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Centennial service on top of the Hill Cumorah, Manchester, New York, September 22, 1923. Courtesy Church History Library (CHL).

# Pilgrimage to Palmyra

## President B. H. Roberts and the Eastern States Mission's 1923 Commemoration of Cumorah

*Reid L. Neilson and Carson V. Teuscher*

The arrival of autumn in 1923 brought more than a mature harvest to the quiet farming village of Palmyra, New York. On a late September weekend, a torrent of visitors flooded the township—a spectacle unlike anything the locals had ever seen. “Trudging along the roads leading into Palmyra today there came a small army of pilgrims,” the local *Rochester Herald* reported, “each with his pilgrim’s scrip and each wearing slung across his shoulders a banner with the cryptic word ‘Cumorah’ blazoned on it.” Befuddled residents witnessed the young male and female pilgrims arrive—two by two—until they eventually coalesced in large groups around the old Joseph Smith family farm. Some of the travelers were exhausted, having walked hundreds of miles to get there.<sup>1</sup>

On September 21, 1923, every elder and sister serving in the Eastern States Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints converged on Palmyra for an unprecedented weekend conference. Meandering down country roads until they arrived at a nondescript hill, they were joined by local Church members living across the East Coast and curious passers-by. President Heber J. Grant, accompanied by Apostles Rudger Clawson, James E. Talmage, and Joseph Fielding Smith, attended from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.<sup>2</sup> Over the next several days, the sleepy township teemed with enthusiastic Latter-day

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1. Staff correspondent, “Pilgrims at Birthplace of Religion,” *Rochester (NY) Herald*, September 22, 1923, 3.

2. “Mormon Head Prominent at Celebration,” *Rochester Herald*, September 22, 1923.



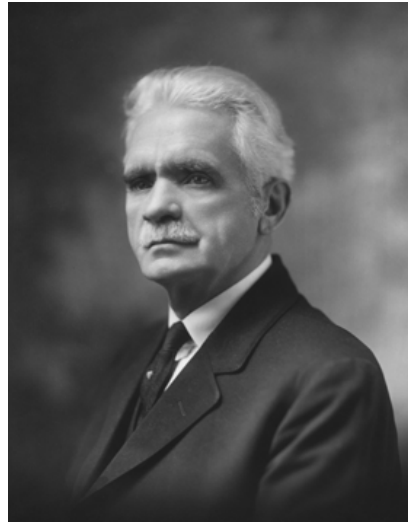
Arrival of the Eastern States Mission elders at the Smith farm, Manchester, New York, September 21, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

Saints eager to commemorate the centennial of an event that took place on that selfsame hill one hundred years earlier in 1823.

Joseph Smith, the religion's first prophet, grew up near the hill in Upstate New York. In his published personal history, he wrote: "Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood" (JS-H 1:51). Starting on the night of September 21, 1823, Smith, then age seventeen, was visited several times by the angelic messenger Moroni, who instructed him to climb the glacial drumlin, which he called Cumorah (JS-H 1:29–50). There he uncovered "the plates, deposited in a stone box" obscured by a large stone on the hill's western side (JS-H 1:51). Following the angel's direction, Smith returned to the hill on the same date in the ensuing years, and in 1827, having been sufficiently instructed, he removed the plates from Cumorah and initiated their translation process (JS-H 1:53–54, 59).

From September 21 to September 24, 1923, the hill served as the setting for a commemoration of Smith's vision of Moroni and receiving the golden plates. As the brainchild of Mission President Brigham Henry

“B. H.” Roberts, the 1923 general conference of the Eastern States Mission replanted Cumorah into the historical consciousness of the general body of Church membership; for the first time on a large scale, Church leaders, missionaries, and members converged on a site purposely envisioned as an LDS center of pilgrimage and commemoration, whereas before it had served as an irregular reminder to occasional tourists of the Church’s bygone presence in New York. The centennial conference’s proceedings reinforced the Hill Cumorah’s centrality to the emergence of the Latter-day Saint movement in the nineteenth century and its unique theological message.



Brigham H. “B. H.” Roberts, President of the Eastern States Mission, c. 1922. Courtesy CHL.

Historians have made much of the period between 1890 and 1930, characterizing it as a time of transition and identity renegotiation for the Latter-day Saint faith.<sup>3</sup> Several scholars have postulated that Church leaders, grappling with an identity vacuum in the wake of polygamy, spent the early twentieth century adopting a new image—one in greater harmony with the trappings of modern American society.<sup>4</sup> This process of representation involved a public forgetting of the distinctiveness of the last half-century, beginning with Joseph Smith’s introduction of plural marriage, instead marking a return to the earliest seeds of the Restoration. Those seeds—founded upon Joseph Smith’s upbringing in New York and the emergence of the Book of Mormon as the Church’s unique scriptural heritage—were on full display at the Cumorah Centennial.

3. For example, see Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). On the Smith family farm in particular, see Keith A. Erekson, “From Missionary Resort to Memorial Farm: Commemoration and Capitalism at the Birthplace of Joseph Smith, 1905–1925,” *Mormon Historical Studies* (2005): 69–100.

4. Kathleen Flake, “Re-placing Memory: Latter-day Saint Use of Historical Monuments and Narrative in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2003) 69–109.

There, Latter-day Saint identity renegotiation involved not only a return to the foundational doctrines of Joseph Smith's early restoration of Christ's church, but it also involved a pilgrimage to its foundational site, a sacred place where ancient and modern prophets met.<sup>5</sup>

Replanting twentieth-century Latter-day Saint identity within the geographic bounds of its nineteenth-century origin story, the 1923 Cumorah commemoration foreshadowed a day when Church theology would be grounded first in the Book of Mormon and second in the Bible. Research has recently been focused on ways mission presidents of the early twentieth century innovated new proselyting efforts focused on the Book of Mormon—subsequently pushing it to the forefront of Church culture.<sup>6</sup> Most studies, however, overlook Roberts's intellectual orchestration of the 1923 summer missionary labors, which he called “country work,” and the September march to Cumorah as constituent pillars of this broader push to renegotiate Latter-day Saint identity in the early twentieth century. Instead, historic treatments of the 1923 conference are generally annexed into broader histories of the hill itself or briefly mentioned as a signpost in the emergence of Church pageantry in the mid-to-late twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, any study of the 1923 centennial celebration should not be separated from the evangelistic “country work” preceding it.<sup>8</sup> To

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5. See Michael H. Madsen, “The Sanctification of Mormonism’s Historical Geography,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 229; and Daniel H. Olsen, “Touring Sacred History: The Latter-day Saints and Their Historical Sites,” in *Mormons and Popular Culture: A Global Influence of an American Phenomenon*, ed. J. Michael Hunter (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 225–42.

6. See John C. Thomas, “The Book of Mormon in American Missions at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Religious Educator* 19, no. 1 (2018): 29–57. When Roberts introduced his new proselyting plan for the summer of 1923, he included in his series of five tracts one completely dedicated to the Book of Mormon. The tract is a powerful endorsement, application, summary, and testimony of the Book of Mormon’s significance and reaffirms that the scripture was already well ensconced in the missionary program of the Church before the Cumorah celebration.

7. Truman G. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 7–32; Curtis Ashton, “Reclaiming Hill Cumorah,” April 18, 2014, <https://history.lds.org/article/historic-sites/new-york/manchester/reclaiming-hill-cumorah?lang=eng&groupid=12968101728671441203-eng>.

8. Past historical treatments of the Hill Cumorah and the 1923 Centennial tend to isolate it from the country work preceding it. See, for example,

Roberts, the proselyting pilgrimage leading to the conference was just as important a means of re-embracing their shared past as the weekend event itself was. Reflecting on the events, Roberts declared the country work the “outstanding feature of our work during the last six months.” To him, the conference was a “fitting climax” to the journey of sacrifice undertaken by his male and female missionaries.<sup>9</sup> By ritually reenacting nineteenth-century proselyting efforts, the country work acted as a primer for the conference, amplifying missionaries’ awareness of the level of consecrated sacrifice exhibited by early Church members in their defense of the Book of Mormon. Without understanding the nature of the country work building up to the main event, it is almost impossible to explain how the event assumed such powerful spiritual implications in its execution and memory.

Roberts engineered the conference to be a transformative experience. Taken as a whole, the summer country work, the conference at Cumorah, and its aftermath embodied the five themes of pilgrimage: the departure, the journey, sacred space, the central shrine, and the return.<sup>10</sup> Deep internal feelings of spiritual significance were reinforced through a process of calculated, externalized religious reenactment. Proximity to culturally relevant religious space only magnified the import of the weekend’s episodic retellings of the past. President Grant later lamented that this transformative pilgrimage was undertaken by so few Latter-day Saints. “I believe that if I had more thoroughly partaken of the spirit of that conference prior to going there,” he remarked at general conference, “that arrangements would have been made to have had hundreds of the Latter-day Saints present.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the conference and the summer proselyting campaign leading up to it long stood out in the memory of all who participated.

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Cameron J. Packer, “A Study of the Hill Cumorah: A Significant Latter-day Saint Landmark in Western New York” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002), 90.

9. Brigham H. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth 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, 1923), 89–90.

10. Ruth Barnes and Crispin Branfoot, eds., *Pilgrimage: The Sacred Journey* (Oxford, Eng.: Ashmolean Museum, 2006), 12–13.

11. Heber J. Grant, in *Ninety-Fourth 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, 1923), 5.

## Eastern States Mission President B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon

In April 1922, President Grant and his counselors in the First Presidency called sixty-five-year-old B. H. Roberts to preside over one of the Church's North American proselyting fields.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to the norm, he was allowed to select his own mission assignment. "The choice I finally expressed was to become president of the Eastern States Mission," Roberts wrote, which then included eleven states with about thirty-three million Americans within its borders. It was to him a "truly a noble field." He privileged the eastern states for their proximity to the historic sites of the Restoration, which he had visited and written about for decades. The Eastern States Mission, where he would preside until 1927, "had the attraction of including within it the territory of the early activities of the church, the birthplace of the prophet (Vermont), the early scenes of the prophet's life, the first vision, and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (the Hill Cumorah), the cradle of the church organization (Fayette, New York). Also the Harmony, Colesville, and Susquehanna valleys, where the priesthood was restored, both the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthood."<sup>13</sup> The significance of these sites greatly "endear[ed] this section of the country to [Roberts's] mind and heart."<sup>14</sup>

As he prepared to assume the presidency of the Eastern States Mission, Roberts determined to further highlight the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith and the divine origins of the Book of Mormon. Both the modern seer and Moroni's ancient record held a special place in the new mission president's heart and mind.<sup>15</sup> During his lifetime, Roberts published

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12. At the time, Roberts was serving in the First Council of the Seventy and was an Assistant Church Historian. For information on his mission presidency tenure, see B. H. Roberts, *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, ed. Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 230–36; Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 315–37; and Robert H. Malan, *B. H. Roberts: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 113–28.

13. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 230.

14. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 230.

15. See John W. Welch, "B. H. Roberts: Seeker after Truth," *Ensign* 16, no. 3 (March 1986): 56–62; John W. Welch, "Introduction," in B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), xi–xxxvii; and Davis Bitton, "B. H. Roberts and Book of Mormon Scholarship: Early Twentieth Century: Age of Transition," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 60–69, 87–88.

more than one thousand essays, general conference talks, sermons, articles, tracts, and pamphlets, in addition to his thirty books, with the Book of Mormon being the subject and doctrinal foundation for much of what he wrote. His three-volume *New Witnesses for God* (1895, 1909, 1909) was the culmination of decades of research, wrestle, and writing in defense of the American scripture and the overarching Restoration of the gospel. “Throughout his mature life he was a dedicated student and analyst of the Book of Mormon, struggling with both the modern and ancient contexts of the book,” concludes Roberts’s biographer Truman G. Madsen.<sup>16</sup>

Two months before being set apart as a mission president, Roberts shared his latest critical thinking on the American scripture with the presiding brethren, a writing project that he completed before leaving for the Eastern States Mission.<sup>17</sup> His comprehensive report sought to assess the truth claims of the Book of Mormon from multiple angles. Concerned his intentions might have been misunderstood by his General Authority colleagues, he penned a letter (which he apparently never sent) summarizing his feelings and faith to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve:

In writing out this my report to you of those studies, I have written it from the viewpoint of an open mind, investigating the facts of the Book of Mormon origin and authorship. Let me say once and for all, so as to avoid what might otherwise call for repeated explanation, that what is herein set forth does not represent any conclusions of mine. . . . I am taking the position that our faith is not only unshaken but unshakable in the Book of Mormon, and therefore we can look without fear upon all that can be said against it. . . .

It is not necessary for me to suggest that maintenance of the truth of the Book of Mormon is absolutely essential to the integrity of the whole Mormon movement, for it is inconceivable that the Book of Mormon

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16. Truman G. Madsen, “Roberts, B. H.,” in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 1035. See also Truman G. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 4 (1979): 427–45; and Truman G. Madsen, “B. H. Roberts after Fifty Years: Still Witnessing for the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* 13, no. 12 (December 1983): 11–19.

17. John W. Welch, “No, Sir, That’s Not History!” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: The F.A.R.M.S. Updates*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 88–90; and Truman G. Madsen and John W. Welch, “Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?” *FARMS Preliminary Reports*, 1985.

should be untrue in its origin or character and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints be a true Church.<sup>18</sup>

Roberts knew and repeatedly asserted the Book of Mormon was the keystone to the overarching truth claims of the Restoration.

Before, during, and after sharing his scholarly research on the Book of Mormon with the presiding brethren in early 1922, Roberts established himself as one of the chief apologists of the ancient American codex.<sup>19</sup> As scholar Terryl L. Givens explained, “Roberts publicly and privately affirmed his belief in the divine origins of the Book of Mormon until his death in 1933, but a lively debate has emerged over whether his personal conviction really remained intact in the aftermath of his academic investigations.” He continued, “It seems most plausible that Roberts’s unflinching intellectual integrity led him to articulate the most probing critique he could of the Book of Mormon, and he found himself incapable of solving the dilemmas he uncovered. But neither did he find his doubts sufficient to overpower his faith.”<sup>20</sup> Roberts welcomed the chance to preside over the mission encompassing the Hill Cumorah because it would give him a chance to continue to explore the book’s complexities while also bearing witness of its ancient origins.

In late May 1922, Roberts succeeded George W. McCune, who was struggling with poor health, as mission president and moved from Utah to the headquarters of the Eastern States Mission in Brooklyn, New York. During his first summer back East, he set out to greet and train his 140 elders and sisters scattered across the ten conferences of the mission.<sup>21</sup> Roberts met with his missionaries in Maine; Vermont; Massachusetts; New York; Pennsylvania; Delaware; Maryland; Wash-

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18. B. H. Roberts to Heber J. Grant, Council, and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, March 15, [1922], Church History Library (hereafter cited as CHL), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

19. See Brigham H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

20. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 110–11. See also Truman G. Madsen, ed., “His Final Decade: Statements about the Book of Mormon (1924–1933),” *FARMS Preliminary Reports*, 1985; John W. Welch, “Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts’s Questions,” *FARMS Preliminary Reports*, 1985.

21. Conferences were groups of wards or branches similar to what are now called stakes.

ington, D.C.; South Carolina; West Virginia; and Kentucky before the winter snowfall made travel on the eastern seaboard and mountains less convenient.<sup>22</sup>

The Church had recently commemorated the one-hundred-year anniversary of Joseph Smith's 1820 First Vision prior to Roberts's mission presidency. By the turn of the twentieth century, Latter-day Saints better appreciated the doctrinal significance of the founding prophet's theophany in the Sacred Grove.<sup>23</sup> As historian James B. Allen documents, "In 1920, the centennial anniversary of the vision, the celebration was a far cry from the almost total lack of reference to it just fifty years earlier." Reaffirming their desire to commemorate their sacred past, Church members in 1920 memorialized the theophany in a variety of new ways: they produced commemorative pamphlets, songs, and verse; dedicated their publications to showcasing its implications; and dramatized the events onstage.<sup>24</sup> In the decade between the centennials of the First Vision in 1920 and the organization of the Church in 1930, Latter-day Saints were increasingly eager observe the centennials of other key events of the Restoration, especially the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

During his first year as mission president, Roberts contemplated how to best celebrate Joseph Smith's 1823 encounter with the angel Moroni and the golden plates in Palmyra. In the nineteenth century, a growing number of Mormon tourists,<sup>25</sup> artists and photographers,<sup>26</sup> historians,<sup>27</sup>

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22. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 230–31.

23. See James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," in *Exploring the First Vision*, ed. Samuel Alonzo Dodge and Steven C. Harper (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2012), 283–306.

24. James B. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision of Mormon Religious Thought," in *Exploring the First Vision*, 245–46.

25. See Martin H. Raish, "Encounters with Cumorah: A Selective, Personal Biography," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (2004): 38–49, 169–70.

26. See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Cameron J. Packer, "A Story on Canvas, Paper, and Glass: The Early Visual Images of Cumorah," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (2004): 6–23, 167–68.

27. See Reid L. Neilson, Justin R. Bray, and Alan D. Johnson, eds., *Rediscovering the Sites of the Restoration: The 1888 Travel Writings of Mormon Historian Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 176–99.

poets,<sup>28</sup> and musicians<sup>29</sup> explored and documented the religious meaning of the Hill Cumorah and the surrounding sacred landscape. Small groups of local missionaries and members had also gathered at the Smith Family farm and the neighboring Hill Cumorah on historic occasions.<sup>30</sup> However, these had been individual—not ecclesiastical—undertakings to remember the founding events of the Restoration.

Roberts envisioned a unique commemoration of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that would culminate on September 21 at the Hill Cumorah. He viewed the anniversary as a window of opportunity to turn the eyes of the body of the Saints in the Intermountain West back toward their religious heritage in Upstate New York. As early as March 1923, Roberts shared with the young leaders of his Eastern States Mission a proposed outline of proselyting events leading up to the centennial celebration in Palmyra.<sup>31</sup> In mid-May, an article detailing the missionwide summer campaign was formally published in the *New York Herald*.<sup>32</sup> Beginning on May 15 (the anniversary of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood in 1829), mission leaders held a series of kick-off meetings marking the beginning of the summer-long country work. The proselyting campaign would culminate about four months later on September 21, when Roberts's missionaries would terminate their rural proselyting and converge at the Hill Cumorah to attend the first annual Eastern States Mission general conference commemorating the advent of the Book of Mormon.

True to his heritage as a historian, Roberts envisioned the missionary gathering as a three-day, episodic treatment of important Church events. The conference's geographical setting only amplified the power

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28. See Louise Helps, "Look Once Again at Cumorah's Hill: The Poet's View," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (2004): 110–23, 173.

29. See Roger L. Miller, "'Hail, Cumorah! Silent Wonder': Music Inspired by the Hill Cumorah," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (2004): 98–109, 171–73.

30. Groups of Latter-day Saints may have gathered there to celebrate Pioneer Day (July 24) in earlier years. There is, however, no record of these meetings in the manuscript history of the Eastern States Mission. See Albert L. Zobell Jr., "Lest We Forget: Early Cumorah Pageants," *Improvement Era* 71, no. 6 (June 1968): 24–25.

31. O. Ragnar Linde, Diary, March 14, 1923, O. Ragnar Linde Papers, J. Willard Marriott Special Collections (hereafter cited as Marriott Special Collections), University of Utah, Salt Lake City; George L. Hoggan, Diary, March 14, 1923, George L. Hoggan Papers, Marriott Special Collections.

32. "Mormons to Start on Missionary Tour," *New York Herald*, May 14, 1923.

behind each episode, and Roberts planned to use the countryside around the Hill Cumorah as a stage to showcase the Book of Mormon's historic and religious significance. He scheduled the retelling of Moroni's appearance to Joseph Smith at the Smith log home to occur at the original home site; the retelling of the Prophet's first visit to Cumorah would be held on the hill itself; the rehearsing of his 1820 First Vision in the Sacred Grove would transpire in the very forest Smith retired to as a young man. By physically retracing the steps of the religion's first prophet, Roberts's missionaries could envision the material circumstances of Smith's early life.

### **“Country Work” in the Eastern States Mission**

The missionary conference at Cumorah was only the pinnacle of a rigorous summer-long canvassing effort throughout the Eastern States Mission. Following the missionwide kickoff meetings on May 15, 1923, each male missionary companionship began country proselyting work in their assigned region, discontinuing conventional missionary work for the summer.<sup>33</sup> Bereft of missionary priesthood leadership for four months, local Church leaders across the mission were instructed to chart a course of self-sufficiency while the elders were traveling through the country.<sup>34</sup> Leaving their assigned areas, elders spread outward into rural counties, villages, farms, and meetinghouses previously unvisited during the fall, winter, and spring months.

Patterned after the ministries of Christians in the New Testament who were counseled to proselyte “without purse or scrip” (Matt. 10:5–10; Mark 6:7–12; Luke 9:3; 10:1–5; and 22:35), the summer campaign pushed missionaries well out of their comfort zones.<sup>35</sup> Going from house to house, county to county, without prearranged lodging or meals, demanded the faith and courage of everyone involved. By 1923, this nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint missionary practice was

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33. Eastern States Mission Manuscript History, July 17, 1923, LR 2475 2, CHL.

34. Eastern States Mission Manuscript History, June 5, 1923, CHL.

35. In the earliest days of the Church, leaders often called members on missions, encouraging them to go from place to place without funds or prearranged plans. They left their families and occupations, often acting under the belief God would provide for their needs. See D&C 24:18; D&C 84:86. This practice lasted well into the 1860s, when Church leaders recognized potential problems with having missionaries travel in this manner. For a thorough study of this aspect of early missionary efforts, see Jessie L. Embry, “Without Purse or Scrip,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 3 (1996): 77–93.



President B. H. Roberts with Eastern States missionaries, Brooklyn, New York, June 1922. Courtesy CHL.

largely considered antiquated; most mission presidents understood the seriousness of “labor, passport, and mendicancy laws” in effect countrywide and did not ask their missionaries to risk breaking them.<sup>36</sup> Although Roberts was considered “old school” in certain respects, he still adjusted the country work to conform with twentieth-century missionary norms.<sup>37</sup> His instructions were clear: The elders and sisters were not to “go rushing through the country on straight lines in the direction started upon,” nor would there be any “ambition to make a record of miles traveled.” He encouraged them instead to prayerfully go “trusting in the Lord,” sharing their message with any person willing to listen

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36. Doing country work without purse or scrip continued through the Great Depression and World War II in some domestic U.S. missions, though it was generally confined to summers. There are examples of this form of missionary work even extending into the postwar era after World War II, as late as the 1950s. Embry, “Without Purse or Scrip,” 78–82; Morris Bishop, “In the Footsteps of Mormon,” *New York History* 22, no. 2 (April 1941): 165.

37. Elton LeRoy Taylor, Oral History by Sandra Skouson, July 5, 1981, MS 2735, folder 421, CHL, 6.

along the way. To go “trust[ing] in the Lord” became the official substitute phrase for “traveling without purse or script [*sic*],” which Roberts worried could be easily misinterpreted by critics who might subject the missionaries to “charges of vagrancy.” If missionaries were blamed for trying to secure lodging among strangers without proper means of paying, the elders and sisters were to refer these people to the financial account at mission headquarters.<sup>38</sup>

The word *country* in country work was an appropriate reference to the predominantly rural nature of greater America in the early 1920s. According to Jessie Embry, in the early twentieth century “church leaders encouraged members to stay in their communities and build up the church there.” Missionaries were increasingly directed toward urban centers with established member bodies to assist their ongoing congregational growth. This slow shift necessitated a change in operations: “When missionaries were in cities, it was more difficult to find people who would provide free room and board.” Rented lodging in urban areas provided continual access to city membership but barred regular travel to the outer reaches of one’s area. For one, transportation was sparse, and missionaries ran the risk of walking miles of dirt roads between two farm houses. Missionaries, already working on limited funds, employed no vehicular means of transportation—consequently, visiting people in the countryside often demand multiday excursions on foot.<sup>39</sup>

During their country work, missionaries spent the week canvassing the countryside but did not spend the entire summer drifting on bucolic byways. On weekends, they returned to their original residences to do laundry, attend church meetings, and catch up on sleep. While they were out, the mission office in Brooklyn forwarded literature and tracts to their rental address. While it was tempting to remain home where all creature comforts were taken care of, come Monday morning all were expected to depart to the countryside to resume the work for another week.<sup>40</sup>

As their male counterparts proselyted in the countryside, female missionaries remained in their local congregations and took charge of “the work in the branches, mailing reports, etc.” When positive reports filtered in from the “country,” the “lady missionaries” were repeatedly commended for their work in the branches. “They are losing no opportunity to teach the Gospel,” one report stated, “The spirit of unity

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38. “Mormons to Start on Missionary Tour.”

39. Embry, “Without Purse or Scrip,” 78.

40. Taylor, Oral History, 6.



Arrival of lady missionaries at the Smith farm, Palmyra, New York, September 21, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

prevails and all are determined to make this a banner year in missionary activity.”<sup>41</sup> Roberts personally thanked the sisters for “keeping the holy campfires burning in branch halls and Sunday Schools, Relief Societies, and Mutuals,” while the elders were away.<sup>42</sup>

As the male missionaries headed into the countryside, most did not travel in their traditional livery, opting instead for garb as unique as the experience. Khaki britches tucked into a pair of leather or cloth-wrapped puttees<sup>43</sup> comprised the lower half, with a suit coat and straw hat on top. Besides an umbrella for the drenching rain and harsh sun, each elder carried relatively little into the field with him—a medium-sized fiber suitcase usually sufficed to hold a week’s worth of toiletries,

41. Eastern States Mission Manuscript History, July 17, 1923, CHL.

42. B. H. Roberts to the Eastern States Mission, August 29, 1923, Cumorah Conference Materials, Roberts Papers, MS 106, box 10, folder 13, Marriott Special Collections.

43. A *puttee* is a gaiterlike article worn from ankle to knee that offers support and protection from the elements. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “puttee.”



Eastern States missionaries—Elders Ducey, Bunker, Eldrige, Wardell, and Moore—with briefcases labeled “Why Mormonism,” Middletown, New York, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

shaving materials, and mission tracts and books for prospective listeners and potential hosts.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes fastened across the face of their suitcases was a small white paper sign with the words in black, “Why Mormonism?”<sup>45</sup>

An eye-catching Cumorah pennant, similar in form to most college banners of the era, was the distinguishing accessory of the missionaries’ wardrobe. It was to be worn for the duration of their September march to Palmyra. The pennant, cut triangularly from blue felt cloth, was

44. Taylor, Oral History, 6.

45. See B. H. Roberts, *Why “Mormonism”?* (Independence, Mo.: Press of Zion’s Printing and Publishing Company, 1923); see also LeRoi C. Snow, “Eastern States Mission,” *Liahona: The Elders’ Journal* 20, no. 19 (March 13, 1923): 382–83. *Why “Mormonism”?* was a missionary tract written and published in March 1923 by B. H. Roberts, intended for distribution on his missionaries’ summer campaign. Of the five tracts in Roberts’s new system, one was dedicated solely to the Book of Mormon, containing references to Roberts’s longstanding interests in the Book of Mormon that frequently highlight its “doctrinal value” and powerful witness.

adorned “with a photograph of the Hill Cumorah on white silk sewed on the broad end,” with the word “Cumorah” in gold lettering alongside the dates “1823—September 21<sup>st</sup>—1923.” Draping from left shoulder to right hip, it visually dominated the torso of the elders and sisters who proudly wore it. “This to attract attention,” Roberts explained, “and invite inquiry as to your march and its purpose.”<sup>46</sup> Elder Elton Taylor recalled, “This pennant created considerable interest and opened up opportunities to explain what we were doing and carry on gospel conversations.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the *Rochester Herald*’s description of the pennant’s solitary word as “cryptic” perhaps best epitomizes the endeavor’s success at soliciting curiosity.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the summer of 1923, Roberts clarified the details of their anticipated arrival at Cumorah. In an August mission circular, he provided information on travel arrangements, sleeping accommodations, and directions to Palmyra. The mission president understood the uneven geographic distribution of his missionaries across a dozen states. Sisters were told to make the entire journey by railroad. Taking distance into consideration, he also granted permission for elders in West Virginia to travel some distance by train; some elders could travel as far as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; elders in Maryland as far as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and elders in Maine as far as Boston, Massachusetts, or Albany, New York. After arriving at these locations by early September, these same elders were instructed to continue their journey to Cumorah on foot for about three weeks. Like the summer work, Roberts instructed them to pursue a nonlinear path, enabling them to “[preach] by the way . . . , testifying to all whom they [met].” Roberts left other logistical details to the care of his conference presidents.<sup>49</sup>

President Roberts envisioned the centennial conference as a gathering capable of transcending mere cultural memorialization—his material preparation pointed toward a deeper spiritual significance. “Colored shirts, knee trousers and puttees,” were permissible for the long foot journey, but his encouragement to ship missionaries’ Sunday best ahead to Willard Bean, curator of the Smith farm, for use at the

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46. B. H. Roberts to the Eastern States Mission, letter, “The Conference at Cumorah,” August 10, 1923, Cumorah Conference Materials, Roberts Papers, MS 106, box 10, folder 12.

47. Taylor, Oral History, 6.

48. Staff correspondent, “Pilgrims at Birthplace of Religion,” 3.

49. Roberts, “The Conference at Cumorah,” August 10, 1923, Roberts Papers.

centennial clearly advertised the conference's sacred nature to attendees. He knew the presence of Church leaders—especially President Heber J. Grant—would heighten the spiritual importance of the proceedings if they were able to attend. Likewise, missionaries were told to expect simple, affordable meals during the weekend, evidence the meeting was not to be a “banqueting affair as to material food” but rather “a spiritual feast.”<sup>50</sup> Details like these highlight the intensive process of transforming American countryside into religious sacred space—Roberts seemed keenly aware it not only required spiritual commitment but physical sacrifice and elevated decorum.

Roberts sent a follow-up letter to his mission reinforcing the centennial's sacred character sometime later. He repeated his vision of the event as a gathering meant to spiritually reinvigorate the elders and sisters after a summer of hard work. It would also serve as a ceremony of remembrance to review historic events central to their religious identity. Roberts's language in the letter was noteworthy; framing it as a “solemn memorial conference,” he again asserted it was not intended to be a social reunion focused on missionary fraternity, but a formal and dignified occasion, serious enough for all present to grasp the import of Joseph Smith's angelic encounters on Cumorah. There would be no place for “lightmindedness or boisterous conduct or jollification,” nor space for sports, games, picnicking, scuffling, or wrestling. It was from start to finish designed to be a “serious piece of business.”<sup>51</sup>

### **A Case Study in Country Work**

When Elder George L. Hoggan put pen to paper on May 15, 1923, to record his thoughts in his missionary journal, a summer of unknowns beckoned. Earlier that day, he had participated in the Maine conference's summer kickoff to the missionwide program of country work. After the group read examples of the faith-based service they were tasked to replicate from Matthew 10 and Luke 5, all present “dedicated [themselves] anew to the work of the Lord,” preparing to embark on their summer routes through the country. Hoggan was assigned a new companion, Elder John Anderson Thorson, to accompany him throughout the summer, as well as a new district between Portland and Liveston, Maine. As

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50. Roberts, “The Conference at Cumorah,” August 10, 1923, Roberts Papers.

51. B. H. Roberts to missionaries of the Eastern States Mission, letter, “Conference at Cumorah (Second Letter, n.d.),” Cumorah Conference Materials, Roberts Papers.

a final flourish to his diary entry that day, he added, “May God grant strength to me in the work.”<sup>52</sup>

The next day, Hoggan packed his “duds” for a week’s travel and “launched the summer work in the Maine” conference. Leaving at 1:30 in the afternoon, he and his companion walked until they arrived at Cumberland, having spoken with passers-by along the way. There, having nowhere to stay for the night, they petitioned for lodging. Eventually, a Mr. Raymond Jewett agreed to house the two young missionaries. Marveling at the generosity of a stranger and the miracle it was to find lodging, Hoggan recorded, “Such trust in strangers is wonderful.”<sup>53</sup>

Day two shortly became as good an archetype of the summer’s work as any. Arising early and spending breakfast with the Jewetts, the missionaries departed at 9 a.m. and walked until 1 p.m. Evidently, there were few contacts to be made in that period. Hungry and tired, they asked around until a woman agreed to feed them a chicken dinner. After their lunchtime break, they went on their way. His diary records a cumulative travel distance of thirteen miles that day. The labor taxed the missionaries both physically and emotionally. Well into the night they walked, seeking somewhere to rest. Hoggan grew tired and desperate. “No one would take us in,” he wrote. Finally, a man opened his door and agreed to let them stay. It was 10 p.m.<sup>54</sup>

The proprietor was typical of the hodgepodge of people Eastern States missionaries met over the course of that summer. Each interaction was unique; this man’s wife left him almost nine years earlier—one day while he was at work, she sold all their joint possessions but the house. He warned the missionaries of his situation, and as the missionaries entered the home they recognized the gravity of his plight—“he had newspapers dated Aug. 12, 1916 for table covers.” Hoggan found him to be a “well read” individual, and they enjoyed spending the evening in his home. After midnight, he and his travel companion found a spot on the man’s floor and “turned in between two quilts.”<sup>55</sup>

The month of May panned out like a series of repeating snapshots. Every morning, the two ate breakfast, studied, and departed from their host’s residence. As they set foot onto the country road, their journey was a *tabula rasa*. The only direction they could not go was back the way

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52. Hoggan, Diary, May 15, 1923.

53. Hoggan, Diary, May 16, 1923.

54. Hoggan, Diary, May 17, 1923.

55. Hoggan, Diary, May 17, 1923.

they came, not at least until Sunday when they inevitably returned to hold meetings with member families in their original area. They covered anywhere between ten and twenty miles a day. They did not always find accommodation—at times they begged from house to house. Weather interfered with the country work. Rainstorms had the potential to keep them indoors for days on end. When housebound, they made it a point to do laundry, finish chores, and help the Lanes, their proprietors, with the housework. This problem faded as the summer months ticked by. When they returned to the country, food and shelter again became priorities—all missionary work depended upon their ability to satisfy incessant bouts of hunger. Asking for food, eating with strangers, and sleeping by the wayside, however, were as good a conversation starter as any.<sup>56</sup>

Temperatures increased as the summer months melted away. The roads grew dustier and work more difficult. Each day more removed from the naïve optimism of the May conference kickoff, Hoggan's diary entries increasingly reflect the building stress of perpetual hardship; interpersonal issues with his companion, being told "to go to the next house" every time they asked for lodging, oppressive heat even in the northeast on muggy days, and tracting without food past dark creep into the quotidian reflection in his journal.<sup>57</sup> The repetitive grind wore on them, and on the occasional hot day both elders knew it would have been easier to sit under a shady tree than walk in an unknown direction. On July 11, Hoggan wrote, "I am not feeling the best in spirit on account of neglect of work. God forgive." That night, without any place to go, Hoggan and Thorson hid out in a barn's hayloft, passing the hours trying to bury themselves just to keep warm.<sup>58</sup>

That experience marked the low point of Hoggan's summer country work. The next day, the owner of the farm found them and chastised them for sleeping in his barn without permission. When he mentioned he could put them in jail, they assured him they had not used matches to start any fires. Things got better. Hoggan found opportunities to play piano for people who took them in. They swam in creeks and rivers along the way to combat the stifling heat and to clean themselves. Gospel conversations occurred in unlikely places. If anything, it all made for a once-in-a-lifetime experience Hoggan would never forget.

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56. Hoggan, *Diary*, May 18–25, 1923.

57. Hoggan, *Diary*, June 9, 12, 15, 1923.

58. Hoggan, *Diary*, July 11–12, 1923.

In spite of the rigorous and uncertain temporal climate within which that year's summer missionary work operated, general responses among the missionaries themselves were positive. Hoggan rarely referred to how he felt about his summer efforts, since he had limited space to record only what he did. However, he made clear the cumulative experience was "interesting" and valuable.<sup>59</sup> Elder David Ariel Nash, a missionary serving in West Virginia, wrote in to the *Liahona*, "The summer campaign is one of the greatest things that has happened to this Mission and much good is being accomplished."<sup>60</sup> Elder R. Willis Walker echoed Nash's sentiments, writing: "The people have been very anxious to accept our literature and to have us explain our doctrine."<sup>61</sup> The process of working without set accommodation or eating arrangements was certainly not easy to navigate; it was a learning experience requiring months of spiritual and physical acclimatization. Likewise, prejudice toward the missionaries' message never abated in certain regions, leading to hardship among missionary pairs.<sup>62</sup> By August, reports circulated that "after two months of country work," some missionaries had "learned through experience how to best work their districts and many friends [were] being found continually."<sup>63</sup> Complimenting the zeal of Mormon missionaries in his region, one "prominent" man in West Virginia reportedly stated, "The work of the 'Mormon' missionaries is surely an example to the ministers of this city. We must either conclude that our ministers haven't the metal [*sic*], or they haven't the message."<sup>64</sup>

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59. Hoggan, Diary, June 1, 1923.

60. LeRoi C. Snow, "Eastern States Mission—Voices from the Field," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 21, no. 4 (August 14, 1923): 74. All *Liahona* citations are also pasted into the Eastern States Mission Manuscript History on the same date. See LR 2475 2, CHL.

61. Snow, "Eastern States Mission—Voices from the Field," 74.

62. Reports from Elders Diamond R. Adams and Carl E. Weaver serving in the Albany Conference in August 1923 noted the presence of prejudice, leading to several refusals of street privileges to preach. See Snow, "Eastern States Mission—Voices from the Field," 76. Elder Elton Taylor also recorded, "This was in an area of early historic church history, in western New York and western Pennsylvania, where there was still considerable bitterness toward the church at that time." Taylor, Oral History, 6.

63. LeRoi C. Snow, "Eastern States Mission—New Haven," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 21, no. 4 (August 14, 1923): 74.

64. LeRoi C. Snow, "Eastern States Mission—South West Virginia," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 21, no. 4 (August 14, 1923): 75.

Living well outside their comfort zone, missionaries engaged in country work were quick to notice its impact on their personal lives. “Yes, we have had some wonderful adventures and experiences,” Elder Leon W. Reynolds remarked. “I would hate to have to part with them.” Prayer and instinct were often the missionaries’ greatest tools in the country—more than not, Roberts’s missionaries were touched by the “many testimony-strengthening experiences” resulting from the unregimented nature of the work. Others characterized their experiences as “happy time[s]” providing “joy and satisfaction . . . never before experienced.”<sup>65</sup> According to the *Deseret News*, the personal value of the pilgrimage for each missionary was unmistakable; a common theme of their journeyings, the reporter wrote, could well have easily been, “They had gone out to find disciples. They found disciples and also found God.”<sup>66</sup>

In many respects, the country work of their summer campaign was a salute to the work of generations of missionaries who toiled in their fields of labor without purse or scrip. One missionary carried a small pedometer on his travels. In a six-week span “crisscross[ing] over much of western Pennsylvania and western New York” on their way to Cumorah, the missionary duo “registered something over 1500 miles by foot.”<sup>67</sup> It was rigorous, toilsome labor, but it taught humility, diligence, and self-reliance. Most—if not all—missionaries would certainly have been excited for fall, ushering in the termination of their country work and the final Cumorah centennial to cap it off. The country work, with all its physical implications, doubled as a spiritual primer for the centennial. As is true of any pilgrim’s journey, Roberts’s missionaries united in a common purpose, adopted common living circumstances, and physically covered large distances on foot, thus identifying with steadfast Latter-day Saint prophets and pioneers of the nineteenth century. In the process of being refined by the hardships they encountered, missionaries learned to better appreciate their communal heritage, carrying a newfound respect for the circumstances of their religious past into the September proceedings at Cumorah.

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65. Snow, “Eastern States Mission—Voices from the Field,” 74.

66. “Palmyra Scene Re-enacted—Genealogy Will Be Theme,” *Deseret News*, September 22, 1923, second section, 1.

67. Taylor, Oral History, 6.

## The September 1923 Pilgrimage to Cumorah

Early September signaled the end of the Eastern States Mission's summer proselyting campaign as its elders and sisters set their sights on the cradle of the Restoration.<sup>68</sup> All missionaries were instructed to arrive at the Joseph Smith family farm on September 21, 1923—not a day before, or a day after. Each companionship donned their personalized pennants as they traversed the highways and rail lines of the East Coast toward Upstate New York. Others walked—and kept on walking for several weeks—until they arrived. All told, over 150 elders and sisters made the journey to Palmyra.<sup>69</sup>



"Hill Cumorah from the Meadow" with automobiles in foreground, Manchester, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

68. Some missionaries started traveling to Cumorah as early as September 1, while others from conferences adjacent to the New York proselyting area started later.

69. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 231; "Eastern States Show Interest in Palmyra Meeting," *Deseret News*, September 21, 1923, second section, 1.

Elders and sisters from the Eastern States Mission were not alone in making the pilgrimage; Latter-day Saints traveled from across the region in automobiles to witness the proceedings. In his instructions to missionaries, Roberts emphasized strict limitations on catering and accommodation at the site during the conference, cautioning missionaries that they would be unable to care for the needs of other Latter-day Saints who desired to attend. Regardless, curious Church members packed their own food and camping gear into their vehicles and made the journey to Palmyra.<sup>70</sup>

Autumn rains saturated the muddy roads, fields, and farms around Palmyra in the weeks leading up to the event.<sup>71</sup> The weather presented an acute problem for the event organizers; meetings were scheduled to be held outdoors, and when the rain showed no signs of stopping on Thursday, September 20, and continued into the following morning, the wet terrain threatened to both literally and figuratively dampen the proceedings.<sup>72</sup>

As a precaution against the rain, two roomy former military tents were erected at the Smith family farm. One was meant to serve as sleeping accommodation for sister missionaries; the other was filled with chairs and used as a meeting place. Other preparations were made to prepare the site for the commemoration; a forty-foot-tall flagpole cut from the timbers of the Sacred Grove was installed outside the Smith family frame home, with another made of metal erected on the Hill Cumorah to fly the American flag. Rows of tables provided space for taking three catered meals per day.<sup>73</sup> Electric lights were likewise set to illuminate the night. While the sisters had ample bedding and cots to make themselves comfortable in their tent, the elders spent their evenings packing into an old barn across the street from the Smith family frame home where “an immense mattress of new-mown hay” awaited them.<sup>74</sup>

As missionaries arrived from all over the eastern seaboard, they participated in an “informal reception” lasting the duration of the

70. See Roberts, “Conference at Cumorah,” August 10, 1923, Roberts Papers.

71. Taylor, Oral History, 7.

72. Jane Shipp Hogan, comp., “Ancestors of Carl Bingham Shipp and Annie May Newton,” typescript, 166–67, MS 15023, CHL.

73. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 231.

74. Rudger Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” *Deseret News*, September 29, 1923, section three, 7; Taylor, Oral History, 6; and Hogan, “Ancestors of Carl Bingham Shipp and Annie May Newton,” 166.



“Serving Breakfast at the Farm” to Eastern States missionaries and Church members, Smith farm, Palmyra, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

afternoon, followed by an opening dinner held on the evening of Friday, September 21.<sup>75</sup> Later, missionaries and members poured into the large tent for the first of the weekend’s meetings—a commemoration of the angel Moroni’s first visit to Joseph Smith one hundred years earlier. Two hymns were sung celebrating the angelic visitation, and the group was formally welcomed to the special conference. Before the meeting closed, the missionaries were invited to report on their summer proselyting labors.<sup>76</sup> Overall, the body was made “comfortable and pleasant” by the enclosed tent shielding them from the constant dribble of rain.<sup>77</sup>

Unfortunately, the mission president who spent so long orchestrating the affair was unable to attend the opening conference session. Roberts’s disappointment was palpable; the onset of “nervous chills”

75. “First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” *Journal History of the Church*, September 21, 1923.

76. “Program of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Eastern States Mission, 1923), 1, CHL.

77. “First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission.”

precipitated by—according to him—“the excessive work of providing for this centennial conference” and the “ceaseless exertions both mental and physical” it required precluded him from attending the Friday meetings. (A doctor later determined the malady as the onset of diabetes—something Roberts would struggle with until he died a decade later.<sup>78</sup>) In his absence, President Heber J. Grant conducted the opening session.

The mission president’s health emergency was remembered by conference attendees in various ways. President Grant noted Roberts’s illness in his journal.<sup>79</sup> Apostle James E. Talmage likewise recorded how Roberts fell ill the day before the conference started and spent Thursday, September 20, resting.<sup>80</sup> Church Historian and Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith noted in the official meeting minutes, “On [the arrival of the Apostles] they found President Brigham H. Roberts . . . quite ill and confined to his bed, he improved, however, and was able to attend most of the meetings of the conference on the succeeding [*sic*] days.”<sup>81</sup>

For one Church member, the memory of President Roberts’s illness assumed deeper spiritual dimensions. Annie Newton remembered Roberts taking “violently ill” on the first day of the conference. Later—she did not specify when—two doctors were called by President Grant to the site from Rochester to attend him. Both men determined there was nothing they could do, allegedly declaring, “He’ll be dead in ten minutes.” In response, President Grant bid the missionaries and members to gather “into the tent and kneel and lend your faith for Brother Roberts.”<sup>82</sup> In their personal records, however, neither Roberts nor Grant mentions receiving or giving a priesthood blessing. Grant did pray for Roberts to have a speedy recovery as he led the Friday evening meeting,<sup>83</sup> and Roberts indeed recovered quickly—enough to be present at several

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78. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 233.

79. Heber J. Grant, Journal, September 21, 1923, Heber J. Grant Papers, CHL.

80. James E. Talmage, Journal, September 20, 1923, James E. Talmage Papers, MSS 229, box 32, folder 1b, L. Tom Perry Special Collections (hereafter Perry Special Collections), Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

81. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Minutes—The First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held at Joseph Smith Farm and the Hill Cumorah, September 21–23, 1923,” 1, Joseph Fielding Smith Papers, MS 4250, CHL.

82. Hogan, “Ancestors of Carl Bingham Shipp and Annie May Newton,” 166–67.

83. Smith, “Minutes—The First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” 2.



Church leaders and missionaries march to the Sacred Grove, Palmyra, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

subsequent meetings and offer a memorable prayer during the Sunday meeting in the Sacred Grove. Still, a reporter for the *Rochester Herald* noted that Roberts had to “leave the chair because of illness” during one of the Sabbath meetings.<sup>84</sup>

Before dawn broke over the Joseph Smith family farm, on Saturday, September 22, missionaries and members arose from their makeshift beds to prepare for a sunrise flag-raising ceremony on the Hill Cumorah. A heavy storm had raged during the night, but Saturday’s cloudy morning brought calm as the Latter-day Saints organized themselves into groups ready to walk the three miles to the hill.<sup>85</sup> Everyone struggled to navigate the slew of muddy, lake-sized puddles scattered around the Smith farm by a week’s worth of rainfall.<sup>86</sup> One such pool of water

84. “Mormon Head Prominent at Celebration,” September 22, 1923.

85. Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7.

86. Some of the puddles were large enough as to inspire younger attendees to wade into them waist-deep as the weather improved. See “Mormonism’s

that had formed along the path of a small creek intersecting the Smith farm was deemed substantial enough in size to accommodate the baptism of several people in a ceremony held the next day.

Because the Church was still several years away from purchasing the entire Hill Cumorah, conference organizers secured special permission from non-Latter-day Saint Pliny T. Sexton, owner and proprietor of the hill and surrounding farmland, to hold ceremonies on his property.<sup>87</sup> The missionaries and members made their way, flags in hand, to the top of the hill while the sun peeked over the eastern horizon. When everyone summited, the appointed “Flag Sergeants” erected America’s national banner. They also raised a unique “Cumorah—Ramah” flag specially designed for the occasion—bisected into two colors, the blue “Cumorah” side bore the hill’s name “as it was known by the Nephites” in bright gold letters. The purple “Ramah” side similarly bore the ancient name of the hill in gold, as it “was known to the Jaredites—the people who first possessed the land.”<sup>88</sup> The color guard, led by Elder Elvie H. Yancey, president of the Vermont missionary conference, was composed of a large portion of “former service men” from the recent Great War. They, with everyone, including the President and Apostles, “stood at attention and pledged their allegiance again to their country’s flag.”<sup>89</sup> The morning’s flag-raising ceremony was symbolic of the newly emerging Latter-day Saint religious identity; merging explicit American patriotism with an accentuation of Book of Mormon truth-claims, the day’s rhetoric diverged from the political isolationism and biblical parallelisms of the previous century, reinforcing the Church’s twentieth-century push to integrate itself into the American mainstream while still claiming religious distinction.

