Photograph of a gold plate with inscriptions found in Peru, currently on display in the showcases of the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, BYU, by courtesy of Paul R. Cheesman, Director of the Institute of Book of Mormon Projects, Brigham Young University. The authenticity of the plate and inscriptions is being studied.

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Foreword

Guest Editor’s Prologue

Where Were the Moroni Visits?

The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript

Preview on A Study of the Social and Geographical Origins of Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1845

Joseph Smith’s New York Reputation Reappraised

The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon

1970 Research Project: The Ohio Period

"THE RETURN," An Oil Painting

A Note on "The Return"

The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems

James Gordon Bennett’s 1831 Report on "The Mormonites"

The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

A Note on Mormon Americana at Yale

Howard W. Hunter 251

Truman G. Madsen 252

Russell R. Rich 255

Dean C. Jessee 259

Laurence M. Yorgason 279

Richard L. Anderson 283

Russell R. Rich 315

Benton P. Patten 321

Benton P. Patten 322

Stanley B. Kimball 325

Leonard J. Arrington 353

Larry C. Porter 365

Jeffrey R. Holland 386

Guest Editor for This Issue

Editor

Book Review Editor

University Editor

Truman G. Madsen

Charles D. Tate, Jr.

Spencer J. Palmer

Ernest L. Olson
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Foreword

When the First Presidency recently called me to serve as Church Historian, they counseled in partial explanation that the resources and techniques of genealogical research should be closely aligned with those of historical research. This counsel reflects a concern for correlation of agencies, programs, institutions—not to abandon the values of specialization but to enable these to be pooled cooperatively to serve larger long-range purposes.

The World Conference on Records, sponsored in 1969 by the Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has done much to alert experts throughout the United States and abroad to the resources, motivations, and ever-improving technology that stand behind Mormon collections of genealogical and historical data. One result is a new regard and a new sense of mutual helpfulness in the huge task of retrieval and record maintenance.

We commend the interdepartmental and inter-university efforts of the Institute of Mormon Studies and mark the results of another year of research, some of which appears in this issue of BYU Studies. Institute researchers working in close cooperation with our microfilers as well as with our Church Historian Office staff have deepened the store of creditable data on Mormon origins, early leaders, and the New York period. Drawing together a variety of disciplines (including archaeology and historiography at the Whitmer home) they have assisted in discovering, relating, and weighing such findings.

We commend all those who are contributing to or who may yet contribute to these efforts. We encourage their continuance and intensification and pledge our cooperation in the more effective gathering and use of the past that is always the prologue of the destiny of mankind.

Howard W. Hunter
Church Historian
Guest Editor’s Prologue

TRUMAN G. MADSEN*

It has been thought that you might like to have the following notes relating to my grandfather, Egbert B. Grandin, who printed in 1830 the first edition of the Mormon Bible. These items were told to me by my mother, Harriet Grandin Allen, many years ago.

The Mormons tried to get their Bible printed in Rochester, but no one wanted to undertake the work. My grandfather at first refused; after consulting friends who felt that it was merely a business matter and that he would be in no way related to the religion, he consented. The type was set for several pages at a time and the Mormons brought the manuscript in lots each day, taking the manuscript sections away the same day. . . . My grandfather received his pay, $3,000 worth in a farm and part of another farm, or a mortgage on the latter, both near Palmyra. . . . The printing was done on what is known as a Washington press. The writer saw this in the Mormon Museum in Salt Lake City. For decades it had lain neglected in the cellar of a store of Pliny Sexton’s, I suppose on Main Street. The hand work on the old style press must have been arduous, no power presses then.1

As the above paragraph shows, even the 1830 printer was less than receptive to the publication of the Book of Mormon, and not at all receptive to the book itself. Many still seriously doubt that the Book is what it purports to be: a sacred history. But there can now be no doubt that it has a history. And that means a series of unexpected turnabouts for its critics.

The critics expected the Book to be a non-Christian threat to “the faith once delivered to the saints.” Again and again it has, instead, pulled men and women toward that faith, illustrating and then enacting it.

*Dr. Madsen, professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University, is director of the Institute of Mormon Studies. He has lectured and published widely in the history and philosophy of religion.

1Excerpts from a letter from Henry Allen addressed to “The Librarian of the Palmyra Library” and recently recovered by Larry C. Porter.

252
The critics called it the "Gold Bible," the "Mormon Bible" and assumed it would replace the Bible. But historically it has been a major force in pulling more than three million persons toward understanding and respect for the Bible.

The critics expected it to be exposed as a forgery or a plagiarized rehash of Spaulding, Rigdon, Ethan Smith, or available Indian lore. But, quite by itself, the Book has remained the single, tangible artifact that renders these alternative "explanations" untenable.

Finally, the critics expected it to be a bubble for backwoodsmen, and none hesitated to predict the collapse of its influence in the nineteenth century. But, strangely, whatever may be its relevance to the arguments of that time and place, it has an almost pre-established harmony with the needs of the twentieth. And, as trends continue, it may be even more relevant to the twenty-first.

With confidence, then, we can predict an increasing willingness to read the Book with diminished hostility, and with a concern to "fairly test it."

That means that the story of its origin needs to be kept straight, its documented elements separated from mere say and hearsay. It is important that the story of the origin of the Book of Mormon also be translated correctly. And that is what a team of research scholars have been about this year.

Where were the Smiths living at the time of the Moroni visits? Russell R. Rich has given us a framework for confidence. What about Joseph Smith's reputation in Palmyra at the time of translation? Richard Lloyd Anderson takes what may well be the first thorough look at the Hurlbut hurlings and offers a detailed historiographer's appraisal. What of the Anthon Transcript story? Stanley B. Kimball has pursued with discipline and patience the main characters in the incident, and given us a platform from which to acknowledge what we can and cannot reliably say. What about the original Book of Mormon manuscript? Dean C. Jessee offers a most fascinating article on the fragments that are preserved. What of the impact of the Book on the New York community? Leonard Arrington, Larry Porter, Laurence Yorgason, and Jeffrey Holland offer further glimpses into that.

Throughout our research, we have felt a lasting debt to the Book's detractors. For through the campaign of disparagement
they have left, as it were, literary fingerprints which provide dates, places, circumstances, and a close look at what was being claimed and counter-claimed. Taken together, they will continue to undercut the notion that the Book was "done in a corner."

While we have encountered many dead ends, we have nevertheless opened some territory that promises further data. We commend these topics to the initiative of New York-minded Mormon historians:

1. The Prophet's silver-mining efforts for Stool (Stowell) and their relationship to the plethora of money-digging accounts.
2. The legal trials of Joseph Smith in the New York period.
3. Activities of the Smith family during the years 1823-1827.
4. The coherence of Joseph Smith's own account of the translation with his closest scribes—his wife Emma, and Oliver Cowdery.

In addition we are aware of four hearsay traditions, the sources of which cannot now be located, and we invite informed comment from our readers:

1. A paragraph, presently unlocated, in the papers of Joseph Knight, Senior, describing the return of Joseph and Emma from the Hill Cumorah with the plates and the Urim and Thummim.
2. A statement (remembered but not identified by Dr. T. Edgar Lyon) that, in the process of translation, the Prophet became more and more familiar with the language until, at the end, he no longer utilized the Urim and Thummim.
3. A statement that Joseph, anticipating publication of the Book, cried out, "O, Lord, what will the world say?" and was somehow reassured that mind-opening evidence would be forthcoming.
4. A report that not long after reading the Book, Parley P. Pratt was assigned by the Prophet to re-read the entire Bible for parallels and corroborations. When he submitted his notes, Joseph was noticeably astonished at the number.

Any information leading to the arrest and conviction of these references, or any reasonable facsimile, will be most welcome. Here, then, are some accumulated findings of another year's research into Mormon origins.
Where Were the Moroni Visits?

RUSSELL R. RICH*

Dating early events in Church history is occasionally especially difficult because early "eye witness" accounts are often found to disagree. Take for example the birth date of Alvin Smith, the Prophet Joseph’s oldest brother. The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is taken from Joseph Smith’s journal, lists the date in question as February 11, 1798;1 but Lucy Mack Smith lists the date as February 11, 1799, in her first edition of her history of the Prophet.2

There has been much more controversy over Alvin’s death than over his birth. A footnote in the DHC 1:16 includes a genealogy of the Prophet’s family, giving the date of Alvin’s death as November 19, 1825. On the same page (and also on page 2) in the body of the text the Prophet is quoted as specifying the date as 1824. In Mother Smith’s original edition she also gave 1824 as the year of Alvin’s death. In Joseph Smith 2:4-6, in the Pearl of Great Price, the present edition also gives 1824 as the year of Alvin’s death. Ascertaining the correct date of Alvin’s death will assist our dating and placing the first Moroni visit.

Two sources enable us to establish the death date of Alvin as November 19, 1823. First is the inscription on Alvin’s grave in the community cemetery located adjacent to the old Western Presbyterian Church in Palmyra. His tombstone gives his

*Dr. Rich is a professor of history of religion at Brigham Young University and a specialist on the schismatic groups of the Restoration.

1Joseph Smith, The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, 1946), Vol. 1, p. 16 {commonly known as Documentary History of the Church; hereafter referred to as DHC}.

2Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors For Many Generations (Liverpool, 1853), p. 40. This first edition was said to have “contained errors, occasioned by its not being carefully compared with historical data,” and was reissued in a “Utah” edition, History of Joseph Smith, 1901 (from page 1 of the Introduction).
death as November 19, 1823. This evidence alone is insufficient to authenticate this date, because a tombstone placed years after a death might also be in error. However, there is another bit of evidence that does establish the 1823 date as the correct year beyond doubt.

It appears that someone was spreading rumors around Palmyra that Alvin's body had been exhumed from its grave and mutilated. These rumors naturally brought deep concern to the Smith family. Joseph Smith, Sr. became so concerned that he purchased the following advertisement in the *Wayne Sentinel*, printed at Palmyra. This ad appeared on successive Wednesdays (September 30, October 6, 13, 20, 27, and November 3, 1824):

**To the Public.**

WHEREAS reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son Alvin had been removed from the place of his interment and dissected, which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are particularly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations—therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports, I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed.

This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who may have heard the report, and of informing those who have put it in circulation, that it is earnestly requested they would desist therefrom; and that it is believed by some, that they have been stimulated more by a desire to injure their reputation of certain persons than a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends. 

JOSEPH SMITH.

*Palmyra, Sept. 25th, 1824.*

A microfilm photograph by courtesy of the Church Hist
WHERE WERE THE MORONI VISITS?

It is obvious that neither 1824 nor 1825 could be the correct date for Alvin’s death, since a request not to circulate grave-molesting rumors was printed as early as September 30, 1824.

Some historians have used the death date of Alvin as a means of determining the house in which the Smiths were living when Moroni made his first appearance to Joseph. While living in Palmyra the Smiths pooled their funds, and eventually negotiated for the purchase of 100 acres of land about two miles south of Palmyra in the township of Manchester and the county of Ontario. They soon constructed a comfortable log house there on the west side of the road, possibly 100, possibly less than 100 yards south of the Palmyra township and Wayne County line. After a time they began to plan another home, one that would be more comfortable for older people. This house was begun under the “management and control” of Alvin. Mother Smith states:

And when November, 1822, arrived, the frame was raised, and all the materials necessary for its speedy completion were procured.

The Utah edition of Mother Smith’s biography gives this date as 1824. Obviously the Utah date is incorrect since Alvin died in 1823 when this house was still only partially completed; in fact from the description given, this seems to have been about the stage of construction the house was in when Alvin died. Thus it appears a possibility that Mother Smith should have given the date as 1823 instead of 1822, but never as late as 1824.

Since it has been definitely established that it was not later than 1823 when Alvin died, and that the new house was not yet finished, for Mother Smith stated that shortly after Alvin’s death they took steps to get the house finished “as speedily as possible” and hired workmen to complete the job, there is only one possibility that it was in the new house that Moroni appeared to Joseph the night of September 21, 1823. This would be that, perhaps because of the large number of children in the family, the Smiths were using the unfinished house as sleeping rooms for some of the boys. This writer is of the opinion, however, that the appearances of Moroni were in the “snug” log house referred to above which the Smiths built shortly after purchasing the farm.
One other interesting conclusion might also be noted in relation to Alvin's death. Shortly before he died, Alvin in speaking individually to each member of his family said to Joseph: "I want you to be a good boy, and do everything that lies in your power to obtain the Record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given you..." Mother Smith states that

Alvin manifested, if such could be the case, greater zeal and anxiety in regard to the record that had been shown to Joseph, than any of the rest of the family; in consequence of which we could not bear to hear anything on the subject. Whenever Joseph spoke of the Record, it would immediately bring Alvin to our minds with all his zeal, and with all his kindness; and, when we looked to his place, and realized that he was gone from it, to return no more in this life, we all with one accord wept over our irretrievable loss, and we could 'not be comforted because he was not.'

With the date of Alvin's death definitely established as November 19, 1823, and with record of his great interest shown in the "Record," it is obvious that recent criticism that the First Vision and the first Moroni visit could not have preceded 1825 is unhistorical.


The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript

DEAN C. JESSEE*

The one thing that confirmed the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon in the mind of Emma Smith was the method of writing the manuscript. When asked about her belief by her son, she answered:

... no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscript unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible. 1

Joseph Smith's own claim for the Book was that he translated it "through the medium of the Urim and Thummim... by the gift and power of God," and that it was "... the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." 2

While much that has been said regarding the origin of the Book of Mormon is beyond the experience of the average searcher, only as he accepts or rejects the credibility of the earliest witnesses, the existence of the book itself provides a common ground for careful investigation. But beyond this, some

*Dean Jessee is a member of the staff at the LDS Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City.
2Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, 1948), Vol. 4, pp. 461, 537 [Cited hereafter as DHC.]
surviving, badly weathered fragments of the original manuscript permit a consideration of the Book of Mormon from a paleographic standpoint. It is the purpose of this study to review the history, and consider the handwriting and composition of the remaining segments of the original manuscript for what they may contribute to the credibility of early witnesses regarding the Book of Mormon origin.

THE WRITING OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Joseph Smith records that during the night of September 21, 1823, a heavenly messenger appeared to him, and revealed the location of "... a book ... written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent ... and that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it ... also that there were two stones ... deposited with the plates; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book." Receiving the plates four years later, on September 22, 1827, Joseph was delayed in his efforts to translate them by persecution which became so intense that "multitudes were on the alert continually" to get the plates from him. This condition became so intolerable that he was forced to leave Manchester, New York, and go to the home of his wife’s parents in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where he arrived in December 1827. By June 14, 1828, he had completed at least 116 manuscript pages of the translation with the help of Martin Harris, a Palmyra "farmer of respectability" who assisted him as scribe. About this time, Harris, "after much solicitation," was permitted to take the writings to Palmyra and show them to his family. While there, others saw them and "by stratagem ... got them away" and they were never recovered. Following this loss, the plates and the interpreters were taken by the angel and not returned until September 22, 1828. Little translation was done prior to April 5, 1829, when

3Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 12.
4Ibid., p. 18.
5Ibid., p. 19.
6Ibid., p. 21.
8That some translation was done just prior to Cowdery’s coming is indicated from a March 1829 revelation: "... when thou hast translated a few more pages thou shalt stop for a season, ..." Doctrine and Covenants 5:30. See also Sec. 10:41.
Oliver Cowdery, a New York school teacher, arrived at Harmony and was engaged as scribe.\(^9\)

The translation progressed with "little cessation" until June of 1829 when David Whitmer, a friend of Cowdery's came to Harmony with an invitation for Joseph and Oliver to continue their work at his father's home in Fayette, New York.\(^10\) Whitmer offered them free board and room and the assistance of himself and one of his brothers to aid in writing. Having need for help "in an undertaking so arduous," Joseph and Oliver accompanied Whitmer to Fayette, where the remainder of the work was completed.\(^11\) According to David Whitmer, the translation at his father's home in Fayette occupied about one month—from June 1 to July 1, 1829.\(^12\)

**THE MANUSCRIPT AFTER PUBLICATION**

Upon completion of the translation, precautions were taken for protection of the manuscript during the printing of the book:

First, that Oliver Cowdery should transcribe the whole manuscript. Second, that he should take but one copy at a time to the office, so that if one copy should get destroyed, there would still be a copy remaining. Third, that in going to and from the office, he should always have a guard to attend him, for the purpose of protecting the manuscript. Fourth, that a guard should be kept constantly on the watch, both night and day, about the house, to protect the manuscript from malicious persons, who would infest the house for the purpose of destroying the manuscript. . . .\(^13\)

John H. Gilbert, who set the type for the first edition of the Book of Mormon in the E.B. Grandin Printing office in Palmyra, New York, remembered that the printing "commenced in August 1829 and was finished in March 1830."\(^14\) Taking into consideration the time spent dodging "persecution" and losing part of the manuscript with its consequences, the actual writing time of the original manuscript covered about three months.

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\(^{9}\) *Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, Ohio), October 1834, pp. 14-15.

\(^{10}\) *DHC*, Vol. 1, p. 35.


\(^{12}\) *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881.


\(^{14}\) Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, *Infancy of the Church* (Salt Lake City, 1889), p. 37.
[th]at thou mig mightest be like unto this River continually runn
the fountain of
[in]g into \ all righteousness & he also spake unto Lemuel saying O that thou
[mightest be like unto this vally firm & steadfast & immovable in keeping
[th]e commandments of the Lord now this he spake because of the stiffneck
[e]ness of Laman and Lemuel for behold they did murmur in many thin
[gs] against their father because that he was a visionary man & that he had lead
[th]em out of the land of Jerusalem to leave the land of their inheritance &
[the]ir gold & their silver & their precious things & to perish in the wilder
[ne]ss & this they said that he had done because of the foolish immagonations of
[hi]s heart & thus Laman & Lemuel being the eldest did murmur against
[the]ir father & they did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God
[w]ho had created them neither did they believe that Jerusalem that great city
[co]uld be destroid according to the words of the prophets & they were like unto
[th]e Jews which were at Jerusalem which sought to take away the life of
[my] father & it came to pass that my father did speak unto them in the vally of
[Le]muel with power being filled with the spirit untill their frames di[d]
[sh]ake before him & he did confound them that they durst not utter against him where
[fo]re they did do as he commanded them & my father dwelt in a tent & it came
[tom] that I Nephi being exceeding young nevertheless being large in sta[t]
[ue] & also haveing great desires to know of the mysteries \ wherefore I cried
unto the Lord & behold he did visit me & did soften my heart that I did
believe all the words which had been spoken by my father wherefore I
did not rebell against him like unto my Brothers & I spake unto Sam
makeing known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested
unto me by his Holy spirit & it came to pass that he believed in my wo
[rd]s but behold Laman & Lemuel would not hearken unto my words
[&] being grieved because of the heardness of their hearts I cried unto the Lord for th
[e]m & it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me saying blessed art thou \ beca
[use of thy faith for thou hast sought me diligently with lowliness of heart {&]
in as much as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in & sh[a]
ll be lead to a land of promise yea even a land which I have prepared fo[r]
you a land which is choice above all other lands & in as much as thy Br[e]e

Brackets on the left of the page identify letters that are not visible on
the accompanying photograph but which are legible on the original.
Book of Mormon Manuscript, 1 Nephi 2:9-21 in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery by courtesy of the Church Historian
Little reference is made to the manuscript between the time of the Book of Mormon publication in 1830, and the deposit of the document in the Nauvoo House cornerstone eleven years later. Hyrum Smith was reported as saying that the manuscript “once fell into the hands of an apostate (I [Hyrum] think one of the Whitmers) and they had to resort to stratagem to get possession of it again.”

On October 2, 1841, eye-witnesses declare that Joseph Smith placed the manuscript in the southeast cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, which was then being constructed. Warren Foote stated: "I was standing very near the cornerstone, when Joseph Smith came up with the manuscript of the Book of Mormon and said he wanted to put that in there, as he had had trouble enough with it. It was the size of common foolscap paper, and about three inches thick." Ebenezer Robinson, one-time editor of the Times and Seasons recalled:

After the brethren had assembled at the southeast corner of the foundation, where the cornerstone was to be laid, President Joseph Smith said: 'Wait, brethren, I have a document I wish to put in that stone,' and started for his house, which was only a few rods away, across Main Street. I went with him to the house, and also one or two other brethren. He got a manuscript copy of the Book of Mormon, and brought it into the room where we were standing, and said: 'I will examine to see if it is all here,' and as he did so I stood near him, at his left side, and saw distinctly the writing, as he turned up the pages until he hastily went through the book and satisfied himself that it was all there, . . . It was written on foolscap paper, and formed a package, as the sheets lay flat, of about two or two and a half inches thick, I should judge. It was written mostly in Oliver Cowdery's handwriting, with which I was intimately acquainted, having set many pages of type from his handwriting, in the church printing office at Kirtland, Ohio. Some parts of it were written in other handwriting. He took the manuscript and deposited it in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House: . . .

The manuscript remained in the cornerstone until 1882 when it was removed by Lewis Bidamon, who had married

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16Warren Foote, "Dairy," Oct. 2, 1841, Vol. 1, p. 57. This statement agrees with that of John Brown, who also witnessed the proceedings. He quoted Joseph Smith as saying: "I have had a great deal of trouble to preserve it. I now deliver it up to the Lord and will not have the care of it any longer." Brown to Taylor, letter cited above in note 15.
Emma Smith following the death of the Prophet, and was living in the house at the time. On September 27, 1882, the Deseret News printed a report from the Carthage, Illinois Republican, as follows:

Last Tuesday, while Major Bidamon was tearing down the walls of the eastern wing of the old 'Nauvoo House,' . . . he came across the corner stone, which was laid by the Prophet . . . at the time the building was commenced, which was in the year 1841. The stone was in the foundation, in the southeast corner, and in the center of it was a square cut chest, about 10 x 14 inches, and eight inches deep, covered with a stone lid, which fitted closely in a groove or shoulder at the top, and cemented around the edge with lead that had been melted and poured in the seam. On removing the lid, which was done with some difficulty, the chest was found to be filled with a number of written and printed documents, the most of them mouldy and more or less decayed. . . .18

After removing it from the cornerstone, Bidamon gave portions of the manuscript to Nauvoo visitors on five known occasions. One of these occurred on September 7, 1883, when Mrs. Sarah M. Kimball, a one-time resident of Nauvoo, returned to visit her former home:

I asked the lady friend with whom I was riding to call with me on Mr. Bidamon a former acquaintance; after learning where I was from, he recognized me and seemed pleased, we talked a little of times that were, and of persons gone, . . . I referred to his home which is a temporary four room building on the southwest corner of the foundation laid for the Nauvoo House. I asked why the heavy and extensive foundations around him were being torn up. He replied, that he had bought the premises, and the rock was torn up to sell, as he was poor and otherwise would not have been able to build. I said, I am interested in this foundation, because I remember there were treasures deposited under the chief cornerstone. He said, yes, I took up the stone box and sold it . . . It had been so long exposed to the wet and weather that its contents were nearly ruined, I gave the coin to Joe and told him he could have the pile of paper. He said it was the manuscript of the Book of Mormon; but it was so much injured that he did

18"Relics of the Old Nauvoo House," Deseret News, September 27, 1882. This date for the removal of the manuscript from the cornerstone is verified in the conversation of Joseph W. Summerhays with Lewis Bidamon on Oct. 3, 1884 in which Bidamon is recorded as saying: " . . . in 1882 I made some alterations in the house and in taking down the east wing in the south east corner I came across a stone box. . . ." Summerhays, "Diary," October 3, 1884.
not care for it. While we were talking, Mr. Bidamon's wife brought a large pasteboard box and placed it on my lap. It contained a stack of faded and fast decaying paper. The bottom layers for several inches, were uniform in size, they seemed to me larger than common foolscap, the paper was coarse in texture and had the appearance of having lain a long time in water, as the ink seemed almost entirely soaked into the paper, when I handled it, it would fall to pieces. I could only read a few words here and there just enough to learn that it was the language of the Book of Mormon. Above this were some sheets of finer texture folded and sewed together, this was better preserved and more easily read, I held it up and said, 'Mr. B. How much for this relic?' He said, 'Nothing from you, you are welcome to anything you like from the box.' I appreciated the kindness, took the leaves that were folded and sewed together. . . .

Four months after her return from Nauvoo, Mrs. Kimball wrote Joseph F. Smith: 'I procured a relic from the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. You can have it if you will take the trouble to call. I am somewhat infirm, otherwise should have reported to you earlier.'

The Kimball acquisition is identifiable from a description given by George Reynolds, secretary of the First Presidency, who examined it in 1884 after it had been given to Joseph F. Smith. Reynolds described it as consisting of twenty pages (ten sheets) and containing the Book of Mormon text from 1 Nephi 2:2 to 1 Nephi 13:35. Mrs. Kimball's observation that some of the leaves "appeared larger than common foolscap," agrees with Reynolds' page measurement of 16 1/2 inches long by 6 5/8 inches wide, which is longer than but not as wide as foolscap.

The largest known single acquisition of the manuscript occurred on May 21, 1885, when the Assistant Church Historian, Franklin D. Richards, and his son Charles C., visited Lewis Bidamon in Nauvoo:

. . . . We were quite willingly shown all that remained of the Book of Mormon manuscript: . . . The paper is yellow with age and from the moisture sweated from its own hiding place. It is brittle to the touch. Many of the leaves crumble

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100Letter from Sarah M. Kimball to Joseph F. Smith, October 10, 1883.
like ashes and some of them are broken away. It is necessary to handle them with the utmost care. The writing is faint, and is not legible on many continuous lines, but fragmentary clauses, and even whole verses are occasionally discernible.

When the proprietor saw the profound interest with which we regarded these things, he spoke to us about them with great respect and generosity. We talked with him upon the subject of the writings at considerable length, and through his complaisance, when we came away we brought with us all of the manuscripts . . . and have them now in our possession.  

The pages of the manuscript obtained by Richards on this occasion comprised two segments of the Book of Mormon text, reportedly covering 1 Nephi 15:5 to 2 Nephi 30; and Alma 2:19 to Alma 60:22. Mr. Richards did not indicate the number of pages he received from Bidamon. However, a comparison of present holdings with his listed references suggests that portions of the manuscripts he obtained have been either lost in transmission and handling, or an error was made in the reporting.  

Franklin Richards retained this portion of the manuscript until his death in 1899 when it passed to his son, Charles C. who, on December 13, 1946, presented it to President George Albert Smith. The measurable leaves of the Richards acquisition appear to be foolscap (13 inches by 16 inches) paper folded and sewed to make 8 inch by 13 inch pages.

If Lewis Bidamon readily parted with segments of the document on these two occasions, such was not the case when the Utah businessman, Joseph W. Summerhays visited him on October 3, 1884:  

I was introduced to Major L.C. Bidamon . . . I said to him Major they tell me over in Missouri that you have found the manuscript of the Book of Mormon in this house. How is it?

He answered: In 1882 I made some alterations in the house and in taking down the east wing in the southeast corner I came across a stone box about 10 x 15 — 6 inches deep. The

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22Letter of Franklin D. Richards to the Editor of the Deseret News, "Visit to Pueblo, Independence, Carthage, Nauvoo, Richmond, etc.," Deseret News, July 1, 1885, pp. 380-381.

23See listing on p. 273.


25Joseph William Summerhays, "Diary," October 3, 1884. Change in this quotation is limited to punctuation and spelling.
box was sealed with a stone cap in it. I found a Bible. Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, Hymn Book, Times & Seasons, a letter addressed to the Pres. of the United States written by Lyman Wight, setting forth the wrongs of our people, some manuscript and less than one thousand dollars in cash (a joke), all in a bad state of preservation. Then turning to his wife he said to her, 'bring the papers.' which she did. I examined them, especially the Manuscript. I cannot tell what it is, for it is very rotten and the ink is faded but from the more visible, I make the following extracts: 'And again I say unto you that it is my will that my servant Lyman Wight should continue in preaching in Zion in the spirit of meekness confessing me before the world and I will bear him up as on Eagles wings and he shall beget glory and honor,' I think this is from the Doc. & Cov. I quote further, 'And they said unto me what meareth the river of water which our father saw and I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water. I said unto them that it was an awful gulph which seperated the wicked from the tree of life and also from the saints of God and I said unto them that it was a representation of that awful Hell which the Angel said unto me was prepared for the wicked.' I think [this] is from the Book of Mormon. Some of the Manuscript was, I think, extracts from the Book of Mormon, and some from the Doc. & Cov. Some of it was in printers takes and had been corrected. The pencil marks being plain and the ink faded, I ask [ed] the Major for some of the manuscript. He refused, but when he left the room his wife gave me one leaf and a few leaves of the Bible. . . . 28

Mr. Summerhayes did not specify which page of the manuscript he received on this occasion. 29 However, of the items he saw and described, three of them—Section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lyman Wight petition, and the page containing 1 Nephi 15:26-29—are found among the Book of

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28Summerhayes was copying from the manuscript of the revelation of January 19, 1841 (D&C 124:18) which inaugurated the building of the Nauvoo House. The revelation had been placed in the cornerstone with the Book of Mormon manuscript.

29This quotation is from 1 Nephi 15:26-29.

30Reference to 'printers takes' and penciled corrections in regard to the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon would indicate that portions of it may have been used by the printer of the 1830 or the 1837 editions of the book. The preface of the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon states that it had been 'carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts by elder Joseph Smith, Jr. . . . assisted by . . . O. Cowdery.'

