

### Advisory Board

Noel B. Reynolds, chair  
James P. Bell

Donna Lee Bowen

Douglas M. Chabries

George Handley

R. Kelly Haws

Robert L. Millet

Alan L. Wilkins

### Editor in Chief

John W. Welch

### Church History Board

Richard Bennett, chair *19th-century history*

Brian Q. Cannon *20th-century history*

Kathryn Daynes *19th-century history*

Gerrit J. Dirkmaat *Joseph Smith, 19th-century Mormonism*

Steven C. Harper *documents*

Frederick G. Williams *cultural history*

### Liberal Arts and Sciences Board

Barry R. Bickmore, chair *geochemistry*

David C. Dollahite *faith and family life*

Susan Howe *English, poetry, drama*

Neal Kramer *early British literature, Mormon studies*

Steven C. Walker *Christian literature*

### Reviews Board

Eric Eliason, co-chair *English, folklore*

John M. Murphy, co-chair *Mormon and Western*

Trevor Alvord *new media*

Herman du Toit *art, museums*

Gerrit van Dyk *Church history*

### Specialists

Casualene Meyer *poetry editor*

Thomas R. Wells *photography editor*

Ashlee Whitaker *cover art editor*



INVOLVING READERS  
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT  
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

**ARTICLES**

- 4** From the Editor
- 6** Joseph Smith Translating Genesis  
Kent P. Jackson
- 29** “I Was Not Ready to Die Yet”: William Stowell’s Utah War Ordeal  
R. Devan Jensen and Kenneth L. Alford
- 53** Joseph Smith’s Dog, Old Major  
Alexander L. Baugh
- 99** “We Believe the Hand of the Lord Is in It”:  
Memories of Divine Intervention in the Zion’s Camp Expedition  
Matthew C. Godfrey
- 133** Animals in the Book of Mormon: Challenges and Perspectives  
Wade E. Miller and Matthew Roper

**PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE**

- 68** Photographs of the Fourteen Apostles of The Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September and October 1898  
Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Ronald L. Fox

**ESSAY**

- 93** Jewels  
Michelle Forstrom

## POETRY

- 98** Ways of Thinking  
Dawn Baker Brimley

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 176** *Masters of Light: Coming unto Christ through Inspired Devotional Art*  
by Herman du Toit  
Reviewed by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel
- 179** *American Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism, 1867–1940* by Thomas W. Simpson  
Reviewed by Heather M. Seferovich
- 183** *The Mormon Missionary: Who IS That Knocking at My Door?*  
by Robert L. Lively Jr.  
Reviewed by Tim Zeidner
- 185** *The Field Is White: Harvest in the Three Counties of England*  
by Carol Wilkinson and Cynthia Doxey Green  
Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew
- 189** *Postponing Heaven: The Three Nephites, the Bodhisattva, and the Mahdi* by Jad Hatem, trans. Jonathon Penny  
Reviewed by Spencer L. Green

## From the Editor

*John W. Welch*



A nephew recently asked me, “Why do we care about the Old Testament? Is it even relevant today?” After catching my breath, I got wondering, how many others might share this feeling as the Church Sunday School curriculum returns in 2018 to the study of the Old Testament? And for those who feel that way, might some of the intriguing articles published in *BYU Studies* over the years on Old Testament topics pique their interest? I would definitely hope so.

Fortunately, this latest issue of the journal leads off with a superb article by Kent P. Jackson, who has spent the better part of a lifetime working on Old Testament materials, especially the book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation. This article tracks in fascinating detail the timing and scribal evidences of the Prophet’s meticulous work on the book of Genesis in 1831 and its eventual preparation for publication. Obviously, the young Prophet of the Restoration saw enormous value in the words left by Moses, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, and Abraham, while at the same time rendering that ancient testament relevant to all believers in Jesus Christ.

And as we look back to previous volumes of *BYU Studies*, we find many articles that point out marvelous and worthwhile things to know about ancient times. For example, the 2006 article by E. Douglas Clark reveals stunning similarities between the opening chapter in Joseph Smith’s translation of Genesis and passages in the more recently discovered early Jewish text called the *Book of Jubilees*. A 2002 article by Syriac specialist Kristian S. Heal details an impressive set of parallels that were recognized by early Christians who saw the life of Joseph in Egypt as typologically foreshadowing the life of Jesus in Galilee and Judea. Then there is the recent article by Dana M. Pike on what is meant by “the



breath of life” (Genesis 2:7), and his earlier work on the anatomy of the expression “the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

I believe that anyone interested in the calling of prophets, whether in ancient or modern times, would find relevant several studies by Stephen D. Ricks on what scholars have called the “narrative call pattern,” which is found not only in the Hebrew Bible, but also the book of Moses in the commission of Enoch (Moses 6)—see Ricks’s seminal 1986 article in *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4—as well as the Book of Mormon, such as in the installation of King Mosiah by his father, Benjamin (Mosiah 1–6), and other examples.

The list of outstanding articles goes on and on, covering such topics as the ancient Israelite backgrounds of the Moses and Exodus typologies in the Book of Mormon, Elisha and the bears, Jewish mysteries on an Ezekiel mural at Dura Europos, a possible reference to prayer circles in Psalm 24, new evidence for an allusion to crucifixion in Psalm 22:16, a powerful study of the whole of Psalm 22 as a foundational New Testament text, and the significance of the plural pronouns in Malachi’s promise of blessings to tithe payers.

These and many other Old Testament items can easily be found by searching the BYU Studies website or by using the “Study Resources” and “Old Testament Lessons” drop-down menus on the home page.

But there’s more in this issue than ancient scripture study. An article by R. Devan Jensen and Kenneth L. Alford is the first dedicated to the wartime imprisonment of William Stowell, the principal Mormon prisoner held during the Utah War. It includes the stories of his plural wives, Cynthia and Sophronia, who endured extreme difficulty with young children during the Move South.

Dog lovers everywhere will relate to new information about the reciprocal devotion between Joseph Smith and his faithful dog, Old Major, a large English mastiff, as narrated by Alexander L. Baugh.

Many other elements in this issue offer something new for every reader, whether interested in thoughtful poetry or self-baring prose, or divine interventions, animals in the Book of Mormon, century-old photographs, or recently published books dealing with topics that range from Mormon art and higher education to missionary work and the widespread human desire to save others.

All this we at BYU Studies hope will start your New Year off on a joyously fulfilling path, as you bring from your reading treasury, like the wise scribe who is “instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,” things that are both “new and old” (Matthew 13:52). We gladly extend our sincere thanks to you personally and to all of our readers everywhere.

[illegible]

Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 1, Joseph Smith's final text of Moses 1:1–15. This page shows the Prophet's final edits to the text and some of the work he and his assistants did to prepare it for publication. All images courtesy Library-Archives, Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri.

# Joseph Smith Translating Genesis

*Kent P. Jackson*

Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible was one of his signature projects as founder and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (originally called the Church of Christ). He began it sometime in June 1830, just three months after the first copies of the Book of Mormon came out of the bindery of the Howard and Grandin Company in Palmyra, New York. The Bible project lasted three years, until July 1833, when he dictated the last pages and declared the work finished.<sup>1</sup> The venture was formidable, eventually producing seven manuscripts totaling 446 pages. Two of those manuscripts were preliminary drafts, and the remaining five constitute the copy of the entire Bible that Joseph Smith prepared for publication.

The Prophet and his contemporaries called the resulting text the “New Translation,” and he identified his work on it as “translating.”<sup>2</sup> Yet it was not a Bible translation in the sense of rendering ancient Hebrew

---

1. Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 119, line 5, in *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible—Original Manuscripts*, ed. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 851.

2. For the title, see “Books!!!” *Times and Seasons* 1 (July 1840): 140; “History of Joseph Smith (Continued),” *Times and Seasons* 5 (January 1, 1844): 754; “History of Joseph Smith (Continued),” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 15, 1845): 801; “History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1 [2 November–31 July 1842],” 1083, 1093, 1155, 1275, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/search?query=%22new%20translation%22&uri=/published/jsp/expanded/papers/43990773/43990773-0449.xml>; and “Revelation, 19 January 1841 [D&C 124],” 10, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-19-january-1841-dc-124/8> (D&C 124:89).

## Kent P. Jackson

In March 1995, I was presented with an opportunity that changed the course of my academic career. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) had offered BYU an invitation to prepare and publish transcriptions of one of the prize RLDS archival collections—the original manuscripts of Joseph Smith’s Bible translation. I was publications director of BYU’s Religious Studies Center (RSC) at the time, and I was asked if the RSC would be interested.



We were. This was an opportunity to bring the Joseph Smith Translation fully to light and make its original pages available to all for study and research.

In accordance with the details of an agreement between the RLDS Church, the LDS Church, and BYU, the RLDS Church archive made available the original manuscripts; the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies scanned and photographed them; the RSC prepared a transcription of all the writing on the documents; the LDS Church archive cleaned, repaired, and deacidified the pages; and the RSC published the research findings and transcriptions in a book.

The result was an 851-page volume published in 2004: *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible—Original Manuscripts*. Seven years later, the BYU Press published an electronic collection that contains the 2004 book and much more, including grayscale and color images of all the manuscript pages. Then, in recent years, the LDS Church’s Joseph Smith Papers website has posted the images and transcriptions for anyone with Internet access to see.

Good research and the better availability of historical documents almost always lead to new discoveries. And often new discoveries necessitate the abandonment of old ideas. This article on Joseph Smith’s translation of Genesis highlights our findings from the original manuscripts and shows that some readings and historical interpretations we once assumed were correct must now be considered inaccurate. Thanks to the availability of the original manuscripts, the process of discovery continues.

and Greek words into a modern language.<sup>3</sup> Instead, he was recasting the text into a new form—often creating something new from words already found in the English Bible and sometimes adding whole new narratives and discourses with no biblical counterparts. Latter-day Saints in his own time as well as today have viewed the process and its resulting documents as part of Joseph Smith’s prophetic mission.

Of the various sections of the Bible, Joseph Smith’s Genesis revision has the most complex history as far as the documents are concerned. In this study, I will focus on that history and outline the process by which the Mormon prophet produced his translation of Genesis from the earliest dictation of the text to its final state on the document prepared for publication. I will also show that he intended to publish the translation and how he went about preparing it with that aim in mind.

## THE MANUSCRIPTS

To put the translation of Genesis in context, we first must understand the history of the manuscripts on which it was written. The New Translation documents have been known among Latter-day Saints since the days of Joseph Smith, but they have been available for academic study only in the past few decades. When the Prophet died in 1844, they were retained by his widow, Emma Smith. She and the documents remained in Illinois when Brigham Young led the majority of Joseph Smith’s followers to the West, eventually to settle in what became Utah Territory. In the early 1860s, she gave the manuscripts to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS, now Community of Christ), and since then, they have been housed in that church’s archival collection.<sup>4</sup> None of the participants in the Bible revision—neither Joseph Smith nor any of his scribes—were with the main body of Saints in their westward move.<sup>5</sup> As a result, Mormons in Utah had very little institutional memory about the revision and no access to its original documents for

---

3. A contemporary dictionary lists “to interpret; to render into another language” only as the sixth definition of *translate*. The more common usages had to do with conveying something from one place, person, or form to another. See Noah Webster, ed., *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.v. “translate.”

4. For the history of the manuscripts after Joseph Smith’s time, see Ronald E. Romig, “The New Translation Materials since 1844,” in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 29–40.

5. Joseph Smith died in 1844. Scribes Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Emma Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Jesse Gause did not go west, and Frederick G. Williams died in 1842.



well over a century. Joseph Smith III, the Prophet's son, published the revised Bible in 1867. Now commonly called the *Inspired Version*, it was edited heavily for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, and it contains some errors that resulted from misunderstanding the history of the manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> Chapter and verse divisions were created so the book would be printed to resemble the King James translation. The *Inspired Version* has been in print since then, but the manuscripts themselves were not subjected to serious academic study until many decades later.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Professor Robert J. Matthews of Brigham Young University gained access to the original documents and examined their content. The manuscripts themselves remained unpublished, but Matthews's research was published and answered many questions.<sup>7</sup> During roughly the same time period, RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard explored some significant questions relative to the translation.<sup>8</sup> Then, in 2004, Brigham Young University's Religious Studies Center published a thorough study of the New Translation that included a transcription of all the original documents, making them openly available for academic research for the first time.<sup>9</sup> This *editio princeps* was followed by an electronic edition in 2011 that contains all the material in the 2004 volume as well as grayscale and color images of all the manuscript pages and much more.<sup>10</sup> Yet even with these publications, it is safe to say that the study of the New Translation manuscripts is yet in its infancy. It is a new discipline with many

---

6. See Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 20–33.

7. Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation": *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible—a History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975). Matthews's work was a groundbreaking examination of the manuscripts and was the starting point for later research that led to the 2004 and 2011 publications of the New Translation. These more recent publications and others clarify and correct many matters in Matthews's 1975 work.

8. Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Mo.: Department of Religious Education, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1969), 70–193. Robert Matthews's 1975 volume corrected numerous preliminary interpretations in Howard's book. Howard later published a revised edition that was much influenced by Matthews's work: *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development*, 2d ed. (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1995), 49–136.

9. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*.

10. Scott H. Faulring and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: Electronic Library* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2011).

possibilities. Research since these publications has revealed much, and the process is ongoing.<sup>11</sup>

## OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT 1

The first draft of Joseph Smith's revision of Genesis is recorded on a document labeled by archivists "Old Testament Manuscript 1" (OT1).<sup>12</sup> Like the other sections of the New Translation, it was recorded on the common writing paper of the early nineteenth century, "foolscap" paper, approximately sixteen by thirteen inches in dimension. The New Translation manuscripts were made of gatherings folded in the middle and stitched at the fold, making booklets measuring about eight by thirteen inches. OT1 is a gathering of fifty-two pages (with one page blank) and eight other pages that were once part of another gathering, thus totaling

---

11. See Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith's Cooperstown Bible: The Historical Context of the Bible Used in the Joseph Smith Translation," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 41–70; Kent P. Jackson and Peter M. Jasinski, "The Process of Inspired Translation: Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," *BYU Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 35–64; Kent P. Jackson and Scott H. Faulring, "Old Testament Manuscript 3: An Early Transcript of the Book of Moses," *Mormon Historical Studies* 5 (Fall 2004): 113–44; Jackson, *Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*; Kent P. Jackson and Charles Swift, "The Ages of the Patriarchs in the Joseph Smith Translation," in *A Witness for the Restoration: Essays in Honor of Robert J. Matthews*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Andrew C. Skinner (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007), 1–11; Paul W. Lambert and Thomas A. Wayment, "The Nature of the Pen and Pencil Markings in the New Testament of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 87–106; Kent P. Jackson, "New Discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," in *By Study and by Faith: Selections from the Religious Educator*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2009), 169–81; and Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet and Seer*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2010), 51–75.

