838, 62. For a sample license, see "License for Gardner Snow, 19 January 1839," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/license-for-gardner-snow-19-january-1839/1>. Branch clerks began keeping marriage records in 1835. "Appendix 3: Statement on Marriage, circa August 1835," 251,

played a role in implementing this practice. In Nauvoo, he recorded the donations of individual Saints in the Book of the Law of the Lord, and he recorded the names of Church members who arrived or were baptized in the city.⁴² When the Saints crossed the plains, it was Elder Richards who oversaw the transportation by wagon, taking inventory of records loaded in Illinois and unloaded in the Salt Lake Valley.

Erekson: I'll return again to the precedent question. How does Elder Richards's service influence the work of the office of Church Recorder today?

Snow: Since the time of Willard Richards, the offices of Historian and Recorder have been connected. As records are created throughout the world, the Recorder bears a centralized responsibility to gather and certify the records created by others. Elder Richards pioneered some of the important central functions of record keeping, such as receiving, certifying, inventorying, and protecting the records.

The Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Erekson: After the varieties of roles and assignments in the early years, and after the general disruption of moving the Saints and their records to Utah, the work of record keeping over the next century proceeded with several general continuities. What did record keeping look like during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

Snow: Two general conditions stand out as being significant to me. First, Apostles continued to fill the combined office of Church Historian and Recorder, including George A. Smith (1854–70),⁴³ Albert Carrington

Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-3-statement-on-marriage-circa-august-1835/1>; included in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants as section 101.

42. See "Far West and Nauvoo elders' certificates, 1837–1838, 1840–1846," CR 100 402, Church History Library.

43. George A. Smith served as an Apostle 1839–75 (including time as a counselor in the First Presidency, 1868–75) and was sustained as "Church Historian and General Church Recorder" on April 7, 1854; he was released on October 8, 1870, "Minutes," *Deseret News*, April 13, 1854, [2]; "Fortieth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Deseret News*, October 12, 1870, 419.

(1870–74),⁴⁴ Orson Pratt (1874–81),⁴⁵ Wilford Woodruff (1883–89),⁴⁶ Franklin D. Richards (1889–99),⁴⁷ and Anthon H. Lund (1900–1921).⁴⁸ Assistants were also called from among the Twelve initially—Wilford Woodruff (1856–83) and Franklin D. Richards (1884–89).⁴⁹ The

44. Albert Carrington served as an Apostle 1870–85 (including time as a counselor in the First Presidency, 1873–1877) and was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder on October 8, 1870; he was released on May 9, 1874. “Fortieth Semi-annual Conference of the Church,” 419; Historical Department office journal, 1844–2012, 31:137 (October 8, 1870), CR 100 1, Church History Library; “Forty-Fourth Annual Conference,” *Deseret News*, May 13, 1874, 232.

45. Orson Pratt served as an Apostle 1835–42 and 1843–81 and was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder on May 9, 1874; he died in office on October 3, 1881. “Forty-Fourth Annual Conference,” 232; “Death of Apostle Orson Pratt,” *Deseret News*, October 5, 1881, 568; “Death of Orson Pratt,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1881, 4.

46. Wilford Woodruff served as an Apostle 1839–98 (including time as President of the Church, 1889–98) and was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder on October 7, 1883; he served until becoming president of the Church on April 7, 1889. “Fifty-Third Semi-annual Conference,” *Deseret News*, October 10, 1883, 604; Historical Department office journal, 39:178; “General Conference,” *Deseret [News] Weekly*, April 13, 1889, 487. He served as the Assistant Church Historian and Recorder from October 6, 1856, to October 7, 1883, when he became “Historian and General Church Recorder.” “Minutes of the Semi-annual Conference,” *Deseret News*, October 15, 1856, 256; “Fifty-Third Semi-annual Conference,” 604.

47. Franklin D. Richards served as an Apostle 1849–99 and was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder on April 7, 1889; he died in office on December 9, 1899. He served as Assistant Church Historian and Recorder from April 6, 1884, to April 7, 1889. “General Conference,” 487; Historical Department office journal, 46:319; “Franklin D. Richards Dead,” *Deseret Evening News*, December 9, 1899, 1.

48. Anthon H. Lund served as an Apostle 1889–1921 (including time as a counselor in the First Presidency, 1901–21) and was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder at a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on July 26, 1900, and by the Church membership on October 7, 1900. He died in office on March 2, 1921. Anthon H. Lund, journals, 1860–1921, 18:210 (July 26, 1900), MS 5375, Church History Library; Historical Department office journal, vol. 53, July 26, 1900; “Third Day,” in *Seventy-First Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1900), 42; J. M. Sjodahl, “President Anthon H. Lund,” *Improvement Era* 24, no. 6 (April 1921): 499.

49. Some Assistant Church Historians and Recorders later became Apostles, including Charles W. Penrose (in the assistant office 1896–1904), Orson F. Whitney (1899–1906), and Joseph Fielding Smith (1906–21).

Quorum of the Twelve oversaw record keeping and conducted formal reviews of records and record-keeping practices in 1881 and 1908.⁵⁰

Erekson: What was the second condition?

Snow: Second, the responsibility for record keeping continued to be delegated beyond the Church Recorder, even though a few centralized activities began to occur. For example, early in the twentieth century the Presiding Bishop's office centralized the administration of financial and membership records.⁵¹ And as temples were built in St. George (1877), Logan (1884), Manti (1888), Salt Lake City (1893), Hawaii (1919), and Canada (1923), paper-based temple records were stored in the temples. Then, clerks from the Historian's Office would make copies for long-term storage.⁵²

Erekson: The construction of multiple temples prompted the need to keep a new category of records that had not previously been collected in an organized way—genealogical records. How was the Church Historian and Recorder involved?

Snow: The Genealogical Society of Utah was organized in 1894 to gather genealogical records. Its first meeting was held in the Church Historian's Office, and the society's first president was the Church Historian and Recorder, Elder Franklin D. Richards. The genealogical records were kept physically separate from other historical records from the outset. In the Church Historian's Office, they were stored in a separate room (1894–1917). When the historical and genealogical records were moved to the new Church Administration Building in 1917, they were kept on separate floors. After 1934, genealogical records were moved to a separate facility.⁵³

50. Joseph F. Smith, Francis M. Lyman, and John Henry Smith to the First Presidency, September 17, 1881; as quoted in Adams and Larson, "Study of the LDS Church Historian's Office," 382. See a later study in John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, and Rudger Clawson to Joseph F. Smith, May 19, 1908, Church History Library.

51. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 99–100, 105–6.

52. Temple records were kept on paper in temples until the 1980s. The Temple Department was created in 1979. See James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile B. Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1894–1994* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 310–11.