After breakfast, all conference-goers expecting to return to the Hill Cumorah for the mid-morning meeting instead gathered in the large tents “on account of mud.”<sup>90</sup> Following the pattern of thematically

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Theologian Interviewed,” *Rochester Herald*, September 23, 1923.

87. See David F. Boone, “‘A Man Raised Up’: The Role of Willard W. Bean in the Acquisition of the Hill Cumorah,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, nos. 1–2 (2004): 24–37, 168–69.

88. Smith, “Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” 3; and “Palmyra Scene Re-Enacted,” 1.

89. “Mormon Head Prominent at Celebration,” September 22, 1923.

90. See session information in George Hoggan’s annotated copy of the “Program of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” Hoggan Papers, 2.



Centennial service on top of Hill Cumorah, Manchester, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

addressing specific historical episodes within their original geospatial setting, the speakers recounted the “death struggles” of the ancient Jaredites and later Nephites in the Book of Mormon—struggles that culminated on the hill. A treatment of Joseph Smith’s visits to Cumorah to obtain sacred artifacts followed. Missionaries were given time to share spiritual experiences from the summer campaign. President Grant and Apostles Clawson, Talmage, and Smith spoke for much of the meeting. Group singing opened and closed all such meetings.<sup>91</sup>

Two additional meetings were held later that Saturday. The ten o’clock session was to be held on the Hill Cumorah, but because of “the damp condition of the ground due to the rain of the day before,” it was moved back to the large tent.<sup>92</sup> The meetings sought to establish the spiritual and historical relevance of the Book of Mormon by rehashing foundational events from centuries preceding Joseph Smith’s theophany of 1820. Covering the themes of apostasy, personal revelation, and the restoration of priesthood authority—constituent, unique pillars of

91. “Program of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” Hoggan Papers, 2–3.

92. “Proceedings of Second Days Services,” *Journal History of the Church*, September 22, 1923; Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7.

Latter-day Saint theology—member and nonmember conference-goers received a contextual broadening of the significance of Joseph Smith's role in bringing about the Book of Mormon.<sup>93</sup>

Local newspaper reports of the second day's proceedings were positive. In labeling the conference attendees as "pilgrims," the newspaper columns captured the depth of sacrifice missionaries made to attend the conference, comparing their youthful zeal to that of a young Joseph Smith.<sup>94</sup> They published photographs and interviewed key Church leaders. Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith believed the conference reports succeeded in removing prejudice toward Latter-day Saint beliefs endemic to that region.<sup>95</sup>

The local media coverage impressed Roberts, who included lengthy quotes from the *Rochester Herald* in his own unpublished autobiography (1932–33) and multivolume *Comprehensive History of the Church* (1930).<sup>96</sup> However, Roberts also felt the lack of newspaper representatives at the gathering was a missed opportunity. During the conference's intricate planning phase, Roberts reached out to national press agencies, who communicated their desire to be present at the proceedings. Unfortunately, the conference schedule unfolded during a week of newspaper workplace strikes throughout New York.<sup>97</sup> The biggest press agencies were unable to send journalists to isolated Palmyra. Apart from the publicity from the editor of the local *Rochester Herald*, who himself attended the conference, according to Roberts, "the Cumorah gathering failed of this anticipated publicity."<sup>98</sup>

By the morning of Sunday, September 23, evidence of the week's prolonged rainfall was dried out by bright rays of sunshine. The morning light glinted through the trees surrounding the Smith family farm.

93. "Program of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission," 3–4.

94. Staff correspondent, "Pilgrims at Birthplace of Religion," 3.

95. "Closing Exercises of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission and Commemoration Services," *Journal History of the Church*, September 24, 1923; and Smith, "Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission," 8.

96. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 232–33; and B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 6:524.

97. During the labor strike, newspapers joined workforces to produce a joint spread of varying page lengths. See Talmage, *Journal*, September 19, 1923.

98. See Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6:523–24; and "Newspapers Give Vivid Account of Celebration," *Deseret News*, September 29, 1923, 7.



Church leaders in the Sacred Grove (left to right: John Harris Taylor, Joseph Fielding Smith, Rudger Clawson, Heber J. Grant, Augusta Winters Grant, James E. Talmage, B. H. Roberts, LeRoi C. Snow), Palmyra, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

The program culminated in a Sabbath-day special meeting in the Sacred Grove—the site of Joseph Smith’s theophany, the opening scene of the latter-day Restoration.<sup>99</sup> After breakfast, missionaries and members crossed the swollen brook near the rear of the neighboring barn, reverently making their way down the narrow lane leading to the Sacred Grove. The conference organizers had arranged a speaker’s stand, complete with a small table that served as an impromptu pulpit. They also carried a portable organ into the grove to provide music for the hymns.

Elder Edwin F. Tout was serving as a missionary during the centennial celebration and was responsible for organizing multiple choir numbers during the proceedings, including two solos he performed in the grove on Sunday morning.<sup>100</sup> A gifted singer himself, Tout was also the patriarch of an extremely talented musical family, including

99. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6:522–23.

100. Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7.

three daughters who accompanied him to Palmyra. Though his family hailed from Ogden, thanks to his daughters' excellence in the realms of opera and drama, the Tout name was known well beyond the confines of Utah—indeed, it had been heard around the world. Hazel, Margaret, and Nannie Tout, three of Edwin's several daughters, met their father in Palmyra for the Sunday meeting. Hazel and her sister Eleanor were both accomplished Broadway performers, both having taken leading roles in several shows in New York City. Margaret was also extremely talented, having toured and sung with the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York City. The eldest daughter, Nannie, however, was the best known of Tout's daughters. According to the *Rochester Herald*, she was an “operatic prima donna,” having sung for luminaries as distinguished as the queen of England.<sup>101</sup> Nannie served as the organist throughout the centennial. Indeed, the Tout family's presence elevated the proceedings as their musical talents reverberated through the trees of the Sacred Grove. Per the *Rochester Herald*, “It was a strange sight to see in this dense grove and on nature's own stage some of the leading people of the theater world.”<sup>102</sup>

On a pilgrimage, the arrival at the central shrine is often associated with the strongest proximity to divine presence. Roberts had arranged the program in a way all could “live again in the places and near places” where “epic events that resulted in the creation of this latter-day work” unfolded.<sup>103</sup> Recapitulating important moments related to Joseph Smith's work in bringing about the Book of Mormon record brought conference attendees closer to the spirit of the early Saints of the Church's restoration. While the Smith family farm, Hill Cumorah, and surrounding countryside were spiritually significant, the Sacred Grove became the conference's central shrine. There in the grove, one of “God's first temples,” participants drew closest to the divine as they partook of the Last Supper rite, prayed, and supplicated.<sup>104</sup> Having paid the physical price in self-sacrifice and given themselves to their calling in

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101. “Mormon Head Prominent at Celebration,” September, 22, 1923; and Paul B. Cannon to G. Homer Durham, June 23, 1981, MS 6768, CHL. See also Nephi Anderson, “Nannie Tout in London,” *Young Woman's Journal* 15, no. 9 (September 1904): 401–4; “Preaching the Gospel in High Places,” *Improvement Era* 7, no. 7 (May 1904): 548; and Edward H. Anderson, “The Touts Sing on Ship,” *Improvement Era* 9, no. 9 (July 1906): 744.

102. “Mormon Delegates Assigned,” *Rochester Herald*, September 24, 1923.

103. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 91.

104. “Program of the First General Conference,” 4–5.



Sabbath service in the Sacred Grove, Palmyra, New York, September 23, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

self-surrender, missionaries and leaders felt spiritually uplifted, renewed, and transformed in the place where the historical and contemporary churches met.

After a summer of faith and sacrifice, the elders and sisters were well attuned to the spiritual significance of spending that Sunday in the Sacred Grove. “We felt that we were truly on hallowed ground,” Elder Elton Taylor recalled. “I realized that this was one of the richest experiences of my life.” Connecting the meeting’s importance to the changing weather, he remembered that as the Latter-day Saints “sang the opening hymn, ‘O How Lovely Was the Morning,’ the sun broke through the clouds and glistened on the leaves of the trees. . . . The spirit of God was truly there in a rich outpouring.”<sup>105</sup> Elder George Hoggan wrote, “I felt a sense of spiritual light every moment.”<sup>106</sup> Apostle Rudger Clawson likewise recorded: “The weather was mild and clear and the sun came out bright and shone down through the trees. The spirit of peace, of thanksgiving and worship pervaded the congregation.”<sup>107</sup>

105. Taylor, Oral History, 7.

106. Hoggan, Diary, September 23, 1923.

107. Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7; later republished as “Centennial Commemoration of the First Visit of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith,” *Liahona: The Elders’ Journal* 21, no. 8 (October 9, 1923): 139–42.

The meeting was significant in several ways. Roberts, hitherto barred by illness from much participation, felt well enough to ask President Grant's permission to open the meeting. The mission president first read a quote about the sanctity of the grove, then offered the meeting's invocation. "As he prayed," Apostle Smith recorded, "the congregation was moved by his eloquence and all felt the presence of the Spirit of the Lord."<sup>108</sup> Roberts's prayer left an indelible impression on the Church President, who noted, "I do not know when I have listened to a more inspiring prayer. I regret exceedingly that his prayer was not taken down in shorthand so that it could have been published."<sup>109</sup> Moreover, it was also the only meeting of the conference that included a liturgical rite: the sacrament was prepared, blessed, and passed to the entire congregation in the Sacred Grove.<sup>110</sup> As missionaries passed the bread and water to attendees, people sat quietly, pondering the restored gospel in the hallowed woodland. It was both "solemn and impressive," according to Apostle Clawson.<sup>111</sup>

After eating lunch as a group, the missionaries and members once again climbed the Hill Cumorah for a Sunday afternoon meeting made enjoyable by continued sunshine and dry weather. The gathering was attended by a congregation so large it was described as "a scene of interest rarely witnessed"; not only did missionaries and members crowd the hill, but over a thousand interested and curious passers-by stopped their automobiles and likewise scrambled up the slope.<sup>112</sup> Roberts, who had been "indisposed and unable to preside at all of the meetings," was

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108. Smith, "Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission," 5–6.

109. Heber J. Grant, Journal, September 23, 1923, Heber J. Grant Papers.

110. Smith, "Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission," 5–6.

111. Clawson, "Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises," 7.

112. Apostle Clawson reported around 250 automobiles parked at the base of the hill, along with 1,250 people present at the afternoon public meeting, and that 1,000 cars "moved about the hill and along the main thoroughfare nearby." See Clawson, "Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises," 7; Talmage, Journal, September 23, 1923, Perry Special Collections; and Smith, "Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission," 7. Local newspaper reporters suggested higher numbers: "Mormon Delegates Assigned," *Rochester Herald*, September 24, 1923; and "Pilgrims Return by Train," *Rochester Herald*, September 24, 1923.

carefully carried up the Hill Cumorah by two of his young missionaries.<sup>113</sup> After he offered an explanation of the Cumorah-Ramah flag waving from the summit flagpole, the attendees were led by mission secretary LeRoi C. Snow in the sacred “Hosanna” shout, a tradition normally reserved for temple dedications.<sup>114</sup> Waving white handkerchiefs, all repeated the words “Hosanna, to God and the Lamb.” The event stirred onlookers, as the powerful throng of voices swept “across the valleys in a challenge of melody.”<sup>115</sup>

Afterwards, people gathered back near to the meadow brook passing through the Smith family farm to witness the baptism of three children, officiated by farm curator Willard Bean.<sup>116</sup> The brook was enlarged enough from the week’s rain to accommodate the ordinances. Following the baptism, the day’s events concluded as 250 people crammed into the tent and a large crowd stood outside for a final evening meeting.<sup>117</sup> When the tent’s seats were filled, a crowd hoping to hear the centennial’s final remarks formed outside. During the meeting, the three children previously baptized were confirmed Church members by President Grant and Apostles Clawson and Talmage. Apostle Smith also blessed a small baby in the congregation.<sup>118</sup> The meeting culminated with remarks by LeRoi Snow and B. H. Roberts,<sup>119</sup> followed by President Grant and his Apostolic cohort, who bid the visitors farewell.

Monday, September 24, ushered in the start of a new missionary work week. Elders and sisters from the Eastern States Mission—most extremely far removed from their proselyting areas—knew that they would soon return to their assigned conferences across twelve states. President Roberts made a concession for the return trip to the delight of all his missionaries: “At the end of the conference, we were happy that

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113. “Last Meetings of Celebration of Centennial,” *Rochester Herald*, September 23, 1923.

114. Smith, “Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” 7.

115. “Last Meetings of Celebration of Centennial,” September 23, 1923.

116. Talmage, *Journal*, September 23, 1923.

117. Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7.

118. Talmage, *Journal*, September 23, 1923.

119. See B. H. Roberts, “Destruction of the Ancient Nations in America, The Book of Mormon Message to the Gentile Nations Occupying the Land,” *Improvement Era* 27, no. 4 (February 1924): 288–92.



Eastern States missionaries and Saints from Albany, New York, in front of the Smith frame home, Palmyra, New York, September 24, 1923. Courtesy CHL.

we were able to go home by train,” one elder recalled, “instead of having to retrace our steps by foot.”<sup>120</sup>

Before returning to their areas, the elders and sisters gathered with their weakened mission president, President Grant, and the three Apostles for a final round of counsel. At the end of the meeting, many missionaries were issued new proselyting assignments.<sup>121</sup> With the centennial conference complete, the missionaries bid farewell to one another, often signing one another’s conference programs as keepsakes.<sup>122</sup> Heretofore isolated Church members also packed their camping tents back into their automobiles and left the Smith family farm for home.

120. Taylor, Oral History, 8.

121. “Mormon Delegates Assigned,” *Rochester Herald*, September 24, 1923.

122. See Hoggan’s annotated program, “Program of the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” Hoggan Papers.

## The Legacy of the Palmyra Pilgrimage and Cumorah Commemoration

Following the conference, Roberts immediately returned to Utah by railcar to attend to his failing health. Though he had been unable to attend portions of it, the conference represented the culmination of months of Roberts's meticulous planning and preparation. To him, the centennial celebration was more than a series of meetings. He wrote in his autobiography it was "altogether a profitable and inspiring time . . . in which sociability and fellowship furnished important features."<sup>123</sup> Indeed, as Roberts aged, the Cumorah conference maintained a favorable position in his memory. Seven years later, he wrote that the event as a whole was "a successful and long to be remembered event by those in attendance."<sup>124</sup>

Among the short-term consequences of the mission pilgrimage to Cumorah was its immediate spark of motivation; for missionaries returning to their areas, many were "naturally fired with zeal for the coming winter campaign," thoroughly "saturated with the thoughts expressed . . . by the leaders of the Church who were in attendance."<sup>125</sup> Not only that, but the proceedings provided spiritual nourishment and needed social interaction for local members in attendance. "We had a most spiritual three days," one visitor wrote in retrospect. "We shall always remember them and the miracle of the healing of President Roberts and the miracle of the elements."<sup>126</sup> Truly, it was "a spiritual feast" to all involved, leaving everyone "with their spirits high" on their return home.<sup>127</sup>

In the weeks after the Cumorah commemoration, Church leaders returned home and settled back into their established routines. In Salt Lake City, preparations were in full swing for the upcoming general conference at the Tabernacle on Temple Square. But few Latter-day Saints had experienced firsthand the Cumorah conference of 1923. Aside from the attendance of four General Authorities, around two hundred missionaries, and the regional members who made the journey to Upstate

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123. Roberts, *Autobiography*, 232.

124. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6:523.

125. LeRoi C. Snow, "Eastern States Mission," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 21 (December 18, 1923): 246.

126. Hogan, "Ancestors of Carl Bingham Shipp and Annie May Newton," 166.

127. Snow, "Eastern States Mission," 246–47.

New York, the event unfolded in a locale sequestered far from the general body of Church membership in the West.

Within two weeks of the celebration, Church members received news of the special gathering. At general conference, President Heber J. Grant felt impressed to relay his impressions of his recent experiences in Palmyra. That the prophet spent a significant portion of his general conference remarks expounding on his New York visit demonstrated the personal value he derived from the proceedings, and his desire for all to know something of the “remarkable” event. President Grant believed the proceedings marked a historic moment for the Church—not only looking back, but moving forward: “Each and every person who attended will look back to with that same pleasure and joy and satisfaction with which we look back upon the dedication of our temples, and the passing of other mile-stones, so to speak, in the history of this Church.”<sup>128</sup> Praise for the centennial celebration among his fellow Apostles was unanimous. Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith said through the conference “much good was accomplished, prejudice was removed and the truth received a firmer hold in the land where the Lord first revealed it.”<sup>129</sup> Likewise, Apostle Rudger Clawson felt the conference was far more significant than a routine commemoration; to him, it was a historic moment, memorable for its spiritual as well as physical dimensions: “These memorial services mark an epoch in the history of the Church and were of such a character, solemnly and spiritually uplifting, as never to be forgotten by those who were in attendance.”<sup>130</sup>

Roberts reflected on how the pilgrimage influenced the lives of his missionaries to his general conference audience. To him, their willing departure into the countryside without purse or scrip symbolized deep sacrifice and was a “great test of faith and patience and endurance.” Indeed, just as any religious journey forces the pilgrim to forsake social status, pay the price of discipleship, and remove him- or herself from daily life, the country work demanded wholehearted consecration and rededication to the service of God. This was embodied in their missionary motto: “A mission in the Eastern States means absolute consecration of one’s self to the service of God and fellow men; with

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128. Grant, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 4–5.

129. Smith, “Minutes—the First General Conference of the Eastern States Mission,” 8, Joseph Fielding Smith Papers.

130. Clawson, “Church Authorities Attend Commemoration Exercises,” 7.

all light-mindedness, folly and sin eliminated.”<sup>131</sup> They “burned their bridges,” which, according to Roberts, involved a sacrificial abandonment of their past lives and embarkation into a new one.<sup>132</sup> On their journey, his missionaries evinced the traits of true pilgrims. Their adoption of unique outfits, including their shared Cumorah pennant, identified them as joint-participants in a united cause. Their march through rural regions, sustained by their faith that they would be housed and fed along their journey, eventually stretched across hundreds of miles, culminating in their arrival in Upstate New York. While interaction with the divine along this journey was isolated to occasional acts of veneration, religious meetings, and conversation, the growing sense among missionaries was one of optimistic hope—hope that their sacrifices would be rewarded in a final reunion at Cumorah. Roberts watched “the development of this experiment” from afar, knowing they would all be amply rewarded in character and spiritual growth.<sup>133</sup> After recapitulating the coming forth of the Book of Mormon at his 1923 mission conference, Roberts testified that Mormon’s ancient abridgment was “the sublimest message ever delivered to the world.”<sup>134</sup>

The 1923 Cumorah conference was a milestone because it signaled the climax of early twentieth-century Latter-day Saint identity renegotiation, including a strong reaffirmation of the Book of Mormon.<sup>135</sup> It foreshadowed subsequent developments in Church historical consciousness, pageantry, and memorialization.<sup>136</sup> According to the

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131. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 89.

132. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 89.

133. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 90.

134. Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 92.

135. Roberts summarized this feeling in his October 1923 conference address: “The great outstanding thing in the Book of Mormon is the fact of the visit of the Redeemer to the inhabitants of this western world, and the message of life and salvation that he delivered here; the Church which he brought into existence, the divine authority which he established here in the western world. This is what makes the Book of Mormon of so much importance—it is a new witness for God and Christ and the truth of the gospel.” See Roberts, in *Ninety-Fourth Semi-annual Conference*, 91.

136. Right before the conference, on September 17, 1923, the Church made a move to purchase the Inglis farm, and for the first time in its history owned a part of the Hill Cumorah. See Boone, “Man Raised Up,” 30–31. While President Grant’s predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, is often seen as the primary champion of Church historical sites in the early twentieth century, the Cumorah conference

*Rochester Herald*, the centennial celebration at Cumorah conveyed the “simplicity and directness of a Norse saga” and was “epic in implications and dramatic in content.”<sup>137</sup> It was at root a story of how hundreds of missionaries, members, and leaders spearheaded the modern Latter-day Saint image, strengthening their connection to the past as they marched into the future.

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Between 2017 and 2018, Carson V. Teuscher worked closely with Reid L. Neilson as an Andrew Jenson Fellow in the Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Their book, *Pacific Apostle: The 1920–21 Diary of David O. McKay in the Latter-day Saint Island Missions*, will be published by the University of Illinois Press in late 2019. Teuscher received a bachelor’s degree in history from Brigham Young University in 2016 and a master’s degree in U.S. history from the University of Oxford in 2017. He is currently working toward completion of a PhD in military history at the Ohio State University, where he studies the evolution of American coalition warfare in the twentieth century.

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was President Grant’s inaugural foray into the land acquisition that eventually led to complete ownership of the hill and the subsequent placement of monuments on it.

137. “Mormon Head Prominent at Celebration,” September 22, 1923.



Tom Monson (*right*) and his brother Bob Monson (*left*) in waders at Vivian Park, Provo Canyon, 1964. Bob's son, also named Bob, is behind his father's arm. All photographs courtesy Clark S. Monson.

# Rod Tip Up!

*Clark S. Monson*

**T**he figure of a well-known and beloved fisherman is missing from the Provo River. When I turn off U.S. Highway 189 in Provo Canyon, Utah, and cross the bridge to enter Vivian Park, I look upstream and downstream for him, but he isn't there. A few feet past the bridge, I cross a familiar double bump in the road—the tracks of the Heber Valley Railroad—but no person I might see walking along the weathered railroad ties walks with a stride I recognize. Sometimes I see numerous fishermen on the river, but they're outfitted in modern gear—GORE-TEX waders, rubber mesh nets, canvas creels, and Cabela's caps. They don't have the vintage rubber waders, nylon net, wicker creel, and long-billed cap of the fisherman I'm looking for. Nor do they catch as many fish.

Old habits are hard to break, and some are worth keeping. For these reasons, I continue to look for my late father when I cross the bridge into Vivian Park. Dad passed away in 2018, but I've been unsuccessfully looking for him on the river since 2002. That's when he could no longer climb unaided up the steep banks of the river to the train tracks, so his angling became confined to bait-fishing over the sides of boats on local reservoirs.

Every boyhood day of Dad's idyllic summers—from Independence Day to Labor Day—was spent on the Provo River. He was determined to learn to fish, but fishing is a sport—or, if you're serious, an art—that most boys learn from their fathers. Dad's father wasn't a fisherman, so he was taught how to bait-fish by his uncles John Nielson, Speed Carter, and Raymond Kirby, for whom fishing was a sport. He learned how to fly-fish by studiously observing a handful of expert fishermen

who frequented the river, including Paul Buttle, Bob Curtis, and Henry Crosby—for whom fishing was an art.

I spent hundreds of hours watching my father fish the Provo River. He was almost always within a quarter mile, upstream or downstream, of the Vivian Park bridge. To our family that meant Dad was usually somewhere between “the swimming hole” and “Frog Island.” Although Dad had fished many sections of the Provo River, the half-mile stretch of water through Vivian Park was the one he loved most.

Dad could, in the words of Henry Van Dyke, drop “his fly on the water as accurately as Henry James places a word in a story.”<sup>1</sup> But like Christ’s disciples of old, this latter-day Apostle quite literally left his net in 1963 to become a “fisher of men.” For this reason, my mother was convinced that when Dad had the occasional opportunity to take leave of his church responsibilities in Salt Lake City and take up his net on the Provo River, the Lord rewarded him by filling it—and not just with fish. My father was indeed a fisher of men, and on more than one occasion he fished them from the Provo River.

Eighteen days after my father died, one of my BYU mentors, Dr. Alan Grey, also passed away. Following Alan’s funeral, I expressed my condolences to his daughter and son-in-law. A friend of theirs accompanied them. When I introduced myself, he asked, “Are you Thomas Monson’s son?” “Yes,” I said. “I met your father many years ago while fishing on the Provo River. I wasn’t a member of the Church then. Your father took a break from his fishing, and we had a meaningful conversation concerning some questions I had about the Church. After our visit, I knew I needed to be baptized. That conversation with your father on the Provo River changed my life.”

Dad didn’t mind a pause from fishing to change a life. He was less inclined to leave the river when it was time to eat. Many summer mornings, my cousin Bob and I went out from the family cabin to the river to let Dad know that breakfast was ready. Sometimes we’d find him already walking back along the railroad tracks. “How did you do?” we’d ask. “Pretty good,” he’d say. “Here, take a look.” Dad would lift the cover of his fishing basket so that we could peer inside. The creel was always full of long, German brown trout bearing crimson spots and golden bellies. Bob and I longed for such fish. Our own fishing for the morning had usually produced only a couple of rainbow trout, or, as many people called them, “planters.” Planters were raised in narrow concrete

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1. Henry Van Dyke, *Little Rivers* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 30.

raceways at the Midway Fish Hatchery. Catching planters didn't prove your ability as a fisherman in our family.

Dad's skill at casting a fly didn't mean he was above bait-fishing—a fact that I once lied about. At a small, private reservoir in Rich County, Utah, Dad and I accompanied several other guests that our host had invited for a pleasurable day of fishing. I was seventeen years old at the time. A damselfly hatch was on,<sup>2</sup> and trout weighing up to four pounds were feeding almost exclusively on them. Dad looked through his metal fly box and removed an elegant fly tied on a long-shanked hook. Called a "blue doctor," the fly bore a reasonable resemblance to the abundant blue-colored damselflies the fish were taking.

Dad rowed the only boat out a short distance from the shore and commenced casting. Soon he was catching one big trout after another. An acquaintance of my father's was fishing next to me on the shoreline and observing Dad's artful casting and fishing success. "Look at your father," he said admiringly. "He's a real purist, isn't he?" Not wanting to tarnish his perception of my father, I nodded in agreement and replied, "He sure is," but I knew otherwise. As much as Dad loved fly-fishing, he would have baited a hook with a glob of Velveeta cheese if he thought it would produce more fish than the blue doctor.

Velveeta is indeed what we used when we fished from rowboats at Utah's Strawberry Reservoir. We also used three-way swivels at Strawberry. Three-way swivels permitted us to have two leaders and two cheese-baited hooks at the end of a single line. On several occasions Dad began reeling in a fish that, as he said, "had a different feel to its fight." When he had reeled in most of his line, we discovered that there were actually two fish, one on each hook. The fight of the two fish felt "different" because they pulled in opposite directions from each other as much as they pulled on Dad's fishing line. Of our family fishing group—usually comprised of my cousin and me, our fathers, and our great-uncle—Dad was the only one who sometimes caught two fish at once.

Catching a lot of fish was important to Dad. As a youth, his fishing kept his family in meat during summers at Vivian Park. And once he was responsible for catching much of the food for his scout troop during a camping trip.

Dad's ward Scoutmaster was unconventional by contemporary standards. He was an avid cigar smoker who took a hands-off approach to

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2. Although commonly referred to as "hatches," the damselflies, more accurately, had recently metamorphosed from their larval stage to their adult form.

Scouting leadership, allowing the boys opportunities to learn things on their own. One day, early in the summer, he drove the Scouts to Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon southeast of Salt Lake City. Rather than staying with and supervising the boys, he merely dropped them off with their camping gear. “Tom,” he said, “you catch fish for the boys. I’ll be back to collect you kids at the end of the week.” Dad made sure his friends didn’t go hungry.

Given Dad’s early responsibility to feed his family and friends through fishing, the modern concept of “catch and release” was utterly foreign to him. In the mid-1970s, fishing regulations on the Provo River changed drastically, and “catch and release” became popular—except with Dad.

Fishery biologists had decided to manage the Provo River exclusively for the difficult-to-catch brown trout, which reproduced naturally in the stream. Easy-to-catch rainbows would no longer be planted. The new regulations also forbade bait-fishing. Fishing on the Provo River was now restricted to artificial lures and flies. Fearing the river’s browns wouldn’t be able to sustain the pressure of the traditional eight-fish take in the absence of hatchery fish, the daily limit was reduced to just two fish. As a further conservation measure, brown trout measuring fifteen inches or larger were to be immediately released when caught. The larger fish were prolific spawners, so their survival was important.

Dad ceased keeping fifteen-inch browns with the rule change, but he did sometimes return to the cabin with what he called “fourteen-and-three-quarters-inch fish.” He never went onto the river with a measuring tape, so anytime he caught a questionably large brown, he was sincerely confident it was “a tad under fifteen inches.” Browns sixteen inches and larger were rare catches. They were also clearly longer than fourteen and three-quarters inches, so whenever Dad caught one, he released it, but it pained him to do so. The largest fish I ever saw Dad bring back to the cabin was a twenty-two-inch, five-pound brown, but that was before the keeping of large fish was prohibited. And when Dad was a teenager, he caught a twenty-four-inch, six-and-a-half-pound brown on the Provo River.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Like many fishermen, my father had a dramatic story about a big fish that got away. The day before he caught the six-and-a-half-pound brown, he had a larger fish break his tackle after he followed the trout down the middle of the river for a quarter mile. He compared the sound of the fish’s splash to that of a boat oar slapped against the surface of the river.

One morning, some years after the new fishing regulations were in place, my mother went out to call my father back to the cabin for breakfast. While she was watching him fish for a moment, a big fish took Dad's streamer fly. After several line-stripping runs, Dad managed to play the trout out. He netted what he estimated to be an eighteen-inch brown. Rehearsing the exhilarating experience to the rest of us back at the cabin, Dad concluded his story, "And then, being the law-abiding citizen that I am, I placed that eighteen-inch fish back in the stream, and off he went!" Dad looked to my mother for confirmation of his version of the events. "I released him, didn't I, Fran?" "Yes," she said, smiling, "but that fisherman watching you from across the river made it easier for you." Dad smiled too, adding with a wink, "Well, that may have had a little to do with it."

Of the many fishing experiences I shared with my father on the Provo River, one stands out. I was fourteen years old, and I was fishing with my father and brother, Tom, at Frog Island. It was 9 p.m. and twilight in the canyon. Dad was fly-fishing nearby and told me to put a night crawler on my hook. I did as instructed, but reluctantly. The feeling of a worm's wriggling movements between my fingers when I pierced its skin with my hook always made me squirm. "Cast your worm into that riffle against the far bank and let it settle into that nice hole below," he said. "I'll bet you catch a big one!" My expectations were high. I knew from experience to trust my father's words.



Tom and Frances Monson at Vivian Park, Provo Canyon. Photo taken about one year after their marriage.



Clark Monson holding trout in front of family cabin in Vivian Park, Provo Canyon, 1969.

In a few minutes, a fish took my bait. The tip of my fishing rod bent hard. “I’ve got one, Dad!” I yelled. “Good!” he called back. “Hold onto him!” Turning to watch me in the fading light, he anxiously instructed me with the words I’d heard many times when I had a fish on, “Rod tip up! Rod tip up!” I didn’t understand that by holding my pole at a 45-degree angle it would absorb much of the stress on my line. Dad had learned through heartbreaking experience as a youth to let large fish fight against the rod—not just the line.

My brother called out as he prepared to net the trout, “Oh, it’s a big one!” “Don’t miss it!” Dad warned. In fishing, nothing was more important to Dad than having a capable person handling the net. Sometimes a wily trout would dart away from the net just as we attempted to lift it from the water. At the failed attempt to secure the fish, Dad would holler, “Hey! Stop horsing around and net that fish!” In this case, Tom deftly netted the big brown on his first try. I was relieved. There would not have been a second opportunity because as soon as the fish was safely in the net, my hook dislodged from its lip. This was precisely why Dad demanded good netting skills.

Dad came over to inspect the biggest fish I’d ever caught on the river. Admiring my catch and congratulating me, he said, “You may never catch as fine a fish on this river again. What do you say we take it to a taxidermist and get it mounted for you?” The expense of having a fish mounted was not a luxury that boys of my time were normally afforded, so I was elated. The nineteen-inch, three-pound brown trout cost my father \$57 to mount. It hangs in my home today, and I am reminded of a priceless memory with my father every time I look at it.

Another memory I have of my father on the Provo River concerns not a big fish, but a big dog. The event took place just after dark, when Dad had stopped fishing for the night. I wasn’t accompanying him during the experience, but I remember hearing the clap of the spring-loaded

back-porch door closing behind him when he entered the cabin to join the rest of us. Dad didn't immediately remove his squeaky rubber waders like he normally did because he was shaken and anxious to relate to all of us a frightening and bizarre experience he'd just had.

Dad said he was returning to the cabin, walking along the shoulder of the highway heading east toward the bridge. He was passing a lone yellow cottage, slightly illuminated by a streetlight, on the opposite side of the highway. Unexpectedly, a large "police dog" there broke free of its chain and charged him.

My cousin and I knew exactly the dog Dad was talking about—a fierce German shepherd. (Dad always called German shepherds "police dogs.") Several times Bob and I had walked along the highway on the side closest to the cottage while the menacing dog lunged powerfully against its chain, barking and snarling at us, teeth bared. "I sure hope that chain holds," Bob would nervously say. For us it always did.

Even though Dad was now safe, it was unsettling to think what might have happened. I wondered how he had escaped serious injury. "As the dog charged," Dad said, "I figured my only defense was to jam the butt of my fishing rod into his snout and hope that that might deter him." Bob and I knew full well that Dad's fly rod, even the heavier reel end, would have had no effect against the vicious German shepherd. As the dog sprinted across the highway toward him, Dad reversed the direction of his fishing pole and prepared to take aim by the dim glow of the streetlight. The dog was nearly on him when a speeding vehicle hit the dog, sending the animal cartwheeling. The car never slowed but continued rapidly up the canyon. The dog wasn't killed, at least not initially, because Dad said it recovered sufficiently to hobble back to its home. That speeding car was the only vehicle to pass Dad during his walk of nearly a quarter mile along the highway that night.

Given today's high traffic volume in Provo Canyon, a dog running across the four-lane highway at 10 p.m. stands a reasonable chance of being hit. But traffic on the old two-lane highway in the 1970s was light late at night. So, for us, it was a miracle that a car had come at precisely the right time to abort the dog's attack. "The good Lord was looking out for me," Dad said. We believed him.

We never again saw the German shepherd chained on the property of the yellow cottage. Although the dog had returned home after being hit by the car, we presumed it succumbed to its injuries.

Now, when I walk past the place where the dog was chained, I seldom think of my father's miracle. That's because the yellow cottage, like so many things I used to know in Provo Canyon, is no longer there.

Further, most of the rustic cabins on the other side of the river in Vivian Park have been torn down and replaced with expensive homes. It's easier to preserve memories of places when they don't change. But like the passage of time, change is inevitable.

I still fish the riffles and eddies along my father's favorite stretch of the Provo River, but the setting is different than it was when I used to accompany him. The noise of vehicles rushing up and down the canyon is unrelenting. The largest old cottonwood and box elder trees that once shaded the riverbanks have died and toppled into the water.<sup>4</sup> Cherished places and structures along the river, including the Chalet Café, River Bend Trailer Park, and the fruit stand at Frazier Park are gone. There are, however, two constants. First, the familiar mountains still stand firm; second, the fishing remains blue-ribbon quality. But when I waded the cold, green waters of my father's stretch these days, I'm not just casting for trout—I'm fishing for memories. And while I don't see my father's figure on the river, I do hear his voice each time a fish hits my fly: "Rod tip up! Rod tip up!"

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4. While the Provo River is still lined by large trees in most places, the stretch of river immediately above and below the Vivian Park bridge is now largely devoid of trees. Some trees were damaged by railroad operations. Others were adversely impacted by erosion, possibly due to excessive foot traffic. The loss of mature trees has not been compensated by new growth, unfortunately.

# **“You Had Better Let Mrs Young Have Any Thing She Wants”**

## **What a Joseph Smith Pay Order Teaches about the Plight of Missionary Wives in the Early Church**

*Matthew C. Godfrey*

**I**t was a cold, blustery day in Commerce, Illinois—a town pressed up against the Mississippi River—in November 1839. As the rain poured from the sky, a small skiff appeared on the river, approaching Commerce (later renamed Nauvoo) from Montrose, Iowa Territory. A woman huddled in the vessel, trying to protect a small bundle in her arms from the elements. The rain, coupled with the spray from the river, soaked both the woman and the bundle, which was a two-month-old baby. Despite the rawness of the day, the woman was determined to reach Commerce, hoping to visit the tithing office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and procure a few potatoes and some flour for herself and her six children, who were sick and living in difficult circumstances in Montrose.

The woman was Mary Ann Angell Young, the wife of Brigham Young, one of the Church's governing Twelve Apostles. Brigham had left the family two months earlier, making his way to England, where he and other Apostles were preaching the gospel to gain converts to the Church. Mary Ann tried to do the best she could to provide for the family in her husband's absence, but in the midst of a malaria epidemic and with no money and little food, her situation was grim. In an 1891 biography of Mary Ann, Emmeline B. Wells, who was the general secretary of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ at the time, commented that women such as Mary Ann were some of the forgotten women of the Church. While their husbands were sent forth to preach, they were “left at home, lonely and unprotected with the heavy burden of a family on their hands, destitute of means and without suitable habitations, in an

ague climate, sickness weighing down their spirits.” These women put their “whole soul, and all [their] energies” into “perform[ing] the part of both father and mother during the husband’s absence.” According to Wells, “they were heroines indeed” for their efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Mary Ann Angell Young’s situation reflected the poverty and difficulties these women faced, as well as the efforts the Church made to care for them. On June 15, 1840, Joseph Smith, the prophet and leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dictated a pay order to his clerk Howard Coray for Mary Ann, asking Newel K. Whitney, a bishop in Nauvoo who was operating a store in the area, to allow “Mrs Young” to obtain “any thing she wants” from him.<sup>2</sup> This brief, four-line note—published in *Documents*, Volume 7 of the Joseph Smith Papers and available on the Joseph Smith Papers website—seems relatively insignificant on its face. Yet digging into the context behind the pay order illuminates the responsibility Church leaders had to care for the families of missionaries, the suffering that these families sometimes experienced, and the economic climate in Nauvoo that exacerbated their difficulties. Exploring the history around the pay order helps to restore Mary Ann’s sacrifices and perseverance to the narrative of Brigham Young’s mission to England and provides texture and nuance to the story.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Emmeline B. Wells, “Heroines of the Church: Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young,” *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (January 15, 1891): 56.

2. “Pay Order to Newel K. Whitney for ‘Mrs. Young,’ 15 June 1840,” in *Documents*, Volume 7: September 1839–January 1841, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2018), 292–93 (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D7).

3. A few historians have examined aspects of the financial and social situations of Latter-day Saint missionaries’ wives, both generally and specifically. See, for example, Amanda Lee Hendrix-Komoto, “Imperial Zions: Mormons, Polygamy, and the Politics of Domesticity in the Nineteenth Century” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015), 141–76; Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 6–10, 15–16; Kathleen C. Perrin, “Louisa Barnes Pratt: Self-Reliant Missionary Wife,” in *Go Ye into All the World: The Growth and Development of Mormon Missionary Work*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Fred E. Woods (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2012), 261–88; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “Women in Winter Quarters,” *Sunstone* 8 (July/August 1983): 12, 17; and Jenny Lund, “‘We All Must Be Crazy’: The Plight of a 19th-Century Mormon Missionary Wife” (paper, FairMormon Conference, 2018), <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2018/we-all-must-be-crazy>. Ronald K. Esplin transcribed a letter from Leonora Taylor to John Taylor to highlight the sickness of the Apostles’ families during 1839–41, and Esplin,

## Caring for Missionaries' Families

The experiences that Mary Ann Angell Young had in 1839, 1840, and 1841 have a background in the proselytizing responsibilities of male Church members. From the organization of the Church of Christ in 1830, proselytizing—or sending men to inform people that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored to the earth through Joseph Smith and his translation of the Book of Mormon—was key to its growth. An early revelation to Joseph Smith told his father, Joseph Smith Sr., that “the field is white already to harvest & lo he that thirsteth [*sic*] in his sickle with his might the same layeth up his store that he perish not but bringeth Salvation to his soul.”<sup>4</sup> Another revelation in 1832 informed male Church members that it was their duty to warn their neighbors about the impending return of Jesus Christ to the earth.<sup>5</sup> According to historian Reid Neilson, men thus “took sabbaticals from their worldly responsibilities and devoted themselves to short preaching tours, relying on the financial generosity of others.”<sup>6</sup> They followed the example of the Apostles in the New Testament, going without purse or scrip.<sup>7</sup>

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James B. Allen, and David Whittaker also discussed this in their book on the Apostles' mission to England. Ronald K. Esplin, “Sickness and Faith, Nauvoo Letters,” *BYU Studies* 15, no. 4 (1975): 425–34; James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission, 1837–1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 267–91. In addition, Stanley B. Kimball explored the condition of Vilate Kimball and her children while Heber C. Kimball was preaching in England, and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has written about Phebe Woodruff's situation during Wilford Woodruff's absence. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 67–69, 74–76; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 34–38, 46–56.

4. “Revelation, February 1829,” in *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, ed. Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013), 13 [D&C 4:4] (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D1). This same declaration was given in several other revelations in 1829. See, for example, “Revelation, May 1829–A,” in *JSP*, D1:53 [D&C 11:3]; “Revelation, May 1829–B,” in *JSP*, D1:57 [D&C 12:3]; and “Revelation, June 1829–A,” in *JSP*, D1:67 [D&C 14:3].

5. “Revelation, 27–28 December 1832,” in *Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others, *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013), 342 [D&C 88:81] (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D2).

6. Reid L. Neilson, “The Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Mormon Missionary Model,” in Neilson and Woods, *Go Ye into All the World*, 69.

7. See Luke 9:1–4 and “Revelation, July 1830–A,” in *JSP*, D1:159 [D&C 24:18].

The responsibility men had to share the gospel had repercussions on women and children in the Church—the wives and families who were often left alone for extended periods of time, with no real way of generating income or resources.<sup>8</sup> Preachers in other denominations throughout the United States faced such situations as well, although not to the same extent as Latter-day Saints. Until the early nineteenth century, for example, Methodist circuit riders were generally unmarried, meaning they had no familial ties to worry about while they were on the circuit. Thereafter, most preachers who were married took a couple of different measures to care for their families. Some asked extended family members to tend to the needs of their wives and children; others petitioned friends, neighbors, or fellow congregants to look after their families.<sup>9</sup> Some, like many Latter-day Saint missionaries, merely left their wives to fend for themselves, expecting them to take care of the children, the farm, and the home in their absence. As one minister explained, “The whole direction of the household” often fell upon the wife.<sup>10</sup> Women and children thus sometimes suffered while their husbands preached. One itinerant preacher’s wife, for example, had “little corn” and a newborn baby while her husband was gone, making her “depressed and discouraged.” Although some “reacted with bitterness to the deprivations that they suffered,” women were perceived as more righteous if they could bear their difficulties “without complaint.”<sup>11</sup>

In the Church of Christ, the ideal was to have the Church itself provide for the families of traveling missionaries. A February 1831 revelation outlining the law of consecration stated that the families of elders “proclaiming repentance” were to be “supported out of the property which is consecrated to the Lord.”<sup>12</sup> A general conference of the Church held in October 1831 in Orange, Ohio, explored the problem further. At the conference, Frederick G. Williams asked whether “it was the business of

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8. Church members believed proselytizing was an obligation that stemmed from Jesus Christ’s injunction to the ancient Apostles to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

9. Peggy Dow, for example, frequently stayed with acquaintances, friends, and even strangers while her husband, Lorenzo, a Methodist preacher, was away. Peggy Dow, *Vicissitudes Exemplified; or the Journey of Life* (New York: John C. Totten, 1814).

10. Rev. H. M. Eaton, *The Itinerant’s Wife: Her Qualifications, Duties, Trials, and Rewards* (New York: Lane and Scott, 1851), 45.

11. Samuel Southard, “The Personal Life of the Frontier Minister: 1760–1860,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 5 (Spring 1966): 220–22.

12. “Revelation, 9 February 1831,” in *JSP*, D1:255 [D&C 42:71].

this conference to take into consideration the situation of the families of the absent Elders." Sidney Rigdon responded that "he supposed that it was," noting that those who were willing to "give up all for Christ's sake" would "be sealed up unto eternal life." Williams then explained that Thomas B. Marsh, who had been directed to travel to Missouri to preach in summer 1831, had not yet returned to his family. Thomas's wife, Elizabeth Godkin Marsh, and their children, Williams related, "were somewhat destitute." Titus Billings disputed Williams's assertion, stating that Elizabeth "and her family were provided for as well as her brethren around her." Joseph Smith then informed the conference "that the Lord held the Church bound to provide for the families of the absent Elders while proclaiming the Gospel."<sup>13</sup> It is not known how much in need Elizabeth was or what, if anything, the Church did for her, but this discussion reiterated that it was the Church's responsibility to care for Elizabeth and her children in Thomas's absence.

Several weeks after this conference, Newel K. Whitney, a Kirtland, Ohio, entrepreneur who had joined the Church in November 1830, was appointed to the office of bishop. A revelation outlined Whitney's responsibilities, including administering to the "wants" of the elders. This apparently meant that when elders had temporal needs, they could go to Whitney's store, which also functioned as a Church storehouse, and obtain goods. In such instances, the revelation stated, elders were to pay for what they received if they could, but if they had no money, "the Bishop in Zion," who was Edward Partridge, would "pay the debt out of that which the Lord shall put into his hands."<sup>14</sup>

A little over a month later, in January 1832, the Church held another conference in which two revelations were dictated, each appointing a group of men to preach the gospel. One of these revelations reiterated that it was "the duty of the church to assist in supporting the families of those . . . who are called and must needs be esent [*sic*] unto the world to proclaim the gospel unto the world." The revelation provided a way that such support could come: those assigned to preach could approach other Church members and "obtain places for their families" with these members.<sup>15</sup> Essentially, as preachers in other denominations had done, elders could request that fellow Saints provide for the needs of their families.

This was the process that John Murdock followed after his wife, Julia Clapp Murdock, died in Kirtland, Ohio, during childbirth, leaving

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13. "Minutes, 25–26 October 1831," in *JSP*, D2:81, 84–85.

14. "Revelation, 4 December 1831–B," in *JSP*, D2:151–52 [D&C 72:11–13].

15. "Revelation, 25 January 1832–B," in *JSP*, D2:162 [D&C 75:24–26].

Murdock with five children under the age of seven, including newborn twins. When Murdock was called by revelation to proselytize in the “eastern countries” in August 1832, the revelation also instructed him to send his children “unto the Bishop in Zion” before departing on his mission. Murdock subsequently arranged for his three oldest children to go to Jackson County, Missouri (the location of Zion), where they were each placed in a different Church member’s home. The newborn twins, meanwhile, had already been adopted by Joseph and Emma Smith. With his children taken care of by the Saints, Murdock was able to pursue his mission.<sup>16</sup> In Murdock’s case, the ideal scenario of the Church and its members taking care of missionaries’ families worked well.

### The Mission of the Twelve

In Nauvoo from 1839 to 1841, however, the Church did not quite meet the ideal. In 1838, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation instructing the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to undertake a mission “over the great waters,” departing from Far West, Missouri.<sup>17</sup> Apostles Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde had already opened up England for the preaching of the gospel in 1837,<sup>18</sup> and the mission discussed in the 1838 revelation was to continue that proselytizing effort. However, the Apostles’ departure was delayed because of opposition and conflict the Saints faced from Missourians who were not of their faith. The conflicts ultimately culminated in the Saints’ expulsion from the state of Missouri. In 1839, Church members moved out of the state, many of them into Illinois. Joseph Smith himself was imprisoned for nearly six months in Missouri before escaping and joining the Saints in Illinois.<sup>19</sup> At that time,

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16. “Revelation, 29 August 1832,” in *JSP*, D2:273–75; John Murdock, “John Murdock Journal and Autobiography, circa 1830–1867,” MS 1194, September 24, 1832, p. 19, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL).

17. “Revelation, 8 July 1838–A,” in *Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839*, ed. Mark Ashurst-McGee and others, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2017), 179–80 [D&C 118:4–5] (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D6).