31Alma B. Summerhayes of Salt Lake City, who kindly provided the above quotation from his father's diary, was unaware of the content or location of the page obtained by his father when contacted in January 1970.
Mormon manuscript material in the Historian’s Office. At least two of these (the Doctrine and Covenants revelation, and the page from the Book of Mormon) were obtained by Franklin Richards in his 1885 visit.\footnote{Franklin D. Richards, \textit{Deseret News}, pp. 380-381.}

A fourth recipient of a portion of the manuscript was Edward Stevenson, who had accompanied the Book of Mormon witness, Martin Harris, from Ohio to Utah in 1870. In an account of his visit to David Whitmer’s son in Richmond, Missouri, in September 1888, Stevenson recorded seeing the printer’s copy of the manuscript then in the possession of the Whitmer family. He added that the original had been placed in the Nauvoo House cornerstone, that Franklin D. Richards had a portion of it at that time, and “I have a piece of the same and deposit\[^{ed}\] a portion in the Museum of Salt Lake City . . . ”.\footnote{Edward Stevenson, “Diary,” September 12, 1888.} A year later, addressing a congregation in Provo, Utah, Stevenson remarked that Mr. Bidamon had given him “a small portion [of the manuscript] as a relic, which I now have . . . ”.\footnote{\textit{Utah Enquirer} (Provo, Utah), August 30, 1889.} The present location of this segment of the manuscript is unknown.

Another page of the Book of Mormon manuscript was identified on August 8, 1931, when the \textit{Deseret News} printed a photograph showing a part of 1 Nephi 14, with the notation that it represented “nearly a full page of the manuscript which is now in the possession of A. B. Kesler,” a Salt Lake City resident.

A few final pieces of the manuscript were obtained by Andrew Jenson at Nauvoo on October 6, 1888: “I called on Lewis C. Bidamon and while conversing with him on the early history of Nauvoo he brought to me some small pieces of paper, pouring them into my hat remarking, ‘Mr. Jenson, those are the last fragments of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon. If you want them you may have them.’”\footnote{Statement of Andrew Jenson, March 18, 1938. An additional portion of the original manuscript was obtained by the Reorganized Church at one time, but “for want of more adequate preservation procedures disintegrated long ago.” Richard P. Howard, \textit{Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development} (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1969), p. 27.} These fragments, equivalent to about one page, are totally illegible.

The Kimball and Richards acquisitions account for sixty-eight of the seventy-two manuscript leaves of the Book of
laman and lemual Repent and go with Nephi

that I prayed unto the Lord saying O Lord according to my faith

which is in me wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren yea even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound and it came to pass that when I had said these words behold the bands were loosed from my feet And I stood before my brethren and I spake unto them again and it came to pass that when I had said these words behold the bands were loosed from my feet

And I stood before my brethren and I spake unto them again and it came to pass that they were sorrowsful because of their wickedness inasmuch that they did bow down before me and did plead with me that I would forgive them of the thing that they had done against and it came to pass that I did frankly forgive them all that they had done and I did exhort them that they would pray unto the Lord their God for forgiveness and it came to pass that they did so and after that they had done pray ing unto the Lord the we did again travel on our journey toward the tent of our father and it came to pass that we did came down unto the tent of our father and after that we did

And my brethren and all the house of Ishmael had come down unto the tent of my father they did give thanks unto the Lord their God and they did offer sacrifice and of burnt offerings unto him and it came to pass that we had gathered to gather all manner of seeds of every kind both of grain of every kind and also of the seeds of fruits of every kind and it came to pass that while my father tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us saying behold I have dreamt a dream or in other words I have seen a vision and behold because of the thing
Book of Mormon Manuscript, 1 Nephi 7:17-8:2 written by an unidentified scribe by courtesy of the Church Historian
Mormon now filed in the Church Historian’s Office. Present evidence does not indicate the source of the remaining four.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Those who described the manuscript after its removal from the Nauvoo House cornerstone were unanimous in observing that it had been severely damaged by the elements. So delicate were the pages that any subsequent handling resulted in further deterioration. Consequently, action was taken to permanently preserve it from further decay. Since portions of the manuscript were almost unreadable, an ultra-violet photograph was taken of each page to increase the legibility. This work was done sometime between 1949 and 1954 by the Genealogical Society microfilm photographer, Ernst Koehler, who was filming records for the Church Historian’s Office at the time. These photographs offer the best means for reading the text of the manuscript.

A second step in the preservation process occurred in 1968-1969, when Earl Olson, Assistant Church Historian, took the loose sheets of the manuscript to the W. J. Barrow Restoration Shop in Richmond, Virginia, for deacidification and lamination. Ten sheets, comprising the Kimball acquisition were laminated September 25-26, 1968, and the remainder of the manuscript was completed June 19-25, 1969.

THE HANDWRITING OF THE MANUSCRIPT

At least five scribes aided Joseph Smith during the writing of the original Book of Mormon manuscript. Martin Harris wrote for Joseph during the initial stages of the translation in Harmony, Pennsylvania, prior to the loss of the 116 pages of the manuscript in 1828. There is no definite evidence that he continued to write after that. Emma Smith, in answer to a question in 1879 regarding those who were scribes for Joseph during the translation of the Book of Mormon, named, in addi-

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34So brittle was the paper, that a preliminary step to lamination required the removal of the binding thread and the cutting of each sheet along the fold.
35Specifically, the Barrow method of restoration and preservation of the Book of Mormon manuscript consisted of the removal of harmful acidic impurities from the paper by soaking it in a solution of calcium hydroxide followed by calcium bicarbonate. After washing and drying, the document was sandwiched between layers of cellulose acetate film and then placed between layers of transparent tissue paper to provide maximum strength.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Scribe*</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
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<td>1 Ne. 2:2-23</td>
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<td>Alma 56:22-37</td>
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<td>Alma 36:11-26</td>
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<td>Alma 56:38-51</td>
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<td>Alma 56:51-57:6</td>
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<td>1 Ne. 17:20-34</td>
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<td>Alma 37:8-19</td>
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<td>Almas 63:11-Hel. 1:5</td>
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<td>2 Ne. 1:8-18**</td>
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<td>Alma 43:2-17</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Hel. 1:28-2:8</td>
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<td>OC</td>
<td>Alma 19:21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pairings indicate the two sides of a single sheet of the Ms.  
*OC - Oliver Cowdery; JW? - possibly John Whitmer; U - Unidentified scribe. Every sheet of the Kimball Acquisition and the first eleven sheets of the Richards Acquisition were entirely preserved. Of those remaining approximately ½ to ½ of each sheet is missing. **Although photographed by Ernst Koehler in 1949-54, these two sheets were missing when the Manuscript was laminated in 1969.
against them to Battle & I Nephi Beheld that the gentiles which had gone out of Captivity by were delivered \( \wedge \) the power of God out of the Hands of all other Nations & it came to pass that I Nephi Beheld that they did prosper in the Land & I Beheld A Book & it was carried forth among them & the Angel saith unto me know eth thou the meaning of the Book & I saith I know not & he saith Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew & I Nephi Beheld it & he saith unto me the Book which thou Beholdest is a record of the Jews which contain the covanants of the Lord which he hath maid unto the House of Israel & it also containeth many of the Prophecies of the Holy Prophets & it is a record like unto the engraveings which are upon the plaits of Brass save there are not so many Nevertheless they contain the covanants of Lord which he hath maid unto the Hause of Israel wherefore they are of great worth unto the gentiles & the Angel of the Lord said unto me thou hast Beheld that the Book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew & when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the Gospel of the Lord of whom twelve Apostles Bore record & they Bore record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God wherefore these things go forth from the Jew in purity unto the gentiles according to the truth which is in God & after that they go forth by the hand of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb from the Jews unto the gentiles Behold after this thou seest the formation of that great & abominable church which is the most
Book of Mormon Manuscript, 1 Nephi 13:18-26 possibly written by John Whitmer by courtesy of the Church Historian
tion to herself, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and her brother Reuben Hale. The bulk of the manuscript was written by Oliver Cowdery after his arrival in Harmony in April 1829. Reuben Miller quoted Cowdery on the subject at the time of the latter's return to the Church in October 1848. "I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the prophet." Following the move to Fayette, New York, in June 1829, Joseph Smith recorded that John Whitmer "assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work," and previous to that, David Whitmer had offered his services "when convenient." Reuben Hale most likely wrote prior to the move to Fayette, while Joseph was residing at the Hale residence in Pennsylvania.

Of the 144 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript in the Church Historian's Office, 124 pages are in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery; eleven were probably written by John Whitmer; and twelve others are the work of an unidentified scribe.

Factors that aid in identifying handwriting presuppose that each person has distinctive writing characteristics from which available samples may vary; and although no two writing samples of an individual are exactly alike, variation is confined more to superficial details than fundamental writing habits. The identification of basic writing characteristics provides the means for detailed comparision and study. Many examples of Oliver Cowdery's handwriting appear in the manuscript sources of early Church history, due, no doubt, to his close association with Joseph Smith, his professional background as a school teacher, his appointment as the first Church Historian, and his ability as a penman. The isolation of basic features of Cowdery's writing permits an accurate identification of his work in the Book of Mormon manuscript.

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28 DHC, Vol. 1, p. 49.
29 Holograph samples of Oliver Cowdery's writing in the Historian's Office are found in Volume 1 of the Patriarchal Blessings, Book A-1 of Joseph Smith's "History of the Church," and the "Oliver Cowdery Papers." Other samples are located in the Cowdery Docket Book and Letters at the Huntington Library in California, the printer's copy of the Book of Mormon manuscript in the possession of the Reorganized Church at Independence, Missouri, and the Newel K. Whitney acquisition recently obtained by Brigham Young University.
One characteristic of the Cowdery writing in the manuscript that almost never appears in his other writings is the complete lack of punctuation and paragraphing—a peculiarity that applies to the other two scribes as well. The lack of such detail, however, by one whose usual mode of writing did not preclude this, adds credence to the claim of a dictated text for the Book of Mormon. Available samples of Cowdery's writing show consistent punctuation, with the single exception of revelations that were apparently dictated to him.\(^\text{10}\)

The handwriting on eleven pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript contains similarities to known samples of John Whitmer's writing. However, identification is not positive since existing variations between known samples of Whitmer's writing and the manuscript writing may not be within the limit of acceptable differences. Only further comparison of earlier samples will clarify this point.

The writer of a third portion of the manuscript is unknown. Available handwriting samples of known associates of Joseph Smith during the Book of Mormon translation provide no clue to the scribe of twelve pages of the manuscript. Basic writing characteristics of this person bear no resemblance to known samples of the writing of Emma Smith, Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith, Samuel Harrison Smith, Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer and David Whitmer. Neither do they compare with Joseph Smith's own hand.

Of the three amanuenses whose writing appears on the manuscript, that of the unidentified scribe contains the most error. Since this portion of the manuscript is more legible than the rest, published excerpts have been taken almost exclusively from these pages.\(^\text{11}\) Consequently, the analyst who seeks to calculate scribal error for the whole book on the basis of these examples may receive a faulty impression.

The appearance of Oliver Cowdery's handwriting on what appears to be the third page of the Book of Mormon manuscript (the first page of the surviving fragments) raises a question of the beginning point of his work as scribe. If, as evidence indicates,\(^\text{12}\) some translation of the Book of Mormon had been done prior to Cowdery's arrival in Pennsylvania in

\(^{10}\)ibid.

\(^{11}\)Consult *The Improvement Era* (June 1941), p. 342; (November 1940), p. 803; (March 1911), p. 384; and *Deseret Evening News* (Dec. 23, 1899).

April 1829, such writing would naturally precede Cowdery's. If Oliver commenced writing at the beginning of 1 Nephi, any writing that preceded his could not have exceeded two pages. It may be, however, that his work on the manuscript commenced at a later point in the text. Joseph Smith, after being directed not to retranslate the lost 116 pages of the manuscript, was advised to insert in their place the "engravings which are on the plates of Nephi." This would correspond to the first 133 pages of the printed book, comprising 1 Nephi to the Words of Mormon. The location of the Cowdery writing at the beginning of the text of 1 Nephi followed by the apparent hand of John Whitmer, may indicate that Oliver began writing at a point in the manuscript beyond the loss of the 116 pages, and that the "plates of Nephi" were written after the completion of the rest of the Book.

In conclusion, the history of the original Book of Mormon manuscript shows that many individuals have contributed to the preservation of part of a unique religious document. And while the further identification of handwriting may yet establish particular facts, an analysis of remaining fragments of the manuscript lends support to early statements regarding the origin of the book: (1) that several scribes were employed during the writing process, (2) that the book originated from a dictated text, and (3) that Oliver Cowdery wrote the major part of the manuscript.

D&C 10:30, 41.
Mormon historical scholarship has not yet provided answers to some questions regarding Mormonism's origins. It is not yet fully known, for example, who (in terms of social and economic backgrounds) joined the Mormon Church in the early years of its existence. Although a partially valid response would cite the names and backgrounds of a few prominent people among whom the leaders would be found, it seems clear that little data is at hand informing us of the cross section of Church members from which came the rank and file strength of the Mormon Church. Such information would give us clues regarding the real appeal of the Mormon message to prospective converts.\(^1\) Such information would also give us a more accurate picture of the environmental pressures and influences on Joseph Smith and other Church leaders responsible for formulating, interpreting and implementing Church doctrines and practices. Further, the organizational trends and doctrinal developments of the Church might be seen in sharper focus in the light of increased understanding of its environment.\(^2\)

\(^*\)Mr. Yorgason is an instructor at the LDS Institute of Religion affiliated with the University of Arizona in Tucson.

\(^1\)See Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Vol. 1 (Spring 1966), pp. 68-88 for an example of an attempt to arrive at answers to this question essentially without the assistance of such information.

\(^2\)De Pillis has also attempted to find answers to these problems in his article, "The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History*, Vol. 37 (May 1968), pp. 50-79, but again without the aid of sufficient information to justify his conclusions.

279
The most thorough efforts to date to overcome this information gap have come from George S. Ellsworth in his doctrinal dissertation, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830-1860," in which two chapters (Chapters 13 and 14) are devoted to discussions concerning the social backgrounds of early Mormons, together with a more detailed study of the specific backgrounds of twenty-six leaders of the Church. He points out that although this study is no thorough cross-sectional analysis, the "conclusions are not untypical and... the generalizations... might be made to apply, without serious error, to the general body of the Mormon people." In his summary statements regarding this subject, Ellsworth concludes that the Mormons came from mostly rural areas, and were typical representatives of those areas, whether they were "free thinkers, religious non-affiliates, earnest seekers after an ideal faith, or regular church members." He is careful to point out that "Mormonism is not to be associated with frontier revivalism."

Ellsworth's conclusions concur generally with assertions made on this latter point by Whitney R. Cross in his chapter on the Mormons in his book, The Burned-Over District, The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 [p. 150 especially]. Such conclusions were generally considered to have considerably mitigated the theory that prospective Mormon converts were "emotion-starved frontiersmen," and that the Mormon phenomenon was actually one of the many and varied responses to the religious needs of the frontiersmen of the day.

Mario DePillis, assistant professor of history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in the article previously referred to (footnote 2) has correctly pointed out that more aspects of the problem of understanding Mormon origins need to be illuminated. He asserts, for example, that traditional thinking needs to be revised (especially in consideration of Cross's theses), and that certain "frontier" conditions could exist almost anywhere, that these conditions usually consisted

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3Ibid., pp. 341-42.
4Ibid., p. 342.
in social, economic and/or political upheavals resulting in social dislocation in the minds of inhabitants of those regions. After an all too brief review and analysis of the backgrounds of a few early converts, and an analysis of data regarding areas of successful Mormon missionary efforts (data supplied by Ellsworth), DePillis makes the following conclusions:

It is simply the thesis of this article that the origin (1827-1844) of what can be called "Mormonism" was related to the disorientation of values associated with migration to and within the backwoods areas of the United States. Typically, these areas were newly settled, rural locales, and might be loosely called "frontier" areas—whether or not they contained more than six persons per square mile.  

In a study by the present writer initiated to test some of the above assertions (along with other objectives), the need has become apparent that further and more specific information on the social and geographical backgrounds of early Mormon converts would prove invaluable in the efforts of historians to understand Mormon origins. With this in mind, the writer has made an attempt to provide such information in a thesis entitled, "The Social and Geographical Origins of Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1845." Items of information regarding the backgrounds of some 280 converts from that period have been gathered and described. These items include the religious inclinations of each convert before conversion to Mormonism, his baptism place and date, the location of his birthplace, the places his parents moved and where he was raised, the religious inclinations of his parents and their economic and/or social status. The sizes and ages of the above-mentioned localities are also included. A chapter is included giving information and analysis on all the significant leaders of the period, contrasting such information with the backgrounds of all other members considered. In addition, a comprehensive map is used to demonstrate the localities from which all the converts came. Finally, tables were included to facilitate comparison of data in concluding analyses.

On the basis of the foregoing data some detailed conclusions have been made. It seems clear, for example, that the larger part (about 75 percent) of the converts were inhabitants of rural areas (rural being defined as 2,500 or less in-

\[\text{De Pillis, Church History, p. 79.}\]
habitants), and that most were born in the east (New England, New York), with comparatively few either born or converted in the south. In these areas most received a "common school" education (three years or less); few received an extended education, and fewer still were illiterate.

Most of the converts (the average age of the converts was about thirty) had belonged to other churches, although a significant number had chosen to belong to no church (about 31 percent). The previous religious affiliations of these converts reveal that about half the converts belonged to churches which used the revival as part of their worship and proselyting procedures (the following were typical of this: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Disciples of Christ [Campbellites]). And of those who did belong to the more revivalistically oriented churches, some were members in name only because of their distaste for revivals. Most of the converts belonged to the religions of their parents, but there was an increase of the rejection of extant churches from parents of converts to converts (17 percent to 31 percent).

Mormonism did not attract the highly urbanized, those sophisticated in business, politics or religion. The wealthy did not flock to its message, neither did the very poor nor the transients of society. In short, the Mormon converts from the period under consideration seldom came from society's highest or lowest levels, neither economically, socially, religiously nor geographically. They were, since becoming Mormons, often called extremists, but the items in their background considered here seem to suggest that Mormonism had its roots in the average and unobtrusive segments of society.
Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reappraised

Richard Lloyd Anderson*

The biographer of Joseph Smith's early life will know his subject when he relies on sources that know their subject. This truism is more obvious in statement than application, for non-Mormon biography has not faced the severe limitations of the uniformly hostile affidavits taken by a sworn enemy of the Mormon Prophet. The image thus obtained is sharply discordant from the Joseph Smith documented in the 1830's: a leader of physical prowess and vigorous manhood, a profound idealist with spontaneous humor and warmth, who displayed personal courage under tremendous odds. A similar youth in the 1820's is discovered, not by editing out non-Mormon sources, but finding those non-Mormon sources that reflect definite contact with Joseph Smith. Such a study shows that collecting informed statements about the Prophet will produce a substantial favorable judgment.¹

Most books on Joseph Smith claim reliance on evidence, but the glaring contradictions show that many apparent historical sources are highly unreliable. Obviously Joseph Smith was a topic of warm controversy in his own community. Consequently one must not take at full value the statement of a contemporary without raising the following issues:

¹Professor of history and religion at Brigham Young University, Dr. Anderson holds degrees in the fields of law, Greek, and ancient history, and has concentrated his research on New Testament and the witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

²This subject could not have been researched without the generous cooperation of the LDS Church Historian and assistants, the aid of the BYU Research Division and its director, Lane Compton, and of the Institute of Mormon Studies and its director, Truman Madsen. In writing, I am indebted to the critique of an admired friend, Professor Leonard J. Arrington of Utah State University.
1) **Verification of person.** Besides meeting the possibility of fictitious invention, vital statistics show whether a person was old enough to be a capable observer and may furnish clues on whether the observations are based on close or distant contact.

2) **Accuracy of reporting.** Here the question is whether the person purportedly making the statement really did so. Second and third hand statements are obviously suspect, but the interviewer recording an apparent firsthand statement may superimpose his preconceptions on the statement of another.

3) **Opportunity for observation.** The basic qualification for any historical source is firsthand contact with the person or event described. Yet the anti-Joseph Smith statements of contemporaries show a distinct tendency to report community rumor, not personal experience.

4) **Bias of the source.** Historians today recognize that no observer is free from bias, but intense prejudice tends to exaggeration. One must therefore be rigorous in examining the factual basis of the conclusions of Joseph Smith's contemporaries.

Although initial collection of statements against Joseph Smith is an oft-told story, its outline is a necessary background for the affidavits to be analyzed. D. P. Hurlbut, excommunicated twice by LDS tribunals for immorality, became so personally vindictive that he was put under a court order restraining him from doing harm to the person or property of Joseph Smith.² He was next "employed" by an anti-Mormon public committee to gather evidence to "completely divest Joseph Smith of all claims to the character of an honest man . . ."³ To achieve this goal he travelled to New York and procured statements at Palmyra Village, the largest business center adjacent to the Smith farm and also at Manchester, the rural district that included "Stafford Street." Cornelius Stafford, then twen-

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³"To the Public," official committee statement published in the *Painesville Telegraph*, January 31, 1834. Early nineteenth century spelling of names is not always consistent, and "Hurlburt" appears in LDS records. The quoted statement and autographs favor the "Hurlbut" of this article.
ty, later remembered that Hurlbut arrived at "our school house and took statements about the bad character of the Mormon Smith family, and saw them swear to them." 14

The Painesville, Ohio, editor, E. D. Howe, replaced Hurlbut as a respectable author, and published the affidavits in *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834), laying the cornerstone of anti-Mormon historiography. Howe lived to see the solidity of the edifice, observing forty-four years afterward in his memoirs that the book "has been the basis of all the histories which have appeared from time to time since that period touching that people." 15 More accurately, Howe's writing was insignificant, but the Palmyra-Manchester affidavits published by him have introduced Joseph Smith in every major non-Mormon study from 1834 to the present. Yet even supposedly definitive studies display no investigation of the individuals behind the Hurlbut statements, nor much insight into their community.

Some simple arithmetic ought to shake the canonical status of the Hurlbut-Howe affidavits. The Smith family lived on the line between Wayne and Ontario counties, well settled with substantial populations. All who claimed to know Joseph Smith in this area had contact in the townships of either Palmyra or Manchester, and the 1830 census contains about 2,000 males old enough to know the Smiths in these two localities. From that possible number, Hurlbut procured the signatures of seventy-two individuals who claimed firsthand experience with Joseph Smith. At best, Hurlbut selected one-half of one percent of the males who potentially knew anything about the Smiths. Although Howe presented these as representative, they are matched by approximately the same number in those communities known to have a favorable opinion of the Smiths in the late 1820's. Dr. Gain Robinson, uncle of the Smith family physician, gathered sixty signatures on a certificate attesting the Smiths' reliability in an attempt to prevent loss of their farm in 1825. 16 Yet the crucial issue is not signatures,

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1Statement of C. R. Stafford, March 1885, Auburn, Ohio, cit. *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1888), p. 3. Hurlbut's published affidavits will be analyzed in the article. They include two general statements with multiple signatures and also the following individual statements: Joseph Capron, Parley Chase, Willard Chase, Abigail Harris, Henry Harris, Lucy Harris, Peter Ingersoll, Roswell Nichols, Barton Stafford, David Stafford, Joshua Stafford, William Stafford, and G. W. Stoddard.


3For full discussion, see Anderson, *Dialogue*, pp. 16, 19.
but individual testimony with supporting details. In this category there are only ten individual statements on Joseph Smith to be considered. But three times this number of individual recollections have been preserved from non-Mormons of Palmyra-Manchester that do not appear in Hurlbut-Howe.

Until Hugh Nibley's *Myth Makers* opened the subject, detailed study of deficiencies in the Hurlbut-Howe evidence was not easily found. Nibley drew the net broadly and exposed the contradictory nature of anti-Mormon testimonials on Joseph Smith. The purpose here is more specific: to analyze Hurlbut's statements for firsthand information—then to suggest major insights from other non-Mormon statements from Palmyra-Manchester. Although this will exclude a number of Susquehanna Valley and Fayette recollections, the more abundant Palmyra-Manchester evidence is based on longer contact with Joseph Smith, much of which extended to pre-Mormon days.

**Hurlbut's General Affidavits**

Hurlbut heavily influenced the individual statements from Palmyra-Manchester, as can be shown by his phrases regularly appearing in affidavits of the Staffords, Chases, etc. His language evidently appears in two community affidavits: names of fifty-one residents of Palmyra appear on one document and names of eleven residents of Manchester appear on another. One must make a necessary assumption here. The signers of a petition or declaration are normally not authors, merely ratifiers. When Hurlbut appeared in the Manchester schoolhouse, he undoubtedly had penned the statement that eleven rather nonliterary farmers signed. One would envision the same procedure as inevitable for the fifty-one signers from Palmyra. Someone authored the general statements, and Hurlbut is the best candidate.

Not only does identifiable phrasing appear, but similar structuring of the affidavits. In the following comparison, significant word correlations are indicated, but the more signifi-

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*This statistic excludes three Palmyra declarations. Lucy Harris talks only of her husband. G. S. Stoddard's single sentence on the Smiths is merely a gratuitous comment: "The Smith family never made any pretensions to respectability." And Abigail Harris reports a single conversation with Lucy Smith that is strictly not relevant to the character of Joseph Smith. For Abigail's evident tendency to maliciousness, see Hugh Nibley, *The Myth Makers* (Salt Lake City, 1961), pp. 20-22.*
cant point is the similarity of basic structure from two purportedly different authors:

**GENERAL PALMYRA AFFIDAVIT**

We, the undersigned, have been acquainted with the Smith family, for a number of years, while they resided near this place, and we have no hesitation in saying, that we consider them destitute of that moral character, which ought to entitle them to the confidence of any community. They were particularly famous for visionary projects, spent much of their time in digging for money which they pretended was hid in the earth; and to this day, large excavations may be seen in the earth, not far from their residence, where they used to spend their time in digging for hidden treasures. Joseph Smith, Senior, and his son, Joseph, were in particular, considered entirely destitute of moral character and addicted to vicious habits. . . .

It was not supposed that any of them were possessed of sufficient character or influence to make any one believe their book or their sentiments,

**PARLEY CHASE AFFIDAVIT**

I was acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sen. both before and since they became Mormons, and feel free to state that not one of the male members of the Smith family were entitled to any credit whatsoever.

Digging for money was their principal employment.

They were lazy, intemperate and worthless men, very much addicted to lying. In this they frequently boasted of their skill.

In regard to their Gold Bible speculation they scarcely ever told two stories alike. The Mormon Bible is said to be a revelation from God, through Joseph Smith Jr., his Prophet, and this same Joseph Smith, Jr. to my knowledge, bore the reputa-

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*These two documents (and all Hurlbut affidavits cited) are in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio. 1834), pp. 261-262 and p. 248. For purposes of comparison, the sentence about money digging has been placed before its preceding sentence, and Hurlbut's italics removed and mine added. Deletions in the general Palmyra affidavit are restricted to the non-Smith paragraph. Since the affidavits appear in this work of Howe (pp. 232-262) arranged by the name of the deponents, further reference will be made by name and not footnoted pages.
and we know not of a single individual in this vicinity that puts the least confidence in their pretended revelations.

The words italicized in the above comparisons are a key to equivalent portions of the two affidavits. Both progress formally through a recital of knowledge of the Smiths, their desreputability in the community, money digging, and being "addicted to" evil practices, closing with application of general character to religious claims and the assertion that no one in that area takes them seriously. It is highly unlikely that Parley Chase would write following the identical outline of Hurlbut's Palmyra affidavit—rather Hurlbut composed both.

Moving to the general Manchester affidavit, one can see from the similar language that Hurlbut obviously prepared it for signing. The sole claim there against the Smiths is found in the first sentence on the following chart, which contains three negative patterns mirrored in other affidavits of supposed independent authorship:

| Lazy, indolent set of men, but also intemperate; and their word was not to be depended upon. |
| Lazy, intemperate . . very much addicted to lying. |
| Lazy set of fellows . . a drunkard and a liar |
| Lying and indolent set of men, and no confidence could be placed in them |
| Became indolent and told marvellous stories |
| Notorious for indolence, foolery and falsehood |

Once more, the combination of similar vocabulary and similar thought pattern is apparent. The "indolent-intemperate-lying" pattern of four affidavits, with slight modification in another two, was not independently created by six spontaneous declarations. Hurlbut either suggested this language, penned it for signing, or interpolated it afterwards. A greater point is being made than common phrases, however. Hurlbut's redundancies reveal what he most wanted to prove—and what the

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9Statements respectively from the general Manchester affidavit, Parley Chase, David Stafford (the first phrase appears in the sentence following "a drunkard and a liar"), Henry Harris, Joshua Stafford, and Joseph Capron.
reader must be cautious of accepting. This would not necessarily be so, if independent language gave support to independent statements, but the opposite is true on his themes of laziness, drunkenness, and untruthfulness. The first of this triad is Hurlbut’s variation on his favorite theme, the Smith’s constant money digging: 10

... the general employment of the Smith family was money digging...

The general employment of the family was digging for money.

A great part of their time was devoted to digging for money...

... spent much of their time in digging for money...

This similar phrasing suggests a common author, and the last example is demonstrably Hurlbut’s, since it comes from the general Palmyra affidavit. Similar language is found in every Palmyra-Manchester declaration under study here, with the exception of Barton Stafford’s.

Other favorite words from the general affidavits are “pretended,” “visionary,” and a stressed concept is the lack of “influence in this community,” which finds its counterpart in individual statements such as “The Smith family never made any pretensions to respectability”—or, “In short, not one of the family had at least claims to respectability.” 11 Virtually every affidavit bearing on the Smiths opens with several sentences similar to the general Palmyra affidavit, clear evidence of regular outside structuring.

Placing Hurlbut’s vocabulary under a magnifying glass in this manner reveals his specific goals. Common language is most frequent on the points of intemperance, lying, and laziness, with the last redundantly emphasized as vocational money digging. Since Hurlbut’s hand is plain on these general charges, the careful historian must be skeptical of stories supporting these charges throughout many affidavits. Hurlbut’s language in ostensibly non-Hurlbut affidavits shows that all his specific evidence is highly suspect, especially on the point of money digging. Careful study of the pre-1830 Smith economics proves they were anything but lazy. And if that contention in fact

10 Statements respectively from David Stafford, Peter Ingersoll, Parley Chase (sentence inverted), William Stafford, and the general Palmyra affidavit.