53. Genealogical records were accessible in facilities on 80 North Main (1934–62), in an abandoned Montgomery Ward building (1962–71), in the west wing of the Church Office Building (1972–85), and in the Family History

Erekson: Meanwhile, the traditional historical activities of publishing, gathering records and information, and organizing the records for better research access continued during this time.

Snow: Yes. The work that began under Joseph Smith's direction to compile a manuscript history was continued after his death by those who held the office of Church Historian and Recorder.⁵⁴ They then moved on to compile a manuscript history of Brigham Young and later supported the work of Assistant Church Historian and Recorder B. H. Roberts in preparing the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, which was published for the Church's centennial in 1930.⁵⁵

Erekson: And the Church continued to create records as it carried out its business. How did the Historian's Office continue to gather contemporary records?

Snow: Various initiatives were undertaken to collect information about events, people, foreign missions, local units, and local leaders. Historic sites were visited, pieces of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon were acquired, statistical data from temples were assembled, and missionaries' biographical information was recorded in a central "missionary register."⁵⁶ Under the direction of the Twelve

Library (1985–present). In 1944, the society was reincorporated as a correlated Church institution and then restructured as an auxiliary in 1961, with Junius Jackson as president; Howard W. Hunter served as president 1964–72, including a two-year overlap as Church Historian and Recorder. In 1975, the auxiliary became a Church department. See Allen, Embry, and Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 44–49, 84, 93, 124, 141–42, 168–70, 174, 195–97, 266–68, 297–98.

54. Joseph Smith Jr. and others, "History, 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church)," 7 vols. (A-1, B-1, C-1, C-1 addenda, D-1, E-1, F-1), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 8, 2019, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers/histories/jspph3/jspph3-sub1>; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1902–32).

55. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century I*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930). Roberts served as a member of the Seventy 1888–1933 and was sustained as an Assistant Church Historian and Recorder on April 6, 1902; he died in office on September 27, 1933. "General Authorities of the Church," in *Seventy-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902), 84; Andrew Jenson, comp., *Church Chronology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914), xxxiv; "B. H. Roberts' Funeral Sunday," *Deseret News*, September 28, 1933, 1.

56. See Historian's Office temple ordinance compilations, 1888–1980, CR 100 242, Church History Library; and Historian's Office temple ordinance compilations, 1877–1984, CR 100 244, Church History Library.

Apostles and through the Committee on Church Records, an annual “Record Day” was celebrated beginning in 1900 to encourage stake presidents to review local records of membership, ordinations, infant blessings, and temple recommends. The purpose of the review was to ensure that Church units were keeping records using the most up-to-date forms.⁵⁷

Erekson: Employing a practice common in libraries of the era, manuscript collections were separated into name and subject files. How were the records used internally?

Snow: The collections were limited to primarily internal use after 1882, which was and is the norm for private archives built to serve institutional needs. And work began on the massive “Journal History of the Church” in 1906. This day-by-day chronology of Church history is an index to many kinds of records, organized by date, that now fills more than 1,200 volumes.⁵⁸

Erekson: What do you think are the lessons learned from this period of Church record keeping?

Snow: During this time, we see the expansion of gathering records, from day-to-day business and ecclesiastical records to traditional historical documents to genealogical records. We also see the beginnings of efforts to help locate materials within the collection. And we developed a concern for compiling and reviewing records, whether they were local unit records, biographies, or manuscript histories.

57. Committee members included Francis M. Lyman, Rudger Clawson, and Andrew Jenson. Rudger Clawson, *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson*, ed. Stan Larson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993): 123, 140; Anthon H. Lund, *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921*, ed. John P. Hatch (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006): 108.

58. Staff compiled information from 1906 to 2008. See Gary Bergera, “‘The Commencement of Great Things’: The Origins, Scope, and Achievement of the Journal History of the Church,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 28; Andrew Jenson, *Eighty-Eighth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1917), 85–87. Narrative histories were prepared from these manuscript sources by Historian’s Office staff, though these were infrequently published. An example of one of these published histories is Andrew Jenson’s *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927).

The Modernization of Record Keeping

Erekson: In the middle of the twentieth century, things started to change.⁵⁹

Snow: Elder Joseph Fielding Smith had become the Church Historian and Recorder in 1921 and filled the office for nearly fifty years, including while serving as President of the Quorum of the Twelve.⁶⁰ Even while serving as President of the Twelve, he would sign his letters as “General Church Recorder” when he was providing instruction or making inquiries about records.

For half of those years he also presided over the Genealogical Society of Utah (1934–61). The Church began to microfilm genealogical records in 1938, and a decade later Church leaders recognized that local-unit records contain vital records information, so they began to microfilm the records, forms, minute books, and histories of wards and branches in order to extract vital records information.

Erekson: How did his many roles affect the work of Church history?

59. The changes mirrored changes in the wider profession. The archival profession had been born in 1909 at a meeting of the American Historical Association, and historians began to advocate for a national archive (established in 1934) and professional archival standards. Reflecting this national trend, the state of Utah appointed a state archivist in 1947. William Palmer had worked for the Church Historian’s Office and, influenced by the work of Church record keeping, he focused on microfilming state records and developing subject files on Utah communities. In 1954, the Utah State Historical Society began a program to organize state records, and Brigham Young University appointed an archivist in 1956. See David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America’s Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607–1884* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); David J. Russo, *Keepers of Our Past: Local Historical Writing in the United States, 1820s–1930s* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Randall C. Jimerson, “Documents and Archives in Early America,” *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 235–58; Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Cory L. Nimer and J. Gordon Daines III, “The Development and Professionalization of the Utah State Archives, 1897–1968,” *Journal of Western Archives* 3, no. 1 (2012): 16–17.

60. Joseph Fielding Smith served as an Apostle 1910–72 (including as President of the Church 1970–72) and was sustained the “Church Historian and General Church Recorder” on April 6, 1921; he was released on January 23, 1970, when he became President of the Church. *Ninety-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1921), 189; “New Church Historian Called,” *Church News*, February 14, 1970, 3.

Snow: Because of Joseph Fielding Smith's duties in the Twelve, direction of the day-to-day operations of the Historian's Office fell to assistants A. William Lund,⁶¹ Preston Nibley,⁶² and Earl Olson.⁶³

Erekson: And in the 1950s and 1960s, those associates began to participate in professional archival and library circles.⁶⁴ But the most significant change toward professionalization originated under the direction of the First Presidency.

