

The Historians Corner

Edited by James B. Allen

The spirit of Mormonism in two different times, in two different places and under differing circumstances is represented by the two pieces selected for this edition. The first, an interesting letter written by an early convert, Albert Brown, reflects the optimism that characterized many Mormons in the Kirtland area around 1835. Of special interest are his comments on the Egyptian mummies obtained by Joseph Smith. But the letter is also significant because the writer's humble spirit as well as his comments on Mormon expectations for the future are no doubt typical of the most faithful Saints at the time.

The second item is derived from a very important study of Mormon publication efforts outside the United States. David J. Whitaker's introductory essay concerning Jesse Haven's publications in South Africa provides an enlightening view of one aspect of missionary work in the 1850s. The document that follows is especially important in that it represents what at least one prominent missionary considered to be the most essential doctrines for the Church to present to the world in that period. The reader will notice a few interesting differences when these doctrines are compared with present-day teachings, but the consistency in spirit between this document of 1853 and things being taught today is also remarkable.