11 Statements respectively of G. W. Stoddard and Barton Stafford.
falls, Hurlbut’s related accusation of money digging is seriously suspect. In fact, the extreme language of almost every affidavit on this subject raises doubt. Had the Smiths been regularly observed in money digging, reasonable statements to that effect would be expected. As it is, the collected depositions describe a large family living under marginal frontier economy "without work" or by laboring "very little." Their "general employment" of money digging never gave them income, but they somehow survived doing little else. Such exaggerations indicate more than overstatement—they suggest invention.

Yet the historian must study the content of all documents, and the one striking characteristic of Hurlbut is reliance on vague generalities. The two community statements combined accuse the Smiths of being "a lazy, indolent set of men" who were "entirely destitute of moral character, and addicted to vicious habits." Such phrases really do not say anything, as both critic and friend of Hurlbut agree. The rules of evidence in the United States insist that a witness tell specific experiences, and leave to the court or jury the function of forming opinions from them. For lack of specific evidence, the general Palmyra and Manchester statements of Hurlbut merely prove that sixty-two signers found the Smiths objectionable; they fail to state what direct observation led to this conclusion. Similarly, the individual statement of Parley Chase, quoted above with the general Palmyra affidavit, is historically insignificant. It merely parades conclusions without substantiation, and to make matters worse, in Hurlbut’s concepts and language.

HURLBUT’S SHORTER AFFIDAVITS

The arithmetic of the Hurlbut witnesses from Palmyra-Manchester can now be summarized. From a total of fifteen statements, the three affidavits just discussed must be subtracted as insignificant: the general Manchester statement, the general Palmyra statement, and its echo, the Parley Chase affidavit. Three more are irrelevant: statements of Lucy Harris, Abigail Harris, and G. W. Stoddard mainly concern Martin Harris and contain nothing observed about Joseph Smith. With these half-dozen excluded, there remain three long statements and

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12 Statements respectively of Joseph Capron and Henry Harris. Responsible investigation dismisses these contentions. See Anderson, Dialogue, p. 15.
six of the one-page variety. The latter are typically deficient in evidence about Joseph Smith, Jr.

Analysis of Hurlbut-Howe will lose its way in pointless detail without constant reiteration of a single question: What firsthand experiences do the Hurlbut affidavits allege concerning Joseph Smith? For instance, Henry Harris reports certain conversations with Joseph Smith, close enough to the Prophet’s own claims to be garbled in the telling, but the sole observation of the “lying” nature of “the pretended Prophet” is the failure of a jury in a “justice’s court” to decide a case according to Smith’s testimony when Harris was a juror. Since many a truthful man has failed to gain the vote of a jury, the point is trivial regarding Joseph Smith’s character. Only three of the shorter affidavits seriously detail Smith money digging, and none in convincing terms. Roswell Nichols ties the supposed treasure searches entirely to conversations with Joseph Smith, Sr., that resemble his known belief in the Book of Mormon. Joshua Stafford claims that Joseph Smith, Jr. showed him a piece of wood from a money box and also claimed to have discovered buried watches. As will be shown later, Joshua Stafford himself is named by relatives as leading in money digging in the neighborhood, which renders such indirect evidence against Joseph Smith suspect. After all, Stafford’s claim is limited to reported (and possibly garbled) conversations with Joseph Smith, not observation of any act of the Mormon founder. Likewise, Joseph Capron tells details of a fantastic dig “north west of my house,” but alleges no personal observation. The “money digging” subject must be further discussed—the point for now is that direct experience with Joseph Smith is strictly lacking in the smaller affidavits raising the issue.

The remaining two shorter affidavits allege Joseph Smith’s human failings. Barton Stafford, a few years younger than Joseph, accuses the young Prophet of undignified conduct. Sometime in 1827 or afterward Joseph was allegedly intoxicated on cider, scuffled with a fellow-worker, tore his shirt, and was escorted home by Emma. Since even here Barton Stafford does not clearly say that he observed the event (only that it happened in “my father’s field”), some doubt remains whether this is a story or an observation. David Stafford does describe a personal experience, claiming that Joseph had “dranked a little too freely,” and while working together a dispute led
to "hard words," which led to a fight, and "he got the advantage of me in the scuffle." One Ford, who attempted to intervene, supposedly came off little better, for "we both entered a complaint against him, and he was fined for the breach of the peace."

Joseph Smith's only known response to a particular Hurlbut affidavit presents another version of the David Stafford incident. It appears in Willard Richards' memo entries of 1843 conversations of the Prophet:

While supper was preparing Joseph related an anecdote. While young, his father had a fine large watch dog, which bit off an ear from David Stafford's hog, which Stafford had turned into the Smith corn field. Stafford shot the dog, and with six other fellows pitched upon him unawares. And Joseph whipped the whole of them and escaped unhurt, which they swore to as recorded in Hurlbut or Howe's book.\(^1\)

Since the above incident takes on such a different context in being told by Stafford or Smith, it is a striking reminder that controversial events cannot be settled by hearing only one side.

If David Stafford took his complaint to the local justice of the peace, the extant record does not show it, though it only covers the years 1827-1830. The record does give certain factual insights into the characters of both the Smiths and David Stafford. It lists three suits in the above period against "Hiram" (or "Hyram") Smith and two against Joseph Smith. Since there were other Joseph Smiths in the Manchester area, and since one "Hiram" Smith signed Hurlbut's general Manchester affidavit,\(^2\) it cannot be proved that these five actions pertain to the family of the Prophet. The one that evidently does, however, shows the attempt of the Smiths to be honest in their financial obligations. The abbreviated trial notation of June 28, 1830, records the following in a suit against "Hyram" Smith:

Joseph Smith, father of the defendant, appeared, and the case was called, and the plaintiff declared on a note and

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\(^1\) Joseph Smith's Journal, kept by Willard Richards, Jan. 1, 1843. I am indebted to Professor Marvin S. Hill of Brigham Young University for pointing it out. The Richards' statement is an official record, kept daily from current minutes.

\(^2\) This Hiram Smith is evidently the same person who was elected highway supervisor in the Smith neighborhood both before and after the Joseph Smith family had moved west. Microfilms of the Manchester Town Record, as well as the Justice's Record being discussed, are at Brigham Young University Library.
account. Note dated 7th April, 1830, for $20.07 on interest and on account for shoeing horses, of balance due on account $.69. Joseph Smith sworn and saith that his son the defendant engaged him to come down at the return of the summons and direct the Justice to enter judgment against the defendant for the amount of the note and account. Judgment for the plaintiff for twenty one dollars, seven cents."

If all of the Smith actions in the Manchester record pertain to the Joseph Smith family, they indicate only that the family was poor—a condition which the Smith autobiographies also portray with considerable emotion. Thus Roswell Nichols' comment (based on "two years" as a neighbor) is gratuitous: "For breach of contracts, for the non-payment of debts and borrowed money, and for duplicity with their neighbors, the family was notorious." By this standard, the neighborhood justice of the peace record indicts David Stafford, not the Smiths. From 1827 to 1830, he was plaintiff in three suits and defendant in six suits of collection, a record in the locality. With this streak of legal cantankerousness, one is not inclined to think that Joseph Smith was necessarily the guilty party in quarreling with David Stafford. Nor is Stafford's ex parte affidavit likely to represent the character of the Smiths without guile.

Hurlbut's Longer Affidavits

Since the shorter affidavits contain essentially non-evidence, a study of Hurlbut-Howe must focus on the only three substantial statements in the collection. The shortest of these comes from William Stafford, the father of Barton Stafford, and there is fortunately additional family information by which to test it. The Hurlbut touch in vocabulary is unmistakable here, as a closing comment imitates the close of the general Palmyra affidavit: "No one apprehended any danger from a book, originating with individuals who had neither influence, honesty or honor." Pomeroy Tucker portrays Stafford as a former sailor without education, which if true would considerably heighten the possibility that Hurlbut composed Stafford's affidavit and merely had him sign it."

"Justice's Record of Nathan Pierce, 1827-1830.
"Pomeroy Tucker, The Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism (New York, 1867), p. 24, note. Compare the nearly identical reports supposedly remembered spontaneously for some years by two different affiants: "... for he had often said, that the hills in our neighborhood were nearly all erected by human hands" (Roswell Nichols); "They would say, also, that nearly all the
There is one clear firsthand testimony of participating with Joseph Smith, Sr. in a treasure dig (with Joseph Smith, Jr. supervising from the house), but the accompanying sheep story throws a great deal of doubt on the digging story as authentically coming from Stafford. As told by the Hurlbut affidavit, the Smiths "devised a scheme" to cheat their neighbor out of "a large, fat, black wether." Hearing the Smiths represent that the sacrifice of such a sheep must appease the spirit guarding a treasure, Stafford contributed the sheep "to gratify my curiosity." But the treasure was lost, and with it the sheep, which "I believe, is the only time they ever made money-digging a profitable business." Oddly, after the "only time," the Stafford statement adds a comment about "a worthless gang" (a typical Hurlbut phrase) which surrounded the Smiths and "had more to do with mutton than money," an intended implication of the Smiths in repeated sheep stealing.

Hurlbut evidently did not represent Stafford accurately. In 1932 M. Wilford Poulson took notes as Wallace Miner recalled a conversation with William Stafford on the subject:

I once asked Stafford if Smith did steal a sheep from him. He said no, not exactly. He said, he did miss a black sheep, but soon Joseph came and admitted he took it for sacrifice but he was willing to work for it. He made wooden sap buckets to fully pay for it.15

A more elaborate version of the Miner-Stafford conversation was reported in the village history of Thomas Cook, which agrees that Joseph took the initiative to admit the taking and that he did the work to repay Stafford for the sheep.16 Of course William Stafford died in 1863 (at which time Miner was twenty), and there are obvious limitations in recalling the details of what one had said almost seventy years earlier. Nevertheless, it is significant that Miner's recollection of Stafford exonerates the Smiths of dishonesty, a reversal of Hurlbut reporting Stafford.

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hills in this part of New York, were thrown up by human hands..." (William Stafford).

15M. Wilford Poulson, Notebook of 1932 interviews, Brigham Young University Archives. The obvious error of writing "Smith" for "sheep" in the first sentence has been corrected.

16Thomas L. Cook, Palmyra and Vicinity (Palmyra, New York, 1930), pp. 221-222. Cook gives Miner's recollection because "various stories have been told about the sacrificing of the sheep..."
An earlier insight into William Stafford's opinion is available, however. His second son was born the same year as Joseph Smith (1805), had the personal ambition to gain a good education for the day, and qualify by examination as a physician, practicing until about 1870 in the general area of Manchester and thereafter at Rochester. There Dr. John Stafford was interviewed by the Reorganized Latter Day Saint apostle William H. Kelley in 1881. The Kelley question-answer notes on this point read as follows:

What about that black sheep your father let them have?

"I have heard that story, but don't think my father was there at the time they say Smith got the sheep. I don't know anything about it."

You were living at home at the time, and it seems you ought to know if they got a sheep, or stole one, from your father?

"They never stole one, I am sure; they may have got one sometime."

Well, Doctor, you know pretty well whether that story is true or not, that Tucker tells. What do you think of it?

"I don't think it is true. I would have heard more about it, that is true. . . ."

Since the well-informed John Stafford knew nothing of the sheep story, it is plain that William Stafford did not carry the attitude against the Smiths that his Hurlbut affidavit represents. If there was such an event of a borrowed sheep, it had nothing to do with dishonesty. But in the interview, Dr. Stafford also insisted, "My father, William Stafford, was never connected with them in any way," a direct denial of the relationship presupposed by the Smith-Stafford money digging episode luridly described in the Hurlbut affidavit. The fact that William Stafford's family doubted the authenticity of the Hurlbut inspired testimony, together with Hurlbut's evident editorializing talents, casts serious doubt upon the William Stafford affidavit as an historical document.

The longest Hurlbut affidavit is that of Willard Chase,

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"William H. Kelley, "The Hill Cumorah . . . The Stories of Hurlbut, Howe, Tucker, etc. from Late Interviews, " Saints' Herald, Vol. 28 (June 1, 1881), p. 167 [hereinafter referred to as Kelley Interviews].

"The sentence preceding John Stafford's denial is, "What Tucker said about them [the Smiths] was false, absolutely." Since Tucker's reference to William Stafford was a reiteration of Hurlbut's sheep story, John Stafford clearly was skeptical that his father was correctly represented in either Hurlbut-Howe or Tucker."
in which instances of dishonesty and treasure digging are minimal. In fact, the Chase statement contains more parallels to Mormon sources than any other affidavit. This would lead to the inference that Chase imposed his individuality to a large extent, though many of the Hurlbut stock phrases and formulae are still apparent. The Chase family tradition was later reported by the younger brother of Willard, and he maintained Willard's statement to Hurlbut genuine; on the other hand, he differed in certain details of recollection from the printed affidavit. Willard Chase ought to have taken more care in his statement than others contacted by Hurlbut, since Lucy Smith recalled him as "a Methodist class leader" in 1827, and his obituary described him as "formerly a Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and was an earnest and zealous worker for many years. ..."

Although Chase had superior practical education, his performance as a witness is characterized by a nearly total lack of personal observation. He tells the familiar story of finding an unusual stone while digging a well with Alvin and Joseph Smith, and accuses Joseph and Hyrum of duplicity in keeping the object. Beyond that he discloses no direct knowledge that the stone was utilized in treasure digging, but only alleges that Joseph claimed to discover "wonders" by its use. The intriguing thing is what Willard Chase does not say here. The Palmyra-Manchester sources attach a firm money-digging tradition to the Chase family. For instance, Dr. John Stafford recalled:

The neighbors used to claim Sally Chase could look at a stone she had, and see money. Willard Chase used to dig when she found where the money was. Don't know as anybody ever found any money."

The interview the same year with Abel Chase confirmed his family's involvement. After describing the stone in possession of his sister, Abel Chase responded to the following questions:

Do you really think your sister could see things by looking through that stone, Mr. Chase?

"Well, she claimed to; and I must say there was something strange about it."


Palmyra Courier, March 17, 1871.

Kelley Interviews, p. 167.
Where is your sister now?
"She is not living now: my brother Willard is dead also. He would know more than I do about those things." 22

The Chase family were in actuality money diggers, but in the longest Hurlbut affidavit Willard Chase fails to report any Smith money digging activities firsthand. If Willard Chase is honestly describing what he knows, the conclusion follows that the Smiths did not have a connection with the money digging circles in the area. And this is just what Lucy Smith reports in her history, describing the "ridiculous" magical activities of Chase and company to steal the plates of the Book of Mormon, practices that appear foreign to her experience. 25

Willard Chase does report stories about the money digging of Joseph Smith in the Susquehanna area. Apparently without real knowledge of Palmyra-Manchester activities, he imported secondhand stories from more than a hundred miles away. What he tells is a highly distorted version of Joseph Smith's employment on a treasure excavation project there. This is his pattern in other matters. He tells of several episodes about the Smiths published by Mormons long after the 1834 printing of Howe's Mormonism Unveiled, so either Hurlbut or Willard Chase knew of these independently. The Chase affidavit approximates these incidents (e.g., the first failure at the hill to obtain the plates, Emma's warning ride to Macedon, etc.) but with exaggerated, ridiculing details. One would assume the same of his secondhand treasure stories about Joseph Smith. 26

This leaves only Peter Ingersoll as a Hurlbut witness with a serious claim to firsthand knowledge of Smith malpractices. Little is known about him other than his appearance in the land records around the 1820's as a property holder near Palmyra Village, a foreclosure on land to satisfy a judgment, and the apparent move from Palmyra after sale of properties in 1836. In 1879 Abel Chase claimed, "He moved west years ago and died

22Ibid., p. 165.
25Lucy Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet (Liverpool, 1853), p. 102 (applying the "ridiculous" terminology both to Willard Chase and his group, and their procurement of a "conjuror" to locate the plates). Cf. her characterization in ironic terms of Sally Chase's utilization of "a green glass," on which she claimed to see "many very wonderful things" and "great discoveries." Ibid., p. 109.
26Hurlbut in general, and the Chase affidavit in particular, rely heavily upon conversations with the Smiths, notoriously open to mistaken interpretation, recollection, and amplification.
about two years ago," but his life after leaving Palmyra is at present a mystery. So is his affidavit. Opening with the standard Hurlbut language that "the general employment of the family, was digging for money," Ingersoll follows with two claimed experiences of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s use of the divining rod. Beyond this, everything of a negative nature about Joseph Smith, Jr. consists not in observation, but supposed admissions in conversation. No Hurlbut affiant represents knowing Joseph Smith so intimately; yet no personal observation about Joseph Smith is given.

The real issue in the Ingersoll statement is whether the damaging admissions reported from Joseph Smith debunk the Mormon Prophet or Hurlbut-Ingersoll. The prize story concerns Joseph's supposedly confiding in Ingersoll that he brought a quantity of wrapped sand into the Smith home; his family's curiosity resulted in questions, which brought his impulsive identification with "the golden Bible":

'To my surprise, they were credulous enough to believe what I said. Accordingly, I told them that I had received a commandment to let no one see it, for, says I, no man can see it with the naked eye and live. However, I offered to take out the book and show it to them, but they refuse to see it, and left the room. 'Now,' said Jo, 'I have got the damned fools fixed, and will carry out the fun.'

There are serious difficulties in accepting this story. The Ingersoll affidavit dates the episode at August 1827. But the Chase affidavit maintains that by June 1827 Joseph Smith, Sr. had given Willard Chase full details of the "record on plates of gold," and the family's knowledge of it from "some years ago." Since Ingersoll so violently contradicts the Chase chronology (which agrees with Mormon sources), the accuracy of "Peter Ingersoll" is seriously suspect. Beyond this is the improbability that any family consists of such a collection of gulibles as to be awed by the mechanical brashness of the Ingersoll episode. After all, the Smiths are known in history as competent people.

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28In one of these is the accusation (like the sheep story) that the Smiths milked Ingersoll's cows while manipulating their discovery. Although Ingersoll received a favorable verdict, he was himself sued on this claim that he had taken a cow. Justice's Record of Nathan Pierce, 1827-1830, entry of May 26, 1830.
There is but one remarkable consistency about the Hurlbut-Howe affidavits—their unmodified condemnation of Joseph Smith and his entire family. This "evidence" proves too much. It portrays a dozen people living in a restricted area from 1816 to 1830 (Lucy was born 1821), and not a single good act or redeeming quality was displayed in that time by any one of them. Fifty-one Palmyrans "acquainted with the Smith family for a number of years" found them "destitute of . . . moral character." This solemn anti-Smith credo casts a shadow across every affidavit: "In short, not one of the family had the least claims to respectability." More than sweeping phrases are at stake—the Hurlbut testimony runs through about thirty pages on the Smiths in Palmyra-Manchester and fails to include even one favorable recollection of the Mormon founders. These are diatribes, not evaluations. Obviously, the attempt was made only to discredit—not to gather authentic information. Because history is the art of seeing both sides of the balance sheet, Hurlbut produced mere propaganda. His total lack of any affirmative family tradition contaminates every negative story repeated. This general quality of Hurlbut-Howe as non-evidence highlights sharply the only two systematic attempts that were later made to gather recollections of non-Mormon associates of the Smiths in New York.

**DEMING'S COLLECTED STATEMENTS**

A. B. Deming published his gathered testimony in a newspaper entitled, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, with the banner line over the only two issues to appear, "Read and Laugh as You Never Laughed Before," and "Startling Revelations." He was the son of the courageous non-Mormon general, M. R. Deming, who stood for law and order in the civil chaos of western Illinois after the Prophet's martyrdom. Affected by his father's early death, and neurotically resentful at the persecution his father's Mormon sympathies caused him, Deming considered "all my misfortunes through life" to be "the direct or indirect result of his friendship to the Mormons . . ." Although impelled to gather evidence against their faith, Deming was plagued by fears that the Mormons "might kill me, as I have several times been creditably informed they intend to do." Yet he describes in detail his cordial reception in Salt Lake City
by Mormon officials in 1882 and 1886. Deming therefore appears as a pathetic reincarnation of the disgruntled Hurlbut.

The historian must treat Deming's results as carefully as Hurlbut's. Checking out the names and residences designated in his statements shows that Deming apparently did make contact with several who had known the Smiths in Palmyra-Manchester. This is not to say that these parties were carefully interviewed, or that Deming was above Hurlbut-like prompting or editing. The point is that in his one-sided reports from biased people, Deming does not totally damn the Smiths as Hurlbut-Howe. For instance, Christopher Stafford was three years younger than Joseph Smith and despised him, though he admitted he really knew Joseph's brother Samuel Harrison Smith better and considered him "a good, industrious boy." Caroline Rockwell Smith remembered her family's conversion to Mormonism without bitterness, and the good deeds of Lucy Smith: "Joe Smith's mother doctored many persons in Palmyra." She did not consider Joseph Smith an obvious fraud: "I hope sometime it will be known whether Mormonism is true or not."

Reading Deming requires gleaning through piles of the usual chaff of hearsay, admissions reported indirectly, generalities on bad reputation, etc. Firsthand claims of Joseph Smith's drinking and fighting occasionally appear, though in language standard enough to come from a common compiler. The money digging theme, however, contains the real surprise, for the Deming statements involve not only the Chases, but the Staffords and others in the community in the quest for buried treasure. Caroline Rockwell Smith does not even mention the Joseph Smith family in connection with this subject, but generalizes:

There was considerable digging for money in our neighborhood by men, women and children. . . I saw Joshua Stafford's peepstone, which looked like white marble and had a hole through the center. Sally Chase, a Methodist, had one, and people would go for her to find lost and hidden or stolen things.  

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29 All this personal data Deming volunteers on the first page of *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1888).
Cornelius Stafford, repeated the sheep story in exaggerated form, but personal observation of money digging points elsewhere than the Mormon Prophet:

There was much digging for money on our farm and about the neighborhood. I saw Uncle John and Cousin Joshua Stafford dig a hole twenty feet long, eight broad and seven deep. They claimed that they were digging for money. . . .

One of the more amusing features of Smith folklore in Palmyra-Manchester is the frequent reference to existing holes of the money diggers as proof that the Smiths were digging. The Deming affidavits shatter the Hurlbut-imposed monopoly by revealing that excavations were made by numerous others. In fact, these statements reveal no direct knowledge that the Smiths were involved—the nearest miss is the claim of Isaac Butts that Joshua Stafford "told me that young Jo Smith and himself dug for money in his orchard and elsewhere nights." That might be far from clear, since the last thing to be suspected from the Hurlbut-Joshua Stafford affidavit is that upright Joshua would long tolerate the presence of Joseph Smith.

Faced with more comprehensive evidence on money digging than Hurlbut admitted, the historian may envision one of four situations: (1) Francis W. Kirkham located a newspaper article on early money-digging that parallels every story told against Joseph Smith. The editor of the Rochester Gem reacted to the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830 by remembering that a "family of Smiths" moved into the primitive Rochester of 1815. The eighteen year old son of this poor family claimed to find a stone with clairvoyant properties, located treasure in nearby hills by its use, and engendered a night-dig on the part of followers, marked by a disappearing chest upon the breaking of a spell. Kirkham asks concerning this pre-Hurlbut reference: "Was this ridiculous story the origin of the accusations that were heaped upon Joseph

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34Ibid., p. 2. Statement of Isaac Butts, n.d., South Newbury, Ohio. Butts also says that Joseph Smith used a divining rod and later a peep-stone for locating buried or lost objects. Although claiming to "have seen both," he specifically does not claim observation of Joseph Smith in these practices, a point seriously in doubt because of Butts' indiscriminate use of hearsay and confessed residence in Ohio from 1818 into the 1820's.
35"Imposition and Blasphemy!—Moneydiggers, etc.," Gem, May 15, 1830.
Smith.\(^{36}\) Hugh Nibley develops evidence for such a trans-
ference by showing other pre-Joseph Smith money-digging parallels. Since "every weird detail of the stories later attached to
Joseph Smith is found in full bloom before Smith can possibly have been involved," and since a solid group of Mormon witnesses who knew Joseph in this early period "protest that the digging stories about him are not true," public rumor simply created an erroneous parallel by "trying to dress Joseph
Smith in other men's clothes."\(^{37}\)

(2) Early Mormon and non-Mormon sources agree that
the Smith men hired out frequently and that one main activ-
ity was digging wells, pits, and other building excavations. Since many saw this regular construction work of the Smiths, it is likely that their later notoriety in the Book of Mormon revelation brought the accusation of money digging for many ordinary activities. (3) When Josiah Stoal was excited about the possibility of discovering Spanish gold, he hired a crew of laborers, among which were Joseph Smith and his father. Since the existence of Palmyra-Manchester treasure digs is certain, the Smith men may have participated in other ventures merely as employees, a variation of the previous case. In either of these events, one might observe one of the Smiths digging and completely misinterpret his reasons for doing so.

There is no substantial evidence for the final possibility, (4) the aggressive treasure seeking of the Smiths. If it took place, they participated in a passing cultural phenomenon, shared widely by people of known honesty. However, the supernaturalism presented in early Mormon sources is re-
strained, qualitatively distinct from the magical superstitions of the money digging stories. Yet to know these propensities of certain segments of the Palmyra-Manchester community makes Joseph and Lucy Smith's histories more credible in regard to non-Mormon attempts to search for the plates and the danger of staying in that area during the translation. Frustrated money diggers had nothing to show for their consider-

\(^{36}\) Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City, 1959), Vol. 2, p. 46. The Gem article is also quoted in full at pp. 46-49. Its editor, Edwin Scranon, was twelve years of age at the time of this episode, but when he wrote the article was an authority on Rochester history. For common pre-1827 money digging publicity, see *Ontario Repository*, February 9, 1825, and *Wayne Sentinel*, February 16, 1825.

able efforts, whereas Joseph Smith possessed tangible plates that he displayed to witnesses.38

Hurlbut structured his evidence to create the false impression that the Smiths, not others, dug for money. This leads one to question the time alleged for this activity as equally erroneous. The majority of the individual affidavits allege treasure hunting as the major Smith occupation from 1820 "until the latter part of the season of 1827." But at least one Palmyra source acknowledges the latter date as the beginning of such rumors. The Rev. Jesse Townsend penned an abusive account of Joseph Smith in 1833: "For the ten years I have known anything of him, he has been a person of questionable character, of intemperate habits, and latterly a noted money digger."39 "Latterly" suggests approximately 1828 for the spread of such a reputation, which corresponds to the Prophet's recollection that at the news of the Book of Mormon discovery in 1827, "false reports, misrepresentation, and slander flew as on the wings of the wind in every direction..."40 His own history specifically identified his hired employment on the Stool excavation late 1825 and early 1826 as the source of later rumors: "Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money digger."41 There is no solid

38 Compare Caroline Rockwell Smith's recollection that the Mormon-source version of these events was told at the time: "Catherine Smith, sister of the Prophet, showed me in their house a chest with lock where the plates were kept, but they feared they would be stolen, and then she took up four bricks in the hearth and said they had been buried there." Ref. at n. 31.


40 Times and Seasons, Vol. 3 (March 1, 1842), p. 708, also cit. Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, 1946-1950), Vol. 4, p. 538. Cf. the earlier-written recollection of the Prophet about the identical year: "[R]umor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating tales about my father's family, and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes." Times and Seasons, Vol. 3 (May 2, 1842), p. 772, also cit. History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 19.

41 Ibid. Lucy Smith represents Stool (the Nauvoo spelling) as locating Joseph because he had heard of his supernatural gifts, but both Lucy and Joseph Smith's histories describe notoriety from the tarring of the First Vision in 1820. In fact, Joseph Smith, Sr. bought space in the Wayne Sentinel for six weeks beginning Sept. 29, 1824 to refute rumors tending "to injure the reputation" of the Smiths. The 1825-1826 work for Stool and 1827 acquiring the plates undoubtedly gave new directions to gossip. Other Mormon sources do not furnish reliable evidence for money digging in New York. Accusations upon apostasy in Kirtland may be smears, and Joseph Smith's Salem trip in this period is not a historical source for his life a decade earlier. The interview with Martin Harris by Joel Tiffany mentions Joseph seeking treasure in this early period, but if Harris is quoted correctly, the source of information (not disclosed) is possibly
evidence of Joseph Smith as the prime mover in any treasure seeking project. Perhaps the supernaturalism of receiving revelations through the Urim and Thummim and "seerstone" after 1827 resembles generally the "peeking" practices of that time. The policeman and thief, the chemist and alchemist, use similar equipment, but with quite distinctly different motivations and abilities.