Snow: That's right. In 1965, the First Presidency established a centralized records management program to govern all Church records. The program included a standardized filing system and the use of common forms that were managed centrally. The Church developed a plan for record retention and appointed record officers in each department at headquarters.⁶⁵

61. A. William Lund (1886–1971) was sustained as Assistant Church Historian and Recorder on April 9, 1911, and died in office on February 8, 1971. "Authorities Sustained," *81st Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 132; Albert L. Zobell Jr., "In Memorium: A. William Lund (1886–1971)," *Ensign* 1 (March 1971): 75.

62. Preston Nibley (1884–1966) was sustained as Assistant Church Historian and Recorder on April 6, 1957, and released on October 31, 1963. *One Hundred Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957), 42; Historical Department office journal, 97:82 (November 21, 1963).

63. Earl E. Olson (1916–2010) was sustained as Assistant Church Historian and Recorder on October 1, 1965, and was assigned to be Church Archivist on January 14, 1972. *One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 25; Historical Department office journal, 101:13.

64. By 1965, staff in the office participated in the Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, the National Microfilming Association, the American Records Management Association, and the Utah Library Association. Some of the librarians on the staff joined a committee sponsored by the Utah Library Association to develop a classification system to expand the Dewey system to allow for greater granularity in classifying publications about Latter-day Saints and their history. Paul A. Foulger, "Report of the Historian's Office Library-Archives for the Year 1960," 5, M258 H673r 1960, Church History Library; "Report of the Office of the Church Historian, Including the Historian's Office Library-Archives, for the Five-Year Period 1961–1965, and Inventory of Holdings as of December 31, 1965," 7, Church History Library.

65. First Presidency to all General Authorities, auxiliary executives, and heads of departments, February 17, 1965, copy in author's possession. Responsibility for forms and reports were transferred to the Presiding Bishopric in 1968.

Erekson: And the First Presidency assigned the Church Historian and Recorder to administer the program.

Snow: Yes. The following year, the Granite Mountain Records Vault was dedicated.⁶⁶ A report made at the end of 1970 indicated that during the first five years of the program, the Church had begun preserving business records onto microfilm, created record schedules to govern how long to keep records, and moved 5,200 boxes into a temporary records center. The gains in office floor space were estimated to have saved \$108,212 over the five-year period.⁶⁷

Erekson: So current records began to be viewed as an asset, something to be managed effectively in order to improve the ongoing work of the Church. Two more centralizing influences also converged at this time.

Snow: First, Church leaders began to draw on information in the records more regularly. During the late 1960s, a central reference library was established to provide reference support to Church leaders and departments at headquarters and to coordinate and advise the activities of local meetinghouse libraries. This reference library was overseen by the Historian's Office.⁶⁸

Second, the Historian's Office moved its records and its functions into the new Church Office Building in 1972. The reference library operated on the first floor of the east wing and the archive on the second. The new space offered larger storage space and improved work areas both for hosting visiting researchers and for staff projects.⁶⁹

Erekson: The combination of new facilities and a more professional staff prompted significant internal changes. The archivists embraced the concept of maintaining record groups and collections that are based on provenance and original order. As a result, they began a decades-long initiative to dismantle the name-and-subject system in order to reconstitute the papers of Brigham Young and everyone else.

66. See Allen, Embry, and Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 236–41.

67. "Report of the Office of the Church Historian, Including the Historian's Office Library-Archives, for the Five Year Period 1966–1970, and an Inventory of Holdings as of December 31, 1970," 12–13, Church History Library.

68. "Report of the Office of the Church Historian . . . 1965," 5; "Report of the Office of the Church Historian . . . 1970," 8–9; "Library Program Moving Rapidly Ahead," *Church News*, January 23, 1971, 4; "The Church Moves On," *Improvement Era* 72, no. 3 (March 1969): 90.

69. "A Report of the Historical Department . . . 1971–1975," 8.

They also started to create registers of collections to help researchers locate specific items within the larger collection.

Snow: And all of this culminated in an important decision about the archive. There had been some debate about which of the Church's libraries and archives should serve as the Church's official archive. Beyond the libraries in meetinghouses, there were also collections of records at Church universities and schools. The Church established a Church Archives Coordinating Committee, which considered the question and then named the Historian's Office as the Church's official archive and central repository in 1973.⁷⁰

Erekson: As you look back on the middle decades of the twentieth century, what are the most meaningful developments?

Snow: The establishment of the corporate records management program helped ensure that the Church would keep not just the historical documents but also the records created each day in the course of doing the work of salvation. The program also introduced the idea that not all records should be kept forever; some could be disposed of after their business use was completed. During this period, we see record keeping as a means of improving the effectiveness of the Church's day-to-day work.

We also see important strides in preservation through the construction of the Granite Mountain Records Vault and the expanded initiatives to create and preserve microfilm copies of records. And defining the Historian's Office as the official archive meant that all important institutional records should be preserved here.

Finally, we cannot underestimate the impact of the professional staff, who improved the ways that we describe and store our records. At the beginning of the period, turning to Church records to find genealogical information really was a new concept.

Years without a Church Recorder

Erekson: We come now to a period in the history of Church record keeping about which much has been written, though in some ways the attention has been unevenly focused. A lot of commentary has been

70. "An Archival Program for the Church Educational System," February 15, 1973, box 15, folder 3, University Archives, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; "Meeting of Archivists," minutes, July 16, 1973, box 77b, folder 3, University Archives.

given to Leonard Arrington's time as Church Historian in the 1970s and the Mark Hofmann forgeries and bombings of the early 1980s.⁷¹ But let's talk about the work of record keeping during this time.

Snow: Elder Howard W. Hunter replaced President Smith as Church Historian and Recorder in 1970 and served for two years.⁷² He had already been serving in the Quorum of the Twelve (since 1959) and as president of the Genealogical Society of Utah (since 1964). He devoted much of his time as Church Historian and Recorder to the filming of genealogical records and left the day-to-day operations of the Historical Department to Earl Olsen.

Erekson: The end of Elder Hunter's tenure marked a significant transition in the history of the office of Church Recorder.

Snow: Yes. Of most significance, the title of Church Recorder ceased to be used, and the title of Church Historian was assigned to a professionally trained employee. This change occurred at a time when various offices and auxiliaries were restructured along a common pattern, with a General Authority serving as the managing director of each department. The Church Historian's Office was renamed the Church Historical Department, and Apostle Alvin R. Dyer⁷³ was appointed as the managing director. Elder Dyer carried all of the responsibilities previously assigned to Elder Hunter. However, the title of Church Historian (without Church Recorder) was assigned to the head of the

71. Gregory A. Prince, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016); Richard E. Turley Jr., *Vicims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

72. Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) served as an Apostle 1959–95 and was announced as the Church Historian and Recorder on February 14, 1970; sustained on April 6, 1970; and released on January 14, 1972. "New Church Historian Called," *Church News*, February 14, 1970, 3, 13; "Voting on Prophets, Seers, and Revelators," *One Hundred Fortieth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1970), 110; Historical Department office journal, 101:13; Leonard J. Arrington, "The Founding of the LDS Church Historical Department, 1972," *Journal of Mormon History* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 45–46.

