

The Historians Corner

Edited by Ronald W. Walker

This issue of “The Historians Corner” deals with three familiar and recurring themes in the history of the Church—the Missouri redress petitions, the code names in the Doctrine and Covenants, and Martin Harris’s testimony—but with new information and / or documents for each one.

The Missouri persecutions are a traditional staple of Mormon historiography. In preparation for a forthcoming book, Clark V. Johnson studied over eight hundred petitions written by Mormons seeking redress from their Missouri experience. Dr. Johnson, who is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, submits one of the most graphic of these redress petitions for publication in *BYU Studies*. Written by Isaac Leany, it describes in firsthand detail the turmoil of the times, including the culminating disaster at Haun’s Mill.

For over one hundred years, the code names found in the Doctrine and Covenants have piqued interest. Who were the Church leaders whose identities were masked by these pseudonyms? Slowly the process of discovery has taken place. Each of the major editions of the Doctrine and Covenants since 1876 has included additional names, with the recent 1981 edition revealing the identities behind all the code names but four. Now, David J. Whittaker, University Archivist at Brigham Young University and book review editor for *BYU Studies*, may have written the final chapter to the question. Working from a recently discovered listing written by W. W. Phelps, Whittaker seems to have solved the enigma of even the last four uncertain identities. In addition, Whittaker places the entire question within its context and historical setting.

Our final selection testifies that “there’s still gold in them thar hills”—important historical documents awaiting discovery—for collectors and institutions with the penchant to seek them out. Mormon memorabilia collector, Brent Ashworth, shares a recently found Martin Harris letter, written late in Harris’s life, reaffirming his witness to the Book of Mormon and the Restoration.