The Kelley Interviews

The legend of the dishonest money diggers who founded Mormonism received new impetus from Pomeroy Tucker in 1867. A Palmyra editor, Tucker depicted superstitious and unscrupulous Smiths by merely re quoting the 1833 statements apparently without so much as reinterviewing the Hurlbut contacts still alive. Tucker was aware of at least three of these, named in his preface as references: Joseph Capron, Barton Stafford, and Willard Chase. Such sloppy methods were evidently not completely applauded. A dozen years later Abagail Jackway told William H. Kelley, "I have heard Willard Chase say Tucker never even asked him for what he knew, and Chase lived next door to him, too." As pointed out elsewhere, Tucker knew Joseph Smith and admitted that dishonesty was "not within the remembrance of the writer," though repeating community gossip as "recollections of many living witnesses." The difference between what Tucker himself remembered and the stories he still heard is the difference between personal observation of the Smiths and the Palmyra-Manchester folklore. Yet Palmyra-Manchester was never totally scornful of Mormon origins. Although Wallace W. Miner was not born until 1843, he grew up in the former Smith vicinity, and Thomas L. Cook in 1930 named him "the only one living in the neighborhood whose relations with the earlier families have continued for the last eighty-five years."
In 1932 Miner told M. Wilford Poulson, "In the early days we didn’t hear so much that was disreputable about the Smiths."44

The clearest proof that certain neighbors approved of the Smiths comes in the second systematic attempt to preserve Palmyra-Manchester recollections. In 1881 William H. and E. L. Kelley visited there with the express purpose of interviewing all who had firsthand knowledge of the Mormon founders, particularly Joseph Smith. The Kelleys were willing to "hear the worst, let it hurt whom it would," and their going together made possible "one writing during each interview." William H. Kelley, then an RLDS apostle and competent leader, took responsibility for writing up the detailed transcript of conversations, which concluded with a description of his method:

These facts and interviews are presented...just as they occurred—the good and bad, side by side; and allowing for a possible mistake, or error, arising from a misapprehension, or mistake in taking notes, it can be relied upon as the opinion and gossip had about the Smith family and others, among their old neighbors.45

For a test of William H. Kelley’s note-taking ability, one should compare his report on David Whitmer the same year. The Kelley-Whitmer interview is detailed and minutely agrees with known writings and comments of the Book of Mormon witness. Consequently, the William H. Kelley transcripts from Palmyra-Manchester can be trusted as the most comprehensive investigations ever made there.46

44Poulson, Notebook of 1932 interviews, Professor Poulson’s strict standards of accuracy are well known.
45The Kelley Interviews contain William L. Kelley’s description of method at pp. 161-162 and 168. Since the interviews were printed in transcript form by individuals contacted, page citations are unnecessary.
46The printing of the Kelley Interviews sparked a skirmish of affidavits, recorded in Charles A. Shook, True Origin of Mormon Polygamy (Cincinnati, 1914), pp. 36-38. The only statement that raises a significant issue on Kelley misquotation is that of John H. Gilbert, who alleges a half-dozen mistakes in the long interview, obviously to discredit all of the Kelley interviews. Without claiming perfection for the Kelleys (or any other nineteenth century interview), one can see that Gilbert admits the main direction of conversation, and quarrels with certain details. Some of Gilbert’s "misrepresentations" are trivial. Other main points in the Kelley interviews can be substantiated as being said to others by Gilbert, and even written by Gilbert himself. He also claims but one change necessary after talking with the Jackways. On analysis, Gilbert is a source of confirmation of the basic accuracy of the Kelley reports. For the Kelley-Whitmer interview, see Saints’ Herald, Vol. 29 (1882), pp. 66-69.
The Kelleys' dogged insistence on personal knowledge disqualified several who merely repeated hearsay about the Smiths, a tendency also true of Hurlbut's day. One young man who signed the 1833 condemnation at Manchester was Abel Chase. Some fifty years later he confessed only a knowledge of "general character," and careful questioning turned up nothing that he really knew about the Smiths. Since he was only thirteen years old when Joseph Smith left Palmyra for a permanent residence in the Harmony and Fayette areas, it is little wonder that Abel Chase could tell the Kelleys nothing definite.

Ezra Pierce and Hiram Jackway vaguely remembered Joseph Smith in public situations (Jackway was twelve when Joseph moved to Harmony), but only two individuals out of nine interviewed displayed any intimate knowledge. One was the same age as Joseph, John Stafford, the doctor already mentioned in connection with the affidavit attributed to his father William. The Kelleys' questions are not always specific enough to determine which recollections of John Stafford are personal and which recall stories that circulated early. For instance, the only mention of drinking is the cider and torn shirt story told Hurlbut by John's brother Barton—but it is not really clear that either of them saw what went on. Personal observation does come to bear, however, in John Stafford's comments on Joseph's physical aggression: "Never saw him fight; have known him to scuffle," evidently the distinction between brawling and playful wrestling. Regarding accusations of laziness, it appears that he had worked by Joseph's side: "[He] would do a fair day's work if hired out to a man. . ." Questioned regarding Joseph's education, Dr. Stafford replied (omitting intervening queries):

Joe was quite illiterate. After they began to have school at their house, he improved greatly. They had school in their house, and studied the Bible. They did not have any teacher; they taught themselves.

His impression of Joseph as a person agrees with the Prophet's known traits and autobiographical comments, and at the same time disagrees with much Palmyra folklore: "He was a real clever, jovial boy."

Because there are problems with the quality of John Stafford's observations on money digging, his remarks really tell more about his father William than the Smiths:
The Smiths, with others, were digging for money before Joe got the plates. My father had a stone, which some thought they could look through, and old Mrs. Smith came there after it one day, but never got it. Saw them digging one time for money (this was three or four years before the Book of Mormon was found), the Smiths and others. The old man and Hyrum were there, I think, but Joseph was not there.

In the lengthy Kelley transcript of interviews, this is the only stated observation of anyone regarding Smith money digging. Aside from the question of whether Stafford was sure the group of men were digging for money, he appears to doubt whether he really saw Joseph Smith, Sr. and Hyrum there ("I think"). That the Smiths "were digging for money" as a general practice evidently rests on hearsay, since the doctor has but one inexact recollection of seeing them, and he was certain that Joseph was not there. Whether Lucy Smith's attempting to borrow the seerstone is an authentic recollection is far from clear. A mere social visit and mild interest might be behind John Stafford's impression. But he must be speaking from observation on the possession of a stone by his own family. So the Hurlbut affidavit from his father only tells part of the truth: William Stafford was evidently independently involved in the superstitions that he (or Hurlbut) accuses the Smiths of.

What can be safely asserted historically after reading Hurlbut, Deming, and Kelley is that money digging did go on in Palmyra-Manchester before Joseph Smith acquired his plates in 1827. What remains unclear, however, is a definite association of the Smiths with it. Close family members implicate Willard Chase, Joshua Stafford, William Stafford, and others in some aspects of these practices.

In the Kelley Interviews, the person with the most firsthand knowledge was also the most favorable to the Smith reputation. This was Orlando Saunders, an "oldsettler" whom Thomas Cook particularly regretted not interviewing. Anti-Mormon writers of the late nineteenth century preferred to quote his younger brother Lorenzo, who moved to Michigan about 1854 and died there in 1888. But Lorenzo was six years younger than Joseph Smith, whereas Orlando Saunders was two years older than the Mormon Prophet. Orlando is also the

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\textsuperscript{49}Cook, \textit{Palmyra}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{48}In two preserved statements, Lorenzo Saunders says virtually nothing firsthand about Joseph Smith. After considerable correspondence virtually re-
more interesting in that he remained all his life on the family farm (within a mile of the Smith farm) and was aware of the various anti-Mormon spokesmen for Palmyra-Manchester until his death in 1889. It is clear that he dissented, and on specific grounds of experience.

Fortunately, Orlando Saunders was also interviewed by a non-Mormon author of ability, Frederic G. Mather, a short time before the Kelleys' report.\footnote{\textit{For a brief biography see National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. 20 (New York, 1929), pp. 492-493.}} Mather was conditioned to journalistic interpretation instead of historical documentation, with the consequent brief and paraphrased comments, but the two interviews remarkably agree. Mather reports Saunders as saying "that the Smith family worked for his father and for himself,"\footnote{Frederic G. Mather, "The Early Days of Mormonism," \textit{Lippincott's Magazine}, Vol. 26 (1880), p. 198. With the exception of the following footnote citation, all further quotations of Mather are on this page. Although Mather writes "Saunders," rather consistent family practice, and Orlando's autograph, follow "Saunders."} which fits the fact of Enoch Saunders' death in 1825. This contact with the Smith men was not cursory, according to the Kelley interview: "They have all worked for me many a day." Mather also reports specific business dealing, the purchase of a horse and bridle, the latter being paid for by "a Bible."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 205.}

There is one apparent contradiction in the two interviews, which must be resolved in favor of the Kelleys. After quoting Saunders on Joseph Smith, Mather follows, "By nature he was placably disposed, but when he had taken too much liquor he was inclined to fight, with or without provocation." The weakness of this statement is that Mather's article is a synthesis of opinions about Joseph Smith in Mather's own words, and the above statement must be a lapse back to his normal narrative. The Kelleys asked particularly about this subject, and they quote Saunders directly: "Everybody drank a little in those days, and the Smiths with the rest; they never got drunk to my knowledge."

questing him to remember seeing Sidney Rigdon at the Smiths before 1830, Lorenzo gave some vague recollections claiming to do so. From age sixteen, he also remembers Joseph coming to his house and explaining his difficulties in getting the plates, though he considers him an imposter and maintains his mother did also. Letter of Lorenzo Saunders to Thomas Gregg, January 28, 1885, cit. Shooke, \textit{True Origin of the Book of Mormon}, pp. 134-135.
Money digging is notable by its absence in both the Mather and Kelley reports. In the latter, Saunders insisted, "I don't know anything against these men, myself." Furthermore, he contradicts the Hurlbut contention that the Book of Mormon was Joseph Smith's inconsistent adaptation of his treasure seeking: "He always claimed that he saw the angel and received the book; but I don't know anything about it." If the Smiths merited the money-digging criticism, Saunders was not above giving it. But the only criticisms reported by either Mather or the Kelleys were on another point. The "well-preserved gentleman of over eighty" told Mather that the Smiths "could save no money," which is mirrored precisely in the Kelley record: "I did not consider them good managers about business, but they were poor people; the old man had a large family."

In Hurlbut the Smiths did nothing but exploit their neighbors, but Orlando Saunders' experience was opposite: "They were the best family in the neighborhood in case of sickness; one was at my house nearly all the time when my father died." Neither did he consider them poor credit risks: "I always thought them honest. They were owing me some money when they left here; that is, the old man and Hyrum did, and Martin Harris. One of them came back in about a year and paid me."

Hurlbut-Howe and Tucker had a single thesis: the Smith family (particularly Joseph) were so thoroughly unreliable in ordinary affairs that they necessarily defrauded the public on the Book of Mormon. The Kelleys found Saunders "a fair type of the intelligent New York farmer," and he was characteristically agnostic here. He had seen the book, "but never read it" nor did he "care anything about it." On the practical issue of the Smith reliability, he was solidly favorable. Mather summarily reported, "He gives them the credit of being good workers. ..." The Kelleys quoted his words: "They were very good people. Young Joe (as we called him then), has worked for me, and he was a good worker; they all were." Evidently referring to the youthful strength of the Prophet, Saunders told Mather "that Joseph Jr., was 'a greeny,' both large and strong." Pressed by the Kelleys on how well he knew Joseph Smith, Orlando Saunders reiterated:

Oh! Just as well as one could very well; he has worked for me many a time, and been about my place a great deal. He
stopped with me many a time, when through here, after they went west to Kirtland; he was always a gentleman when about my place.

**William Smith's Refutation**

In sum, major non-Mormon biographies treating Joseph Smith's New York life and reputation are historically substandard. This judgment unfortunately applies as well to twentieth century productions as nineteenth, since both fall into an unsophisticated acceptance of Hurlbut's contrived and slanted statements, without apparent awareness of non-Mormon sources favorable to the Smiths from Palmyra-Manchester. Nor do other independent statements from that area confirm the Hurlbut evidence. Some merely repeat rumors of the time, but compound hearsay does not suddenly become evidence when spoken by a genuine Palmyra-Manchester resident. For all of his prejudice, crusty Orsamus Turner was honest enough to distinguish between his own rather complementary recollections and the stories that later circulated about Joseph Smith. He knew that community reports had various qualities, for he ruled out the Spaulding theory of the Book of Mormon because it was not accepted "by those who were best acquainted with the Smith family. . . ." 

History begins when that issue is raised.

But anti-Mormon literature is overcrowded with non-witnesses. For instance, Rev. Jesse Townsend can prate about the "impostures and low cunning" of the "Mormonite" leader and yet say not that he knows Joseph Smith, but that he knows of him. The reason why more accurate data on Joseph Smith was not of easy access is suggested in Townsend's own words:

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Indiscriminate quotation reaches its lowest ebb when supposed Palmyra residents are relied upon without investigation. Daniel Hendrick is typically quoted on early Joseph Smith biography as remembering that "Parson Reed told Joe that he was going to hell for his lying habits." Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York, 1946), p. 26, cited recently for this quote in Edmund Wilson's acrid excursus into Mormon history, *The Dead Sea Scrolls 1947-1969* (New York, 1969), p. 280. The lateness of the "recollection" demands verification, since it comes from a purported interview printed in the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, February 21, 1897, p. 34. To date rather diligent investigation has failed to verify the existence of Daniel Hendrick (whose otherrambling descriptions are not notably accurate), or "Parson Reed."

"He lived in a sequestered neighborhood. . . ."56 In simple terms, the Smiths lived away from any village by two miles or more. To add to the problem of a villager really knowing the young prophet, within a few months of obtaining the ancient plates, he moved to other neighborhoods, only occasionally visiting Palmyra-Manchester during the publication of the Book of Mormon. Consequently, John Gilbert, chief compositor for the Book of Mormon stated in interviews that he saw Joseph Smith only once or twice, even though Gilbert was in public life in Palmyra from 1824 through the Mormon exodus of 1831.50 Albert Chandler, later a prominent editor in Michigan, worked as a bookbinder's apprentice on the Book of Mormon in 1829-30. Yet he knew Joseph Smith, Jr. "but slightly." "What I know of him was from hearsay, principally from Martin Harris, who believed fully in him."57 Some of the fifty-one signers of the general Palmyra condemnation probably had no more than this degree of knowledge of the Smiths.58

There are even greater problems in taking Palmyra-Manchester statements as definitive on the origin of the Book of Mormon. As Chandler recalled the Palmyra of 1829-30, everyone scoffed at Martin Harris, but none really knew the events and personalities behind the new religion:

The absolute secrecy of the whole inception and publication of the Mormon Bible stopped positive knowledge. We only knew what Joseph Smith would permit Martin Harris to publish, in reference to the whole thing.49

Much non-Mormon opinion is obviously irrelevant to the writing of early Mormon history. Howe claimed to print only "a few, among the many depositions which have been obtained

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56 Townsend to Stiles in *Origin of Mormonism*, p. 288.
56 Numerous interviews with Gilbert establish that he dealt with Hyrum Smith and Martin Harris in the Book of Mormon production. His letter to James T. Cobb, March 16, 1879, Palmyra, New York is clear: "Hyrum Smith was the only one of the family I had any acquaintance with, and that very slight." A microfilm of this letter was kindly loaned me by Larry Porter, Brigham University field research representative in New York State.
55 Lemuel Durfee knew the Smiths indirectly as a landlord from 1825 to 1829, but prior to that evidently did not know them at all, according to Lucy Smith's account, pp. 96-98.
56 Chandler to Linn in *Story of the Mormons*, pp. 48-49.
from the neighborhood of the Smith family. . . ."60 Doubtless, his motivation was to prove the worst without much awareness of which signers were in the best position to speak. In the study of Joseph Smith's character, it is the distant non-observer of Palmyra-Manchester who tends to be hostile. The better informed the witness, the more affirmative his views.

This tendency requires a careful look at the close-knit Smith family, since they had the most intimate knowledge of young Joseph Smith. The Prophet answered Hurlbut-Howe by admitting human weaknesses but denying gross personal transgression and insisting, "I have not . . . been guilty of wronging or injuring any man or society of men."61 In further statements, he elaborated only to the extent of admitting digging (in Nibley's phrase) not for gold but for hire.62 The unaffected but detailed history of Lucy Smith throws far more light on the family's early history than all of Hurlbut-Howe, but in her artless simplicity she does not respond specifically to the charge of the early affidavits, actually an evidential strength. But the last surviving brother of the Prophet met these issues head on.

William Smith was too young to remember the earliest days at Palmyra-Manchester, but his recollections are very specific from about 1823. An individualist who was notably not an organization man, he spent his later years in the obscurity of an Iowa farm. He is known for an occasional speech or interview, but his considered answer to Hurlbut-Howe lay among the papers of a friend until forwarded to the LDS Church about 1925. In sending Smith's manuscript, Charles Knecht described his own interest in the family, which prompted him to loan William a Chambers' Miscellany, containing a summary of the Hurlbut evidence. William "wanted to reply to it, and wanted me to see it published. . . ."63 The manu-

60Howe, Mormonism Untailed, p. 231.
62In addition to the citations of Joseph Smith's published histories already made, see the Elders' Journal, Vol. 1 (July 1838), p. 43: "Question 10. Was not Jo Smith a money digger. Answer. Yes, but it was never a very profitable job to him, as he only got fourteen dollars a month for it." Also cit. Joseph Smith, History of Church, Vol. 3, p. 29.
63Letter of Charles Knecht, 1925, Yakima, Washington. Both Smith and Knecht appear (as required by Knecht's recollections) on the 1880 census in Elkader, Iowa, Knecht then as 36 and a "clerk, dry goods store." Knecht is listed in Yakima city directories from 1924 through 1926.
script is definitely in William Smith's handwriting and evidently dates from about 1875.\textsuperscript{64}

William's discursive response reached methodological bedrock in its third sentence, frustration at historians who "have no greater foundation for facts to build upon than public rumor. . . ."\textsuperscript{65} Embedded in doctrinal discussions and lengthy historical parallels are specific reactions to the conclusions of Hurlbut-Howe. To the charge that his brother Joseph was "suspected of sheep stealing," William replied vigorously that "at no period of his life" was he guilty, "nor was he ever suspected of committing such an offense."\textsuperscript{66} The value of the younger brother's comments go beyond specific denials to details of their home life. The father (absurdly characterized by a noted biographer as possessing "irreligion and cynicism") insisted quietly on hymns and "prayers both night and morning." The tone of "strict piety" in the home is described: "My parents, father and mother, poured out their souls to God, the donor of all blessings, to keep and guard their children, and keep them from sin and from all evil works."\textsuperscript{67}

The Chambers' summary of Hurlbut goes to the essential issues of this paper:

The reputation of the family (according to the testimony of neighbors) was of the worst kind. We are told that they avoided honest labour, were intemperate and untruthful, addicted to sheep stealing, digging for hidden treasures, etc. . . .\textsuperscript{68}

Responding specifically to this quoted statement, William Smith's answer was brief but direct in denial and explanation of the origin of these charges:

\textsuperscript{64}Knecht's handwritten letter gives 1875 as the approximate year of his contact with William Smith, and the close of the manuscript (p. 19 of the transcription) reads, "My father and mother are both dead some 20 years. . . ."; a statement (as it relates to the last-surviving Lucy Smith) harmonious with 1875.

\textsuperscript{65}Smith's underlining is preserved in this quotation, though so irregular that remaining quotations will ignore his underlinings. All quotations from William Smith (and those throughout the article) are modified only to the extent of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

\textsuperscript{66}Typescript, p. 3. All quotations have been checked with the manuscript, though the typescript is a nearly perfect transcription and is cited for convenience in paging.

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., p. 18.

\textsuperscript{68}This quotation corresponds exactly in the Smith manuscript (typescript, p. 6) and the only edition of Chambers' Miscellany available at this writing, one undated but by reference to Mormon events published after 1877. The many editions of this work, reaching back to the 1840's, make possible Smith's use of an earlier edition.
My statement on this subject is that the charges are false. My father's family were a peaceable, quiet, and a church-going people—and nothing of these calumnies was ever heard of, not until after my brother Joseph Smith came out with his profession as a prophet...\(^\text{a}\)

William Smith, supported by informed non-Mormon testimony, gives specific recollections of daily life designed to reveal Hurlbut's charges as malicious defamation:

The improvements made on this farm was first commenced by building a log house at no small expense, and at a later date a frame house at a cost of several hundred dollars. After noticing these facts we crave the reader of this article to judge whether there was much time for indolence or for indulgence in immoral or intemperate habits. Here I wish to remark that I never knew my father Joseph Smith to be intoxicated or the worse for liquor, nor was my brother Joseph Smith in the habit of drinking spirituous liquors. Neither did my father's family spend their time, or any portion of their time, in idle habits. Such was the prevailing circumstances of the family, connected with the want of money and the scarcity of provisions, that necessity made an imperative demand upon every energy, nerve, or member of the family for both economy and labor, which this demand had to be met with the strictest kind of industry, and no persons speaking the truth can say to the contrary.\(^{\text{a}}\)

\(^{\text{a}}\)Typescript, p. 6. The unorganized pattern of the biographical material in William Smith's answer is a valuable insight into his historical aims and talents. He is spontaneous to a fault, and organized only in intent, bringing his experiences to bear in random fashion. Since he is not characterized by careful historical explanations, and is careless of sequence, the absence of descriptions of the First Vision (an event of his late childhood) is objectively insignificant. Cf. Anderson, "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision. . ." BYU Studies, pp. 398-401.

\(^{\text{a}}\)Ibid., pp. 17-18.
The Dogberry Papers
and the Book of Mormon

RUSSELL R. RICH*

On September 2, 1829, a new paper was born in Palmyra, New York, bearing the following title and heading:

THE REFLECTOR
printed and published weakly [sic], by
O. Dogberry, Jun., Editor and Proprietor

The object of the papers was to "correct the morals and improve the mind."

O. Dogberry was the pseudonym for a certain Esquire Cole, an ex-justice of the peace, who had obtained access on Sundays and evenings to the use of the idle E. B. Grandin & Co. press, the same press which was being used to print the Book of Mormon.

Vol. 1, No. 1 bears the September 2, 1829, date and started the First Series which continued through December 16, 1829. The December 22 issue began a "New Series" and, therefore, started with No. 1 again. Price was to be $1 per series, and the issues were to be published weekly for four months.

Apparently rumors and gossip about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon were widespread; and Esquire Cole, who looked upon Joseph as an imposter, printed rather tart comments about him and the Book of Mormon. Listed below are some of the comments taken from Vol. 1:

"The Gold Bible, by Joseph Smith Junior, author and proprietor, is now in press and will shortly appear. Priestcraft is short lived!" (No. 1, page 2, September 2, 1829.)

*Dr. Rich is a professor of history of religion at Brigham Young University and a specialist on the schismatic groups of the Restoration.

1The Reflector, New Series, No. 4, p. 29.
"The Book of Mormon is expected to be ready for delivery in the course of one year. Great and marvellous [sic] things will come to pass about those days." (No. 3, page 10, September 16, 1829.)

Three separate statements appeared in the next number. "We understand that the Anti-Masons have declared war against the Gold Bible. Oh! How impious!"

"The number of the Gold Bible apostles is said to be complete. Jo [sic] Smith Jr. is about to assign to each, a mission to the heathen."

"Some few evenings since, a man in the town of Mendon, had a loud call to go and preach the doctrines contained in the Gold Bible, under heavy denunciations." (All from No. 4, page 14, September 23, 1829.)

"The 'Gold Bible' is fast gaining credit; the rapid spread of Islamism was no touch to it." (No. 5, page 18, September 30, 1829.)

"The 'new Jerusalem Reflector' states that the building of the TEMPLE of NEPHI is to be commenced about the beginning of the first year of the Millenium. Thousands are already flocking to the standard of Joseph the Prophet. The Book of Mormon is expected to astonish the natives!" (No. 6, page 22, October 6, 1829.)

"Gold Bible"

"A work bearing this Cognomen ['Gold Bible'] is now in the press; as much curiosity has been excited in this section of the country on the subject, and as the work itself will not be ready for delivery for some months to come—at the solicitation of many of our readers—we have concluded to commence publishing extracts from it on or before the commencement of the second series." (No. 15, page 57, December 9, 1829.)

The Second Series of the Reflector, called in the masthead "New Series," began publication on December 22, 1829. It had been changed in size to about eight inches by ten inches, with eight pages of three columns. No. 1 contained nothing about Joseph Smith or the Book of Mormon, but the first page of No. 2 (page 9) in the New Series was filled with Chapter 1 of 1 Nephi and the first three verses of Chapter 2 (in the current edition), though it did not contain Nephi’s explanation immediately under the chapter heading. With the exception of
one printing error, there is only one change from the reading in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. 1 Nephi 1:9 of the present edition which reads "... and he beheld that his lustre was above that of the sun at noon-day" is printed thus in the Reflecter, "... and he beheld that his lustre was above that to the sun at noon-day," the word "to" being substituted for "of."

On the fourth page (page 13) of this No. 2 issue, in another article under the heading "Gold Bible," Mr. Cole seems somewhat softened in his attitude toward the Book of Mormon for he wrote:

We do not intend at this time to discuss the merits or demerits of this work, and feel astonished that some of our neighbors, who profess liberal principles, and are probably quite as ignorant on the subject as we are, should give themselves quite so much uneasiness about matters that so little concern them. The Book, when it shall come forth before the public, it must stand or fall, according to the whims and fancies of its readers. How it will stand the test of criticism, we are not prepared to say, not having as yet examined many of its pages. —We are, however, prepared to state, that from a part of the first chapter, now before us, and which we this day publish, we cannot discover anything reasonable, or which will have a tendency to subvert our liberties. As to its religious character, we have as yet no means of determining, and if we had, we should be quite loth [sic] to meddle with the tender consciences of our neighbors.

Issue No. 3 of the New Series was published on January 13, 1830, and continued on with 1 Nephi 1 (in the original edition) publishing to the end of verse 15 of Chapter Two of the current edition, with no changes, except the word "thou" is misspelled "though" (1 Nephi 2:9) the first time it is used. Thereafter, it is spelled "thou" (verse 10) as in the official Book of Mormon. This much filled half of the first page. Again, on the fourth page (page 20) there was an article under the heading "Gold Bible":

We inadvertantly neglected in our remarks last week, respecting the wonderful work, to accompany them with the explanations requisite to a correct understanding of it. The appellation of 'Gold Bible' is only a cant cognomen that has been given it by the unbelievers, for be it known that this book, as well as the sacred volume which is held so valuable by all good christians, is not without its revilers and unbeliev-
ers by way of derision. The true title of the work, as appears from the copy-right [sic] is 'The Book of Mormon'—comprising a great number of books, or parts, by different primary authors, all of which are divided into chapters. The first is the 'First Book of Nephi,' of which we gave an extract in our last, and is continued in the present number of our paper. The whole purports to be a compilation, in ancient hieroglyphics, on plates said to resemble plates of gold by one of the chosen of the lost tribes, whose name was Mormon.

The next part of the Book of Mormon that was published was in the January 22 issue, a four page unnumbered "Extra." The Book of Mormon material was not on the front page this time but was on the third and fourth pages (numbered pages 27 & 28). Rather than continuing with 1 Nephi 1, Esquire Cole skipped over to Alma 22, where he began with Alma 43:22 (current edition) and continued through verse 40 of the same chapter just as it reads in the first edition. This took just a little over two-thirds of a page and was the third and last time that Book of Mormon material was quoted directly in the Reflector.

As to why no further material from the Book of Mormon was quoted, we find the story in the History of Joseph Smith, by his mother, Lucy Mack Smith. She does not tell us the date but merely states that one Sunday afternoon while the Book of Mormon was being printed, Hyrum became worried about the safety of the work and persuaded Oliver Cowdery to go to the printing shop with him. When they arrived, they found Mr. Cole busy printing his newspaper. Mother Smith states:

Upon reading the prospectus of his paper, they found that he had agreed with his subscribers to publish one form of "Joe Smith's Gold Bible" each week and thereby furnish them with the principal portion of the book in such a way that they would not be obliged to pay the Smiths for it.3

Mrs. Smith remembered the paper was called Dogberry Paper on Winter Hill. There never was any paper published under this name, but the editor and proprietor of the Reflector called himself O. Dogberry and occasionally inserted a note that the paper was published at the 'Bower on Wintergreen

3Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft) 1958, chapter 32.
4Ibid., p. 164.
Hill.” And so, putting these facts partially together in her memory many years later, Mother Smith remembered it incorrectly as Dogberry Paper on Winter Hill.”

Hyrum and Oliver were vigorously opposed to Esquire Cole’s printing of sections of the Book of Mormon. When Cole ignored their argument that they held the copyright and continued to print what he wanted, Hyrum and Oliver reported such to the Prophet’s parents. Joseph Smith, Sr., immediately went to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and arrived back in Palmyra with Joseph the following Sunday. As soon as Joseph had warmed himself, he went to the printing shop where Mr. Cole was again working on his paper. When Joseph insisted that Mr. Cole not print anymore of the Book of Mormon, Cole wanted to fight him; but through patience and firmness, Joseph and Mr. Cole agreed to submit the matter to arbitration, where it was decided that Mr. Cole must stop his violation of the copyright. There are probably many ramifications of the copyright arbitration with which we are not acquainted, but one obvious one appears in the following issue of the Reflector. Even though Esquire Cole had softened his language and even his attitude toward the Book of Mormon from what it was in the First Series to what it became in the New Series, he returned to his earlier stance after his disputation with the Prophet Joseph over his illegal use of the Book of Mormon. He reverted to calling the Book of Mormon the “Gold Bible” which title he had said was used by “revilers” and “unbelievers.” This is illustrated in the March 16, 1830 Reflector when the following letter and editorial were printed:

Palmyra, March 11, 1830

O. Dogberry, Esquire

Dear Sir—When the present series of the Reflector is completed, you will please erase my name from your list of subscribers.

Yours, etc.

Luther Howard

Mr. Cole’s comments concerning this letter were:

We have only to regret that this ‘little lump of anguish,’ who measures something more than four feet in his shoes, had not requested an immediate discontinuance, as he is the only person of the same description our list contains. It is from the enlightened, independent, and liberal minded, that
we receive and expect support—not from meddlesome, canting, or whining hypocrites—it is not from a man who professes ostentatiously to belong to a Calvinistic Church, where himself and the family display a profession of fine clothing, while he privately advocates the 'Gold Bible.' This man has an itching to appear in print—he shall be gratified. We have many communications on hand respecting this pious as well as meddling worthy. His Geneva friends will not be forgotten.

Many other comments appeared in later issues of Mr. Cole's paper shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon. They all reflect this same negative outlook, as Mr. Cole's softened attitude was only temporary.

1970 RESEARCH PROJECT

The Institute of Mormon Studies research project for this year will be the Ohio Period. The findings will be published in the Spring 1971 issue of BYU Studies. Students, research librarians, and other interested persons who would like to participate in, make suggestions about, or provide information on this period of research, please write to Institute of Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84601.
THE RETURN

An Oil Painting

by

Benton P. Patten
A NOTE ON "THE RETURN"

Benton P. Patten*

Paintings are more than restful views upon walls. They contain some of the greatest commentaries our culture has, for instance: Rembrandt's pictures of the life of Christ, nearly eight hundred in all (which still inspire us), whole schools of art, social realism, pop art and other "isms." Many people wish a painting to be as plainly read as the freeway exit sign, nothing more, nothing less, because they "know what it is."