73. Alvin R. Dyer (1903–77) served as an Apostle 1967–77, including time as a counselor in the First Presidency (1968–70) and as an Assistant to the Twelve (1970–76). On the restructuring, see Alvin R. Dyer, "The Future of Church History," *Ensign* 2 (August 1972): 58–61.

newly organized History Division, Leonard Arrington.⁷⁴ At the same time, Arrington's fellow division heads, Earl E. Olson and Donald T. Schmidt, were assigned the respective titles of Church Archivist and Church Librarian. In 1975, Florence S. Jacobsen became Church Curator, but no one was named as Church Recorder.

Erekson: During this time without a Church Recorder, what happened to the record-keeping functions?

Snow: Earl Olson had been appointed as a records manager when the records management program was organized in 1965. So he and Schmidt dealt with records management issues during the mid-1970s. Then the responsibility for managing records began to move around the Church, first to the Management Data Department (in 1977) and then to Finance and Records (in 1987). The Historical Department stopped collecting the minutes of local Church units in 1978 and began collecting instead an annual historical report.

Erekson: Was that the end of the title of Church Recorder?

Snow: Elder G. Homer Durham⁷⁵ of the Seventy became the department's managing director in 1977, and in 1982 he received the title

74. Leonard J. Arrington (1917–99) was announced as Church Historian on January 14, 1972, and sustained on April 6, 1972. His title was changed to "Director of the History Division" on February 24, 1978; the division was transferred to BYU in the summer of 1980; and he was formally released in February 1982. Historical Department office journal, 98:58, 101:13; "General Authorities and Officers of the Church," *One Hundred Forty-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), 9. He was possibly released on February 2 since that is when Elder Durham was set apart (see note 75). Lavina Fielding Anderson, "A Note on Church Historians," *By Common Consent* 11, no. 3 (July 2005): 4, <http://mormon-alliance.org/newsletter/2005jul.htm>; Gary Topping, *Leonard J. Arrington: A Historian's Life* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008): 99–101; Gary James Bergera, ed., *Confessions of a Mormon Historian: The Diaries of Leonard J. Arrington, 1971–1999*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018), 1:103–4, 122; 2:475–77; 3:74, 77–108. For a complete list of works published by the History Division, see Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Doves and Serpents: The Activities of Leonard Arrington as Church Historian, 1972–1982* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1982): 244 (Appendix B numbered separately, 1–41).

75. G. Homer Durham (1911–85) served as a member of the Seventy 1977–85. He was set apart at Church Historian and Recorder on February 2, 1982, and was not sustained in general conference. He died in office on January 10, 1985. Historical Department office journal, 99:85; "Elder G. Homer Durham Dies," *Ensign* 15 (March 1985): 74–75. Though Durham was not sustained, Gordon B.

of Church Historian and Recorder.⁷⁶ His successor, Elder Dean L. Larsen, likewise carried the dual title while leading the department from 1985 to 1989.⁷⁷ But from that point until 2005, neither a Church Historian nor a Church Recorder was called. The offices remained vacant until Elder Marlin K. Jensen's appointment in 2005. Despite these changes in title and role, the top-level responsibility for leading the Church History Department was continuously assigned to a member of the Seventy who at first held the title of managing director and then the title of executive director after 1985.⁷⁸

Erekson: So the role of Church Recorder was officially vacant for less than a decade, but in practice, it was vacant off and on for approximately thirty years.

Snow: Yes, and in that time, we lost a central officer to certify the important records of the Church, as had been outlined in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Hinckley announced Durham's appointment during general conference on April 4, 1982. *Official Report of the One Hundred Fifty-Second Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 96.

76. Elder Joseph Anderson (1889–1992) served as managing director 1975–77. He had previously served as secretary to the First Presidency (1922–70) and as an assistant to the Twelve (1970–76). He later served as a member of the Seventy (1976–78).

77. Dean L. Larsen (1927–) served as a member of the Seventy 1976–97, including time as a President of the Seventy (1980–93). He was announced as Church Historian and Recorder on February 28, 1985; sustained on April 6, 1985; and transferred to the Temple Department on October 2, 1989. Though he did not actually act in the role of Church Historian and Recorder, he was formally released from that calling at the time of his transition to emeritus status on October 4, 1997. Historical Department office journal, 99:100; Gordon B. Hinkley, "The Sustaining of Church Officers," *Ensign* 15 (May 1985): 5; Historical Department office journal, 99:140; James E. Faust, "The Sustaining of Church Officers," *Ensign* 27 (November 1997): 20. During Elder Larsen's tenure, the title of the General Authority leader of Church departments was changed to "Executive Director," and the title "Managing Director" was assigned to the highest-ranking employee in the department.

78. Responsibility for leading the department during this period was assigned to members of the Seventy: Joseph Anderson (1975–77), G. Homer Durham (1977–85), Dean L. Larsen (1985–89), John K. Carmack (1989–91), Loren C. Dunn (1991–93), Stephen D. Nadauld (1993–96), Marlin K. Jensen (1996–98), John K. Carmack (1998–99), Loren C. Dunn (1999–2000), D. Todd Christofferson (2000–2004), and Marlin K. Jensen (2004–5).

Into the Twenty-First Century

Erekson: Even though no one held the office of Church Recorder, records continued to be created in the Church. What happened as the Church moved into the twenty-first century?

Snow: As Church wards and stakes were organized around the world, records began to be created in many languages and many formats—paper, audio, digital. The Temple Department experimented with electronic records throughout the 1980s and went entirely digital in 1990.⁷⁹ Membership records also went digital in the 1980s. In the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, new electronic systems were created to record information about financial contributions, unit boundaries, and local and general leaders. And the Church also mounted its first website, lds.org, in 1996, which introduced an ever-growing practice of digital publishing.

Erekson: Concerns about managing electronic records soon arose. How were the concerns addressed?

Snow: Sometime in the early 1990s, the responsibility for managing records came back to the Church History Department. Around the turn of the century, the First Presidency established an Electronic Records Management Committee, which concluded that more attention to records was needed. As a result, they appointed Elder Jensen⁸⁰ as the Church Historian and Recorder in 2005.

Erekson: How did Elder Jensen tackle the work of the Church Recorder?