12. Editors of the *Joseph Smith Papers* have labeled it Old Testament Revision 1 and have published the first few pages of it in Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013), 152–56. Complete images and transcripts of Old Testament Revision 1 and Old Testament Revision 2 are available on the Joseph Smith Papers website, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-1/1>; <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/old-testament-revision-2/1>.

fifty-nine pages of writing. It includes the narrative called “Visions of Moses” and Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 24:41. The text on the first twenty pages (through Genesis 6:13) has been accepted in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as part of its canonized scripture, now called the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.<sup>13</sup>

The first draft of Genesis was developed in three stages. First, Joseph Smith dictated the Visions of Moses, dated June 1830. Then he dictated a revision of Genesis 1–24, starting sometime in the summer or fall of 1830 and finishing on March 7, 1831. Finally, some limited edits were made to the text during and after the time of the initial recording.

### The Visions of Moses

The title “Visions of Moses” for the text on the first two and one-half pages came into use in the late nineteenth century. This text narrates a series of visions Moses had prior to the revelation of the Creation account with which Genesis begins. In the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, the text on the manuscript is one of the most significant documents of Mormonism.

At the top of page 1 is a heading that Cowdery perhaps supplied himself: “A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830.” The account itself starts with a different title, “The words of God which he gave <spake> unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceeding high Mountain. . . .”<sup>14</sup> The text has no biblical counterpart, nor is it an expansion of any Bible passage. It is followed immediately by a new rendering of Genesis 1, but it is not certain whether Joseph Smith and his scribe knew at the time it was dictated that it would be the beginning of a revision of the Bible. In any case, as time progressed, it became clear that the Visions of Moses was the prologue to the biblical Creation account.<sup>15</sup>

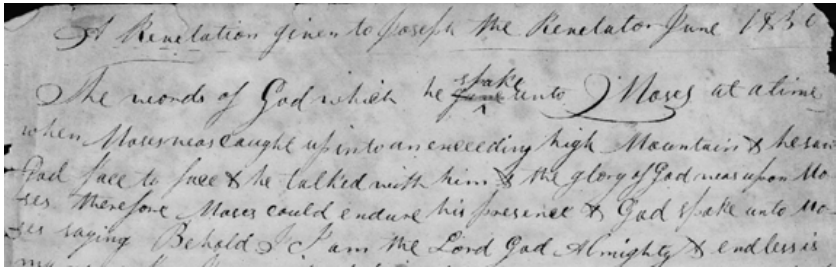
---

13. For a summary of how the book of Moses became part of the Pearl of Great Price, see Jackson, *Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*, 18–20.

14. OT1, page 1, lines 1–4 (Moses 1:1). All quoted excerpts are from the transcripts in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*.

15. These brief paragraphs summarize a longer discussion of these matters in Kent P. Jackson, “The Visions of Moses and Joseph Smith’s Bible Translation,” in *To Seek the Law of the Lord: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, Utah: Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 161–69.



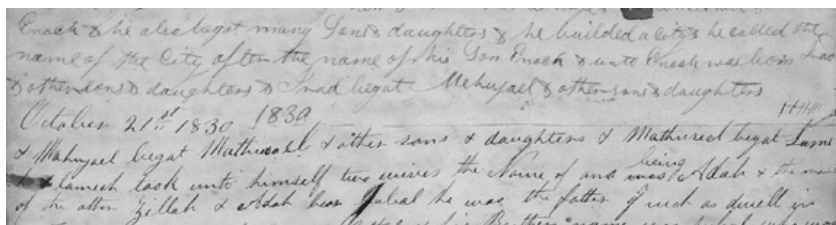


The beginning lines of Old Testament Manuscript 1, page 1, the first page of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible, in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery (Moses 1:1–3).

No contemporary source tells us where Joseph Smith was when the Visions of Moses originated. Candidate locations include Harmony, Pennsylvania, and Colesville and Fayette, New York. The words on the first two and one-half pages are probably the text written from dictation, rather than a copy of an earlier draft. But this is not certain.

## Genesis 1–24

After the Visions of Moses, the text is a revision of the Genesis chapters in order, continuing through chapter 24, verse 41. Even if the text on the first pages of OT1 is a copy of an earlier draft, beginning at Genesis 1:1, OT1 is clearly the original dictated manuscript. Some dates are written on the pages where scribal hands change. Oliver Cowdery was the scribe to the top of page 10. An inscribed date of June 1830 marks the beginning of his scribal work, but there is no end date. His writing, which includes the Visions of Moses and Genesis 1:1–4:18 (Moses 1:1–5:43), was certainly finished by October 1830, when he left on a mission to preach to the American Indians in Missouri. Early on page 10, John Whitmer's handwriting begins with the date "October 21<sup>st</sup> 1830." Halfway down the same page, Whitmer dated the manuscript "November 30<sup>th</sup> 1830" and continued writing until near the bottom of page 11. His writing includes Genesis 4:18–5:11 (Moses 5:43–6:18). Emma Smith's hand begins with "Dec 1<sup>st</sup>" and continues to the top of page 14, covering Genesis 5:12–21 (Moses 6:19–52). John Whitmer wrote from the top of page 14 through almost half of page 15 (Moses 6:52–7:1), where Sidney Rigdon's handwriting begins. Rigdon had arrived in Fayette early in December, and soon thereafter Joseph Smith began working with him as scribe. Rigdon



Excerpt from Old Testament Manuscript 1, page 10, showing the transition between the writing of Oliver Cowdery and that of John Whitmer, with the date on which Whitmer began writing (Moses 5:42–45).

continued to write for the rest of the manuscript, writing Genesis 5:22–24:41 (including Moses 7:2–8:30).

In tracing the timeline of OT1's creation, our next approximate date comes not from the manuscript but from historical sources. In early January 1831, John Whitmer left New York to oversee the Church's new converts in Ohio. Before he left, he made a copy of the Genesis manuscript as far as it had been dictated at that time, which was at a paragraph break at the top of page 20 following eight pages of new text about Enoch. Whitmer later wrote in his history that he had been instructed to "carry the commandments and revelations" with him to Ohio; his copy of the Genesis translation was among those "commandments and revelations."<sup>16</sup> Whitmer's arrival in Ohio was noted in the local *Painesville Telegraph* on January 18, 1831:

*Mormonism* — A young gentleman by the name of *Whitmer*, arrived here last week from Manchester, N. Y. the seat of wonders, with a new batch of revelations from God, as he pretended, which have just been communicated to Joseph Smith. As far as we have been able to learn their contents, they are a more particular description of the creation of the world, and a history of Adam and his family, and other sketches of the ante-deluvian world, which Moses neglected to record.<sup>17</sup>

16. "John Whitmer, History, 1831–circa 1847," 10, in Karen Lynn Davidson, Richard L. Jensen, and David J. Whitaker, eds., *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*, vol. 2 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2012), 22, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). For Whitmer's Genesis manuscript, see Jackson and Faulring, "Old Testament Manuscript 3."

17. "Mormonism," *Painesville Telegraph* 2 (January 18, 1831).

The *Telegraph* article, despite its sarcastic tone, summarizes correctly the content of Joseph Smith's Genesis to that point. The Genesis revision included a more detailed description of the Creation than was found in Genesis, more about Adam and Eve and their family, and much more about the world before the flood. There is no question that the writer of the *Telegraph* article had seen or had heard details regarding Whitmer's copy.

According to Joseph Smith's 1838–39 history, “soon after the words of Enoch were given,” God instructed him to set the translation aside for a while.<sup>18</sup> The date of that revelation is December 30, 1830, and the words “soon after the words of Enoch were given” places the stopping point at the top of page 20 in the OT1 manuscript. Whitmer's departure around the turn of the new year and Joseph Smith's revelation on December 30 set the extent of the translation then at the end of Genesis 5.

After Joseph Smith's arrival in Kirtland, Ohio, the translation work started again. At about the beginning of February 1831, he resumed his revision with Rigdon still serving as scribe. They started where they left off and worked on Genesis until March 7, when the Prophet received a revelation in which he and his scribe were instructed to set aside Genesis and start revising the New Testament instead.<sup>19</sup> By that time, they had arrived at page 61 of the manuscript, and they had translated through Genesis 24:41, which is where OT1 ends. The following day, March 8, 1831, they started working on the New Testament. Joseph Smith and his scribes would work on the New Testament until July 1832, when they would return to Genesis.

## Edits to the Text

The third stage in the development of the OT1 Genesis draft includes revisions that were made after the original dictation. These are quite limited, and there never was a careful review or systematic edit of the text. The revisions can be dated to three time periods:

---

18. “History of Joseph Smith (Continued),” *Times and Seasons* 4 (October 15, 1843): 352; “Revelation, 30 December 1830 [D&C 37],” 49, in MacKay and others, *Documents, Volume 1*, 227, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#) (D&C 37:1).

19. “Revelation, circa 7 March 1831 [D&C 45],” 75, in MacKay and others, *Documents, Volume 1*, 279, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#) (D&C 45:60–61).

**Edits Made by Early January 1831.** Examples of changes made to the text not long after the original writing include:

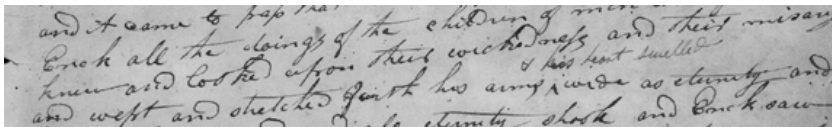
and he beheld also things which were not ~~present~~ <visible> (OT1, page 13, line 6 [Moses 6:36])

the posterity of all the sons of ~~Adam~~ <Noah> should be saved with a temporal salvation (OT1, page 17, lines 46–47 [Moses 7:42])

The first of these edits is a word change that makes the meaning more vivid, and the second seems to be correcting what was considered a writing error. These changes, and some others like them, are reproduced in John Whitmer's early-January copy of the manuscript, indicating that they had been made in OT1 by the beginning of 1831 when Whitmer made his copy.

**Edits Made between Early January and Mid-March 1831.** An insertion was made in OT1 that alters substantially the meaning of the text:

Enoch . . . wept and stretched forth his arms <& his heart swelled> wide as eternity (OT1, page 17, line 44 [Moses 7:41])



An insertion in the text of Old Testament Manuscript 1, page 17 (Moses 7:41).

This change is not on Whitmer's early January copy, but it was already on OT1 by the time Whitmer made a second copy, Old Testament Manuscript 2 (OT2), beginning in March.

**Edits Made after Mid-March 1831.** Six small changes written on OT1 appear to be in the hand of Joseph Smith. They must have been made no earlier than mid-March 1831, because they were not on OT1 when John Whitmer copied its content onto OT2. These two examples are typical:

heard the voice of the Lord God <as they were> walking in the garden (OT1, page 7, line 4 [Moses 4:14])

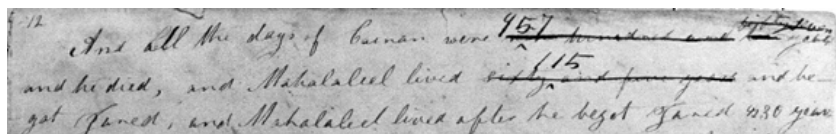
& hast eaten of the <fruit of the> tree of which I (OT1, page 7, line 24 [Moses 4:23])

Other changes were made to OT1 no earlier than the summer of 1831. They are in the hand of Oliver Cowdery, who was away from the manuscript from the time of his departure for Missouri in October 1830 until his return to Ohio in the summer of 1831. The changes are revisions

to the listed ages of the patriarchs from Adam to Methuselah.<sup>20</sup> There are fourteen such changes in all, of which the following are illustrative:

& all the days of Enos were ~~905~~ <940> years (OT1, page 11, line 39 [Moses 6:18])

And Cainan lived ~~70~~ <117> years and begat Mahalaleel (OT1, page 11, line 42 [Moses 6:19])



Changes made to the ages of Cainan and Mahalaleel on Old Testament Manuscript 1, page 2 (Moses 6:19–20).

The changes in the ages of the patriarchs are internally consistent, but there is no discernable pattern to the changes collectively, and nothing in the original Genesis text itself invites changes like these. Like the small revisions apparently in the hand of Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Cowdery made these changes after OT2 was written. This will become important in the continuing history of the manuscripts.

## OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT 2

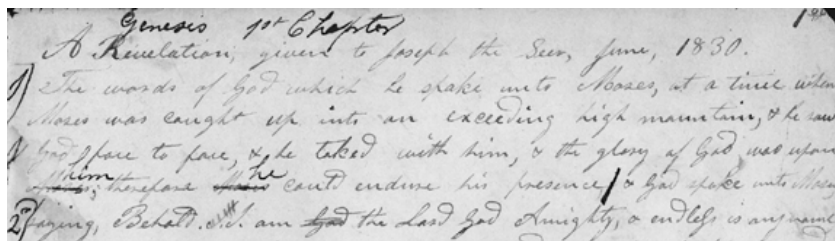
Old Testament Manuscript 2 (OT2) is made up of three gatherings totaling 119 pages. The book of Genesis is found on the first 65 pages.

This manuscript began as a duplicate of OT1 and was probably intended from the start to be the “fair copy” of the text, that is, the master copy for publication, because it was prepared systematically to go to press. In a revelation dated March 8, 1831, at the time Joseph Smith started his work on the New Testament, John Whitmer was instructed to “assist my servant Joseph in Transcribing all things,”<sup>21</sup> that is, to make copies. He accordingly copied the Old Testament manuscript, and later he made the master copies of Joseph Smith’s revelations and the first New Testament manuscript.<sup>22</sup> The text on OT2 from page 1 to

20. See Jackson and Swift, “Ages of the Patriarchs,” 1–11.

21. “Revelation, circa 8 March 1831–B,” 80, in MacKay and others, *Documents*, Volume 1, 286, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#) (D&C 47:1).

22. See Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, vol. 1 of the Revelations and



The top of Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 1 (Moses 1:1–3). The text is in the hand of John Whitmer, but Sidney Rigdon inserted the heading at the top and some word changes in the text.

the top of page 59 is a transcription of OT1, which Whitmer began when Joseph Smith started working on his translation of the New Testament. The date Whitmer finished copying OT1 onto OT2 is written at the end of OT1: “April 5<sup>th</sup> 1831 transcribed thus far.” With that, work on Genesis stopped until it was taken up again over a year later.

The resumption of the Genesis translation is noted in a letter of July 31, 1832, from Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps. The Prophet wrote, “Brother Frederick [G. Williams] in [is] employed to be a scribe for me of the Lord—we have finished the translation of the New testament . . . , we are making rapid strides in the old book and in the strength of God we can do all things according to his will.”<sup>23</sup> In the preceding days, the work on Genesis had begun again. Frederick G. Williams was the new scribe, and he would continue to write for Joseph Smith through the completion of the Old Testament revision almost a year later. We have no definitive way of dating when they finished Genesis, but because the translation of Genesis ends only seven pages after it was resumed in the last week of July 1832, it seems likely that it was completed near the beginning of August. Thus, Genesis was translated in two time periods: June 1830–March 1831 (Gen. 1:1–24:41) and July–August 1832 (Gen. 24:41–50:26).