As an artist searches deeper into his soul, symbols and insights produce unexpected views as they come into his consciousness. The reason a man continues time and time again to use seed pods and ramshackle houses as inspiration is indicative in some way as to the message he is trying to convey. Maritain said that the artist embodies the same thought as the poet except that he expresses it visually. As you know, some imagery in poetry is as hard a problem to unravel as is a well done painting.

This work was concerned with a particular September evening when a boy again asked his Father in Heaven if he was still in favor with Him, and came to symbolize "the return" of all resurrected beings in this dispensation.

*Mr. Patten is presently an art instructor at the Utah State School for the Deaf in Ogden, Utah.
The Anthon Transcript:
People, Primary Sources, and Problems

STANLEY B. KIMBALL*

Of the many important and little understood events of early Church history, certainly the consultation of Martin Harris with Professor Charles Anthon in New York City in February 1828 regarding the Book of Mormon is one of the most important and intriguing. It is also one of the earliest events of the Restoration which can be assessed rationally and tested. The events leading up to this visit are briefly as follows: By late 1827 the story of Joseph Smith and the "gold plates" was sufficiently well known in and around Palmyra, New York to have caused great curiosity and cupidity among some of his contemporaries. In order to protect the plates and to have sufficient time and peace of mind to commence the translation of the plates, Joseph and Emma moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania, about 150 miles away, where Emma's parents lived.

Shortly thereafter, a friend of the Smith family, Martin Harris of Palmyra, visited him, secured a handwritten copy of some of the characters on the plates, took them to New York City for the evaluation of men of learning, and returned to relate the following to Joseph Smith:

I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Anthony [sic], a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments;—Professor Anthony stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were

*Dr. Kimball, professor of history at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, has studied widely on Church origins. He is also a member of the editorial board of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought.
Egyptian, Chaldeac [sic], Assyriac, and Arabac [sic]; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthony called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

He then said to me, 'let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthony had said respecting both the characters and the translation.1

This story, familiar in Mormon lore, raises a great many important questions which need careful examination. Among these questions are the following: Who was Martin Harris? How did he become involved with Joseph Smith? Who advised him whom to consult regarding the transcription? Who were the persons with whom he did consult? What were their qualifications? What was the import and significance of their opinions? What was the necessity, if any, of the consultations? How reliable is Martin Harris' account of what transpired? When and how was the connection made between the prophecy of Isaiah 29:11 regarding "a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned"? How and when was the transcript made? How rapidly did the story of this remarkable event spread? Was it used as a "missionary tool"? What is the pedigree of the so-called "Anthon transcript" in existence today?

WHO WAS MARTIN HARRIS AND WHAT WERE HIS CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH SMITH?

Martin Harris (1783-1875) was a highly respected and well-to-do farmer and individual in Palmyra, New York at that time. Prior to his trips to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and New

York City, he had resided in Palmyra for over thirty-five years. (He had been born in Easttown, Saratoga County, New York and had moved with his family to Palmyra in 1792 when he was nine years old.) We are told that as a boy, Joseph Smith had worked on the Harris farm for fifty cents a day and that he and Harris had even wrestled together. We also know that Harris was a friend of the Smith family and was one of the first individuals with whom the family shared the information about Joseph’s spiritual experiences.2

Just prior to Joseph’s move to Harmony, an important meeting took place between him and Martin Harris. Whether this meeting was by design or accident we are not sure. Joseph’s mother records that "With a view of commencing the work of translation and carrying it forward as speedily as circumstances would permit," Joseph requested her to set up an appointment for him with Martin Harris. Such a request suggests that in spite of having worked for Harris, Joseph did not know him very well. Whether this appointment was ever made and kept is not known. We do know, however, that late in 1827 when Emma’s brother Alva Hale, arrived in Palmyra to help the young couple move to Harmony, Joseph and Alva met Harris in a public-house in Palmyra. Mr. Harris stepped up to Joseph and said, "How do you do, Mr. Smith." After which he took a bag of silver from his pocket and said again, 'Here, Mr. Smith, $50.00, I give this to you to do the Lord’s work with ...'"3

During this, or a subsequent conversation, arrangements were apparently made for Martin Harris to give Joseph enough time to settle in Harmony and transcribe some of the characters, whereupon Harris should come to Harmony and "take the characters to the East, and, on his way, he was to call on all the professed linguists, in order to give them an opportunity to display their talents in giving a translation of the characters."4 This Harris did in February 1828.

It is highly unlikely that Harris knew with whom to consult in "the East" regarding the transcription and translation from

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3Smith, History of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 114.

4Ibid., p. 118.

5Ibid., p. 119.
the plates. There is, of course, the possibility that he simply went to New York City and inquired on the spot. It is much more probable that he sought advice in advance.

There is some evidence that he returned to Palmyra after receiving the manuscript before leaving for the East. The Reverend John A. Clark (1801-1843), then a resident minister in Palmyra, later recorded that "It was early in the Autumn of 1827 [sic] that Martin Harris called at my home . . . remarking that he had a matter to communicate that he wished to be strictly confidential," and showed him a few characters copied from the plates. Clark also wrote that "He was so much in earnest on this subject, that he immediately started off with some of the manuscript Smith had furnished him on a journey to New York and Washington." Clark does not say whether Harris requested advice from him regarding men of learning.

WHO ADVISED HARRIS ABOUT WHOM TO VISIT?

Two other possible sources of information are worth considering. One was the nearby academy in Canandaigua, only nine miles from Palmyra. The Canandaigua Academy, one of the oldest and best in western New York state, opened in the fall of 1796. Unfortunately the early records of the academy are very incomplete prior to 1842, so we know little about the faculty with whom Martin Harris may have advised.7

Another possible source of Harris' information was a Luther Bradish. Bradish (1783-1863), a diplomat, statesman, and student of languages, was born in Cummington, Massachusetts, but later settled in Franklin County, New York. Bradish was also well traveled for his day. Just before the War of 1812, in which he served as a volunteer, he had visited the West Indies, South America, and Great Britain, and during the years 1820-26 he was sent by John Quincy Adams, U.S. Secretary of State, to Asia as a semi-official agent on a special mission to the Sublime Porte in Constantinople concerning an American trade treaty with the Ottoman Empire. After fin-

6John A. Clark, Gleanings by the Way (Philadelphia, 1842), pp. 222, 229. Apparently Clark was much too busy in Philadelphia to be accurate about the date of such things.

7Lewis C. Aldrich, comp., History of Ontario County, N.Y., (Syracuse, 1893), pp. 226-228, and correspondence with Clyde M. Maffin, Ontario County Historian. Stephen A. Douglas was a student of the academy for three years in the 1830's.
ishing this mission, during which time he learned Arabic, he traveled to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Europe "where he spent considerable time in the great capitolis and studied assiduously their languages, manners and antiquities." Of his sojourn in Egypt Bradish himself informs us that he spent five months there in 1821. During that time he happened to pass through Dendera when the French engineer Jean Baptiste Lelorraine was engaged in the operation of preparing antiquities for removal to France. Bradish carried this news to Cairo where Henry Salt and Bernadino Drovetti (the English and French Consul-General in Egypt at that time) did all they could (unsuccessfully) to prevent Lelorraine from shipping his antiquities to France. Upon his return home, Bradish won a Franklyn County seat in the New York state assembly in Albany; he held that position from 1827-1830.

There are two independent sources stating that Harris did indeed seek the opinion and advice of Bradish concerning the transcription. The first source is Pomeroy Tucker (1802-1870), founder (in 1822), editor, and part owner with Egbert B. Grandin (printer of the Book of Mormon) of the Wayne Sentinel published in Palmyra. Tucker reports that Harris "sought the interpretation and bibliographical scrutiny of such scholars as Hon. Luther Bradish, Dr. Mitchell, Professor Anthon and others." Since Tucker was a native and resident of the area and a newspaper editor, it is safe to assume that, in spite of his anti-Mormon bias, this simple declaration of fact is reliable, especially since we have a corroborating second source.

This second source is a statement made by John H. Gilbert in September 1892. An associate of both Tucker and Grandin,

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Luther Bradish to unknown person, November 1838 (?); "Luther Bradish Papers," New York Historical Society.

M. Saulnier, Notice sur le Voyage de M. Lelorraine en Egypte . . . (Paris, 1822), pp. 45, 48. Since Salt and Drovetti figure so prominently in the career of Antonio Lebolo—the discoverer of the mummies which contained the Book of Abraham—this reference to them in connection with Bradish is intriguing, if not very important. The most complete and recent study of the connection between Salt, Drovetti, and Lebolo and Joseph Smith is Jay M. Todd's The Saga of the Book of Abraham (Salt Lake City, 1969).

Gilbert was the chief compositor of the Book of Mormon, which was printed on the Wayne Sentinel press. According to Gilbert, Harris "stopped at Albany and called on Lt. Governor Bradish. . ."12 (Furthermore, the statement by W. W. Phelps, that Harris "went to New York City by way of Utica and Albany,"13 strengthens the possibility that Harris consulted Bradish about the transcription.)

It is entirely possible that Martin Harris knew Bradish beforehand. Though a resident of Franklyn County (over 200 miles northeast of Palmyra), Bradish did have relatives in the Palmyra area.14 It is also entirely possible that his travel experiences (especially those in Egypt and the Near East) were known to Harris, since few Americans of that day had made so long and so varied a foreign tour.

Regardless of who advised Harris, a more important question is why he was directed to Professor Anthon (and "Mitchell"). In 1828 the main centers of learning were, of course, all in "the East." There were five such centers—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania (or what was later called by that name), and Columbia College (now Columbia University.) Since the science of Egyptology did not exist in 1828 there were no Egyptologists. The only scholars in the world acquainted to any degree with the Egyptian language would have been those in the field of classical studies. In those days, classicists did not limit themselves strictly to Greek and Roman studies, but studied most of the other ancient civilizations as well.

The chief classical scholars in the United States in 1828 were Edward Robinson, George Ticknor, Edward Everett, and George Bancroft at Harvard; James L. Kingsley and T.D. Woolsey at Yale; and Anthon at Columbia. Robinson and Woolsey, however, were in Europe in 1828; Ticknor was at that time primarily interested in the Romance languages; and Everett was in politics after 1826.15 Of the remaining practicing classicists in the East during 1828, Anthon was the best known.

12Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, Esq., September 8, 1892, Palmyra, New York (typescript copy p. 4, located in LDS Church Historian's Office).
14In the Bradish papers there are several letters connecting him with Palmyra prior to 1828.
It seems certain then that anyone qualified to advise Harris properly would have recommended him to Anthon.

WHO WAS PROFESSOR ANTHON?

Charles Anthon (1787-1867) was a professor of classical studies at Columbia for forty-seven years—from 1820 until his death. One of eight children born to Dr. George Christian Anthon, a German surgeon, and his second wife, Genevieve Jadot, who made their home in New York City, young Charles was probably the most brilliant student who had ever attended Columbia College. He won so many prizes and honors that, to give other students a chance, his name was withheld from scholastic competition.

At first his main interest was law, but in 1820, one year after being admitted to the bar, he became adjunct professor of Greek and Latin at Columbia College and in 1830 was advanced to Professor of Greek language and literature. Anthon was a prolific scholar and for more than thirty years produced at least one volume annually. "Each of his text books passed through several editions, and for thirty years, about the middle of the nineteenth century, his influence upon the study of the classics in the United States was probably greater than that of any other man."16

Of the many extant contemporary opinions concerning Anthon, the following are representative. In an 1850 sketch of his life, Edgar Allan Poe wrote, "If not absolutely the best, he is at least generally considered the best classicist in America. . . As commentator he may rank with any of his day, and has evinced powers very unusual in men who devote their lives to classical lore."17 Upon his death he was eulogized in an important magazine of the day, Harper's Weekly, as "more widely known in Europe than any other American commentator on classical authors."18 His obituary in the New York Times of July 30, 1867, noted that his textbooks "are regarded as standard authority in many schools and colleges, and their republication and extensive uses in England bear ample testimony to the esteem in which they are held abroad."

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18August 17, 1867. The article is illustrated with a large portrait by Matthew Brady, the famous Civil War photographer.
Anthon was a bachelor and lived in the residence wing of the college (at 7 College Green), and it was likely in his study that the visit of Harris took place. (The college was then located one block north of the present post office and federal building near City Hall Park in lower Manhattan.) At the time of Harris' visit, Anthon was probably working on his *magnum opus*, an edition of *Horace*, a study which won him his full-professorship in 1830. It is also important to note that Martin Harris later related that Anthon was alone at the time of the consultation.19 This fact is important because there were no witnesses to the event from whom we might glean more information.

WHO WAS DR. MITCHELL?

The identification of Professor Anthon has provided no difficulties. The determination of who "Dr. Mitchell" was is somewhat more complicated. The *Dictionary of American Biography*, a comprehensive and reliable source of American biography, lists three Mitchels and thirty-two Mitchells. Among them are several who could possibly have been this "Dr. Mitchell." The most likely candidates are:


Unfortunately Martin Harris never referred to this learned man except as "Dr. Mitchell." References to him in Church history are scanty and sometimes vague. One suggests that he was a certain Dr. Samuel Mitchell. Another states he may have been a Dr. Mitchell of Philadelphia. (Both writers were apparently thinking of Samuel Augustus Mitchell, mentioned above.) Others refer to him as Samuel I. Mitchell and Samuel E. Mitchell.

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19 From a statement by David B. Dille, a one time missionary in England who had interviewed Harris, in the *Millenial Star*, Vol. 21 (September 1853), p. 545.
However, a non-Mormon writer who is well qualified to shed some light on the subject rules out all the above candidates. This writer is Professor Anthon himself. In two of his letters, one dated February 17, 1834, to Mr. E. D. Howe of Painesville, Ohio, and the other dated April 3, 1841, to Rev. T. W. Coit, Rector of Trinity Church, New Rochelle, West Chester County, New York, we find the following statements.

In the Howe letter, Anthon wrote:

Some years ago, a plain and apparently simple-hearted farmer called on me with a note from Dr. Mitchell, of our city, now deceased [italics mine], requesting me to decipher [sic], if possible, the paper which the farmer would hand me.20

This would fix the date of "Dr. Mitchell’s" death sometime between 1828 and 1834. All of the previously mentioned Mitchells died after 1834. In the Coit letter, Anthon wrote:

Many years ago—the precise date I do not now recollect—a plain looking countryman called upon me with a letter from Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell... [italics mine]21

Neither the Dictionary of American Biography nor Longworth’s Directory of the City of New York, 1828-29, however, list a Samuel L. Mitchell. The latter lists a Samuel Mitchell who was a lampmaker—obviously not Dr. Mitchell. This same directory, however does indicate a Samuel L. Mitchell, M.D. living at 47 White Street. Research revealed that in 1828 a Samuel Latham Mitchell, M.D., was a vice-president of Rutgers Medical College in lower Manhattan. We also know that this Dr. Mitchell was in New York City during February 1828, for on February 16 of that year, "Dr. Mitchell [delivered] in the city hall, an address on the late Thos. Addis Emmet."22 This Dr. Mitchell, born 1776, died in 1831, and thereby complies with the death before 1834 of "Dr. Mitchell," as mentioned above in Anthon’s letter to Howe. He also resided in New York City, as did the "Dr. Mitchell" mentioned in the same letter.

20Howe, Mormonism Unveiled, pp. 270-272.
21Even though this letter was first published by Coit in The Church Record, Vol. 1 (Flushing, New York, April 24, 1841), pp. 231-232, the usual source is given as the 1842 reprint of the letter in Clark’s Gleanings, pp. 233-238. The two printings are identical.
Samuel Latham Mitchell was of Quaker parentage, the son of Robert and Mary (Latham) Mitchell of North Hemstead, Long Island, New York. His early studies were in the classics. After receiving his medical and scientific training in New York and Edinburgh, he was appointed to the chair of natural history, chemistry, and agriculture at Columbia College in 1792. He was a man of many talents and much energy. In addition to teaching, he was twice in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1801-1804 and 1810-1813; a senator from 1804-1809; professor, College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, 1807-1826; and an organizer and a vice-president of Rutgers Medical College during its brief existence, 1826-1830.23

First, last, and always, Mitchell was a promoter of science. He has been called the "Nestor of American Science"; he was a member of dozens of scientific and scholarly societies and wrote scores of learned books, pamphlets, articles, etc., on a multitude of subjects. His contemporaries described him both as "a living encyclopedia" and "a chaos of knowledge."

Although all Mormon (and many non-Mormon) references to the good doctor spell the name Mitchell rather than Mitchell, this writer is satisfied that the shadowy "Dr. Mitchell" is in reality Samuel L. Mitchell. This problem of the spelling of the name need not be confusing. The two names sound very much alike—Mitchell being the much more common spelling.24

**HOW VALID WAS THE ANTHON-MITCHELL COMMENTARY?**

Now for the most important question. How valid was the testimony of Anthon and Mitchell respecting the transcription and translation of ancient Nephite-Egyptian records? According to Martin Harris, Dr. Anthon said that "the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian." Dr. Mitchell is reported to have "sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said." It is important that we realize that even though the statement of Martin Harris is now contained in the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith was only reporting what Martin Harris said happened and was not neces-

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24The famous scientist's biographer has noted, "The misspelling of the name means little, as few people, either then or now, spell Mitchell's name correctly." (Courtney Robert Hall, *A Scientist in the Early Republic: Samuel Latham Mitchell*, New York, 1934, p. 104.) It seems conclusive, then, that the "Dr. Mitchell" was really Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell.
sarily vouching for what Dr. Anthon and Dr. Mitchill reputedly had said.

There are at least three possible interpretations of the Martin Harris statement regarding his visit with Dr. 's Anthon and Mitchill:

The first is that Martin Harris fabricated the whole story. But this is hardly tenable. He was skeptical in the first place—that is why he went to New York City; and he certainly had nothing to gain by falsifying evidence to support the almost fantastic story of the impoverished and persecuted Prophet. If Martin Harris was thinking about making money from the Book of Mormon, it was not necessary for him to have gone to the trouble and expense of visiting New York City.

The second is that Dr. 's Anthon and Mitchill made up their stories, or at least pretended knowledge that they did not have. This is, unfortunately, not too difficult to believe. The learned are prone to pontificate. Anthon's interest in the matter may have gone deeper. Did he wish to share some of the wealth and fame that exploitation of the golden plates might bring? This is possible, for the Book of Mormon itself says, "... And the learned shall say: Bring hither the book, and I will read them. And now, because of the glory of the world and to get gain will they say this, and not for the glory of God."²⁵

However, a third interpretation, that Anthon and Mitchill merely recognized the characters as some form of Egyptian and so stated this, I believe, is most probable. Many books had been published by 1828 containing facsimilie of Egyptian characters and Anthon and Mitchill could easily have been acquainted with at least the appearance of the various styles of Egyptian writing. Whatever they said respecting the correctness of the translations cannot be taken too seriously. Even a reincarnated Egyptian could not have translated the characters because the "reformed Egyptian" had been so changed that "none other people knoweth our language."²⁶ It is entirely possible, of course, that they said nothing at all about the translation, but only remarked that the transcription was correct, for in 1828 neither Anthon, Mitchill (nor anyone else in the world for that matter) had seen much translated from the Egyptian. It is not difficult to understand how a man of Harris' background could

²⁵Nephi 27:15-16.
²⁶Mormon 9:54.
have mistaken transcription for translation. Perhaps Harris was so intent on fulfilling a scriptural prophecy that he heard only what he wanted to hear. Certainly any notion that he had been an instrument in God's hands in fulfilling prophecy would have helped convince him that he should sell his farm and finance the publication of the Book of Mormon.

The simple supposition, however, that Anthon and Mitchell were able to recognize various styles of Egyptian writing is nothing very remarkable or important, and certainly no evidence that they were in any position to say that either the translation or transcription was correct. We must go deeper than this to place any weight on their judgment. Two standard ways of deepening such an investigation are an examination of the *Nachlasse*, or literary remains, and the publications of a given individual.

In the case of Dr. Mitchell, aside from the above mentioned facts that he was in his youth a student of the classics and had at least a reading ability of several languages, no other possible evidence of a competence in Egyptian studies has come to light. His biographer mentions nothing, his papers in the East Hampton Free Library (and elsewhere) reveal nothing, and a ten-page bibliography of his writings indicates he never published anything regarding any language. It appears then that Mitchell could have given Harris only a very superficial opinion regarding the transcript.

In respect to Anthon, fortunately, we have more to investigate. While there is nothing germane to this study in his papers at Cornell University, a study of his publications is most rewarding. We have noted that he produced many volumes and was considered "the principal classical bookmaker of his time." Most of this enormous output was, however, after February 1828 and therefore, of little help in evaluating Anthon's acquaintance with the Egyptian language in 1828. But one very significant book was published in 1825 and went through six or more editions by 1828; in fact, this was the book that established Anthon's reputation as one of the foremost classicists in America. The work was *A Classical Dictionary* by John Lempriere (first published 1788), corrected and improved by Charles Anthon.

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27 Letter of Herbert Finch, Curator and Archivist, Cornell University, to author, November 13, 1969.
Our interest in Lemprière’s work is not important. It is to the four thousand Anthon additions to the Dictionary mentioned in the preface that we now turn our attention, because they may be used legitimately as a criterion of Anthon’s learning and acquaintance with various subjects. But in which of Anthon’s four thousand added subjects are we interested, and which have value in determining Anthon’s acquaintance with Egyptian? Reading through his reference to Egypt is most disappointing. It is only a short geographic sketch of the country. In the preface, however, Anthon states, “The articles on which the most labour has been bestowed are the following: Memnonium . . . Nilus . . . Pyramids . . . Thebae . . .” Turning to these and other entries in this Classical Dictionary, we find Anthon referring to many writers and authorities, including Bruce, Davison, Montagu, Salt, Belzoni, Lacrose, Denon, Jablonski, and Mannert. He also cites Champollion’s “elaborate treatise on Hieroglyphics of Egypt”—definite evidence that Anthon was aware of the early works of the French scholar, Jean François Champollion (1790-1832), the greatest student of the Egyptian language of the period, and the man upon whose work much of subsequent advance in Egyptology was made. Anthon does not identify the exact title of this book by Champollion, but the latter had written only one book by 1827 that could fit the above description, his famous Précis du système Hiéroglyphique des Anciens Égyptiens (Paris 1824). The writer has been successful in locating Anthon’s copy of the Précis (at Cornell University). Hopefully I searched it for marginalia in any way connected with Harris’ visit, but nothing was found—only Anthon’s signature on the flyleaf.

HARRIS SUFFICIENTLY CONVINCED

Such is the story of the Harris-Anthon-Mitchill encounter. In spite of the limited ability of Anthon and Mitchill (or anyone else in the world at that time) to pronounce judgment on the transcription, and despite the ridicule of Anthon regarding the story of angels and the destruction of Anthon’s certificate, Harris was sufficiently convinced to go into debt and devote his full time to the support of the young prophet. As soon as pos-

30Ibid., p. 480.
sible, probably in April, Harris went to Harmony and served as Joseph's scribe until June 14, 1828.51

A year later in June 1829 his faithfulness and support earned him the privilege of becoming one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon in Fayette, New York, whence Joseph Smith had moved in 1829 at the generous and friendly invitation of David Whitmer, a friend of Oliver Cowdery who succeeded Harris as Joseph's scribe in the work of translating the Book of Mormon. The following August Harris mortgaged his farm to guarantee the $3,000 necessary to print 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon, which was finally published in Palmyra during March 1830. The Church was organized April 6 of that year, and Martin was one of the first to be baptized.

HOW RELIABLE IS HARRIS' ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED?

As far as the official account (published in 1842 as noted above) of what transpired, it must be carefully noted again that Joseph Smith is not vouching for what Harris said; he is simply reporting what Harris told him. Since there were no witnesses to the event, we have only the many statements of Martin Harris and two statements from Anthon to go on.

That the event took place pretty much as Harris reported it is substantiated by Anthon's previously cited letters to Howe and Coit.52 Much has been made of the fact, however, that these two letters, which are very critical of the Mormons, insist that "the paper contained anything else but Egyptian Hieroglyphics," and they are widely quoted by anti-Mormon writers. Why should Harris' story be accepted above that of the pro-

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51 By this date he had transcribed 116 pages of foolscap. With considerable misgivings Joseph Smith allowed Harris to take these pages back to Palmyra to show his wife. Somehow the material was lost or stolen with the result that both Joseph and Martin were severely chastized by the Lord and for some time Joseph was not allowed to continue translating. Thereafter either Emma Smith or Oliver Cowdery served as scribe to the Prophet. Apparently Harris had little connection with Joseph Smith until a year later when he became one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

52 Since Anthon lived for twenty years after the publication of the second letter and since there is no recorded denial of his letters having been forged or misquoted, we may assume (even though we do not have the original letters) that he did actually write them—a fact which proves that the interview did indeed take place. Should further evidence be desired one could cite Henry Drissler, A Commemorative Discourse (New York City, 1868). Since this booklet is really a short biography of Anthon written immediately after his death, the reference in it (pp. 21-22) to the Howe letter should settle any doubt regarding the interview having taken place and the letter having been written.
fessor? One good reason is that the two letters contain glaring inconsistencies.\(^3\) Aside from Anthon's acknowledged brilliance, the sources reveal him as also a rather crochety bachelor, a petry taskmaster with no outside interest, and a man of no religious association. The two letters were not written by the detached scholar, but by an uncritical, emotional man trying to rid himself of any connection with people he did not and could not understand.

As far as the truthfulness of the Harris statements concerning what occurred, we have no evidence whatsoever beyond his character. Richard L. Anderson has done extensive research on Harris' life in Palmyra and has proved that "none of his townsmen exceeded his established reputation as a responsible and honest individual," and that during his "almost 40 years' residence in Palmyra he was admired for his integrity...."\(^3\)

The integrity of Harris can further be substantiated by the facts that though his connections with Joseph Smith cost him money, his domestic tranquility, and brought upon him much ridicule; that in spite of having been severely censored for losing the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript; that after the trials of Kirtland his "mind became darkened" to the extent that he was formally excommunicated in December 1837; that he remained in Ohio after the Church left for Missouri, Illinois, and finally for the Valley of the Great Salt Lake; that he eventually joined various other churches, including the Strangite (for which he did some missionary work in England in 1846); and that he was pilloried in the Elders' Journal of August 1838 as a "lacky... beneath contempt," and also in the Millennial Star (an official Church publication in England) on November 15, 1846 in an article entitled "Sketches of Notorious Characters," and described as one having "yielded to the spirit and temptation of the Devil," and a "bitter enemy" of Joseph Smith, that despite all this, there is no record of his ever having denied his testimony to the truth-


fulness of the Book of Mormon and his experiences connected with it.

While it can be argued that the foregoing reveals instability in Harris' character, the fact remains that not only did he not try to rid himself of the stigmata of being a deluded person and a religious fanatic, or strike back at his critics in the Mormon camp, but he continued to his death to affirm his testimony. He was interviewed many times on the subject before and after his disaffection and always told the same story. This is impressive evidence of his inner conviction of the reality of his various spiritual experiences connected with the Book of Mormon.

Once the background of this whole incident is explored and assessed, we are still left with some nagging questions among which are: What was the meaning and significance of the event? Would the Restoration have been significantly altered in any way if the Harris-Anthon incident had never taken place? Since, as will be shown, the incident apparently did not become an important missionary tool, and was not especially trumpeted abroad to impress investigators, this author does not think the incident had any great practical value—especially when we conclude, as we must, that the opinions of Anthon and Mitchill were not conclusive in any way.

The standard answer regarding the why and purpose of the Harris-Anthon incident is that it was necessary to fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah and Nephi. Such an answer, however, is really begging the question, for then one must ask why the prophecies were made in the first place. It could be argued that the prophecies represent nothing more than the fact that God rewarded two faithful servants with a glimpse of the future, and that these two men dared not leave unrecorded such a vision.

253 Nephi 27:15-18: "But behold, it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall say unto him to whom he shall deliver the book: Take these words which are not sealed and deliver them to another, that he may show them unto the learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee. And the learned shall say: Bring hither the book, and I will read them. . . And the man shall say: I cannot bring the book, for it is sealed. . ."

Isaiah 29:11: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed."

B. H. Roberts went no deeper than this interpretation, and even as profound a thinker as Orson Pratt pursued the question no further in his *Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon* (Liverpool, 1850) as reprinted in *Orson Pratt's Works* (Salt Lake City, 1945), Vol. 1, pp. 107-289, especially pp. 271-279.
Perhaps the real reason behind the event lies in an "ecclesiastical imperative" that through sufficient witnesses to truth mankind will be left without excuse for having rejected God's word. That such a divine imperative exists is suggested by many scriptures—among the most clear being that "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established," and "In the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good will he establish his word." (Matt. 18:16 and 2 Nephi 27:14) According to Oliver Cowdery, the Angel Moroni told Joseph Smith that ". . . the scripture [Isaiah and Nephi] must be fulfilled before it is translated, which says that the word of a book, which were sealed were presented to the learned, for thus has God determined to leave man without excuse. . . ." [italics mine]36 Apparently Moroni was the source of the belief that prophecy was about to be fulfilled and apparently this 1835 publication was the first public statement to that effect.