18. Historical Introduction to “Recommendation for Heber C. Kimball, between 2 and 13 June 1837,” in *Documents, Volume 5: October 1835–January 1838*, ed. Brent M. Rogers and others, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2017), 398–400.

19. “Volume 6 Introduction: Joseph Smith Documents from February 1838 through August 1839,” in *JSP*, D6:xxiv–xxvii. For explorations of the Saints’ expulsion from Missouri, see Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*

he and other Church leaders began purchasing land in the vicinity of Commerce, Illinois, and across the Mississippi River at Montrose, Iowa Territory, so that the Saints could again have a place where they could gather together.<sup>20</sup>

The problem was that Commerce—which the Saints would rename Nauvoo—and Montrose were swampy areas infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Numerous Saints became infected with the disease in the summers of 1839 and 1840.<sup>21</sup> Complicating matters, most Saints had left behind their property and other resources in Missouri, leaving most Church members—and the Church itself—destitute. Moving to the Commerce area required a complete buildup of the community, which, for an already-impooverished church, seemed close to impossible with the limited resources available. Church leaders, including Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, were forced to contract more than \$150,000 in debt for land purchases in the Commerce area—an astronomical sum for the Church.<sup>22</sup> They tried to obtain money to repay the debts by selling lots of land to the Saints, but since so few of the Saints had cash resources, the vast majority of these purchases were made on credit and not in hard money.<sup>23</sup> In these difficult circumstances, several of the Apostles believed they still needed to fulfill the Lord’s commandment to serve a mission over the great waters, so they prepared to depart for England in 1839. Between August and September, seven Apostles

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(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987); Alexander L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1996; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2000); and Leland H. Gentry and Todd M. Compton, *Fire and Sword: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri, 1836–1839* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011).

20. Hancock County, Illinois, Deed Records, 1817–1917, vol. 12-G, p. 247, April 30, 1839, Hancock County Recorder’s Office, Carthage, Illinois; Hancock County, Illinois, Bonds and Mortgages, 1840–1904, vol. 1, pp. 31–32, April 30, 1839, microfilm 954,776, U.S. and Canada Record Collection, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, [cited hereafter as FHL]; “Agreement with George W. Robinson, 30 April 1839,” in *JSP*, D6:439–42; Lee County, Iowa, Land Records, 1836–1961, Deeds (South, Keokuk), vol. 1, pp. 507–9, microfilm 959,238; vol. 2, pp. 3–6, 13–16, microfilm 959,239, U.S. and Canada Record Collection, FHL; “Bond from Horace Hotchkiss, 12 August 1839–A” and “Bond from Horace Hotchkiss, 12 August 1839–B,” in *JSP*, D6:553–56, 557–59.

21. Ulrich, *House Full of Females*, 32–34.

22. “Volume 7 Introduction: Joseph Smith Documents from September 1839 through January 1841,” in *JSP*, D7:xxii.

23. See, for example, “Land Transaction with Jane Miller, 6 March 1840,” in *JSP*, D7:203–11.

left the Nauvoo area: Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, and Orson Pratt.<sup>24</sup>

The timing of the Apostles' departure was less than ideal for their families, who were completely starting over in the new settlement and had to find shelter and subsistence while facing disease and destitution. Both Phebe Woodruff and Leonora Taylor, for example, moved in and out of various residences while their husbands were gone.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, Vilate Kimball, without any kind of income, was faced with paying debts that her husband Heber C. Kimball had accrued. "It costs a great deal to support your family," Vilate wrote to Heber. "We are continually on expence, and not earning a cent."<sup>26</sup>

With their husbands traveling to England, the Apostles' wives were supposed to be supported by the Church and its members. Yet Church leaders had few resources with which to alleviate the poverty. This was in part because of the loss of property in Missouri, in part because of existing debts to merchants in New York for goods sold in Church storehouses, and in part because of the crushing debt incurred through the purchase of land in the Commerce area. Because of these precarious financial conditions, the Church and its members could do little for the Apostles' families. Hyrum Smith informed Apostle Parley P. Pratt in December 1839 that "the families of the Twelve are generally well, but not altogether so comfortably situated as I could wish owing to the poverty of the church."<sup>27</sup> Smith and others wanted to do more but did not have the resources.

In spring 1840, Joseph Smith determined that something had to be done for the Apostles' families regardless of the Church's financial situation. He told the wives of the Twelve that if any of them "wish[ed] to live in Commerce," they could request that a house be built there and the Church would take care of it.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, the Church appointed three members of the Nauvoo high council—Henry G. Sherwood, Charles C. Rich, and Dimick B. Huntington—as a committee "to contract for the

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24. Allen, Espin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 67–71, 77.

25. Phebe Woodruff to Wilford Woodruff, April 1, 1840, MS 19509, CHL; Leonora Taylor to John Taylor, September 9, 1839, MS 1346, CHL; see also Espin, "Sickness and Faith, Nauvoo Letters," 427.

26. Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, December 8, 1840, MS 18732, CHL; see also Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, 75.

27. Hyrum Smith to Parley P. Pratt, December 22, 1839, in "Letterbook 2," 81, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-2/86>.

28. Phebe Woodruff to Wilford Woodruff, March 8, 1840, MS 19509, CHL.

building of houses for some of the wives of the Twelve." At a May 2, 1840, meeting of the Nauvoo high council, the committee also received the assignment to fence in and plow up "the lots on which the houses are to be built." The labor for the construction of the houses and the development of the lots would be paid for "in town lots in Nauvoo."<sup>29</sup>

One of the homes built under the committee's supervision was for Phebe Woodruff. Unfortunately, it was less than desirable and little better than living outdoors. Phebe informed her husband, Wilford, that after the house was finished, she discovered that it had "no door or window or loft in it" and that "the roof [was] verry [*sic*] poorly laid on." Because of these conditions, "the snow and rain came in verry [*sic*] plentifully the snow would be a number of inches deep and mostly over the floor." She lived in the house for two months, but it soon became unbearable, and when a family offered to take her in, she readily agreed. In Phebe's case, despite the Church's efforts to supply her with shelter, her living conditions continued to be inadequate.<sup>30</sup>

### The Situation of Mary Ann Angell Young

Conditions were also harsh for Mary Ann Angell Young, Brigham Young's wife, but she had suffered in Brigham's absence before. The two married in 1834 after Brigham's first wife, Miriam Works, had passed away in 1832. At the time, Brigham had two children, Elizabeth and Vilate. Over the next several years, Brigham and Mary Ann had four more children: Joseph A., Brigham Jr., Mary Ann, and Alice, who was born on September 4, 1839, just days before Brigham left for England. In the first five years after Brigham and Mary Ann were married, Brigham was absent "about half the time."<sup>31</sup> In 1837, when Kirtland, Ohio, was rife with dissension, Brigham, who was one of Joseph Smith's main defenders, feared that his life was in danger and fled Ohio for Missouri, leaving Mary Ann and their children behind. According to one biographer, Mary Ann "was left alone to struggle as best she could under the complication of adverse circumstances surrounding her, relying upon

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29. Nauvoo High Council, Minutes, May 2, 1840, p. 58, MS 3429, CHL.

30. Phebe Woodruff to Wilford Woodruff, September 1, 1840, MS 19509, CHL; Phebe Woodruff to Wilford Woodruff, July 2, 1840, MS 19509, CHL; see also Ulrich, *House Full of Females*, 46.

31. Lisa Olsen Tait and Chad M. Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 243.

God for help.” Dissenters searched her house frequently, believing that Brigham was still there, and such searches distressed Mary Ann greatly. In spring 1837, Mary Ann took the children to Missouri. “Worn out with travel and the fatigue of having the sole care of her children,” she finally reunited with Brigham. Her condition concerned him—“you look as if you were almost in your grave,” he reportedly said.<sup>32</sup>

The situation was not much better when the Saints were expelled from Missouri in the winter of 1838–1839. With Joseph Smith in prison, Brigham Young bore much of the responsibility of directing the Saints’ exodus from the state and helping them gain temporary shelter at different locations. Mary Ann recalled that during that winter “I kept house in eleven different places, previous to arriving at the place of destination on the banks of the Mississippi river.”<sup>33</sup>

Once the family reached Montrose, Mary Ann’s difficulties did not end. Even before Brigham left for England, Mary Ann and her children were sick and suffering.<sup>34</sup> With his departure, the situation did not improve. A later history of Brigham Young stated that when Brigham left Montrose on September 14, 1839, Mary Ann was “sick, with a babe only ten days old, and all [his] children sick and unable to wait upon each other.”<sup>35</sup> They were living in an “old military barracks” in Montrose with families of other Apostles and had few resources on which to draw.<sup>36</sup> These circumstances meant that Mary Ann and her children suffered greatly in Brigham’s absence. One history notes that Mary Ann frequently had to cross the Mississippi River to Nauvoo in order “to obtain the barest necessities of life.” She would use an open skiff for such crossings, taking baby Alice with her and leaving her other children in the charge of her stepdaughter Elizabeth, who was only fourteen years old. “These journeys were sometimes made in storms” that would drench Mary Ann and the baby, but they resulted in “a few potatoes and a little meat or flour”—at least something to provide nourishment.<sup>37</sup>

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32. Emmeline B. Wells, “Heroines of the Church: Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young,” *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (January 1, 1891): 18–19; see also Tait and Orton, “Take Special Care of Your Family,” 243–44.

33. Wells, “Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young” (January 1, 1891): 19.

34. Leonora Taylor to John Taylor, September 9, 1839, MS 1346, CHL; see also Esplin, “Sickness and Faith,” 427.

35. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, book B, 35, CR 100 150, box 1, CHL.

36. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 29.

37. Wells, “Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young” (January 15, 1891): 56.

On one of these trips, Mary Ann visited the home of a Latter-day Saint woman in Nauvoo. This woman later recalled:

On a cold, stormy November day Sister Young came into my house in Nauvoo, with her baby Alice in her arms, almost fainting with cold and hunger, and dripping wet with the spray from crossing the river in an open skiff. I did not question her, but made her a cup of tea immediately and gave her something to eat; we had very little ourselves, but she was glad to have even that. I tried to persuade her to stay, but she refused, saying, "the children at home are hungry, too." I shall never forget how she looked, shivering with cold and thinly clad. I kept the baby while she went to the tithing office. She came back with a few potatoes and a little flour, for which she seemed very grateful, and taking her baby with the parcels she had to carry, weak as she was from ague and fever, wended her way to the river bank.<sup>38</sup>

To obtain money for such necessities, Mary Ann sewed and washed clothes, but such work never produced much income. In spring 1840, she received a lot of land in Nauvoo, and Church members helped her fence it off, plow the ground, and plant a garden, although she was still living in Montrose and had to cross the Mississippi River each day to take care of it. Church brethren eventually built a small house on the lot, but, much like Phebe Woodruff's, it left much to be desired. According to Mary Ann's nephew Joseph W. Young, the structure consisted of a "body of a house . . . without doors, or windows"—barely a semblance of a shelter. Because of their poverty, Mary Ann and the children were also forced to subsist mainly on "corn-meal bread & the milk of one cow, and the few vegetables they got from their garden."<sup>39</sup>

It is unclear how much Brigham Young knew about the condition of his family. He gleaned some information from letters that were written to him and to the other Apostles. Vilate Kimball, for example, informed Heber C. Kimball that Mary Ann's home "could hardly be caud [called] a shelter," information that made Brigham "fee[l] bad." Although he stated to Mary Ann that he had "not ben [*sic*] concerned about" his

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38. Wells, "Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young" (January 15, 1891): 57. This story has been related in at least two other publications: Tait and Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," 245–46; Rex G. Jensen, "Indomitable Mary Ann," *Ensign* 23 (July 1993): 40–43.

39. Joseph W. Young, *Autobiography*, 23, Joseph W. Young Papers, 1849–1872, MS 1529, CHL; see also Tait and Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," 246.

family because “the Lord said by the mouth of Brother Joseph; that they should be provided for, and [he] believed it,” Brigham still clearly worried about them.<sup>40</sup> On June 11, 1840, he dreamt he saw and embraced his daughter Elizabeth, kissed Mary Ann, and was told that his other children were enjoying school. At the end of the dream, Mary Ann told him, “We feele well but you must provide for your own familes for the Church are not able to doe for them.”<sup>41</sup> The dream made a significant enough impression on Brigham that he recorded it in his journal, including Mary Ann’s admonition. His family was in need, yet there was little Brigham could do, and Mary Ann was doing all in her power. The situation was bleak.

Just four days after Brigham Young’s dream, Joseph Smith evidently also had a feeling that the Church needed to do more for Mary Ann. On June 15, 1840, Smith had Howard Coray, one of his clerks, write out a pay order to Newel K. Whitney, who was one of the Church’s bishops. As mentioned above, Whitney had owned a store in Kirtland that served as a Church storehouse, and it appears he had been put in charge of a similar store in Nauvoo. Following the 1831 revelation that instructed elders in need to obtain goods from the storehouse and charge it to the Church,<sup>42</sup> Joseph Smith and other Church leaders would sometimes issue pay orders for the store. These orders would request that goods be provided to individuals and charged to the account of Smith or other leaders. In such cases, Whitney would at times write on the back of the pay order what goods were provided to the individual and their value.<sup>43</sup> The pay order for Mary Ann Angell Young was brief and to the point: “Sir, It is my opinion, that you had better let Mrs Young have any thing she wants, that so doing will be well pleasing in sight of God.” Coray signed Joseph Smith’s name and then noted that this was done “per H Coray.”<sup>44</sup>

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40. Brigham Young to Mary A. Young, October 16, 1840, MS 6140, CHL; see also Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, September 6, 1840, MS 3276, CHL; Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 399, 402.

41. Brigham Young, Journal, June 11, 1840, CR 1234 1, CHL.

42. “Revelation, 4 December 1831–B,” 151–52.

43. See, for example, “Pay Order to Oliver Granger, 15 April 1840,” in *JSP* D7:264–65; Hyrum Smith to Newel K. Whitney, May 8, 1840, Newel K. Whitney Papers, MS 10480, CHL.

44. “Pay Order to Newel K. Whitney for ‘Mrs. Young,’” 293, underlining in original.

Two days after the order was prepared, Mary Ann delivered it to Whitney. Despite her great need, and despite the order stating she could have "any thing she wants," she procured only three items: nutmeg, a shawl for herself, and a pair of shoes "for man."<sup>45</sup> Nutmeg was sometimes used in the preparation of botanical medicines for diarrhea and dysentery, indicating that sickness may have still been prevalent in the Young household.<sup>46</sup> The shoes may have been for one of Mary Ann's boys, although they might also have been for Brigham. The three items were valued at \$0.10 for the nutmeg and \$1.50 apiece for the shawl and the shoes, for a total of \$3.10. It was a meager amount. Although Mary Ann could have used much more, she obtained only some of the bare necessities for her family. Why she did not procure more from the storehouse is not clear, but part of it could have been out of a desire not to be a burden on the Church. In October 1840, for example, Brigham told Mary Ann that he wished his family had enough "food and rament," but he realized "that the church is poor and it is as much as they can doe to attend to without doing anything for my famely."<sup>47</sup> Although not explicitly stating it, Brigham was implying that he did not wish for Mary Ann to burden the Church with her situation, something that Mary Ann may have believed as well.

Part of Mary Ann's reluctance may have also stemmed from the notion that good, faithful women should trust in God, not complain, and not worry about the future. Had not Jesus told his disciples to take no thought for food, drink, or clothing, for God would provide (Matt. 6:31–32)? Perhaps Mary Ann believed that if someone was truly trusting the Lord, they should bear their situation without burdening others or the Church. Even when she hinted that things were not as good for her and the family as they could be, Mary Ann focused on what she did have. In an April 1841 letter, for example, she told Brigham that she wished she had "a better house," but she was grateful that she had been able to obtain "a comfortable shelter from the storm." She thanked God "for all the blessings" he had given her, although admitting she was

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45. "Pay Order to Newel K. Whitney for 'Mrs. Young,'" 293.

46. L. Meeker Day, *The Botanic Family Physician* (New York: By the author, 1833), 15; Elisha Smith, *The Botanic Physician: Being a Compendium of the Practice of Physic, upon Botanical Principles* (New York: Murphy and Bingham, 1830), 488; "Milk Porridge," *Southern Botanic Journal* 1 (March 4, 1837): 47.

47. Brigham Young to Mary A. Young, October 16, 1840; see also Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 401.

“constantly fatigued” from the responsibilities she bore.<sup>48</sup> This attitude of not wanting to complain about what she lacked and to bear her burdens silently may have also affected her decision of what to take from the store. Whatever the case, Joseph Smith paid Whitney for the items about a week after Mary Ann procured them, settling the account.<sup>49</sup>

As a window into Mary Ann Angell Young’s poverty, the brief pay order to Whitney is poignant. It also highlights the sacrifices that families of missionaries made. Brigham Young and Willard Richards wrote to Joseph Smith in September 1840 about the impoverished individuals they encountered in England, stating that their hearts were “pained with the poverty & misery of this people.” They had “done all [they] could to help as many off as possible, to a land where th[e]y may get a morsel of bread.”<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, the families of the Apostles themselves were largely languishing in hunger and destitution in the absence of their husbands and fathers, and the Church itself did not have the resources to alleviate these conditions.

Brigham Young finally returned to Nauvoo on July 1, 1841, reuniting with Mary Ann.<sup>51</sup> The nearly two-year absence had been difficult for her, but she had tried her best to care for the family. Given her health and the heavy burdens she had borne, it was probably a relief to have her companion back. Just nine days after Brigham Young arrived in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation stating that the Lord no longer required Young “to leave [his] family as in times past.” The revelation instructed Young to “take special care of [his] family from this time henceforth and forever.”<sup>52</sup>

This revelation likely came in part because of the suffering of Young’s family during his mission to England. It also reflected the increasing responsibilities that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were assuming in Nauvoo. In August 1841, at a conference of the Church, Joseph Smith stated “that the time had come when the twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the first presidency, and attend to the settling of emigrants [*sic*]” in Nauvoo. Smith continued “that it was right

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48. Mary Ann Angell Young to Brigham Young, April 15, 1841, CR 1234 1, CHL.

49. “Pay Order to Newel K. Whitney for ‘Mrs. Young,’ 15 June 1840,” 293.

50. “Letter from Brigham Young and Willard Richards, 5 September 1840,” in *JSP*, D7:392.

51. Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 304–6.

52. “Revelation, 9 July 1841,” in *Documents, Volume 8: February 1841–November 1841*, ed. Brent M. Rogers and others, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2019), 188 [D&C 126:1–3] (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D8).

that they should have an opportunity of provididing [*sic*] something for themselves and families"—recognizing again the burdens that the wives and families of the Twelve had borne.<sup>53</sup>

As the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Brigham Young had opportunities to think more about his family's sacrifice and the condition of the families of preaching elders. As early as October 1840, he had told his brother Joseph Young, one of the seven presidents of the Seventy, that more missionaries were necessary in England but that he did not want individuals who could not provide for their families. "We doe not want men to leve there [*sic*] families to suffer for we can see enupth [enough] of poverty here with out here [hearing] of it from home."<sup>54</sup> Brigham Young's counsel went further in April 1843, when he and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve held a conference "to ordain elders, and send them forth into the vineyard to build up churches." After numerous individuals were assigned to preach outside of Nauvoo, Young addressed the group and told them not to depart "on their mission, until they have provided for their families." According to Young, this meant that the families would have "a comfortable house," as well as "a lot fenced, and one year's provisions in store, or sufficient to last his family during his mission." Young further stated that the Twelve "left their families sick and destitute" when they went to England, with nothing but the Lord's promise "that they should be provided for," but that was a special situation. "God does not require the same thing of the elders now," Young declared, "neither does he promise to provide for their families when they leave them contrary to counsel."<sup>55</sup>

After these instructions were given, there were still times when men spent prolonged periods of time away from their families on preaching assignments. On these occasions, wives and children still suffered, because of both a lack of necessities and sheer loneliness. Louisa Barnes Pratt, for example, referred to herself as a widow after her husband, Addison, was called on a multiyear mission to the Hawaiian islands. "I felt a loneliness indescribable!" she later remembered. "I was subject to severe fits of melancholy."<sup>56</sup> Yet because of Mary Ann's experiences,

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53. "Discourse, 16 August 1841, as Reported by *Times and Seasons*," in *JSP*, D8:228.

54. Brigham Young to Mary A. Young, October 16, 1840; see also Allen, Esplin, and Whittaker, *Men with a Mission*, 403.

55. "Elder's Conference," *Times and Seasons* 4 (April 1, 1843): 157–58.

56. S. George Ellsworth, ed., *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 67;

Brigham Young's feelings on providing for the families of missionaries had changed. It was no longer the Church's responsibility to take care of families, he believed; instead, that duty fell to the elders themselves.

## Conclusion

In the early years of the Church, men's assignment to preach for long periods of time in areas away from their homes disrupted the lives of families in several ways, including economically, as the pay order from Joseph Smith on behalf of Mary Ann Angell Young highlights. Revelations and instructions from Joseph Smith had placed the burden of providing for the families of missionaries on the Church itself, which, at times, seemed to work well. However, in Nauvoo in 1839 and 1840, when the Church and its members were building a new community in a disease-ridden environment after having lost everything in Missouri, the lack of resources prevented the Church from meeting the needs of the Apostles' families. Thus, Mary Ann Angell Young and the wives of other Apostles suffered greatly while their husbands preached in England. Their sacrifices—and their willingness to assume the burden of caring for their families—enabled the Apostles to gather a multitude of converts to Nauvoo, but it came at a significant price. Largely because of the condition of these families, Brigham Young provided a different direction in 1843 to those going out to preach. Now elders were not to leave before ensuring that their families were provided for. This counsel solidified what the families of the Apostles already knew: sometimes, despite best efforts, the Church could not meet the needs of the families left behind.

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see also Perrin, "Louisa Barnes Pratt," 265–66; and Hendrix-Komoto, "Imperial Zions," 141–42.

# The Bread of Life, with Chocolate Chips

*Samuel Morris Brown*

I learned to cook when my wife was recovering from cancer surgery. There's a hollowness, kindred to cancer, hungry to swallow you up when a beloved's life is threatened. I still remember, with a soul-deep ache, that time when her body was a battleground for scalpel surgeons and monstrously mutated cells. Those harrowing days and their fulminating awareness of her mortality still haunts me. I've seen a lot of death in my short life; nothing disoriented me like her cancer.

The wild upheaval of unexpected illness unearthed more than a surgical specimen for the pathologist's microscope. She and I discovered in the cancer's aftermath my longstanding failure as a husband to be her full partner. This spousal dereliction had insinuated itself into the infrastructure of our marriage. I realized that my soul needed a surgery of its own. A spiritual death had wrapped its malignant fingers around my internal organs, a nefarious mimic of the tumor that had lifted the retina off the back of her eye. The simultaneous, stark revelation of her mortality and my personal failure left me wanting to sit alone in a room and cry my way through the smothering chaos rather than accept the painful transformation that beckoned.

But there was no time to stare, heartbroken, at my pitiful soul, dithering about whether I could be remade, whether we could be made whole. I would have to man up. I would need to keep house.



The war between the forces of order and chaos is as ancient as any humanity we would recognize as our own. In the Bible's opening lines,

our Hebrew God tamed the waters of the primordial abyss. Their neighbors and occasional captors, the Babylonians, despised the waters of chaos too. In Babylon, the people celebrated the power of the god Marduk's sword to vanquish the sea monster Tiamat, who presided over the inundating waters. The god-king's slaughter of that watery demon made human existence possible in ancient Mesopotamia.

Those Babylonians are my kin. I know that chaos and detest it. I struggle against its asphyxiating wetness. In the weeks of our physical and psychic suffering, I felt the waters of despair swell to fill the miserable concavity in my soul. I wanted to gut Tiamat to put an end to the chaos. I needed Marduk's sword but did not know where to find it. In its place, I found a thick-bellied, well-balanced kitchen knife. It hefted well. I started chopping vegetables.



When she and I first met the summer after college, my kitchen consisted of an electric vegetable steamer made of thin plastic. In it I melted bags of Lipton pasta mixes into nodular slurries. Most nights, I half expected a two-headed brook trout with five eyes to peer up from the yellowish, lumpy mass. But I didn't care. Especially when mixed with a can of cold black beans, the molten pasta sustained me. I had other priorities than food.

She changed all that.

One of my first memories of our years together is of an outlet store hawking adventure clothing in southeastern Maine. A male friend, on a whim, rescued a bag of cookies that had been abandoned atop a clothing rack. Still troubled by urban legends about razor blades concealed in Halloween apples, I declined his offer to share in the spoils. Surely, I fretted, a sociopath had baked those sweet morsels with foxglove before depositing them as bait above the fleece sweaters. But, eyes singing with spontaneous pleasure, she partook. No razor blades, no poison herbs. Just butter, sugar, flour, and chocolate. She laughed at me, her mouth full of cookie. In the car afterward, I ran my fingers through her thick, black hair. I still feel that hair in the web spaces of my fingers, where it caught before I wiggled my hand free.



During the initial crisis, I cooked simple, even clumsy dishes. I flailed in a quicksand of risottos, week after week, gruels of sodden rice drowning in liquefied cheese. With time, though, she taught me the language of

the kitchen. As she initiated me into the sorority of the hearth, I opened my heart to the ancient rhythm of the village. I found myself drawn into the cycles that once organized the world. I saw harvest seasons as more than a Whole Foods marketing campaign. I considered what it might mean to be with a bundle of life—roasted carrots or a seared tenderloin, perhaps—as it fell to its death on our hearth.

Over the ensuing years, she guided my culinary restlessness into intermittently successful experiments. I learned how to attend to the moment when the cumin, coriander, and garlic splashed into sweetly diaphanous onions bathing in heated oil. That familiar, tiny explosion of odors still calls to my increasingly sentimental memory those early years as her pupil.



She did not, however, teach me to bake. I was afraid. Cooking let me be wild, even dissolute. The distracted nonchalance of stovework fit my personality. I could stab some specimen of allium or whittle a fennel bulb, smear the sacrifice in oil and salt, and start it on fire. Vivid flavor could spring from death, no matter the liberties I took with the recipe. I could add extra salt, or vinegar, or Aleppo chili pepper flakes at the end, as our tongues dictated.

Baking, on the other hand, channeled the stentorian gaze of endless generations of women whose culinary science was hard won and ironclad. Baking meant gardening in fastidious colonies of yeast. It demanded precision. In baking, the ways I touched and handled wet, leavened flour created the difference between glorious supper and execrable waste. The baker's tasks entailed reading recipes as if they were the code of Hammurabi. I preferred to see recipes as half-remembered oral traditions from an archetypal hearth.

I watched her, though, enthralled by her careful face and the tawny blubber of dough that she massaged with her hands before lowering it into a bread pan. I saw her pour cookies from the mixing bowl and into our lives. I witnessed her create cakes from cocoa, butter, and flour. Baking was perilous, yes, but also beautiful.



In the misery after her surgery, a box of fine chocolates arrived on our doorstep from San Francisco. They were a gift from a friend, a whimsical, quantitative man whose mind never sleeps. The exquisite flavors of that chocolate told us a story about the meaning of life. We will all die,

and most of us will suffer. And yet we will have known the tenderly bitter tang of chocolate, the sweet softness of homemade bread, the touch of oil-wet fingertips on our scalps. We will have lived.

After a few years of cooking, I happened upon Kristine Wright's essay about Latter-day Saint women baking bread for the sacrament. Not allowed to perform the formal priesthood ordinance, they brought the ritual to life in the loaves of bread they offered on the altar.<sup>1</sup> They baked the Lord into the world, recapitulating his work in Capernaum. There, Christ had performed his great miracle of loaves and fishes. Five hungry thousands listened to Jesus with one ear and to their grumbling stomachs with the other. He fed them from a basket of food barely adequate to the hunger of his disciples, let alone the multitude. The crowd was hungry again within a few hours. Jesus exploited that extended moment of knowing that the food would never be adequate but had to be enough. For that brief time, the bread and fish was sufficient to tell his disciples that Jesus was the bread of life. He in his eternal presence, in his life of divine regard mapped onto human transience, is our everlasting bread. He is the force that makes us whole in spirit and body.

The thought of baking sacramental bread as a ritual in its own right captivated me. If Christ was the bread of life, those Latter-day Saint women were his bakers. I realized then that women had also likely baked the bread of that Passover meal transformed by Jesus's broken body. When he gave thanks at that last supper, it was for their bread. (I find myself now ignoring the tired-eyed disciples in Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, my gaze occupied instead by the fist-sized loaves of bread scattered across the table like wind-fallen peaches.) In my mind, the baker that night was the Mary, "covered in roses . . . covered in ashes . . . covered in rain," of the folksinger Patty Griffin's devastating eulogy. I knew in my soul's soul that when Jesus preached the bread of life he had in mind those women baking that bread. I could taste their bread in the same place of knowing. I could hear believers praying, as Jesus taught them, for *that* daily bread whenever they turned their eyes to the sky.

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1. Kristine Wright, "'We Baked a Lot of Bread': Reconceptualizing Mormon Women and Ritual Objects," in *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Kate Holbrook and Matt Bowman (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 82–100.

In the bread of the Lord's Supper, eternity and time conjoin. That crushed wheat mixes with water and yeast, is lit on fire, and enters our bodies, where we burn it again in our cellular furnaces. When my own baptism by fire will come, I do not know. I suspect it began with that cancer surgery and the wounds it exposed. But we all dance in that fire on the boundary between eternity and time whenever we bake. Christ's gift has always been in his grace-filled juxtaposition of the eternal and the temporary.

As I reflected on those sisters baking that sacramental bread, I remembered the chocolates that arrived in the midst of our sadness. Those two images—of baking bread and succoring chocolates—braided themselves together when I entered a new phase of my religious life.



Years into my apprenticeship in the kitchen, some overoptimistic Church leaders decided that I should serve in an elders quorum presidency. I couldn't imagine why anyone thought I belonged in a hierarchy. My speech is arcane and unsettling; my demeanor is at best disheveled. My belief, however fervent, is a clumsy mixture of the feral and the abstruse. I doubted that I could be of any use to the people we worshiped with. I realized, in the rare clarity of thought I associate with inspiration, that I'd better learn to bake. Any ministry meant to recall Jesus's would need to incarnate his bread of life, even if the heaven was inanimate, and sugar and chocolate joined hands with the flour. Cookies were small and lively; they were more manageable than bread, more easily shared with ward members. Plus, chocolate chip cookies are the first and most familiar of sweet baked things, a common pathway into the guild of those who know flour and water. An ever-gracious mentor, my wife taught me a basic recipe for salted chocolate chip cookies based on whole-wheat flour. I was a mediocre student of baking, as I had feared. But her attention and my belief that God wanted me to bake called me to persevere. Gradually, vivid flavors came through, especially when I began zesting citrus peels into the dough. The veil of fear and unfamiliarity over my eyes began to lift.



*The veil.* It's a story about being blind and yet feeling the warm breath of a greater realm on our cheeks. This veil of mortality drapes across the world to separate the living from the dead. On our mortal side of this

supernatural curtain stand the people whose stomachs rumble, whose food waste befouls the sewer system, who yawn and sweat and fight and want. On the other side of that boundary, it's all of us a century later, now docile and pure, like Montaigne's old men too weary to get into any trouble. As a young child, I imagined the veil as if it were a cheesecloth wrapped around a quorum of ghosts. I still sort of like that image of a gauzy barrier at which the living and dead strain to see and be seen. I'm glad to love and be loved by those who have slipped from the world that can be touched into the world beyond our fingertips.

Increasingly, though, I think of the veil as the barely visible interface between what is temporary and specific on the one hand and what is eternal and universal on the other. It's that shimmer just out of sight when we look over an alpine lake at dusk. It is, in the company of the beloved, the shiver of awareness that she is not just an electrified scaffold of gristle and bone. The veil contains the sacred yearning that comes as we eat the bread of life. The veil is the promise of life in the midst of physical and spiritual deaths.

When she and I stand together in the kitchen, the veil of eternity stretches under the pressure of our questing fingers. As the remnants of plants and animals speed their dissolution over the fire of our modern stove, they place us in a different kind of time. These living-things-becoming-food, these cookies and loaves of already broken bread, are real. So are we, both broken and real, in time and eternity.

We Christians eat in remembrance of a God beaten to death. We do it every Sunday as we take the sacrament. The Lord's Supper isn't just about that one Passover meal, though, however carefully we repeat it. We are always eating in the presence of these lives of ours as fragile as food. From the sacrifices of animal and vegetable spring our enfleshed souls. When we make ourselves vulnerable to the flavors born of these foods and the communities they may cohere, we push our fingers into the veil. Our spirits surge with a life greater than our bodies can contain.

I get, I think, what the ancients were doing with their animal sacrifices, so much more daring and wildly natural than our searing the flesh of dismembered industrial chickens over machined rows of propane-spewing candles. Our ancestors slaughtered, gutted, and divided a sheep into a wood fire to burn it into fragrant smoke that would feed the heavens. Theirs was an eternal meal. Not an endless meal. That's not the point, even though we may wish that a specific mouthful—or a particular person at a certain moment—would last into an endless

sequence of seconds. The point that we struggle to comprehend is to melt the veil of eternity into our lives. Our Hebrew predecessors did so at the temple altar; we do it at the sacrament table. And, sometimes, we can trouble that veil with a chocolate chip cookie.

These cookies my wife taught me to bake have become a spiritual discipline for me, like a nun worrying the beads of her rosary. I bake them almost every week now. Because my grandfather loved puns, I dubbed them the *Cookies* of the Priesthood, as they were intended to entice the elders to visit our spartan classroom above the staircase. But this pun hid the truth inside my clownish humor: the title was dead serious. I couldn't stop thinking about the sacramental bread when I baked them. That bread, these cookies, were the otherworldly priesthood of the Firstborn made actual among us. They were Jesus as the bread of life and the bread he broke with the disciples. They were the sacrificial offering Abraham and Sarah made to Melchizedek. They were the Savior hanging from a tree and calling out for his Father absent in heaven as his mother wept at his feet. They are the soul-healing promise of his broken body. They are the assurance that in opening ourselves to eternity we can see through the death of spirit and body, that Atonement is concerned with more than just a blessedly quiet afterlife wrapped in the veil's ghostly gauze.

Sometimes these cookies are a hope of solace in the face of personal tragedy.

A friend's father died unexpectedly. Sudden death hideously breaks the living and the dead. Survivors must bear that rupture in their souls. Before the body is hidden in the ground, the traditional story we tell about the veil is senseless and cruel. The beloved is still physically present, but that presence is a sacrilege of its former vitality. My friend's favorite cookies were pumpkin chocolate chip, so we baked fifty small orange-brown cakes studded with chocolate chips. I left the nutmeggy mound of sweet things on his back porch with a note of condolence. I realized as I walked back up the street that these priesthood cookies were my offering against death. I had little else. In such despair, sometimes we can only say "take, eat," as we hold hands in otherwise silence. Those chocolates, that sadness, are the bread of life in the mouths of mortals.

That calamitous death taught me that many events that call us to protest our infirmity also welcome a morsel of this bread of life. Funerals, cancers, heart attacks, drug overdoses, and advancing birthdays after

middle age all want the cookies of that priesthood of Christ, the priesthood that thins the veil between our fingers. This bread of life, bedecked with chocolate chips, is my testimony of hope against cataclysmic days.



We're going to die one day, she and I. So will everyone we have ever known and loved. That day will come long before we desire it. And yet, in the meanwhile, we will bake, we will give, and we will wonder as the veil wraps close about our skin.

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This essay by Samuel Morris Brown won third place in the 2019 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

## Cookies of the Priesthood

*Base recipe is an adaptation by Kate Holbrook of a Molly Wizenberg adaptation from Kim Boyce's recipe; the base supports the rainbow of variants listed below.*

2 cups whole wheat flour  
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour  
1½ teaspoons kosher salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1½ teaspoons baking powder  
1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 cup brown sugar  
2 large eggs  
¾–1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1½ cups chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix flour, pastry flour, salt, baking soda, and baking powder in a medium bowl.

Cut butter into roughly 1-centimeter cubes.

Using a stand mixer with paddle attachment, beat butter and both sugars for about 2 minutes until creamy. (At first, set the mixer speed on the lowest setting to avoid a sugar bomb; then increase the speed to medium-low.)

Add eggs and vanilla extract to the butter mixture and mix on low speed until moist and well combined.

Add the combined dry ingredients and mix on low speed until integrated.

Add chocolate chips and fold them in by mixing the dough for a few seconds on low speed.

Spoon heaping balls of dough onto ungreased baking sheet.

Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Let cookies cool for 5 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool.

## Successful Variants

*Pistachio orange:* Decrease chocolate chips slightly; add a heaping  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of pistachios (ground to moderate granularity) and the zest of 1 orange.

*Blueberry lemon:* Eliminate chocolate chips. Add zest of 1 lemon and 8 ounces of dried blueberries. (The dried blueberries from Trader Joe's are the best option discovered so far; the bulk dried blueberries at other stores are much drier and smaller.)

*Cherry almond:* Ditch the chocolate chips. Add heaping  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups dried sour cherries and heaping  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh whole almonds (ground to moderate granularity).

*Strawberry:* Add  $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 cup diced dried strawberries.

*Nutmeg orange:* Add 2–3 pinches nutmeg to dry ingredients. Add zest of 1 orange.

*Lemon hazelnut:* Decrease chocolate chips slightly. Add a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup hazelnuts (ground to moderate granularity) and the zest of 2 lemons.

*Grapefruit:* Decrease chocolate chips slightly. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cardamom,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pecans (ground to moderate granularity), and the zest of 1 grapefruit.

*Cranberry:* Add  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon cinnamon to the dry ingredients. Eliminate chocolate chips and add zest of 1 orange and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups dried cranberries.

*Cranberry chocolate:* Add  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon cinnamon to the dry ingredients. Reduce chocolate chips to 1 cup. Add 1 cup dried cranberries, zest of 1 orange, and scant  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pecans (ground to moderate granularity).

*Orange cherry:* Reduce chocolate chips to 1 cup. Add 1 cup dried cherries and zest of 1 orange.

*Lime currant:* Add  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons of powdered, dried lime (stocked at many Near Eastern stores; okay to substitute with fresh zest of 2 limes) to the dry ingredients. Replace chocolate chips with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried currants.

*Lime barberry:* Add zest of 2 limes and replace chocolate chips with 1½ cup dried barberries.

### **Failed Variants**

*Pomegranate:* Add 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses in lieu of vanilla extract. Add ¾ cup pomegranate arils. Reduce chocolate chips to ¾ cup.

**Note:** *The arils just don't have a great texture.*

*Quince:* Grate a peeled quince and microwave on high for 6 minutes. Wring out quince in a dish towel (or mash through a strainer) to remove water. Add cardamom and ground hazelnuts. *Optional:* add a few pomegranate arils.

**Note:** *This variant is a huge amount of work for soggy cookies.*

*Syrian splash:* Add 1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper flakes to the pistachio-orange variant recipe.

**Note:** *The pepper created weird burnt notes.*

## Winter Rail Yard

I hear the coal train's organ note in the distance,  
remember the two pigeons  
circling together and pecking the open ground  
between ties near the tracks.  
They were smoke-purple birds, white-winged.  
And even if a train by some surprise could pass over them  
violently vibrating their walls on either side,  
they would be safe in the center from every moving part,  
not just the unearthly noise of torqueing iron axle.  
These birds probably have learned by now  
that after its spray-painted flanks clunk and clunk and rail away,  
it's all just the sound of commuters' engines again  
and a slightly stronger morning sun.

—Matthew Scott Stenson

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This poem won honorable mention in the 2018 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

# Agency and Same-Sex Attraction

*Ben Schilaty*

“Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God’s greatest gift to man.”<sup>1</sup>

—David O. McKay

I arrived at my parents’ home at eleven o’clock at night after twenty-six hours of driving. The trek from Tucson, Arizona, to Everett, Washington, had been miserable. My life had become unmanageable, and I didn’t know what else to do but go home. I sprawled out on the living room floor, exhausted from the drive and emotionally worn out. I was too tired to pretend to be happy and too sad to do much besides complain. I was thirty years old, and it felt like my life would be perpetually filled with loneliness.

I had come out to my parents seven years before. I didn’t consider myself gay back then. I was “more attracted to men than women.” My parents responded immediately with love and concern, making sure that I knew they loved me. One of the first things my dad said was, “Well, you’re probably better off being single because being married is hard”—a very typical thing for him to say. “Things could be worse, so be grateful for what you’ve got” was frequent advice from him.

After our initial conversation, about once a year my dad would ask, “So how’s that whole ‘same-sex attraction’ thing going?” and I’d reply,

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1. David O. McKay, in *One Hundred Twentieth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1950), 32.

“Good.” My mom would hug me and tell me she loved me, and that was all we ever said about it. I just didn’t feel like opening up to them.

Now, seven years later and at thirty years old, I was sitting on the same couch that I had sat on when I came out to them, and I just spewed seven years of experiences. I couldn’t keep them in anymore. They included the pain of being gay and a Latter-day Saint, wondering what my future would look like, and a hole in my heart that just couldn’t seem to be filled. Church materials used words like *affliction*, *temptation*, *inclination*, and *struggle* to describe experiences like mine. I felt like I had been tried to the point of breaking. I just couldn’t struggle with my “affliction” anymore.

After listening for quite some time, my mom seemed to grasp how hard the last seven years had been for me. She promised, “Ben, we’re not just on your side. We’re with you one hundred percent. If you need to leave the Church and marry a man, you and he will always be part of our family.” My dad nodded his head in agreement. I didn’t know how much I needed to hear that from my mom. I had felt trapped in a doctrine and culture that seemed to have no place for a gay man like me, wedged between wanting to be in a same-sex relationship and wanting to stay in the Church. Hearing my mom tell me that it was okay to leave set me free. She honored my agency just as my Heavenly Parents do. She also reassured me that if I made a choice that was outside of our doctrine, I wouldn’t be outside of our family. I couldn’t do anything that would remove me from my family. My mother gave me life and then gave me the freedom to live it.

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself” (D&C 93:30). My mother acted within her sphere of influence, as the matriarch of our family, to let me know that I would always be part of the family. She used her agency to give me a supernal gift.

I journaled a lot during the next few weeks, trying to figure out what to do with my life. After a long conversation with my dad in which we both spilled our guts, I wrote, “What I really appreciate about my dad is that he asks really good questions and he listens. He’s also thought deeply about this stuff. It felt so good to be 100% honest with him and for each of us to just share our feelings and be on the same page.” The next day I wrote, “Went to the temple with my parents which was great. However, my mom spends a little too much time looking at me lovingly.”

I did a lot of hard spiritual work at my parents’ house. I searched the scriptures for answers, and the ones I got often weren’t satisfying. I read

the words of Jesus in Gethsemane: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). I thought to myself, I don’t want to be gay. I don’t want to have to choose between being in the Church and being with someone I love. The cup I was given felt so incredibly unfair. And yet the Savior acted in his sphere of influence to drink from a cup that he didn’t want. What cup was God offering me?

Then I opened up the Book of Mormon and read: “Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves” (2 Ne. 10:23). It was my choice, and no one else’s. And I should be glad that no one could choose for me. Then the next verse drove me to my knees: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved” (2 Ne. 10:24). I had been focusing so much on my pain, my loneliness, and my desperation that I had failed to really ascertain the will of God regarding my sexuality. I was so intent on changing who I was that I missed out on being who I was.

As I sought his will and turned to Christ, I felt Christ point me to his church. I felt called to keep my covenants. I felt compelled to act within my sphere of influence to choose to live the restored gospel. For the first time in my life, I felt that changing my sexuality was outside of my sphere of influence. God wasn’t asking me to change. He was inviting me to be the person he created me to be. And so, even though it was a bitter decision at the time, I chose to drink in a renewed commitment to a life within the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After a month of staying with my family, the time came to head back to Arizona and return to real life. But I couldn’t keep doing things the way I had before. It hadn’t worked. My mind and my spirit were both telling me, through the pain I was in, that something wasn’t right. Similar to how our bodies give us hunger pangs to tell us to nourish ourselves, my spirit was telling me that something needed to change.

While keeping my sexuality a secret had been hard on me, the real cancer was the shame it created. What would people think of me if they knew I was gay? Would they hate me like I had hated myself? I couldn’t let fear control me anymore. I couldn’t live with the shame anymore. So over the next six months I came out to every person I was close to in my life. I made a lot of phone calls, had a lot of one-on-one conversations, and wrote a lot of emails. And I sent a few letters.

One of the letters I sent was to the Wrights in Orem, Utah. They had basically adopted me while I was an undergrad at BYU. With my parents and siblings far away in Washington, the Wright family had taken me in long before they knew I was gay and made sure I always had a place to spend holidays and eat Sunday dinners. I sent the letter, wondering how this disclosure was about to change our relationship. A week later I got a letter back from Cyndi, the mom of the family. It said in part: “Thank you so much for your letter. We really appreciate you sharing your story with us. Nothing changes. We still love you as one of our own.” Cyndi used her agency to choose me. She acted within her sphere of influence to let me know that I was family. Some families choose to reject their children and others for being gay. The Wrights chose to keep me close.

The next time I was in Utah, I stayed at the Wrights’ house. Cyndi and I stayed up talking after everyone else had gone to bed. She reiterated what she had said in the letter, that I was family. She told me that if I left the Church, she would always claim me. I had wasted a lot of time worrying what other people would think of me.

Now, I want to be clear at this point that it was my choice to move forward in the Church. I’m not advocating that anyone should simply accept the way I exercise my agency as the way they should. The God-given gift of agency requires all free agents to do their own spiritual work to reconcile themselves with the will of God, whatever that is for them and their lives. As the Lord speaks to us through his authorized servants, through the scriptures, and through the Holy Ghost, we will be led down the right paths. The key is to be connected enough to heaven that we can be guided on how to proceed in our unique circumstances.

To paraphrase David O. McKay, the most precious gift we have been given, next to life itself, is the power to direct that life. “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; *otherwise there is no existence*” (D&C 93:30, emphasis added). Our Heavenly Parents endowed us with life *and* with the gift of agency. If we don’t have agency, we don’t exist. That is, if we cannot act independently of God’s will for us, then we can’t really act upon his will of our own free will either. It must be terrifying even for Heavenly Parents to let their children act for themselves. And yet they enabled us to do so. They gave us existence. They didn’t just create us materially. They gave us power to act for *ourselves*.

I think of them observing me during those weeks I spent with my earthly parents, weeping with me and pleading with me to use my agency wisely. I imagine them cheering for my mom when, like them, she

promised to always honor my agency. I think of them watching Cyndi pen that letter promising to always claim me and of them saying, “We will always claim you, too, Ben.”

I am not able to choose whether to have opposite-sex attractions, but I do have a multitude of other choices. As a gay Latter-day Saint, the choice I make again and again is to seek out God’s will for me and then to do it. I believe that the Lord wants us to honor one another’s agency as he does. We can’t exist without agency. Our relationships can’t thrive without the freedom to choose. I was blessed by my loved ones when they explicitly told me that they wanted me in their families no matter what I chose. Hearing them say those things changed my life. Those affirmations took me from a pit of despair and offered me hope. I doubt my mom or Cyndi or the many other people in my life who said similar things recognized the gift they were offering me in those moments. But I know it now. And our Heavenly Parents knew it all along. Let’s allow others to use the gift of agency, and let’s use our agency to choose each other.

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# The Creator Praises Birds

Vent and crissum,  
lores and crest and comb: I  
made them all—the  
nares, nape, those  
horny bill plates—I in  
feathered trochees  
made them: peacock,  
sparrow, tufted titmouse,  
flitting jenny  
filled with joy of  
beaking worm, of strut and  
glide, of piping  
double on their  
syrinx. Praise how flock and  
murmuration  
call out warning,  
call to fly or roost or  
call for pleasure:  
*See me! Hear me!*  
*Pur-ty! Pur-ty! Pur-ty!*  
*Cheer up! Pibbity!*

Praise the brave-heart  
tender fledgling, wobbly  
winging over  
houses, over  
pavement, risking all to  
climb the air by  
beating wind I  
too created, rising  
heavenward in joy.