79. The Temple Department was created in 1979. Temple records were kept on paper in temples until the 1980s. In 1981, the Salt Lake City Temple piloted an automated Temple Recording System (TRS), and the Church implemented the system in the Jordan River Temple. The Provo, Ogden, and Swiss Temples were retrofitted in 1982, and by 1986 the system operated in eighteen more temples. In 1989, the department stopped recording information about proxies, witnesses, and officiators, keeping only the recipient information in a new and simpler Ordinance Recording System (ORS), piloted in the Logan Temple in 1990 and installed in most other temples the following year. See Allen, Embry, and Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers*, 310–11.

80. Elder Marlin K. Jensen (1942–) served as a member of the Seventy 1989–2012, including time in the Presidency of the Seventy (1998–2001). He was sustained as Church Historian and Recorder on April 2, 2005, and released on October 6, 2012. “The Sustaining of Church Officers,” *Ensign* 35 (May 2005): 23; Eyring, “Sustaining of Church Officers,” *Ensign* 42 (November 2012): 25.

Snow: First, he established and chaired a new Churchwide Records Management Committee. Through this committee, he guided the creation of “policies, processes, and systems that will help manage and preserve essential Church records.”⁸¹ The committee also refreshed the Church’s records management program, helping each department appoint a records coordinator from among its own employees.

Erekson: And those department employees were, in turn, supported by professionals in the Church History Department.

Snow: That’s right. And the professional staff in the Church History Department help in a number of ways. They create a comprehensive schedule of record retention and disposition to guide how long the Church should keep current business records. Our employees can also help make plans to preserve digital records long-term. During Elder Jensen’s tenure, the Church began to use electronic systems to manage current records and to preserve electronic records of enduring historical value.⁸²

I should also add that during his tenure, the Church History Library building was completed. It was dedicated in 2009 by President Thomas S. Monson as the place appointed for the Church’s “countless records” to be “carefully preserved for future generations.”⁸³

Erekson: Looking back on this long history of record keeping, what are the lessons or precedents that you see for the office of Church Recorder?

Snow: It appears clear to me that the office of Church Recorder is important to the work of the whole Church, and there are benefits in linking the office with that of Church Historian. It is also clear that the Church Recorder cannot create every record but instead must serve as a central collector who can certify that the records were properly

81. Jensen and Boone, “Historian by Yearning,” 5.

82. The first electronic system used by the Church for current records was Vignette Records and Documents (VRD), and the Church has since migrated to an IBM-based platform called FileNet that allows the use of automated rules about which records to keep and which are no longer needed. The Church began this process of automated record disposition in 2014. The department began to host a Digital Records Preservation System (DRPS) in 2011 that runs continuous quality checks to protect against file corruption and can reconstitute information in any format in the future.

83. Thomas S. Monson, “Church History Library Dedicatory Prayer,” June 20, 2009, 3, CR 626 3, Church History Library.

created and appropriately preserved. It also seems that what types of records are preserved is not as important as the practices of record keeping. Records can be created with paper, microfilm, or electronic formats; regardless of the format, the right practices need to be followed. Finally, and this is why I think the recorder function is linked to the historian function, the records need to be organized in such a way that they can be accessed to serve the work of the Church. Sometimes that service is provided by publishing the records; at other times it is provided by study and consultation, and sometimes it is provided by awarding access to the record creators so that they can manage their work more effectively. In all of these uses, we fulfill a solemn duty to keep records and remember the work of the Lord.

Defining the Work of the Church Recorder Today

Erekson: That brief history brings us back, full circle, to your time in the office.

Snow: After I was sustained in general conference, my ten-year-old granddaughter called with a question. She asked me, “What does the Church Historian and Recorder do? Do you keep a scrapbook for the Church or what?” The idea of a scrapbook is helpful because we really do bring together all kinds of records. But the work is much larger and much more complicated.

Erekson: That fuller understanding of the history of the office of Church Recorder became the first step in defining the work of the Recorder today. How did that process unfold?

Snow: We started with a summary of the historical findings and began to discuss them with the members of the Records Management Committee, which I now chaired. We also talked with the Presiding Bishopric, who oversees the Church departments responsible for financial, membership, and statistical records. In the process of creating the Digital Records Preservation System, a second Churchwide committee had been created to evaluate options for that system and to help effectively store electronic records. We took up the questions with the members of those committees and also discussed our findings with two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who serve as advisers to the Church History Department. As a result of counseling together, we created a proposal to take to the First Presidency in September 2016.

Erekson: The proposal was approved, and you came away from that meeting authorized to make some important changes. Let's start with the organizational side.

Snow: We began by merging two committees. The Records Management Committee had cared for paper records, and the Digital Records Preservation Committee had studied digital records. The new committee, chaired by the Church Historian and Recorder, is called the Church Record-Keeping Executive Committee, and it contains staff members representing the leading quorums, as well as leaders of departments that create important records, such as the Temple and Family History Departments, and the leaders of departments that support the creation of records, such as the Publishing Services and Information and Communication Services Departments. This executive committee is supported by a standing operations committee with directors from the same key departments as well as working groups that form to address various long- and short-term needs.

Erekson: You also initiated new procedures for tracking and reporting progress.

Snow: We began an annual process of reporting to Church departments on the status of their record preservation. Our Records Management team conducted a manual inventory of records in 2015 to establish a baseline. Since that time, we've begun to develop electronic tools to monitor and report. Each year we produce a records report for each department or entity of the Church. This is the modern fulfillment of the instruction given to the Church Recorder in Doctrine and Covenants 128:4: He receives the records, enters them into the general Church collection, and certifies that the records are true and preserved.

Erekson: And you also became more active in teaching the principles of record keeping.

Snow: This recognizes that records are created all over the world and only come to the Church Recorder for certification. So we defined principles and guidelines for training the record keepers. Internally, the most visible way we do this is through an annual Record Keeping Summit, held in the first months of each year since 2017. At the meeting, we review accomplishments, make assignments, distribute the annual reports, and provide instruction on record-keeping principles and practices.

Erekson: And there are several other ways that this instruction is delivered. We've created orientation and personal development training for departmental records coordinators as well as training materials that coordinators deliver to their respective departments. Beginning in 2018, new employees learn about the importance of record keeping during their human resources orientation. And an internal website provides Church employees with guidelines, definitions, and helpful video instruction.

Snow: I also shared the history and lessons of record keeping at a recent gathering of temple recorders. And I've shared the principles with my brethren in the Seventy on various occasions.

Erekson: How about for Church members?

Snow: I shared a summary of the principles together with scriptural thoughts about record keeping in the electronic edition of the April 2019 *Ensign*.⁸⁴

Erekson: Let's talk a little bit about the principles of record keeping. Where did the "Pattern for Record Keeping" (fig. 1) originate?