Joseph's mother adds a little to our understanding of this. She records that, in reference to Joseph's preparation prior to translation, "The first step that he was instructed to take in regard to this work was to make a facsimile of some of the characters, which were called reformed Egyptian, and to send them to some of the most learned men of this generation and ask them for a translation thereof."37

Turning from the philosophy and rationale of the event itself, let us now consider the concrete results. To what use was this unique incident put? How was the story disseminated? The story spread undramatically by word of mouth, through newspapers, periodicals, at least one tract, and by books. Martin Harris told the story in Palmyra immediately after he returned from New York City; by 1840 missionaries had carried the story to New Rochelle, New York, and to England before 1849; at least four newspapers carried the story between 1829

36In a series of letters published in the Messenger and Advocate in 1834 and 1835 from Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps—especially in the fourth letter of February 1835—Cowdery claims that he had the help of Joseph Smith in the preparation of the letters. Such a claim lends authority to these letters. A similar statement is made by Edward Stevenson, Reminiscences of the Prophet Joseph (Salt Lake City, 1893), pp. 28-29: "It was manifested to the Prophet that a facsimile of characters must be copied and sent to the most learned professors of the country, and that Martin Harris should be the bearer of them."
and 1831. The first book to mention the incident was published in 1834; in 1840 two denominational journals carried the story; also in 1840 the first semi-official Church reference to the matter was made in a tract; in 1842 the story was officially released by the Church in Nauvoo and Liverpool, England; between 1842 and 1890 at least nine books made mention of it; and in 1844 the first reproduction of the "Anthon transcript" and the first published reference to the connection between the event and the prophecy of Isaiah appeared. (As has been noted above, the incident was even mentioned in a commemorative discourse following the death of Anthon.)

More or less chronologically these references to the consultation are as follows: We have already cited above what Harris reported to Joseph Smith in Harmony. Harris related the incident to at least two citizens of Palmyra—John H. Gilbert recorded that "Martin returned from his trip east satisfied that 'Joseph' was a 'little smarter than Professor Anthon'." Clark in Palmyra wrote that "After his return he came to see me again, and told me that, among others, he had consulted Prof. Anthon, who thought the characters in which the book was written very remarkable, but he could not decide what language they belonged to." Harris was also an energetic missionary for the Church. He and his brother Elmer baptized a hundred converts by 1833. It is difficult to imagine that both Martin and his brother did not relate the experiences in New York City. (It might also be well to point out that after Martin Harris became one of the Three Witnesses and saw the plates and the Angel Moroni, he tended to stress this remarkable experience more than the visit with Anthon and Mitchill.)

Perhaps the first newspaper account is in the Palmyra Free-man, August 1829, but this is known only through a quotation reprinted in the Rochester Advertiser and Telegraph of August 31, 1829—"So blindly enthusiastic was Harris that he took some of the characters interpreted by Smith and went in search of someone, besides the interpreter, who was learned enough to English them; but all of whom he applied (among the number was Professor Mitchell of New York) happened not to be

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38 Gilbert, Memorandum, p. 4.
39 Clark, Gleanings, p. 229.
possessed of sufficient knowledge to give satisfaction."\(^{41}\) About a week later the *Rochester Gem* of September 5, 1829 reported the incident as follows: "Harris states that he went in search of someone to interpret the hieroglyphics, but found no one was intended to perform that all-important task but Smith himself."\(^{42}\)

Some time later the *Canandaigua* (New York) *Morning Courier and Enquirer* of September 1, 1831 reported the incident:

Harris with several manuscripts in his pocket went to the city of New York and called upon one of the professors of Columbia College for the purpose of showing them to him. Harris says that the professor thought them very curious, but admitted that he could not decipher them. Said he to Harris, 'Mr. Harris, you had better go to the celebrated Dr. Mitchell and show them to him. He is very learned in these ancient languages and I have no doubt he will be able to give you some satisfaction.' ...Harris says that the Doctor...looked at his engravings—made a learned dissertation on them—compared them with the hieroglyphics discovered by Champollion in Europe, and set them down as a language of a people formerly in existence in the East, but now no more.\(^{43}\)

The first known reference to this incident in book form was made in 1834 by Eber D. Howe in his publication *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic]. Howe, after serving in the War of 1812, became a printer's apprentice in Buffalo, New York, on the *Buffalo Gazette*. In 1817 he moved to Cleveland, and in 1822, removed to nearby Painesville, or nine miles from Kirtland, to start his own newspaper, the *Painesville Telegraph*, which he edited until 1835. Thereafter, though his brother took over the paper, he remained in Painesville for many years, engaged in the printing business and the manufacture of woolen goods.\(^{44}\)

Howe's interest in Mormonism probably originated from the missionary activities of Parley P. Pratt in and around Mentor, Ohio, in October-November, 1830, which resulted in the


\(^{42}\)Ibid, p. 152.

\(^{43}\)For this newspaper article in full see "James Gordon Bennett's 1831 Report on 'The Mormonites,'" by Leonard J. Arrington in this special issue of *BYU Studies*. Apparently, Anthon did compare the transcript with the prints in his copy of Champollion's *Précis*.

conversion of Pratt's friend, Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite minister, most of his congregation, and the establishment of a small branch in Mentor, which was not far from Painesville. Shortly thereafter, on January 11, 1831, Howe wrote to William Wines Phelps for answers "to some enquires touching the origin of Mormonism..."45 Phelps (1792-1872), born in New Jersey, had been active in New York politics, edited a newspaper, was in 1831 a printer in Canandaigua, near Palmyra, and was seriously investigating Mormonism.

The probable reason Howe chose to write to Phelps was that the latter was a fellow printer near the place of origin of Mormonism. Or it may be, however, that Howe learned of Phelps from Sidney Rigdon, since prior to January 11, 1831, Rigdon and Phelps had discussed Mormonism "for ten hours."46 In any event, on January 15, Phelps answered Howe, reporting, among other things, that "When the plates were said to have been found, a copy of one or two lines of the characters were taken by Mr. Harris to Utica, Albany, and New York; at New York they were shown to Dr. Mitchell, and he referred to Professor Anthon who translated and declared them to be the ancient short-hand Egyptian."47 Phelps had apparently heard this story or had read about it in the various newspaper accounts cited above.

After the Mormons moved into the Kirtland area during early 1831, Howe reported on their activities and recorded in his autobiography, "All their vain babblings and pretensions were pretty strongly set forth and noticed in the columns of the Telegraph."48 These articles became the basis of his book, *Mormonism Untailed*. It was in the preparation of this book that Howe decided on February 9, 1834, to write to Anthon and "took the liberty to inform Mr. Anthon of the vile use that was made of his name in the country; and to request of him a statement of the facts respecting it."49 Anthon, obviously incensed by what Howe reported, answered him immediately in the above cited letter.

46Ibid., p. 274.
48Howe, *Autobiography*, p. 44. This autobiography reveals a man incapable of interpreting sensitively the Restoration and one who would have considered it as "vain babblings." Up to the age of 40 (1838) he found it "easier to concure in the opinion of others." He then became a skeptic, and finally an adherent of "modern Spiritualism." (pp. 44-45.)
The first semi-official Mormon account of this event is contained in a missionary tract written by Orson Pratt (one of the original Twelve Apostles) in 1840 in Liverpool, England. He wrote that:

...a few of the original characters were accurately transcribed and translated by Smith, which, with the translation, were taken by a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris to the city of New York, where they were presented to a learned gentleman of the name of Anthon, who professed to be extensively acquainted with many languages, both ancient and modern. He examined them, but was unable to decipher them correctly; but he presumed that if the original records could be brought, he could assist in translating them.50

In 1841 we get some idea of how the Harris-Anthon incident was being spread slowly by word of mouth and by missionaries. In September 1841 the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo printed a letter from Charles W. Wandell (1819-1875), a New York convert then laboring as a missionary in New Rochelle, New York. In this letter, written July 27, Elder Wandell reports that

The Episcopal D.D. [T.W. Coit] at this place had the curiosity to write to Professor C. Anthon of New York to know if our statement concerning the 'words of the book' were correct. Professor Anthon answered him by letter with permission to publish it, which he did. You will find it in a periodical entitled 'The Church Record,' Vol. I, no. 22.51

(Wandell then added an extract from this letter.)

This is the best and earliest reference we have regarding the use missionaries made of the Anthon-Harris story. According to Coit, some of the Mormons in New Rochelle "were claiming the patronage of Professor Anthon's name in behalf of their notions," [and he] "took the liberty to state the fact to him, and ask in what possible way they had contrived to associate him with themselves."52 The Reverend Dr. Thomas Winthrop Coit (1803-1885), an Episcopal clergyman and author of several learned theological works, was at that time (1839-1849) rector of Trinity Church in New Rochelle and

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50 Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (New York City, 1841), pp. 6-7.
52 Coit, *The Church Record*, p. 231; see also Clark, *Gleanings*, p. 232.
thereafter professor of church history at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1842 there were at least four published references to the Harris-Anthon visit—including Clark's \textit{Gleanings}, and Daniel P. Kidder's \textit{Mormonism and the Mormons}. By far the most important, however, was in the May 2 issue of the \textit{Times and Seasons} which contained the fourth installment of what was then called "Church History." (Cited above) The chief significance of this publication was that it was the first official reference to the event. (It is rather strange that the Prophet waited fourteen years to publish the story. No mention whatever was made to the incident in the \textit{Morning and Evening Star} (1832-34), the \textit{Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate} 1834-36), or in the \textit{Elders' Journal} (1837-38).) That same year the story was reprinted in the \textit{Millennial Star} in October as the "History of Joseph Smith."

In late 1844 two important dimensions to the Anthon story are added: the first publication of what the transcript looked like and the first explicit allusion to the event having been a fulfillment of Isaiah 29:11-12. This information was presented to the public in two ways—by newspaper and by placard. On Saturday, December 21, Samuel Brannan, the presiding Elder of the branch in New York City and publisher and editor of a semi-official Church publication, \textit{The Prophet}, published in this newspaper a three-line reproduction of the "Anthon transcript." With no introductory remarks or any indication of source, this illustration was printed under a headline reading, "The Stick of Joseph taken from the hand of Ephraim." He then added that . . . "The following is a correct copy of the characters taken from the plates which the Book of Mormon was translated from: the same that was taken to Professor Mitchell, and afterwards to Professor Anthon of New York, by Martin Harris in the year 1827 [sic] in fulfillment of Isaiah 29:11-12." (The quotation was given in full.)

Although Brannan gave no source or any further information about this illustration of the "Stick of Joseph," we can divine its probable origin. Sometime prior to December 1844 (probably earlier in the same year) someone printed a black

and gold placard titled "The Stick of Joseph taken from the Hand of Ephraim: A correct copy of the characters taken from the plates [of] the Book of Mormon!! Was translated from—the same that was taken to Professor Anthon of New York by Martin Harris in the year 1827 [sic] in fulfillment of Isaiah 29:11-12." Since the wording and the three lines of the transcript printed in The Prophet on December 12 are almost identical with that printed on the black and gold placard, it seems more than likely that this placard was the source of Brannan's story in The Prophet.44

Very little, however, is known about the provenance of the placard. We conclude, of course, that it existed before December 21, 1844, and from the only extant copy known, in the LDS Church Historian's Office, we learn the following from what is written on its back: There is the signature of Mrs. Hyrum Smith (who died in 1852) and a statement, "1844 placard Stick of Joseph. This was formerly owned by Hyrum Smith and sent to the Historian's Office March 22, 1860, by his son, Joseph Fielding Smith." (One obvious assumption would be that it was printed in Nauvoo on the Times and Seasons press, but preliminary comparison of the fonts indicates that it was not.)

Now to the questions regarding the fate of the Urtex, or original copy of the transcript and the pedigree of the transcript in possession of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints Church today (hereafter cited as the RLDS transcript). About the first question we know almost nothing. Harris probably kept his copy for many years, but there is nothing known about what he finally did with it. (As we shall soon note, many years later David Whitmer claimed to have the original transcript. There is, unfortunately, no additional evidence for this claim.) The situation is further complicated by a statement of the Prophet's mother that Mrs. Martin Harris obtained a copy of the characters her husband took to New York City.55 Until new information is brought forth about the final disposition of the original transcript and the alleged second copy, we can only deepen the study of the RLDS transcript and its background.

According to the RLDS Church, "the paper itself is old, and of the same quality and appearance of the paper of the [Book

44All subsequent issues of The Prophet were searched for further information regarding the "Stick of Joseph," but none was found.

55Smith, History of Joseph Smith, p. 121.
of Mormon] manuscript and of early revelations, manuscripts undoubtedly made before 1833."\(^5\) While such an observation is helpful, it is by no means conclusive. Until an expert in diplomatics is called in and paper and ink tests are run,\(^6\) we must concentrate on the pedigree of the document.

The RLDS transcript was given to the Church in 1903 by the heirs of David Whitmer, fifteen years after his death in 1888.\(^5\) The first account of Whitmer's possession of this document was made by Edward Stevenson (later a member of the First Presidency of Seventies) who visited Whitmer in 1871 and made a copy of the document.\(^6\) Later, the March 25, 1881, edition of the Richmond (Missouri) Conservator reported that Whitmer had the original transcript, a claim which Whitmer made again in 1887 when he wrote, "I have in my possession the original paper containing some of the characters transcribed from one of the golden plates, which paper Martin Harris took to Professor Anthon of New York. . ."\(^6\) In 1884 a committee of the RLDS Church conversed with Whitmer and were shown the transcript. Unfortunately we lack any further information regarding how, when, or why Whitmer acquired this document. Though inconclusive, it is of interest to note that Martin Harris neither confirmed nor denied Whitmer's claim.

Reasoning by analogy we can surmise a little about the transcript from the wandering of one of the two manuscript copies of the Book of Mormon translation. As protection against loss or theft while it was being printed, Joseph Smith had Oliver Cowdery make a copy of the translation, which copy Cowdery later kept in his possession. (Joseph Smith placed the original translation in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo

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\(^6\)Of course, even such an examination would not be conclusive, for it is quite possible to have either a genuine document containing false information or a faked document with true information. This is just one of the many reasons why God prefers to work through faith rather than knowledge. Facts and knowledge are often debatable, a private testimony is not.

\(^5\)The donation was probably made by Whitmer's grandson, George Schweich of Richmond, Missouri. There is some evidence that the RLDS transcript (or some copy of it or the original transcript) was in the possession of a William Evarts Benjamin of New York City around 1901. See I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism* (New York, 1902), p. 80.

\(^6\)This he published in 1893 in his *Reminiscences of Joseph Smith*.

House in October 1841, where it was subsequently nearly destroyed by water.)\textsuperscript{61} After the death of Cowdery in March 1850, his copy of the translation went to his friend and fellow-witness, David Whitmer. (In 1903 his heirs sold it to the RLDS Church where it remains to this day). For many years, Whitmer believed that his copy of the translation was the original. In 1878, however, Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith proved to him that he really had the Cowdery copy.\textsuperscript{62} This is important, for if Whitmer was mistaken about his copy of the Book of Mormon translation, it is equally possible that he was mistaken about the originality of the "Anthon transcript" he claimed to have.

\textbf{OBSURITY OF SOURCES}

Since we know nothing about how Whitmer acquired his copy of the transcript, we are free to assume that perhaps Martin Harris felt that the transcript ought to be kept together with the Cowdery copy of the Book of Mormon translation and at some time, gave the transcript either to Cowdery or to Whitmer. There is no evidence that he gave it back to Joseph Smith to be deposited in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. There is always the possibility too, that what eventually came into Whitmer's hand was the alleged second copy, or even a copy of a copy.

One interesting, and possibly very meaningful, detail about the RLDS transcript is the word "Characters" written across the top. Four students of early Church history, R.D. Webb, Ariel Crowley, Dean Jessee of the LDS Church Historian's Office, and the anti-Mormon writer, I. Woodbridge Riley, think that this word is in the hand of Joseph Smith. If so, the authenticity of the RLDS transcript would be strengthened greatly.

For the time being, however, we must face the conclusion that the three primary sources of the "Anthon transcript"—the

\textsuperscript{61}Richard Howard, Church Historian of the RLDS Church, refers to these two manuscripts as the D MS (dictated manuscript) and the E MS (emended manuscript) which was used by the printer. In the 1880's L. C. Bidamon, second husband of Emma Smith, opened the cornerstone and divided what was left of the D MS between the LDS and RLDS Churches. Only pages 3-22 plus fragments exist today—in Salt Lake City. Those pages given the RLDS Church disintegrated long ago. See Richard P. Howard, Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development (Independence, Mo., 1969).

1844 placard, the 1844 newspaper story, and the RLDS transcript—are all equally obscure. Until we learn more about the origin of any of them, we are in no position to say definitely that any of them is original, a near contemporary copy of the original, or a spurious invention to give credence to the Book of Mormon story.

Circumstantial evidence, however, including the fact that there is a high degree of similarity of the characters on the three sources, suggests that all three are at least closely related to the unknown original, and new information about one will aid in our understanding of the others.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

It is beyond the scope of this paper to say much about the characters. Over the years, however, suggestions and attempts have been made to indicate and prove that the characters are some form of Egyptian, Meso-American, or even Phoenician. The strongest argument that can be made for the ingenious and pioneering efforts of those who favor the Egyptian origin of the characters is the definite resemblance of the RLDS transcript characters to Egyptian characters. But this does not prove that the transcript is authentic, that the characters make connected thought, or are Egyptian. (Indeed, twelve, almost half of our English-Latin characters, appear in the Cyrillic alphabet, but this fact never has given and never will give anyone insight whatsoever into or understanding of Russian, Serbian, or Bulgarian.) Also it must be pointed out that there are so many variant, hieratic, and demotic characters that the affinity of many other writing systems with Egyptian could probably be proved.

If the case for the transcript characters' being Egyptian in origin appears less than absolute, it is, nonetheless, infinitely stronger than any of the other arguments. The only basis for the characters' being somehow connected with Meso-American scripts is, of course, that since some pre-Columbian peoples were descended from some Book of Mormon peoples, it would not be totally unreasonable to expect some connections between their manners of writing.\textsuperscript{62, 64} The most far out explanation, how-

\textsuperscript{62}See the works of R. C. Webb, Ariel Crowley, and two RLDS commentators, Harvey Siebel and Paul M. Hanson.

\textsuperscript{64}See studies by Augustus Le Plongeon, Crowley, Welby W. Ricks, Jose O. Davila, and especially Carl Hugh Jones.
ever, of the transcript characters is that of a Phoenician origin. 65

Finally there are two other minor, but interesting, considerations. One pertains to a possible second visit of Harris with Anthon, and the other to an alleged encounter between Michael N. Chandler (the person from whom, at the suggestion of Joseph Smith, the Church purchased some mummies which held some papyri) and Anthon and Mitchell. Neither event, unfortunately, can be supported well. The only evidence we have for the first is in Anthon’s letter of 1841 to Coit in which he states that, “... one day, when I had ceased entirely to think of the countryman and his paper, this same individual, to my great surprise, paid me a second visit. He now brought with him a duodecimo volume, which he said was a translation into English of the ‘Golden Bible.’ He begged my acceptance of the volume. ... I declined receiving it however. ...” 66 No further evidence of this second visit has been found.

The purported visit of Chandler with Anthon and Mitchell rests on an equally tenuous foundation. The only known authority for this information is John Riggs (1812-1902), an early convert whose father ran a hotel in Kirtland during the Mormon period there. He became an M.D. and settled in Provo, Utah, in 1851 where he remained for the rest of his life. 67 An attempt to prove or disprove this connection between Chandler and Anthon and Mitchell has caused this writer weeks of futile effort and considerable grief. Although it is both probable and possible that Chandler took his papyri to Anthon for an opinion, there is no evidence that he did; and until further evidence is available, there is no point and little interest in speculating about it.

The possible visit with “Dr. Mitchell” is, however, worth continued effort. If it can be proved that the “Dr. Mitchell” was really Samuel Latham Mitchell who died in 1831, then we have at least a much clearer idea of when Chandler came into possession of the mummies and a better chance of learning

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65 Probably first advanced by Le Plongeon. Ross T. Christensen is developing a thesis that the Mulekites were largely Phoenician in their ethnic origin.


more about them and their whereabouts prior to their acquisition by Joseph Smith in Kirtland in 1835. If, on the other hand, it can be proven that this "Dr. Mitchell" was not S.L. Mitchell, we then gain a new lead, an additional opportunity to seek out information about these mummies and papyri by properly identifying this new "Dr. Mitchell" and searching his life and papers for bits of information.

CONCLUSIONS

For a variety of reasons most institutions, especially religious ones, ultimately face the necessity of preparing a detailed history of their own origins. While the early generations are so close to the beginning that their personal knowledge is adequate and their faith strong, succeeding generations have to acquire their knowledge second-hand and therefore require written accounts, not only to buttress their own faith, but to answer the ever present critics and doubters. This generation must now utilize fully the art and science of history to recapture the past and properly narrate and interpret its own origins; we must search out more fully the sources of the Restoration in preparation for a new comprehensive history of the Church alluded to in Dr. Madsen's preface to last year's Institute of Mormon Studies issue of BYU Studies.68

While there still are, and perhaps always will be, some unanswered questions regarding the "Anthon transcript," this writer would like to think that the above detailed investigation of the whole story, the people involved, and the three primary sources of the transcript has not only answered more questions than it has raised, eliminated much error, and answered some criticism, but also made the story more understandable, credible, and what we like to call, faith promoting.

James Gordon Bennett’s 1831 Report on “The Mormonites”

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON*

In the summer of 1831 James Gordon Bennett demonstrated the enterprise which was to make him one of America’s greatest journalists by investigating the circumstances surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Born in Scotland in 1795, and for several years a student in a Catholic seminary at Aberdeen, young Bennett, “on a sudden impulse,” migrated to Nova Scotia in 1819. For a while he was a teacher, but later moved to New York City where he worked for The Courier. He first obtained national recognition when he was the Washington, D. C. correspondent for the New York Enquirer, sending in lively reports on such topics as the tariff, the United States Bank, and the performances of the French, English, and Italian opera companies. A strong supporter of Andrew Jackson, Bennett eventually secured the backing to purchase the Enquirer, and combined it with the Courier to publish the Morning Courier and New York Enquirer. As associate editor (1829-1832), Bennett developed the Courier and Enquirer into a leading eastern newspaper.

During the height of the controversy over the United States Bank, Bennett decided upon a tour of upstate New York. In company with Martin Van Buren, whom he later supported as nominee for Vice President on the Jackson ticket, and Nathaniel S. Benton, Bennett spent two months (from June 12 to August 18, 1831) on an interviewing tour which took him up

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*Leonard J. Arrington is professor of economics and history at Utah State University. The author of Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, Dr. Arrington has published in Western Humanities Review, Rural Sociology, Dialogue, BYU Studies, and a variety of historical journals.

the Hudson to Albany, and westward on the newly-completed Erie Canal to Buffalo. Bennett’s personal diary of this trip, now in the Manuscripts Division of the New York Public Library, tells of the visits of himself and companions with political and business leaders in Saratoga, Schenectady, Utica, Syracuse, Auburn, Ithaca, Geneva, Canandaigua, Avon Springs, Rochester, Lockport, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Batavia, and other towns in western New York. At each stop Bennett records in his reporter’s brief-form script, the opinions of local leaders on such topics as internal improvements, local problems and prospects, Masonry and Anti-Masonry, the New York Safety Fund Banking System, and other important topics of the day. He also records his personal observations of town life, newly-built factories, the condition of farms and farmhouses, canals, activity on the lakes, and many scenic attractions. These notes provided the basis for several articles which were subsequently published in the Courier and Enquirer.

Of interest to New Yorkers at the time was the emergence of a new religious society, usually called “Mormonites,” with a colorful and flamboyant young prophet, Joseph Smith. As ready as any ambitious young journalist to report on the bizarre, Bennett made diary notes from which he wrote one of the earliest feature articles on the new religion.

Three separate entries in Bennett’s diary are of interest to Mormon historians. Collectors may be surprised that an entry for June 29, 1831, describing his journey by canalboat from Utica to Syracuse, indicates that on the book table in the canalboat reading room were three newspapers and two books: Walter Scott’s Ivanhoe and the Book of Mormon. The entries for August 7 and 8, 1831, were made at Geneva, a picturesque village situated about sixteen miles southeast of the Joseph Smith farmstead near Palmyra. Internal evidence suggests that Bennett discussed Mormonism with E. B. Grandin, whose firm had printed the Book of Mormon; Charles Butler, the lawyer-philanthropist from whom Martin Harris attempted to borrow money to pay for printing the Book of Mormon; and others.2 Here are those entries:

2Butler had been a clerk in the office of Martin Van Buren. As assistant District Attorney of Genesee County in the late 1820’s, Butler prosecuted the kidnappers of William Morgan, whose exposure of Freemasonry created a sensation in western New York. Butler later became president of the board of the Union Theological Seminary, a position he held for twenty-seven years.
Geneva, August 7, 1831:

Mormonism. Old Smith [Joseph Smith, Sr.] was a healer—a grand story teller—very glib—was a vender [?]—made gingerbread and buttermints &c&c—Young Smith [Joseph Smith, Jr.] was careless, idle, indolent fellow—22 years old—brought up to live by his wits—which means a broker of small wants—Harris [Martin] was a hardy industrious farmer of Palmyra—with some money—could speak off the Bible by heart—Henry [Sidney] Rigdon—a parson in general—smart fellow—he is the author of the Bible—they dig first for money—a great many hills—the Golden Bible Hill [Cumorah] where there is a hole 30 or forty feet into the side—6 feet diameter—dug among and the chest fled his approach—turned into a religious plot and gave out the golden plates—the Hill a long narrow hill which spreads out broad to the South—covered with Beech, Maple, Basswood and White Wood—the north end quite naked—the trees cut off in the road from Canandaigua to Palmyra between Manchester & Palmyra—several fine orchards on the east—and fine farms on the west—here the ground is hilly—but small hills—very uneven—the [Lake Canandaigua] outlet runs past part of it—Mormonites went to Ohio because the people here would not pay any attention to them—Smith's wife [Emma] looked into a hole and the chest fled into a trunk and he lost several of them—[William W.] Phelps of the Phoenix was converted to Mormonism and is now a teacher or elder—

August 8, 1831:

Mormonism—C[harles]. Butler saw Harris² they wanted to borrow money to print the Book—he told him he carried the engravings from the plates to New York—showed them to Professor Anthon who said that he did not know what language they were—told him to carry them to Dr. Mitchell—Doctor Mitchell examined them—and compared them with other hieroglyphics—thought them very curious—and they were the characters of a nation now extinct which he named—Harris returned to Anthon who put some questions to him and got angry with Harris

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²Professor Richard L. Anderson of Brigham Young University states that among the Charles Butler Papers in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress is a folder containing correspondence for 1842. One four-page statement dictated by Mr. Butler relates to the Butler-Bennett interview. Butler stated that sometime after Harris' application for a loan, "as he was walking in the street at Geneva he [Butler] was accosted by a young man who showed him a letter asking if he knew where he could find the person to whom it was addressed. The letter was to Mr. B [Butler] from Jas Watson Webb then editor of the N Y Inquirer introducing the bearer James Gordon Bennett who was sent to get information about the discovery of the Mormon Bible." See also Francis H. Stoddard, *The Life and Letters of Charles Butler* (New York, 1903), pp. 125-128.
Although the reader will note important inaccuracies, these notes nevertheless demonstrate Bennett's intense interest in the controversial new religion. Certainly, the notes reflect myths about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon which were already in the process of formation in 1831.

While at Canandaigua (located at the head of Lake Canandaigua, ten miles south of the Joseph Smith farm) on August 15, 1831, Bennett used the above notes to write a two-part feature story which appeared in the Morning Courier and Enquirer on August 31 and September 1, 1831. Having been written "on the spot," this early report on "Mormonism" as a species of "religious fanaticism" and as a "Church and State Party" suggests not only contemporary attitudes toward "the Mormonites," but also the rapidity with which misinformation was conveyed by the press. The charges of "roguery," of Joseph Smith's "shiftlessness," of Sidney Rigdon's authorship of the Book of Mormon, and of the pretensions of the new faith are all mentioned and deplored. The articles also contain a graphic, and perhaps firsthand, description of the Hill Cumorah as it looked in 1831. The two articles, which were "discovered" by Nancy Richards in a New York library in 1969 and photo-stated for the use of Professor Richard L. Anderson of Brigham Young University, are here reproduced in their entirety through the generosity of Dr. Anderson.4

MORNING COURIER AND ENQUIRER
New York, New York
Wednesday, August 31, 1831

MORMONISM - RELIGIOUS FANATICISM - CHURCH
AND STATE PARTY
Canandaigua, Aug. 15th, 1831.

New York has been celebrated for her parties—her sects—her explosions—her curiosities of human character—her fanaticism political and religious. The strangest parties and wildest opinions originate among us. The human mind in our rich vales—on our sunny hills—in our crowded cities or thousand villages—or along the shores of our translucent lakes bursts beyond all ordinary trammels; throws aside with equal fastidiousness the maxims of ages and the discipline of generations, and strikes out new paths for itself. In

4Nancy Richards is curator of the museum of the Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Massachusetts. An article by Dr. Anderson appears elsewhere in this special issue of BYU Studies.
politics—in religion—in all the great concerns of man, New
York has a character peculiarly her own; strikingly original,
purely American—energetic and wild to the very farthest
boundaries of imagination. The centre of the state is quiet
comparatively, and grave to a degree; but its two extremities,
Eastern and Western; the city of the Atlantic, and the con-
tinuous villages of the Lakes, contain all that is curious in
human character—daring in conception—wild in invention,
and singular in practical good sense as well as in solemn
foolery.

You have heard of MORMONISM—who has not? Para-
graph has followed paragraph in the newspapers, recounting
the movements, detailing their opinions and surprising distant
readers with the traits of a singularly new religious sect
which had its origin in this state. Mormonism is the latest
device of roguery, ingenuity, ignorance and religious excite-
ment combined, and acting on materials prepared by those
who ought to know better. It is one of the mental exhalations
of Western New York.