—J. S. Absher

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This poem won first place in the 2018 Clinton F.  
Larson Poetry Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

# Is Not This Real?

*Joseph M. Spencer*

*The following essay is a slightly revised version of a talk originally delivered at Brigham Young University on November 29, 2018, as part of the Wheatley Institution's semiannual Reason for Hope lecture series.*

Latter-day Saints often take Korihor, the infamous Nephite anti-Christ, to be a fool, someone perhaps rightly struck dumb for stupidly demanding signs when he knew better. After all, he self-contradictorily trusted “an angel” who told him that “there is no God” (Alma 30:53). One popular commentary remarks: “Wickedness does not promote rational thought!”<sup>1</sup>

Such an approach to Korihor is good fun, perhaps, but it fails to comprehend Korihor's place in the Book of Mormon. Presumably, his voice is present in the narrative for a reason. Should we not assume that Mormon, as author of the Book of Alma, wishes us to reflect on Korihor's critique of Nephite Christian faith? We are presented with Korihor's own words in Alma 30, despite the fact that these words led many Nephite Christians into serious spiritual error. True, as we read on, we are told of Korihor's unseemly demise and reminded by Mormon that such is “the end of him who perverteth the ways of the Lord” (Alma 30:60). But this end result does not, I think, lessen the fact that Mormon gives us Korihor's actual words and arguments. It seems we are being asked to think through them.

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1. David J. Ridges, *Your Study of the Book of Mormon Made Easier, Part Two: Mosiah through Alma* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2007), 280.

Not only are we being asked to think through Korihor's words, but we are arguably also being asked to watch as Alma thinks through them. As I will show, it seems Alma is at first caught off guard by Korihor and that it takes him awhile to sort out how to respond to the critique. Though God gets involved in the situation with Korihor, which settles affairs to some degree (see Alma 30:49–50), this resolution does not seem to leave Alma settled in his mind and spirit. And so he works out a complex response to Korihor's critique over the course of several chapters. In the following pages, I wish to probe Korihor's appraisal of Nephite Christian devotion, sorting out the basic stakes of his argument, and then I wish to look at how Alma slowly and belatedly develops a full response to Korihor.

Before beginning in earnest, I should explain briefly why I believe this analysis is worth pursuing. The question at the heart of the exchange between Korihor and Alma concerns *knowledge*, what Alma calls the *real* (Alma 32:35). And this question of knowledge seems to be a concern many in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have right now. Is it really possible to know the truth of the Restoration? Some skeptically ask if people just talk about knowing religious truths because they're either naïve or opportunistic—either following blindly without having asked any hard questions or being consciously inauthentic to get along in a culture that is obsessed with certainty. Is there any space today for knowledge, especially in religious contexts?

Well, let us begin with Korihor.

According to the text, Korihor's critique of Nephite Christian devotion derives from a kind of cynicism. That is, behind his more strictly philosophical criticisms lies a suspicion that the whole of Nephite Christianity was created by "ancient priests" who sought "power and authority," ultimately in the hopes of getting gain (Alma 30:23). These priests, he claims, figured out that they could prevent people from "enjoy[ing] their rights and privileges" or "mak[ing] use of that which is their own" by providing a system of "ordinances and performances" overseen by individuals with immense social capital: people others would be naturally afraid to "offend" (30:23, 27–28).

What corruptly shields these priests from criticism, according to Korihor, is a set of unverifiable things: "traditions," "dreams," "whims," "visions," and "pretended mysteries" (30:28). Such is Korihor's institutional critique of Alma's church. Now, it strikes me as deeply interesting that Alma does not bother himself much with these accusations, though they apparently lie at the root of Korihor's attitude. Alma dismisses them as untrue with a simple wave of the hand (see 30:34–35). What

interests Alma, it seems, is not Korihor's institutional critique, especially when it sets forth its own unverifiable claims. In Alma's view, all this is apparently superficial, and so he gives his attention primarily to Korihor's philosophical criticisms about whether Nephite Christian claims are true and how one comes to know the truth. He addresses these issues in detail and at length.

I want, though, to pause for a moment on the fact that Alma prioritizes questions of knowledge over questions of authority, on the fact that he privileges philosophical questions over what might be called ethical questions. This prioritization seems noteworthy for today's context because the past decade or so has seen, in the larger culture surrounding the Church, an inversion of Alma's priorities. In other words, at least from my own observation, those struggling with or in fact leaving the Church *tend* (let me emphasize that this is only a *tendency*) to begin with and seldom get beyond suspicions about the ethical nature of the institution.

I refer here not only to worries about the Church's stance on certain political or social issues but also to the oft-asserted claim that the Church has hidden historical or financial information from its membership. I do not mean to deny that such concerns are important, but I think I have often felt like Alma when encountering these concerns. It seems to me that most such questions about the Church as an institution are only important *if* one begins from the conviction that there is something *real* at work in the Restoration. Truth first, ethics later. This is the position I see Alma taking. He wants to address matters of truth and knowledge, and then, if necessary—and heaven knows it is necessary—we can discuss institutional ethics.

For the purposes of this essay, then, I wish to follow Alma's lead and move right to the heart of the matter: whether and how one can *know* the truth. What are Korihor's *real* criticisms?

Korihor seems to direct two precise points of criticism toward Nephite Christian devotion. What allows the reader to identify them is a bit of repetition. Twice Korihor speaks of things he calls "foolish," and twice he raises questions about what one "can know." First, he says that Nephite Christians are guided by "a foolish and a vain hope" (30:13); second, he says that they trust the "foolish traditions of [their] fathers" (30:14). Note how Korihor's critiques point in opposing temporal directions: in hope, one looks to the future, while tradition comes to a person from the past. Consequently, Korihor offers two distinct (but related) objections. Regarding hope, he claims that "no man can know of anything which is to come" (30:13)—future events are, by definition,

unknowable; they are unavailable to present empirical experience. And regarding tradition, he claims that one cannot have knowledge with any “surety,” since “ye cannot know of things which ye do not see” (30:15)—one cannot be certain about an account of a past event, since its very pastness hides it from present empirical experience. Here, then, we have two objections, but they converge on one overarching issue: knowledge.

Note that Korihor sees a connection between tradition and hope—between “foolish” adherence to tradition and “foolish” anticipation of things to come. “Ye look forward” to Christ, he says, but this “is the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your fathers” (30:16). Naïve adherence to tradition distorts one’s thinking, and only such distorted thinking could allow a person to think that the future is decided and clear.

Here, then, is Korihor’s critique of Nephite Christian devotion. First, he does not like that its point of departure is tradition—so many reports “handed down” (30:14) over centuries regarding extraordinary experiences and events about which one cannot be certain because they lie inaccessibly in the past. Second, he does not like that Nephite Christians derive hope from these uncertain traditions—a blind sense of security about the future that, by definition, cannot be known. From Korihor’s perspective, then, either Christians unwisely believe that they have knowledge when they do not (the assumption being that knowledge derives primarily from direct experience), or they are consciously oriented by something other than knowledge (such as faith) when they ought to be oriented by knowledge. Korihor thus presents to Nephite Christians a kind of dichotomy. Either you are deluded because you think you know what you definitely do not know, or you are deluded because you knowingly orient yourself to something other than knowledge. Either way, Nephite Christians are foolish, frenzied, and deranged.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of Korihor’s critique, we can now straightforwardly state what Alma must do if he wishes to address Korihor’s critique directly. He can (1) defend the idea that one *can* know the truth about traditional claims or (2) explain why something other than knowledge, such as faith, is preferable as a point of orientation. Fascinatingly, Alma does both. On the one hand, as I will argue, he contends that Korihor has a fetishistic relationship to knowledge that is deeply problematic and that faith is a better place to start (and end) than knowledge. Thus, he will effectively displace knowledge as a core value, arguing, in fact, that faith not only is not lesser than knowledge but also goes beyond knowledge and produces something

of infinitely more value. On the other hand, he will also argue that one nonetheless can know the truth of the Christ tradition—know it, in fact, perfectly. I want to trace both of Alma's points here.

I would like to make a preliminary point first, however. Strange as it may seem, Alma does not offer his double response to Korihor's critique until after Korihor's death. Alma offers an immediate response to Korihor's onslaught in Alma 30, but he later develops a fuller and, in my view, more mature response in Alma 32. From the perspective of the later response, Alma may be said to offer only a weak defense when talking with Korihor in person. This is perhaps disappointing in a certain way, but Alma's experience is a common one. All too often, it is only when it is already too late that we figure out what we should have said in a socially complicated situation. This was apparently the case for Alma on this occasion.

Although many have been deeply impressed and inspired by Alma's in-person exchange with Korihor, others may well wonder whether the exchange is fully satisfying, especially in a twenty-first-century context. Initially, Alma says just that he knows both that "there is a God, and also that Christ shall come" (Alma 30:39). How does he justify this bold claim? First, he makes a rhetorically clever move that nonetheless will never convince someone like Korihor. Alma says, "And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only" (30:40). This statement is certainly true, and maybe it keeps Korihor honest to some degree (he does, in fact, retreat a bit, qualifying his criticism). But such a rhetorical move will never convince an atheist or agnostic that someone can know spiritual truths with any certainty. Alma then goes further, stating, "I have all things as a testimony that these things are true" (30:41). He explains, "All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (30:44). Here Alma offers a positive argument in his defense, but, again, such an argument is unlikely to persuade an atheist or even an agnostic—especially in the twenty-first century. A believer naturally and rightly sees God's hand in the order of the universe, but unbelievers are seldom swayed by this kind of argument. In other words, what Alma offers in response to Korihor within Alma 30 is an interesting defense of the faith he himself already has, but it is not a satisfying reason to begin believing. The response certainly does not work on Korihor, who persists in disbelief until he has direct empirical evidence of God's power (though,

even then, Alma is left with the impression that Korihor has not changed his mind; see 30:54–55). And of course, today any “argument from design” (as arguments like Alma’s from Alma 30 are usually called) is even less likely to compel belief because there are perfectly satisfying scientific explanations for the ordered nature of the universe.<sup>2</sup>

It thus seems that Alma lacks a fully developed defense when he first confronts Korihor’s skepticism. Really, he seems surprised at Korihor’s belligerent atheism, which is unprecedented in recorded Nephite history. He counters his foe with a description of the orderliness in Creation, which he, as a believer, sees as divine, but he does not yet have a way of explaining to someone like Korihor how a nonbeliever might come to know the truth of a religious tradition.

Before moving on, I wish to make clear that I do not mean to cast aspersions on Alma by gently criticizing his immediate response to Korihor. I think the text suggests that Alma himself felt he needed to develop and elaborate on this first response: two chapters later, when Alma finds himself preaching among the Zoramites, he seems still to be thinking about Korihor, still attempting to work up a complete response to Korihor’s critique.<sup>3</sup> The second he begins speaking to an eager audience of the Zoramite poor, he speaks of “many who do say: If thou wilt show unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety; then we shall believe” (32:17). Alma takes his opportunity to preach as an occasion, in part, to work out a better answer to Korihor, who is already dead. Alma apparently thinks Korihor’s questions need better answers than what he provided before this point, and he has evidently developed what he considers to be better responses. Thus, although the Zoramite poor do not approach Alma in the same faithless way as Korihor, Alma, as it were, asks them to sit down and listen to the sermon he wishes he could go back and give to Korihor.

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2. It is important to make clear that the believer is not wrong to see divine influence in the immensely complex order of the world. The point is that non-believers have alternative explanations, with the consequence that the complexity and orderedness of the world in no way *compels* them to believe in a higher power. I owe thanks to Ralph Hancock for helping me to see the importance of clarifying this point.

3. When Joseph Smith dictated the text of the Book of Mormon to his scribes, the chapters were longer than those in current editions. It seems important that what are now Alma 30 and Alma 32 were actually within a single chapter, chapter XVI (now Alma 30–35), in the original Book of Mormon.

Let us now take a look at Alma's more mature response to Korihor's critique, found in Alma 32 rather than in Alma 30. Alma 32 is, of course, a chapter with which Latter-day Saints are generally familiar. We are not, however, familiar enough with it, in my view. I say that for a specific reason. My experience is that Latter-day Saints tend to read Alma 32 as being about how faith is preparatory to and eventually replaced by knowledge. When I ask students or average Church members about Alma 32, their spontaneous response suggests that they read it as a treatise on how a lesser intellectual state (faith) eventually gives way to a greater intellectual state (knowledge).<sup>4</sup> I think this is a mistaken reading, which I will try to show.<sup>5</sup>

Alma 32 famously contains a parable of sorts about what it means to have faith. "Now," Alma says, "we will compare the word unto a seed" (32:28). Here already one must be careful. Thanks in part to a popular Primary song, there is a common view of this text that is mistaken—a view expressed when people speak of planting "a seed of faith." But what Alma compares to a seed is *not* faith; it is *the word*. Although Alma will speak of faith being "increased" or of it "grow[ing] up" in the course of his discussion (32:29), the point of his parable is not to illustrate how faith grows from something small into something great. What grows into a plant—and then into a tree—is the word. Faith in Alma's discourse is just the trust that one places in the seed's potential goodness (and then later in its actual goodness). Alma appears to be less interested in encouraging his hearers to develop more or stronger faith than in clarifying what faith in the word looks like.

Faith's first task, according to Alma, is to plant the seed in what he calls "an experiment" (32:27). He hopes that, at first, his hearers can simply "believe in a manner that [they] can give place" for the word (32:27). But what does "the word" refer to? God, Alma explains, "imparteth his word by angels" (32:23). And what is it that angels announce? Alma urges his hearers to "begin to believe in the Son of God" and the plan of salvation (33:22) and states his "desire that [they] shall plant *this*

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4. It is important to note that published commentaries on and discussions of Alma 32 tend to read the text in more nuanced ways.

5. I learned much about reading Alma 32 by participating in the 2008 Mormon Theology Seminar project, which focused on Alma 32. For the final results of that project, see Adam S. Miller, ed., *An Experiment on the Word: Reading Alma 32* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2014).

word in [their] hearts” (33:23, emphasis added). The word or seed is thus the angelic announcement of the Son of God’s atoning work, however this may actually come to an individual. (Note that the word comes to Alma’s hearers through him, rather than directly through angels. That is, of course, how most of us receive the word. This is a point to which I will return.)

Thus, what Alma asks first is that, with faith, his hearers give some space for the word. Can we trust it enough to try an experiment with it? Only once we have done that, Alma explains, can we start to track what happens and therefore make a responsible decision regarding the word’s goodness. Here is what is supposed to happen: “If it be a true seed, or a good seed,” says Alma, “behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts” (32:28). If the seed is good, it will swell. This is what good seeds do when planted. Moisture in the soil causes a seed to swell before it then sprouts and begins to grow. Alma claims that this metaphorical swelling is something one can feel. It has an immediate and undeniable effect on us. “When you feel these swelling motions,” he says, “ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed” (32:28). Notice that Alma says that honest observers of their own unmistakably internal experiences will start talking to themselves. They will conclude, for themselves, that the seed is good. Why? “It swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow” (32:30), which is what every good seed does. A sensible person, therefore, recognizing what is happening, will naturally conclude that they have encountered a good seed. That is the metaphor in the parable: as Alma says so simply: “If a seed groweth it is good” (32:32).

Now comes the key moment. Alma asks, “Are ye sure that this is a good seed?” (32:31). His answer is simple and affirmative: absolutely! Because a person is absolutely sure that the seed is good, he says, “ye must needs know that the seed is good” (32:33). Here is the key word: *know*. Having tried the experiment, one *knows*. Alma next asks if such “knowledge” is “perfect” (32:34). And he again—perhaps against our expectations this time—answers in the affirmative: “Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing” (32:34). Here Alma speaks of perfect knowledge, of sure knowledge, of apparently undeniable knowledge. He adds the following rhetorical question: “O then, is not this real?” (32:35). Alma believes that anyone undertaking this experiment will have an experience of something real, of something indelible, of something that resists mere subjective interest.<sup>6</sup> Here Alma sees the dawn of very real

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6. That Alma speaks here of the real perhaps helps to explain why he stands in awe before the complex order of nature. If the word of God can be known to

knowledge, of an actual and discernible encounter with something, in fact, reproducible and verifiable.

It is worth reflecting at least briefly on the kind of knowledge at stake here. Alma elsewhere distinguishes between different kinds of knowledge—separating out, for example, “temporal” from “spiritual” knowledge, or knowledge that is “of the carnal mind” from knowledge that is “of God” (36:4). As for the sort of knowledge he has in mind in Alma 32 (and in Alma 36), it appears to be akin to what we would today call aesthetic knowledge. This distinction seems clear from the fact that he ties knowledge directly to taste. At the very moment he speaks of the real, he says that experience of it amounts to having “tasted” it (32:35). (He speaks in a similar fashion in Alma 36:26: “Many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted . . . ; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know.”)<sup>7</sup> Philosophers have long spoken of taste (not only as one of the five senses but also as the taste that one cultivates) as a peculiar sort of knowledge. As one thinker recently summed up the tradition, taste simultaneously concerns “an excess of knowledge that is not known . . . but that presents itself as pleasure” and “an excess of pleasure that is not enjoyed . . . but that presents itself as knowledge.”<sup>8</sup> Tasting something that is “sweet above all that is sweet” (32:42) is an excessive experience, one that overflows the categories of understanding but that, in a way, nonetheless produces a kind of knowledge. One develops a taste for religious truth, and one *knows* that it is good.

Alma is certainly convinced that the taste one develops for the word is a form of real knowledge. But let us be clear: what one knows, surely and perfectly, is pretty limited, according to Alma. He qualifies his talk of perfect knowledge with the phrase “in that thing” (32:34). One *can* know something in an absolute way, but all that Alma says we can know is *just this one thing*: that the seed is good. Beyond that, does the person

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be good and if one encounters the real in experimenting on the word, it should follow that reality in general cannot be divorced from God and his goodness. Of course, one must try the experiment and come to know the goodness of the word before one can see the goodness of Creation. It thus remains necessary to respond to the nonbeliever with a discussion about the experiment on the word rather than with any argument of design.

7. I owe gratitude to John Tanner for drawing my attention to the epistemological importance of Alma’s references to taste, and to Matthew Wickman for giving me the opportunity to think through the importance of the aesthetic in Alma 32.

8. Giorgio Agamben, *Taste*, trans. Cooper Francis (New York: Seagull Books, 2017), 43.

involved in an experiment like this know anything perfectly? Note that Alma himself raises this question: “Is your knowledge perfect?” he asks, apparently with reference to things apart from the seed’s goodness (32:35). This time, he answers negatively (32:36). Apparently, we know nothing apart from the seed’s being good (or not being good). That is all we know. But again, let us be clear: a person can know that one thing, according to Alma, and know it perfectly, surely, and really. We have a foundation, a foothold. We know little, but we do know something. And Alma claims that this little bit of knowledge will spur us to keep working, encouraging the word to grow: “Ye will say: Let us nourish [the seed] with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us” (32:37). This kernel of knowledge, minimal but sure, is enough to mobilize one’s efforts with the seed. It is enough to solidify one’s faith.

Here is the interesting thing: Alma says knowledge mobilizes one’s further exercise of faith. When he asks if the experimenter’s knowledge is perfect in general (rather than just “in that thing”), he answers, “Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith” (32:36). Here, crucially, faith goes beyond knowledge. Faith’s first efforts, in fact, yield a bit of knowledge, but it is minimal, just enough to spur us to invest our faith in the word in a genuinely productive way. Knowledge, we might say, dawns early rather than late in the experiment, and it arrives primarily so that we will get to work seriously on the seed, or the word. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, “Well, yes, we’ve got to keep working because we’ve got only a bit of knowledge, and faith needs to keep experimenting until our knowledge *in general* becomes perfect. We don’t lay aside faith once we’ve got a bit of knowledge, true, but that’s because there’s a lot more knowledge to come!” But here we must slow down and look carefully at the text. From this point to the end of the chapter, Alma never again speaks of knowledge. Faith continues beyond knowledge—that is, beyond knowledge of the seed’s goodness—but not because it aims at producing more knowledge or more general knowledge. It apparently aims at something else. And what does it aim at? Alma is perfectly clear about this: faith aims at life, at eternal life.

Alma is explicit on this score. When he speaks of what to anticipate from the seed, he refers to “the fruit of the tree of life” (32:40). He further says, “If ye will nourish the word . . . , looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life” (32:41). Echoing Lehi’s famous dream about the tree of life, he also promises this: “By and by ye shall pluck the fruit” of this tree, “which

is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure” (32:42). Here, then, is what faith-beyond-knowledge aims at. It does not strive for more knowledge; it strives toward life, life eternal. Knowledge is, in Alma’s parable, a crucial but ultimately brief moment occurring early in the long road of faith. It is also focused on just one tiny but essential detail: whether or not the seed that one plants is good. Then knowledge fades into the background as one chases after the good life, the life whose goodness is signaled by the goodness of the seed that grows into a tree of life. One hungers for life rather than for knowledge.

Let me pause here to highlight, for a moment, Alma’s theological brilliance. Alma has laid out a path that begins with eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, the tree that gives knowledge specifically of good and evil. But then the path leads to a tree of infinitely greater value, the tree of life. Although he does so subtly, Alma seems to build his whole parable as a sustained reflection on the two trees in Eden. (Incidentally, I think that the common reading of Alma 32, which regards faith as inferior in some way to knowledge and therefore assumes that the parable is about progress from faith to knowledge, makes it impossible to see Eden’s two trees clearly.)<sup>9</sup> Alma thus places his listeners and us as readers on a path that leads from the real effects of eating from Eden’s first tree—its effect in this context is that we can know perfectly whether the angelic announcement regarding Christ is good—to the anticipated experience of eating from Eden’s second tree. From the bitter tree to the sweet tree (see 2 Ne. 2:15)—this, I think, is what Alma 32 is about.

All this constitutes Alma’s belated response to Korihor. Korihor asked how anyone can be certain about a religious tradition. Alma’s mature answer has nothing to do with the complex and beautiful order of Creation, as does Alma 30. He instead argues in Alma 32 that one must experiment with the word provided by the tradition and that one relatively quickly comes to know perfectly and certainly that the word is good. In this way, Alma responds to Korihor’s skepticism first by providing a parable about what it looks like to know the goodness of the word.

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9. For more on Edenic themes in Alma 32, see David E. Bokovoy, “The Word and the Seed: The Theological Use of Biblical Creation in Alma 32,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 23 (2014): 1–21. These issues are also addressed in Jenny Webb, “It Is Well That Ye Are Cast Out: Alma 32 and Eden,” in Miller, *Experiment on the Word*, 43–56.

It is possible to know. But even as he insists that religious knowledge is a real possibility, Alma goes on to suggest that Korihor places too much value on knowledge. Alma emphatically does not regard knowledge as the end or the aim of one's devotional efforts. Knowledge is, rather, something of importance gained near the beginning of one's journey of faith. Knowledge therefore must be subordinated to life. Knowledge serves as a spur to get one moving passionately in the direction of the tree of life, but it cannot be itself the end or the aim of all things. If, like Korihor, we privilege knowledge over life, our values are confused, and they require serious reconsideration.

As anticipated, then, Alma's response to Korihor is twofold. Korihor is wrong to suggest that one cannot be certain about the goodness of a tradition. But Korihor is also wrong to make knowledge the measuring stick for everything, because the truly good life, life worth living for eternity, is the real measuring stick.

For my part, I find Alma's mature response to Korihor largely satisfying. He convinces me that life should be granted greater privilege over knowledge, and he convinces me that knowledge of the religious real is possible. But a critical reader must at this point confess that Alma's parable regarding the seed is at least partially problematic and partially unsatisfying. Anyone struggling to know if the word offered by the Restoration is good, or anyone deeply worried about someone struggling with such questions, likely feels as if Alma is hiding behind a metaphor. He speaks of planting and swelling and growing and eating, but what do these images mean in the context of real life? How do I come to know that the word is good? According to Alma, I must "plant" it, but what does it mean to plant the word? And Alma goes on to say that I should watch to see whether the seed "swells" and "sprouts" and "begins to grow," but what does it look like for the word to do any of these things? Alma's parable is beautiful, but what, concretely, is it supposed to mean? Again, for anyone going in circles about their own feelings and experiences, the metaphor can feel too vague. And this is, I think, an entirely legitimate concern. I also think, however, that Alma has a full and satisfying answer to this worry, which is good news. That answer comes in Alma 36.<sup>10</sup>

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10. The treatment of Alma 36 that follows relies heavily on the extended analysis of the text I provide in Joseph M. Spencer, *An Other Testament: On Typology*, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2016), 2–7, 11–24. Naturally, some of my own thinking about this chapter has developed beyond what is available in this earlier discussion.

Chapter 36 finds Alma talking with his son Helaman, his soon-to-be successor in the Nephite church. Alma opens his words with encouragement to know, returning to the theme of chapters 30 and 32. “I beseech of thee,” he says to Helaman, “that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know” (Alma 36:3). The moment he says he knows something, however, Alma appears to recognize that his son might have worries about what it means to know something in a religious vein. At any rate, Alma backs up a step, offering a clarification I have already cited: “I would not that ye think that I know of myself—not of the temporal but of the spiritual, not of the carnal mind but of God” (36:4). Having drawn these basic distinctions, Alma goes on to outline a kind of puzzle, highlighting the ways in which spiritual knowledge can be confusing—if not, in fact, paradoxical. “If I had not been born of God,” he explains, “I should not have known these things; but God has, by the mouth of his holy angel, made these things known unto me, not of any worthiness of myself” (36:5). This verse is strange. Alma seems to say first that he had to be born of God in order to come to know certain things, but then he adds that God went ahead and made them known to him *regardless* of whether he had been born of God (or at least regardless of his worthiness).

These first verses from Alma 36 thus work together to raise a complex question, essentially equivalent to the question I have been asking here: how does one come to know something religious with any certainty? But if the first verses of the chapter outline a question, then what comes next provides a kind of answer; Alma 36:1–5 outlines a problem, and then Alma 36:6–25 provides a solution. Interestingly, the solution does not come in the form of a philosophical discourse or even a theological parable, but rather in the form of a personal story. What explains knowledge is not theory but experience. Alma will tell how he came to know, without relying on obscure metaphors. Further, he recommends to Helaman that he come to know in the same way, indicating that anyone can have the same experience Alma did. Here, perhaps, we can get a real sense for what it looks like to come to know, perfectly and surely, that a religious word is good.

Alma therefore jumps into a well-known story—the story of when he and the sons of Mosiah were going about “seeking to destroy the church of God,” only to encounter a “holy angel” who spoke with “the voice of thunder” (36:6–7). As Alma tells the story, this encounter had an immediate effect on him: he “fell to the earth” and “did hear no more” (36:10–11). He collapsed while the world around him retreated into oblivion. The

effect of the encounter was, in short, to trap Alma in his own head. At the heart of Alma 36, therefore, we have an opportunity to see the inner workings of the young man's mind. His friends fade from the picture. His physical surroundings fade away too. Even the angel disappears from the text. All we have after the collapse is Alma's singular psyche, for ten verses (see 36:13–22).<sup>11</sup> As we read, we are trapped with Alma in his head.

There is a point worth being quite clear about before going any further. I often hear it said that Alma's conversion was unusual because it was instigated by an angel. I think, though, that this is not quite right. The angel indeed forces Alma to ask some hard questions, but the angel does not convert him. If anything, in fact, the angel sends him into a three-day spiral of depression. When Alma begins to come out of it, interestingly, he says nothing about the angel. It is not the shock of a sign-like angelic visit that forces Alma to know. There is something else, something much more mundane at the heart of his conversion—of his coming to know the goodness of the word. Alma is not an exception, filled with knowledge simply because he got the sign Korihor wanted so badly.

Since the reader is trapped in Alma's head for ten verses here at the center of Alma 36, it seems natural that this stretch of the text contains repeating instances of the words "thought" and "memory." Each of these terms appears five times, and they are arranged largely in alternating pairs: memory, thought, thought, memory, memory, thought, thought, memory, memory, thought. As Alma tells the story of his three-day psychological struggle, he seems to present it as a confrontation of sorts between his thoughts and his memories. The whole episode unfolds in five sequences, which we must track to develop a sense of how Alma came to know the goodness of the word. He begins in a situation where his memories and his thoughts cannot be reconciled, leaving him in doubt and despair, but he then moves to a situation where his memories and his thoughts are wholly reconciled, putting him in a position of perfect knowledge regarding the goodness of the word. A full analysis of these five sequences would require much more space than I can give to them here, but even a brief treatment should clarify the meaning of Alma's metaphors from Alma 32.

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11. By the end of verse 12, Alma has completely collapsed, and we are listening only to his thoughts. Beginning with verse 23, Alma is waking up and re-encountering the world. It is only in verses 13–22 that Alma's psyche takes up the whole stage.

At the beginning of the story, in the first sequence, Alma remembers just one sort of thing: “I did remember all my sins and iniquities” (36:13). The immediate result of this memory is torture: “I was tormented with the pains of hell” (36:13). At this same point, the content of Alma’s thought is similarly narrow. He speaks of “the very thought of coming into the presence of my God,” which produces “inexpressible horror” in him (36:14). Here, then, is where Alma begins. His memory, the past as he sees it, initially focuses on only his sins and iniquities. His thought concerns the future, a day of judgment, a reckoning in the presence of God. When these combine—a past of sin and a future of judgment—Alma experiences torment and horror. Thus, when the second sequence opens, Alma tries out another thought: “Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct” (36:15). Here he tries to replace his first thought with another, a kind of antithought, a desperate wish to cease existing. Unfortunately, it gets him nowhere. “Three nights” of being “racked . . . with the pains of a damned soul” follow, marking the futility of his attempt to escape from judgment (36:16). Note that Alma’s memory, in the course of the second sequence, remains exactly the same as in the first sequence: “I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins,” he repeats in verse 17.

The third sequence, however, marks an interesting change. First, it opens with a new memory: “I remembered *also*,” Alma says (36:17, emphasis added). This is quite a formula, I think. All of a sudden, Alma’s memory expands. And what does he *also* remember at this point? “Behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world” (36:17). This is crucial. Alma remembers *also*, and what he remembers is *the word*. It must be emphasized that Alma says nothing about the angel at this transitional point. The word, which converts him, is the humble but prophetic word of his father—something entirely mundane and yet so potently transformative. At any rate, this new memory immediately provides Alma with a new thought—namely, “the coming of one Jesus Christ.” “My mind caught hold upon this thought,” he tells us as the third sequence continues in verse 17. And this thought leads him to pray. “O Jesus, thou Son of God,” he cries, pleading for mercy (36:18).

The fourth sequence follows quickly. “And now, behold, when I thought this,” he says, referring back to his prayer (36:19). There is a point here worth highlighting. At the end of the third sequence, Alma’s thought remains abstract; it concerns the *idea* of Christ. At the beginning

of the fourth sequence, however, Alma's thought becomes concrete; it is a direct *prayer to Christ*. What results from this new, concrete thought? "I could remember my pains no more," Alma says (36:19). This thought has a particularly interesting consequence for Alma's memory. In the course of the fourth sequence, the additional memory of the third sequence pushes out a problematic memory. Pain disappears from his memory.

Then follows, at last, the fifth and final sequence of Alma's story. Once his thoughts are focused concretely on Christ, he says, "I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more" (36:19). This is crucial, and it must be read carefully. Notice that the content of Alma's memory at this point is again, as in the first sequence, made up of his past sins. His memory, what he sees as his past, has not changed in the end, but his relationship to it has. The memory of his past was originally a source of torment, but now, we are told, Alma is "harrowed up" by that memory no more. He also says something about the state of his thought at this point, but he puts that off for two verses in order to mark the astonishing contrast between the moment before his prayer and the moment after: "And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy" (36:20–21). These might be the two most beautiful verses in the Book of Mormon.<sup>12</sup> But then Alma follows them with a clarification of his final thought: "Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne . . . ; yea, and my soul did long to be there" (36:22). Alma's final thought too brings his story full circle. His thought is of the future presence of God, just as in the first sequence. Here again, though, while the thought is the same, Alma's relationship to it is fundamentally changed. Before, he was racked with "inexpressible horror." Now, he says, his "soul did long to be there"—there with God.

Now, somewhere in these five sequences, Alma gains real knowledge. He makes this clear as soon as he tells of having woken up. "Because of the word which [God] has imparted unto me," he says, "many . . . do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the

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12. It should be noted that these verses return to the imagery of Eden's two trees, especially as these are presented in 2 Nephi 2:15. They also reemphasize the question of taste and its connection to knowledge.

knowledge which I have is of God” (36:26). This sequence of thoughts and memories has produced knowledge in Alma. And so the story in Alma 36 helps us answer questions from the parable of the seed in chapter 32. Where in this story, then, does Alma’s knowledge dawn? Is it possible to nail down the exact psychological content, so to speak, of his metaphor about the seed? What does it mean to say that the seed swells and sprouts and begins to grow?

It seems to me that the crucial possibility-creating moment occurs when Alma “remembered also.” His soul, one could say, *swells* at exactly that moment; the world—both the past world of Alma’s memory and the future world of Alma’s anticipating thoughts—gets bigger. That is the moment when the word—which was not given directly by the angel, but more humbly by Alma’s father—has not just been planted but in fact swells. What creates knowledge, however, comes a moment later when the seed sprouts and begins to grow, which the word does in a rather straightforward way in Alma’s autobiographical story. Alma’s soul breaks open, and he cries out to Christ, who overwhelms him with mercy.<sup>13</sup> It is as he prays to Christ that he knows both the bitter and the sweet, that he feels as deeply as possible the absolute gulf between the two experiences. When this yields in him a completely different relationship to the past and to the future (although the past and the future remain effectively the same), he *knows*. This, I think, is Alma’s metaphor made plain and concrete.

I am struck that in Alma 37, still talking to Helaman, Alma says the following about the sacred records Alma has kept (he is speaking specifically about the brass plates): “They have enlarged the memory of this people . . . and brought them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls” (37:8). This verse, it seems to me, provides a beautiful little formula for what Alma spells out in detail in Alma 36. What does it mean for the word to swell, for one to feel swelling motions in one’s soul? It means that the word enlarges the memory, helping a person to focus on the words of life they have heard. And this

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13. George Handley has pointed out to me the possibility of locating Alma’s knowledge in his experience of God’s love. There is little question that love has its own kind of knowledge (as biblical metaphors make clear). While this is unquestionably a key part of any experience like Alma’s, it seems important to remain within the ambit of Alma’s own lexicon, and he never himself refers to love in the course of chapters 30, 32, and 36.

inaugurates a process that quickly brings the individual to know Christ and his goodness.

Thus might anyone come to know religious truth. And I wish to say in my own name that I believe this is real. “Is not this real?” That is Alma’s question, but now *I* say: Yes, it is real. We can know, can know of the goodness of the word that has been given to us. In this I find I have a reason to hope, a “cause to believe,” as Alma puts it (32:18). With Alma, I want to say that *I know*. I know the word is good. And the word gets me moving in the direction of sustaining life. I do not know much, to be sure, but I know—and I believe I know this with real and indelible certainty—I know that the word of Christ is good. Alma’s word, Nephi’s word, Moroni’s word, Joseph Smith’s word—these are good words. They bear fruit in me. And that is enough—that is knowledge enough. There is one thing I think I can say I know without qualification. My memory has been enlarged—in my case, most especially by the Book of Mormon—and consequently I have felt the abyss between pain and joy, between the bitter and the sweet. That abyss is real. Like daylight from dark night, the word divides my past experience in two. There is before, and there is after. I remember my sins, but the thought of God’s presence fills me with longing.

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Joseph M. Spencer is a philosopher and an assistant professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He is the author or editor of six books and dozens of articles in the fields of philosophy and Latter-day Saint scripture. He serves as the editor of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, the associate director of the Mormon Theology Seminar, and the coeditor of the book series *Introductions to Mormon Thought* (published by the University of Illinois Press). He and his wife, Karen, live in Provo, Utah, with their five children.

# The Day Joseph Smith Was Killed

## A Carthage Woman's Perspective

*Alex D. Smith*

Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed on June 27, 1844, in the recently constructed jail in Carthage, Illinois. Years later, local resident Amanda Benton Smith recorded her own account of the events of that day.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-eight years old and a mother of six, Amanda was the wife of Carthage Grey captain Robert F. Smith—the militia officer responsible for protecting the Latter-day Saint prisoners and defending the town.<sup>2</sup> In her reminiscence, Amanda describes learning of the Smiths' deaths and draws a vivid picture of the vacant Hancock County seat as local citizens fled to the countryside in anticipation of the Latter-day Saints' retaliation, which never came.

An alternative viewpoint articulated with courage and even a little humor is not the only contribution of Amanda's account. If accurate, her sketch suggests that the leader of the Carthage Greys may not have been complicit in the attack on the jail. According to Amanda's narrative, her husband, Robert, expressed alarm and concern at the fate of the Smith brothers. If Robert had been aware of the plans to murder

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1. "A Short Sketch of the Trials of Mrs. R. F. Smith at the Killing of the Smiths, the Mormons Prophet," holograph manuscript in the handwriting of Amanda B. Smith, fifteen pages, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

2. Amanda Benton Smith (June 9, 1816–January 9, 1892) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to John and Mary Ann Benton. She was married to Robert Frederick Smith (August 2, 1806–April 25, 1893), who served in the Union army in the Civil War as a Brevet Brigadier General. Amanda and Robert are buried in the Oakwood Cemetery in Hamilton, Illinois.

Joseph Smith, he did not preemptively warn his own family to leave the town as so many of their neighbors had done. Amanda's "short sketch" helps contextualize the Smiths' murders by providing a perspective less frequently considered in traditional Latter-day Saint narratives of the tragic day. In describing the "almost constant terror of the Mormons" she had felt for years, her anxiety over her husband's welfare, and her desires to protect her family, Amanda gives voice to those Hancock County non-Latter-day Saints who were not involved in the deaths of the Church's prophet and patriarch. Like the Latter-day Saints in nearby Nauvoo, Amanda felt threatened by her neighbors and sought to protect her own interests. Her story helps capture the emotions shared by Church members and non-Church members alike during the tense summer of 1844.

A separate piece of paper accompanying the manuscript contains the following typed note (spacing errors in original):

Mrs. R. F. Smith's Story.

The enclosed manuscript is one written in her own hand by Mrs. Robt. Smith, wife of Captain Robert F. Smith, commander of the Carthage Grays, telling of her "trials" on the day Joseph and Hiram Smith were killed by the mob at the Carthage jail. The Smiths at that time lived on the place we know as "Cottonwood" on Gospel Four Corners, our present home place to which Father and Mother moved in 1864.

The Baird place mentioned was later the T. C. Miller farm. Capt. Miller was father of Mrs. Laura Noyes. Mrs. Gene Baird was grand mother, and her son, James was father of Robt. and Alex Baird. The Metcalf place, also sec. 29, Carthage T[ownshi]p. Well-known family.

This is a very valuable manuscript, new and unpublished history of the Mormon episode. It shows the terror of the Carthage people, also that Capt. Smith himself believed it possible the Mormons would rise against the Gentile inhabitants. This manuscript was given to me by a member of the Smith family.

Abigail Davidson. Dec. 1936

## Document Transcription

A short sketch of the trials of Mrs. R.F.Smith at the Killing of the Smiths. The Mormans Prophet

They were killed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1844 that day I was unusually depressed and out of sorts had been liveing in almost constant ~~dred~~ terror of the Mormans for years and never knew from day to day and hardly from one hour to another, what dreadful catastrophe would happen and when the runner reached me. about half past two P. M. that a mob had collected on the prarie ~~some~~ a few miles out and were on the road to Carthage. Some thought they were Mormans comeing to liberate the Smiths from jail and and would destroy the town & and every thing in it my neighbors began to make preperations to leave their homes with their families and the part of town where I lived was soon entirely deserted but myself. my husband was Captain of the Captain of the Carthage Greys. he had not been at home a single night for two weeks. he with [p. 1] his men had been keeping gard of the town day and night all that time. every thing seemed so gloomy at home, but I thought I would not give way to my feelings. so I dressed my six little children in clean frocks and put the baby in his little wagon and sent them to visit a friend of mine just one block away. an hour or so after I had sent them away. I heard the firing of many guns. I got up from my chair to go to the front door but was powerless to move for a minute or so. When I became concious there was a Mormon girl, who lived in the neighborhood, standing in the door. I was holding on to the back of my chair and she was ringing her hands and saying "Oh my God." Mrs Smith they are shooting the men down at the Jail and throwing them out of the window.["] I soon [p. 2] collected my senses. and my first thought was of my absent children and I started to bring them home. by that time the mob had scattered and were all over the town. I met one of them but did not know him as he was disguised. but he knew me and told me what had occured, that was the first I knew of the truth, who had been killed &c. I got my little children together and went back home hopeing I might find my husband there. but was disapointed. there was not a soul stiring in that part of the town, then I started down to the head quarters, on the square as it was called, to inquire for my husband. the officer of in command there told me that my husband had been ordered by Gov. Ford to guard the town, and

Interval of Alley between Lots 647  
Block 20 in Map 19, Page 535

The variation gallery between Lids 14 & 15. 1983  
Blk 26 - see index 21 page 407.

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See Newcastle News Record 27 pages 109  
See location of alloy but later 20 Nov 33 301  
Bib. 7 See Mine Record 23 pages 717

PAGE

PAGE 100

TABLE 6. W. Neil Jan. 28

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For Vacation of  
alley between Lots 2-3-4  
Block 39 see Misc 14, Page 495  
For Vacation of alley  
between Lots 5 & 6 Block 39  
1839. see Misc. 19, page 53

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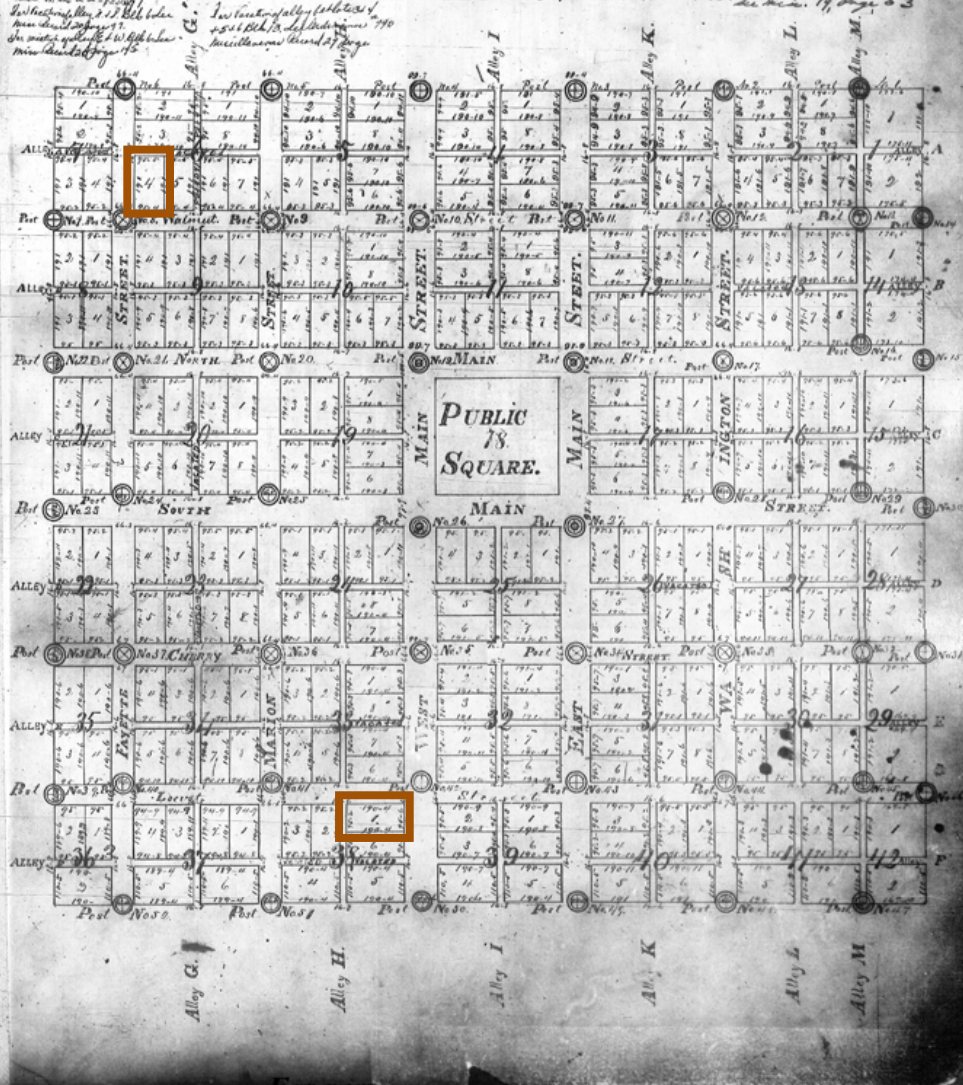
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**CARTHAGE.** *by W. Nest Jan. 25*



Amanda Smith's home was located on the southwest corner of Locust and West Main streets (bottom box) in Carthage, Illinois. According to her description of the events of June 27, 1844, she was able to hear from her home the shots fired at Carthage jail, located on the northeast corner of Walnut and Fayette streets (top box). 1839 plat of Carthage, Hancock Co., Illinois, Plat Books, 1836–1938, vol. 1, microfilm 954,774, U.S. and Canada Record Collection, Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

that I would find him down at the jail. I went there but had not the courage to enter the building, so sent a little boy [p. 3] who was standing there, in to tell Captain Smith that his wife was out side and would like to see him. I was getting very anxious, as it was getting twards evening, to know our fate for the comeing night My husband came to me, but was full of trouble and worry at over the terrible ending of the prisoners and did not have many comforting words for his wife and children. he told me that his duties were such that ~~that~~ it was impossible for him to leave there, and for me to go back home and he would send word to a friend up in town that had a team and wagon to call for us and take us to the house of an old friend about four miles out in the country. the friend came with his team soon after I got home so I had no time to get supper for my children but started at once. I felt as tho' I would [p. 4] never want food for myself, again.

There was another family in the wagon and some of their household goods which made quite a heavy load as well as a crowded one. they intended stoping at a place a mile nearer town than I was going to. Mrs. Baird a widow & her son lived there, and on quite a high hill. There was a creek at the foot of the hill and the rise was quite steep just as we got across the creek the wagon broke down and could not be repaired at that time and place. we could do nothing else but get out and walk up the hill to Mrs Bairds. I was not much acquainted with her, but the lady who started to go there was and we all got a very cool reception, she said she did not see why folks did not stay at home like she did. she also said her Jimmie had slept on the floor three nights befor we got there. I told her that I did not go there to stay, but intended to go to the next [p. 5] farm house. she told me it was a mile and a half to go the main road, but only one half mile to go across & and a good "coo" path all the way. by that time the sun had set and the full Moon had arrisen I once more started with my <six> little children for Mrs Metcalfs. where I knew, if I could only get there my whole family would be welcome My eldest child, Emma was a little over eight years old and the youngest of the six was only fifteen months old and had to be carried. we walked and stumbled across a large field and finely came to a wide creek which I knew nothing about nor where to find a the crossing. the children were getting very tired and sleepy and hungry. it was a study for me to know how we were to get across the creek. finely I took helped Emma across by steping on tall grass and flags that grew from one side to the other. and oftain would step into [p. 6] holes over shoe top in water.