Snow: In addition to studying the history of the office, we also searched the scriptures for principles we could use in teaching. And, our records management and preservation professionals brought their expertise in both fields to align scriptural principles with the best practices in industry.

Erekson: The result is a statement of nine principles (fig. 1).

Snow: We can *organize* ourselves by appointing people to be responsible for the records,⁸⁵ selecting which records to keep⁸⁶ and making plans

84. Steven E. Snow, "The Sacred Duty of Record Keeping," *Ensign* 49 (April 2019), <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2019/04/the-sacred-duty-of-record-keeping>.

85. Best practices for stewardship include to (1) understand the importance of record keeping and the role of the Church Recorder; (2) recognize that Church records refer to all information, in any form, created for the transaction of Church business and ecclesiastical activities; (3) assign responsibility for managing records to appropriate stewards; and (4) learn the duties related to record-keeping stewardship. Relevant scriptures include Doctrine and Covenants 78:11; 85:1–2; 104:11; 107:99; and 128:4.

86. Best practices for selection include to (1) identify the records created and received during the normal course of activity; (2) group like records together into record sets and identify various record formats; (3) determine how long to



A Pattern for Record Keeping

“Behold, there shall be a record kept among you.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 21:1

Organize



Stewardship

“Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty.”

—D&C 107:99



Selection

“They are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren.”

—Words of Mormon 1:6



Planning

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass.” —Alma 37:6

Manage



Protection

“These things were to be kept sacred ... from one generation to another.” —Alma 63:13



Retention

“Keep a record of this people ... for it is for a wise purpose that they are kept.”

—Alma 37:2



Disposition

“It has hitherto been wisdom in God that these things should be preserved.” —Alma 37:8

Preserve



Storage

“Let all the records be had in order, that they may be put in the archives.” —D&C 127:9



Access

“Put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired.”

—Joseph Smith—History 1:1



Certification

“Certifying in his record that he saw with his eyes, and heard with his ears.” —D&C 128:3

FIGURE 1. A Pattern for Record Keeping. Courtesy Church History Library. © by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

to care for the records.⁸⁷ Then we *manage* our records by protecting them from loss or destruction,⁸⁸ retaining them as long as necessary,⁸⁹ and making a proper decision on whether or not to preserve them long-term.⁹⁰ We *preserve* the records by storing them properly,⁹¹ making appropriate provisions to access them,⁹² and certifying that they are properly kept.⁹³

Erekson: That is the message of record keeping. It gives us much to expound on throughout the coming years as we work with Church departments, affiliated Church entities, and area offices around the world.

keep each record set; and (4) decide what to do with each record set after it is no longer needed. Relevant scriptures include Doctrine and Covenants 57:13; 69:8; and Words of Mormon 1:5–6.

87. Best practices for planning include to (1) create and document policies and procedures; (2) implement systems for managing records; and (3) enable auditing and verification of effective record keeping. Relevant scriptures include Mosiah 4:27; Alma 37:6–7; and Doctrine and Covenants 88:119.

88. Best practices for protection include to (1) ensure the integrity of records: that they are accurate, authentic, reliable, and properly cared for; (2) secure access to information that is confidential, private, or sacred; and (3) make records available only to those who need appropriate access. Relevant scriptures include 1 Nephi 14:30; Alma 37:2; and 63:13.

89. Best practices for retention include to (1) retain records in compliance with Church policy and all applicable laws and regulations; (2) find and retrieve needed records efficiently; and (3) facilitate appropriate discovery, regulatory compliance, and Church audit. Relevant scriptures include 2 Nephi 3:12; Joseph Smith—History 1:1; and Articles of Faith 1:12.

90. Best practices for disposition include to (1) transfer records of enduring historical value to the Church History Library; and (2) destroy records with expired utility and no enduring value. Relevant scriptures include Doctrine and Covenants 47:3; 69:5–6; and Jacob 3:13.

91. Best practices for storage include to (1) preserve records of enduring value in dedicated preservation facilities and systems; (2) maintain proper environmental and geographic conditions for long-term preservation; and (3) provide appropriate physical and intellectual controls of records. Relevant scriptures include 1 Nephi 19:3; Jacob 4:2; Alma 37:14; and Doctrine and Covenants 127:9.

92. Best practices for access include to (1) make records accessible today and in the future for appropriate uses; and (2) safeguard accessible records against loss, theft, and error. Relevant scriptures include 1 Nephi 19:5; 2 Nephi 27:22; and Alma 37:8.

93. Best practices for certification include to (1) track, verify, and report the status of record collection and preservation; (2) monitor and migrate records while continuously validating record integrity; and (3) certify that records have been kept properly. Relevant scriptures include Doctrine and Covenants 128:3–4; Alma 37:5; and 3 Nephi 23:7.

Snow: And it is comforting to know that behind the principles, we have the support of dedicated professionals employed by the Church History Department who stay on top of the latest issues and technological developments in the fields of digital preservation, records management, and information governance.

Erekson: Do you have any final insights or observations to share?

Snow: This effort to define the role of Church Recorder has been one of the most important developments of my tenure. Researching and counseling together brought clarity to questions that had existed for more than forty years. This understanding should benefit the work of the office of Church Historian and Recorder for decades to come. I am grateful for the scholars in our department who have worked so hard to clarify these issues.

Keith A. Erekson is an author, teacher, and public historian who serves as director of the Church History Library. He holds advanced degrees in history and business and has worked in auto manufacturing, scholarly publishing, and higher education. Before directing the library, he served as a tenured associate professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso and an assistant to the university's president.

Elder Steven E. Snow was sustained as a General Authority Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on March 31, 2001, and will be made emeritus at the October 2019 general conference. He served as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy from 2007 to 2012 and as Church Historian and Recorder from 2012 to 2019. A native of St. George, Utah, he attended Dixie College and earned his bachelor's degree in accounting at Utah State University and his law degree at Brigham Young University. Prior to his call as a full-time General Authority of the Church, he was a senior partner in the Utah law firm of Snow Nuffer.