The individuals who gave birth to this species of fanati-
cism are very simple personages, and not known until this
thrust them into notice. They are the old and young Joe
Smith’s Harris a farmer, Ringdon [sic] a sort of preacher
on general religion from Ohio, together with several other
persons equally infatuated, cunning, and hypocritic. The
first of these persons, Smith, resided on the borders of
Wayne and Ontario counties on the road leading from
Canandaigua to Palmyra. Old Joe Smith had been a country
pedlar in his younger days, and possessed all the shrewdness,
cunning, and small intrigue which are generally and justly
attributed to that description of persons. He was a great
story teller, full of anecdotes picked up in his peregrina-
tions—and possessed a tongue as smooth as oil and as quick
as lightning. He had been quite a speculator in a small way
in his younger days, but had been more fortunate in picking
up materials for his tongue than stuff for the purse. Of late
years he picked up his living somewhere in the town of
Manchester by following a branch of the “American System”
—the manufacture of gingerbread and such like domestic
wares. In this article he was a considerable speculator, hav-
going on hand during a fall of price no less than two baskets
full, and I believe his son, Joe, Junior, was at times a partner
in the concern. What their dividends were I could not learn,
but they used considerable molasses, and were against the
duty on that article. Young Joe, who afterwards figured so
largely in the Mormon religion, was at that period a careless,
indolent, idle, and shiftless fellow. He hung round the
villages and strolled round the taverns without any end or
aim—without any positive defect or as little merit in his
character. He was rather a stout able bodied fellow, and
might have made a good living in such a country as this
where any one who is willing to work, can soon get on in
the world. He was however, the son of a speculative Yankee
pedlar, and was brought up to live by his wits. Harris also
one of the fathers of Mormonism was a substantial farmer
near Palmyra—full of passages of the scriptures—rather wild
and flighty in his talk occasionally—but holding a very re-
spectable character in his neighborhood for sobriety, sense
and hard working.

A few years ago the Smith's and others who were in-
fluenced by their notions, caught an idea that money was
hid in several of the hills which give variety to the country
between the Canandaigua Lake and Palmyra on the Erie Canal.
Old Smith had in his peddling excursions picked up many
stories of men getting rich in New England by digging in
certain places and stumbling upon chests of money. The
fellow excited the imagination of his few auditors, and made
them all anxious to lay hold of the bulk axe and the shovel.
As yet no fanatical or religious character had been assumed
by the Smith's. They exhibited the simple and ordinary de-
sire of getting rich by some short cut if possible. With this
view the Smith's and their associates commenced digging, in
the numerous hills which diversify the face of the country in
the town of Manchester. The sensible country people paid
slight attention to them at first. They knew them to be a
thriftless set, more addicted to exerting their wits than their
industry, reader at inventing stories and tales than attending
church or engaging in any industrious trade. On the sides &
in the slopes of several of these hills, these excavations are
still to be seen. They would occasionally conceal their pur-
poses, and at other times reveal them by such snatches as
might excite curiosity. They dug these holes by day, and at
night talked and dreamed over the counties' riches they
should enjoy, if they could only hit upon an iron chest full
of dollars. In excavating the grounds, they began by taking
up the green sod in the form of a circle of six feet diame-
ter—then would continue to dig to the depth of ten, twenty,
and sometimes thirty feet. At last some person who joined
them spoke of a person in Ohio near Painesville, who had a
particular felicity in finding out the spots of ground where
money is hid and riches obtained. He related long stories how
this person had been along shore in the east—how he had
much experience in money digging—how he dreamt of the
very spots where it could be found. "Can we get that man
here?" asked the enthusiastic Smiths. "Why," said the other,
"I guess as how we could by going for him." "How far off?"
"I guess some two hundred miles—I would go for him my-
self but I want a little change to bear my expenses." To
work the whole money-digging crew went to get some money to pay the expenses of bringing on a man who could dream out the exact and particular spots where money in iron chests was hid under ground. Old Smith returned to his gingerbread factory—young Smith to his financing faculties, and after some time, by hook or by crook, they contrived to scrape together a little "change" sufficient to fetch on the money dreamer from Ohio.

After the lapse of some weeks the expedition was completed, and the famous Ohio man made his appearance among them. This recruit was the most cunning, intelligent, and odd of the whole. He had been a preacher of almost every religion—a teacher of all sorts of morals. —He was perfectly au fait with every species of prejudice, folly or fanaticism, which governs the mass of enthusiasts. In the course of his experience, he had attended all sorts of camp-meetings, prayer meetings, anxious meetings, and revival meetings. He knew every turn of the human mind in relation to these matters. He had a superior knowledge of human nature, considerable talent, great plausibility, and knew how to work the passions as exactly as a Cape Cod sailor knows how to work a whale ship. His name I believe is Henry Rangdon or Ringdon [note how precise Bennett is in his reporting!], or some such word. About the time that this person appeared among them, a splendid excavation was begun in a long narrow hill, between Manchester and Palmyra. This hill has since been called by some, the Golden Bible Hill. The road from Canandaigua to Palmyra, runs along its western base. At the northern extremity the hill is quite abrupt and narrow. It runs to the south for a half mile and then spreads out into a piece of broad table land, covered with beautiful orchards and wheat fields. On the east, the Canandaigua outlet runs past it on its way to the beautiful village of Vienna in Phelps. It is profusely covered to the top with Beech, Maple, Bass, and White-wood—the northern extremity is quite bare of trees. In the face of this hill, the money diggers renewed their work with fresh ardour, Ringdon partly uniting with them in their operations.

(To be continued.)

*Continued in the Thursday, September 1, 1831, issue of the MORNING COURIER AND ENQUIRER

MORMON RELIGION - CLERICAL AMBITION - WESTERN NEW YORK - THE MORMONITES GONE TO OHIO

Concluded from yesterday's paper.

About this time a very considerable religious excitement came over New York in the shape of a revival. It was also about the same period, that a powerful and concerted effort
was made by a class of religionists, to stop the mails on Sunday—to give a sectarian character to Temperance and other societies—to keep up the Pioneer lines of stages and canal boats. and to organize generally a religious party, that would act altogether in every public and private concern of life. The greatest efforts were making by the ambition, tact, skill and influence of certain of the clergy, and other lay persons, to regulate and control the public mind—to check all its natural and buoyant impulses—to repress effectually freedom of opinion—and to turn the tide of public sentiment entirely in favor of blending religious and worldly concerns together. Western New York has for years, had a most powerful and ambitious religious party of zealots, and their dupes. They have endeavored ever since the first settlement of Rochester, to organize a religious hierarchy, which would regulate the pursuits, the pleasures, and the very thoughts of social life. This organization was kept up by banding churches and congregations together—by instituting laws similar to those of excommunication—by a species of espionage, as powerful and as terrible as that of a Spanish Inquisition. Every occupation in life—every custom of the people—every feeling and every thought, from the running of a stage or of a lady's tongue up to the legislation of the state, or of Congress, was to be regularly marked and numbered like so many boxes of contraband or lawful merchandise, by these self-created religious censorships and divines. Rochester is, and was the great headquarters of the religious empire. The late Mr. Bissell, one of the most original and talented men in matters of business, was equally so in religious enthusiasm. and all measures calculated to spread it among the people. —

The singular character of the people of western New York—their originality, activity, and proneness to excitement furnished admirable materials for enthusiasts in religion or roguery to work upon. Pure religion—the religion of the heart and conduct—the religion that makes men better and wiser—that makes woman more amiable and benevolent—that purifies the soul—that represses ambition—that seeks the private oratory and not the highway to pour forth its aspirations: such a religion was not that of the party of which I speak. Theirs is the religion of the pomp and circumstance of glorious controversy—the artificial religion of tracts. Magdalen Reports, lines of stages—the religion of collecting money from those who should first pay their debts—of sending out missionaries to spend it, and of letting the poor and ignorant at home starve and die. Such mistaken principles and erroneous views must when attempted to be carried into effect, breed strange results. Men's minds in this age will not submit to the control of hypocrisy or superstition or clerical ambition. They may be shackled for a day through
their wives and daughters—for a month—a year, but it cannot be lasting; when the first die or the last get husbands, independence will be asserted.

This general impulse given to religious fanaticism by a set of men in Western New York, has been productive among other strange results of the infatuation of Mormonism. This piece of roguery, folly and frenzy (for it partakes of all) is the genuine fruit of the same seeds which produced the Sunday Mail movement—the Pioneer line of stages—the Magdalen Reports &c. &c. It is religion run into madness by zealots and hypocrites.

It was during this state of public feeling in which the money diggers of Ontario county, by the suggestions of the Ex-Preacher from Ohio, thought of turning their digging concern into a religious plot, and thereby have a better chance of working upon the credulity and ignorance of their [their] associates and the neighborhood. Money and a good living might be got in this way. It was given out that visions had appeared to Joe Smith—that a set of golden plates on which was engraved the "Book of Mormon," enclosed in an iron chest, was deposited somewhere in the hill I have mentioned. People laughed at the first intimation of the story, but the Smiths and Rangdon persisted in its truth. They began also to talk very seriously, to quote scripture, to read the bible, to be contemplative, and to assume that grave studied character, which so easily imposes on ignorant and superstitious people. Hints were given out that young Joe Smith was the chosen one of God to reveal this new mystery to the world; and Joe from being an idle young fellow, lounging about the villages, jumped up into a very grave parsonlike man, who felt he had on his shoulders the salvation of the world. besides a respectable looking sort of a blackcoat. Old Joe, the ex-preacher, and several others, were the believers of the new faith, which they admitted was an improvement in christianity, foretold word for word in the bible. They treated their own invention with the utmost religious respect. By the special interposition of God, the golden plates, on which was engraved the Book of Mormon, and other works, had been buried for ages in the hill by a wandering tribe of the children of Israel, who had found their way to western New York, before the birth of christianity itself. Joe Smith is discovered to be the second Messiah who was to reveal this word to the world and to reform it anew.

In relation to the finding of the plates and the taking the engraving, a number of ridiculous stories are told.—Some unsanctified fellow looked out the other side of the hill. They had to follow it with humility and found it embedded beneath a beautiful grove of maples. Smith's wife, who had a
little of the curiosity of her sex, peeped into the large chest in which he kept the engravings taken from the golden plates, and straightway one half the new Bible vanished, and has not been recovered to this day. Such were the effects of the unbelievers on the sacred treasure. There is no doubt but the ex-parson from Ohio is the author of the book which was recently printed and published in Palmyra, and passes for the new Bible. It is full of strange narratives—in the style of the scriptures, and bearing on its face the marks of some ingenuity, and familiar acquaintance with the Bible. It is probable that Joe Smith is well acquainted with the trick, but Harris the farmer and the recent converts, are true believers.

Harris was the first man who gave credit to the story of Smith and the ex-preacher. He was their maiden convert—the Ali of the Ontario Mahomet, who believed without a reason and without a murmur. They attempted to get the Book printed, but could not raise the means till Harris stept [sic] forward, and raised money on his farm for that purpose. Harris with several manuscripts in his pocket, went to the city of New York, and called upon one of the Professors of Columbia College for the purpose of shewing them to him. Harris says that the Professor thought them very curious, but admitted that he could not decypher them. Said he to Harris, 'Mr. Harris you had better go to the celebrated Doct. Mitchell and shew them to him. He is very learned in these ancient languages, and I have no doubt will be able to give you some satisfaction.' 'Where does he live,' asked Harris. He was told, and off he posted with the engravings from the Golden Plates to submit to Doct. Mitchell—Harris says that the Doctor received him very 'purtly,' looked at his engravings—made a learned dissertation on them—compared them with the hieroglyphics discovered by Champollion in Egypt—and set them down as the language of a people formerly in existence in the East, but now no more.

The object of his going to the city to get the 'Book of Mormon' printed, was not however accomplished. He returned with his manuscript or engravings to Palmyra—tried to raise money by mortgage on his farm from the New York Trust Company—did raise the money, but from what source—whether the Trust Company or not I am uncertain. At last a printer in Palmyra undertook to print the manuscript of Joe Smith, Harris becoming responsible for the expense. They were called translators, but in fact and in truth they are believed to be the work of the Ex-Preacher from Ohio, who stood in the background and put forward Joe to father the new bible and the new faith. After the publication of the golden bible, they began to make converts rapidly. The revivals and other religious excitements had thrown up materials for the foundation of a new sect, they soon found they
had not dug for money in vain—they began to preach—to pray—to see more visions—to prophesy and perform the most fantastic tricks—there was now no difficulty in getting a living and the gingerbread factory was abandoned. They created considerable talk over all this section of the country. Another revelation came upon them, and through Joe and some other of these prophets, they were directed to take up their march and go out to the promised land—to a place near Painesville, Ohio. Money was raised in a twinkling from the new converts. Their principles—their tenets—their organization— their discipline were as yet unformed and unfashioned, and probably are so to this day. Since they went to Ohio they have adopted some of the worldly views of the Shakers and have formed a sort of community system where everything is in common. Joe Smith, Harris, the Ex-pedlar and the Ex-parson are among their elders and preachers—so also now is Phelps one of Mr. Granger's leading anti-masonic editors in this village.

Such is a brief view of the rise and progress of the Mormon Religion one of the strangest pieces of fanaticism to which the ill-advised and the worst regulated ambition and folly of certain portions of the clergy in Western New York ever gave birth. What a lesson it ought to teach us!

James Gordon Bennett's eagerness to break into print before he had all his facts straight is not untypical of his own career nor of that of the propensities of leading journalists of his age. Considering the state of transportation and communication in antebellum America, newspapers were able to "get away with" ambiguous writing, if not palpable falsehoods. This partly accounts for the pertinacity with which early Americans held on to the false and damaging image of Mormonism conveyed by Bennett and other writers and publishers.

Nevertheless, the resourcefulness displayed by Bennett in reporting so early on the emergence of the new faith suggests why Bennett rose to become one of America's greatest newspaper entrepreneurs. In 1835 he established the New York Herald, a four-page daily selling for one cent a copy, which soon achieved a preeminent position among American newspapers. The Herald's coverage of the news, wrote Allan Nevins in his article on Bennett in the Dictionary of American Biography, was "comprehensive, piquant, and bold." Its "boldness in laughing at churches, politicians, and pompous public characters," Nevins added, was widely applauded. Thus, while Bennett's editorials and articles were sometimes flippant, impudent,
and sensationalistic, they also contributed toward the democratization of the new republic. Throughout his journalistic career (his death occurred in 1872) Bennett published hundreds of articles on the Mormons, and his reports on Joseph Smith were among the fairest that were printed about that extraordinary personality. Never one to recall past injustices and ever ready to acknowledge present favors, Joseph Smith personally induced the City Council of Nauvoo, Illinois, in December 1841, to pass a resolution expressing "lasting gratitude" and "appreciation" to "that high-minded and honorable editor of the New York Weekly Herald, James Gordon Bennett, Esq. . . . . for his very liberal and unprejudiced course towards us as a people, in giving us a fair hearing in his paper, thus enabling us to reach the ears of a portion of the community, who otherwise would ever have remained ignorant of our principles and practices." The Council resolution expressed the hope that the citizens of Nauvoo would subscribe for the Herald "and thus be found patronizing true merit, industry, and enterprise."

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The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

LARRY C. PORTER*

With the many branch, ward and stake organizations which currently bedeck the international scene of Mormonism, it is understandable that the activities of a small branch of Saints at Colesville, Broome County, New York, could have been virtually forgotten with the passage of time. Yet, at the close of 1830, it was one of some five principal branches serving as focal points for the gathering of the faithful in the new Church. Fayette, Seneca County, New York, served as the headquarters of the Church, while other branches existed at Colesville; Kirtland and Mentor, Geauga County, Ohio; and Warrensville, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The Colesville Branch was personally inaugurated by the Prophet Joseph Smith and its membership played a significant role in the initial years of the new dispensation. Drawn by Joseph’s affirmation of communication with the heavens and the supportive evidences contained in the Book of Mormon, the Colesville Saints gave impetus to the missionary zeal of the Restoration and provided elements of needed leadership for the rapidly expanding faith.

A local account places Joseph Smith in the New York-Pennsylvania border region “shortly after 1818,” as a partici-

*Mr. Porter is a doctoral candidate in history of religion at Brigham Young University. He is on leave from the Department of Seminaries and Institutes where he has served as a teacher, principal, and district coordinator, and currently lives on the Martin Harris farm in Palmyra, New York.

"Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," December 31, 1831. (Located in the LDS Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah).
pant in a lumbering enterprise. However, Joseph's own narrative first places him in the area in October 1825, employed by one Josiah "Stoal." Mr. Stowell's farm bordered the Susquehanna River some two miles south of the village of South Bainbridge (now Afton), Chenango County, New York. He had professedly identified an area near the village of Harmony, in the township of Harmony (now Oakland Township), Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, about three miles below the New York Line, where

a company of Spaniards, a long time since, when the country was uninhabited by white settlers, excavated from the bowels of the earth ore, and coined a large quantity of money; after which they secured the cavity and evacuated, leaving a part still in the cave, purposing to return at some distant period.

Having been previously unsuccessful discovering the whereabouts of the mine, Mr. Stowell had hired a number of workmen to assist him in seeking for the purported treasure. In 1825 he was desirous of securing Joseph's services "on account of having heard that he possessed certain means, by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye," as he had heard while visiting a relative, Simpson Stowell, at Palmyra, New York. He offered $14 per month to Joseph, who initially demurred. But the insistence of Mr. Stowell and the prospect of good wages apparently prompted him and his father to go to the site on the Susquehanna. According to the

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2Joseph Smith, "Journal History of the Church"—"Documentary History of the Church" (MSS located in LDS Church Historian's Office), Book A-1, p. 7. See also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, 1902), Vol. 1, p. 17 [commonly called *Documentary History of the Church*; hereafter cited as *DHC*]. In the original manuscript "Stoal" is also spelled "Stowell" with a single "l". Official records in the Chenango County, New York, Clerk's and Surrogate's offices spell the name with a double "l", "Stowell." The writer will adopt this latter form, "Stowell."

3*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland), October 1835, p. 201. On August 14, 1868, the writer personally examined the excavation which is east of "Flat Brook" and northeast of the McKune Cemetery, which according to local residents was the site of this early digging. There is a depression there although it is obscured by heavy underbrush.


5Lucy Smith, *History of the Prophet Joseph* (Salt Lake City, 1902), p. 91.

terms of a purported "Articles of Agreement," Josiah Stowell, Calvin Stowell, William Hale, Charles Newton, William I. Wiley, the Widow Harper [Mrs. Oliver Harper], Joseph Smith, Sr., Joseph Smith, Jr., John F. Shephard, Elihu Stowell, and John Grant were to receive designated shares of any wealth realized from the venture.8

Isaac Hale states that Joseph Smith, Jr. and the other "money-diggers" arrived at Harmony in November 1825, and boarded at his place during the course of their mining operation. He further attested that after a short time they "... became discouraged, and soon after dispersed. This took place about the 17th of November, 1825."9 Joseph described these proceedings when he asserted that, "After I went to live with him [Stowell], he took me, with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it."10

While at the Hale home, Joseph became very much attracted to a daughter, Emma, who was similarly drawn to him. Of this attraction, Isaac Hale reported that after

... the conclusion of the digging, young Smith made several visits at my house, and at length asked my consent to his marrying my daughter Emma. This I refused, and gave him my reasons for so doing; some of which were, that he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve; he then left the place.11

The resulting "distant" courtship terminated some fourteen months later on January 18, 1827, with their elopement and marriage in South Bainbridge, New York, in a ceremony performed by one Squire Tarbill [Tarble?].12

Between the time of his lodging at the Hale home and his eventual marriage, Joseph worked for Josiah Stowell, who also

9The Susquehanna Register (Montrose), May 1, 1834.
10"DHC, Vol. 1, p. 17. The "old gentleman," Josiah Stowell, would have been fifty-five years of age at the time.
11"The Susquehanna Register, May 1, 1834.
12"DHC, Vol. 1, p. 17. The writer believes that the spelling of "Tarbill" may well prove to be "Tarbell" or "Tarble," names prominent in the area. It is also possible that the "Squire Tarbill" sought is Esq. Zachariah Tarble, who was in the locality at the right time, but the connecting link, if any, must yet be established.
operated saw mills on the Susquehanna River and owned holdings which numbered in the hundreds of acres. A most interesting personal sketch of Mr. Stowell portrays him as follows:

Deacon Isaiah [Josiah] Stowell, . . . a man of much force of character, of indomitable will, and well fitted as a pioneer in the unbroken wilderness that this country possessed at the close of the last century. He was one of the Vermont sufferers, who for defective titles, consequent on the forming a new State from a part of Massachusetts, in 1791, received wild lands in Bainbridge. He had been educated in the spirit of orthodox puritanism, and was officially connected with the first Presbyterian church of the town, organized by Rev. Mr. Chapin. He was a very industrious exemplary man, and by severe labor and frugality had acquired surroundings that excited the envy of many of his less fortunate neighbors. He had at this time grown up sons and daughters to share his prosperity and the honors of his name.

Joseph Smith also worked as a laborer for Joseph Knight, Sr., whose residence was approximately three and one-half miles southwest of the Stowell place. The Knight home was situated on the south side [also referred to as the "east" side] of the Susquehanna River, opposite the village of Nineveh, near the "Colesville Bridge," Colesville Township, New York. Mr. Knight operated a farm, a grist-mill, and a carding machine [the "carding-mill" was on the Susquehanna, about

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13See land deeds identified in the Grantee and Grantor Indices, Chenango County, Books 5, Series 1, S-Z 1798-1874, pp. 2224-2230. In a cursory survey of deeds, the writer found over 800 acres purchased by Josiah Stowell in Chenango County, New York.

14The Chenango Union (Norwich, New York), May 2, 1877.

15An excellent description of the physical layout of the Joseph Knight, Sr., property is furnished in the following account: Just opposite of Nineveh, on the east side of the river, on what is now known as the Scott, or Henry P. Bush farm, in a little old, gray, frame house lived a poor man named Knight who worked hard to sustain his little family. At the outlet of Pickerel Lake, on this farm, Knight had a carding mill, the dam trenches and raceways being still visible. In this mill Knight toiled from day to day to eke out the scanty supply for his little ones. Some distance west of the carding mill on a slight rise of ground, stands an old barn, in which Smith later preached to his disciples, giving forth his doctrines and revealing the new truth.


17Hamiton Child, Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chenango County, N.Y. for 1869-70 (Syracuse, 1869), p. 82; Broome Republican (Binghamton), May 5, 1831.
two miles above Centre Village, Colesville Township, Broome County].

In his journal, Newel Knight, the second son of Joseph Knight, recounted the hiring of Joseph Smith and the subsequent telling of his experiences with the plates containing the Book of Mormon to the Knights:

The business in which my father was engaged often required him to have hired help, and among the many from time to time employed was a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, Jun., to whom I was particularly attached. His noble deportment, his faithfulness and his kind address, could not fail to win the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. . .This chosen instrument told us of God’s manifestations to him, of the discovery and receiving of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, of his persecutions for the gospel’s sake, and many other items of his eventful life.

Joseph Knight, Jr., gave an expanded picture of his father’s holdings and the family’s acquaintance with Joseph and the “gold book”:

My father moved to Chenango co., York State in December 1808. In a few years [June 24, 1811] he bought a farm on the Susquehanna river, in Broome co., 20 miles above the great bend, built a grist mill and two carding machines. I was raised to work in them. My father bought three other farms and hired many hands; in 1827 [1826] he hired Joseph Smith; Joseph and I worked and slept together. My Father said Joseph was the best hand he ever hired, we found him a boy of truth, he was about 21 years of age. I think it was in November he made known to my father and I, that he had seen a vision, that a personage had appeared to him and told him where there was a gold book of ancient date buried and if he would follow the directions of the Angel he would get it. We were told it in secret; I being the youngest son, my two elder brothers [Nahum and Newell] did not believe in such things; my Father and I believed what he told us.

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"Newel Knight Journals, 1800-1845," #318. (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office); "Newel Knight’s Journal," Scraps of Biography—Tenth Book of the Faith Promoting Series, Juvenile Instructor Office (Salt Lake City, 1883), p. 47. H.P. Smith, History of Broome County (Syracuse, 1885), p. 352. The Broome County, New York, Census for 1825 designates Joseph Knight, Sr., as operating one of the two carding machines listed in Colesville Township.

"Scraps of Biography, pp. 47, 48.

"Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844, compiled by T. Thomas Bullock from loose sheets in Joseph Knight’s possession, August 16, 1862. (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office). This is Joseph Knight,
Both the townships of Colesville and Bainbridge traditionally claim that Joseph Smith attended school in their respective districts at some juncture during his residency there.\textsuperscript{20} If indeed this was the case, it is interesting to note the possible curriculum for Colesville as suggested by the report of the Commissioners of Schools of the town of Colesville, signed September 26, 1826, "The Books most in use in the common schools of our town are the following (Viz.) Webster’s & Crandal’s Spelling Books, Testaments, English Readers, Walker’s Dictionary, Daboll’s Arithmetic, Flint’s Surveying, and Wood-bridges’ & Wilett’s Geographies."\textsuperscript{21}

Apparently Joseph Smith’s labors with Joseph Knight, Sr., were seasonal or at least sporadic as he was again in the hire of Josiah Stowell at the time of his wedding in 1827. Joseph states that "...we were married, while I was yet employed in the service of Mr. Stool ... Immediately after my marriage, I left Sr. Stool’s and went to my father’s [Manchester, Ontario County, New York] and farmed with him that season.\textsuperscript{22}

The extent to which Joseph’s close friends and confidents had prior knowledge of the time appointed for his securing the "Golden Plates" as being September 22, 1827, is rather obscure, but it seems obvious that both Knight and Stowell journeyed to Manchester about that time with a decided purpose in mind:

So far at least was the elder Knight taken into the Prophet’s confidence that he purposely so arranged his affairs as to be at the Smith residence, near Manchester, at the time the plates of the Book of Mormon were given into Joseph’s possession.\textsuperscript{23}

Josiah Stowell and Joseph Knight, Sr., came to the Smith home on September 20 and "tarried" several days, becoming primary witnesses to that momentous occasion. Although Lucy Smith’s account suggests that they were not appraised of

\textsuperscript{Jr.’s account. Broome County Deeds, Liber 3, pp. 36-37. Newell Knight reversed his initial skepticism and became an outstanding leader in the early Church organization. However, Nahum continued his reluctance to accept the tenants of Joseph Smith.}

\textsuperscript{20}Child, Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chenango County, p. 82. Child states that Joseph attended school in District No. 9: H. P. Smith, History of Broome County, p. 332.

\textsuperscript{21}School Reports, 1813-1867, Broome County Courthouse, Binghamton, New York.

\textsuperscript{22}DHC, Vol. 1, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 47.
Joseph's going to the Hill Cumorah and were even making preparations to leave;\textsuperscript{21} she also states that it was Mr. Knight's horse and wagon which were used to transport the plates from the Hill Cumorah to their initial hiding place in the birch log, and some two days later, it was Joseph Knight, Sr., and Josiah Stowell who were among those summoned to go in search of the three ruffians who beset Joseph when he retrieved the plates from an endangered situation.\textsuperscript{25}

In December 1827, when local persecution necessitated Joseph's removal from Manchester to his father-in-law's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, the Prophet maintained his associations in Colesville and vicinity. His friends there gave him material assistance in sustaining his immediate needs. Joseph Knight, Sr., recorded:

I left my Father Joseph Knight, Sr., purchased a building spot adjoining my Father's and began to work for myself, and nearly ready to build a large house. Joseph had commenced to translate the plates, he told my father he wanted fifty dollars; my father could not raise it; he then came to me, the same day I sold my house lot and sent him a one horse wagon. Father and I often went to see him and carry him something to live upon; at last Oliver Cowdery came to write for him, then he got along faster.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition to the foodstuffs, Joseph Knight, Sr., also furnished Joseph and Oliver with some of the paper upon which the original copy of the Book of Mormon was first written.\textsuperscript{27} On one of his visits to Harmony in May 1829, Joseph Knight, Sr., became the subject of a revelation through the Prophet, which admonished him that "...no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care."\textsuperscript{28} The work of translation would have been seriously curtailed, had it not been for the assistance of these discerning friends.

\textsuperscript{21}Smith, History of the Prophet Joseph, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., pp. 100-106.
\textsuperscript{23}Joseph Knight's Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844, p. 1. The road distance from the Knight farm, opposite Nineveh, New York, to Joseph Smith's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, was about twenty miles.
\textsuperscript{25}Doctrine and Covenants 12:8 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1954) [hereafter cited as D & C].
In early June 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved to the Peter Whitmer, Sr., home in Fayette, New York, at his invitation. Here the translation was completed, the Witnesses called, and by March 26, 1830, the Book of Mormon made available to the public. On April 6, 1830, "The Church of Jesus Christ" was organized in the Whitmer's log home at Fayette. Without a list of those who attended the proceedings, the writer has been unable to determine if any of the people from Broome or Chenango Counties participated in the events of that day. Joseph Knight, Jr., states definitely that "...my father [Joseph Knight, Sr.] was not there." However, in that same month (April 1830) Joseph Smith made a special visit to the home of Joseph Knight, Sr., at Colesville, in a missionary endeavor:

Mr. Knight and his family were Universalists, but were willing to reason with me upon my religious views, and were as usual friendly and hospitable. We held several meetings in the neighborhood; we had many friends, and some enemies. Our meetings were well attended. and many began to pray vocally to Almighty God, that He would give them wisdom to understand the truth. Amongst those who attended our meetings regularly, was Newel Knight, son of Joseph Knight.

Newel Knight was the first in his family and apparently the first of the Colesville Saints to accept the new gospel. During the last week in May 1830, he visited at Fayette, where he was baptized by David Whitmer. Soon after the first conference of the Church, held June 9, 1830, at the Whitmer farm, Joseph Smith returned to Colesville, accompanied by his wife Emma, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and David Whitmer.