After helping and carrying each child across separately we had quite a <long> steep hill to climb. my children were so worn out with fatigue and hunger that they fell down often and wanted to go to sleep right there. it was long after their usual hour of going to bed we were all in such a helpless plight I felt as though I could not <go> much farther. myself. after walking slowly and almost driving the children along we got to the top of the hill it was a very clear moonlight night and in the distance I could see the house. every thing seemed so still and not a sound of any thing to be heard. for the first time. through all the trouble. I felt afraid but could not tell why. We finely reached the house and found it deserted but the latch string was out. for any friend who happened along the first thing I did after entering the house was to kindle a fire. wood and [p. 7] kindling was left on the hearth of the large fire place. and fire covered over so that it was an easy matter to start a blaze I then took a survey of the place and found a broad trundle bed in bedroom & and a bedstead all in order in living room the first thing was to prepare my little ones for bed. there was not a dry stitch of clothing on one of them. the dew was very heavy & the grass in some places higher than their heads. we were all as wet as if we had been dipped in the river I could not find dry clothes to put on them so had to put them to bed without any. and they were all asleep in a short time. I began to look around for a dress for myself. but could not find a garment of any kind. but a coarse heavy shirt that Mrs Metcalf had just finished for her fifteen year old son I took off my dress and put that on. then [p. 8] I made a rousing fire and hung all the childrens wet clothing around it to dry. I was very nervous and frightened all the time I was in the house. I began to realize all at once that I had a severe headach and was sick enough to die I thought. I layed down on the side of the bed but before I could compose myself. I heard a dog bark and shortly Mr Metcalf and our family Doctor. Doctor Evens. came in. we were made more than welcome by Mr Metcalf. they had traveled a long distance and were very hungry & wanted to know if I could get them something to eat. There was nothing prepared for an emergency of that kind. could not find any thing in the pantry but corn meal & a large panful of sour cream I stirred up a corn cake as soon as I could & put it to bake & made a pot of coffee & set the table. by that time I was [p. 9] to[o] sick to stand up another minute the Dr. made me lie down again & he and Mr. Metcalf finished getting their supper &c. There being no time peace of any kind I did not know what time of night it was but think it must have been

near midnight After they finished their supper they got me all stired up <again> by saying they were going to town I begged so hard for to go with them but it was all in vane soon after they left, Refuges from town kept comeing in till the house was full and all brought word of what terrible revenge the Mormans were going to take on the Carthage people for killing the Smiths. they were frightened and beleaved all the stories they heard and surely there never was a more exciteing time. In about an hour after the Dr and Mr. Metcalf went to town Dr Evens came back in great hast with his horse [p. 10] buggy and said he wanted three of my children to take to Augusta. and that my husband would be there for me and the rest of the children in half an hour I hesitated about getting the children ready for their clothes were not near dry yet and I told the Dr. I could not put damp clothes on them for fear of makeing them sick he did not stop to discuss the question at all but told an other person to hand him out three of the children and they were only partly dressed. Two little boys & my second daughter Louisa. one of the little boys had no pants on at all the Dr stoped at the next house & got a quilt to wrap the children in. he took them safely through to Augusta in that plight. a near & dear friend of mine took them in and cared for them. till she had an opportunity to send them home again. Soon after [p. 11] the Dr. left a big wagon drove up filled full of household goods Women and children. the gentlemen members of the tribe were walking and carring their fire arms when I saw how crowded the wagon was I did not want to go, I was so near worn out, I told my husband I would about as soon die right there as to go any further but I had to go and myself & and my three youngest children were helped up on an already overloaded wagon and to make matters worse for me there was a very old lady lying on a bed near where I was sitting and she had several fits and seemed to suffer greatly but none of her people seemed to pay her any attention but I witnessed it all and I expect I suffered more than she did. After we had traveled a mile or so it began to get daylight and after traveling a few miles further we stoped and got breakfast camp fashion. after [p. 12] breakfast we started again on our journey hoping to reach Augusta by noon. but after traveling several miles we discovered one of the horses was lame and about to give out. we were near crooked creek which was full of water and quite a steep hill on the other side. while the men were discusing whether we had better try to cross the creek and up the hill with the lame horse an old resident that onced lived in Carthage came along and said he lived near by and insisted that we should go to his

house and stay untill we could find out if it was nessary to go further on. I was sure he was a good friend in need and was glad that his kind invitation was accepted when we got to the house we found many old acquaintances and neighbors some from Carthage and some from other places. they were very buisy getting dinner [p. 13] I asked one who belonged to the house if I could ~~get~~ have a quiet room where I could lie down with out being disturbed for a while. ~~and~~ the lady took me to a cool pleasant room and done all she could for my comfort. I was so exhausted I could have slept on a rock pile but felt so thankful that I could have a quiet once more I slept till after three P. M. then got up arrainget my toilet the best I could under the circumstances. kind friends in the mean time took care of my children. I was invited to the dining room and after takeing a good cup of coffee & other refreshments I soon began to feel more like myself. while talking to some of the ladies I saw they kept smileing & were very much amused at something about me and at last they broke out in one voice "Mrs Smith do tell us what kind of a garment you have on". and to [p. 14] my utter astonishment I still had that boys shirt on that I put on while trying to dry my dress and in the hurry an[d] confusion of getting ready to start. I put my dress on & for got to t[a]ke<sup>3</sup> off the shirt. I must have been a comical looking sight indeed & and when I come to think of it at this late date. I wonder how I got my dress fastened over it.

About five P. M. of the same day a messenger from Carthage brought us word that every thing was quiet and that the dead bodies of the Smiths had been taken to Nauvoo. there were only a few people in town and they did not apprehend any danger at that time from the Mormans My husband and two other gentlemen hired a team and Carriage and we went back to Carthage that night it was several days before the children that went to agusta got home the little girl enjoyed it so much she wanted to know how soon we were going again. [p. [15]]<sup>4</sup>

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Alex D. Smith is a historian with the Joseph Smith Papers in the Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has coedited six volumes in the Journals and Documents series and is currently editing the Nauvoo journals of William Clayton.

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3. TEXT: Supplied character is missing due to a hole in the manuscript page.

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# The Nauvoo Temple Bells

*Shannon M. Tracy, Glen M. Leonard, and Ronald G. Watt*

*[The following is an excerpt of a chapter of the same name from the forthcoming book *Artifacts Speak: Revisiting Old Stories about Treasured Mormon Heirlooms*, edited by Glen M. Leonard, to be published by BYU Studies.]*

June 27, 2002. Nauvoo, Illinois. 6:00 p.m. Six long chimes ring from a bell located within the Nauvoo Temple tower to signal the first of many dedicatory services for the newly rebuilt Nauvoo Temple. The sound seems to announce a rebirth of dreams long wanting to be fulfilled. Now, for the first time in over a century and a half, a bell rings in the dedicated house of the Lord that sits atop the bluff overlooking the neatly planned streets of the lower city. As was its predecessor, this temple was built for the perfecting of the Saints in the household of faith. It was erected to help establish the knowledge of eternity. It was fashioned to house revelations for its patrons concerning what steps they should take toward eternal life, what knowledge they should gain, and what covenants they should make. The bell heralds a renewed temple of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

But this is not just any temple. This is the temple in the City of Joseph, the “City Beautiful.” Nauvoo, Illinois, was a place of hoped-for rest and peace. It was a center for the stakes of Zion, a place where weary Saints

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1. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:39–41, 55; Ephesians 2:19–22; and Gerry Avant, “Nauvoo Temple Stands as a Memorial,” *Deseret News*, Church News, July 6, 2002. The bell was installed July 3, 2001. R. Scott Lloyd, “Bronze Bell to Be Distinctive Feature on Nauvoo Temple,” *Deseret News*, Church News, July 3, 2001.

gathered to find safety from a world that did not accept them. Nauvoo's citizens had struggled to forge a community from a soggy bottomland into a Jeffersonian-style city. They charted out its coordinates along compass points as true and square as the doctrines that they espoused. But the Saints would not be able to enjoy their beautiful city for long. In less than seven years after Nauvoo's establishment, its founder and mayor would be martyred and its citizens would be expelled from the city they had built. They found buyers for the better homes and farms at drastically reduced prices but abandoned the rest, along with barns, land, and personal possessions. They would flee across the Mississippi River with barely enough to survive and the hope of a safe home far away in the West. And they would take with them their temple bell.<sup>2</sup>

For everything that the Saints of Zion gave up when they left Nauvoo, the bell—and Brigham Young's promise to replace the building in whose tower it hung—served in part to represent their hopes for the future. The bell also became an anchor, a remembrance of things past and a symbol of dreams yet to come. This chapter will recount the histories of the old Nauvoo Temple bells—yes, two bells bore that name—and examine the various stories of the original bell and its substitute, with their colorful heritage.

### **The First Nauvoo Temple Bell**

When the Prophet Joseph Smith announced plans to build a temple in Nauvoo, he made it clear that the Lord said it was to be built by the sacrifices of the Saints.<sup>3</sup> This was not a casual statement. Many of the people of Nauvoo had recently escaped Missouri and had lost everything. Now they were required to build a house to the Lord where the covenants and ordinances of perfection could be administered. A tenth of all they possessed was to be given to begin the construction process, and then they were to donate a tenth of their increase and their time for the temple's completion. Financial aspects of this tithing applied to the entire church, not just Nauvoo's citizens.<sup>4</sup>

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2. See Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002).

3. "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 (October 1840): 186; First Presidency, "A Proclamation, to the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 15, 1841): 277.

4. Doctrine and Covenants 119.

After construction was underway, it was decided to hang a bell in a tower atop the temple. Martha Jane Knowlton reported Joseph Smith's explanation in an 1843 discourse. The Prophet said, "We will build upon the top of this Temple a great observatory[,] a great and high watch tower[,] and in the top thereof we will Suspend a tremendous bell that when it is rung shall rouse the inhabitants of Madison[,] wake up the people of Warsaw[,] and sound in the ears of men [in] Carthage."<sup>5</sup>

The idea of a temple bell was not new. The Kirtland Temple plans called for a bell that never materialized. In January 1836, William W. Phelps wrote to his wife, Sally Phelps, "A great effort is now about to be made to procure a 'bell' for the Lord's house."<sup>6</sup> Similar intentions are found in plans for an earlier temple in a central block of the plat of the City of Zion, in Jackson County, Missouri. In a letter dated June 25, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote, "A belfry is to be in the east end, and a bell of very large size."<sup>7</sup>

The Nauvoo Temple would become the first and (to date) the last house of the Lord with a bell in its steeple. In the late spring of 1845, nearly a year after Joseph's death, the governing Quorum of the Twelve Apostles asked English members to consider contributing something substantial toward the construction of the temple. The request, signed by Brigham Young as quorum president and directed to British Mission President Wilford Woodruff, was to provide a bell for the temple. In their letter of May 8, 1845, the Twelve wrote: "We have thought it might be very agreeable to the feelings of the English Saints to furnish a bell for the temple, if this is their pleasure, you can forward it [at] the first conveyance, and we will have it hung as the building is going up. We are but little acquainted with the weight of bells: we have thought of

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5. Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Smith's 19 July 1840 Discourse," reported by Martha Jane Knowlton and Howard Coray, *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 393. We have used the more likely date for the Knowlton-Coray manuscript, October 5, 1843; see "Howard and Martha Cory Notebook," in *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 417–18 n. 1.

6. William W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, January 1836, W. W. Phelps Letters, 1835–1841, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

7. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 309, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/315>; James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 1:10.

2000 lbs. weight, but we leave this to your judgment. We want one that can be heard night or day.”<sup>8</sup>

Woodruff published the council’s letter in the mission’s monthly magazine, the *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, and urged the members to respond to his call. Here was a clear way for the Saints living abroad to assist in Joseph Smith’s call to build a temple. In August 1845, an editorial in the *Star* stated that all further donations from the British Saints would be used to obtain the bell and also a clock for the Nauvoo Temple. Woodruff instructed branch leaders to send their contributions directly to him. When contributions for the bell lagged, he announced in September that he would no longer distinguish between contributions for the temple and for the temple bell. “We shall make use of all funds collected for the Temple to pay for the Bell until a sufficiency is procured.”<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, in mid-September, a group of Hancock County, Illinois, residents who wanted to rid the region of Latter-day Saints launched a campaign of harassment and arson that forced the Latter-day Saint farmers to abandon their properties and move into Nauvoo. Sometime later, Brigham Young informed Woodruff of a change in plans. Woodruff should now forward the money collected for the bell to Nauvoo. Apparently, Young heard nothing back from Woodruff; so, in December, Young repeated the request with a new sense of urgency: “I wrote you in my last letter that we intended to purchase the bell in this country and desired you to transmit the money collected for that purpose by the first safe opportunity. I feel as ever anxious this should be done.”<sup>10</sup>

During the week before Young sent his reminder notice, he dedicated the attic story and began the ordinance work for Nauvoo’s Latter-day Saints. Wagon shops were at work preparing for the removal of thousands of people. Why import a large bell from England or even purchase one stateside for a building that would be left behind six months later? Would a smaller bell serve the temporary needs? One can only remember the commitment of the Saints to *complete* the edifice as commanded by the Lord, “that you may prove yourselves unto me that ye are

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8. Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, May 8, 1845, in *Millennial Star* 6 (July 15, 1845): 42–43, original at Church History Library.

9. *Millennial Star* 6 (July 15, 1845): 43; *Millennial Star* 6 (August 15, 1845): 77; *Millennial Star* 6 (September 15, 1845): 107; “This Week in Church History: 150 Years Ago,” *Deseret News*, Church News, May 20, 1995.

10. Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, December 19, 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

faithful in all things whatsoever I command you, that I may bless you, and crown you with honor, immortality, and eternal life.”<sup>11</sup>

In January 1846, as Wilford Woodruff was making plans to leave Great Britain, he informed the British members that “some £220 has been donated since we called for assistance for the bell and clock.” He encouraged the Saints to continue their efforts in collecting funds for the bell. Donations for the temple received by Woodruff and Reuben Hedlock, who succeeded Woodruff as president of the British Mission, stood at just over £535 in Woodruff’s final published accounting before he left England.<sup>12</sup> Woodruff set aside the original directive to purchase an English bell and one of four clocks planned for the temple tower. Instead, he forwarded the funds to Church headquarters. He sent the bulk of the donations to the Temple Committee in Nauvoo by an unnamed courier and carried a very small balance (£8.13.5½) with him across the Atlantic to New York and then to Nauvoo. His actions fulfilled Young’s request “to transmit the money . . . by the first safe opportunity.”<sup>13</sup>

It was just as well. A bell was secured and put to use in Nauvoo before Woodruff sailed from Liverpool in February 1846. If Woodruff had purchased an English bell, it could not have arrived in Nauvoo prior to mid-April 1846. That is when Woodruff’s journal records his reunion with his wife Phebe and their children.<sup>14</sup> Heber C. Kimball’s journal says that each session of the temple endowment was announced with the ringing of the temple bell while endowments were being

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11. 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), 7:534–35, 542 (November 30 and December 10, 1845); Doctrine and Covenants 124:55; Young to Woodruff, December 19, 1845.

12. Reuben Hedlock served as British Mission president from November 1843 to January 1845. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 412.

13. *Millennial Star* 6 (September 15, 1845): 107; *Millennial Star* 7 (January 1, 1846): 5; *Millennial Star* 7 (February 1, 1846): 44. Woodruff’s journal entry differs slightly from the published summary. The journal says donations for the temple received by Reuben Hedlock (£255.15.3) and Woodruff (£317.12.11½) totaled £563.8.2½, or, he added, at \$485 per pound, \$2,732.52. See Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journals*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1985), 3:6–7 (January 21, 1846).

14. Woodruff, *Journals*, 3:5, 22–25, 38–39, 48.

administered—between December 10, 1845, and February 7, 1846.<sup>15</sup> The image is a poignant one. For years, the Saints had toiled to build their temple in the midst of poverty. Now, with joyous hearts, they could hear the beautiful sounds of a bell calling them to the house of the Lord to receive their washings, anointings, and endowments. Of all the tasks this bell would be called on to perform, this would be the finest and remain longest in the hearts of the people—a call to come out from the world and to prepare for eternity.

Kimball's journal account is consistent with the idea of a locally acquired bell. In contrast, many of the traditional stories have a bell from England arriving with Wilford Woodruff. One of those is a reminiscence of George Washington Bean, who worked on the Nauvoo Temple as a young man. Bean told his son Willard W. Bean that he had been present at the temple's dedication. (George would have been fifteen at the time.) Willard Bean is quoted in one source as saying, "Among other things he [George W. Bean] spoke of a large bell some of the brethren (missionaries) had sent from England by ship to New Orleans, thence by river steamer up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo, where it was hung, with some difficulty, in the steeple of the Temple."<sup>16</sup> While this part of George Bean's recollection lacks veracity, his description of the bell's later use in the Salt Lake Fort can be verified.

George Bean was not the only one who knew half the story. Wilford Woodruff's request for donations was widely known, but fewer people knew of Brigham Young's decision to use an American bell. That decision was communicated by letter and not widely known to the public. The stories of an English bell hanging in the Nauvoo Temple have been passed down from one generation to another, often converging with other stories. They include unreliable personal "recollections" mingled with verifiable, documented facts. The traditional story became an assumed truth that found its way unchallenged into reputable publications.<sup>17</sup>

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15. *Heber C. Kimball's Journal: November 21, 1845 to January 7, 1846*, introduction by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, [1982]), December 10, 1845, to January 7, 1846.

16. Willard Bean, as quoted by Joseph J. Cannon, "President Joseph J. Cannon's Message," *Temple Square Topics: Official Organ of Temple Square Mission* 3 (July and August 1939).

17. For example, see Mary Grant Judd, "A Monument with a Message," *Relief Society Magazine* 29 (January 1942): 11; Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: Gateway to the West* (Carthage, Ill.: Ida Blum [Mrs. Carl J. Blum], 1974), 76–77 (crediting the story to Kimball S. Erdman, the great-great-grandson of David Burlock Lamoreaux); Heidi S. Swinton, *Sacred Stone: The Temple at Nauvoo* (American Fork, Utah:

Aside from the English bell stories, early Latter-day Saint sources offer no explanation of the bell's origin, acquisition, or size. Bells of that time varied widely in size. The projected 2,000-pound British bell would fit the "large" category. If a temporary bell of medium proportions was chosen, it might have weighed between 300 and 800 pounds and measured up to 33 inches in diameter. (The bronze-alloy bell hung in the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple weighs 846 pounds and has a diameter of 33½ inches. It was produced by the Verdin Clock and Bell Company, with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, and cast at the Petit Fritsen Bell Foundry in the Netherlands.<sup>18</sup>) Another choice might have been as small as a steamboat's signal bell, the type reported by Thomas L. Kane in 1846. Usually much smaller, a steamboat bell's diameter could reach up to 33 inches.

Whatever its size, by the fall of 1845 a signal bell was in use both before and after it was placed atop the temple. The Nauvoo Temple bell served as one of three—perhaps four—distinct signaling devices used to alert the people of Nauvoo. Some of these alarms could be used at ground level; others required an elevated position, ultimately the roof or tower of the temple. As safety concerns increased in late summer, work on the temple tower moved forward. On Saturday, August 23, 1845, the cupola, or dome, was raised to the top of the temple tower with Stephen Goddard riding it up. According to Willard Richards, Goddard further demonstrated his agility when he "stood on his head on the top of the spire post."<sup>19</sup> Following this feat, sixty or seventy workmen celebrated by eating watermelons in the attic. The men then hoisted a flag, which remained in place until Sunday night.<sup>20</sup>

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Covenant Communications, 2002), 111; and Russ Hill, "Bell to Keep Resounding on KSL," *Deseret News*, June 21, 2005, A-8, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/600142891/Bell-to-keep-resounding-on-KSL.html>, which used information from a marker near the bell tower on Temple Square to explain the bell's origin: "It's generally believed the bell was a gift from English converts to the LDS Church when they arrived in Nauvoo."

18. R. Scott Lloyd, "Bronze Bell to Be Distinctive Feature on Nauvoo Temple," *Deseret News*, Church News, July 13, 2001, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/archive/2001-07-14/bronze-bell-to-be-distinctive-feature-on-nauvoo-temple-20075>.

19. As quoted by John Taylor, "John Taylor Journal," August 23, 1845, *BYU Studies* 23, no. 3 (1983): 85–86, 85 n. 265; "Samuel Holister Rogers Journal, 1819–1846," August 23, 1845, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

20. Joseph Hovey, *Biography of Joseph Grafton Hovey* (n.p., n.d.), Perry Special Collections.

Once the dome was in place, a bell could be hung in the tower. The date of its hanging is not known. On November 20, 1845, a newspaper in Burlington, Iowa, across the river from Nauvoo, noted that “[the Saints] are finishing the Temple, putting in the carpets, &c., and *intend* to hang a bell.”<sup>21</sup> If accurate, this report would allow a bell situated temporarily on the ground to be used in sounding military alarms in September and the same bell (or a larger one) to be hung in the tower before ordinance work began. The alarms sounded in mid-September are described by Nauvoo residents as coming from the Nauvoo Temple bell. The reports do not say if it was a land-based bell or one in the tower.

On September 10, vigilantes attacked Morley Settlement. This was the beginning of a campaign to torch Latter-day Saint farm buildings and grain stacks in rural Hancock County in an effort to drive the Latter-day Saints out of Illinois. In response, Nauvoo officials stepped up preparations to defend the city. On September 17, they gathered the men and posted small detachments at key entry routes outside Nauvoo and within the city. Colonel Jonathan Hale, for example, was ordered to station thirty men from his Third Regiment in the Squire Spencer barn east of the temple.<sup>22</sup>

The first known mention of a signal bell associated with the temple was recorded at the September 17 gathering. Nauvoo’s police chief, Hosea Stout, who was managing militia assignments for Major General Charles C. Rich, ordered “that at the tolling of the Temple Bell every man know it as an alarm & repair forthwith armed & equipd to the parade ground.” The next day, Stout mentioned a second way to alert the citizen soldiers. All companies of the Nauvoo Legion were “to be in readiness for actual service at a moment’s warning & that they immediately repair to the ground they now occupied. At firing of the artillery it shall be the signal of alarm.” A test of his signal on the nineteenth brought the soldiers together for a meeting with Brigham Young.<sup>23</sup>

At the meeting, Brigham Young identified other ways to notify the militia. Hosea Stout reported Young’s message: “As signals—we will

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21. “Nauvoo,” *Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye*, November 20, 1845, 2, emphasis added.

22. Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, ed. Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:66–67; Thomas Bullock, “Journal of Thomas Bullock (1816–1885): 31 August 1845 to 5 July 1846,” ed. Gregory R. Knight, *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (1991): 20.

23. Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:66–67; Don F. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple: A Story of Faith* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002), 271–72.

have the flag hoisted and then let all men be on the ground as a flag with strip[e]s is hoisted[;] it is a signal for all commissioned officers to meet in council at Gen [George] Miller's house." Young added, "We intend shortly to have a light at night on the top of the temple which can be seen for miles." The light would be a way to alert more distant volunteers. A striped flag would call the officers to the parade ground, and a white flag would invite the men to muster. From her home in Nauvoo, Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs could see the white flag, "a signature to gather." She also heard the firing of the cannon that week and understood its meaning.<sup>24</sup>

When rumors that a mob was gathering at Carthage reached Nauvoo on September 21, "the flag was raised and the Temple bell rang to collect a posse to go to Carthage." Between forty to fifty men responded to the bell's alarm. They left Nauvoo under Colonel Stephen Markham's command. As more troops were being marshaled, Lieutenant General Brigham Young arrived on the scene. The alarm was false, he said, and he dismissed the troops.<sup>25</sup>

The attacks on outlying Latter-day Saint properties in the fall of 1845 led the Twelve to confirm a private decision made in March: they would sell Church properties, including the temple, and move the Latter-day Saints to a new gathering place in the West. Before the mass exodus, Brigham Young dedicated parts of the temple in phases to allow sacred ordinances to be performed. On the fifth of October, Young offered a dedicatory prayer and presented "the Temple, thus far completed, [to the Lord] as a monument of the Saints' liberality, fidelity, and faith."<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the fall and winter of 1845, Church leaders pursued opportunities to sell or lease the temple. In October, they extended an invitation to Catholic Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati. A month later they advertised in the *Burlington Hawk-Eye* an offer to rent the temple to any responsible society. In December, Brigham Young received a tip that a

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24. Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:67, entry for September 19, 1845; Zina Diantha Huntington, "'All Things Move in Order in the City': The Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs," ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 320.

25. Journal History of the Church, 1896–2001, Church History Library, CR 100 137, July, 1845, reel 7, vol. 19, September 21, 1845, <https://catalog.lds.org/assets/2987565f-96fb-470c-88co-08c3ec43e3fe/o/339>; Stout, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:70–71.

26. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 514–15; Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:456–57. A three-day general conference began the following day, Monday, October 6, 1845.

firm in Philadelphia was interested in buying the temple, but nothing came of it.<sup>27</sup>

Brigham Young wanted to see a finished temple before he left with a pioneer company. But threats against his freedom hastened the departure of Church leaders—those who were administering the ordinances. On January 2, 1846, Young reassured the Saints that leaving Nauvoo did not mean the end of temple ordinances. “We can’t stay in this house but a little while,” he said. “We [have] got to build another house. It will be a larger house than this, and a more glorious one, and we shall build a great many houses . . . and build houses all over the continent of N[orth] America.”<sup>28</sup>

The next phase for the temple was its closing down. February 7, 1846, marked the last endowments and last proxy baptisms for the dead. The next day, a Sunday, Young met with the Council of the Twelve in his office in the southeast corner of the temple attic. It was in this room that couples knelt across an altar to be married. “We knelt around the altar,” Young noted in his journal, “and dedicated the building to the Most High. We asked his blessing upon our intended move to the west; also asked him to enable us some day to finish the Temple, and dedicate it to him . . . and to preserve the building as a monument to Joseph Smith. . . . We then left the Temple.”<sup>29</sup>

When Brigham Young left the temple on the eighth, he told a congregation in the grove that the Twelve would depart later that week. Everyone else was to follow when the prairie lands of Iowa had dried and grasses were growing. Some anxious families left ahead of schedule—less than a fourth of the whole. Most of the exiles crossed the river systematically as planned, from March through the end of May.<sup>30</sup>

In late March, Orson Hyde wrote to Brigham Young, who was camped at Sugar Creek, Iowa, that the temple would not be ready for its planned dedication on April 6, 1846, the Church’s sixteenth anniversary. Instead, dedicatory services began with a private dedication on April 30, with Wilford Woodruff as voice, followed by a public meeting on May 1,

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27. Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:508, 537–38; *Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye*, November 20, 1845, 2.

28. *Heber C. Kimball’s Journal*, January 2, 1846.

29. Richard O. Cowan, *Temple Building: Ancient and Modern* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1971), 29; Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847* (Salt Lake City: Elden Jay Watson, 1971), 28.

30. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 594–97.

when Joseph Young offered a dedicatory prayer.<sup>31</sup> Woodruff arrived in Nauvoo from England two weeks before the dedication. On April 13, 1846, from a steamboat still some distance downriver, he caught his first glance of Nauvoo. Raising a spyglass to his eye to get a better view, he “examined the city” and found that “the Temple truly looked splendid.”<sup>32</sup>

### Later Uses of the Nauvoo Temple Bell

References to the ringing of the bell continued after the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple. On June 14, 1846, Nauvoo’s militia heard “the ringing of the Temple Bell.” Around seven hundred armed men gathered on the green behind the temple with their firearms. A large mob had assembled at nearby Golden Point, threatening to attack the temple. On this occasion, the mob dispersed. But these renewed threats prompted many families to hasten their efforts to leave and join those already on their way.<sup>33</sup>

Over the next several weeks, the temple bell was regularly used to sound an alarm for men to assemble in defense of the city. George Morris, who remained behind in Nauvoo to help complete the temple, remembered those days: “I have lain in the Temple night after night upon the hard wooden benches with my rifle by my side expecting an attack every minute, I have laid in my bed with my clothes on and my gun leaning against my pillow where I could lay my hand upon it . . . and jumped from my bed at all hours of the night at the sound of the big drum and the ringing of the Temple bell which was a signal for us to gather.” As Morris noted, it was not just a bell hanging in the temple tower belfry that alerted the troops. A base drum was there also.<sup>34</sup>

On September 10, at the beginning of what would be known as the Battle of Nauvoo, the bell rang to notify a mixture of Latter-day Saint forces and newly arrived non-Latter-day Saint city residents of the coming battle. The two competing militaries exchanged shots that day, and again on the eleventh. “We soon got into order,” Curtis E. Bolton wrote in his diary, “and just as the bell was rung to give notice that the Mob were in Motion we started to meet them.” On the sixteenth, following

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31. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 110; *Hancock Eagle*, April 10, 17, 21, 1846.

32. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, January 1845–December 1846, Church History Library, MS 1352, box 2, folder 2, April 13, 1846.

33. Bullock, “Journal of Thomas Bullock,” 68–69 (June 14, 1846).

34. George Morris, *Autobiography, 1816–1891*, typescript, 1953, 26, Perry Special Collections.

the battle, the trustees surrendered the city to the mob by signing a "treaty." The agreement allowed the trustees and two others to remain in Nauvoo for the disposition of Church and private property. All other Latter-day Saints were required to move out as soon as possible.<sup>35</sup>

The next day, invaders occupied Nauvoo and began to forcibly remove the remnant followers of Brigham Young from the city. The trustees were forced under duress to give the keys of the temple to Henry I. Young, chairman of the Quincy Committee, who promptly opened the building to the invaders. Desecration of the temple began immediately. On the eighteenth, some of the invaders climbed up the tower where they beat the drum, rang the bell, and shouted for joy. One preacher yelled, "Peace! Peace! Peace! to the inhabitants of the earth, now the Mormons are driven!"<sup>36</sup>

Around this time Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a friend to the Latter-day Saints, visited Nauvoo. He found the temple in the possession of a drunken mob. He convinced the guards that he was just an interested passerby, and they permitted him to view the interior. Colonel Kane climbed to the observation section of the tower and viewed the city from there. In the steeple, he found "fragments of food, cruises of liquor, and broken drinking vessels," along with "a bass drum and a steam-boat signal bell." The bell, he said, was located in the high belfry. "A cruel spirit of insulting frolic carried some of them up into the high belfry of the Temple steeple, and there, with the wicked childishness of inebriates, they whooped, and shrieked, and beat the drum that I had seen, and rang in charivariic unison their loud-tongued steam-boat bell."<sup>37</sup>

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35. Curtis E. Bolton, *Reminiscences and Journals, 1846–1853*, manuscript, 2 vols., 1:7, MS 1424, Church History Library; "Articles of Accommodation," September 16, 1846, original draft, Chicago Historical Society, available in David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1974), 202, 249–50.

36. Thomas Bullock, *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock*, ed. Will Bagley (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark, 1997), 66–67 (September 17–18, 1846); Andrew Jenson, "The Battle of Nauvoo," *Historical Record* 8 (June 1889): 856.

37. Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: March 26, 1850* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1850), 8, 11. George A. Smith read at length from Kane's published discourse in a "Historical Address" delivered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, on October 8 and 9, 1868, *Journal of Discourses by President Brigham Young, His Two Counsellors, and the Twelve Apostles*, reported by D. W. Evans and John Grimshaw (Liverpool: Horace S. Eldredge, 1871; repr., Salt Lake City, 1967), 13:116–18.

Kane's description of the bell as a "steam-boat signal bell" added more complexity to the Nauvoo Bell's history. Typically, a steamboat bell would have been smaller than a good-sized church bell. Steamboat bells, like some bells used in churches, were of a nonrocker type and were rung with the use of a clapper. Rocking type bells were not standard on boats because they were prone to ring with the wave movement of the ship. Steamboat bells ranged from fourteen to thirty-three inches in circumference, depending on the size and design of the boat. Kane did not offer dimensions in his description of the bell. Yet his eyewitness account of a drum and a steamboat signal bell in the tower does suggest that this bell was the same one used by the Saints. Kane's observation is trustworthy evidence of the bell's style and type—and a hint as to its origin.

### The Nauvoo Temple Bell Goes West

Westward-bound Daniel H. Wells and William Cutler arrived at Winter Quarters on September 23, 1846. They carried letters for Brigham Young reporting the events surrounding the Battle of Nauvoo. His directions concerning Church property included this directive: "As you will have no further use for the Temple bell, we wish you to forward it to us by the first possible chance, for we have [much] need [of] it at this place."<sup>38</sup>

Acting on these instructions, the trustees saw to it that the bell was removed from the temple and transported to the Missouri River camp of the Saints. Joshua Hawkes stated in 1904 that "he and James Houton took the Nauvoo Temple bell over the Mississippi River in October 1846, and that it was in [the] charge of Joseph L. Heywood."<sup>39</sup> Heywood was one of the trustees. The bell arrived in Winter Quarters by December 1846 and was placed in the public square, where its chiming called people to worship services and community meetings. For example, on the twentieth, after Mary Richards had taken care of her morning chores, she sat down to write a letter: "In about ten minutes after[ward] the Temple bell rung for meeting. got ready and went[.] Bro Brigham

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38. Brigham Young to the high council at Council Point, September 27, 1845, CR 1234 1, General Correspondence, Outgoing, 1843–1876, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878; also in Preston Nibley, *Exodus to Greatness: The Story of the Mormon Migration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1947), 243, 245.

39. Joshua Hawkes, conversation with Andrew Jenson, Salt Lake City, April 2, 1904, recorded by Andrew Jenson, MS 17956, box 51, folder 3, Andrew Jenson Collection, circa 1841–1942, Church History Library, <https://catalog.lds.org/assets/od4b8fbo-cd53-4843-87ff-9ooda93262ae/o/4>.

preached a sermon that I think will be long remembered by all who heard it.” In his unforgettable remarks, Young called on the people to cease their swearing, stealing, evil speaking, and other vices, or they would suffer God’s punishment.<sup>40</sup>

The bell was still in use in the public square in Winter Quarters the following spring as the vanguard pioneer company prepared for their departure. John D. Lee noted that on Sunday, March 21, “the Saints assembled in a special conference at the stand by request of Pres. B. Young, notified or by the signal of the ringing of the Temple bell.” Five days later, on a Friday, Norton Jacob wrote in his journal: “At ten o’clock the people were called together by the ringing of the old temple bell and a special conference was held preparatory to the departure of the pioneers. Brother Brigham chastened the people severely for being so covetous and withholding their means in fitting out the pioneers.”<sup>41</sup>

Before Brigham Young left Winter Quarters in April 1847, he signed an “Epistle from the Twelve” containing detailed instructions for those who would follow. The letter directed Charles C. Rich to bring the bell to Utah in his emigrant company: “The first company will carry the Temple bell with fixtures for hanging at a moment’s notice, which will be rung at day light or a proper time, and call all who are able to arise to prayers, after which ringing of bell & breakfast, or ringing of bell and departure in fifteen minutes to secure the cool of the day till breakfast time &c as the bell may be needed—particularly in the night season if Indians are hovering around to let them know you are at your duty.”<sup>42</sup>

Contrary to the plan, Rich’s emigrant company was not the first to leave after President Young’s departure. Instead, four companies left Winter Quarters between June 17 and 19, and Rich’s left June 21, after waiting two weeks for a cannon. “[W]e are organised to move five abreast the two cannons sciff and temple bell heading the middle line,”

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40. Mary Haskin Parker Richards, *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, ed. Maurine Carr Ward, Life Writings of Frontier Women, vol. 1 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 102.

41. John D. Lee, *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846–47 and 1859*, ed. Charles Kelley (Salt Lake City: Western Printing, 1938), 127; facsimile reprint, with introduction by Charles S. Peterson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984); Norton Jacob, “The Life of Norton Jacob,” typescript, Perry Special Collections.

42. Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve Apostles to “the Brethren at Winter Quarters . . .,” April 16, 1847, in Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, ed. Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:249–50 (April 18, 1847).

Patty Sessions wrote in her diary.<sup>43</sup> Rich attached the bell to a wagon where it could be easily rung to wake the company each day, signal them to begin their day's journey, and warn of potential Indian attacks. In her autobiography, Sarah Rich, Charles C.'s wife, described the arrangement. "There was also a skiff or a boat fitted up on wheels, and the cannon placed on that. . . . So the boat and one cannon and the big bell was in our company. . . . The bell was so arranged over the boat and cannon, that it could be rung by pulling a rope." (Notice that the "big bell" was sounded with the pull of a rope attached to the clapper—the way steamboat bells were rung.) Because of the combined weight of the bell, cannon, and boat, two yoke of oxen were required to pull this custom wagon over the trail to Utah.<sup>44</sup>

By June 21, 1847, Rich's company was on its way to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Along the route west, Rich journalized, "We rang the bell at daylight for getting up and putting out our herds; rang again at 8 o'clock for starting." The Nauvoo Temple bell arrived safely in the Salt Lake Valley in mid-September.<sup>45</sup> On October 2, it was placed in the original ten-acre log and adobe fort, next to the flagpole and not far from the brush bowery built by returning members of the Mormon Battalion. Three weeks later, Tarlton Lewis was paid one dollar to install a bell post and hang the bell.<sup>46</sup> A time or two that first winter the bell post was used as a whipping post to punish thieves who chose a bare-backed whipping over a ten-dollar fine. Later on, the Nauvoo Bell was moved to a new location near the old bowery on Temple Square, where it "pealed forth its silvery notes" to call the Saints to religious services. As a signal

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43. Patty Bartlett Sessions, "Diaries and Account Book," manuscript, vol. 1, June 21–23, 1847, Church History Library. Only one cannon came west with the company. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Charles C. Rich: Mormon General and Western Frontiersman* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 114.

44. Sara De Armon Pea Rich, as cited in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 376–77; "Journal of Sarah De Armon Pea Rich," typescript, 71, Perry Special Collections.

45. Charles C. Rich, Diary, June 23, 1847, Church History Library; Sarah P. Rich, *Reminiscences*, Church History Library; Charles C. Rich to Brigham Young, August 18, 1847, General Correspondence, Incoming, 1840–1877, Brigham Young Office Files, 1832–1878, Church History Library.

46. Harrison Sperry, drawing representing the Old Fort and its two additions in the Great Salt Lake Valley as it was in 1847, MS 9164, Church History Library; Salt Lake Stake, high council, minutes, October 24 and November 7, 1847, Church History Library.

bell, it also launched other community functions, including organized wolf hunts.<sup>47</sup>

Unlike the first year's gathering, the Pioneer Day observance of July 24, 1849, made use of the artillery brought by Charles C. Rich's company—and the Nauvoo Bell. The event began early with the firing of one cannon. A brass band traveled throughout the city in two carriages, playing martial airs. After a large national flag was unfurled atop a hundred-foot-tall liberty pole, it was saluted with the firing of six guns. Next came the ringing of the Nauvoo Bell, followed by spirit-stirring airs from the band. As a procession moved from Brigham Young's home to the bowery for a formal celebration, "the young men and young ladies sang a hymn through the street; the cannons kept up one continual roar, the musketry rolled, the Nauvoo Bell pealed out its silvery notes, and the brass band played a slow march."<sup>48</sup>

Truly, the Saints and their leaders felt the need to celebrate in grand style their arrival in a new gathering place. The Nauvoo Bell occupied a place of prominence in this celebration. But in subsequent celebrations of July 24, the bell was absent. It had met an unfortunate death. During the severe winter of 1849–50, the bell cracked during a hard frost, making it unusable. A proposal to repair it by welding was abandoned when no one could be found locally with the needed skill. Later, the *Deseret News* reported that "it is about being re-cast, and enlarged, and we hope to hear its cheering tones again in a few days. It is a heavy undertaking for our present means, but it is confidently believed, that the iron furnace left by the gold diggers last season, when attached to the flue of the mint, can accomplish the object."<sup>49</sup>

It is unlikely that the materials, equipment, and skills to cast and enlarge the bell existed in Utah in 1850. We talked with a specialist at the Verdin Bell Company (the firm that provided a bell for the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple). First of all, our contact said the mixing of bronze (a copper-based alloy) with other metals, often tin, must be carefully balanced in their proportions. Second, because a substantial amount of superfluous metal burns off during the smelting and casting processes,

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47. Journal History, May 14, 1848; John Nebeker, "Early Justice in Utah," dictated in 1884, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 3 (July 1930): 88; Thomas Bullock, "24th of July, at Great Salt Lake City," *Frontier Guardian*, September 9, 1849, 4; James Smithies, Diary, 1846–1859, February 22, 1848, Church History Library.

48. Bullock, "24th of July," *Frontier Guardian*, September 9, 1849, 4.

49. "Nauvoo Bell," *Deseret News*, September 14, 1850, 112.

bell foundries do not reuse the material from older bells. Finally, it would be next to impossible to determine the mixture of metals in the Nauvoo Bell in order to match it. Any attempt to blend metals, the Verdin expert said, would create a brittle bell without true tones. Indeed, the Utah craftsmen acknowledged that they faced a “heavy undertaking for their present means.” David Shayt, an expert at the Smithsonian, offered a similar assessment. He doubted that craftsmen inexperienced with bell making could produce a fine-tuned bell with the forty-niners’ furnace. In addition, he said that to create a new bell they would need another bell to serve as a pattern.<sup>50</sup> The *Deseret News* said nothing more about the experiment to create a new bell in the iron furnace.

If the cracked original Nauvoo Bell was destroyed in a failed attempt to recast an enlarged version, as we believe, what is that large bell hanging in the handsome thirty-five-foot campanile on Temple Square? The short answer: The bell on Temple Square known publicly for decades as the Nauvoo Bell is a nineteenth-century church bell named for the minister whose Midwestern church it once briefly adorned.

### **The Hummer Bell**

The story of Michael Hummer’s bell begins in 1840, when he arrived in Iowa City. He had chosen the ministry and prepared himself with training in college and Presbyterian seminary. Hummer was born in 1800 in Kentucky. At age twenty, he signed a covenant renouncing Christianity. He decided to “give himself to money-making.” Later, a religious leader reached out to this “infidel,” and Hummer was converted. It was then that he received his college and seminary training and became a minister.

During the 1838 school year, Hummer taught in an academy in Stephenson, now Rock Island City, Illinois. The following spring, he was engaged by the Presbyterian Church in Davenport, Iowa, for six months of preaching. A member of the Davenport congregation remembered Hummer’s distinct personality: “He was a very talented man, and was considered, for years, the ablest clergyman in the State; but he was very peculiar. He possessed a high temper, and did not hesitate to show it

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50. Telephone conversation with Verdin specialist by Shannon Michael Tracy; telephone conversation with Smithsonian specialist by Rebecca K. Hyatt, June 16, 2000; “Nauvoo Bell,” *Deseret News*, September 14, 1850. Also see Verdin Bells and Clocks, <http://www.verdin.com/about/>.

if occasion required.”<sup>51</sup> A contemporary characterized him as “a man of vigorous intellect & an orator, but of *ungovernable temper*.” It was said that “he entered upon his work with confidence and energy.” The Schuyler presbyter of Illinois sent Hummer to Iowa City to consecrate a small congregation—that is, to increase their level of their devotion to sacred things.<sup>52</sup>

Hummer arrived in Iowa City with the Rev. Launcelot Graham Bell, the founder of numerous Presbyterian churches in developing areas west of the Mississippi. “Iowa City was a little more than a year old; streets had been opened and lots cleared of timber, the inhabitants had erected frame, log, and clapboard houses and had finished one story of the capitol” when the two churchmen arrived. Working together, in September 1840 they organized the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Thirteen members made up the original congregation. For the next two years, four ministers in succession served the congregation for a short time each.<sup>53</sup>

In December 1842, Michael Hummer was given greater authority and an opportunity for significant leadership in an expanded organization. The Reverends S. J. Bill and M. Hummer were elected as presiding ministers. Hummer was given the additional role of present pastor. The newly staffed board of trustees consisted of a lead miner, two farmers, three merchants, and a carpenter. These men drafted a new constitution to guide the church.<sup>54</sup>

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51. J. M. D. Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa: Being Personal Reminiscences of J. M. D. Burrows concerning Men and Events, Social Life, Industrial Interests, Physical Development, and Commercial Progress of Davenport and Scott County during the Period from 1838 to 1888* (Davenport, Iowa: Glass and Company, 1888), 19–20.

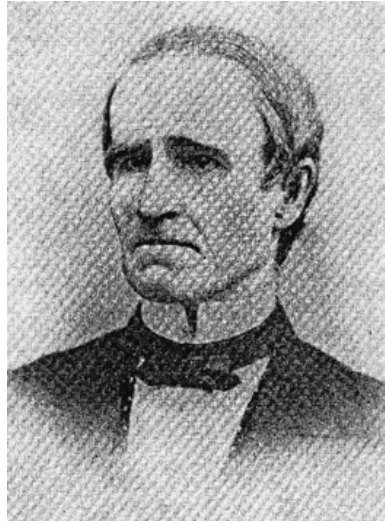
52. Ruth A. Gallaher, “Hummer’s Bell,” *The Palimpsest* 3, no. 5 (1922): 155, emphasis in original.

53. Jacob Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” *Journal of Presbyterian Historical Society* 9 (June 1918): 290. This article was delivered as a seventy-fifth anniversary lecture. It was also published as a fifty-four-page booklet by the State Historical Society of Iowa and in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 9 (1918), a periodical “prepared under the auspices of the Iowa Society to ‘serve as a kind of model for other churches to imitate.’”

54. First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, “1890 First Presbyterian Church Iowa City Jubilee Anniversary Program,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2074>; “1842 Photocopy of Founding Letter,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2040>; Notes by Bob Hibbs, Iowa City Historian, June 13, 2006, in Certification of Organization of the First

With a constitution in place, the trustees could receive real estate, build a building, and conduct other secular business. In the spring of 1843, the board gave Hummer the responsibility to raise funds for a church building. The following November, a subscription paper circulated. Trustee Chauncey Swan headed the list by donating three hundred dollars and a building lot valued at one hundred dollars. The lot at Clinton and Market streets was elevated and a block north of what succeeding generations would call the Old Capitol. Solicitation extended out to other congregations as well. To generate support, the trustees promised “in point of size, taste and durability” the church “should be inferior to no church then being finished in Iowa City.”<sup>55</sup>

Donations varied in size, from Swan’s generous offer to what for many was a generous five dollars. Forty-seven people promised contributions totaling nine hundred dollars. The early years in Iowa City were, as one historian put it, “the years when the men and women of Iowa had ‘to bend their energies to meet the necessity of a roof over their heads and a supply of bacon and meal for their table.’” The board sent Hummer east to raise money from older and richer Presbyterian congregations. The Iowa City trustees agreed to reimburse Hummer for his expenses. His salary would be 10 percent of the money he raised. Hummer headed out in the spring of 1844, the first of two or three trips east during the following two and a half years. Hummer’s ledger for 1845–47 itemizes expenses for materials and services: He purchased a bell from the Meneeley Bell Foundry in Troy, New



Michael Hummer (1800–1879) served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City from 1841 to 1848. In 1922, author Ruth Gallaher said of Hummer in this faded picture, “The face is thin with high cheek bones and an aquiline nose . . . and the tight-lipped mouth is drawn down at the corners as if he is determined not to smile at any one.”

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Presbyterian Church, Iowa City Genealogical Society, <http://iagenweb.org/johnson/CertFirstPresbChurchOrganization.htm>.

55. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 536–37.

York, and in 1847 collected from donors in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York just over six hundred dollars.<sup>56</sup>

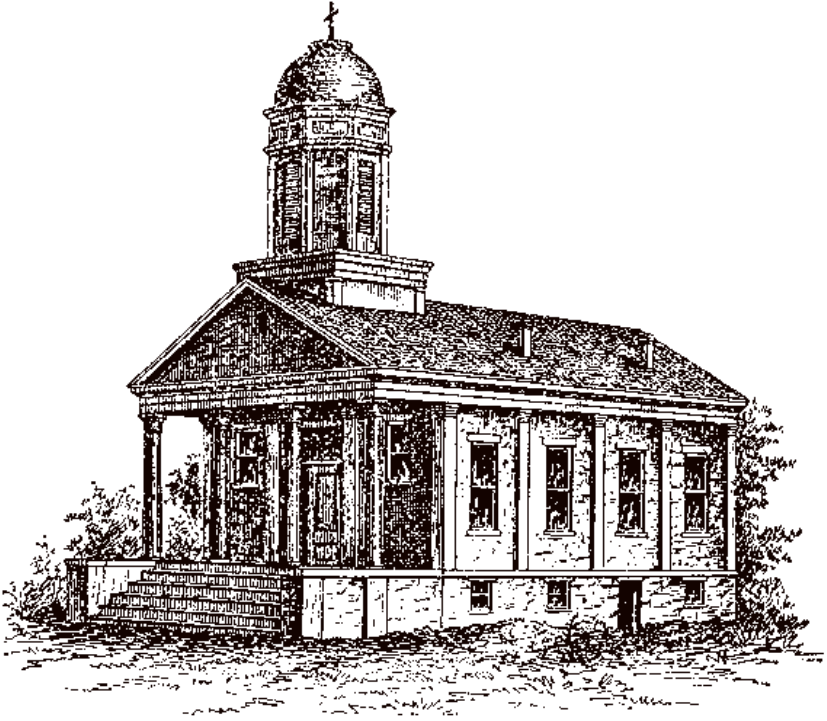
Before Hummer left Iowa, the trustees hired a contractor to build the church. While in New York, Hummer received two letters from Theodore Sanxay raising concerns about the contractor. The trustees had approved a \$5,500 contract for the building, an ambitious undertaking. Sanxay said the contractor put up the walls and got the window frames and rafters in place but seemed unwilling to do much more. Church donors were upset. The contractor wanted extra pay for minor items needed for the building but not specified in the contract. "His only cry is 'mony, mony, mony.'" Hummer suggested that people donate "a few Locks, pew fastners [*sic*] and Butts." In July 1845, the trustees accepted Hummer's suggestion and named him an agent "to settle with the contractor and to superintend future operations." Hummer turned his energy to the project. He provided architectural drawings and wrote out specifics on dimensions, lumber, carpenter work, painting, and brick work for the spire.<sup>57</sup>

In late December 1846, Hummer delivered his first sermon in a basement meeting room in the unfinished church. The completed church building was dedicated on February 24, 1850, two years after S. H. Hazzard replaced Hummer as minister. As the trustees promised, the church was not of inferior quality. The classic brick building measured forty-two feet across and extended seventy-five feet from front to back. It featured a high portico and Grecian columns and cupola. The society had expended around five thousand dollars. A smaller than desired bell

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56. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 537–39; Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 155–56; Notes by Bob Hibbs, June 13, 2006; Michael Hummer, "1847 Rev. Michael Hummer's Church Book, 1845–1847," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show2047>. Only one historical narrative, that of Van Der Zee, says the bell was a gift: "The bell was a large one, of heavy and splendid tone, presented to the church by some gentlemen of Troy, New York, the proprietor of the bell foundry being one of the number."

57. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 537–38; Theodore Sanxay, "1844 Letter and Envelope from Theodore Sanxay to Rev. Michael Hummer," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2043>; "Date Unknown: Specifications for the Presbyterian Church Spire," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2182>; S. B. Gardner, "1851 Cross Bill Filed by the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church against Rev. Hummer," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2049>.



Construction of The First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City began in 1844, but funding shortages delayed completion until 1850. This handsome brick building suffered irreparable damage by a tornado in 1856. Drawing by an unknown artist for the cover of the church's centennial program in 1940. Courtesy Iowa City Public Library.

sounded the call to services. For many parishioners, a church bell was seen as a mark of success.<sup>58</sup>

Doctrinal issues and financial conflict ended Hummer's service in 1848. During his trips east, he embraced some of the beliefs and activities attributed to Emanuel Swedenborg, among them a form of "spirit-rapping," or Spiritualism.<sup>59</sup> Such ideas, considered unorthodox

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58. Charles [Clarence] Aurner, *History of Johnson County, Iowa, containing a History of the County and Its Townships, Cities and Villages from 1836 to 1882* (Iowa City, Iowa: n.p., 1883), 433.

59. Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1688 and died in 1772. Members of the group acknowledge their religion draws its primary theology from his writings. Swedenborg's theology denies the Vicarious Atonement, the Trinity, and the deity of the Holy Spirit, but holds Christ as

by Presbyterians, were not well received by most of Hummer's congregation. In addition, Hummer was said to be "always excitable, somewhat peculiar, and an avowed infidel before his conversion." As a youth, Hummer was an atheist who converted to Presbyterianism.<sup>60</sup>

The congregation's challenges against Hummer's unacceptable preaching were not the only controversies. Soon they charged him with misconduct in his handling of the funds. The matter was complicated because he paid his own salary and expenses out of the donated funds, and he did not reveal the details. During a subsequent trial to investigate these matters, Hummer became furious and left the room in a rage. The presbytery, he declared, is "a den of ecclesiastical thieves."<sup>61</sup> Despite the rift, Hummer tried to remain in his position. But because he ignored the authority of the presbytery and its finding, he was not successful. At the first session of the elders in 1848, Michael Hummer was formally expelled from the ministry by the church trustees and set adrift.<sup>62</sup>

Before Hummer left Iowa City, he reached an agreement with the church trustees. As partial payment of the salary still owed to him, the two parties mutually agreed that he could take possession of the communion service, two Bibles, the pulpit furniture, twelve lamps, and other movable property of the church. In addition, he would also receive a promissory note for \$658.22, which was secured by a mortgage on the church real estate. He was to receive annual installments of \$100 each. After settling with the church, Hummer moved south to Keokuk. His plan was to create a spiritualistic temple or church to promote his ideas of Swedenborgianism. A specialist in Presbyterian history observed, "Whatever his faults might be, Hummer was by no means a commonplace man: he came to be recognized as 'an able, original, striking, and to some extent effective preacher,' and strangers stopping in Iowa City, it is said, were apt to go hear him. Excitable and visionary at all times, he at length showed such violence that his parishioners believed him insane." Hummer continued his involvement in the ministry after he left Iowa City. His last years were focused on an unnamed kind of business—presumably making money.<sup>63</sup>

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divine. See "Tenets of Swedenborgianism," <http://www.swedenborg.org/beliefs/tenets-of-swedenborgianism>.

60. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433.

61. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433.

62. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 156.

63. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 539, 539 n. 24. The 1870 U.S. Census for Wyandotte, Kansas, lists his occupation as "Business."

Hummer knew that the Iowa City church operated with limited funds. The board of trustees had agreed to his removal of physical property (the board would later challenge that assumption). Did the bell also belong to him? Late in the summer of 1848, Hummer returned to Iowa City, accompanied by James W. Margrave, a former trustee who supported Hummer's plans to create a new movement in Keokuk. Their plan was for Hummer to climb into the belfry, unfasten the bell, and, with ropes and tackle, slowly lower the bell to the ground. Margrave would be waiting with a wagon readied for a hasty retreat with the prize. Their intent: transport the bell to Keokuk and place it in the belfry of Hummer's new church.<sup>64</sup>

As the men were getting their equipment in place, curious onlookers in the small city gathered to see what was happening. The two conspirators apparently did not anticipate such interest, and they were not prepared for any resistance. Hummer climbed the tall construction ladder and successfully lowered the bell to the ground. But while he was still in the belfry unfastening the block and tackle, Margrave left the bell unattended. He took off to fetch his team and wagon from a nearby stable. During Margrave's absence, six or eight of the spectators implemented their own plan. First, they removed the ladder, trapping the now irritated Hummer in the empty belfry. Next, they loaded the bell into Eli Myer's wagon and drove away.<sup>65</sup>

According to reminiscent accounts in Iowa City, the stranded Hummer began "raving and scolding and gesticulating like a madman," while the boys and other bystanders laughed at his helpless wrath. Hummer launched into an impromptu sermon, described by witnesses as "more remarkable for its emphatic language than for logic of thought," and then proceeded to drive home his points by hurling toward the crowd below pieces of scantling, bricks, and other loose boards from the unfinished bell tower. When Margrave returned, he freed his leader, but the bell was long gone. The pair headed back to Keokuk, without the desired goal in tow.<sup>66</sup>

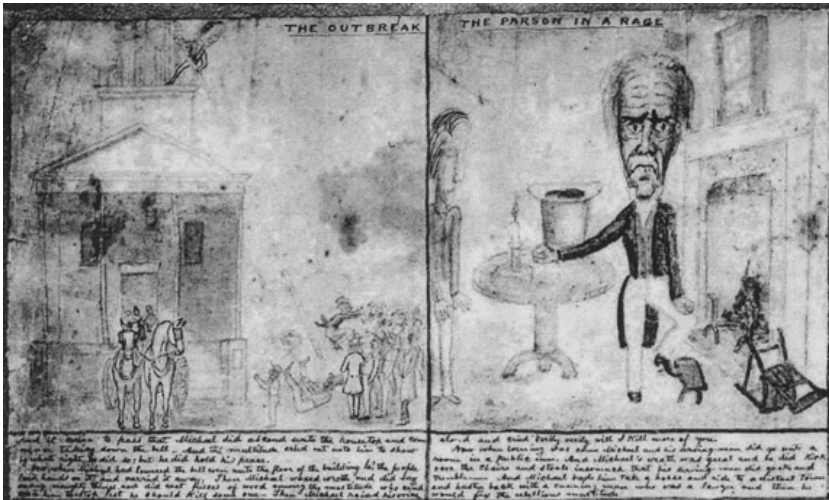
The Iowa City men who had taken the bell from Hummer transported it up the Iowa River to a point near the mouth of Rapid Creek. There, they sank it in deep water for a temporary hiding place. To aid in

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64. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 156–79; Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 539, 541.

65. F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927, typescript, Church History Library; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 434.

66. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 3:157–58; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34; Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," 2.

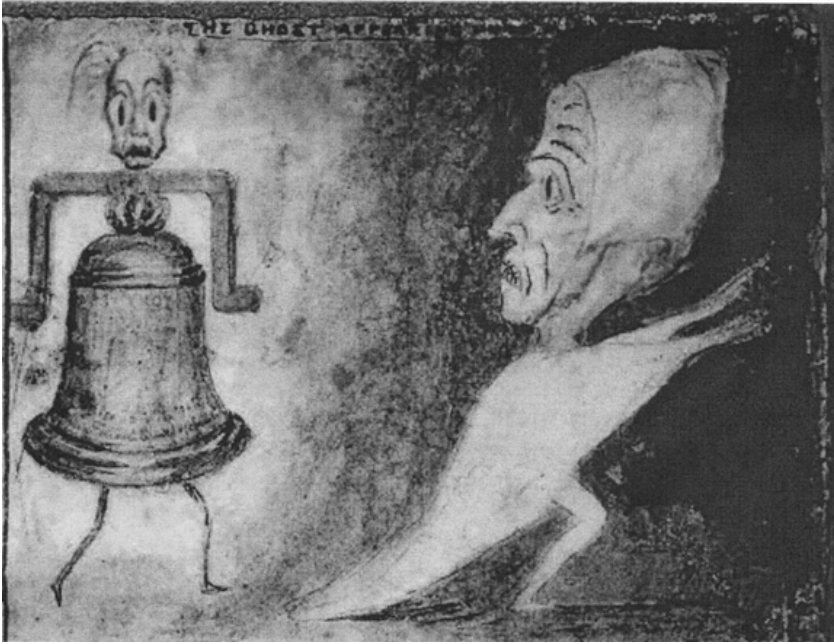


The seven panels of artist George Yewell's satirical drawing "Chronicles of the Bell" begin with "The Outbreak," showing Michael Hummer in the church tower throwing objects at those loading the bell into a wagon, and "The Parson in a Rage," depicting the pastor in a local inn that evening, threatening to hire an attorney "to fix the rebellious multitude." Charcoal sketch, version #4, 1848, panels 1 and 2, Iowa City Public Library.

a later retrieval, they attached one end of a large chain to the bell and the other end to the trunk of an elm tree near the bank. It is said that these secondary thieves intended to keep the bell secured while waiting for a settlement of the difficulties between the ex-minister and the trustees. However, when a few of the men returned to retrieve the bell, all they found was a chain still attached to the tree. The bell at the other end was gone! Some surmised that the bell had "washed down the river" or even "sunk through to China." Meantime, Hummer employed his own approach. Drawing on his newfound beliefs, Hummer engaged in "spirit rappings." He was told through the spirits, Hummer said, that the bell was buried in a well located eight miles to the west. Hummer and Margrave failed to locate the missing bell.<sup>67</sup>

The removal of the "Hummer Bell" was a topic of great interest at the time. A local historian said it "was talked about, laughed over, and

67. Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 3:158; Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," 2; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34. Aurner said, "The 'spirit rappings' told Hummer that it was buried under the State house."



In the third panel of cartoonist George Yewell's satirical "Chronicles of the Bell," he imagines Michael Hummer running from a ghostly church bell in the night that calls him to repent of his "wickedness." Charcoal sketch, version #4, 1848, panel 3, Iowa City Public Library.

turned into a great deal of fun." Two young lawyers, John P. Cook and William H. Tuthill, wrote a song, improvising and expanding it as they sang. The first stanza of their creation, "Hummer's Bell," reads as follows:

"Ah, Hummer's bell! Ah, Hummer's bell!  
 How many a tale of woe 'twould tell,  
 Of Hummer driving up to town  
 To take the brazen jewel down,  
 And when high up in his belfre-e,  
 They moved the ladder, yes, sir-e-e;"  
 Thus while he towered aloft, they say,  
 The bell took wings and flew away.<sup>68</sup>

68. The complete poem can be found in "Hummer's Bell," *Annals of Iowa* 3 (July 1864): 333; Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa*, 21–22; and Gallaher, "Hummer's Bell," 163–64. Tuthill's initials, "W. H. T.," appear after the fourth eight-line stanza. Samuel Magill created an entirely new and longer (eleven-stanza) version: Samuel Magill, "Hummer's Bell," *Lone Tree Reporter* (Johnson, Iowa),

A panel cartoon reflecting the same point of view sketched on brown paper not long after the bell's confiscation was displayed in a local shop window and later published.<sup>69</sup>

While the Iowa writers and artists kept the general story alive, a detailed explanation of the bell's travel to Utah and its uses there remained unwritten for years. Latter-day Saint emigrant company rosters, family recollections, newspaper reports, diaries, and correspondence between Brigham Young and various claimants reveal the rest of the story. Most importantly, these sources explain how Hummer's large brass church bell became confused with a smaller Nauvoo Temple bell.

### **The Lamoreaux Brothers and the Hummer Bell**

The key Latter-day Saint player in this entanglement was David Burlock Lamoreaux. Though not a participant, David's older brother Andrew Losey Lamoreaux was implicated in some accounts. So, who are these brothers? Andrew Lamoreaux was born at Pickering, York, Ontario, Canada, in 1812.<sup>70</sup> His brother David was born at the same place in 1819. Their father, John McCord Lamoreaux, supported his family in Pickering as a successful grocery man for over twenty years. John had inherited the business from his father, Joshua, who fled to Canada from his native state, New York, where he had been branded a Tory because of his loyalty to King George of England and his refusal to fight with the American patriots during the Revolutionary War.<sup>71</sup>

While in his early teens, David Lamoreaux was cutting down trees when a sapling hit him in the face and broke his nose completely off. David ran for help with the nose in his hands. Stitched back onto his face, the nose survived. The accident left a hole in his forehead, so for

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section 7, Johnson County Historical Edition, October 14, 1926, 1, accessed at NewspaperArchive. Elizabeth Irish's article about her father appears on the same page.

69. The cartoons, sketched in seven sections by George Yewell soon after the theft of the bell, were displayed in a local shop window. They were published in Millicent Smith, "Veil of Mystery Shrouds Hummer's Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927. The original cartoon is preserved in the State Historical Society of Iowa and can be viewed at "Chronicles of the Bell," <http://history.icpl.org/files/original/22451730codccafofc49baco5fobb120.jpg>.

70. Lyndon W. Cook and Milton V. Backman Jr., eds., *Kirtland Elders' Record* (Provo, Utah: Grandin, 1985), 91.

71. Edith Ivins Lamoreaux, *The Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1946), 6, available at Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

the rest of his life, David wore a patch to hide it.

When John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt brought the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to John Lamoreaux, he opened up the attic of his big store as an assembly room. The elders preached there to a room filled with the interested and the curious. The Lamoreaux family accepted the gospel message. To them it was as if coming directly from heaven. All were soon baptized.<sup>72</sup>

The new Latter-day Saints sold their holdings and left Canada in 1838. John and his family, including Andrew and David, moved first to Kirtland, where they lived briefly, and next to Dayton, Ohio. In 1839, all of the family except Andrew moved to Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois, into one of the few Latter-day Saint stakes created outside Nauvoo. Meanwhile, Andrew and his family moved to Missouri, from which they were soon expelled. They relocated to Nauvoo, and eventually the entire family joined them. The Lamoreaux family observed the rising stone walls of the temple and received their temple blessings. Andrew served as captain of a company assigned to the fortifications in the Battle of Nauvoo in September 1846.<sup>73</sup>

The Lamoreaux family left Nauvoo in the great exodus of 1846 that, over a period of seven months, sent thousands of Latter-day Saints across the Mississippi River into Iowa. The Lamoreauxs spent a year or so in the



David B. Lamoreaux was the only Latter-day Saint in the group that hauled the Hummer bell to Salt Lake City in 1850. He wore a patch over his forehead to cover a youthful injury caused when a tree fell on his face. Public posting on Ancestry.com by Lamoreaux descendants.

72. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6.

73. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 3:13–14, 15 n. 25.

Kanesville area (now Council Bluffs, Iowa), where they prepared for the trek to Utah. During that time father John Lamoreaux died. On June 21, 1847, the Nauvoo Temple bell left Winter Quarters attached to a wagon for use as a signal bell in the Charles C. Rich emigrant company of 126 Latter-day Saints. This party was the last of ten that crossed the plains that year. On July 3 of the following year, Andrew, his wife, Isabelle, and their four children left Winter Quarters in the Willard Richards Company. They reached their destination in mid-October 1848. Meanwhile, David and Mary Ann Lamoreaux and their children relocated ninety-five miles north along the Mississippi River from Nauvoo in Iowa City.<sup>74</sup>

It was during his sojourn in Iowa City that David Lamoreaux became involved in the “rescue” of Hummer’s bell. He was with those who hauled off the bell and sank it in Rapid Creek. The other named participants included Eli Myers (who drove the team), James Miller, and A. B. Newcomb. Over time, these four men concluded that the wrangling between Hummer and the church elders over ownership would not be resolved. This foursome, and possibly others, joined the rush to California for gold and took the bell with them. David Lamoreaux chose to travel only as far as Utah.<sup>75</sup>

All of Lamoreaux’s adventurous associates made it to California. Eli Myers, a twenty-four-year-old farmer in rural Agency, Wapello County, and a native of Ohio, left behind his wife, Elizabeth, and their three children, the youngest just nine months old. James Miller, thirty-two, had migrated from his native Scotland to Canada, where he married, and then, in 1846, relocated to Iowa. His California venture left his wife, Elizabeth, and sons ages six and three in Iowa. Connecticut-born A. B. Newcomb, forty-five, left his wife, H. A., and their daughter behind. However, at different times over the next few years, all three returned to Iowa and moved their families to the gold fields in Amador County, east of Sacramento toward Sutter’s Creek.<sup>76</sup>

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74. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6; Pioneer emigration list, 1847–1848, 133, in docket book February 1844–May 1845, <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel/pioneers/7070/david-burlock-lamoreaux>.

75. Irish, “Hummer and His Bell.”

76. Personal information is from census records and family trees at [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) for Myers and Miller and at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) for Newcomb. Eli Myers (1826–1905) had an uncle of the same name, Eli Myers (1813–1850), living in Amador County, California, who died on October 23, 1850, so the two did not meet in California. It is unknown if the senior Eli Myers influenced his nephew to seek gold dust there. Both were born in Preble County, Ohio; Eli

On April 15, 1850, Myers, Miller, Newcomb, and Lamoreaux secretly fished out the bell and packed it in a strong box. They loaded the box onto Newcomb's wagon and headed west. Because Lamoreaux was a Latter-day Saint, they decided to go to Kanesville, Iowa, where they joined Shadrach Roundy's independent, Salt Lake City-bound freight company. While the bell moved west with Roundy, David Lamoreaux and his family seem to have joined a Church-sponsored emigrant company headed by Joseph Young, assisted by William Snow. That party's en route inventory of people and resources lists the Lamoreaux family with two wagons, nine head of cattle, and six people. Emigrants in the Young party ferried their forty-two wagons across the Missouri River and headed west on June 15, the smallest of ten companies that left Kanesville, Iowa, that year. The first segment of the company entered the Salt Lake Valley on October 1. Others arrived later.<sup>77</sup>

Shadrach Roundy's even smaller freight company, which included a few independent travelers, left for Utah on June 22. His people regularly interacted with Young's Church-sponsored emigrant train. Eventually, Roundy's company moved out ahead of the emigrants and arrived in Salt Lake City two weeks before them. During the trip, Newcomb's wagon experienced difficulties. One ox died near Laramie, Wyoming, and within a few more days, the other ox died, leaving Newcomb without transportation. So, the bell was transferred to Hiram Mott's wagon for the rest of the journey. Mott lost one ox, a cow, and seven horses (one on a hot July 15 from exhaustion while "running Buffaloes"). David Lamoreaux lost a large red and white ox and a red steer. Some of the company's cattle died of exhaustion; others either strayed or were left behind to die on the road west of Fort Bridger.<sup>78</sup>

Hiram Mott, from Bainbridge, New York, served as the captain of one of three "tens" (Brigham Young's term for subgroups) in Roundy's company. Roundy was captain over the first ten, which, among others, included his own family and that of David Lamoreaux. William W. Rust,

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(1813) relocated to Johnson County, Iowa, in 1836. Eli (1826) moved with his parents and siblings to District 13 (later Agency), Wapello County, Iowa, sometime between 1842 and October 1845. Family group sheets of both men, [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

77. Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34; Shadrach Roundy, Journal, 1850, June to September, MS 1403, Church History Library; Gardner, Snow, Record Book, 1850, MS 2614, Church History Library.

78. Roundy, Journal; Captain S. Roundy's Company Report, 1850 September, in Brigham Young Office Emigrating Companies Reports, 1850–1862, CR 1234 5, Church History Library.

a Vermont native, was captain of the second ten. As with the Lamoreaux family, the names of Mott and Rust, with their wives and children, appear in both Roundy's journal and Young's roster. The names of the three Iowa City men don't appear on either list. Perhaps these "Old School" Presbyterians maintained their independence by camping separately or moving ahead on their own.<sup>79</sup>

Roundy's party arrived in Salt Lake City on September 10, 1850.<sup>80</sup> Eli Myers, James Miller, A. B. Newcomb, and David Lamoreaux wintered in the city, with the tightly boxed Hummer bell still in their possession. In early February, Hiram Mott met with Asa Calkin, who, with his family, had arrived in Salt Lake with the Young-Snow 1850 emigrant company. Calkin was working as a clerk in the tithing office. After negotiations, which may have included David Lamoreaux, the parties agreed on a purchase price of six hundred dollars. Calkin entered into this agreement while President Brigham Young was away on a trip to southern Utah. Later on, Young's absence would help explain some of the confusion surrounding the Hummer bell.<sup>81</sup>

Years later, Brigham Young assumed that because Hiram Mott negotiated the deal, Mott received the funds. The official record shows distributions to four people from an account set up at the tithing office for David Lamoreaux. On March 20, 1851, a credit of \$600 for "1 Bell" was posted in Lamoreaux's account. From then until mid-August, Lamoreaux authorized payments, in kind or cash, to three other men. The account book gives no reason for the payments. Most likely, they compensated the recipients for expenses incurred in transporting the bell. On April 1, John [Eli]<sup>82</sup> Meyers received a single payment of \$90 (his traveling companions James Miller and A. B. Newcomb are not

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79. Roundy, Journal; Gardner, Snow, Record Book, 1850. The duplicate listing may mean that the Iowa City group signed up first with Roundy and later with Young and Snow. Hummer's followers were identified as "Old School" Presbyterians by Asa Calkin, a former Iowa City resident, in A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

80. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6.

81. M[ichael]. Hummer to Brigham Young, January 26, 1869, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers; Brigham Young to Charles H. Berryhill, April 8, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library.

82. We could not locate a John Meyers in Eli's family, so we cannot explain the use of the name "John." Eli's uncle, of the same name, was in the gold fields and died there in October 1850, before Eli arrived.

among the recipients). On April 9, Hiram Mott received \$15 in cash. On the eighteenth, he received three bushels of potatoes and two hundred pounds of flour at ten cents per pound (total value \$25). It was not until August 14 that Shadrach Roundy received \$11 and a credit for goods valued at \$9 at the Salt Lake mercantile store of James A. Livingston and Charles A. Kinkaid, located just south of the Council Hall on Main Street. For his part, Lamoreaux ordered two hundred pounds of flour, paid some back tithing, and spent \$8 on a stray animal bill. This left just over \$200 in his account. All of it was transferred to Samuel P. Hoyt's account on October 9. The Hoyt family arrived in the Salt Lake Valley late in September 1851 with virtually nothing to live on. Brigham Young was looking for volunteers to help settled Fillmore, the newly designated territorial capital. Hoyt responded to Young's public announcement by signing on. The last of the Hummer bell funds from Lamoreaux's account allowed Samuel and his family to outfit themselves for the trip south.<sup>83</sup>

It is worth recalling that it was during the winter of 1849–50 that the Nauvoo Bell cracked and was melted down. David Lamoreaux's party arrived in Salt Lake City four days before the September 14, 1850, report in the *Deseret News* about plans to enlarge and recast the bell. This timing in Salt Lake City may have contributed to conflicting stories that confuse one bell with another, including the misconception that David (some accounts include his brother Andrew) brought the Nauvoo Bell to Salt Lake in 1848 (or later). As noted earlier, the Nauvoo Bell arrived in Salt Lake City on October 2, 1847, with the Charles C. Rich emigrant company. Andrew Lamoreaux traveled to Utah in 1848 in a large company headed by Willard Richards.

The confusion over which bell came west with which emigrant company surfaces most often in accounts influenced by a series of next-generation Lamoreaux family histories. All of these stories borrow the details of the Hummer bell incident and apply them to the Nauvoo Bell. The first two of three interrelated Lamoreaux stories are biographical sketches based in part on an interview with David Lamoreaux. The

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83. Trustee-in-Trust, Ledger A, David B. Lamoreaux account, March 20, 25; April 1, 9, 18; August 14, 18; and October 9, 1851; and Trustee-in-Trust, Journal B, David B. Lamoreaux account, p. 168, April 9; p. 122, March 20, 25; April 1, 18; August 14, 18; and October 9, 1851. Information from these sources was shared by Grant Anderson, a Church History specialist, Church History Library. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892–1904), 4:303–4, s.v. "Samuel P. Hoyt."

first is a short, undated biographical sketch titled “The Nauvoo Bell.” It was written by one of David Lamoreaux’s daughters sometime after his death in 1905 and before 1943. Besides telling the Hummer story as if it took place in Nauvoo, this account brings the bell from England, changes Presbyterian to Methodist, and hangs the bell on Brigham Young’s schoolhouse. All of these errors are common elements in Utah accounts. The story of the bell occupies the first third of this biography:

The Nauvoo Bell has a romantic story as told to me by my father, David B. Lamoreaux.

The Bell was placed on the Temple at Nauvoo, was purchased and donated by the members of the English saints and brought to America by apostle Wilford Woodruff.

Nov. 19th 1848 the Temple was destroyed; at this time the gentiles were persecuting the Saints and destroyed everything they could not use, taking the cherished Bell and putting it on the Methodist Church. It grieved the Saints so much they decided to do something about it. They made their plans to repossess it.

One stormy night the men gathered in secret and without horses pulled the wagon to the Church and lowered the Bell, pushed and pulled the wagon by hand to the edge of the Mississippi River and carefully concealing it in the water. Andrew Lamoreaux and his brother, David, were chosen to bring the Bell to Utah with their families, concealing the Bell in their wagon with their provision. The families walked so the Bell might ride.

In the notes we have, it states three dates the Bell arrived here, 1848 - 1851 - 1853. The Bell was used on Brigham Young’s School House for many years.<sup>84</sup>

The second Lamoreaux story is a close restating of the first. It is a pamphlet-sized life history of David B. Lamoreaux written and published by a daughter-in-law in 1946. It says that “a Methodist minister, having his eye on it for his own church, removed the bell one night, unobserved by the Mormon leader” (Brigham Young), who intended to take it west. David Lamoreaux and his brother Andrew learned of the bell’s removal and invited others to help them retrieve the bell from its new owner. The group accomplished the task during the night and hid the bell “in a

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84. Coauthor Shannon Tracy obtained a copy of “The Nauvoo Bell” from Lois Leetham Tanner, who got her copy from Edith Smith Elliot. The Lamoreaux family refers to this biographical sketch as the Lamoreaux “letter.” The “letter” ends by listing the names of three surviving daughters: Maud Lamoreaux (1871–1965), Nell Lamoreaux Clayton (1873–1943), and Lulu Lamoreaux Jones (1879–1949).

boggy marsh until it could be loaded into David's wagon before crossing the frozen Mississippi River. This made his load so heavy that members of his family were forced to walk most of the way across the plains."<sup>85</sup>

The third version of the Lamoreaux story is found in a 1957 family publication called *Our Grand-Mother—Jane—the Pioneer*. This variant offers greater precision than the others. It is based on the diary of Jane Mathers (Savage). The story begins in the fall of 1846, when Nauvoo was being overrun by vigilantes. A group of Latter-day Saint men became aware of a plot to steal the Nauvoo Bell from the temple tower. This group was led by David Lamoreaux and included a few of his friends. They used facemasks to disguise themselves as members of the mob. Then, just as the vandals were lowering the bell from the tower to the ground, Lamoreaux drove his own wagon underneath the bell, and "in a flash the brethren were off." The invaders thought the thieves were part of their own group. In a few minutes, the intruders discovered their mistake, but it was too late. David's group proceeded out of town and hid the bell in the muddy banks of the Mississippi River. The bell remained hidden until the twenty-sixth of September, when it was removed and taken to Winter Quarters, and from there to Salt Lake.<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, according to records in Iowa, three years after his expulsion from his church, Michael Hummer, now a resident of Keokuk, Iowa, became frustrated over his failed attempts to collect the remainder of the monies owed him by the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Early in 1851, he filed with the district court in Iowa City a bill of complaint against the church. On March 18, board president S. H. Hazard and the board of trustees responded with two handwritten, seven-page documents. One, a response to Hummer's bill of complaint, reviewed Hummer's role in managing the church finances and objected to his alleged unwillingness to take counsel. For example, he went forward, it said, with plans for a church building more elaborate than the congregation could afford.<sup>87</sup>

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85. Lamoreaux, *Life Story of David Burlock Lamoreaux*, 6. This version of the story is repeated in Darwin Wolford, *Andrew Locey and David Burlock Lamoreaux; the Brothers Who Recovered the Nauvoo Bell* (Rexburg, Idaho: Darwin Wolford, 1998), 9–10.

86. Ruth Savage Hilton, *Our Grand-Mother—Jane [Mathers Savage]—the Pioneer* (Oakland, Calif.: [Brigham Young University Extension Division, Publication Services], 1957): 21–27.

87. Thomas Hughes, "1851 Response to Bill of Complaint Brought by Rev. Hummer against the Church," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2048>.

The second document, a cross bill, set forth questions the board wanted Hummer to answer in court. In addition, it argued that Hummer had removed property from the church without board approval. Specifically, it said that “Hummer, violently and forcibly,” entered the church “and took from the Cupola thereof one large bell” owned by the church “and worth, as these respondents believe, about five hundred dollars.” The cross bill also classified as stolen the Bibles, pulpit furniture, and other items that Hummer said the board approved for removal. On March 19, Hummer’s attorney informed the court that Hummer had been “found a monomaniac” by a jury in the probate court of Lee County, Iowa. The premise of this decision was that since Michael Hummer was in constant communication with the spirits of another world, he was incompetent to care for matters in this world. The probate court appointed three men as guardians of Hummer’s person and belongings.<sup>88</sup>

These counterarguments did not resolve the issues of actions and ownership. Changes in church leadership, financial instability, and other priorities within the church delayed the resolution for two years. One narrative says that in 1855 the court awarded Hummer the \$650 promised him. At the same time, Hummer was held responsible for the loss of the bell. The value was charged against his claim, giving him legal ownership, but it reduced the cash payout to \$150. Ultimately, the histories say, this ruling motivated Hummer to seek out and, if possible, to recover the missing bell.<sup>89</sup>

The unsettled issue of Hummer’s salary was finally resolved through the dedicated efforts of Rev. John Crozier. Because of a long-time acquaintance, Crozier believed he could negotiate a settlement. Crozier served as pastor and chairman of the board of trustees at First Presbyterian Church from May to August 1853. However, the exchange of ideas took place mostly by mail during September and October. Some of the letters were not getting through because Hummer had moved from Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa, just across the Mississippi from Hamilton, Hancock County, Illinois. In a “Dear Brother” letter dated September 22,

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88. S. B. Gardner, “1851 Cross Bill Filed by the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church against Rev. Hummer,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2049>.

89. Gallaher, “Hummer’s Bell,” 155–64; Aurner, *History of Johnson County*, 433–34. A popular summary of the Hummer story, based on the earlier histories, is Don Doyle Brown, “The Preacher and the Bell,” in *Tell a Tale of Iowa: 50 True Stories of Iowa’s Past* (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead, 1980), 127–29.

Hummer proposed that the two of them meet on the first Tuesday of October at the fall meeting of the presbytery of Iowa, a gathering of a group of local leaders. "My highest regards to Mrs. Crozier and yourself," the letter said in closing, "yours in christian union, M. Hummer."<sup>90</sup>

Crozier arrived in Burlington, Des Moines County, in Iowa's south-east corner, on October 5. He soon learned that Hummer had applied to be reinstated in the church but was refused. The presbytery adjourned earlier that day, and Hummer left town. Crozier drove west eight miles to the rural farm town of Middletown, where he found Hummer. They "had an interview of several hours." Hummer rejected the highest offer the trustees had authorized Crozier to make, that is, "to pay him \$500, \$400 down and the other hundred in one year." With no better option, Crozier asked Hummer for a counter proposal. "Hummer offered to settle for \$400 in cash, \$100 at the end of a year at ten percent interest, and all court costs and attorney's fees up to \$50." This was an achievable deal. Crozier penned a letter to the Board of Trustees detailing his efforts. Understanding that the trustees would make the final decision, Crozier offered in a postscript a word of advice: "Humiliating as I consider the proposition here enclosed I would nevertheless say *accept!* Agree with thine adversary quickly." The signed agreement charged the missing bell to Michael Hummer, and its value was deducted from his claim. The bell "was certainly his at last," Crozier wrote, "whether it was his at first or not." The board of trustees approved a payment of \$490.<sup>91</sup>

### Brigham Young and Hummer's Bell

A half continent away and two years after Hummer received his overdue salary, Brigham Young heard about a bell in the Bishop's Storehouse that some said had once hung in a church in Iowa City. He asked Asa Calkin (the tithing clerk who had purchased the bell) to enquire of the Presbyterian Church there. Young offered two options. First, he would buy the bell for a reasonable price. (He did not know that Hummer owned the bell.) Second, if they wanted the bell, he would gladly

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90. Michael Hummer, "1853 Letter from Rev. Hummer to Rev. Crozier," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2052>.

91. John Crozier, "1853 Report to the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2051>; Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City," 549; George W. Clark, "1853 Request for Rev. Michael Hummer to Be Paid \$490.00," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2055>.

return it for what Calkin had paid for it. Instead of writing directly to the board of trustees, Calkin wrote to his brother Charles Calkin, an Iowa City resident. In his July 31, 1855, letter, Asa shared the history of the Hummer bell. He said that it had no inscription and that it weighed 745 pounds.<sup>92</sup> This is the first known estimate of the Hummer bell's weight and the unusual lack of a bell-maker's inscription.<sup>93</sup>

Charles inquired of others and was told that its ownership was in question. Among those he contacted was board member Henry Murray, a thirty-nine-year-old Irish physician and generous donor to the church. Murray's name was high on the list of subscribers willing to help buy a replacement for Hummer's bell for the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. The First Presbyterian Church had changed its name after some members had pulled out and organized the New School Presbyterian Church, formally called the First Constitutional Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Calkin provided Murray a copy of Brigham Young's letter. Calkin told him that because of the indifferent attitude of others he met with, he felt he "could be of no service to the trustees." He informed his brother Asa "that they did not wish to interfere in the matter but leave it with their agent at Salt Lake."<sup>94</sup>

Though hesitant to get involved with the bell's ownership at that time, the North Presbyterian Church's board of trustees moved forward to finish the church building. The new minister, Silas H. Hazard, collected \$500 from eastern donors, and the board secured a \$1,000 loan to help fund the work, which included repairing "the Bell-deck [which had been] torn up by some hand of violence." On February 25, 1850, Hazard preached a sermon of dedication. Church membership had dropped to twenty over Hummer's theological shift. Hazard increased it to forty-five. Over a period of years, the church was adorned with other furnishings. By the spring of 1850, members had pledged \$514 toward the purchase of a bell. Early in 1856 "their house of worship was extensively repaired and thoroughly re-decorated at an expense of several hundred dollars." But in May, sparks from an adjacent planing mill started a fire on the roof. It spread and destroyed the entire church building. The trustees met the next day and appointed Dr. Murray, Dr. Cochran, and

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92. A. Calkin to "Dear Brother," July 31, 1855, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

93. A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, CR 1234, box 33, file 2, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

94. C. M. Galkin, "[1800s] Letter from CM Galkin to Murray re: Bell," Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2129>.

H. D. Downey to begin planning for a larger and finer replacement. The congregation turned again to meetings in other churches and public buildings.<sup>95</sup>

It was in this context that in 1857 Milton Cochrane, president of the board of trustees, wrote to Brigham Young concerning the whereabouts of the bell. Cochrane told Young the bell belonged to the First (North) Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. Through correspondence with persons in Salt Lake City, Cochrane said he was “satisfied that the bell is now in the possession of your people.” No record exists of President Young’s reply.<sup>96</sup>

A year later, church members met for the first time in the basement of their new house of worship. But a national financial panic and relocation of the state capital to Des Moines made it impossible even to pay the pastor’s salary. In 1862, a new pastor, Samuel M. Osmond, who would serve a record-setting seventeen years, revived interest in fundraising. His dedicated service brought people into the church, and membership reached more than two hundred. Donations and a major loan peaked in 1868 at \$7,700. Osmond dedicated the new church in 1865—without a bell.<sup>97</sup>

Church leaders launched a fund-raising campaign in June 1867 “for the purpose of purchasing a first class Church Bell for the North Pres. Ch. B flat base cleff [bass clef] or as near that as can be procured.” They hoped to install the bell before the spire was enclosed. Apparently, the campaign failed to reach its funding target. Seventeen months later, in November 1868, Osmond wrote to Brigham Young to inquire if the Hummer bell was in Utah. Young confirmed its presence. The bell had been lying idle ever since it arrived, he said. Reiterating the position he held in 1855, Young offered to part with the bell under the right conditions—if the Presbyterians could prove ownership.<sup>98</sup> In response, Osmond said the trustees would like to receive the bell as soon as possible. He would pay transportation costs, but the congregation could not raise the

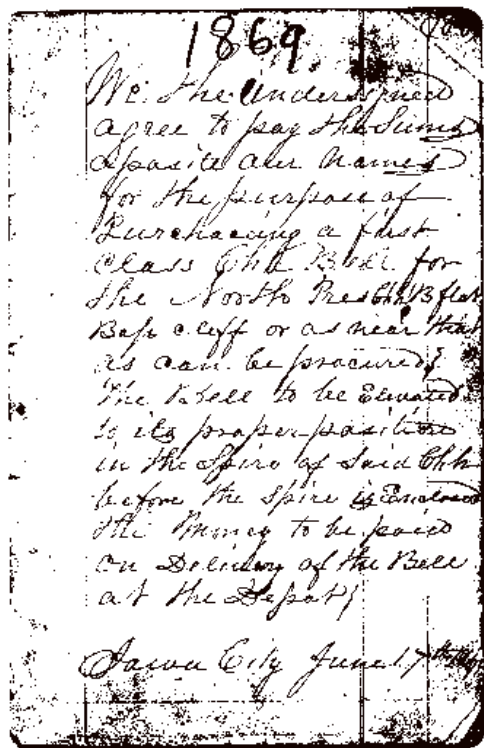
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95. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 544–45, 551–52, 556; “1855 Subscription Ledger for a Bell for the North Presbyterian Church in Iowa City,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2056>.

96. Milton B. Cochrane to Brigham Young, April 21, 1857, CR 1234 1, box 25, folder 13, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

97. Van Der Zee, “History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City,” 554–56.

98. A. Calkin to “Dear Brother,” July 31, 1855; Brigham Young to S. M. Osmond, November 30, 1868, Brigham Young Letterbooks.



Those who signed this subscription ledger to help pay for a “first class church bell tuned to a B flat” agreed to pay “on Delivery of the Bell at the Depot” in Iowa City. Subscription ledger, 1867–1872, courtesy Iowa City Public Library.

money to satisfy Young’s selling price.<sup>99</sup>

As a follow-up, the board of trustees published a notice in the *New York Tribune* in January 1869 stating that Brigham Young would be willing to return the bell to Iowa City if the trustees paid transportation costs. An excited Michael Hummer, now living in Kansas City, Missouri, read the notice enthusiastically. He wrote to Brigham Young declaring that he, not the North Presbyterian Church, was the rightful owner of the bell. Hummer said that he purchased the bell from Andrew McNeeley in 1844 in West Troy, New York, and that McNeeley’s name was “cast upon the bell.”<sup>100</sup>

99. S. M. Osmond to Brigham Young, December 22, 1868, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers. Aurner says that in 1868 Osmond learned that “some returned California gold hunters let the secret out,” which led him to write to Brigham Young. This implies an 1868 return of Myers, Newcomb, and Miller, but genealogical information and census records prove that all three returned home in the 1850s to move their families from Iowa: Eli Myers left after the February 1850 birth of his son Joseph and returned more than nine months before the birth of his son James on September 1856 in Nevada; A. B. Newcomb’s daughter Josephine was born in Iowa in 1848 and his daughter Jessie in 1857 in California; James Miller’s son James was born in 1847 in Iowa, daughter Jenetta in 1851 in Wisconsin, and daughter Mary in 1854 in California.

100. M. Hummer to Brigham Young, January 26, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 5, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

The company Hummer described as the McNeeley Bell Company in West Troy, New York, was actually named the Meneely Bell Foundry of Troy, New York. (A common problem of the company at that time was that people mistakenly called it by the name “McNeeley.”) Andrew Meneely, the son of immigrants from north Ireland, established The Meneely Bell Foundry in 1826 in West Troy (now Watervliet), New York. He had learned his trade at age fifteen as an apprentice to Julius Hanks, whose father, Colonel Benjamin Hanks, had created a bronze bell foundry in adjacent Gibbonsville. Shortly after Benjamin Hanks opened the new facility, he transferred the business to his son Julius Hanks, his younger brother Horatio, and to Andrew Meneely. The business moved to Troy, New York, in 1825. Andrew Meneely continued to produce bells until his death in 1851 at age forty-nine. His sons and their descendants continued the business in two separate companies until 1951.<sup>101</sup>

In February 1869, Mrs. M. Wheeler, Michael Hummer’s niece, wrote to Brigham Young about the bell. The family had heard rumors that the bell was in Utah. However, she said, her uncle did not accept that explanation as true. Wheeler said she would rather learn that “the bell was sunk in the [Great Salt] Lake than to hear it had gon [sic] back to Iowa City.” Besides, she added, “my poor uncle has had much to contend with.”<sup>102</sup> Her sentiments reflect a keen awareness of the impact on Hummer’s life of the contest between himself and the church he once headed.

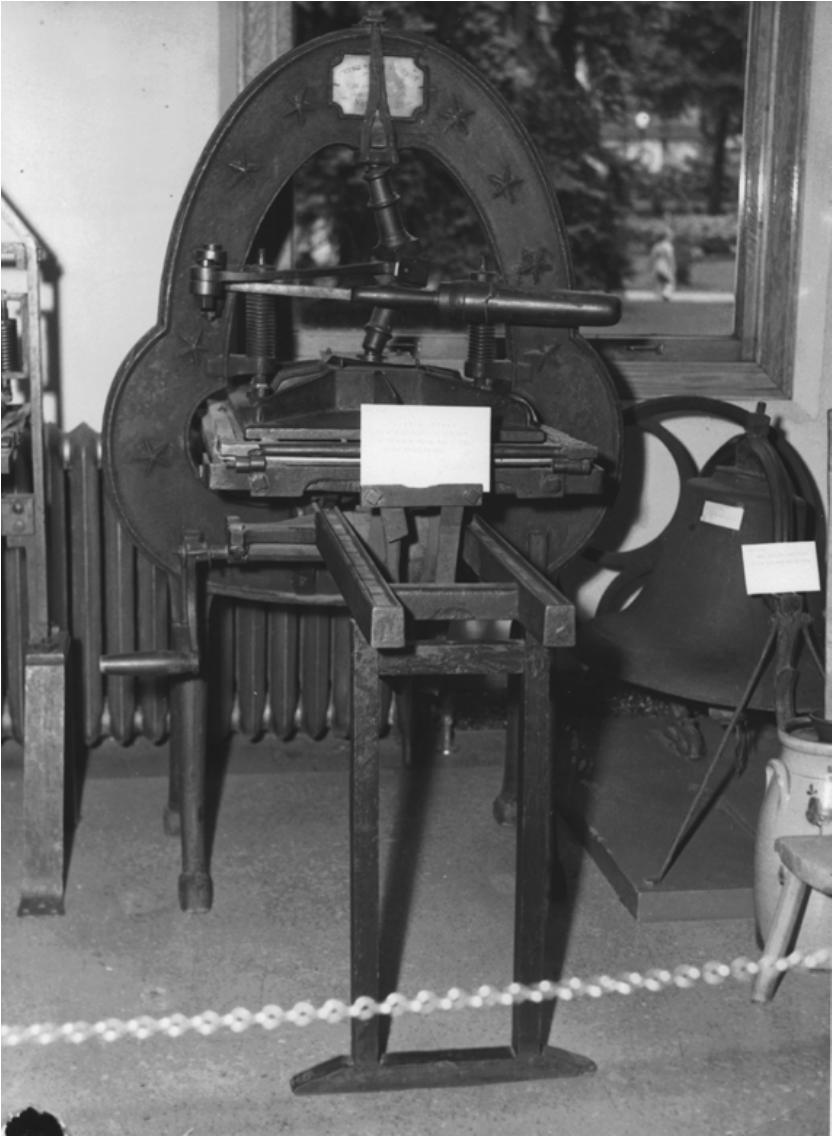
Young was prepared with an answer. Soon after his November exchange of letters with the Presbyterian minister Samuel M. Osmond, Young secured details about the bell in correspondence with his former clerk, Asa Calkin, who was living in St. George, Utah. Calkin reviewed for Young the problems of discerning the ownership of the bell and told the president what he had paid for the bell.<sup>103</sup> With this information in hand, Young replied to Wheeler’s inquiry with a letter addressed directly

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101. Paul Grondahl, “Andrew Meneely (1802–1851): Founder of World-Renowned Meneely Bell Foundry,” *Times Union*, December 5, 2013, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Andrew-Meneely-1802-1851-Founder-of-4993148.php>.

102. Mrs. M. Wheeler to Brigham Young, February 16, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, file 11, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

103. A. Calkin to Brigham Young, January 20, 1869, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 2, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers; Ronald G. Watt, “A Tale of Two Bells: Nauvoo Bell and Hummer’s Bell,” *Nauvoo Journal* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 37.



The Book of Mormon printing press, *center*, the “Old Bell” (Hummer bell), other bells, *right*, and hundreds of other historical objects were moved from the Deseret Museum in 1919 to this storage area in the Church History Museum on Temple Square. Courtesy Church History Library.

to Michael Hummer. Young said he would give up the bell to the “first properly authorized person who will produce *bona fide* proof of ownership & authority to receive it, & who will refund the money expended thereon which is between six and seven hundred dollars.”<sup>104</sup>

Michael Hummer replied to President Young’s letter in May 1869 with another query: What proof would he need to claim the bell? Young answered that he needed affidavits certifying ownership from two or more reliable persons “whose veracity is not likely to be a subject of question.” Young also expected to be reimbursed for his expenses.<sup>105</sup> This was the last correspondence between Brigham Young and Michael Hummer, for Hummer never replied.

But the story does not end here. The fund-raising campaign launched in 1867 by Samuel Osmond went well enough that the board of trustees of the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City approved the purchase of a bell from the Meneely Bell Foundry. The bell arrived in July 1869. The cost was \$962.30 plus shipping. In August, the trustees hired a contractor to build the spire. However, the bell failed to satisfy expectations. For some, it was too small; for others, the pitch was not acceptable. So, church members increased their donations to fund an exchange of the new two-thousand-pound bell for one at least a thousand pounds heavier. Instead of a bell tuned to B flat in the bass clef, they ordered an E-flat tone. Three months later the rejected bell was on its way back to the foundry.<sup>106</sup>

In February 1870, Brigham Young received a letter from Charles H. Berryhill, an Iowa City resident. Although not a member of the Presbyterian Church, Berryhill expressed “an interest in having the bell restored.”<sup>107</sup> Young asked his second counselor, Daniel H. Wells, to respond. Young’s expectations had not changed. Berryhill was to pay for transportation, reimburse the church for its cost in buying the bell,

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104. Brigham Young to M. Hummer, March 24, 1869, Brigham Young Letterbooks, italics in original.