*Sex and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail:
The Biology of Three American Tragedies*

By Donald K. Grayson

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018

Reviewed by Melvin L. Bashore

Who would be more likely to survive in a wilderness setting, beset by starvation and extreme cold? Women or men? Single individuals or families? Would age make a difference? In *Sex and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail*, Donald Grayson looks at who died and who lived in three mid-nineteenth-century emigrant groups. An emeritus professor of anthropology at the University of Washington, Grayson began looking at patterns of death in the Donner Party, publishing his findings in 1990 and 1993.¹ Curious if those same patterns of death were manifest in another emigrant group, Grayson began looking at the 1856 Willie handcart company. Grayson acknowledges my help with his research at the Church Historical Department in the mid-1990s, and he published his findings about mortality in the Willie handcart company in the *Journal of Anthropological Research* in 1996.²

In *Sex and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail*, Grayson re-examines his earlier analyses, adds new ones, and in some instances, reaches different conclusions than his earlier studies. He also looks at death in the Martin handcart company, an entirely new analysis for him. While his earlier publications were written in technical form, in this book, the statistical analyses are woven into the fabric of the story of the tragic disasters. This makes *Sex and Death* suitably readable for anyone curious

1. Donald K. Grayson, "Donner Party Deaths: A Demographic Assessment," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 46, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 223–42; Donald K. Grayson, "Differential Mortality and the Donner Party Disaster," *Evolutionary Anthropology* 2, no. 5 (1993): 151–59.

2. Donald K. Grayson, "Human Mortality in a Natural Disaster: The Willie Handcart Company," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 185–206.

about the differences in death and survivorship among groups entrapped in situations like those faced by the unfortunate members of the Donner Party and Willie and Martin handcart companies.

In the first introductory chapter, Grayson gives a brief overview of the contents of the book. He also addresses his use of the word *sex* in the title of the book. For many, if not most, the word *sex* implies intimacy. I admit that when first asked to write this review, I was given only the title of the book, not the author's name. I wondered why a book would seemingly focus on lovemaking and death on the trail. I'm confident that the majority of people who read the title will think similarly. So why didn't Grayson substitute the word *gender* for *sex* in his title? Grayson explains: "Gender refers to behaviors considered appropriate to males and females in a given society . . . [while] sex refers to the biological status—whether male or female—of the people involved" (4). In other words, Grayson's book title could be read as "Men and Women and Death on the Western Emigrant Trail."

The second chapter contains a general overview of those overland companies that traveled to California and Oregon before the Donner Party sallied forth in 1846. Those familiar with the history of these groups and individuals—such as the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson party or Lansford Hastings (author of a trail guide in whose footsteps the Donner Party followed) will find Grayson's summary accounts appealing and well written. They will not be bored with their recitation. Although Grayson attests to being only an amateur historian, he writes with clarity and energy, and at times, despite the painful subject, with wit. His retelling of the history of the Donner Party paints a vivid picture of that sad situation, when in order to live, people resorted to cannibalism. Of the eighty-seven people in the party, thirty-five died after the group established its winter encampment. The characteristics of the people in the Donner Party form the heart of his analysis of who lived and died.

In chapter 3, Grayson takes a different course. He looks at what is known about human biology and why people might live or die in situations of extreme cold coupled with starvation. He draws on various scientific studies that could be used to predict who might survive—or not—in harsh, frigid conditions. What is learned is (1) the youngest and oldest have the highest mortality, (2) men have a higher mortality than women, and (3) more people survive who travel in larger groups rather than in smaller kin or family groups.

The next three chapters look at the three emigrant groups in detail to see if these biological and scientific predictors of death hold true for

the deaths that occurred in the Donner Party and the Willie and Martin handcart companies. In general, they do. Grayson shows that sex, age, and family structure all factor into who lived and died in very predictable patterns for all three emigrant groups. Readers will be fascinated by the detail with which Grayson examines every nuance of survivorship. For example, in the Donner Party, men died at almost twice the rate of women. In regard to the relationship between age and days to death (counting from the day that the first person in the company died) among men, the youngest survived the longest and the oldest died first. Grayson offers plausible explanations for all the various aspects of mortality rates.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will, of course, be most interested in Grayson's findings about the handcart companies. The composition of the handcart companies differed in significant ways from the Donner Party. While the latter group comprised single men and families, the demographics of the handcart companies were more diverse, with a surprisingly large number of elderly people and women. They were also very poor, whereas some families in the Donner Party were fairly well-off. Members of the handcart companies—both old and young, male and female—ventured forth across the plains for religious and economic reasons.

Principally because they were exposed to the cold for a longer time than the handcart groups, 46 percent of Donner Party members died. By comparison, of the 442 members of the Willie company who continued west of Florence, Nebraska, 16.1 percent died. But the death rate of men was significantly higher in the Willie company: “the ratio of male to female mortality in the Willie Company is even higher than it is in the Donner Party: 3.0” (152).

Every aspect of the demographics in the handcart companies is examined: single women, single men, single mothers with children, single fathers with children, both parents with children, parents without children, siblings, and so forth. One interesting finding is that single-mother families suffered the lowest mortality rate of any other demographic in the Willie company: only 7 percent. Why? These women traveled without more vulnerable-to-dying older men, were given the assistance of younger men who had been appointed to help them, and had fewer younger children than the traveling groups that had both a mother and a father.

All historians must struggle with the question of blame for the handcart disaster. Grayson faults Brigham Young for not owning up to being at least partially responsible for what happened but commends him for

his decisive actions in launching the rescue effort. In the main, I find Grayson's recounting of the history of the Willie and Martin companies to be fair and balanced, although some of his criticisms of Young may cause some readers to squirm.

I might quibble with one observation that Grayson made about the relative difference between energy expenditure and food supplies of the two handcart companies. He writes, "Even though the Martin Company was on its own and exposed to severe cold longer than the Willie Company, their energy expenditure during some of those days was reduced by the two extended periods they spent in camp. These occurred between October 23 and 29, while camped along the Platte River, and between November 4 and 9, while at Martin's Cove. Equally important is the fact that while Willie's group ran out of food, Martin's company did not" (184–85).

While at the Bessemer Bend camp on the Platte River (October 23–29), the Martin company held a meeting to decide what they should do with their scant remaining flour. They had enough for one day—a portion of eight ounces for adults and four ounces for children. They decided to try to make that small amount last for three days. They supplemented it by boiling the bones of oxen and cattle that they killed. Three express riders from George D. Grant's small relief company, then sequestered at Devil's Gate, were sent ahead to try and find the Martin company. When they found them on October 28, children were eating bark from willows. Years later, Josiah Rogerson, a fifteen-year-old member of the Martin company, remembered that six to eight people died every day. The Martin company may have had enough food when they left the Bessemer Bend camp on October 29 to subsist on short rations. They had to push their handcarts about thirty miles before they met up with Grant's relief company at Greasewood Creek. They ate the last of their meager flour rations on October 31. It took them that entire day to get to Grant's wagons. Unfortunately Grant was low on provisions, so they had to survive on diminished rations the whole time they were at Devil's Gate and in Martin's Cove. I guess it could technically be said, as Grayson argues, that the Martin company was never out of food, but the deficient food situation certainly merits mention.³ It may also partly explain why the Martin company was so weak from the effects of cold

3. See Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Company* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 316–402.

and starvation at the Platte River and Martin's Cove that sixteen to eighteen people died and were buried in a grave eight days after leaving the Cove—possibly one of the largest mass graves in overland emigration history.⁴

In the book's last chapter, the author discusses the question of if men and women learn their gendered behaviors or if there is a biological factor behind gender differences. For instance, is there a cultural or a biological reason for why men are hunters and women are gatherers? Humans are certainly cultural beings, but when people are starving and freezing in the wilderness, Grayson argues, the results are governed by human biology, and "the results are remarkably predictable" (212).