---

Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 4–5; and Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 231–32.

23. “Letter to William W. Phelps, 31 July 1832,” 5, in Matthew C. Godfrey and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*, vol. 2 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 267, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).

Joseph Smith had dictated the text of Genesis 1–24 in full, and his scribes had written the entire dictation in longhand, including verses that had no changes from the King James translation. When he resumed his Genesis translation on OT2, he finished the dictation of chapter 24. In chapters 25–29 he dictated entire verses when a change was to be made, but he skipped verses not in need of any correction. Then, at Genesis 30, he shifted to a system he and his scribes had developed earlier while they worked on the New Testament.<sup>24</sup> He marked in his printed Bible the insertion points for changes (but not the changes themselves) and dictated to Williams the words to change or add, which Williams recorded on the manuscript pages. The rest of the Old Testament translation was done that way, with only references and new wordings recorded on the manuscript. These examples at Genesis 37:2 and 39:8 are typical:

2<sup>d</sup> Verse And this is the g hystory of the generations of Jacob (OT2, page 61, line 36)

8th Verse — Knoweth (OT2, page 62, line 9)

Joseph Smith made fewer changes in the second half of Genesis than he did in the first half. Several of the later chapters received no changes at all: chapters 27, 31, 33–36, 40–43, and 45–47. The chapters between those received only few changes, but chapter 48 was expanded substantially, and chapter 50 received about eighty more lines of text. In both of those chapters, Joseph Smith added major doctrinal content to the existing verses.

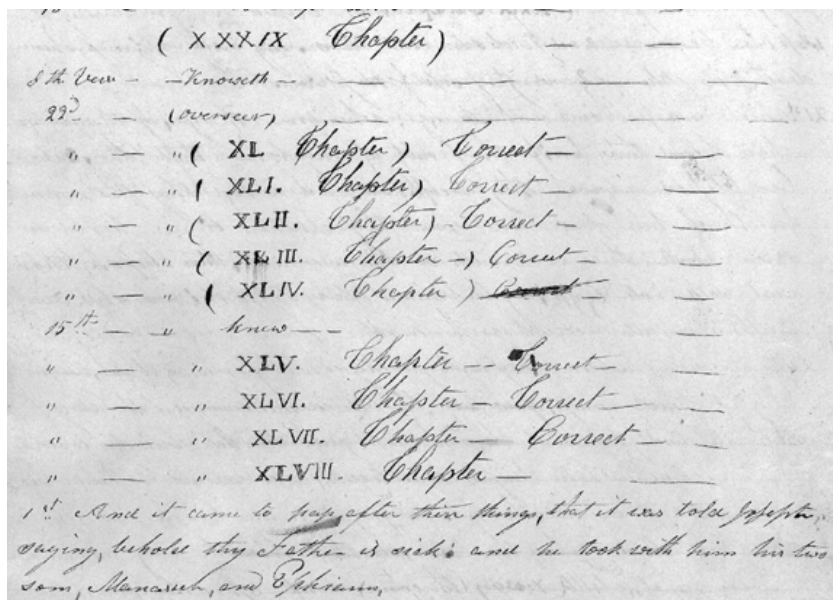
## PREPARING THE FAIR COPY FOR PUBLICATION

Joseph Smith spoke and wrote frequently about his desire to publish the New Translation, and there is considerable evidence on the manuscript pages to show that he deliberately prepared the text on OT2 with that end in mind. Nowhere is this more evident than on the Genesis pages. When he returned to Genesis after the New Testament translation was finished, OT2 was the live copy on which the rest of the Old Testament translation was continued and on which refinements were made to bring the text to a publishable form. This is obvious in processes that

---

24. See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 422, 455.





Excerpt from Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 62, showing Genesis 39–47 with few revisions. A large addition to Genesis 48 begins in the lines at the bottom of the image.

were intended to assure that the text was accurate in comparison with its underlying sources, OT1 and the Bible.

There was a concerted effort to correct OT2 against OT1. Corrections in John Whitmer's hand show that he proofed OT2 fairly systematically, and in the process he restored on OT2 some passages he had inadvertently omitted in his transcription from OT1. Some of the omissions were the result of haplography, the eyes of the copyist skipping from a word in one line to the same word in a later line, resulting in the loss of text between them.

There was also an effort to correct OT2 against the Bible. In a few places, it appears that while Joseph Smith was reading out of the Bible and dictating the text to his scribe, he inadvertently skipped a phrase or a verse, sometimes as a result of lines ending with the same word(s). Those omissions were then carried over onto OT2. Virtually all of the corrections of this sort are in the hand of Sidney Rigdon, who apparently proofed OT2 against the Bible, restoring some missing words.<sup>25</sup>

25. For example, compare OT2, page 8, line 16, with Genesis 3:3–5.

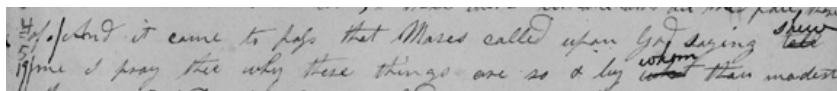


Excerpts from Old Testament Manuscript 1, page 8 (top) and Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 11, showing haplography in the transcription of the text. When copying the text from OT1, John Whitmer's eyes skipped from *repented* on the second line (second word from right) to *repented* on the third line (third word from right), resulting in the loss of the text between them. Whitmer restored the lost text when he proofed OT2 against OT1.

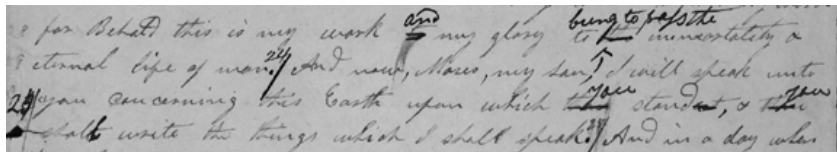
of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it,  
neither shall ye<sup>d</sup> touch it, lest ye die.  
4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall  
not surely die:  
5 For God doth know, that in the day ye eat

Genesis 3:3–5 in the H. & E. Phinney Bible (top) and the corresponding text on Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 8. The word *die* is at the end of verses 3 and 4 in the Bible, and Joseph Smith's eyes skipped from the first one to the second one when he read from the Bible and dictated the words to his scribe. Sidney Rigdon restored the missing words when he corrected the OT2 text against the Bible.

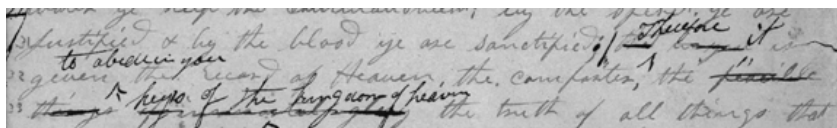
In addition to these procedures to proof the text against its underlying original sources, the Prophet also made some significant edits to what he had dictated before to refine and clarify wording and to add further insights. In this process, he revised both word choices and the meaning of the text, rather than merely repairing transcription errors. These changes sometimes have significant doctrinal implications, and it seems safe to say that they represent his latest thinking on the text. In the Genesis pages, Sidney Rigdon was the scribe for almost all of those changes, but in other parts of the translation, similar after-dictation rewordings are in the hand of Frederick G. Williams, and some are in the hand of Joseph Smith himself.



Two word edits on Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 3 (Moses 1:30).



Edits on Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 3 (Moses 1:39–41) include some that appear in the book of Moses and others that do not. On the first line, one can see the original dictated wording of a familiar passage and Joseph Smith's later revision of it.



A significant revision was made on Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 18 (Moses 6:60–61), changing the line to read, “Therefore it is given to abide in you the record of Heaven, the Comforter, the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

The text of Genesis also shows evidence of traditional copy editing, including the insertion of punctuation and corrections in the capitalization of letters. Some capitalization changes may have been made during the process of refining the wording, but in many cases a difference in ink suggests a separate pass to make those changes.

Other changes made to prepare the text for publication were the additions of chapter and verse divisions. At the top of page 1 of OT2, Sidney Rigdon wrote the words “Genesis 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter.” John Whitmer had divided the text into chapters as he transcribed from OT1 to OT2, but almost all of his chapter numbers, and some of his chapter divisions, were later changed by other hands.

Verse numbers start at the beginning of the manuscript and continue through Genesis 24. Inserted in more than one hand, they are written in the left margin and are usually followed by slashes. Often slashes were also inserted in the lines of the text, sometimes with verse numbers, showing where a particular verse was to begin. The verses created by the inserted numbers are on average approximately four times as large as those in traditional Bibles. This seemed to be Joseph Smith's preference

for sacred texts, because later when the Doctrine and Covenants and the book of Abraham were prepared for publication, their texts were divided into large, paragraph-length verses instead of small intrusive verses like those found in the Bible.<sup>26</sup>

Some of Joseph Smith's Genesis changes were never included on the fair copy. After Genesis had been transcribed onto OT2, the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery made some revisions to the text on OT1, as noted above. It is not clear why they wrote the changes on OT1 instead of on OT2; it may simply be that they pulled the wrong manuscript off the shelf. The changes include the six small word revisions that appear to be in Joseph Smith's hand and the fourteen changes to the ages of the patriarchs. There is every reason to believe that the Prophet intended those changes to be part of his New Translation of Genesis, yet because they were written after OT2 had been created, they were not passed on and never became part of the finished translation. They were forgotten until recent years when the manuscripts became available for serious research.<sup>27</sup>

All together, the extensive revisions made to OT2—corrections against the original manuscript and against the Bible, the insertion of refinements and rewordings in the text, the correction of capitalization, and the insertion of punctuation and chapter and verse divisions—demonstrate that the document was prepared systematically for publication. It was the intended final copy of Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis. The text thus prepared was ready to go to press, and historical sources tell us that the intent was to print it as soon as possible.<sup>28</sup> These considerations are important for understanding the later history of the Genesis translation, because the current text of the book of Moses comes not from OT2—Joseph Smith's corrected and final copy of the translation—but mainly from his preliminary draft, Old Testament Manuscript 1.

---

26. The small verses in today's Doctrine and Covenants date to 1876, and those in today's book of Moses were created for the 1902 edition. For the book of Abraham, see *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842): 704–6.

27. See Jackson and Swift, "The Ages of the Patriarchs in the Joseph Smith Translation."

28. Many orthographic inconsistencies remained. It was likely assumed that the spelling would be standardized in the typesetting process.

## FINISHED

A misconception that survived among Latter-day Saints for over a century and a half is that Joseph Smith never finished his Bible translation.<sup>29</sup> A more recent misconception is that he continued to make modifications to it until the end of his life.<sup>30</sup> Neither of these ideas is true. The evidence is clear that in July 1833 Joseph Smith finished his revision of the entire Bible, and he considered it ready to go to press either then or shortly thereafter. At the end of the final Old Testament manuscript, his scribe Frederick G. Williams wrote, “Finished on the 2d day of July 1833.”<sup>31</sup> On the same day, the Prophet and his two counselors, Williams and Sidney Rigdon—both of whom were scribes for the New Translation—wrote to Church members in Missouri and announced, “We this day finished the translating of the Scriptures for which we returned gratitude to our heavenly father.”<sup>32</sup> Beginning at that point, Joseph Smith no longer talked or wrote of *translating* the Bible but of *publishing* it. In August, he and his counselors wrote again to Missouri, “You will see by these revelations that we have to print the new translation here at kirtland for which we will prepare as soon as possible.”<sup>33</sup> His efforts thereafter were to find the means to print it, and he encouraged Church members to donate money so he could do so. But he was never able to publish the work because of lack of funds and because other priorities, persecutions, and circumstances took precedence. Yet even in the last years of his life, publishing his translation was something he wanted and intended to do.<sup>34</sup>

---

29. See, for example, “Which Bible Version?” *Church News*, November 14, 1970, 16; and “The Inspired Version,” *Church News*, November 16, 1974, 16.

30. Both of these inaccuracies are reflected in the “Joseph Smith Translation” entry in the Bible dictionary in the English Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible and in the Guide to the Scriptures in many languages.

31. OT2, page 119, line 5.

32. “Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 2 July 1833,” 51, in Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin and Matthew J. Grow (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2014), 166, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).

33. “Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 6 August 1833,” 3, in Dirkmaat and others, *Documents, Volume 3*, 233, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).

34. See Robert J. Matthews, “Joseph Smith’s Efforts to Publish His Bible Translation,” *Ensign* 13 (January 1983): 57–64. This important compilation

## PUBLICATIONS

Individual Latter-day Saints made private copies of parts of the Genesis translation,<sup>35</sup> and sections were published in the *Evening and the Morning Star* and the *Times and Seasons*.<sup>36</sup> Passages were also published in the second lecture of the Lectures on Faith in 1835.<sup>37</sup> These printings were based ultimately on the draft text of OT1 and did not contain the changes Joseph Smith made to the translation when he refined Genesis for publication on OT2. In 1851, Franklin D. Richards published excerpts from Genesis in the *Millennial Star* and in his British Mission booklet *The Pearl of Great Price*.<sup>38</sup> Those excerpts came from the earlier periodicals and from a manuscript copy.

---

shows that to the end of his life, Joseph Smith expended much effort to find time and raise money to print the Bible translation. Matthews believed that Joseph Smith made modifications to the text until the end of his life because Matthews assumed the accuracy of Richard Howard's conclusion that the edits on the manuscripts were in the hand of Joseph Smith. Robert J. Matthews, personal communication with the author; see Howard, *Restoration Scriptures*, 1st ed., 122–23. Such is not the case. Many technical corrections are in the hand of John Whitmer, but the content edits are in the hands of Sidney Rigdon (who made the majority of edits) and Frederick G. Williams, who were no longer serving as Joseph Smith's scribes after the mid-1830s and were no longer in his confidence by the end of that decade. Only a few are in the hand of Joseph Smith. See Jackson, "New Discoveries," 176–78.

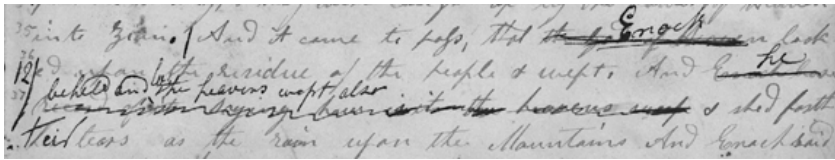
35. In addition to Whitmer's early January 1831 copy, Edward Partridge made a copy of OT1, probably in February. See "1831 Edward Partridge Genesis Copy," in Faulring and Jackson, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: Electronic Library*. Some of the Genesis excerpts in the 1851 *Pearl of Great Price* had never been printed before, so when preparing that volume, Franklin D. Richards must have had a manuscript copy of at least parts of Genesis.

36. "Extract from the Prophecies of Enoch," *Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (August 1832): 18–19; "The Church of Christ," *Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (March 1833): 1; "The Church of Christ," *Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (April 1833): 1–2; "History of Joseph Smith (Continued)," *Times and Seasons* 4 (January 16, 1843): 71–73.