105. Brigham Young to Rev. M. Hummer, May 15, 1869, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

106. “1869 Church Bell Subscription Ledger,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2066>; and “1869 Contract for the Building of a Spire for the First Presbyterian Church,” Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2067>.

107. Charles H. Berryhill to Brigham Young, February 21, 1870, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 12, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

and verify the bell's true ownership.<sup>108</sup> Berryhill's reply to Wells came quickly. He wanted to know "the nature of the claim that Prest. Young holds on it." Furthermore, Berryhill shared his belief that the Union Pacific Railroad would transport the bell to Iowa without charge for the Iowa church.<sup>109</sup>

Wells did not feel comfortable in proceeding without Young's involvement, and since the President was en route to southern Utah, the matter would just have to wait. But Berryhill was impatient. He wrote again, this time to Orson Pratt, stating that he needed to know why Brigham Young wanted six to seven hundred dollars for the bell. Berryhill wrote: "It certainly cannot be possible that your church with its professions of Christianity can be the possessors and holders of stolen property knowingly, but you will perceive that it looks suspicious in Mr. Wells failing to advise us as to the nature of the claim against the bell." Berryhill concluded, "If we knew . . . that it was a just claim, we might possibly make some arrangement to pay it."<sup>110</sup>

Three weeks later, Brigham Young was back in Salt Lake City. The reply he dictated reveals his displeasure with the tone of Berryhill's letter. Wearying of the seemingly unresolvable situation, President Young once again defended the Church's need to be reimbursed for what it had paid "a Mr. Mott, of Iowa, on his way to California, who offered to sell it for six or seven hundred dollars; we paid him for the bell." Young reassured Berryhill that the bell was boxed up, safe, and, when he last saw it, in good condition. He said, "The bell we have never used, & probably never should use it, it is not such a one as we want." Young concluded, "I am still writing to let you know all that I can concerning it, and now if you are disposed to prove the property, pay charges, and take the bell away, I shall be very glad to have you do so, if not, you will do me a great kindness not to trouble me any more about it."<sup>111</sup>

For Brigham Young, too much time had been expended on the issue. Charles Berryhill did not respond, and the matter remained unresolved. The bell would remain in storage in the tithing yard for another

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108. Daniel Wells to Charles H. Berryhill, March 3, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

109. Charles H. Berryhill to Daniel Wells, March 14, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

110. Charles H. Berryhill to Orson Pratt, April 8, 1870, CR 1234 1, box 33, folder 12, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

111. Brigham Young to Charles H. Berryhill, April 29, 1870, Brigham Young Letterbooks.

thirty-nine years—from 1870 to 1909. During those same years, in Iowa, the story of the theft of Hummer's bell appeared in local histories. A new poetic retelling circulated in religious circles in 1907.<sup>112</sup> But in Utah, the passage of time and the death of those who knew the story of the controversial Hummer bell eventually created gaps in knowledge of the identity and the location of the Iowa bell.

While Berryhill's exchange with Brigham Young went nowhere, his neighbor in Iowa City had not given up. The campaign to buy a larger bell launched by Samuel M. Osmond in September 1869 had taken off. The fund drive reached its goal early in 1872, and the church placed an order with the Meneely foundry. The new, larger bell arrived in March and was installed in a spire reaching skyward 153 feet. No doubt the members of the North Presbyterian Church of Iowa City expected to enjoy the tones of their 2,874-pound, E-flat bell for years to come. Unfortunately, on June 20, 1877, the spire, the bell, and most of the front of the building were torn off by a tornado. The spire was replaced with a short battlement tower with a crenellated finish that reflected the architectural pattern of castle towers. Reports on this change don't mention a bell. The congregation enjoyed this church for more than a century before moving to a new building. The old building and its land were annexed to the University of Iowa campus and preserved for cultural activities.<sup>113</sup>

### Retelling the Story

For a number of years after Brigham Young's death on August 28, 1877—and Michael Hummer's passing two years later in Wyandotte, Kansas—interest in the Hummer bell waned. The residents of Iowa City were reminded of the story by its presence in local histories published in the

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112. See "Hummer's Bell," in *The Presbyterian Church in Iowa, 1837–1900*, prepared by a Committee of the Synod of Iowa, Joseph W. Hubbard, D.D., Chairman (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Jones and Wells, the Superior Press, 1907), [https://archive.org/stream/presbyterianchuroopres/presbyterianchuroopres\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/presbyterianchuroopres/presbyterianchuroopres_djvu.txt). A later poem, the eleven-stanza "Hummer's Bell," by Samuel Magill, was published in *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 14, 1926.

113. "1869 Church Bell Subscription Ledger"; Nick Fetty, "Church Marks 175 Years of History," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, September 14, 2014, <https://www.press-citizen.com/story/news/local/2014/09/14/church-marks-years-history/15646557/>; Vernon Trollinger, *Haunted Iowa City* (Charleston, S.C.: Haunted America, 2011), 70–71.

late 1880s and early 1890s. But its identity among Utah artifact custodians was lost.

Perhaps it was the detailed recitation of the whole story in Iowa histories that caused the Rev. John Crozier to reflect on Hummer's experience with his opponents. In a letter to a Presbyterian minister in 1890, Crozier said of Michael Hummer, "Undoubtedly his mind became unsettled. He was a man of vigorous intellect & an orator by of *ungovernable temper*. That Scotch-Irish Virginia-Kentucky blood which is but another name for '*Adam unsanctified*' was often too much for him. But in many of the things charged against him he '*was more sinned against than sinning*'. . . . And yet I do believe that had a course of Christian tenderness been taken it is possible many years of efficient labor might have been wrought by him."<sup>114</sup>

In 1911, an Iowa newspaper published Elizabeth Irish's recollections of her father's attempt in 1895 to retrieve the Hummer bell. General Charles W. Irish was an Iowa City engineer and railroad surveyor who had been appointed United States Surveyor General for Nevada by President Cleveland in 1886. Irish was called to Washington in 1893 to head the Bureau of Irrigation and Inquiry. One of his responsibilities was to examine irrigation water resources in the western states. It was while traveling through Utah in 1895 with his daughter Elizabeth that Irish befriended "a large number of pioneer Mormons." When Irish told his unnamed Latter-day Saint friends about Hummer's bell, they "asked if he had any means of by which he could identify the bell." Irish told them "that he had seen the bell many times, and that the name of the foundry and city were stamped on [t]he bell." By appointment the next day, the men took Charles and Elizabeth to an outbuilding in the tithing yard and showed him an old bell which they believed "Brigham Young had brought across the plains with him." Elizabeth Irish said the men were "all armed with magnifying glasses." Before long they found the name of the foundry and the city of its creator "which General Irish had told them was imprinted on the bell."<sup>115</sup>

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114. Van Der Zee, "History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City, 530 n. 24, italics in original.

115. Elizabeth Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell by the Late General Charles W. Irish of Iowa City, Iowa," *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 13, 1926, section 7, p. 1. A similar article followed: F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1927. Information on Charles Irish's life, is from "Biographical Note," in MSC 362, Manuscript Register, Papers of Charles Wood Irish, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa

Charles Irish wondered what the men knew about the bell's history. Their response melded together the story of three separate bells: the Nauvoo Bell, Brigham Young's schoolhouse bell, and the Hummer bell. According to Elizabeth Irish, "They stated it was first used for church purposes, and to call the workmen to their work each day." This was the Nauvoo Bell (which no longer existed). Her Latter-day Saint hosts also said that "in later years when Brigham Young built a private school house for his own children the bell was placed in a cupola on it and was used to call the children to school." These older men were not aware that the schoolhouse bell had its own history. That bell had found a permanent home in the Church History Museum. Elizabeth said the men thought that when the schoolhouse was demolished, the Hummer bell "was retired to the old Tithing House, and was almost forgotten." (Actually, the Iowa City bell rested in the tithing office from 1851 until its transfer to the Deseret Museum.) Elizabeth Irish said the "old pioneers gave [her father] their word of honor, stating that when all the old pioneer Mormons had passed away, the bell, of course, would not be of interest to the younger generation, and that they would consent to have the 'Hummer Bell' [sent] back to the General or his daughter."<sup>116</sup>

Sometime before Elizabeth published her account of Colonel Irish's visit, she became aware that the old tithing house had been demolished and the Hummer bell "placed in the 'Mormon Historical Chamber' of that city, where it can now be viewed by interested visitors." She said a Latter-day Saint friend sent her a photograph of the bell in its new location. Her friend reassured her: "You may be sure if anyone gets that bell, it will be Miss Elizabeth Irish."<sup>117</sup>

General Irish's story, as retold by his daughter in 1911 (and reprinted in 1926), contains one element that helps confirm the identity of the Hummer bell. In 1895, the general's Utah hosts insisted that the bell carried no evidence of its maker's name. Irish convinced them otherwise using magnifying glasses to reveal what remained of the original inscription. This evidence squares with the report forty years earlier of

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Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa, [http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/scua/msc/tomsc400/msc362/msc362\\_irishcharles.html](http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/scua/msc/tomsc400/msc362/msc362_irishcharles.html).

116. Elizabeth Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell," *Des Moines Register*, May 14, 1911.

117. Irish, "Identification of the Old Hummer Bell," *Des Moines Register*. See also F. M. Irish, "Hummer and His Bell," *Lone Tree [Iowa] Reporter*, October 14, 1926, section 7, p. 5, <https://byufamilyhistorylibrary.newspapers.com/image/52269475>.

tithing clerk Asa Calkin, who told Brigham Young that the inscription had been ground off. In other words, Irish agreed with Calkin's observation that the bell had been defaced. The Hummer bell had "spoken." For those willing to take a closer look, the controversial artifact revealed its maker and place of origin.

When President Gordon B. Hinckley authorized an authentic reconstruction of the Nauvoo Temple with a bell in its tower, the Hummer bell once again underwent a close inspection. In the spring of 2000, three architects working on the temple project measured the bell hanging in the campanile. A draftsman's drawing of their measurements reveals a bell 23½ inches tall and 33 inches wide at the bottom. The thickness of the metal is about 2½ inches. The architects also found a hint of an inscription in a filed-off area on the bell's side, about 15 inches from the top. The area is about 2½ inches tall and 13 inches long. This discovery supports Irish's observation and Calkin's explanation that someone had filed off the manufacturer's name and place of business, no doubt to hide its origin. This was a common practice when used bells were sold. A charcoal rubbing made of what remained of the inscription lacks clarity. Yet some have seen tell-tale letters in the rubbing that suggest the name of bell-maker Meneely.<sup>118</sup>

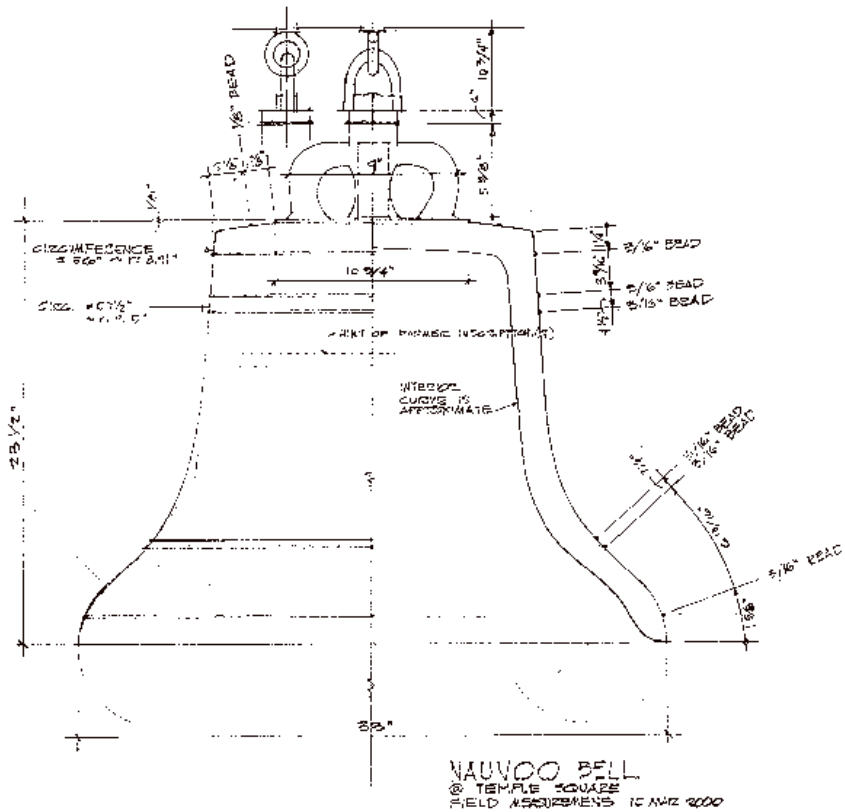
The caretakers who told Irish that the Hummer bell once hung in the steeple of Brigham Young's "old schoolhouse" were confused. Yet, their assertion was not the only such claim. In 1876, Salt Lake City's *Daily Tribune* published an article retelling the Lamoreaux story. The newspaper's version has Young himself directing Lamoreaux and others to steal the Nauvoo Bell from a Methodist church "not many miles from Nauvoo" and transport it to Zion. After the bell arrived in Utah, the *Tribune* says it "was kicking about the Prophet's premises, where the young Mormon hoodlums amused themselves by ringing it." The article concludes with the common claim that the stolen bell was placed in the steeple of Young's schoolhouse, where it was used, according to the paper, to call Young's children to Sunday School.<sup>119</sup>

Another example of the Hummer bell finding its way to a school tower appeared in a *New York Times* feature article about "legends or fanciful stories connected with" church bells in England, Europe, and the United

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118. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 277, 280, and 287 n. 97. Rebecca K. Hyatt's "Nauvoo Bell" research file contains a photocopy of a charcoal rubbing of the inscription.

119. "Brigham's Church Bell," *Daily Tribune* (Salt Lake City), July 1, 1876, 4.



The field measurements of the “Nauvoo Bell” (that is, the Hummer bell) on Temple Square recorded on March 15, 2000, show a diameter of 33 inches and a height of 33½ inches. The drawing also identifies with dashes the location of “a hint of an earlier inscription.” Copy in Shannon Tracy’s files.

States. This 1899 account is written from a Midwestern perspective and identifies it as “a bell now hanging over a private schoolhouse of a Mormon prophet in Salt Lake City.” The story does not explain how the bell made its way west. Instead, it tells of the unnamed pastor’s disagreement with church officials over his salary and his attempt to remove the bell to resolve the question. The *Times* article says that it was Presbyterian officials who learned of Hummer’s effort “and rushed to the rescue of their property. They permitted the bell to be lowered to the ground, but then seized it, loaded it in a wagon, and drove away.”<sup>120</sup>

120. L. A. Maynard, "Stories of Church Bells," *New York Times*, June 25, 1899, 14.

Reliable evidence confirms that the Hummer bell was not used at the Brigham Young schoolhouse. Young himself insisted correctly that the Hummer bell had never been used for *any* purpose. Nevertheless, the adobe school built just east of the Beehive House in 1860 did feature a small brass bell. That bell, smaller than the Hummer bell, and clearly marked, has survived. After thirty-two years atop the school, the bell was removed in 1902. Mrs. Edwin F. Holmes purchased the building with plans to raze it. She presented the bell to the recently organized Utah Historical Society, where it was photographed. Because the society had no display space, they found a new home for it. The school bell now resides in the Pioneer Memorial Museum of the International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) at the head of Salt Lake's Main Street.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to the school bell, the DUP museum has on permanent display the Brigham Young farm bell, a large iron bell made by the G. W. Coffin & Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. The original location of that bell was at Young's six-hundred-acre working dairy and experimental farm. The farm included barns, fields, pastures, and orchards. It was located near Seventh East and Twenty-Third South in Salt Lake City. The 1863 farmhouse was moved in 1975 and became part of This Is the Place Heritage Park, at 2601 Sunnyside Avenue.<sup>122</sup>

A second iron bell made by the Coffin foundry has also survived. It was hung in 1873 in a new belfry built over the entrance to the west wing assembly rooms of the Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward meetinghouse. This bell was removed from the meetinghouse during a renovation in 1909. Seven years later, in October 1916, the ward gifted the old bell to the Deseret Museum, and Bishop George Q. Morris personally delivered it. This bell, measuring about twenty inches high and with a diameter of twenty-five inches at its base, is preserved by the Church History Museum on West Temple Street.<sup>123</sup>

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121. *Deseret News*, August 4, 1902, July 28, 1904; Watt, "Tale of Two Bells," 38. See also "Old Brigham Young School House Now Being Razed to the Ground," *Deseret Evening News*, August 4, 1902, 5; "Historic Relics," *Deseret Evening News*, July 28, 1904, 2.

122. *Deseret News*, August 4, 1902; July 28, 1904; "Utah News," *Millennial Star* 35, no. 46 (1873): 735.

123. "Utah News," *Millennial Star* 35, no. 46 (1873): 735; "Old Fourteenth Ward Bell Now in Museum," *Deseret Evening News*, October 24, 1916; Collection catalog, accession #20-1675, Church History Museum; Lynn M. Hilton,

Some reports identify a five-hundred-pound bell that once hung in the dome of the Salt Lake City hall as the original Nauvoo Bell. However, minutes of Salt Lake City Council meetings convincingly demonstrate that the city purchased their bell (and a clock) in 1866. The city hall bell no longer exists. It was stolen in 1910, broken up, and sold to a recycler, who reported the theft to police.<sup>124</sup>

The friendly hosts who told General Charles Irish that the bell he saw in the tithing yard storage shed would soon be forgotten by the Latter-day Saints were correct. Sixteen years after the general's visit, Walter M. Davis sent an inquiry to Joseph F. Smith. Davis had learned that some Iowa City tourists had seen "the historic relic at Salt Lake City in 1895." (The tourists were Charles W. and Elizabeth Irish.) Davis was informed through a secretary's response that President Smith did not know the whereabouts of the bell.<sup>125</sup>

This lack of understanding among a new generation of Latter-day Saints led to other unintentional misidentifications of the Hummer bell. Two days before the annual Pioneer Day celebration in 1931, the *Deseret News* published an article titled "Church Museum Preserves Relics of Pioneer Days." The article drew attention to "an old bell, used to assemble the pioneers at times of danger and for special conferences to be held within the walls of the city fort, is given a place of honor in the museum."<sup>126</sup> This description accurately describes the ways the Nauvoo Bell was used in the pioneer fort. Calling it "an old bell" seems odd but is easily explained. The LDS Museum on Temple Square used that term itself. A printed form with typed entries identifying the location of "Exhibits of L.D.S. Museum" includes two bells displayed in the basement level. The bells sat alongside a "home made chair with cane seat," Levi Riter's pioneer rocking chair, the Ramage Press that printed the first edition of the Book of Mormon, and the 1850 *Deseret News* press. The bells, items number 39 and 40 on the list, are described as (1) "Bell. Used for thirty years on the Fourteenth Ward school house," and (2) "Old Bell

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ed., *Story of Salt Lake Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 125-Year History, 1847-1972* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Stake).

124. Salt Lake City Council Minutes, December 5, 1865, February 6, 13, and October 12, 1866, MS 22101, Church History Library.

125. Van Der Zee, *History of Presbyterianism in Iowa City*, 541-43 n. 28, where Walter Davis's letter is described. Van Der Zee also says, "An attempt to reveal the identity of a bell in the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City has not verified the supposition that it is the long lost Presbyterian bell of other days."

126. *Deseret News*, July 22, 1931, 4.

brought to Utah in the early days. Used for summoning the people to public assemblies. For a long time it was the only large bell in Utah.”

In 1936, a request for information about the Hummer bell arrived in Salt Lake City. A Des Moines librarian who was doing research on the Hummer bell inquired of Salt Lake librarian Johanna Sprague as to its whereabouts. According to Sprague, her Des Moines correspondent had learned that in 1910 the Iowa Historical Society had traced the bell to the “Mormon Ladies Relic Chamber,” an apparent reference to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers collection displayed in the Templeton Building.<sup>127</sup> Sprague questioned the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, the Church Historian’s Office, and the LDS Bureau of Information, but, of course, found no such bell identified by that name. The *Deseret News* then invited readers to share with Sprague anything they might know about the bell’s whereabouts.<sup>128</sup>

An event in the late 1930s became the defining point in tying together the stories of the Nauvoo and Iowa City bells. On June 17, 1939, the *Deseret News* published an article headlined “Haunting Tone of Nauvoo Temple Bell Rings out Anew.” The article states that about a month earlier Joseph J. Cannon, president of the Temple Square Mission, had “rediscovered” the Nauvoo Bell in a basement corner of the Bureau of Information on Temple Square, where it had rested for years. The article said that Cannon had a rough-hewn redwood scaffolding made for the bell “on which the 1500 pound bell was hung.” The poundage of this bell is influenced by knowledge of Brigham Young’s suggestion to Willard Richards that an English bell of around 2,000 pounds would be appropriate. Asa Calkins estimated that the Hummer bell weighed 745 pounds. The Salt Lake City Scales certified the weight on July 20, 2000, as 782 pounds. One can sense in the newspaper’s statement the passion that still surrounded the Nauvoo Bell: “The Nauvoo Temple bell will ring again. Although not a stone of the million-dollar temple erected by hardy Mormon pioneers now remains at the original site on a hill above Nauvoo, Ill., the great bell, which was pulled down in 1850 when the Temple was destroyed, is now heard daily by hundreds

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127. Soon after the October 1916 completion of the Utah State Capitol, the DUP moved its collection to the capitol basement.

128. “Library in Iowa Seeks Whereabouts of ‘Hummer’s Bell,’” *Deseret News*, August 10, 1936, 9.



In 1911, an unidentified woman posed with the “Old Bell” in a room of the Vermont Building rented by the Deseret Museum. The bell moved to the newly built LDS Museum on Temple Square in 1919. Courtesy Church History Library.

of tourists visiting Salt Lake.”<sup>129</sup> In a detailed retelling of the Lamoreaux version of the Nauvoo Bell’s history, Cannon said that the bell was “brought from seclusion and hung in a redwood belfry” in the Temple Square museum.<sup>130</sup>

Cannon did not narrate the story on his own. In the July 1939 message, he said, “Elder Nephi L. Morris, upon seeing the bell and hearing its tone began looking up information.” That same year Morris published *The Restoration*, a faith-promoting history of the early days of the Church. Cannon quoted the material that Morris found. The extracts quoted include Brigham Young’s invitation to the English Saints to fund a bell, Young’s directive to the agent in Nauvoo to transport the bell to Winter Quarters, and David Lamoreaux’s rescue of the bell from “lawless persons [who] had hoisted the bell and were making ready to steal it.”<sup>131</sup>

Although the general story is not useful, the *Deseret News* article is helpful when it tells us that the bell was “brought from seclusion and hung in a redwood belfry” in the Temple Square museum “some months before July 1939.” Museum records confirm that the bell was moved from the basement to the main floor, where it was not only displayed in a redwood scaffolding, but also featured a new label. No longer was it seen as “an old bell.” The unnamed artifact now became “The Nauvoo Temple Bell.” The label asserts that “this bell hung in the belfry of the Nauvoo Temple.” Following a few comments about the temple construction, the label concludes: “After the Latter-day Saints were driven out, the beautiful building was ruthlessly destroyed by the mob. The bell is all we have left of this edifice.”<sup>132</sup>

The unintentional renaming of the Hummer bell in 1939 caught the attention of the Church’s General Relief Society Presidency. For nearly a year, the presidency had been developing plans to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the women’s organization. In October 1939, they discussed their proposal with the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric, and Joseph J. Cannon, president of the Temple Square

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129. “Haunting Tone of Nauvoo Temple Bell Rings Out Anew,” *Deseret News*, June 17, 1939, 9.

130. Joseph J. Cannon, “President Joseph J. Cannon’s Message,” *Temple Square Topics* 3 (July 1939): 1.

131. Joseph J. Cannon, “The President’s Message,” *Temple Square Topics* 3 (July 1939): [1–2].

132. “Nauvoo Temple Bell,” exhibit label, ca. 1939, LDS Museum (an annex to the Visitors Bureau), Salt Lake City.

Mission. During this meeting, President Cannon recalled that Brigham Young had suggested building a tower with a bell on Temple Square since the new Tabernacle was under construction and new landscaping plans were being created. Cannon's idea was immediately appealing. The Relief Society had been founded in Nauvoo. Placing a bell from that place and time seemed a wonderful way to celebrate—a bell tower that would fulfill President Young's desire. Everyone agreed: they would reintroduce the newly rediscovered "Nauvoo Bell" to the public at that celebration event. The January 1942 issue of the *Relief Society Magazine* celebrated the potential of "A Monument with a Message." The article described how David Lamoreaux and others rescued the Nauvoo Temple bell from those who were trying to steal it in September 1846 by driving a wagon beneath the bell and driving off with it.<sup>133</sup>

Subsequently, architect Lorenzo S. Young made a model of the campanile—the bell tower—that would house the "Nauvoo Bell." But plans stalled. World War II tormented the nations of the earth, and the Church was not immune. The First Presidency postponed the project. Not until 1965 did they readdress the issue and authorize construction. The bell finally went on public display in September 1966. At that time, Relief Society President Belle S. Spafford was advised not to claim that the bell in the campanile had been rung in Nauvoo. "The Nauvoo Bell was melted down, so the historians tell me, almost immediately after it was brought to the valley," Mark E. Petersen, of the Council of the Twelve, informed her, "and this bell was created here in Utah. It is called the Nauvoo Bell because I believe the materials from the Nauvoo bell went into it."<sup>134</sup>

In the interim, from 1939 (when plans were first proposed to display the bell on Temple Square) until the bell was actually put in place, the surrogate "Nauvoo Bell" was not idle. In 1944, with First Presidency approval, the bell made a special appearance in the University of Utah stadium as part of the Days of '47 Queen Coronation Pageant. In its announcement of the program, the *Salt Lake Tribune* offered a brief

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133. Campanile project history, ca. 1967, CR 11 47, box 1, folders 1–2, Church History Library; Mary Grant Judd, "A Monument with a Message," *Relief Society Magazine* 29, no. 1 (January 1942): 11–12; see also Mary G. Judd, "Our Permanent Centennial Memorial," *Relief Society Magazine* 28, no. 11 (November 1942): 769–70.

134. Lorenzo S. Young, campanile project architectural drawing, ca. 1941–42, CR 11 46, Church History Library; Mark E. Petersen to Belle S. Spafford, September 20, 1966, Campanile project history, ca. 1967.

history of the bell, drawn in part from versions of the Lamoreaux family's accounts. The program included a tribute to Utah pioneers by Salt Lake City Mayor Earl J. Glade, "followed by a reenactment of the 1849 Days of '47 celebration" and the ringing of the "Nauvoo bell." Despite this apparent linking of the original Nauvoo Bell with the 1849 commemoration, the article asserted that as part of the coronation ceremony the famous bell would "make its first appearance at a general celebration in Utah."<sup>135</sup>

The confusion over the identities of the two bells publicized to a wide audience in 1939 continued for nearly sixty years. An early example took place in November 1941, when the *Deseret News* received an inquiry from J. Kirkwood Craig, a minister at the Franklin Methodist Church, in Franklin, New Hampshire. Craig had visited Salt Lake City and toured Temple Square. He had also visited Joseph Smith's birthplace. Craig was looking for an article he had seen earlier in the *Deseret News*. He asked for a copy of and for information on any other historic bell in the area. The newspaper referred the letter to Temple Square. John H. Taylor, president of the Temple Square Mission and Bureau of Information, responded by informing Craig that he had forwarded the letter to the Historian's Office. Taylor added, "Of course if you were in Salt Lake City you saw the bell that we have in the Bureau of Information which came from the top of the Temple at Nauvoo."<sup>136</sup>

Librarian Alvin F. Smith responded for the Office of the Church Historian. "We have not been able to locate the article referred to in your letter," he wrote, "and know of only two bells in Salt Lake City which are of historic interest, namely the Nauvoo Temple bell, which is in the Bureau of Information on the Temple grounds, and the bell of President Brigham Young's school house which is preserved in the State Capitol [the Daughters of Utah Pioneers collection]. . . . By instructions from President Brigham Young the temple bell was sent to Council Bluffs and later transferred to Salt Lake City. The tone of the bell has excellent resonance at the present time."<sup>137</sup>

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135. "Old Nauvoo Bell to Ring in Days of '47 Queen's Reign," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 16, 1944, B3.

136. John H. Taylor to J. Kirkwood Craig, December 8, 1941, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2103>.

137. Alvin F. Smith to J. Kirkwood Craig, December 3, 1941, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpi.org/items/show/2102>.

When Craig received these letters, he forwarded them to Jacob Van Der Zee, a Presbyterian minister and historian in Iowa City. Craig had already shared information about a grandfather, an elder in the Iowa City Presbyterian church. Any material Craig got from Salt Lake, he promised to give Van Der Zee, but he was disappointed with the “lack of information” in the letters. “I think the man who is at the head of the Presbyterian School in Salt Lake could get for you some additional information.”<sup>138</sup>

Another example of the confused understanding, this one from late in the century, appeared in 1981 in the Church’s official magazine, the *Ensign*, in the format of an “I Have a Question” feature.<sup>139</sup> The answer drew heavily from a short document mentioned earlier: “The Nauvoo Bell,” written by one of David B. Lamoreaux’s daughters. Unfortunately, the use of this reminiscent account in a Church magazine negatively impacted many retellings of the story in subsequent years.<sup>140</sup> To complete her story, the author of the *Ensign* article borrowed details from the real Nauvoo Bell’s trip west in the Charles C. Rich emigrant company. On their way to Utah, the article says, the Lamoreaux brothers rang the bell “to awaken the herdsmen at dawn, to signal morning prayer, to start the day’s march, and to sound during the night watches to let the Indians know that the sentry was at his post.”<sup>141</sup>

Not only has the confused identity of the two bells continued in Latter-day Saint circles, but questions about the Hummer bell’s disappearance still surface in southeastern Iowa. For example, in 1998, the Church Historical Department received an inquiry about the Hummer bell from Iowa City. In part the letter reads, “If the bell does still exist and whoever owns it,” and if they “would be willing to part with it, we would be willing to negotiate and would be more than willing to come

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138. J. Kirkwood Craig to Jacob Van Der Zee, January 5, 1942, Iowa City Public Library, <http://history.icpl.org/items/show/2104>.

139. Lois Leetham Tanner, “I’ve Heard There Is a Story behind the Bell on Temple Square. Can You Relay It?” *Ensign* 11 (February 1981): 16. A similar version of the story appeared in 2008 on a religious blog: Jane M. Choate, “The Nauvoo Temple Bell,” *Relijournal/Christianity* (blog), February 17, 2008, <http://relijournal.com/christianity/the-nauvoo-temple-bell/>.

140. “The Nauvoo Bell,” photocopy, acquired by coauthor Shannon Tracy from Lois Leetham Tanner, the *Ensign* author, who got her copy from Edith Smith Elliott.

141. Tanner, “I’ve Heard There Is a Story.”



Curators at the LDS Museum on Temple Square moved Michael Hummer's Iowa City church bell from storage in 1939, changed the label from "Old Bell brought to Utah in the early days" (the label in 1929) to "Nauvoo Bell," and displayed it in a newly built redwood stand. Courtesy Church History Library.

and get it or pay to have it shipped.”<sup>142</sup> At that point, corrective efforts were underway inside the Historical Department. One year later, archivist Ronald G. Watt published his account of the Hummer bell, which is the starting point for the expanded and revised narrative in the second section of this article.<sup>143</sup>

As of this writing, the Hummer bell, accepted by many since 1939 as the original Nauvoo Temple bell, remains on display in its commemorative campanile near the Tabernacle on Temple Square. Each hour it sounds a single chime, “controlled by an electronic system in the basement of the Tabernacle . . . set according to Greenwich time.”<sup>144</sup>

For many years, Church-owned media outlets popularized the bell-ringing. Beginning on Sunday, July 23, 1961, KSL Radio and KSL-TV launched the use of the Temple Square bell to sound the time on the Salt Lake City stations every hour on the hour. The official beginning came as the climax of a special television program that evening, when Church President David O. McKay “pulled the clapper against the bell’s resonant shell.” The chime is activated by a signal from the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., that is picked up by a microphone and transmitted to the broadcast studio through a cable.<sup>145</sup>

The traditional hourly “clang” of the Nauvoo Bell ended temporarily in June 2005 when the station converted to a digital, or high-definition, signal. It resumed a month later after engineers found a way to deal with

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142. Mike Bobo to “Dear Friend,” November 18, 1998, Public Services Section correspondence, Church History Library.

143. Watt, “Tale of Two Bells,” 31–42.

144. “Nauvoo Bell Rings Out on Day of Thanksgiving,” *Church News*, April 13, 1991, 5.

145. “As We See It,” *Deseret News*, Church News, July 29, 1961, 5; “The Church Moves On,” *Improvement Era* 64 (October 1961): 696; Lynn Arave, “Nauvoo Bell Chimes Live on KSL,” *Deseret News*, April 5, 2002, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/905692/Nauvoo-Bell-chimes-live-on-KSL.html>; Lynn Arave, “Upgrade by KSL Changes for Whom the Bell Tolls,” *Deseret Morning News*, June 17, 2005; Lynn Arave, “Nauvoo Bell’s ‘Clang’ Is Back on KSL Radio,” *Deseret News*, June 23, 2005. An earlier mention of KSL’s live broadcast, using information on a plaque posted near the bell tower is Arave, “Nauvoo Bell Chimes Live on KSL,” April 5, 2002. The errors are obvious: “The bell was salvaged from the temple as church members fled from Missouri later that year to escape persecution. The second pioneer company in the summer of 1847 managed to haul the 1,500-pound bell to Utah.”

the seven-second delay in high-definition.<sup>146</sup> After the Church History Department shared information about the bell's true identity with station management, the broadcast company quietly dropped the name from its chiming announcement of the hour. These internal changes were made without public notice. Therefore, media reports of the 2002 dedication of the rebuilt Nauvoo Temple either continued to identify the Temple Square bell as the original Nauvoo Temple bell or hedged. A *Deseret News* piece alluded to the Lamoreaux version: "Some say the Nauvoo Bell was salvaged by fleeing church members in 1846 and hauled to Utah a year later, although no one knows for sure."<sup>147</sup> Understandably, misunderstanding or uncertainty continues to the present, making our offering a needed corrective.

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Shannon M. Tracy has worked in the IT world for over thirty-two years and is currently an independent contractor. He enjoys participating in historical research. Glen M. Leonard served as director of the Museum of Church History and Art (now Church History Museum) from 1979 to 2007. Ronald G. Watt, now retired, was Senior Archivist at the Church History Library. We acknowledge the contributions of Grant Allen Anderson, W. Randall Dixon, Rebecca K. Hyatt, and Darlene Hutchinson, who shared with us their research files on the Nauvoo and Hummer bells.

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146. Arave, "Upgrade by KSL Changes for Whom the Bell Tolls"; Arave, "Nauvoo Bell's 'Clang' Is Back on KSL Radio."

147. For example, see Carrie A. Moore, "Nauvoo Temple: New Centerpiece Rises in the 'City Beautiful,'" *Deseret News*, May 2, 2002, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/385007058/Nauvoo-Temple.html>. Moore wrote: "The Nauvoo Temple will have its own new bell. The Nauvoo Bell, currently located in Salt Lake City's Temple Square, will stay where it is, although there was some talk of sending it to Nauvoo, [architect Roger] Jackson said."

# Brigham Young's Newly Located February 1874 Revelation

*Christopher James Blythe*

Brigham Young dictated few dialogic revelations (that is, revelations in the voice of the Lord) while he was prophet, seer, and revelator of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Only one of the revelations found in the 138 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants was received under his ministry. Young was often willing to share visions, dreams, and impressions, but he hesitated to place these types of revelations in the language of the Lord, and when he did so verbally, he was even more hesitant to place them in writing.

With this in mind, you can imagine my excitement when I recently stumbled upon a fascinating document titled “The word of the Lord that was reveal[e]d to his People, by his servant the Prophet sear and Reverlator, President Brigham Young, Feb[r]uary 1874[.]” The document had been drafted by Thomas Christmas Haddon (1815–99) and included a discourse Young had delivered in St. George, Utah, just over a week before he officially organized the communitarian united order there. The discourse began with the recital of a revelation:

The word of the Lord that was reveal[e]d to his People, by his servant the Prophet sear and Reverlator, President Brigham Young, Feb[r]uary 1874[.] He speak unto the people saying, Thus saith the Lord it is my will that this people should enter into A Holy united order, by concentrating their labour, there time, and their means together for the interest of my Kingdom, and for their own mutual benefit, And I the Lord will bless them abundantly, they shall get along with less labour, and less means, And become a great deal richer, and happyer, and be enabled to do a great deal more good, And if not the curse of the Lord will be upon

them, for we are got as far as we can get in our present position, for the time is fully come that we should enter into this Holy Order, the Lord is saying come, and Holy angles are saying come, and all good men are saying come, and I say come let us enter into this Holy Order, that the Kingdom of Heaven may continue to advance, till it fill the whole earth with the knowledge and love of God, Hear this oh Israil, I tell you the Kingdom of God cannot advance one step further until we enter into this Holy Order.<sup>1</sup>

Only one other historical reference to this discourse is known, but it does not include the dialogic text of the revelation; it simply confirms the invitation Young made after the revelation: “He [Young] said, among other things, in referring to the Order of Enoch, ‘The Father says Come; the Son says Come; the Spirit and the Bride say Come; the servants of God say Come, enter into this Holy Order.’”<sup>2</sup>

It is from this other source, the Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, that we know the revelation and discourse were delivered on February 1, 1874, in St. George. It makes sense that Young would have believed himself the recipient of a divine revelation at this time. It was the beginning of a new era in his ministry in which he would emphasize the restoration of communal living among the Saints. Decades earlier, the Saints had practiced a form of communal living in Missouri but had since largely stopped following the “law of consecration.” St. George was only the first of numerous united orders Young would establish throughout Utah.<sup>3</sup>

We know little about this revelation or the manner in which it was dictated. Had Brigham Young dictated or received the revelation previously, before reading or reciting it before the congregation, or was it dictated spontaneously at the meeting? Did Haddon record Young’s words at the time, or did he reconstruct the words of the revelation at a later time? We can narrow the timing of when Haddon recorded this particular text to sometime between February 1875 and April 1877, one to two years after the revelation had been delivered (although he may

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1. Thomas C. Haddon, writings, circa 1882, MS 3216, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL). The dating of this particular document is almost certainly earlier than 1882, as noted below.

2. Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, c. 1903–6, p. 10, MS 318, CHL.

3. See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 155–75.

have drawn on earlier, more contemporary notes).<sup>4</sup> Even if Haddon's report of Young's words are verbatim, it is notable that Young did not himself distribute the revelation in a written form. It was not recorded in an official capacity, and there is no evidence that the revelation was intended to be canonized.

In this way, the February 1, 1874, revelation is similar to a revelation Young dictated to Reuben Miller on January 31, 1846. By that time, Miller had come to believe James J. Strang was the successor of Joseph Smith, in part because James J. Strang had dictated a revelation he claimed to be from the Lord, while Brigham Young had not. In response, Young dictated a revelation of his own: "thus saith the Lord unto Reuben Miller through Brigham Young—that Strang is a wicked & corrupt man & that his revelations are as false as he is—therefore turn away from his folly—& never let it be said of Reuben Miller, that he ever was led away & entangled by such nonsense."<sup>5</sup>

Like Reuben Miller, many Latter-day Saints were alarmed that Young recorded and presented so few new revelations to the Saints. Meanwhile, other claimants to Joseph Smith's position as leader and prophet seemed to have no problems producing new revelations and new scripture. Joseph Smith had, after all, dictated an extensive body of revelations, and many expected revelations to continue coming through the Church's new leader. Young frequently assured the Saints that he was able to write revelations but gave two principal reasons for why he did not do so.

First, he argued that the Saints had not lived up to the revelations that Joseph Smith had already revealed. In April 1852, Young stated:

It has been observed that the people want revelation. This is revelation; and were it written, it would then be written revelation, as truly as the revelations which are contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. I could give you revelation about going to California, for I know the mind of the Lord upon this matter. I could give you revelation upon the subject of

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4. Haddon seems to have drafted the text of this discourse with his accompanying reflections at least a year after Young's February discourse; Haddon noted that after the discourse, General Authorities preached on this subject "for the space of ten or twelve month[s]." He also noted that at the time of his writing, "we [had] nearly finished the temple," which was dedicated on April 6, 1877. The manuscript in which this text has been (presumably) copied is a collection of short essays penned by Haddon at different times. Haddon, writings.

5. Brigham Young, Journal, January 31, 1846, CR 1234 1, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.

paying your Tithing and building a temple to the name of the Lord; for the light is in me. I could put these revelations as straight to the line of truth in writing as any revelation you ever read. I could write the mind of the Lord, and you could put it in your pockets. But before we desire more written revelation, let us fulfil the revelations that are already written, and which we have scarcely begun to fulfil.<sup>6</sup>

Second, Young believed that the Saints were more accountable when a revelation was framed in the voice of deity. On December 29, 1867, Young explained, “When revelation is given to any people, they must walk according to it, or suffer the penalty which is the punishment of disobedience; but when the word is, ‘will you do thus and so?’ ‘It is the mind and will of God that you perform such and such a duty;’ the consequences of disobedience are not so dreadful, as they would be if the word of the Lord were to be written under the declaration, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”<sup>7</sup>

Brigham Young apparently had both these reasons in mind when he delivered a dialogic revelation in August of 1874—only six months after his February revelation in St. George—when speaking to the Saints already organized into a united order in Lehi. He explained that the united order “is no new revelation. . . . we have the commandments that have been from the beginning.” He further instructed:

[Those] who wish to have new revelation they will please to accommodate themselves and call this a new revelation. On this occasion I will not repeat anything particular in respect to the language of revelation, further than to say: Thus saith the Lord unto my servant Brigham, Call ye, call ye, upon the inhabitants of Zion, to organize themselves in the Order of Enoch, in the New and Everlasting Covenant, according to the Order of Heaven, for the furtherance of my kingdom upon the earth, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the salvation of the living and the dead. You can accommodate yourselves by calling this a new revelation, if you choose; it is no new revelation, but it is the express word and will of God to this people.<sup>8</sup>

This later statement reveals that Young had considered the possibility of a revelation on the united order. But unlike the February meeting in which he delivered the other revelation on the united order, it seems that

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6. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 6:319 (April 1852).

7. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 12:127–28 (December 29, 1867).

8. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 17:154 (August 1874).

on this occasion, Young thought better of forming the charge to live the united order as a revelation to the people. Rather, the statement following “Thus saith the Lord” was directed to Brigham himself. Ultimately, regardless of how he framed his comments in February or August of 1874, he would most consistently turn to the already established canon of revelations from Joseph Smith when he urged the Saints to live the united order. Haddon’s recording of this discourse and its inclusion of a dialogic revelation allows us to see how Young may have initially contemplated delivering his directions to the Saints as a commandment from the Lord. As Young said on earlier occasions, it was always in his power to present the Saints with revelations, and this seems to have been a rare occasion when he actually did so.

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## *Ed's Slot, Provo River*

Jan Perkins



The oil painting *Ed's Slot, Provo River* is 34" × 40" on linen canvas and was completed in 1994.

I had painted a few fly-fishing paintings prior to this one. I was interested in capturing the brilliant light of sunset as it shines up Provo Canyon at the height of autumn color. I asked my friend Sean, who fishes the river a lot, if he would model for the painting. He eagerly agreed and then bought the original painting. I wanted my painting to be authentic, so Sean taught me a little bit about currents and the textures they make on the river and where to cast a line.

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Jan Perkins is a Utah artist who paints "old farms, barns, ranches, and western rural landscapes." Her paintings can be viewed at [janperkins.com](http://janperkins.com).

*The Next Mormons:  
How Millennials Are Changing the LDS Church*  
By Jana Riess

New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

*Reviewed by Stephen Cranney*

*The Next Mormons* is a mixed-methods work (that is, it includes both representative statistics as well as interviews) on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of millennial members of The Church of the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United States. Written by well-known religious journalist Jana Riess, with assistance from Benjamin Knoll, a political science academic, the book is built around the results of their Next Mormons Survey. On the whole, the book is an enjoyable read, reflecting Riess's skill as a journalist. The book was clearly written to be accessible, with little reference to major theories in the field of sociology or religion.

Generally, large, national social science surveys pick up, at most, a handful of Latter-day Saint respondents, making any kind of rigorous analysis of issues particular to Latter-day Saints difficult. Media outlets and others will occasionally perform one-off surveys that gather Latter-day Saint responses to specific (often political) issues, but generally social scientists, the media, and the public are flying in the dark when it comes to finding representative numbers about Latter-day Saint attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, the few surveys that do have large numbers of Latter-day Saints (such as the American Religious Identification Survey or the Pew Religious Landscape Surveys) are generic religion surveys, so questions do not reflect concerns, language, or concepts specific to Latter-day Saints.

Enter the Next Mormons Survey. Riess and Knoll are to be commended for their landmark survey and study that fill the need for a large, representative Latter-day Saint sample. Latter-day Saints who spend much of their religious life with a particular group of Church members—whether that group be a predominantly conservative, white ward in central Utah or an online, more heterodox, left-leaning crowd—can

develop skewed perceptions about the Latter-day Saint experience in America, even if we know intellectually that our personal experiences may not be representative of all Latter-day Saints. Representative surveys can be great course corrections for the thousands of little assumptions we all have. For example, I was surprised at Riess's finding that most former members still retain a belief in God (215), running contrary to my anecdotal experiences with atheist ex-Latter-day Saints online, and at her finding that there were more single men in the Church than single women, also running contrary to my experience of living in an area on the East Coast with a plethora of single Latter-day Saint women (76). Readers would do well to compare their own conceptions and views about the Church in the United States against the numbers presented in *The Next Mormons*.

However, the nonquantitative portion should not be implicitly taken as representative. As mentioned above, the book is divided into a survey portion, which was used to derive the numerical data, and a portion containing first-person accounts from interviews conducted by Riess. This latter focuses disproportionately on the minority of experiences within the Church. Riess does mention that "these oral history interviews are *not* representative of Mormons or former Mormons as a whole" and that she purposefully oversampled some subgroups "so that no one person's experiences would represent an entire minority group" (246, emphasis in original). For example, she highlights a convert who is the child of same-sex parents and struggles with the Church's heteronormative position on sexuality. Back-of-the-envelope calculations using the latest Census Bureau data indicate that only about six out of a thousand coupled households with children are same-sex.<sup>1</sup> Add single parents to that, as well as the fact that children of same-sex couples are probably much less likely to convert, and it is not unlikely that about one out of a thousand converts are from same-sex parent households. The book also highlights interviews with two transgender individuals, though most surveys show the prevalence of transgender identification at well under 1 percent.

Now, it is completely fine to highlight atypical cases since they are often the most interesting and because the individuals they highlight are just as important as any other Church member. However, readers

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1. "Characteristics of Same-Sex Couple Households: 2005 to Present," United States Census Bureau, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/same-sex-couples/ssc-house-characteristics.html>.

should be careful not to project these experiences onto the Church body as a whole, or even a significant portion of it, since many of these are niche cases. One could think of many other interesting, atypical individuals—for example, converts raised by polygamous parents—who would have also been fascinating to interview, but there is only so much space. These qualitative cases were drawn using Riess’s own connections; the stories are salient to conversations in today’s society and are similar to those one would encounter in the more liberal spaces of the Latter-day Saint blogosphere (in which Riess is fairly active). These points, however, do not necessarily justify prioritizing the experiences presented in the book over other unique experiences.

Turning from the more narrative parts of the book, I identified two major technical issues in the study. One is the constant conflation of age, period, and cohort effects (despite occasional disclaimers; see, for example, pp. 17 and 54). “Age effects” are patterns between age groups. For example, fifteen-year-olds generally have less education than thirty-year-olds simply because they are younger. “Cohort effects” are patterns between cohorts. For example, people who were children during the Great Depression might have certain attitudes toward frugality because their formative development occurred during a time of economic scarcity. Finally, “period effects” are effects arising from specific time periods. For example, people in 2019 are going to have different social and political attitudes than people in 1950. Disentangling these different effects is technically difficult and requires a survey with multiple data points. Without this longitudinal data, it is impossible to know whether any differences between millennials and older generations are due to shifting attitudes across time or simply because they are younger.