Sex and Death offers a fresh way of looking at these tragic emigrant trail disasters. Many readers will certainly wonder what the outcome might have been had not the two handcart companies received timely rescue. Would these two religious companies have resorted to eating their comrades to stay alive? It's hard not to ponder this question when reading *Sex and Death*.

Melvin L. Bashore retired after thirty-seven years with the Church Historical Department. He created the Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel database on <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/overlandtravel/>. Before retiring in 2013, he served several years on the Church history board of *BYU Studies Quarterly*. He has published numerous articles on trail history, including "Mortality on the Mormon Trail, 1847–68," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2014), 109–23, coauthored with H. Dennis Tolley.

4. J. J., "Some Reminiscences," *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, December 22, 1878.

Devery S. Anderson, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1867–1883* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018)

In 1833, Joseph Smith established the first School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio. The school was a place where men in the Church of Christ, founded by Smith in 1830, met to learn about spiritual and secular matters and to prepare for missionary work. During these meetings, Joseph Smith saw many visions and received revelation. The Kirtland school ended in 1837, but thirty years later, Brigham Young revived the School of the Prophets in Utah. This school was called the Salt Lake School of the Prophets and is the main subject of Devery Anderson's new book *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1867–1883*.

Devery Anderson is the marketing manager at Signature Books and has previously published on Latter-day Saint history: he was an editor of a three-book documentary series: *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845*; *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846*; and *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005, 2005, and 2011 respectively). Anderson's new book, *Salt Lake School of the Prophets*, is another documentary work, which reproduces the minutes kept at the meetings of the School of the Prophets led first by Brigham Young and later by John Taylor.

Instead of focusing on spiritual and secular education (like the Kirtland school), the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets met to discuss doctrine and theological questions, oversee local political and economic matters, and formulate strategies to combat some of the political, social, and economic issues of the day. Some of these issues included conflicts with people in the community who were not members of the Church, relationships with American Indians, the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and

protests against the communal economy the Church was trying to enforce in the region. The school also dealt with new movements created both by and against the Church, conflicts between the Church and missionaries from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the battle between the federal government and the Church over polygamy. The decisions made in these meetings had a notable impact on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as Utah Territory.

After the school shut down in 1874, President John Taylor was inspired to reconvene the school in 1883. After the first couple of meetings of the revived school, however, it ended, as did another school that had been established in St. George, Utah. Anderson speculates that these schools shut down so soon because federal government investigations made it dangerous for the General Authorities to meet together (xx).

In the book, the minutes from the meetings held by the schools are split into seven time periods: 1867–69, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1883. The book also includes an introduction, thirty-three pages of biographical sketches of members of the Salt Lake school, photographs, and five appendixes detailing the rules observed by the first class of the School of the Prophets, the trial of William S. Godbe and Elias L. T. Harrison, minutes of the Salt Lake United Order in 1874, meetings held by the St. George School of the Prophets in 1883, and Brigham Young's discourse on December 20, 1867.

Salt Lake School of the Prophets is a good read for anyone interested in Church history and the political environment of nineteenth-century Utah. There is much to learn from the meetings held by the different iterations of the school and the changes that Church leaders made in the community as a result.

—Hannah Charlesworth

Alexander Campbell and Joseph Smith: Nineteenth-Century Restorationists by RoseAnn Benson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, in cooperation with Abilene Christian University, 2017) RoseAnn Benson's latest book, *Alexander Campbell and Joseph Smith*, examines and compares two of the most prominent restorationist leaders in nineteenth-century America. On this subject, Latter-day Saints are likely most familiar with the conflict between the two men and their movements. Early Latter-day Saint Sidney Rigdon, for instance, was one of several individuals who defected from Campbell's Disciples of Christ and joined what became The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And Campbell later published a treatise, "Delusions," against Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Though these facts are relatively well known among Latter-day Saints, that story is incomplete.

Benson's book not only places these points of conflict in context but also, especially for Latter-day Saint readers, tells a more complete story of Alexander Campbell and brings insight into Smith's story by examining his belief systems and work in light of Campbell's own restorationist movement.

Despite having distinct differences, these individuals had much in common, as the book discusses. Both led religious movements indigenous to America and believed in the need for a restoration of true Christianity. They also both worked on emending scripture and influenced the future religious landscape of America.

Notably, the book was published by Brigham Young University in concert with the Abilene Christian University (a Campbellite institution), reflecting an effort to bring two faiths together to tell history. The book also features two forewords: one written by Thomas H. Olbricht, a Campbellite scholar; and

one by Robert L. Millet, a Latter-day Saint scholar.

Comprising about four hundred pages, the book is roughly divided into fourteen chapters. The chapters are organized into an introductory section followed by four other sections. The chapters in the introductory section review the history of early American Christianity and the early lives and influences of both Campbell and Smith. The first section of the main body "explores the meanings of Christian restoration, primitivism, and millennialism and how Campbell's and Smith's movements fit or did not fit into these categories" (5). Section 2, "Systems of Belief," discusses each religious leader's foundational beliefs by exploring, in part, three documents from Campbell that reveal his theology, Smith's Articles of Faith, and each leader's work on emending the Bible.

The third section reviews instances of conflict between Smith and Campbell, and the final section discusses Campbell's and Smith's "distinctive contributions to restorationism" (6). Finally, two appendixes present, respectively, the full text of "Delusions" and the constitution of the Mahoning Baptist Association, for which Sidney Rigdon was an early leader, before he left the Campbellite faith.

The book's contextualization of the Latter-day Saint faith as an American restorationist movement, its analysis of primary documents, and its balanced discussion of both history and theology make the book a valuable scholarly contribution to early American religious history. Though the book has a Latter-day Saint leaning, as pointed out by Olbricht (xiii), the work is laudable for bringing two traditions together and aiming to examine both fairly. With this effort, writes Olbricht, Benson's work "will be a prolegomenon to any future study on the subject at hand" (xiii).

—Alison Palmer