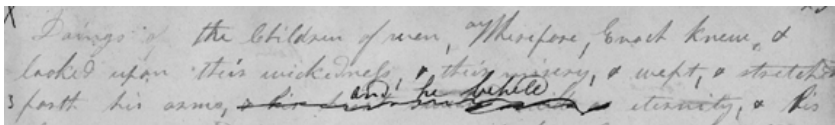
37. "Lecture Second," in *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams and Co., 1835), 13–18.

38. "The First Part of the Book of Genesis," *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 13 (March 15, 1851): 90–93; Franklin D. Richards, ed., *The Pearl of Great Price: Being a Choice Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith, First Prophet, Seer, and Revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1851).

When the RLDS publication committee prepared to print the translation in 1867 (commonly called the *Inspired Version*), they had access to both of the Old Testament manuscripts. But the evidence shows that they misunderstood the relationship between the two documents. In general, the committee retained the grammatical refinements that were written on OT2, but they did not include the Prophet's edits in which he changed the meaning or added new insights. Thus, some significant revisions were lost from what would become a continuing trail of printings.<sup>39</sup>



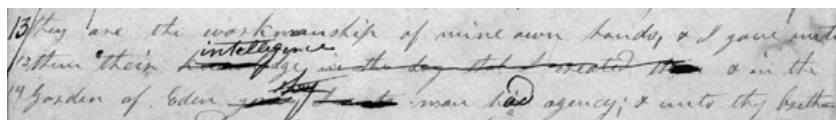
Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 21 (Moses 7:27–29), contains this reading that was not included in the RLDS *Inspired Version* and thus is not in the book of Moses.



An edit not in the book of Moses, from Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 23 (Moses 7:41).

The 1878 Salt Lake City edition of the Pearl of Great Price drew its Genesis material (today known as the book of Moses) directly from the 1867 *Inspired Version*, the best text available to the compilers at the time. The 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price used the 1878 book of Moses material but edited it to be more consistent with the early printings in the *Evening and the Morning Star* and the *Times and Seasons* (which were based on OT1), thus moving the text farther away from Joseph Smith's final wording. The 1902 edition also includes other edits that are not based on any earlier manuscripts or printings. The English 1921, 1981,

39. The details are spelled out in Jackson, *Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*, 20–33.



Changes on Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 22 (Moses 7:32–33) that have doctrinal significance.

and 2013 editions preserve the text of the 1902 edition with only slight variations.<sup>40</sup>

In all, today's book of Moses differs in over two hundred places from the text Joseph Smith prepared and wanted to publish. Most are simple word differences of little consequence for the message and meaning of the text, but some differences are of greater interest.

### THE LEGACY OF JOSEPH SMITH'S GENESIS

I believe that it can be stated safely that Joseph Smith's Genesis text is the most important part of his New Translation of the Bible. Indeed, it is one of the great treasures of Mormonism, containing material that makes the beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints unique among Christians. When he introduced the Visions of Moses in his history, Joseph Smith called it a "precious morsel" that God, "who well knew our infantile and delicate situation," revealed to bless his Saints.<sup>41</sup> And as the revelations of Enoch were being recorded, the Lord promised that "the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect."<sup>42</sup>

The Visions of Moses and Genesis 1:1–6:13 of the New Translation have been, since the canonization of the Pearl of Great Price in October 1880, part of the Latter-day Saint canon. This text provides an unparalleled view of the scope of God's creations (Moses 1:27–39), unique teachings about the origin and objectives of Satan (Moses 1:12–24), a recast text of the Creation (Moses 2–3), a dramatically revised narrative of the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Moses 4),

40. See Jackson, *Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*, 143–71.

41. "History of Joseph Smith (Continued)," *Times and Seasons* 4 (January 16, 1843): 71.

42. "Revelation, 7 December 1830 [D&C 35]," 47, in MacKay and others, *Documents, Volume 1*, 223, and on the [Joseph Smith Papers website](#) (D&C 35:20).



and an account of the life and teachings of Enoch that is found nowhere else (Moses 6:26–7:69). Later in Genesis, the New Translation adds an expanded theology of the nature of covenant and the purpose and destiny of the house of Israel (Gen. 9; 48; 50).

But perhaps the most singular contribution to Latter-day Saint theology is the remarkable assertion in Joseph Smith's Genesis that the Christian gospel was known and believed from the beginning of human history. This is shown in the explicit depictions of Adam and Eve as Christians, as well as of Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and Moses. Joseph Smith's dramatic reinterpretation of Genesis thus makes it a thoroughly Christian book—another testament of Jesus Christ. It also places the religion he founded in the nineteenth century within a framework that spans the entire length of human history, making the message of Genesis and the message of the Restoration one and the same.

---

Kent P. Jackson retired in June 2017 as a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He has a BA in ancient studies from BYU and MA and PhD degrees in Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern studies from the University of Michigan. He joined the faculty of Brigham Young University in 1980.

His research interests include Latter-day Saint scripture, doctrine, and history, with emphasis on the intersection of Mormonism and the Bible. He has authored or edited *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible*, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*, and *The King James Bible and the Restoration*.

Professor Jackson is a former associate dean of Religious Education and former associate director of the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies.



# “I Was Not Ready to Die Yet”

## William Stowell’s Utah War Ordeal

*R. Devan Jensen and Kenneth L. Alford*

In the fall of 1857, twenty-one-year-old Cynthia Jane Stowell<sup>1</sup> bade farewell to her husband, William R. R. Stowell,<sup>2</sup> a lieutenant in the Utah militia working to hinder the US Army from entering Utah Territory. Cynthia, who was pregnant, was tending nine children—six of whom were orphans she and William had adopted.<sup>3</sup> Sophronia Stowell,<sup>4</sup> a plural wife of William, also had children to tend. That winter they received

---

1. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell (FamilySearch.org PID: KWJZ-XNZ) was born April 20, 1836, in Yorkville, Gibson County, Tennessee. Hereafter the FamilySearch personal identification number will be listed in parentheses without “FamilySearch.org PID”).

2. William Rufus Rogers Stowell (KWN2-PHJ) was born September 23, 1822, in Solon, New York.

3. During his life, William wrote three accounts of his Utah War experiences. One handwritten version titled “William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857,” MS 4602, is in the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE4455155](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE4455155). Another handwritten account titled “The Echo Canon War” is housed in Papers, Utah War, MSS 2379, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The third and most complete version is located at the Weber County Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Ogden, Utah, and is published as James Little, *A Biographical Sketch of William Rufus Rogers Stowell* (Colonia Juárez, Mex.: By the author, 1893). The last account was prepared under the supervision of William Stowell and includes expanded journal entries.

4. Sophronia Kelley Stowell (KWN2-PHN) was born July 22, 1826, in Richelieu, Quebec, Canada.

news that William had been captured and was being held as a prisoner of war at Camp Scott, near Fort Bridger, in present-day Wyoming. The two women must have worried that they might never see William again.

The Utah War of 1857–58 grew out of rising tensions between Utah's leadership and federal authorities. This armed conflict, formally identified by the US government as the Utah Expedition, foreshadowed the struggle between states' rights and federal authority that played out a few short years later during the American Civil War. Previous publications generally discuss the Utah War from the point of view of the main actors or the war's effect on the Church or the population of Utah Territory as a whole. On a macro level, the Utah War can be recounted in terms of competing demands between Mormons and the federal government, but this article poignantly recounts how the Utah War also affected individual lives. William Stowell's family history is uniquely interesting because of William's participation in the military defense of Utah, his capture and suffering as a prisoner of war, and the struggle of his two wives and many dependents to survive in his absence.

### **Teenage Marriage and Instant Family**

Cynthia's family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Tennessee. After the death of her father in June 1845, her widowed mother moved the family to Nauvoo, Illinois, in March 1846, where they lived only a few short months before they and other Mormons felt pressure to leave the state. The family relocated to Council Bluffs in present-day Iowa, where Cynthia's oldest brother, William A. Park, enlisted in the US Army's Mormon Battalion for the Mexican-American War. The rest of the family spent several years in frontier surroundings, earning a living and saving money to buy a wagon, steers, and cows.<sup>5</sup> In 1851, as a fifteen-year-old teenager, Cynthia traveled in Captain John G. Smith's company across the plains to Salt Lake City.<sup>6</sup> Settling in Provo, Utah Territory, Cynthia (now sixteen) was living with her widowed

---

5. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography* (n.p., n.d.), 2, Perry Special Collections.

6. "Cynthia Jane Park," *Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://history.lds.org/overland-travel/pioneers/44757>. Utah's largest city was known as Great Salt Lake City during the Utah War. It was not until 1868 that the city's name was officially changed to Salt Lake City. For purposes of simplicity, this narrative will refer to Salt Lake City.



William Rufus Rogers Stowell and Cynthia Jane Park Stowell. Cynthia experienced hardship and uncertainty when William was captured by the US Army, held as a prisoner of war, and indicted for high treason. Courtesy Church History Library.

brother, William, when she met William Stowell, a twenty-nine-year-old émigré from Nauvoo. He was caring for his fifteen-month-old nephew, William Henry Packard, whose parents had died.<sup>7</sup> Cynthia Park and William Stowell were married by Apostle John Taylor on October 19, 1852. In the fall of 1853, Governor Brigham Young asked the Stowells to move to the newly designated territorial capital of Fillmore in Pahvant Valley to guard against “Indian depredations” and to help build a wing of the planned statehouse.<sup>8</sup>

On April 22, 1854, two days after Cynthia’s eighteenth birthday, William brought home his half-brother Dan’s five orphans, aged six to thirteen, whom he wanted to adopt.<sup>9</sup> Two days later, Cynthia gave birth to her first son, Brigham.<sup>10</sup> The young mother now found herself with seven children to rear.

In June 1855, Cynthia and William moved to Bingham’s Fort, near Ogden.<sup>11</sup> In October, William married a plural wife, Sophronia Kelley,



Sophronia Stowell, a plural wife of William Stowell. She assisted Cynthia and the rest of their large family during the Move South in the spring of 1858. Courtesy Abraham Heslington Family Organization.

7. William Henry Packard (KWZ5-G52) was born August 12, 1851, in Springville, Utah County, Utah Territory.

8. “William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857.” 1. Both the small town of Fillmore and Millard County in which it is located were named for US President Millard Fillmore. Indian threats were a legitimate concern, as the October 1853 massacre near Fillmore of US Army Captain John W. Gunnison and his military survey party demonstrated.

9. The orphans were William Augustus (1841–1915, LCXT-ZL8), Harriet Eliza (1843–1897, KWJD-CV1), George Washington (1845–1927, KWJ8-3M5), Mary Louisa (1847–1864, KWVZ-1R7), and Ann Jeanette Abigail Stowell (1848–1912, KWNF-783).

10. Brigham Stowell (KWCD-RTN) was born April 24, 1854, in Fillmore, Millard County, Utah Territory.

11. Begun in the spring of 1851, Bingham’s Fort “was located north of Second Street and west of Wall Avenue in Ogden. The fort enclosed an area 120 by 60 rods and its walls were built of rocks and mud, principally mud. . . . At the close of 1854, Bingham’s Fort had a population of 732.” “Pioneer Forts of

who had a son from a previous marriage.<sup>12</sup> On January 6, 1856, Cynthia gave birth to twins, Amanda and Miranda; Sophronia gave birth to Elvira on September 12.<sup>13</sup> Their large family eked out a meager living on their farm.

### Escalating Tensions

The Utah War arose from a complex web of causes and motivations. Stated briefly, federal and Utah territorial authorities often clashed regarding Mormon authority and influence in the territorial court system, the mail service, policies regarding American-Indian relations, polygamy, and the moral character of territorial appointees.<sup>14</sup> On January 6, 1857, Utah's legislators approved provocative memorials to President James Buchanan, arguing for rejection of federal officials who did not reflect local values.<sup>15</sup> Shortly thereafter, Buchanan received reports of rebellion and murder in Utah. William W. Drummond, associate justice of the Utah Territory Supreme Court and a married man who flaunted his mistress in public, had tried to diminish Mormon influence by reducing the power of Utah's county probate courts. After disagreeing with local officials, he wrote a formal complaint to Buchanan, then fled first to California and later to New Orleans, where he resigned with

---

the West," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 9:123–24.

12. George Washington Eldredge (KWJX-59G) was born June 25, 1846, in Mormon Grove, Pottawattamie County, Iowa Territory.

13. Amanda (KWC6-RVG), Miranda (KWZS-7S6), and Elvira (KWJD-PFJ) were born at Bingham's Fort (present-day Ogden), Weber County, Utah Territory.

14. President James Buchanan justified the Utah Expedition based on complaints from numerous individuals, including William W. Drummond, associate justice of the Utah Territory Supreme Court; W. M. F. Magraw, a mail contractor who lost a lucrative bid to the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company; and Thomas S. Twiss, Indian agent on the Platte River. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 171. For additional context, see Brent M. Rogers, *Unpopular Sovereignty: Mormons and the Federal Management of Early Utah Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 5, 9–15.

15. Several of the men nominated for federal appointments were later indicted for treason, though all were finally pardoned. William P. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War, to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2008), 62–63, 67–73.

a letter that became a scathing newspaper account of Mormon harassment, alleging that Church leaders had destroyed territorial Supreme Court papers and murdered government officials.<sup>16</sup> Drummond called for a non-Mormon replacement as governor “with a *sufficient* military aid” to see the job through.<sup>17</sup> John M. Bernhisel, Utah’s territorial delegate in the US House of Representatives, wrote to Governor Young that “the clouds are dark and lowering . . . that the Government intended to put [polygamy] down,” and that federal troops might be sent to overturn the perceived rebellion.<sup>18</sup>

### The Utah Expedition and Utah’s Response

In May 1857, while Congress was adjourned, President Buchanan ordered US soldiers to escort and install Alfred Cumming as incoming territorial governor, replacing Brigham Young.<sup>19</sup> They also escorted Delana R. Eckels, the newly appointed chief justice of Utah’s territorial Supreme Court.<sup>20</sup> The army left Fort Leavenworth (Kansas Territory) on July 18. While Governor Young had received earlier reports of the federal government’s actions, on July 24, 1857 (ten years after a vanguard company of Mormon pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley), Porter Rockwell, Abraham O. Smoot, and Judson Stoddard shared alarming news with people gathered for a pioneer celebration in Big Cottonwood Canyon that the US Army was marching on Utah Territory and that it was presumably commanded by William S. Harney, a general with a reputation for violence.<sup>21</sup> The inability of direct communication between Young and Buchanan made war seem likely.

---

16. “Utah and Its Troubles,” dated March 19, 1857, *New York Herald*, March 20, 1857, 4–5, as cited in MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 1*, 102–3.

17. “Judge Drummond’s Letter of Resignation,” in *The Utah Expedition, 1857–1858: A Documentary Account of the United States Military Movement under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, and the Resistance by Brigham Young and the Mormon Nauvoo Legion*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1982), 363–66, italics in original.