The Sabbath arrived [June 27, 1830], we held our meeting, Oliver Cowdery preached, others bore testimony to the Book of Mormon, the doctrine of repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost etc... Early on Monday morning [June 28, 1830], Oliver Cowdery proceeded to baptize Emma Smith, Hezekiah Peck and wife [Martha Long]. Joseph Knight and

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29DHC, Vol. 1, pp. 48-76; The Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra), March 26, 1830.
30Joseph Knight’s Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844, p. 1.
31DHC, Vol. 1, pp. 81-82.
32Scraps of Biography, p. 52.
wife [Polly Peck], William Stringham, Joseph Knight Jun.,
Aaron Culver and wife [Hannah Peck], Levi Hall, Polly
Knight and Julia Stringham.33

Although not named in the above account, there were
others baptized on June 28, 1830. Esther Knight Stringham,
daughter of Joseph Knight, Sr., was baptized with her parents
and her husband, William Stringham.34 Sally Coburn Knight,
wife of Newel Knight was also baptized at this time. How-
ever, her baptismal date is listed as June 29, 1830 [June 28?],
a Tuesday, which would have been the day following Joseph’s
arrest.35 Anna Knight De Mill, daughter of Joseph Knight,
Sr., and wife of Freeborn De Mill, was similarly baptized on
June 29, 1830 [June 28?].36 It should also be noted here that "a
short time afterwards," Emily Coburn, sister of Sally Coburn
Knight, was baptized over the strenuous objections of her
father, Amasa Coburn, and the Rev. Mr. Shearer of the Presby-
terian faith.37

Joseph Knight, Jr., relates that the baptisms of June 28
were accompanied by disruptive events:

...when we were going from the water, we were met
by many of our neighbors, pointing at us and asking if we
had been washing sheep; before Joseph could confirm us he
was taken by the officers to Chenango Co. [South Bain-
bridge] for trial, for saying that the Book of Mormon was
a revelation from God; my father employed two lawyers
[James Davidson and John Reid] to plead for him and
accessed him; that night our wagons were turned over and
wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were
piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a
great deal of mischief done. Before Joseph got to my Father’s

Vol. 27 (1936), pp. 78-79; DHC, Vol. 1, p. 88 lists a "Levi Hale" rather than
the "Levi Hall" named by Newel Knight. The writer believes that "Levi Hall"
is correct.
35Messenger and Advocate, October 1834, p. 12. Oliver Cowdery, editor of
the Messenger and Advocate, remembered the date as being June 29, 1830;
however, the baptisms were performed on "Monday Morning." Monday would
have fallen on June 28. The writer believes that there is a dating error here,
and that Sally Knight was baptized on the same day as her husband: Monday,
June 28, 1830.
36Letter of Elsie McGee to Preston Nibley, October 3, 1955 (located in
the Joseph Knight Letter File, LDS Church Historian's Office).
37Scrapbook of Biography, p. 54. Emily Coburn later denied the faith and
was author of a book on "Mormonism": Emily M. Austin, Mormonism or
Life Among the Mormons (Madison, 1882).
house he was taken again to be tried in Broome Co., Father employed the same lawyers who cleared him there.\textsuperscript{28}

The confirmation of the new Saints, so rudely interrupted by the constable, was subsequently accomplished. Newel Knight and his wife Sally visited Joseph Smith in Harmony in early August 1830, and with Emma, were confirmed members of the Church. The remaining confirmations were completed on August 29, 1830, when Joseph, Hyrum Smith, and John and David Whitmer visited Colesville. "That evening we assembled the Church, and confirmed them, partook of the Sacrament and held a happy meeting..."\textsuperscript{29}

One report says that on September 6, 1830, Freeborn De Mill, husband of Anna Knight De Mill, was baptized by Hyrum Smith and confirmed by Joseph Smith at Colesville.\textsuperscript{30} However, another source lists his baptism at September 26, 1830.\textsuperscript{41} If the second date is correct, this would conceivably place him in Fayette for the first day of the second conference of the Church where "A number were baptized...and the word of the Lord prevailed."\textsuperscript{32} The minutes of this conference, which assembled at the Whitmer farm September 26-28, 1830, lists the "whole" membership of the Church as sixty-two. They also note that Newel Knight was "ordained a priest under the hand of Brother Oliver Cowdery."\textsuperscript{33}

Newel Knight reports that soon after this conference

Brother Hyrum Smith, wife [Jerusha Barden] and family [Lovina and Mary] came to Colesville, to live with me, but most of his time, as also that of my own, was spent in the villages around, preaching the gospel wherever we could find any who would listen to us, either in public or private. A few believed and were baptized... On the 14th of October Brother Hyrum Smith and I held a meeting at my uncle Hezekiah Peck's... At this meeting, four persons came forward

\textsuperscript{28}Joseph Knight's Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844, p. 2; DHC, Vol. 1, pp. 88-89. The writer would like to pursue the nature of the South Bainbridge and Colesville trials at a future time.


\textsuperscript{30}Issa M. R. Teeples Stapley (compl.), De Mille Family History and Genealogy, 1953, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{31}"Early Church Information File," The Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\textsuperscript{32}DHC, Vol. 1, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{33}"Far West Record, The Conference Minutes and Record Book of Christ's Church of Latter-day Saints," p. 2 (Located in the LDS Historian's Office).
and manifested their desire to forsake all, serve their God in humility, and obey the requirement of the gospel.\(^\text{44}\)

A few days afterward, still in October 1830, Newel Knight and Hyrum Smith called on another of Newel’s uncles, his mother’s brother, Ezekial Peck. Both Ezekial and his wife, Electa Buck, embraced the gospel and were baptized.\(^\text{45}\) Elizabeth Knight, daughter of Joseph Knight, Sr., was baptized at Colesville by Hyrum Smith on November 1, 1830. She was then thirteen years of age and said to have been the youngest member to be baptized up to that time.\(^\text{46}\)

Orson Pratt was ordained an elder at Fayette by Joseph Smith on December 1, 1830, and sent on his “first mission” to Colesville to labor with Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight. He returned that same month to Fayette, accompanied by Hyrum.\(^\text{47}\) The brother of Martin Harris, Emer Harris, living at or near Windham, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, was contacted and apparently baptized, by Hyrum Smith and Newel Knight on February 10, 1831.\(^\text{48}\)

In January 1831, Jared Carter set out on a business trip of several weeks, and stopped at the home of John Peck, a brother of Hezekiah Peck and Polly Peck Knight, in Lisle Township, Broome County. John was opposed to the work of Joseph Smith, but allowed Jared to examine a copy of the Book of Mormon:

...after reading a while in the Book of Mormon and praying earnestly to the Lord that he would show me the truth of the Book I became immediately convinced that it was a revelation of God & it had such an influence on my mind that I had no mind to pursue my business...on visiting the church of Christ at Colesville & having an interview with them I felt it my duty to separate from Babalon \([sic]\) and be baptized. Accordingly I was baptized by Hyrum Smith about the 20th of February for the remission of sins & as I was baptized I felt the influences of the Spirit of God for as I stepped out of the water I was wrapped in the spirit both soul & body even so that the chill of the cold water was taken from me...\(^\text{49}\)

\(^{44}\)Scrap\(s\) of Biography, pp. 65-66.
\(^{45}\)Utah Genealogical Magazine, Vol. 27 (1936), pp. 78-79.
\(^{46}\)Ibid., Vol. 26 (1935), p. 150.
\(^{47}\)“Journal History,” December 1, 1830.
\(^{49}\)“Jared Carter Journals, 1830-1834.” (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office).
There are others who affiliated with the Colesville Branch at this time, but the date and circumstances of their baptisms are still unidentified. Josiah Stowell has always intrigued the writer. He was obviously a leading figure in the affairs of that branch, yet the details of his baptism or his reasons for not accompanying the eventual move to Ohio, have eluded us. Whether his extensive holdings, family, or condition of age (he was sixty-one years old) precluded his removal, is difficult to discern. There is one account which bears additional investigation, however. In a sworn statement given March 27, 1903, by one Sally Ann Beardsley, she says "I remember of the time when the followers of Smith including Deacon Josiah Stowell went away. It was said they were going to the Promised Land." If the account is accurate, perhaps it is possible that Josiah did go with the Saints for a short season. However, the land deeds of Chenango County do not reflect a move to Ohio, but rather a removal to nearby Tioga County, New York.

In a series of land sales, over an extended period of years, Josiah Stowell, Sr., sold his holdings in Chenango County and made new purchases in Tioga County. In an indenture made on August 30, 1833, he purchased sixty-five acres on the north side of the Susquehanna River in the Town [Township] of Tioga, Tioga County, New York. The deed names him as a resident of the Town of Tioga. His wife, Mariam Bridgeman Stowell, died in Smithboro, Tioga County, New York, September 23, 1833, at the age of sixty: On June 28, 1839, Josiah is identified as an inhabitant of the "Town of Barton and County of Tioga." An indenture made on February 3, 1844, refers to him as being "of Chemung in the County of Chemung and State of New York." He is reported to have died at Smithboro, but no death date is mentioned.

That Josiah Stowell, Sr., did not lose his ardor for the faith is attested to in a letter written by a member of the Church, Martha L. Campbell, to Joseph Smith, at the instiga-

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50 "Jacob Morris Papers," #1656.
51 Deed Book 29, p. 478, Tioga County Courthouse, Oswego, New York. The deed books of Tioga County contain many land transactions of Josiah Stowell, Sr. and his children, particularly Josiah Stowell, Jr., and Horace Stowell.
54 Deed Book 85, Chenango County Office Building, Norwich, New York.
55 Stowell, Stowell Genealogy, p. 229.
tion of Brother Stowell. Dated Elmira, Chemung County, New York, December 19, 1843, it reads as follows:

Brother Smith by the request of Brother Stowell I now set down to write you he is quite unwell & is some times fearfull that he cannot stand it through the winter & wishes me to say to you that he wants your prayers & the prayers of all the saints for the recovery of his health to in able him to gather among the Saints & he also wishes to know if you could receive him as a brother he says he shall come out [to Nauvoo] next spring if he lives & has health to indure the journey he says if he remains as well as at present he shall venture to star[t] he says he never staggard at the founda- tion [of] the work for he knew to mutch concerning it if I un- stood him wright he was the first person that took the Plates out of your hands the morning you brough[t] them in, & he observed blessed is he that seeth & says he has seen & believed . . . he gave me strict chur [charge] to say to you his faith is good concerning the work o[f] the Lord he has ever mani- fested good feeling toward [you] and your fathers family & also the Church . . . we do earnestly solicit your prayers for us in regard to our health & also to besech the Lord for us that he may open the way for us to come up to Zion the next season for to meet with the saints would be a delicious morsel. . . .

Whether the state of Josiah Stowell’s health or word of the death of Joseph Smith (June 27, 1844) were the factors which precluded his going to Nauvoo, is presently an unknown. Per- haps even death denied him the “delicious morsel” which he sought.

Not all of the early converts of the Colesville Branch stayed faithful to their covenants or remained with the Coles- ville group. Reed Peck turned antagonistic towards Mormon- ism during the “Missouri Period” and witnessed against the Saints at a trial in Richmond, Missouri in November 1838. He was subsequently excommunicated from the Church at a con- ference in Quincy, Illinois, March 17, 1839. Peck prepared a strong anti-Mormon treatise containing his observations of the Mormon conflict in Missouri, which manuscript was extensive- ly quoted by Lu B. Cake in his examination of the rudiments

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56Letter of Martha L. Campbell to Joseph Smith, Jr., December 19, 1843, “Josiah Stowell Papers.” (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office). Martha L. Campbell was a member of the LDS Church at Elmira, New York, having been baptized at that place on August 9, 1835, under the ministrations of Elders Evan M. Greene and John Young, Jr. See “Journal History,” July 6, 1835.

of Mormonism. As late as August 28, 1862, he was living in Cortlandville, Cortland County, New York, when he purchased his son Presson's land in the Township of Afton. There he died August 25, 1894, and his wife Clarissa was later buried with him in the East Afton Cemetery. Although he chose to disassociate himself from the Church, Reed Peck's father, mother, brother and sister continued with the Saints to Nauvoo.

Benjamin Slade was another member of the Colesville Branch who left the Church and became a witness for the State of Missouri in the prosecution of the brethren at Richmond. On January 13, 1857, he and his wife Roeana (?) [Roxa?] were listed as residents of the Township of Guilford, Chenango County, New York. Aaron Slade, Jr., "... went to Buffalo with the Mormons enroute for Nauvoo, but returned and settled on the Chemung." Baptistical records are not available for others we associate with the Colesville Saints. Identified as a member of the Branch in Missouri in September 1833, Clark Slade is probably one of the original "Broome-Chenango" Saints. Philip Slade and his wife Eliza, who may or may not have been associated with Mormonism, are "suspects." They resided in Chenango Township, and were disposing of property in the Village of Binghamton on March 2, 1831. Phebe Crosby Peck affiliated with the Colesville Branch. Her husband Benjamin (brother

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58 Lu B. Cake, Old Mormon Manuscript Found, Peepstone Joe Exposed (New York, 1899). (The original Peck manuscript is located in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.)

59 Deed Book 113, p. 404, Chenango County Office Building, Norwich, New York.


64 Smith, History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York, p. 141.

65 "Newel Knight Journals, 1800-1845," #318.

66 Deed Book 13, p. 462, Broome County Courthouse, Binghamton, New York. The writer has not yet discovered the relationship between the respective Slades named above.
of Hezekiah Peck), died April 30, 1829, prior to the organization of the Church. Later in Missouri in about 1833, Phebe married Joseph Knight, Sr., following the death of his first wife, Polly Peck Knight.\(^6\)

Attempts are yet being made by the writer to trace a number of other "prospective" members of the Colesville organization, among them a Mr. "Kimball," who "lived and carried on sugar making about one-half mile from my [Joseph Hervy] home. I was often in his shop. People said that when Smith passed through the adjoining valley Kimball joined them."\(^6\)

The third conference of the Church was convened at the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr., in Fayette on January 2, 1831. At that gathering, the Prophet Joseph Smith advanced a revelation from the Lord which vitally affected the entire Colesville membership: "...Wherefore, for this cause I give unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high..."\(^9\) Of this revolutionary announcement, Newel Knight simply states:

It was at this conference that we were instructed as a people, to begin the gathering of Israel, and a revelation was given to the prophet on this subject.

Having returned home from conference, in obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company.\(^7\)

In the midst of these preparations, Hyrum Smith, Presiding Elder of the Colesville Branch, received the following communication from the Prophet, dated Kirtland, Ohio, March 3, 1831:

My dearly Beloved Brother Hyrum I have had much concern [sic] about you but I always remember you in my prayers calling upon God to keep you safe in spite of men or devils I think you had better come into this country immediately for the Lord has commanded us that we should call the Elders

\(^9\)The Oneonta Herald (Oneonta, New York), January 18, 1900.
\(^9\)D & C 38:32.
\(^9\)Scrapes of Biography, p. 68.
of this Church to gether [sic] unto this place as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{71}

In response to this directive, Hyrum went to Kirtland, leaving Newel Knight to supervise preparations for removal within the Branch. Indicative of the vast amount of preparation required to move a body of people are a sampling of the land transactions which were necessitated.

Freeborn De Mill disposed of thirty-six acres on March 1, 1831, and some twenty-five acres on July 16, 1830 (the latter undoubtedly by proxy).\textsuperscript{72} Aaron Culver sold one hundred acres on March 9, 1831.\textsuperscript{73} In an indenture dated March 9, 1831, Newel Knight sold the sixty acres which he had acquired from his father, Joseph Knight, Sr., in 1828.\textsuperscript{74} Joseph Knight, Sr., apparently had some difficulty selling his land and was required to secure the services of an attorney, William M. Waterman. The May 5, 1831 \textit{Broome Republican} bears this notice:

\begin{quote}
FOR SALE, THE farm lately occupied by Joseph Knight, situate in the town of Colesville, near the Colesville Bridge—bounded on one side by the Susquehanna River, and containing about one hundred and forty two acres. On said Farm are two Dwelling Houses, a good Barn, and a fine Orchard. The terms of the sale will be liberal—Apply to

Wm. M. Waterman\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

Newel was aided by his young brother, Joseph, Jr., who in early April of 1831, went on foot among certain of the brethren to alert them concerning the proposed move.\textsuperscript{76} The exact date of departure for the Colesville Saints in their journey to Ohio is difficult to establish. It is probable that there was more than one group on the move at about the same time. Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York, was evidently the appointed rendezvous for the respective parties on the road.

\textsuperscript{71}"Joseph Smith Papers." (Located in LDS Church Historian’s Office). See also the letter of Joseph Smith to Martin Harris, dated Kirtland, February 22, 1831, which directs Martin to "... send to Colesville and have either Hiram [sic] or Newel to come immediately or both if they can be spared." (Photoprint of the original in the "Joseph Smith Papers"). Apparently Newel could not be spared.

\textsuperscript{72}Deed Book 13, p. 298; Deed Book 12, p. 448. The latter piece of land was jointly owned with Garrison De Mill.

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Ibid.}, Deed Book 14, p. 299.

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 298.

\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Broome Republican} (Binghamton, New York), May 5, 1831, p. 3 (Microfilm copy located in the Binghamton Free Library, Binghamton, New York).

\textsuperscript{76}Joseph Knight's Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844.
Joseph Knight, Jr., states that "In 1831, we met at Ithaca and came to Buffalo together. . .".\textsuperscript{17}

There are some very interesting local accounts of having witnessed the Saints on the move. Harriet E. Shay recalls:

I distinctly remember seeing the followers of Joseph Smith, Jr., of Mormon fame, go by my fathers, George Clappers, house on the east side of the Susquehanna River in the Town of Afton County of Chenango, N.Y. between Afton, formerly South Bainbridge, and Nineveh, on what is now known as the Lewis Poole farm.

To the best of my recollection there were eight (8) or ten (10) wagons. They were covered like western emigrant wagons, and were drawn by oxen.

One reason I remember so distinctly of the wagons going by is from the fact that my Uncle Cornelius Atherton was engaged to be married to Betsy Peck daughter of Hezekiah Peck, who with his wife and son, Reed Peck went with the Mormons at that time. Hezekiah Peck forbade the marriage of Betsy and Uncle Cornelius unless he would join the Mormons and go with them; this Uncle Cornelius would not do.

That day was made impression to me as I witnessed the sorrow of Uncle Cornelius who was at our house when the wagon train went by.

I also remember an incident which occurred about the same time which later became more familiar to me as I became acquainted with the parties. Stephen Pratt was engaged to be married to a Peck girl, a relative of Hezekiah Peck, I think her name was Anna. Just before the followers of Smith started they ran away and were married, therefore they did not go with the Mormons.

I knew Reed Peck, son of Hezekiah, well after he deserted the Mormons at Kirtland, Ohio, or Nauvoo. He came back to Afton and spent his days above the village on east side of the river. His place is known as Pecks Mills. He died about three years ago. He was a man highly respected.

Mrs. Harriet E. Shay being duly sworn deposes and says, that the above statement is true to the best of her knowledge and belief.

Harriet E. Shay

subscribed and sworn to
before me this 27th day
of March 1903

Delos Van Woert, Notary Public\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18}"Jacob Morris Papers," #1656.
Joseph Hervy similarly remembered a party of departing Saints:

... passing through Coventry into the town of Lisle (now Triangle), thence up the south branch of Halfway brook, a stream that had it rise in the town of Smithville and a small village of that name ... My memory is that some twenty or thirty women, girls, men and boys, on foot and in two old-fashioned western emigrant wagons comprised the emigrating party. I well remember hearing it talked that women left their husbands and families to with Smith ...79

Subpoenaed as a witness in Colesville when only a few days out, Newel Knight recorded "... this plan has been adopted by our enemies to add a little more to the persecutions already heaped upon us. The whole company declined traveling until I should return."80 Jared Carter was to recount "... we went to Ethica [sic] & took water to go to the Ohio."81 Ithaca is situated on the south end of Cayuga Lake which opened a system of waterways all the way to Ohio. Their route would have taken them north, via the Cayuga and Seneca Canals, which generally followed the course of the Seneca River, and thence into the Erie Canal system, conveying them west to Buffalo.

At Buffalo, the Colesville Saints were frustrated in their efforts to take a sloop for Fairport, Ohio, because "the wind blew from the lake and filled the harbor with ice, so that we were detained nearly two weeks."82 Approximately a week after their initial arrival, they were joined by eighty Saints who had embarked from Waterloo, Seneca County, under the leadership of Lucy Mack Smith. While these two groups were conversing, still another boat "landed, having on board about thirty brethren, among whom was Thomas B. Marsh, who immediately joined us..."83

While at Buffalo, Jared Carter was appointed to lead "12 or 13" Colesville brethren [Joseph Knight, Jr., among them] over land to Dunkirk, New York, where they took a steamboat to Fairport, Ohio, and then proceeded to Kirtland. This feat was accomplished under very trying circumstances.84 According

79The Oneonta Herald (Oneonta, New York), January 18, 1900.
80Scraps of Biography, p. 69.
81"Jared Carter Journals, 1830-1834."
82Scraps of Biography, p. 69.
83Smith, History of the Prophet Joseph, pp. 174, 177.
84"Jared Carter Journals, 1830-1834;" Joseph Knight's Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844.
to the itinerary of Freeborn DeMill, the Saints at Buffalo were finally able to take passage from that Lake Erie port on Wednesday, May 11, 1831. After a most disagreeable crossing, due to boisterous winds, they reached Fairport, Ohio on Saturday, May 14, 1831. Upon their arrival at Kirtland, "it was advised that the Colesville branch remain together, and go to a neighboring town called Thompson [sixteen miles northeast of Kirtland], as a man by the name of Copley had a considerable tract of land there which he offered to let the Saints occupy." Here they were to be organized under the law of consecration and stewardship. However, Joseph Knight, Jr., recounts that the arrangement with Copley soon lost its attractiveness, necessitating their removal to Missouri:

... we went to Kirtland, Ohio [then to Thompson, Ohio], and commenced preparing houses on a brother's land who had a thousand acres; my folks came on, they were called the Colesville church; we planted and sowed a great deal; the man was turned out of the church for bad conduct; his name was Lemon Copley, he then began to persecute us and we had to leave his farm and pay sixty dollars damage for fitting up his houses and planting his ground. We then had a revelation to go to the western line of the States; we arrived at Independence, Jackson Co., Missouri, 25 July 1831.

The revelation referred to by Joseph Knight, Jr. was given to Newel Knight in consequence of the difficulties with Lemon Copley and contains a directive that "you shall take your journey into the regions westward, unto the land of Missouri, unto the borders of the Lamanites." Again obedient to the Prophet, the Colesville Saints commenced their journey on June 28, 1831 and reached Independence (as stated above) on July 25, 1831. Newel Knight, leader of the expedition, gives us some additional particulars:

On the third day of July I took passage with the Colesville company at Wellsville, Ohio, arrived at St. Louis on Sunday the 18th, on Sunday the 18th I took passage on the steamer Chieftain for Independence Mo., where we arrived the 25th. August 2nd, commenced the first house in Zion. August 3rd, the land of Zion and the lot for the Temple was consecrated.

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85"Journal History," July 25, 1831; Scraps of Biography, p. 69.
86Scraps of Biography, p. 69.
87Joseph Knight's Incidents of History from 1827 to 1844.
the Colesville branch began to labor diligently. On the 4th of August, the first conference was held at the house of bro. Lewis [Joshua Lewis]. On the 7th my mother [Polly Peck Knight] died. The time now pased [sic] in our common Labours, building houses and sowing grain untill [sic] winter. Jan 22 and 23 [1832]. A general conference was held at my house where much business was done. I was employed as President of the branch the most of my time.90

Settling in Kaw Township, the Colesville Branch continued to maintain its identity throughout the stay in Jackson County, July 25, 1831 to December 1, 1833.91 Even when the Jackson mob drove them into Clay County, Missouri, during the winter of 1833, Newel Knight attested that "The Colesville Branch, as usual, kept together and formed a small settlement on the Missouri bottoms, building themselves temporary houses."92 However, in 1836, when the Saints in Clay County were again required to leave their homes, the Colesville Branch became a nonentity, its membership being absorbed into other organizations of the Church.

From the very inception of "Mormonism," the Saints comprising the Colesville Branch linked their lives inexorably with the Restored Gospel and the volume which had inspired their conversion, the Book of Mormon. They relinquished family, friends, homes and material comforts in pursuit of their testimonies. The Prophet Joseph Smith was not unmindful of these sacrifices. On August 22, 1842, while making entries in the Book of the Law of the Lord, he formulated a tribute to certain of the Colesville membership which might well serve as a prototype for all:

... I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord,—of such as have stood by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past,—say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among

90"Newel Knight Journals, 1800-1845," #318. The writer specifically cites this reference because of a time discrepancy in the published source, Scraps of Biography, p. 70, listing their travel from Ohio to Missouri as occurring in the month of "June" rather than "July." The manuscript accounts of Newel Knight, Joseph Knight, Jr., and the "time table" of the Freeborn De Mill family, confirm "July."

91"Journal History," July 25, 1831. The latter date, December 1, 1833, marks the departure of Freeborn De Mill from Jackson County into Clay County, Missouri.

92Scraps of Biography, p. 85. Newel Knight's wife, Sally Coburn Knight (sometimes spelled "Colburn") died in Clay County on September 15, 1834. He subsequently married Lydia Goldthwait at Kirtland, Ohio, November 24, 1835. Scraps of Biography, p. 94.
the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man’s days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and in the vigor of health turn upon him, if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore, his name shall never be forgotten.

There are his sons, Newel Knight and Joseph Knight, Jun., whose names I record in the Book of the Law of the Lord with unspeakable delight, for they are my friends.93

A Note On
Mormon Americana at Yale

JEFFREY R. HOLLAND*

One of the finest non-Mormon accumulations of important manuscripts and materials relating to the first half-century of LDS history is stowed away in the Yale University Library. While Mormon materials have been accruing to Yale for years, the heart of this rich selection is a relatively recent gift—the William Robertson Coe Collection, one of six private collections1 acquired by Yale curators over the past two decades to swell their now highly significant array of Western Americana titles.

The genesis of the Coe Collection dates back to 1910 when Mr. Coe purchased a ranch in Wyoming from Colonel "Buffalo Bill" Cody and began to identify himself with the needs and interests of Wyoming and the West. In his work he frequently cooperated with his friend, the Right Reverend Nathaniel S. Thomas, Episcopal Bishop of Wyoming. Bishop Thomas, himself a collector of western books, suggested to Coe the desirability of the formation of a library of Western Americana while early material was still available. The suggestion appealed to Coe and shortly thereafter he bought Thomas' small collection to serve as the nucleus for his own.

As Coe acquired Utah materials, his interest in the Mormons increased and he made every effort to obtain documents from the New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois periods of the Church's history, as well as anything pertaining to the early

*Mr. Holland is a Yale University fellow where he is a doctoral candidate in American Studies.

1The other five are Henry Wagner's Texas and Middle West Collection, Walter McClintock's Indian Collection, Winlock Miller's Pacific Northwest Collection, Thomas Streeter's Texas Collection, and Frederick W. Beinecke's California and Far West Collection.
years in the Great Basin. Today at Yale there are over nine hundred Mormon entries in the Coe Collection alone, including rare first editions, personal correspondence from Joseph, Brigham, and others, and a variety of historically invaluable documents such as the Bringham Manuscripts, the Howard Egan Papers, the Thomas L. Kane—Mormon Papers, etc.3

Typical of the many Book of Mormon items which might be pertinent to this Spring 1970 number of BYU Studies is a letter dated February 12, 1830 and sent from one Lucius Fenn of Covert, Seneca County, New York to one Birdseye Bronson of Winchester [New Hampshire? Massachusetts?]. After a rather staid beginning in which Fenn notes the health of his family and their desire for news from Winchester, he refers to recent activities in the vicinity (trouble caused by the Freemasons, the importance of the "cold sober movement" in halting the spread of intemperance) and then notes:

there is somthing that has taken place lately that is mysterious to us it is this there has been a bible found by 3 men but a short distance from us which is somthig remark-able we think. there was it is said an angel appeared to these 3 men and told them there was a bible concealed in such a place and if one of them would go to that place he would find it he went and found as the angel said it was in a stone chest what is most to be wondered at is this that the man that found it could not read at all in the english language but he read [read?] this bible and nobody else cannot it has been concealed there for fourteen hundred years it is written on a kind of gold leaf it is the same that our is only there is an addition to it they are a printing it in Pal-myra it is expected that it will come out soon so that we can see it it speaks of the Millenniam day and tells when it is a goeing to take place and it talks that the man that is to find this bible his name as Joseph and his fathers name is Joseph, some people think that it is all a speculation and some think that somthing is going to take place different from what has been for my part I do not know how it will be but it is somthing singular to me, as it respects religion there has been considerable of an attention paid to it this winter between these lakes and there has been consider-able many as we humbly hope have been [renewed?] by the grace of God there is a general solemnity upon the people

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3Some significant other letters and papers are: six letters from William Smith; one letter from Lucy Mack Smith; one letter from Joseph Smith (from the Liberty Jail; sixty letters from Brigham Young; several John C. Bennett letters (one in which he says he does not really believe all he has printed against the Church); and papers of Pickel, Oliver Olney, and Thomas Sharp, et al.
generally in these parts and we hope that there will be a greater outpouring of the spirit than ever. . . 

A letter such as this, written from the immediate neighborhood of the Peter Whitmer farm where only six months earlier Joseph had been finishing the work of translation, would appear to be of at least passing interest for several reasons: it seems to acknowledge the very early public role of the Three Witnesses, it is indicative of the interest and enthusiasm with which some New York contemporaries would receive the Book of Mormon as it came off the press later that spring, and it is suggestive of the socio-religious climate of northwestern New York in 1830.

While this particular item may not be of profound significance, one wonders what other pieces of greater importance are yet lying in the Yale University Library or some maiden aunt's attic. In any case there is a good deal of wading and winnowing yet to be done, here and elsewhere, by both the self-styled and professional LDS historians.

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3This letter has already been published in Mortenson and Mulder, Among the Mormons (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958).

Features in the SUMMER 1970 Issue:

Calorimetry and Metal Binding in Biology by James J. Christensen and Reed M. Izatt

Abraham in Egypt by Thomas W. Mackay

Ideals of Mormons and Gentiles in Utah and Other States by Virgil B. Smith

Provo Temple Site, 1968, an oil painting by Dale T. Fletcher

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