Even though this survey was not a longitudinal survey, which uses multiple data points over a period of time, the book implies trends—in part through trend-language (even in the title, *The Next Mormons*)—and interprets findings through the lenses of how thinking has changed across time. Given the data, however, other conclusions could be made that are entirely different from the ones Riess makes. Indeed, using the exact same data, charts, and graphs, another author could conclude not that millennial Latter-day Saints are more liberal than previous generations, as Riess purports, but that Latter-day Saints start out more liberal and become more conservative as they age. Without any talk about period trends one way or another, this alternate conclusion would be as justified as the current book’s perspective that emphasizes shifting views across generations.

Looming large in this book is the conventional wisdom that younger, liberal generations means a more liberal future for the Church. This attitude is an old one, stretching back into the 1970s and beyond, and yet here we are in 2019 with Donald Trump as the U.S. president. There is a good deal to say about the problematic demographic assumptions inherent in Riess's view—for instance, this assumption does not take into account higher fertility among conservatives and that people become more conservative as they age. For every case where we have seen societal shifts across time (for example, attitudes toward gays), there are other issues that have not shifted (for example, attitudes toward abortion), and the latest cohort-component projections suggest that the political landscape will be split for the foreseeable future.<sup>2</sup> Suffice it to say, this assumption is not as warranted as many implicitly think.

Attached to this assumption is the idea that the Church has to drift in line with modern patterns to accommodate millennials or risk an exodus of young people who see the Church as out-of-step. Riess doesn't actually beat this drum as hard as some would. For the most part, she is sufficiently nuanced about the matter. The notion, however, is implied enough throughout the book and occupies a prominent enough place in the concluding thoughts, suggesting that many millennials will become "collateral damage" (235) if the Church does not change, that it is worth briefly discussing here. There is no empirical support for the idea that shifting on hot-button social issues will help retain younger generations, because the religious institutions that have done so are the ones that have shown the most dramatic declines across time.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the Church's devotion to a more conservative "configuration of the nuclear family" (235) is undoubtedly largely responsible

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2. Eric Kaufmann, Anne Goujon, and Vegard Skirbekk, "American Political Affiliation, 2003–43: A Cohort Component Projection," *Population Studies* 66, no. 1 (2012): 53–67.

3. Michael Hout, Andrew Greeley, and Melissa J. Wilde, "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 2 (2001): 468–500; Vegard Skirbekk, Eric Kaufmann, and Anne Goujon, "Secularism, Fundamentalism, or Catholicism? The Religious Composition of the United States to 2043," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (2010): 293–310. For more recent data, see the more liberal mainline Protestant trends relative to the evangelical and Catholic trends from the GSS, as reported in Thomas B. Edsall, "On Paper, the Election Is the Democrats' to Lose," *New York Times*, March 27, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/27/opinion/is-trump-good-for-trump.html>.

for the higher fertility of members, which acts as a major contributor to Church growth in the United States. Thus, an emphasis on family and children likely contributes to long-term growth of the Church. This is not to say the concerns of those who do not fit into this particular “brand” of families are not real and should not be addressed, but the benefits of a family emphasis to individuals and the Church as a whole should also not be overlooked. Those who choose not to have children may not be attracted to the Church, but they also won’t be creating and rearing the next generation as much as the people who build their life around obtaining the partnered, multiple-children archetype emphasized by the Church.

Another nontechnical limitation of the study is its American-centric nature. Throughout the book she conflates “the Church” with “the Church in the United States of America.” She acknowledges that her study focuses on the Church in America, and given the prominence of the United States in the governance and culture of the Church, this occasional conflation is for the most part forgivable. However, it does have implications for her hypothesis that future Church membership may become more liberal on certain issues, since the Church, like many other religious institutions, will almost certainly become more diverse, drawing on more members and leaders in developing countries as participation in organized religion declines in the developed world. This newfound diversity has implications for ideational shifts within the Church, because it is less likely that leadership will be drawn from highly educated, developed countries that have traditionally served as the source of Church leadership.

The first millennial president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sustained in about fifty to sixty years (yes, that’s about how long it will take for millennials to reach the highest leadership positions in the Church, where the big-picture decisions are made), could very well be an African for whom the American themes discussed in this book are irrelevant to the formation of his religious worldview. We may not know exactly which issues different groups will find relevant in the future, but like individuals from outside the United States today, future Church leaders from other countries will likely have concerns that differ from those in the United States. (As an analogous example, around the time the book was released, the more liberal-leaning United Methodist Church, largely lead by its African contingent, voted against solemnizing same-sex unions.)

It is always easy to criticize a study for not having enough data points or for not being more comprehensive, but I do not want my technical

critiques here to obscure the marvelous work Riess has accomplished with this survey. Yes, it would have been great if she had done a global survey across multiple time points to track trends, but to my knowledge Riess does not have access to the millions and millions of dollars it would take to pull off such a survey, so it is incredible that she was able to crowdfund a survey of this scope and magnitude. Plus, it would have made for much more boring reading to just report the numbers, but readers should be constantly aware of the various ways one could interpret her nonlongitudinal findings.

The second major technical issue was more preventable and easily so. Nearly all of the book is based on comparisons-of-means (that is, comparing the means of different groups), which come quick and fast. However, Riess rarely discusses statistical significance or variation. Occasionally she will raise the issue of sample size, but it is as if she is not aware that there is a test that can give you a clear yes-or-no, is-there-a-relationship answer. Based on her articles that she has written using the data from this book, either she or Knoll is technically capable of performing such analyses, which made it all the more confusing why they did not do formal statistical tests throughout.

Furthermore, it appeared in some cases that she mentioned a difference as if it was relevant when it was in all likelihood a statistical tie. For example, on page 4 she indicates that millennial Latter-day Saints who still identified as members of the Church were slightly different than the baseline, but it is clear from the confidence intervals (margins of error) reported in footnote 8 that the difference is not statistically significant. Another example is the counterintuitive finding that black members are six percentage points more likely to see the priesthood/temple ban as divinely inspired (121); she acknowledges that for this statistic, the margin of error could be high, but without clearly indicating the significance level of this difference (or the confidence intervals), it is hard to know if this is a real difference or just statistical noise. Comparisons like this form the bread and butter of the book, but they are not statistically tested. Throughout my reading, I was constantly second-guessing whether the group-by-group orderings and comparisons were significant or not. Discussion of significance was perhaps removed to make the book more readable, but testing significance is the bone, not fat, of any quantitative work, and a gentle introduction to significance would have been welcome to better ground the comparative statements.

Hopefully, after Riess is finished using the dataset for her own publications (I, for one, look forward to her planned book on former members

of the Church, which she has mentioned elsewhere), she will send the data to a public repository like ICPSR to allow future scholars to use the primary data. This is a work of not only social science but also history. For example, as the book was in production, the section on gender and the temple became less immediately relevant (due to the annoying tendency of social phenomena to shift under the feet of researchers). However, that section of the book stands on its own as an important historical record. Whereas in the past historians had to read through the lines of all-too-scarce journals and other primary sources to divine the attitudes in a particular period, thanks to Riess future historians have a treasure trove. It would be as if an archivist uncovered a large-N survey on Latter-day Saint attitudes about polygamy during the Nauvoo period. In a time when Latter-day Saint studies is being covered in a myriad of fields and new Church history books are being published by the dozens every year, the social science of the subject—which is arguably more relevant to the day-to-day lived experience of Latter-day Saints than the history—has remained surprisingly fallow in comparison. Here Riess has taken a large and substantive step into this field.

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*On Fire in Baltimore:*  
*Black Mormon Women and Conversion in a Raging City*  
By Laura Rutter Strickling

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018

*Reviewed by Rachel Cope*

In her thought-provoking book, *On Fire in Baltimore: Black Mormon Women and Conversion in a Raging City*, Laura Rutter Strickling captures the complex conversion narratives of fifteen Latter-day Saint women who found space for themselves within a “historically White church” (xiii). The book provides powerful accounts of individual spiritual journeys while also grappling with the racial tensions that implicitly and explicitly influence black and white interaction within and without The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Strickling’s book project first took shape when she enrolled in a graduate course on Africana race and ethnicity while working on her PhD in sociocultural linguistics at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. This course caused her to “examine [her] own White identity in relation to a Black perspective,” fostered an interest in “social contexts where African American English was spoken,” and eventually motivated her to interview black women in her Baltimore ward about their conversion stories (xii). The latter project was motivated by Strickling’s desire to understand why these women chose the Church they did.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, each of which recounts the stories of individual black women from Baltimore who found their way into the Latter-day Saint fold. Strickling quotes heavily from the words of the interviewees (whose names have been changed to protect their privacy), rather than retelling their experiences from her perspective as a white Church member, thus allowing the women’s voices, words, and worldviews to remain central to the story. In this way, the book functions as a collection of primary sources as well as a monograph. Indeed, the accounts the women share provide more than interesting stories; they challenge stereotypical views of Latter-day Saint womanhood—poverty, addiction, abandonment, imprisonment, rape, abuse, single

motherhood, and death figure into their narratives. Women's lives, their stories suggest, are diverse, complex, and typically stray from the ideals presented over the pulpit.

Their personal narratives also add nuance and depth to the meaning of conversion and testimony in Latter-day Saint contexts. Elements of the women's black Christian culture are woven into their encounters with and embracement of the Church of Jesus Christ. Visions, spiritual dreams, experiences with angels and other heavenly beings, instances of divine protection, and miraculous moments are laced throughout their stories. Prayer is raw, real, and powerful and results in divine intervention. Relationships with God are deeply personal. Jesus is central to their spiritual lives. Community matters. Through these themes, the stories shared in this book refigure the supernatural and the ethereal elements of nineteenth-century Church culture into a contemporary narrative. And their spiritual biographies provide more than an appendage to this larger narrative. By challenging assumptions about race, conversion, religious experience, and worship, these women's stories also push and probe the boundaries of what it means to be a Latter-day Saint in the twenty-first century.

In addition to sharing black women's stories, Strickling also recounts details about the interview process, intentionally acknowledging her whiteness and grappling with how her own racial constructs and understandings may have impacted the interview experiences, including the questions she asked, how she asked them, and how she interacted with the women she interviewed. She also talks about some of the uncertainty she sensed from several of the women during the interview process, surmising that they did not always know how to talk about matters of race with a white woman. In sharing these details, Strickling demonstrates how a white woman can rethink her assumptions about race and recognize her own whiteness in her effort to come to a better understanding of the experiences of others. This approach models for readers how to begin thinking about whiteness and blackness as racial constructs and encourages others to do future work on the issues of race (and gender) in the Latter-day Saint experience more thoughtfully.

The book is a carefully reasoned and interesting read that grapples with questions about race, drawing upon historical context, ethnography, and racial and linguistic theory; its framing, however, could be more historiographically sound. The author's intent seems to be sharing untold stories and dealing with the convergence of black and white experiences and beliefs—and she successfully meets those goals. But

more nuanced contextual detail would strengthen the work for readers interested in how these stories fit within specific kinds of context, such as black women's conversion experiences or their spiritual biographies and memoirs.

Notwithstanding the noted omissions, Strickling has written a compelling book that encourages readers to consider the forgotten and the overlooked in order to understand religious belief, practice, and experience within the Church of Jesus Christ. Even though Strickling focuses more on sharing the stories of why these women chose to become Latter-day Saints than she does on interpreting and analyzing the historical meaning and significance of these stories, her work does, both implicitly and explicitly, pose the question: what does it mean to be a Latter-day Saint?

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*Martyrs in Mexico:*  
*A Mormon Story of Revolution and Redemption*  
By F. LaMond Tullis

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018

*Reviewed by Ignacio M. García and Cindy Gonzalez*

While not described as such, *Martyrs in Mexico* is a continuation of the story that author F. LaMond Tullis gave us in *Mormons in Mexico*, a classic work, first published in 1987, detailing the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico.<sup>1</sup> *Martyrs in Mexico*, however, has a narrower scope, focusing on one community—San Marcos, Hidalgo—from which would come well-known individuals of the Church in Mexico. Why did Tullis choose San Marcos? The obvious answer is that this community holds an important place in Church lore. San Marcos was the place of one of the Church’s most remembered (though not necessarily among American Saints) martyrdoms: that of Rafael Monroy and Vicente Morales, who were killed by a firing squad of Mexican revolutionaries for, the story goes, refusing to renounce their faith.

Tullis seeks to correct what he calls the “varying degrees of conformity to the facts” that surround the case of the martyrdom and which have been the subject of “academic treatises . . . magazine articles, newsprint, films, sound bites, diaries, journals, and family lore” (2). He begins by setting the context under which Monroy and Morales learned of and embraced the gospel and describing how that context led to their eventual death. Past studies of this event have largely focused on Monroy, who was not only the branch president in San Marcos but also a well-to-do landowner in the region. Tullis follows the same pattern, partly because we know less about Morales and partly because the Monroy family became a dynastic family in the Church in Mexico; Monroy’s

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1. See F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987).

descendants have reached the highest levels of the Church hierarchy in Mexico as well as membership in the Quorum of the Seventy.

Tullis tells us that Rafael Monroy “began to develop an interest in the Latter-day Saint missionary discussions” when he first heard about the missionaries, but it was not until he met Rey L. Pratt, president of the Mexican Mission, at a conference and Pratt visited him that Monroy was baptized, along with two of his sisters. Shortly after, their mother followed (9, 28). All this took place in 1913. Guadalupe, his wife, would take longer to embrace the gospel. Morales had joined the Church six years earlier and came to San Marcos because of his call as a part-time local missionary. A widower, Morales met Monroy in San Marcos and eventually married Monroy’s younger cousin, Eulalia Mera Martínez.

All of this was happening during the start of the second and more violent phase of the Mexican Revolution. This phase was accompanied by stronger anti-American feelings, and it forced President Pratt to abandon Mexico, but not before he ordained Rafael Monroy an elder and made him president of the San Marcos branch. Monroy then had to strengthen the members of his branch amid the war and the growing animosity of their Catholic neighbors and some of the Saints’ own extended families. All of these problems were further complicated when conflict arose among the revolutionary forces fighting the dictatorship of Victoriano Huerta. The followers of Venustiano Carranza, who would become president of Mexico, first controlled San Marcos but then gave way to those who followed Emiliano Zapata, one of Mexico’s most famous revolutionary heroes. It is no exaggeration to say that the Monroys, well-off as they were, favored the more moderate Carrancistas and interacted with them while avoiding much contact with the Zapatistas.

For the Zapatistas, the Monroys were enemies because of their wealth, their hacienda, and their ties to an American church and because Rafael was known to favor the Carranza government. Thus, it was easy for the Zapatistas to believe the Monroys’ neighbors when they said these “Mormones” were concealing weapons for the Carrancistas (58). Though repeated searches found nothing, the Zapatista soldiers and the hostile neighbors continued to disparage and distrust the Monroys and other members of the branch. What began as a distrust of Rafael’s allegiance turned into religious bigotry and eventually a reason to execute him and Vicente Morales.

Although this book centers on the killing of Rafael and Vicente, Tullis takes only about half the book to tell the story of their lives and deaths.

By page 70, they are dead, and another ninety-two pages tell of the aftermath of their murder. The story that follows has little and, at the same time, much to do with the lives of the two martyrs. The second part of the book is about the Monroy family survivors and their efforts to hang on to their faith. The Monroys, particularly Jesusita, Rafael's mother, and those connected to Rafael by marriage or work loomed influential in the San Marcos branch for many years. Here we are introduced to Casimiro Gutiérrez, the branch president who succeeded Rafael; Bernabé Parra Gutiérrez, the next branch president and probably one of the most accomplished of the San Marcos Saints; Daniel Montoya Gutiérrez, a teacher in the branch and the first of the Montoyas to become significant in the Church in Mexico, particularly in the north; Benito Villalobos Sánchez, the fifth branch president; and even Margarito Bautista and Abel Páez, the intellectual precursors of the Third Convention movement, which eventually broke away from the main body of the Church.

In addition to these brief biographies, Tullis discusses the struggles of the San Marcos branch to establish what he terms a "gospel culture." In doing so, he discusses the "deficiencies" that these mostly uneducated branch leaders carried with them. In fact, most of the second part of the book, and particularly chapter six, is about the "chaos," "struggles," "deficits," "stumbles," "turmoil," "contention," and "fall" of the San Marcos Saints (102, 100, 96, 94, 113). Those looking for an inspirational story of the struggle for gospel fidelity among the Saints in this region will be disappointed, as will anyone wanting a more nuanced study of class, race, leadership, and institutionalization among new converts. Tullis has a specific view of how the Mexican Saints in San Marcos should have acted, and he emphasizes problems that did not escape other Saints in other parts of the world as being somehow unique to the San Marcos Saints.

Unfortunately, this book features the same kind of problematic descriptive analysis of Mexican and Latino culture that was so common in social science circles up until the late 1960s. Social scientists blamed the poverty, lack of education, social misbehavior, and an inability to assimilate into American or western ideals on the local culture that they believed promoted instant gratification, deviant sexual behavior, and a "what will be, will be" attitude toward the future. Tullis identifies a litany of deficiencies among the Mexican Saints. In so doing, he demeans the culture by consistently blaming the branch leaders and Church members for being dragged down by their "traditional Mexican culture" instead of being inspired by the "social conduct, ethics, and . . .

understanding . . . informed by a gospel culture” (119, 87). Drunkenness, fornication, gossip, and other ills are blamed solely on the Mexican culture, though American Saints and others also confronted these same problems.

It is not, according to Tullis, until the San Marcos Saints are fully institutionalized into the ways of the American Church that they begin to show fruits of conversion. He makes the mistake that others have made when writing about Saints of color, confusing righteous living with institutional loyalty and involvement in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Mexican Saints show few “fruits of the gospel” until they have become educated, economically successful, and more entrenched in the institutional structure. This view of religious fidelity through institutional lenses fails to capture the real essence of people’s faith, which they developed in spite of the challenges they faced for being Latter-day Saints. This “essence” of faith is living those gospel principles that can be practiced even when there is little institutional structure: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, humility, charitable work, scripture reading and prayer, and living a virtuous life—all while maintaining a firm belief in Joseph Smith’s teachings.

Another of the book’s weaknesses is that, with the exception of the Monroy family, readers get only a glimpse of the actors in the story. To better understand the San Marcos Saints, it would be helpful to learn more about them and not just their leaders. And to understand them, we also need to understand the Mexican Revolution and the Zapatista movement, especially when we consider that, though the Monroys were Carrancistas, some Latter-day Saints were Zapatistas. Tullis does point out some of the complexities of the insurrection but not enough for us to understand the San Marcos Saints as Mexican citizens and not just citizens of the Church. Without a better understanding of the rank-and-file members, the larger story of the Mexican Revolution, and the lives of poor Mexicans, we might be tempted to ask, “Were Rafael and Vicente really martyrs or simply victims of communal hostilities and war?”

The value of *Martyrs in Mexico* is that it tells more than has been told before about Rafael Monroy’s life and family and how they became a dynastic family in the Church in Mexico. It also tells us more about Vicente Morales, who has been the forgotten man in this story of martyrdom. Unfortunately, the story of Morales is limited, as is that of most members of the San Marcos Church who were not leaders. This is an avoidable weakness since Tullis could have drawn more on the memoirs he refers to

in the footnotes and bibliography and done more genealogical work on the members of the branch. Thus, as a story of Mexican Saints, this book is limited in scope; we learn too little of the Mexican Saints except those of a particular community who confronted particular challenges during the years of revolution in Mexico. Given the sparsity of English-language work on Latin American Saints, however, this book is a necessary read for those wanting more information on Saints south of the border. But it should be read with the understanding that this type of Latter-day Saint history is of an era gone by.

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*The Parables of Jesus: Revealing the Plan of Salvation*  
By John W. Welch and Jeannie Welch,  
Artwork by Jorge Cocco Santangelo  
American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2019

*Reviewed by Micah Christensen*



*The Parables of Jesus* (c. 2018), Jorge Cocco Santangelo (b. 1936, Argentina)

It has been just over fifty years since Elder Spencer W. Kimball gave his address titled “The Gospel Vision of the Arts,”<sup>1</sup> raising the possibility of having a “Michelangelo” of the Restoration. Ever since, many

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1. See Spencer W. Kimball, “The Gospel Vision of the Arts,” *Ensign* 7 (July 1977): 2–5, which was adapted from Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity” (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, September 12, 1967), [https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/spencer-w-kimball\\_education-eternity/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/spencer-w-kimball_education-eternity/), reprinted in

members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been looking for their version of a Sistine Chapel. Yet, what if the highest expression of Church art is not a monumental fresco or statue but, instead, an intimate combination of sacred text and art—a Book of Hours for the Restoration? This radical concept is tested in a new book combining an exegesis of Christ's parables by John and Jeannie Welch and purpose-made artwork by Jorge Cocco Santangelo.

The religious scholar John W. Welch is well known to BYU Studies readers and the Church at large. Through many published works and his discovery of chiasmus—an ancient poetic structure found in prophetic writings—Welch has consistently deepened Latter-day Saints' understanding of scripture. In *The Parables of Jesus: Revealing the Plan of Salvation*, Welch and his wife, Jeannie, map their own personal experiences and scriptural insights onto Christ's parables. These are paired with works made for the book by the artist Jorge Cocco Santangelo.

Jorge Cocco Santangelo is lesser known to members of the Church but well celebrated in his own sphere. Cocco Santangelo was born in Argentina, where he achieved national recognition for his art. He moved to Buenos Aires in the 1960s, to Spain in 1976, and to Mexico City in 1983. In all these places, he established a career and considerable reputation through exhibitions and contests. Throughout this fifty-plus-year career, with more than thirty one-man shows, Cocco's work has been mostly abstract. It was not until the mid-2000s, while in his seventies, that Cocco began publicly exhibiting religious paintings.

The collaboration between Cocco Santangelo and the Welch family fits squarely into a tradition of popular publishing that took off at the end of the nineteenth century. Artists like Gustave Doré (French, 1832–83), James Tissot (French, 1836–1902), and Heinrich Hofmann (German, 1824–1911) had their works reproduced millions of times in Bibles, books of prayer, and scriptural commentaries during a time marked by the emergence of religious revivalism, literacy, and mass-printing technology. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are still beneficiaries of the glut of images created during that time. In our first publications with visuals—the *Young Woman's Journal* (1889–1929), *Improvement Era* (1897–1970), *Juvenile Instructor* (1901–29), and *Children's Friend* (1902–70)—we used black-and-white photogravures by Hofmann and illustrations by Carl Bloch (Danish, 1834–90), first taken



*The Woman at the Well* (2017), Jorge Cocco Santangelo

from mass-publication sources before we eventually found our way to reproducing the original oils.

Like these nineteenth-century artists, Cocco Santangelo is tackling subjects that have been depicted over hundreds of years by thousands of artists. The likelihood that even the most talented artist could offer a completely new approach and lexicon is unlikely. And, for the most part, Cocco Santangelo sticks to well-established, familiar scenes.

The woman at the well is one of the most oft-depicted subjects in the Latter-day Saint artist community—though the depictions are often borrowed from other religious traditions. Cocco’s version is immediately recognizable to anyone even vaguely familiar with the subject. Christ is on the left of a well, surrounded in blue light, and a woman is walking toward him out of dark wood and holding an empty water vessel. What makes Cocco’s approach unique is the breaking of the work into lines and geometric shapes, a style he refers to as “sacrocubism.”

Sacrocubism is obviously related to the well-known cubist movement, whose heyday lasted only about ten years, from 1907 to 1918. When cubism was first introduced by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, it was a radical attempt to push the limits of what is visible on a two-dimensional surface. (Although the style is now more than one hundred years old, it



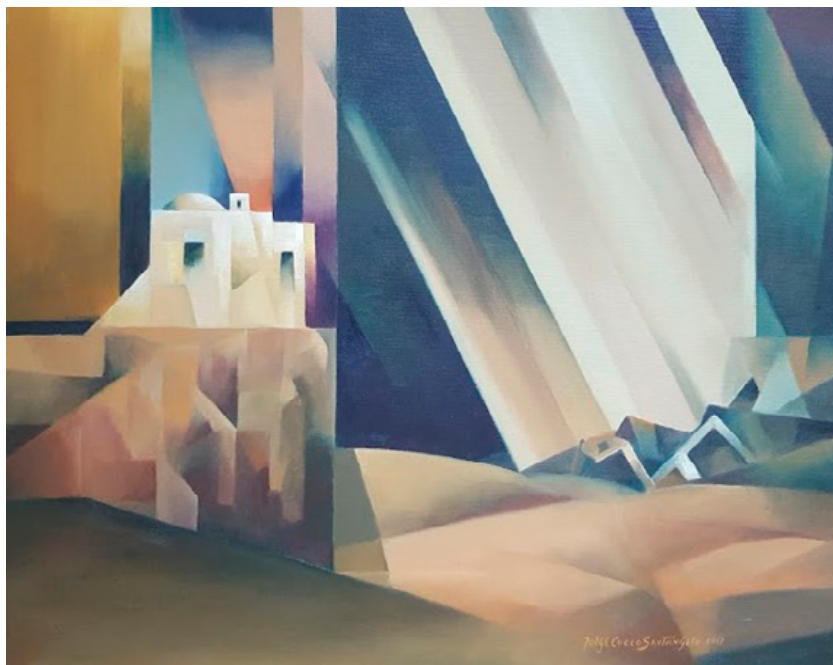
*The Forgiven but Unforgiving Servant* (2017), Jorge Cocco Santangelo

still feels radical.) Art historians distinguish synthetic cubism, which is abstract to the point of rendering a subject unrecognizable, from analytic cubism, which breaks recognizable figures into shapes and colors. Cocco's work fits squarely—pun intended—into the analytic tradition.

Using this style, Cocco is able to exert more control on viewers, drawing their eyes with overt lines that are carefully calculated in most narrative paintings and communicated through glances, gestures, and other design elements. Cocco's approach also appeals to Latter-day Saint affinities for symbolic geometry—squares, plumb lines, and vectors that relate to sacred rites.

This approach works particularly well for his composition of *The Forgiven but Unforgiving Servant*, a story seldom represented in visual art. From left to right, we first see the master forgive the debts of his servant, only to then see that same servant deal harshly with his subordinate. These figures and actions are emphasized through the use of gesture and lines that lead us through the narrative.

While the style of these paintings is effective and intriguing, what is perhaps most interesting about these works is their use as illustrations



*The House upon the Rock* (2017), Jorge Cocco Santangelo

for the accompanying commentary. For several years, I was my ward's Primary chorister, always on the lookout for new and compelling imagery to help teach a story and gain short attention spans. I challenge any member of the Church who attended Primary to look at *The House upon the Rock* and not hear the familiar Primary melody and act out the hand motions. And this goes to my larger point: Latter-day Saints consume fine art as illustrations.

Whereas the ordinances of other religions are accompanied by imagery—altarpieces, rich carvings, and colorful textiles—that become a focal point for votive offerings, communions, and prayers, as Latter-day Saints, we do not use art for sacral purposes. For the Brigham Young University Museum of Art's 2013 exhibition *Sacred Gifts*, the museum went to extraordinary efforts to recreate the original settings of paintings by Carl Bloch, a Lutheran. Visitors were often surprised to see that works they had previously seen only as manual-sized illustrations were actually life sized, surrounded by altars and candles.

In our ordinances, words, not images, are the focus. We repeat words with great accuracy. In most meetinghouses, there are more chalkboards

than paintings. (As I write this, I am in my own stake center, built in 2015. The pulpit for the speaker is central, and the only altar is pressed against the right wall. The only decorative pieces are two niches at the back of the chapel, populated with silk flowers in baluster vases.) The most sacred spaces of our most sacred buildings—celestial rooms—deliberately depict no images at all. In this sense Latter-day Saints are iconoclastic. We deliberately remove images from our most sacred spaces. We make an exception for images, however, when they support text.

This is not the first time John W. Welch has ventured into the art world. His book *The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert*, coauthored with Doris Dant, was arguably responsible for the reassessment of a once-forgotten master who is now relatively well known in the Church.<sup>2</sup> This development, long after Teichert's death, is a significant insight into the fact that Latter-day Saints consume fine art as illustration.

Teichert, who studied at the prestigious Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students' League of New York, was among the most accomplished and prolific artists in Church history. Despite having created more than three hundred large-scale paintings on the Book of Mormon—arguably the most ambitious Latter-day Saint painter to date—Teichert died without the Church at large accepting her oeuvre. Though the vast majority of Minerva Teichert's monumental paintings were meant be seen as original works in physical space, it was not until the works were seen as illustrations that they were reappraised.

We can fight against this tendency in our people, or we can learn to embrace it. In the case of *The Parables of Jesus*, we see a sincere and remarkable collaboration of three figures who have worked years to hone their respective arsenals. Like Teichert, Cocco Santangelo's work will be seen as reproductions, but this time by design.

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2. John W. Welch and Doris Dant, *The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1997).

*Revelations and Translations, Volume 4:*  
*Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts*, facsimile edition  
Edited by Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid  
The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018

*Reviewed by Thomas A. Wayment*

Volume four of the *Revelations and Translations* series presents for the first time a transcription and complete photographic reproduction of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' holdings of all the manuscripts, grammars, lexical aids, and other resources that were produced in the process of creating the book of Abraham. The series has already published full editions of Joseph Smith's earliest extant manuscript revelations, many of which form the basis of the Doctrine and Covenants (volume 1); the revelations that were published during Joseph Smith's lifetime (volume 2); and the full printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon (volume 3, parts 1–2).<sup>1</sup> This fourth volume in the series completes the publication of almost all of the early manuscripts connected to Latter-day Saint canonical scripture, with the exceptions of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The Joseph Smith Papers Project is currently working on producing a volume for the former, and as for the latter, an excellent and thorough transcription, along with a few color images, has already been published.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009); Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011); Royal Skousen and Robin Scott Jensen, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 3, Part 1: Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 1–Alma 35*, and *Part 2: Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Alma 36–Moroni 10*, Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2015).

2. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah:

Among other helpful aids, the frontmatter of *Revelations, Volume 4* includes an introduction that is insightful and succinct while avoiding many of the polemical stances that have come to characterize book of Abraham research. Following the practice of the earlier volumes in the series, the majority of the book comprises images and transcriptions of original documents, except in the case of the Egyptian papyri, which have been photographed but not transcribed for the reader. The main body of the book begins with images of the surviving papyri that were purchased by Joseph Smith and other Church leaders and that Smith used for his inspired translation of the book of Abraham. These are followed by photographs of the notebooks of characters that Joseph Smith and others copied from the papyri and images of the alphabet and grammar materials that Smith and his scribes developed to try to understand Egyptian language and writing. Finally, the book reproduces images and transcripts of the various early manuscript copies of the book of Abraham text that were created in preparation for its publication. The book ends with the printing plates used for publishing the book of Abraham in the early Church newspaper *Times and Seasons*. An appendix is included that features a brief chronology for the Abraham project, which began in 1835 and reached completion in 1842, thus affirming that work continued on the Abraham project post 1835. This easy-to-use appendix is an invaluable contribution for Latter-day Saint scholars who have been contending for some time about whether translation of the papyri continued into the Nauvoo, Illinois, period. The final appendix compares characters copied from the papyri to their accompanying explanations from the grammar books and alphabet and is also helpful for researchers.

The publication of these materials comes at a timely moment for the Church and scholars working on the book of Abraham. The internal dynamics that are obvious in the Church's Gospel Topics Essay on the book of Abraham are less so in this publication; the essay includes the claims that some translations "were not based on any known physical records" and that Latter-day Saint and other Egyptologists "agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of

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Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004). Though this volume provides a transcription of the Joseph Smith Translation, Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews do not adhere to the same transcription style, policies, and procedures that the Joseph Smith Papers volumes use.

Abraham,” but it offers no cogent explanation of how this could occur.<sup>3</sup> The publication of the grammar and alphabet materials alongside the text of the book of Abraham, however, represents a process by which Smith explored an unfamiliar language and sought to interpret it even though the language remained unknown to him. For decades, the grammar and alphabet have remained largely on the sidelines, as unwanted byproducts that were potentially produced by scribes who worked on their own. Now, these products are situated within Joseph Smith’s translation process without discrimination, and that will prove to be one of the most important contributions of this new volume.

A careful study of the grammar materials produces some fascinating lines of inquiry that make this a potential treasure trove for new research. The text of the grammar is loaded with information that begs further research, and my own initial perusal quickly focused on the exploratory language of priesthood that was used in the grammar and alphabet books (87), the softening of the racial claims of the Joseph Smith Translation regarding Ham (123), the concept of a “church” that existed in Abraham’s day (137), the gendering of priesthood and the way men and women are described (149), the clear reliance upon language from Genesis 1–2 (165), and the subtle interpretation of biblical stories (173). These topics and others will keep scholars employed for years.

My only significant complaint with the publication was the alarm that I felt at seeing the full facsimile images of the papyri that were still glued to nineteenth-century paper backing! The images, the authors explain, were created with cutting-edge technology (xxxvi–xxvii), but the fact remains that in their current state of preservation, these papyri will eventually suffer decomposition from the glue used to adhere them to the paper. As a result, some of these papyri will be pulled apart by their fibers and ruined. If this published review results in any corrective efforts, I hope it will be to preserve the papyri for future generations. I have seen with my own eyes the destruction of papyri by mylar sheeting and improper mounting, and hopefully these treasures will be preserved in a way that will make them accessible for future generations.

With the publication of this volume, we have, for the first time, access to the full range of manuscripts, copies, grammars, and alphabet

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3. “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham,” *Gospel Topics Essays*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>.

documents used in the production of a text that would later be canonized. The volume presents the original artifacts (the papyri), the deliberative byproducts (the alphabet and grammar), and a variety of early copies that document the process of creating a publishable text—all the while offering rich footnotes that contain contemporary documentary evidence. The scholarship that went into the production of this volume achieves the highest standards the discipline can aspire to, something we have come to expect from the Joseph Smith Papers team. The scholarship drawn upon in this volume engages all perspectives, and the works of Robert Ritner, John Gee, and others are quoted and referenced throughout the work. An excellent bibliography is included at the end. This book is the high-water mark in book of Abraham studies.

I must acknowledge that I was prepared to be let down by this volume, mostly because of the rather fractious debates that exist in book of Abraham research. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the authors found a way to acknowledge the entire academic community that has previously worked on this important text. The book is already quite long and was probably expensive to produce, with its beautiful color plates, but it would have been helpful to provide readers with a postscript on the 1851 edition and Franklin D. Richards's later edition of the book of Abraham, as well as information on the later canonization process that took place after Brigham Young's death, although those two matters may be perceived as stepping beyond the goals of the editors' original project. But since Franklin D. Richards, James E. Talmage, and others continued to shape the text, they represent important contributions to the canonized version. In the end, this is an excellent volume that will both create conversations and inform existing academic positions.

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Joseph Paul Vorst

By Glen Nelson

New York: Mormon Artists Group, 2017

*Reviewed by Herman du Toit*

The discovery of a Latter-day Saint artist from a former era, who had almost been forgotten to the vicissitudes of history, is a noteworthy event in the annals of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph Paul Vorst's prolific painting career spanned two continents and two world wars during his short lifetime. Vorst excelled in a variety of techniques and media, producing a significant body of work. Glen Nelson's painstaking research has resulted in an eminently readable monograph compiled from multiple sources in Germany and the United States. It is the first book to explore Vorst's life and art. Founder of the Mormon Artists Group, Nelson is a seasoned writer and has published numerous books, including four *New York Times* best sellers. He is also an accomplished librettist.

A friend first alerted Nelson to Joseph Paul Vorst in June 2013, referring him to a blog post by Latter-day Saint historian Ardis E. Parshall, who had encountered a brief article about Vorst in a June 1940 issue of the *Improvement Era* and wondered if there was more to the story.<sup>1</sup> Nelson contacted the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City and was thrilled when Alan Johnson, the director of the museum, and Laura Hurtado, the global acquisitions curator at the time, agreed to assist him with his research and with the publication of his sumptuously illustrated monograph. Hurtado and Nelson also cocurated an exhibition titled *Joseph Paul Vorst: A Retrospective*, which opened at the museum on November 9, 2017.

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1. Ardis E. Parshall, "Joseph Paul Vorst: Regionalist Artist," *Keepapitchinin* (blog), June 24, 2013, <http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2013/06/24/joseph-paul-vorst-regionalist-artist/>.

Nelson's book has nine chapters, which are divided into three sections. The first deals with Vorst's early history in Germany and records his conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Part two documents his arrival in the United States and his rapid rise in prominence on the exhibition circuit of some of America's most important art museums. The third part documents his mature style as an American artist and ultimately his untimely death. The book is illustrated with 112 color images and 113 black-and-white illustrations.

Alongside beautiful color reproductions of Vorst's work, Nelson's book pieces together the few details that are known of Joseph Paul Vorst's life. He was born in 1897 into a large family of ten siblings in Essen, in the heart of the Ruhr valley in Germany. Although Vorst was born into poverty, Nelson observes that photographs of the family showed happy countenances and a humble but adequate rural environment (24). With the encouragement of his father, Vorst began to draw before he was five years old, using charcoal and pastels that other, more affluent children had discarded. After completing his secondary schooling, he enrolled at the Essen School of Trades and Applied Arts, and his studies there provided Vorst with a sound grounding for his career. He graduated in 1923 and was undoubtedly influenced by the styles of art prevalent in Germany at the time—namely, the *Jugendstil*, with its emotional and romantic view of nature; *Die Brücke* and its concern with authentic expression; and *Der Blaue Reiter* group, which produced emotional, raw imagery designed to provoke a visceral response from the genteel viewers of the day. In addition to his very accomplished teachers, several visiting figures also inspired him, including Richard Strauss and Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

After fighting in World War I (little is known of his service), he started producing artworks continuously and explored different styles during the 1920s as Europe recovered from the social and economic upheavals wreaked by the war. Soon, things began to change for the better, and the period 1924–29 was known as the Golden Twenties in Germany. Younger artists started to replace the emotionality of expressionism with a new dispassionate approach based on objectivity and realism. During this period, Vorst produced watercolors, oil paintings, linocuts, and lithographs in both the new objectivity and the expressionist styles. Reproductions of his artworks were often printed in local newspapers, and a large number of his works were of religious subjects.

The Weimar Republic was established in Germany after the end of World War I with the promise of a new democratic leadership. These

hopes were dashed, however, when the Nazi party came to prominence. Vorst's antipathy toward the Nazi party was kindled early, and in 1924 he had a skirmish with a group of Hitler's Brownshirts. Around this same time, on June 10, 1924, Vorst was baptized in Essen and became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is unknown how he came in contact with his new religion. Church records indicate that, after his baptism, he served as the ward organist and sang in small ensembles with Church members. Vorst produced numerous prints, watercolors, and paintings that explored the incidence of streaming sunlight during the years following his baptism. According to Nelson, it is this interest in light that elevates his landscapes beyond the ordinary (45).

Around 1930, Vorst moved to Berlin, where he studied at the Academy of Arts under the tutelage of renowned Impressionists Max Slevogt and Max Liebermann. During this time, his work was widely exhibited and received notable recognition in the press. When his mentor Lieberman came under increasing censure because he was the son of a Jewish banker, Vorst decried fascism, and, concerned about increasing financial uncertainty, he fled to the United States.

After his arrival in New York, Vorst traveled to Ste. Genevieve, near St. Louis, Missouri. Here, his extended family, who had emigrated earlier, welcomed him, and he soon felt integrated within their community. His first trip after settling in the area was to Salt Lake City, where he performed multiple vicarious ordinances for deceased relatives. Family history also became a lifelong passion for him. As the Great Depression descended on the world a few years later, Vorst faced stiff challenges. During this time, however, he also met and fell in love with Lina Weller, another émigré from Germany. They were married on June 15, 1935, in St. Louis, and nine years later they had a son.

Vorst participated wholeheartedly in the art world of the United States. He became an exponent of the social realist school of art, and within ten years after arriving in the country, he exhibited widely and successfully at the most prestigious museums in America and even in the White House. Sadly, on October 15, 1947, Joseph Paul Vorst was conducting a choir rehearsal for his local church choir when he was struck by an aneurysm, and he died a short while later. He was just fifty years old.

Nelson's monograph is a valuable addition to the cannon of Latter-day Saint art. The narrative is well researched and painstakingly records Vorst's engagement with his adopted society. The book carefully explores the development of his style and provides astute analysis of individual examples of his artworks. Nelson's informed commentary on

sociopolitical developments during this turbulent period in world history is equally engaging; two world wars and the Great Depression are the ever-present backdrop to this important Latter-day Saint artist's short but significant career. The book is a fitting tribute to an artist who produced a wealth of paintings, drawings, watercolors, murals, etchings, and sculptures that prominently reflect the social realist movement of his day, but who was almost forgotten in the onward rush of modernism.

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*Utah and the American Civil War: The Written Record*, edited by Kenneth L. Alford (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of University of Oklahoma Press, 2017)

There are two schools of thought about Utah's participation in the Civil War: it was *de minimis*, unworthy of comparison to the blood-soaked contributions of nearly all other American states and territories; or, it was larger than the size of its troop commitment to the Union Army and has a record more complex than is often understood. With this book, *Utah and the American Civil War*, Kenneth L. Alford is squarely in the latter camp, arguing that "the common belief that Utah Territory 'sat out' the Civil War is incorrect. Although the territory was removed from the war's devastation and provided only one active-duty military unit . . . , the war deeply affected Utah and its inhabitants—from pioneers and Union soldiers stationed in Utah to the Native Americans they clashed with throughout the war" (15). What follows to support this assertion is a mammoth, 864-page collection of military documents, ancillary material, and analysis. Alford is a native of Ogden, Utah; BYU professor of Church history and doctrine; retired army colonel; former West Point teacher; expert in large-scale data organization; and published authority on Utah's involvement in the Civil War. As such, he was extraordinarily well equipped to assemble and lead the team of undergraduate and graduate students who grappled with a tsunami of documents to produce this user-friendly reference book.

Most of the official documents presented here have previously been published by the War Department during the decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century. The documents, however, were embedded in 128 volumes of

military orders, telegrams, and letters bearing a title as cumbersome as their accessibility: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. What Alford has done for readers interested primarily in the war's role in the West and Utah may be summarized with three words: organization, focus, and context.

In a useful introduction and three opening chapters, the editor summarizes the history of Utah and the Civil War while describing what the *Official Records* (OR) are and how they were produced about 120 years ago. In another five hundred pages, chapter 4 presents the heart of the study—the OR documents relating primarily to Utah. Chapter 5, one of the more unique parts of the book, devotes two hundred pages to additional records related to wartime Utah that were inexplicably excluded from the OR. Through eight short appendices, Alford then provides aids that give additional context to the subject at hand. These aids include information on military terminology, geography, and the territory's changing political boundaries. Enhancing the accessibility of all this information is Galen Schroeder's excellent thirty-six-page index, a seemingly mundane section but one that is crucial for a documentary history of this scope and complexity.

In reviewing a different documentary history (a recently published volume of the *Joseph Smith Papers*), a historian described that rather dense study as "the researcher's paradise and a casual reader's nightmare."<sup>1</sup> I do not view *Utah and the American Civil War* this way.

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1. Ryan D. Davis, review of *Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, edited by Matthew C. Godfrey and

Because of its clarity and orderliness, Alford's study is unquestionably valuable to professional historians needing the details of what happened in Utah Territory during 1861–65, but the book also has merit for serious nonacademic readers. A wide range of students will find in these documents a useful, objective account of Utah's role in the Civil War. Alford's sense of balance is a good one to have alongside other recent narrative accounts by other historians who view Brigham Young's leadership during both the Utah War and the national fratricide that soon followed in terms of conspiracy theories and unpatriotic motives.

—William P. MacKinnon

*The Expanded Canon: Perspectives on Mormonism and Sacred Texts*, edited by Blair G. Van Dyke, Brian D. Birch, and Boyd J. Petersen (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018)

If you are looking for excellent scholarship and insights into Latter-day Saint scripture, you might want to start with this new compilation from Greg Kofford Books. The authors of the fourteen essays in this volume explore a wide range of topics related to the Latter-day Saint canon and offer a surprisingly consistent level of discourse. Usually anthologies include a few weak links, but that is not the case with this volume.

The opening essay, "The Triangle and the Sovereign: Logics, Histories, and an Open Canon," by David Frank Holland, is by itself worth the price of the book. Holland examines the sometimes uneasy interplay among the three sources of revelatory authority in the Church:

canonized scripture, prophetic teachings, and personal revelation. His discussion of the limitations placed on the assumed sovereignty of prophetic declaration by the other two sides of the authority triangle should be carefully considered by every Latter-day Saint.

I don't have space to give even a cursory summary of the other essays, but a brief sentence about each of the authors and their topics should be sufficient to give a flavor of the book and its quality.

Brian D. Birch discusses "authoritative discourse in comparative perspective" (27), including the transformation of revelation in the Church from charismatic to bureaucratic and the notion of "practical infallibility." James E. Faulconer argues for a literal interpretation of scripture but employs a very carefully explicated definition of *literal*. Claudia L. Bushman proposes a body of extracanonical scripture for and by Latter-day Saint women and offers a thoughtful list of suggested inclusions. Grant Hardy examines the Book of Mormon "in the context of world scripture," looking for similarities and differences (73). In the shortest essay in the volume, Richard Lyman Bushman comments on "the way we approach the Book of Mormon as modern, educated Latter-day Saints, particularly as our reading is affected by the gold plates" (85).

In one of two essays written by non-Latter-day Saint scholars, Ann Taves struggles with the task of taking Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon seriously while trying to explain why he did not really have material plates to translate from. David Bokovoy next examines the book of Moses as a form of prophetic midrash, followed by Brian M. Hauglid, who recounts the Pearl of Great Price's path toward both canonization and legitimation. One of the most informative essays in the book is by Paul C. Gutjahr, the other non-Latter-day Saint

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others, *Journal of Mormon History* 43, no. 3 (July 2017): 187.

author, who discusses four pivotal moments in the publication history of the Book of Mormon and illustrates how “sacred scriptures are by necessity mediated hybrids, meshing purported supernatural interventions with more mundane human efforts” (157).

Grant Underwood celebrates rather than critiques the revisions to Joseph Smith’s revelations, giving both statistics and examples of the editorial changes that Joseph and others made to the texts he dictated. In a fascinating account, Blair G. Van Dyke recounts the long process of “spiritualizing” digital scripture in the Church. Boyd J. Petersen and David W. Scott examine the quasi-canonical document “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” assessing how authoritative it is among various types of Latter-day Saints. Finally, Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd discuss a particular noncanonical form of revelation in the Church—patriarchal blessings—and their development in the early years of the Restoration.

—Roger Terry

*Moramona: The Mormons in Hawai‘i* by R. Lanier Britsch, 2d ed. (Laie, Hawai‘i: Brigham Young University–Hawai‘i, 2018)

*Moramona* is the quintessential history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawai‘i. The book journeys from the first missionaries arriving on the islands in 1850 and their initial struggles to maintain a foothold there to the eventual success of the Church

on the islands. The book concludes with a summary of the current prosperity of the Church in Hawai‘i, including the successes of Brigham Young University–Hawai‘i, the Kona Hawai‘i Temple, and the rich culture of faith among today’s members.

The first edition of *Moramona* was written in 1975 and published in 1989. This second edition enriches the original content with colored photos, personal stories of significant figures, and refined presentation. The second edition also adds over forty years of relevant history after 1975. Other additions include a foreword by Reid L. Neilson, an assistant Church historian; an explanatory preface by author R. Lanier Britsch; and a prologue on pre-1820 Hawaiian history.

The contents of the volume were “painstakingly gathered, refined, and shared” (xviii) by Britsch, the Church’s foremost expert on Church history in Asia and Oceania. Britsch received a PhD in Asian studies from Claremont Graduate University in 1967, and he taught history and Asian studies at Brigham Young University–Provo and served as the vice-president of academics at Brigham Young University–Hawai‘i.

*Moramona* is recommendable to those interested in the Church and its history in the Hawaiian islands. The book accommodates casual reading with its easy-to-read language, elegant organization, and narrated personal histories, but also facilitates detailed study with its glossary, a Hawaiian pronunciation guide, and statistical reports.

—Alec J. Harding