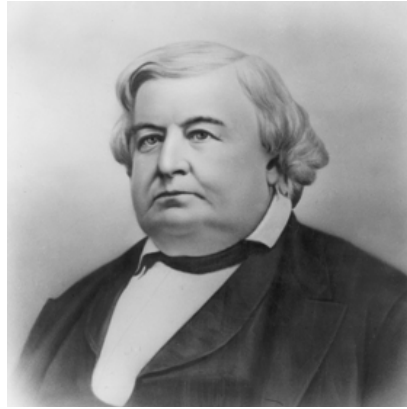
18. John M. Bernhisel to Brigham Young, April 2, 1857, Church History Library, quoted in MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 1*, 106–7.

19. A former mayor of Augusta, Georgia, Cumming served as Utah’s territorial governor from 1858 to 1861.

20. Eckels served from 1857 to 1860 and was both preceded and succeeded by John F. Kinney.

21. Richard Whitehead Young, “The Nauvoo Legion,” *Contributor* 9 (August 1888): 362. See also MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 1*, 354. General Harney

Recalling mob action that required the forced exoduses of Church members from both Missouri and Illinois,<sup>22</sup> on August 1, Governor Young mustered the Nauvoo Legion, Utah's territorial militia—"arguably America's largest, most experienced militia."<sup>23</sup> Captain Stewart Van Vliet, a US Army quartermaster sent to procure food and supplies, met with Young in early September and disclosed the army's mission to replace him as governor. Young declared martial law on September 15 and restricted admittance to the territory.<sup>24</sup> Colonel Edmund B. Alexander's federal forces, though, had already entered Utah Territory in today's southwestern Wyoming. In late September, Alexander set



up temporary Camp Winfield on Hams Fork of the Green River and reconnoitered two possible routes of march to Salt Lake City—northwest through Soda Springs or southwest through Echo Canyon.

Incoming territorial governor Alfred Cumming. He was convinced by Colonel Thomas L. Kane to enter Salt Lake City unescorted. He met with Cynthia Stowell, gave her money, and promised to assist her husband, who was being held captive near Fort Bridger. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

---

did not actually lead the Utah Expedition to Utah. He was replaced by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston.

22. Expulsion from Missouri and Illinois and assassination of their prophet and patriarch clearly influenced the decisions of both Young and the Mormon leadership. For more about the expulsion, see Clark V. Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1992); and Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1868* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

23. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 35.

24. Within this charged political climate and apparently without Governor Young's order or consent, some territorial militia members and their Paiute Indian allies massacred the Baker-Fancher party at Mountain Meadows in southern Utah on September 11, 1857. See Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford, 2008).



In early October, Lieutenant William Stowell was serving as an adjutant in Major Joseph Taylor's Nauvoo Legion infantry battalion.<sup>25</sup> To hinder the army's advance, Mormons burned Fort Bridger and nearby Fort Supply on October 3–4, and the Nauvoo Legion took watchful note of the Utah Expedition's approach.<sup>26</sup> Many of the territory's militiamen suffered from a lack of adequate food and clothing, living on baked flour and water while dealing with occasional snowfalls.<sup>27</sup>

During the night of October 3, Stowell dreamed he had been captured by the army and made a prisoner of war but that he would subsequently escape "without any material injury." He dreamed that he was riding through Echo Canyon and returning safely to his family.<sup>28</sup> That week, Taylor, Stowell, Wells Chase, George Rose, and Joseph Orton were dispatched to watch the movement of the approaching US troops in the Green River area.<sup>29</sup>

As Major Taylor's adjutant, Stowell carried the following orders from the Nauvoo Legion's commander (and Brigham Young's second counselor in the LDS Church's First Presidency), Lieutenant General Daniel H. Wells:<sup>30</sup>

---

25. Stowell was appointed adjutant on May 15, 1857. See "Roll of Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Privates of the 5th Regiment Commanded by Colonel C. W. West, Ogden City," in Papers, Utah War.

26. Fort Bridger was built in 1842 on Blacks Fork of the Green River by James Bridger—a mountain man, trapper, and scout. Mormons purchased the fort in 1855. Fort Supply, twelve miles south of Fort Bridger, was built by Mormon pioneers "between Willow Creek and Smith's Fork of Green River" in present-day Uinta County, Wyoming. Established as a successful "experiment of raising wheat in that high altitude," Fort Supply was burned by the Legion, together with Fort Bridger, in the fall of 1857 at the beginning of the Utah War. "Pioneer Forts of the West," 9:166–68.

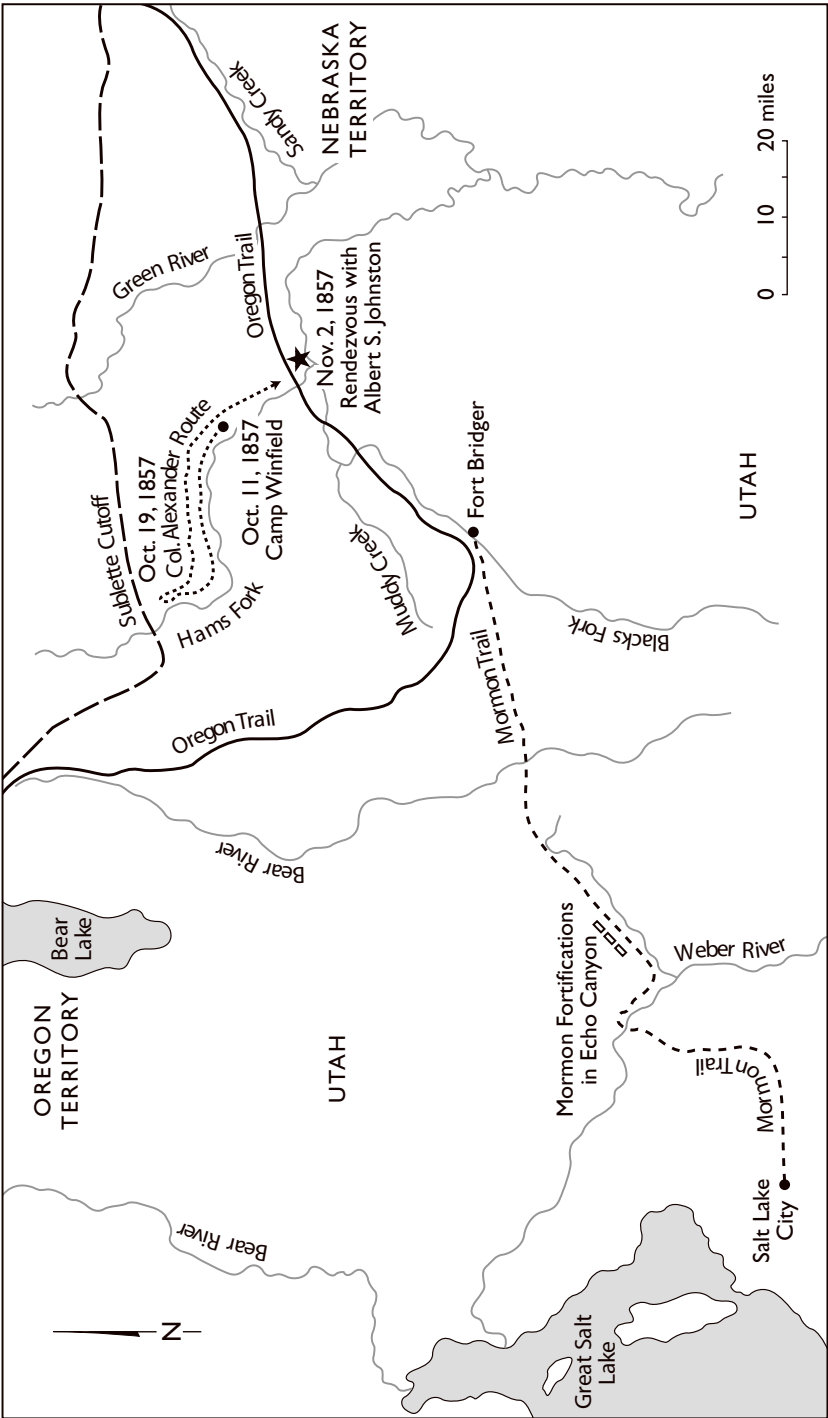
27. Donna G. Ramos, "Utah War: U.S. Government versus Mormon Settlers," June 12, 2006, HistoryNet, World History Group, <http://www.historynet.com/utah-war-us-government-versus-mormon-settlers.htm>.

28. "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 1. See also Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 1; and Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 23.

29. "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 2; Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 3; Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 23; for the names of the men, see "Nauvoo Legion," *Contributor* 9 (August 1888): 370.

30. For more about Wells's defensive campaign, see Quentin Thomas Wells, *Defender: The Life of Daniel H. Wells* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2016), ch. 11.





Routes Followed by the U.S. Army Expedition in 1857–58. Map drawn by Bill Nelson for William P. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War, to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2008), 396. Adapted from Fred R. Gowans and Eugene E. Campbell, *Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness*. Used by permission.

Headquarters Eastern Expedition,  
Camp near Cache Cave,<sup>31</sup> Oct 4, 1857.

Major Joseph Taylor:

You will proceed with all possible dispatch, without injuring your animals, to the Oregon road, near the bend of Bear River, north by east of this place. Take close and correct observations of the country on your route. When you approach the road send scouts ahead to ascertain if the invading troops have passed that way. Should they have passed, take a concealed route and get ahead of them. Express to Col. [Robert T.] Burton, who is now on that road and in the vicinity of the troops, and effect a junction with him, so as to operate in concert. On ascertaining the locality or route of the troops proceed at once to annoy them in every possible way. Use every exertion to stampede their animals, and set fire to their trains. Burn the whole country before them and on their flanks. Keep them from sleeping by night surprises. Blockade the road by felling trees or destroying river fords where you can. Watch for opportunities to set fire to the grass, so as, if possible, to envelop their trains. Leave no grass before them that can be burned. Keep your men concentrated as much as possible, and guard against surprise. Keep scouts out at all times, and communication open with Col. Burton, Major [John D. T.] McAllister<sup>32</sup> and O. P. [Orrin Porter] Rockwell, who are operating in the same way. Keep me advised daily of your movements, and every step the troops take, and in which direction. God bless you and give you success.

Your bro. in Christ,  
Daniel H. Wells.

PS.—If the troops have not passed, or have turned in this direction, follow in their rear and continue to annoy them, burning any trains they may leave. Take no life, but destroy their trains and stampede or drive away their animals at every opportunity.

D. H. Wells.<sup>33</sup>

---

31. Cache Cave played a significant role in the Utah War as Legion headquarters in Echo Canyon. See Hank R. Smith, "Cache Cave: Utah's First Register," in *Far Away in the West: Reflections on the Mormon Pioneer Trail*, ed. Scott C. Esplin and others (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 197.

32. John D. T. McAllister is best known for composing "The Handcart Song."

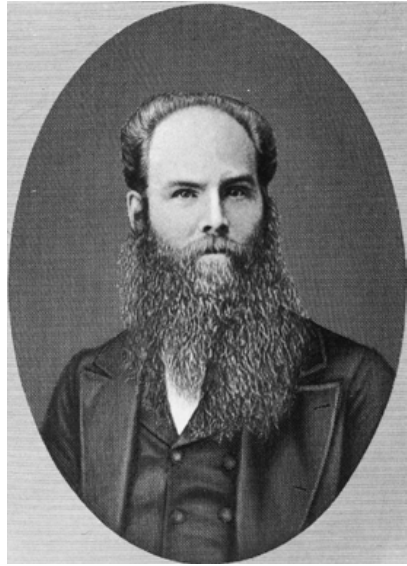
33. Orders of Daniel H. Wells, quoted in Third District Court (Territorial), Case Files, *People v. Young*, series 9802, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, quoted also in Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 1–2; and "Indictment of the Mormon Leaders," *New-York Tribune*, March 1, 1858, 6. There are small transcription discrepancies between these sources. The text above conforms to the version that appeared in the *New-York Tribune*.

## Prisoners of War

Meanwhile, Major Lot Smith's Mormon scouts patrolled with similar orders "to stampede the animals, burn the grass, stage nightly surprises to keep the soldiers from sleeping, block the road with fallen trees and destroy the fords."<sup>34</sup> In early October, Smith burned three supply trains that were hauling tons of food and supplies for the army.<sup>35</sup> The following week, he ran off seven hundred head of federally owned cattle.<sup>36</sup>

Captain Randolph B. Marcy's Utah Expedition soldiers fired dozens of shots at Smith's militiamen on October 16, but none were injured or captured. That afternoon Major Taylor's small party observed smoke and thought they had located Smith's camp, but instead Marcy's soldiers captured Taylor, Stowell, and their pack mules.<sup>37</sup> The three men traveling with them escaped.

Stowell carried the orders from General Wells inside a small pocket journal in his shirt. His first thought was to get rid of the papers, but he quickly reconsidered. As he later wrote, "After dark, I took the



Lot Smith, a major in Utah's Nauvoo Legion. He was ordered to delay federal troops until a hoped-for diplomatic breakthrough could be reached. He led a group of rangers east across present-day Wyoming near where the California, Oregon, and Mormon Trails merge. He and his men burned prairie grass, stampeded army mules, drove off cattle, and burned more than seventy wagons filled with food and supplies. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

---

34. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 255.

35. "Narrative of Lot Smith," in *Mormon Resistance: A Documentary Account of the Utah Expedition, 1857–1858*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 220–28.

36. Richard E. Turley Jr. and John Eldredge, "Utah War," in *Mapping Mormonism: An Atlas of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Brandon S. Plewe, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2014), 111. The army and Lot Smith's scouts continued to skirmish throughout the month of October.

37. Young, "Nauvoo Legion," 370.

book containing the orders out of my bosom, intending to drop it by the side of my horse. Just as I was about to drop the book, a quiet, distinct [otherworldly] voice said, 'Keep them, for they will do more good than harm.'"<sup>38</sup> He was surprised, for he couldn't see any reason to keep them. He tried to throw them away twice more, and each time he felt the same impulse to retain them—which he did.<sup>39</sup>

Stowell and Taylor were placed under guard at Camp Winfield and questioned separately by Colonel Alexander, who was at that time the senior officer in the field. When asked why he was there, Stowell replied, "To repel a mob[,] sir." When asked why he thought the army was a mob, he replied, "I have known the Latter-day Saints to be harassed by mobs from my first acquaintance with them. . . . It had been reported to us that there was an army coming from the states under the name of Government troops without any legal cause hence we regarded it as vile mobocracy."<sup>40</sup> He warned the colonel about the strong fortifications in Echo Canyon, exaggerating the number of the Legion's troops as twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand.<sup>41</sup> The army, he said, would suffer severe casualties if they attempted to enter the Salt Lake Valley by force. Stowell's orders were soon discovered, and he was interrogated again. Stowell warned the colonel against entering Salt Lake City through Marsh Valley in present-day Idaho because General Chauncey W. West was guarding that entrance.<sup>42</sup>

Stowell was jeeringly told in mid-October that the army would winter in Salt Lake City and that "Jesus Christ cannot keep us out!"<sup>43</sup> Colonel Alexander and his senior advisers sensed the danger of traveling via Echo Canyon and decided the following day to enter the Salt Lake Valley

---

38. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 25.

39. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 5.

40. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 4. Compare "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 2; and Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 25. President James Buchanan had never informed Brigham Young that he was being replaced as territorial governor and that a Utah Expedition was being sent to escort his successor.

41. "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 3. The actual number was only a fraction of Stowell's boast to his captors. See MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 428, for a US Army estimate of the Nauvoo Legion forces facing them.

42. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 25. In *Biographical Sketch*, the general is referred to as "General G. W. West."

43. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 26; see also "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 3.

by way of Soda Springs, traveling northward along Hams Fork.<sup>44</sup> Stowell recorded that the information he and Major Taylor shared regarding Mormon defensive operations caused division within the army's leadership. As a result, the army retraced its route down Hams Fork and waited for Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston's arrival.<sup>45</sup> This short delay—along with the more significant impact of "severe weather, deep snow, and a massive loss of animals"<sup>46</sup>—possibly prevented an armed conflict that winter that could have resulted from the army's immediate deployment.

Taylor and Stowell were restrained in irons while they suffered from cold, hunger, and growing uncertainty. Time surely passed slowly for them. Stowell claimed that a sergeant fed them vegetable soup that had been poisoned. They vomited after sampling it and administered priesthood blessings to each other. Both men remained weak for several days.<sup>47</sup>

### On Trial for Treason

Colonel Johnston arrived on November 3, escorting Governor Cumming and Chief Justice Eckels. Johnston complained to army headquarters on November 5 that the Mormons had "placed themselves in rebellion against the Union and entertain the insane design of establishing a form of government thoroughly despotic and utterly repugnant to our institutions."<sup>48</sup>

About this time, Major Taylor formulated an escape plan. Stowell was suffering from rheumatism from the cold march. He began spinning a yarn to his guards at the campfire while Major Taylor escaped into an opening in a passing herd of cattle. Taylor's absence went unnoticed for about fifteen minutes.<sup>49</sup> A party with bloodhounds searched but couldn't

---

44. Brandon J. Metcalf, "The Nauvoo Legion and the Prevention of the Utah War," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 72 (Fall 2004): 310.

45. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 6.

46. William P. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 2: A Documentary History of the Utah War, 1858–1859* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2016), 618. The name of the sergeant later recorded by the captives does not correspond to anyone carried on the Utah Expedition's muster rolls.

47. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 5; see also "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 3.

48. Colonel Johnston to Army Headquarters, November 5, 1857, in Hafen and Hafen, *Mormon Resistance*, 159. Within a few years, Johnston would join the Confederacy and die at the Battle of Shiloh. He was the highest-ranking officer killed in the Civil War.

49. "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 3.

find him. Half frozen, he joined up with a Mormon supply train four miles from Fort Bridger, sharing military intelligence and reporting Stowell's capture to Brigham Young.<sup>50</sup>

On November 16, the army established temporary winter quarters at Camp Scott, about two miles southwest from Fort Bridger. They spread a Sibley tent over Stowell and staked it tightly down. Many animals died of the cold that night. Stowell's legs were subsequently shackled, and he complained of "living [in the guard tent] with filthy lousy soldiers and being covered with body lice."<sup>51</sup> Brigham Young wrote to Colonel Johnston on November 26, informing him that "if you imagine that keeping, mistreating or killing Mr. Stowell will redound to your credit or advantage, future experience may add to the stock of your better judgment."<sup>52</sup>

Near Camp Scott, Governor Cumming, Chief Justice Eckels, and their associates set up a temporary seat of territorial government in quarters called Eckelsville, a "ramshackle warren of dugouts, log cabins, tents, buggies, and wagon boxes."<sup>53</sup> Mormon troops continued to watch the army from nearby Bridger Butte. Not intimidated by Governor Young's earlier correspondence, Eckels convened a grand jury on December 30 that indicted twenty Mormons for high treason. The list of those



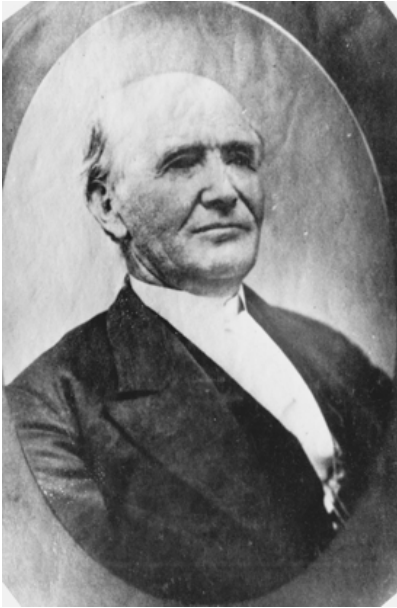
Brigham Young (c. 1857). He declared martial law in Utah Territory and ordered the Nauvoo Legion to hinder the approach of federal troops. He also took a personal interest in the safe return of William Stowell from captivity. Courtesy Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

50. Joseph Taylor, *Journal*, 1857, Church History Library; Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 7.

51. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 7–8; Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 27.

52. Brigham Young to Col. A. S. Johnston, November 26, 1857, in *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, January 4, 1857, 3–4, Church History Library. Thanks to Steve Richardson for identifying this resource.

53. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 284.



Delana R. Eckels, incoming chief justice of the Utah Territory Supreme Court. He arraigned Lieutenant Stowell for high treason and reportedly attempted to poison him. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

indicted included the Church's First Presidency (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Daniel H. Wells<sup>54</sup>), John Taylor, George D. Grant, Lot Smith, Orrin Porter Rockwell, William A. Hickman, Albert Carrington, Joseph Taylor, Robert Burton, James Ferguson, Ephraim Hanks, and the army's prisoner, William Stowell.<sup>55</sup>

On January 5, 1858, with Judge Eckels presiding, Stowell was charged in person (the other nineteen were charged in absentia) with "wicked, malicious, and treasonable conspiracy, combination, confederation, and agreement." Stowell was further charged with possessing "a wicked, malicious and treasonable communication from the said Daniel H. Wells to the said Joseph Taylor."<sup>56</sup> Journalist Albert G. Browne Jr.,<sup>57</sup> a reporter for Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune* who doubled as the

court's clerk, sent the following account to the *Tribune*: "Stowell is a thick, heavy-set man, not more than five feet six inches in height, with a rough

---

54. After the unexpected death of Jedediah M. Grant on December 1, 1856, Wells was set apart as second counselor in the First Presidency on January 4, 1857.

55. Third District Court (Territorial), Case Files, *People v. Young*. See "Indictment of the Mormon Leaders," *New-York Daily Tribune*, March 1, 1858, 6. The article was published in March 1858, but the news report from which the article quoted was dated December 30, 1857. The other individuals indicted were Lewis Robison, Joshua Terry, John Harvey, Daniel Jones, Phineas Young, and William Young (spelling corrected). In the original handwritten indictment, blank space was left for the later addition of more people.

56. Third District Court (Territorial), Case Files, *People v. Young*.

57. The overqualified but inexperienced reporter had a bachelor's and law degree from Harvard, a law license, and a PhD from the University of Heidelberg. See MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 186; and MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 96.



and obstinate, but not malignant countenance, short and shaggy black hair, and an illiterate expression. He was clothed warmly, and with tolerable neatness, Judge Eckels having personally inspected and provided for his physical cleanliness before the arrival of the Marshal at camp. He listened to the reading of the indictment with composure, and was evidently gratified, surprised to find his name in such noble company.”<sup>58</sup> Stowell hired the gray-bearded Virginia attorney Charles Maurice Smith, who was traveling with the army as a civilian camp-follower, for two hundred dollars, pled not guilty, and asked for an adjournment to secure witnesses.<sup>59</sup> Eckels agreed to a delay for both sides to call witnesses, noting that there were still numerous other “persons who had not yet been arrested.”<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, Lieutenant Stowell remained a prisoner.

### Sister Wives with Shoeless Orphans

On the home front, unaware of their husband’s capture, Cynthia and Sophronia worked hard to harvest crops and prepare for winter. Cynthia wrote, “We were living on our town lot in Ogden in a house with two rooms for our families. The oldest boy of the orphans, about fifteen, was the best help we had for our out-door work. Before the severe cold of winter set in he, with a yoke of steers and a wagon, hauled a large quantity of sage brush from the sand ridge for fuel as he was too young to battle with the difficulties of hauling wood from the canyons.” Her son, she said, “was, as well, poorly clad and wore a pair of tattered men’s shoes until a kind neighbor furnished him a better pair. The other wife and myself worked together and spun yarn which we . . . wove into cloth to supply the pressing wants of the family.”<sup>61</sup>

During those early years, Utah lacked sufficient means to manufacture clothing and bedding. Despite their best efforts, Cynthia and Sophronia were unable to provide shoes for their children during the winter. Cynthia wrote, “Sophronia and myself took turns on alternate days to go with ox team and gather the squashes, potatoes, etc. and

---

58. “A Mormon Prisoner—His Trial,” *New-York Semi-Weekly Tribune*, March 2, 1858, transcript in Perry Special Collections.

59. Stowell, “Echo Canon War,” 8. MacKinnon notes, “One of the war’s mysteries is how Smith, later a prominent Washington lawyer, happened to accompany the Utah Expedition.” MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 2*, 293 n. 44, 576.

60. “Mormon Prisoner—His Trial,” March 2, 1858.

61. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 3.

bring them home for the winter. The second orphan boy of eleven years usually accompanied us with his thin clothing and shoeless feet in the cold raw winds of autumn. Sophronia's father kindly let us have a winter cow, but our supply of milk was very limited for want of food and shelter for the cow."<sup>62</sup>

Many kind neighbors provided food for their family, and Cynthia recorded that "as a family we enjoyed excellent health. Plain food, fresh air, and a healthy climate all worked in our favor." Unfortunately, they did have one serious accident when William Henry Packard, "the first orphan adopted into the family, and now about [8?] yrs. old, accidentally ran a pitchfork into his leg. He caught cold in it and had a serious time for three weeks during which he required good care and nursing."<sup>63</sup>

Adding to her anxiety, Cynthia learned, likely during November, of William's imprisonment. "Circumstances did not admit," she observed, "to our keeping up a correspondence with him."<sup>64</sup> For his part, William was able to write his family only one short note during his imprisonment. His family was able to write only one or two times after being informed by Church leaders that there would be an opportunity of corresponding with him. Cynthia and Sophronia were both pregnant, and they dreamed of being reunited with William. "We had some dreams of his being home with us again and that gave us some hope and a little comfort. At one time I dreamed that he was at home and played with the baby on my lap, that was just getting old enough to take a little notice of its surroundings."<sup>65</sup>

Midwinter, Apostle Orson Hyde visited Cynthia and Sophronia to assure them that "all things would work around right for Mr. Stowell's deliverance and restoration to his family." She wrote that the winter passed "the faster and with less borrowed anxiety from the constant care and exertion required to meet the urgent demands of the family." Cynthia recorded that she deeply appreciated her friendship with her sister wife, Sophronia, who "worked faithfully along with me in these difficult times, and our faith and confidence in each other has remained steadfast ever since."<sup>66</sup>

---

62. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 3.

63. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 4.

64. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 4.

65. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 4.

66. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 4.

## Continued Captivity

In February or March, Lieutenant Stowell and a fellow prisoner, a US corporal named Nicholson who was “imprisoned for some light offence,”<sup>67</sup> stockpiled food and bribed a guard so they could escape. After four days of wandering near Fort Supply, they concluded that they would almost certainly die of exposure, so they returned to camp. William later wrote that it required great endurance to reach the camp. Their feet, hands, and face were “frozen and our strength almost exhausted.” Stowell recorded that upon seeing them back in custody, Eckels commented that “he would rather have frozen to death on the mountains than come back.” Stowell told him, “I was not ready to die yet.”<sup>68</sup> Manacled with a heavy ball and chain, Stowell later recorded that Corporal Nicholson was court-martialed and received fifty lashes for his desertion. “I was compelled to see the fifty lashes severely administered,” he wrote. “When I was released, [Nicholson] was still a prisoner with ball and chain. The punishment seem to me barbarous in the extreme.”<sup>69</sup>

Soon after, Eckels surprised Stowell with a pie baked by an apostate Mormon in camp, Elizabeth Wadsworth.<sup>70</sup> More than a year earlier, James and Elizabeth Wadsworth had brought their adopted nephew, also named James, from England to Utah Territory as part of the ill-fated Hunt wagon company that accompanied the Willie and Martin handcart companies. While living in Payson, they resisted pressure to practice plural marriage. Their niece, Elizabeth Cotton, joined the Wadsworth household with the intent to “escape from Utah and return to Iowa”<sup>71</sup> and had traveled with them to Eckelsville. The Wadsworths

---

67. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 30. This may have been Edwin or Edward E. Nicholson, Co. K, Tenth US Infantry. In 1861, he returned east with the Tenth Infantry to fight in the Union Army in Virginia, was discharged in July 1862, and was commissioned an officer in the 4th Maryland Infantry, a volunteer regiment. He is identified as a private in Utah Expedition rolls, but William Stowell refers to him as a corporal.

68. Stowell, “Echo Canon War,” 9.

69. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 30.

70. Elizabeth Wadsworth “emigrated to Utah in 1856, but soon became disgusted with the practices there and came to Newton, Iowa, where she united with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1866.” “Obituary,” *Newton (Iowa) Journal*, February 3, 1892, 2.

71. “Late from the Utah Expedition,” *New-York Tribune*, January 22, 1858, 2.

were disgruntled with Mormonism, and Stowell claimed it was widely known in camp that Elizabeth Cotton was sleeping with Eckels.<sup>72</sup>

A week after the initial gift of a pie, Eckels and James Wadsworth privately presented Stowell with a most unusual gift for a Mormon teetotalist: a bottle of liquor and another pie. Eckels told him not to share the liquor with anyone. Wadsworth quietly confided to Stowell that it had been laced with chloroform. Stowell dumped the liquor on the ground but ate some of the pie, which promptly made him sick. A man who found a small portion of the liquor remaining, drank it, became ill, and was taken to the hospital. A prisoner told the man, "They have tried to poison Stowell, and you have got the dose."<sup>73</sup>

Into this setting rode Colonel Thomas L. Kane on March 12 as an unofficial peace commissioner.<sup>74</sup> After informing President Buchanan the previous Christmas Day that he intended to travel to Utah to offer his services as an unofficial negotiator, Kane had traveled by steamer from New York to San Pedro and then quietly traveled overland northeast to meet with Brigham Young in Salt Lake City. Young directed Kane to "please learn what you can in regard to Stowel[l], and what their intentions are toward him."<sup>75</sup> Kane rode through mountain snows to Camp Scott in order to speak with Colonel Johnston. Soldiers suspected Kane was a Mormon, and as Captain Jesse A. Gove reported, his men "want[ed] to hang him."<sup>76</sup> To avoid conflict, Kane moved a short distance to Eckelsville. He called the men at Camp Scott "monomaniacs" with "no exception"<sup>77</sup> and assessed Chief Justice Eckels as "an over eager prosecutor and certainly one of the most indiscreet of speakers. . . . He

---

72. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 30. In 1858, Cotton left Utah with Eckels and became a member of his household in Greencastle, Indiana. In the early 1860s, she married the judge's son, William, the day after he divorced his first wife.

73. Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 10; "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 6.

74. For Kane's friendship with the Latter-day Saints and motivations behind this unofficial peace mission, see Matthew J. Grow, *"Liberty to the Downtrodden": Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and David J. Whittaker, ed., *Colonel Thomas L. Kane and the Mormons, 1846-1883* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2009).

75. Brigham Young to Thomas L. Kane, March 22, 1858, Church History Library.

76. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 283.

77. MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 285.

boasts to all the world of what he intends to do when he reaches the little capital [Salt Lake City].”<sup>78</sup>

Kane helped convince Governor Cumming to enter Salt Lake City without a military escort, which defused much of the tension. Kane also proved instrumental in working out a solution to the misunderstandings between the federal government and the Mormons.

Shortly after Cumming left Eckelsville for Salt Lake City, Eckels began empaneling a grand jury to probe plural marriage in Utah. It was a judicial action that was “well beyond his judicial purview. . . . Absent a U.S. or territorial statute banning polygamy, the judge’s gratuitous charge to the jury smacked of religious persecution, a provocation that sent shock waves to Salt Lake City and Washington.”<sup>79</sup> Kane assessed him as “a bad man” who “desired to embarrass the peace negotiations, to *which he is opposed*.”<sup>80</sup> Governor Cumming called Eckels’s actions “unwise and unauthorized.”<sup>81</sup>

### The Move South

Meanwhile, in Salt Lake City, fearing military occupation by federal troops, Young convened a special conference on March 21, 1858, in the Old Tabernacle on Temple Square. Referring to the 1855 Crimean War Siege of Sebastopol, he said it would be better to burn their cities than allow the army to live in them—rendering hollow any military victory. Young instructed residents north of Utah County to move south for safety. Approximately thirty thousand people from southern Idaho to the Salt Lake Valley’s Point of the Mountain moved on snowy, slushy roads to central and southern Utah. Many of the refugees settled temporarily in Utah County between Provo and present-day Salem. Elder Wilford Woodruff noted in his journal: “North to the South the road is lined for 50 to 100 miles from Box Elder to Provo with horse Mule & ox teams and loose cattle sheep & hogs and also men women & Children.

---

78. Thomas L. Kane to James Buchanan, c. March 15, 1858, Vault MSS 792, Kane Family Papers, Perry Special Collections.

79. MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 2*, 383–84.

80. Thomas L. Kane to Judge John K. Kane, April 4, 1858, Vault MSS 792, Kane Family Papers; emphasis in original.

81. Alfred Cumming to James L. Orr, May 12, 1858, James Buchanan Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

All are leaving their homes."<sup>82</sup> The massive three-month move obliged Latter-day Saints to make do as best they could.

Because both Cynthia and Sophronia were pregnant, they did not leave their home in Ogden until April 21—just one week after the birth of Cynthia's son Rufus.<sup>83</sup> In those extreme circumstances, Sophronia gave birth to daughter Mary on May 4.<sup>84</sup> Cynthia wrote that the difficulties "seemed quite insurmountable" and added:

In this wagon were myself and four children, Sophronia and her two children and the six orphan children; in all fourteen souls with no other male assistance than the orphan boys we were raising.

We could take nothing more with us than necessary clothing, bedding and food, the latter only enough to last us until we hoped to be able to get more by a return of the team. We went as far as Salt Lake City and found shelter in the house of Mr. Seth M. Blair.<sup>85</sup> There we remained until the oldest boy, Wm. A. Stowell, returned to Ogden and brought down another load. In these two loads were all we took with us in the move; very little for so large a family.<sup>86</sup>

### Pleading for Her Husband

The first week of May or so, Cynthia met with Governor Cumming in Salt Lake City to explain personally her husband's situation and plead for his release. Cumming listened to her plight and promised to take a letter to William when he returned to Camp Scott.<sup>87</sup> Cynthia wrote the following account of her meeting with the incoming governor:

---

82. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898 Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kinney, 9 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1983-84), 5:177-8, 186; spelling standardized.

83. Rufus Stowell (KWJD-KJP) was born April 14, 1858, in Ogden and died October 15, 1858, in Ogden.

84. Mary Stowell (KWVS-5CT) was born May 4, 1858, in Ogden and died October 17, 1858, in Ogden.

85. Blair, a Legion major, played a colorful role in the war as Brigham Young's liaison with fellow Texans US Senator Sam Houston and Buchanan peace commissioner Ben McCulloch.

86. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 4-5.

87. Governor Cumming was true to his word and delivered Cynthia's letter to William after he returned to Camp Scott on May 13. See MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 463.

He received me very kindly. He inquired about the family and as his queries led to it I gave him an account of the family, its numbers, the orphan children, etc. He said it was a bad shape to be in. His sympathetic attitude cheered me. He probably thought my case quite a representative one among our people. He assured me he would do all he could for Mr. Stowell. At the close of our short interview he gave me ten dollars. I had expected he would feel ugly towards us and of course was the more surprised at his kindness and sympathy. At that time there was not much in the way of good to be had in Utah.<sup>88</sup>

With the money she received from the governor, Cynthia bought shoes for Sophronia and some yards of fabric to make clothing for the children.<sup>89</sup>

Back at Camp Scott, Governor Cumming tearfully interviewed William Stowell and assured him of “a fair, and impartial trial and not by a jury of that camp.”<sup>90</sup> At the end of May, two peace commissioners (Benjamin McCulloch of Texas, who earlier had turned down the president’s invitation to be Utah’s territorial governor, and Kentucky senator-elect Lazarus W. Powell) arrived with a proclamation of general pardon from President Buchanan. Stowell swore allegiance to the United States on June 1 and was freed. Historian William P. MacKinnon notes, “In effect, Lieutenant Stowell was the first beneficiary of this amnesty and the only individual case in the midst of the blanket pardon granted to the territory’s entire population.”<sup>91</sup>

Stowell reported his release as follows: “I was escorted to the blacksmith shop to be relieved of my irons. . . . When the smith came out to take off the shackles, I turned the end to him that was sound and at the same time cautioned him not to injure my leg. I stood in an awkward position purposely making it rather difficult to loosen the iron. After a little,” he continued, “I said, ‘let me take the tools, I can take it off sooner than you can.’ I sat down and put the weak joint . . . on the top of my leg, took the cold chisel, applied it to the weak place and with a slight tap of the hammer, parted the iron, remarking that I could have taken that off any time since it was put on, in five minutes. The officers turned away laughing.” Stowell thanked Commissioner Powell for bringing President

---

88. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 5.

89. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 5.

90. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 31; see also “William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857,” 6–7.

91. MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 2*, 510 n. 10.



Buchanan's proclamation of pardon and asked him to thank the president. Eckels and the soldiers donated forty-seven dollars and fifty cents to help his family.<sup>92</sup> Stowell then rode down Echo Canyon on June 4 with Governor Cumming's advance party and recalled his dream of the previous fall.<sup>93</sup>

### A Family Reunited

Stowell's first concern was for his family. He traveled to Provo and met with Brigham Young, seeking his family's whereabouts. He found Cynthia in Pondtown (now Salem) and Sophronia in Payson.<sup>94</sup> Cynthia wrote, "As patiently as possible we awaited the arrival of Mr. Stowell. We understood that the general pardon of the President of the U.S. would release him. He arrived in Payson the 10th of June, 1858. . . . When Mr. Stowell returned my dream before related in which I saw him play with the baby on my lap was fulfilled."<sup>95</sup>

After a joyful reunion, they made the hot, dry journey home to Ogden, but more afflictions lay in store for the Stowells. Cynthia's son Rufus died on October 14, and Sophronia's daughter Mary died three days later. They were buried in the same grave. "Surely it was a time of great destitution and affliction to us," Cynthia wrote. "Many others suffered with us. There was the satisfaction that we had done the best we could as a people under the difficulties that were forced upon us by our enemies."<sup>96</sup>

William's capture, imprisonment, and trial for high treason makes his Utah War experience unique. Cynthia and Sophronia demonstrated resilience, faith, courage, and hard work throughout the war. Eventually, Cynthia would have five more children,<sup>97</sup> as would Sophronia.<sup>98</sup> Over the next decade, the Stowells enjoyed a brief respite from their trials

---

92. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 31–32.

93. "William R. Stowell Journal, circa 1857," 7; Stowell, "Echo Canon War," 11; MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 510 n. 10, 513.

94. Little, *Biographical Sketch*, 33.

95. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 5.

96. Cynthia Jane Park Stowell, *Autobiography*, 5.

97. Heber John (1860–1923, KW8C-CVP), Matilda (1863–1957, KWJZ-XNH), Cynthia (1865–1930, KWNX-S3X), James (1868–1889, KWV7-W81), and Francis Augustus Stowell (1877–1925, KWZV-7H6).

98. Mariah (1859–1945, KWCK-LP9), Martha Matilda (1859–1947, KWJZ-88N), David (1861–1939, KWZH-4MV), Alexander (1864–1941, KWCB-B4Q), and Mary Ann (1866–1943, KWCF-FKX).

until federal antipolygamy legislation drove them into hiding and to move further south—this time to Colonia Juárez in northern Mexico. There, William became a mill owner and a Church patriarch. He passed away on May 30, 1901. After William's death, Cynthia and Sophronia returned to the United States, free from the political pressures that had motivated their second move south.<sup>99</sup>

---

R. Devan Jensen is executive editor at the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and a third-great-grandson of William and Cynthia Stowell.

Kenneth L. Alford is a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University and a retired colonel in the United States Army.

They are grateful for the reviews of Utah War researchers William P. MacKinnon and Brent M. Rogers, who provided vital details and perspectives.

---

99. Sophronia died at Franklin, Idaho, on January 24, 1907. Cynthia moved to Cornish, Utah, where she died in the home of her daughter Matilda on January 18, 1908.

# Joseph Smith's Dog, Old Major

*Alexander L. Baugh*

When it comes to history, interesting information is often found in the little-known, incidental details. Discovering the lesser-known facts in people's lives helps one understand more about their disposition, character, temperament, motivation, and personality—who they really were and what they were like. One such aspect of the life of Joseph Smith is how he came to own a dog and his close relationship with this canine companion.

George A. Smith (fig. 1) provided some of the best information about Joseph Smith's dog. In 1834, young George was one of over two hundred Mormon volunteers who made up the Camp of Israel (later known as Zion's Camp) that marched to western Missouri. In compiling his account of the day-to-day travels and events associated with the trek, George reported that on Thursday, June 5, 1834, the company crossed the Mississippi River from Illinois into Missouri, then camped a mile west of the settlement known as Louisiana. The presence of the Mormon company alarmed some of the local inhabitants, who were aware of their presence and were leery of their intentions. On this occasion Samuel Baker, the oldest member of the camp, presented Joseph Smith with a dog. George reported, "There was a Gentleman in our Camp named Samuel Baker, from Norton, Medina Co. Ohio, who was nearly 80 years old and had walked the whole journey. . . . Father Baker brought with him a large and very faithful watch dog and being satisfied that the spies who were watching our Camp sought the life of Joseph, presented the dog to him; this dog was greatly attached to Joseph and

was generally by his side, keeping close watch of every thing that approached the camp.”<sup>1</sup>

George A. Smith’s narrative indicates that Baker gave Joseph Smith the dog for two significant reasons. First, during the company’s month-long travels the dog had become “attached to Joseph.” For this type of bonding to take place, the Prophet had likely paid considerable attention to the dog during the journey (petting, stroking, feeding, engaging in playful interaction), which resulted in him becoming attached to the canine as well. Recognizing the fondness Joseph Smith and the dog had for each other, Baker was willing to relinquish ownership. Second, given this mutual sense of attachment, the dog could serve to protect the Mormon leader. This relationship is illustrated by an incident that took place after the last Mormon company crossed the Mississippi



FIGURE 1. George A. Smith, date unknown. Smith reported that Samuel Baker gave a dog to Joseph Smith in June 1834 during the Camp of Israel’s (Zion’s Camp) expedition to Missouri. Courtesy Church History Library.

1. George A. Smith, *Memoirs of George A. Smith, 1817–September 10, 1847*, 29, MS 1322, George A. Smith Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE714718](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE714718). George A. Smith’s memoir, created years later, provides the most information about Samuel Baker of any accounts of Zion’s Camp.

Financial records of the camp indicate that Baker made two financial contributions, for \$5.44 and \$1.00. “Account with the Church of Christ, circa 11–29 August 1834,” in Matthew C. Godfrey, Brenden W. Rensink, Alex D. Smith, Max H Parkin, and Alexander L. Baugh, eds., *Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, vol. 4 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin, Matthew J. Grow, and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 144, 146, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). Samuel Baker died in Nauvoo, Illinois, date unknown. Milton V. Backman Jr., *A Profile of Latter-day Saints of Kirtland, Ohio and Members of Zion’s Camp* (Provo, Utah: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1982), 4.

River. George A. Smith wrote: "Levi Hancock, one of Sylvester Smith's Comp[an]y, had while waiting to cross the River made a fire of a large joint of sweet elder and landing on the bank being the last to cross, Sylvester formed his company in single file and marched them to the Notes of Levi's fire and as they came into Camp they made quite a Military appearance, this excited Joseph's faithful watch dog which attacked them as if they had been an enemy although the dog was called off and did no injury, it enraged S. [Sylvester] Smith to that extent that he used much abusive language to Joseph, threatening the dog's, life."<sup>2</sup> To make matters worse, the next morning Sylvester protested once again, only this time it was about the dog's barking during the nighttime, and this resulted in another exchange of harsh words between the two men. Sylvester threatened to kill the dog a second time, to which Joseph Smith countered, "If you kill that dog I will whip you."<sup>3</sup> Cooler heads eventually prevailed, but the incident was not fully resolved until after the members of Zion's Camp returned to Kirtland, Ohio.<sup>4</sup>

What breed was the dog? In a popular history volume of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, *The Story of the Church*, author Inez Smith Davis, a great-granddaughter of Joseph

---

2. Smith, *Memoirs of George A. Smith*, 29.

3. Smith, *Memoirs of George A. Smith*, 29. For a similar account, see Heber C. Kimball, "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 788–89.

4. This incident between Joseph Smith and Sylvester Smith was one of several heated exchanges that occurred between the two men during the 1834 expedition to Missouri. After returning to Ohio on August 11, a council was held to investigate charges issued by Sylvester Smith against the Prophet. After some deliberation, the Mormon leader was found innocent of any wrongdoing. "Minutes, 11 August 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 99–101, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). Later, on August 28–29, the Kirtland high council convened to try Sylvester Smith for his membership in the Church. He was found guilty regarding the false accusations he had made against Joseph Smith, whereupon he issued a public confession, and although he was removed from the high council, he retained his membership in the Church. See "Minutes, 28–29 August 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 120–35, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). For specific mention in the council minutes regarding the incident with Joseph Smith's dog, see Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 125, 129–30, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).



**FIGURE 2.** Mastiffs are known for their loyalty. Photograph by ocean yamaha, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>.

Smith, wrote that the dog was a “great mastiff,”<sup>5</sup> in all likelihood an English mastiff—the largest breed of dogs in terms of mass, not necessarily height or length. English mastiffs reach full physical maturity around eighteen months. Males can weigh anywhere from 160 to 230 pounds, females from 120 to 170 pounds. They have large, square heads, a black mask (face), black ears, and drooping jowls (with plenty of excess drool and slobber). Because of their size, they have a relatively short life span, generally from eight to ten years, but some live longer. They are powerful and muscular canines (figs. 2, 4). In spite of their size, English mastiffs are the gentle giants of the dog species—affectionate,

---

5. Inez Smith Davis, *The Story of the Church: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and of Its Legal Successor, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 3d ed. (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1943), 304. Davis was a daughter of Vida Elizabeth Smith, who was a daughter of Alexander Hale Smith, one of four surviving sons of Joseph and Emma Hale Smith. As a direct descendant of Joseph Smith, Inez Davis was familiar with many of the personal histories and stories associated with Joseph and Emma’s family passed on to her by her mother, her grandfather Alexander H. Smith, Joseph Smith III, and other Smith family members.

peaceful, good-natured, dignified, and somewhat docile. On the other hand, they are also courageous and extremely protective of their human caregivers and are excellent guard dogs. They have a keen sense and a natural, instinctive perception of threatening situations and will intercede if danger threatens their guardians.<sup>6</sup>

In recounting his childhood memories, Joseph Smith III said it was a white dog.<sup>7</sup> English mastiff's coats are generally fawn (light yellowish tan), silver fawn, apricot fawn, or dark fawn-brindle (brownish or tawny color with streaks of other color patterns), not exactly white. So, from Joseph III's description, the dog was likely silver fawn in color. A number of contemporary sources, including statements by Joseph Smith himself, indicate the dog's name was Major, and in some instances he was referred to as "Old Major." It is not known whether he was named Major by Samuel Baker, the original owner, or by Joseph Smith. At the time the Prophet gained custody, Major was probably full grown but still relatively young, around eighteen months, which would indicate that he was probably born around 1832 or 1833.

Joseph Smith III (fig. 3) had two early recollections of Major, both of which took place in the fall of 1838



FIGURE 3. Joseph Smith III. After the martyrdom, Old Major became the loyal companion of eleven-year-old Joseph Smith III. Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

6. "Mastiff," American Kennel Club, <http://www.akc.org/dog-breeds/mastiff/>; *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "mastiff," last modified April 26, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/animal/mastiff>; "Mastiff," Dogtime, <http://dogtime.com/dog-breeds/mastiff#/slide/1>.

7. Joseph Smith [III], "The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith (1832–1914)," *Saints' Herald* 81 (November 6, 1934): 1414. Smith's memoirs were edited by his daughter Mary Audentia Smith Anderson and appeared serially in the *Saints' Herald* from 1934 to 1937. A photo-reprint edition was published under the same title. See Joseph Smith III, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832–1914)*, ed. Richard P. Howard (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1979), 2.





FIGURE 4. The English mastiff is one of the oldest and largest breeds of dogs. Photograph by Radovan Rohovsky, GNU Free Documentation License.

while the Smith family was living in Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri. Young Joseph was just six years old at the time, but he remembered that Major had been in some sort of fight with another dog, and during the struggle the other dog had chewed on Major's ears, causing them to be sore. It was during this time that Joseph III's younger brother Frederick, who was two years old at the time, was placed on the floor near Major. And while mastiffs are generally known to be good-natured toward young children, on this occasion, "the baby pulled his ears, which hurt him so that he growled fiercely." This caused the Prophet to spring into action in defense of the young-

ster. "Father punished him severely for this, boxing his ears soundly," Joseph III recalled. The harsh treatment taught Major a hard lesson that day, and from that time on when a young child was placed near him, "he would spring to his feet immediately and go away, evidently never forgetting the punishment he had received for growling at the baby."<sup>8</sup> Joseph III recalled that on another occasion, after hearing some excitement taking place outside the Smith's home at Far West, he went to the door or window and saw his father walking away from the house, and then he saw Major jump from an upper window to a platform below and follow his master off.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph Smith may have been allowed to have Major with him during part of the time he was incarcerated in Missouri, and if so, this was

8. Joseph Smith [III], "Memoirs of President Joseph Smith," 1414. Although Joseph III did not state that it was his younger brother Frederick who pulled Major's injured ears, he was likely the child mentioned. The youngest child, Alexander Hale Smith, born June 2, 1838, would have been only a few months old at the time.

9. Joseph Smith [III], "Memoirs of President Joseph Smith," 1414.

perhaps the most significant role this pet played in Joseph's life. Evidence for this comes from a statement by Aaron W. Harlan (fig. 5), a longtime resident of Lee County, Iowa, who visited Joseph Smith in Nauvoo on several occasions in the early 1840s. In a February 17, 1888, letter to the editor of the Keokuk, Iowa, *Post*, Harlan wrote, "I visited Joseph Smith at Nauvoo several different times, say about once each six months. I have ate with him at his table, and played with his dog, and on noticing that the dog was getting old, I said to Mr. Smith: 'Your dog is unusually fat.' Yes, said Mr. Smith, he lives as I do, and shall as long as we both live, and then added that when he was a prisoner in Missouri, that dog could not be separated from him, and for months when he slept, that dog always remained awake by his side." Then, alluding to Joseph Smith's character, Harlan good-naturedly added, "The man that will reciprocate the fidelity of a dog, cannot be altogether bad."<sup>10</sup>



FIGURE 5. Aaron W. Harlan, c. 1861–1864. Harlan recalled Joseph Smith telling him that his dog, Major, was with him during the Prophet's Missouri imprisonment. Courtesy Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

10. A. W. Harlan, letter to the editor, February 17, 1888, (Keokuk, Iowa) *Post*, publication date unknown, copy in Hawkins Taylor Papers, 1837–1890, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, copy in the possession of John W. Welch. The published letter appears under the heading "Mr. A. W. Harlan's Recollections of Joseph Smith and the Mormon City of Nauvoo."

Aaron W. Harlan was born November 15, 1811, in Union County, Indiana. He came to Montrose, Iowa, in 1834, where he was hired to help build the Fort Des Moines barracks. He settled in Croton, Iowa, located in the eastern part of Lee County, Iowa. He went to California for a time during the gold rush and later served four years in the Union Army as a commissary sergeant. He died on April 30, 1911, at the age of 99 and is buried in the Croton Cemetery. See "Scenes in Early Iowa," *Iowa Historical Record* 7 (October 1891): 189; and

A ten-volume scrapbook from the 1880s entitled "History of Keokuk" has recently been donated to the Iowa State Historical Society. These beautiful volumes are held in the Iowa State Historical Library and Archive in Iowa City.

Because Keokuk is just across the Mississippi River from Nauvoo, this trove of documents sheds light on the context of events in Nauvoo in the 1840s. Many items preserve memories of people who experienced the years of Iowa Territory and early statehood. Volume 9 contains minutes, news articles, and information about the many churches in and around Keokuk. It also includes about thirty pages of local newspaper clippings about the Mormons in Iowa and Nauvoo.

Among these clippings is an article by A. W. Harlan, published by an Iowa newspaper, the (Keokuk) *Post*, in February 1888. A shrewd and accurate observer, Harlan was an early settler in Iowa. Two of his publications—an article on slavery in Iowa before statehood, and the diary he kept on his trek to the California gold fields in 1850—appeared in *The Annals of Iowa* in 1897 and 1913.

In the clipping shown here from the 1888 recollection, Harlan tells about times when he visited Joseph Smith at his home in Nauvoo.

**MORMON RESEARCHES.**  
MR. A. W. HARLAN'S RECOLLECTIONS  
OF JOSEPH SMITH AND THE MORMON  
CITY OF NAUVOO.  
(Special Correspondence of The Post.)  
CROTON, Iowa, Feb. 17.—*Editor Post:*  
—In your issue of Nov. 5th, 1887, you published an article entitled "Mormon Researches," in which there is much truth, indeed more truth than I would have thought could have been contained in so short an article. And yet there are a few things that are not fairly stated. In two places the Mormons are represented as orthodox christians, I speak from my own knowledge, and say at that day they put a different construction on some portions of the testament, and many portions of the old testament from what the other sects did at that time. I have always been a skeptic and been called an infidel, and as such in seeking knowledge I visited Joseph Smith at Nauvoo several different times, say about once in in each six months. I have ate with him at his table, and played with his dog, and on noticing that the dog was getting old, I said to Mr. Smith: "Your dog is unusually fat." Yes, said Mr. Smith, he lives as I do, and shall as long as we both live, and then added that when he was a prisoner in Missouri, that dog could not be separated from him, and for months when he slept, that dog always remained awake by his side. The man that will reciprocate the fidelity of a dog, cannot be altogether bad. His wife Emma cooked the dinner herself, while the



**FIGURE 6.** Liberty Jail, c. 1878, original glass-plate photograph by Jacob T. Hicks. Photograph courtesy Clay County Historical Society and Museum, Liberty, Missouri. This is the earliest known photograph of the jail.

If Joseph Smith was allowed to have his dog with him during his Missouri imprisonment, it is not known exactly when Major was actually with him, but there are some clues. On October 31, 1838, the Prophet and six other Mormon leaders were arrested at Far West by Samuel D. Lucas, major general of the militia companies from Jackson and Lafayette Counties. During the month of November, the Mormon prisoners were temporarily incarcerated in Independence (November 4–8), and at Richmond (November 9–29). Following a seventeen-day court of inquiry in Richmond, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin were charged with treason and ordered to be sent to Liberty Jail in Clay County to await the spring term of the circuit court. While it is possible that Major may have been with Joseph Smith during his short stay in Independence and his nearly

---

“Aaron W. Harlan,” Ancestry, <https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=60525&h=13487177>.

three-week stay in Richmond, it seems more likely that it was not until he and the other prisoners began their confinement in Liberty Jail (fig. 6), on December 1, that the authorities would have permitted him to have custody of his dog.

It is important to note that during this era, regulations regarding the incarceration of inmates were not like they are today. Prisoners were not only allowed to have visitors, but family members and friends were permitted to take up lodging for a day or two or even for weeks at a time.<sup>11</sup> Given these allowances regarding visitors, it may not have been out of place for the Mormon prisoners to have had other privileges, including the keeping of a dog.

If Joseph Smith was allowed to have Major with him in Liberty Jail, how did the dog get there? The most logical answer is that Emma, his wife, brought Major. In fact, she and Phebe Rigdon, wife of Sidney Rigdon, were the first Latter-day Saints to visit the Mormon prisoners in Liberty Jail. The two women arrived on December 8, one week

---

11. For examples of individuals who visited the Mormon leaders in Liberty Jail, see Dean C. Jessee, "Walls, Grates and Screeking Iron Doors: The Prison Experience of Mormon Leaders in Missouri, 1838–1839," in *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, ed. Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 26–27. During the Richmond preliminary hearing (November 9–29, 1838), Sidney Rigdon was ill, so his daughter Athalia R. Robinson (wife of George W. Robinson, who was also a prisoner) was allowed to lodge with the prisoners in order to take care of her father and to be with her husband. See Alexander L. Baugh, "'Silence, Ye Fiends of the Infernal Pit!': Joseph Smith's Incarceration in Richmond, Missouri, November 1838," *Mormon Historical Studies* 13 (Spring–Fall 2012): 141. The wives of Parley P. Pratt, Morris Phelps, and Luman Gibbs—Mary Ann Pratt, Laura Phelps, and Phila Gibbs—each stayed with their husbands for a period of time during their incarceration in the Richmond jail. In fact, Pratt's wife Mary Ann and two of their children stayed for almost three months. Laura and Phila were also with their husbands for a period of time during their imprisonment in the Columbia, Boone County, jail, although they may have lodged with the jailor's family. See Alexander L. Baugh, "'Tis Not for Crimes That I Have Done': Parley P. Pratt's Missouri Imprisonment, 1838–1839," in *Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism*, ed. Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, and Dennis J. Siler (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2011), 154; see also Alexander L. Baugh, "The Final Episode of Mormonism in Missouri in the 1830s: The Incarceration of the Mormon Prisoners in Richmond and Columbia Jails, 1838–1839," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 19–21, 31, 33.



after their husbands and the other Mormon men began their incarceration in the prison. Emma and Phebe remained overnight and then left the next day, December 9, to return to Far West.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps Emma brought Major along on this occasion to give herself and Phebe a sense of protection as they traveled the forty miles from Far West to Liberty, or perhaps it was just so her husband could see his beloved dog. She might not have had any intentions of leaving Major with her husband at the jail, but perhaps while she was there, the sheriff, the jailor, or some other official allowed Joseph to keep the dog. Another possibility is that Emma brought Major to the jail at the time of her second visit to Liberty eleven days later. On this occasion, she was accompanied by Nancy Baldwin (wife of Caleb Baldwin, one of the prisoners) and Thirza Cahoon. The three women arrived on December 20 and stayed until December 22.<sup>13</sup>

Emma's last visit to the jail came on January 21, 1839.<sup>14</sup> By this time, most of the Latter-day Saints, including Emma, were making final preparations to leave the state. Uncertain as to how much longer her husband and the other prisoners would remain confined in jail and knowing she would shortly be moving to Illinois, it makes sense that this visit was when she took Major with her back to Far West.<sup>15</sup> Given the dates and timetables of Emma's three visits to Liberty, Major spent at least a month (December 20, 1838, to January 21, 1839), but possibly up to six weeks (December 8, 1838, to January 21, 1839), with Joseph Smith in the jail.

On March 21, 1839, Joseph Smith wrote a letter from Liberty Jail to Emma, who by this time was living with John and Sarah Cleveland a

---

12. Lyman Wight, Journal, quoted in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 8 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1967), 2:309. Joseph Smith III may have also accompanied his mother, Emma, on this occasion. See Joseph Smith [III], "Memoirs of President Joseph Smith," 1414.

13. Wight, Journal, 309.

14. Wight, Journal, 315.

15. Emma Smith and her four children left Far West on February 7, 1839, and arrived in Quincy, Illinois, in mid-February. See "Historical Introduction," in Mark Ashurst-McGee, David W. Grua, Elizabeth A. Kuehn, Brenden W. Rensink, and Alexander L. Baugh, eds., *Documents, Volume 6: February 1838–August 1839*, vol. 6 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin, Matthew J. Grow, and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2017), 338 n. 389.

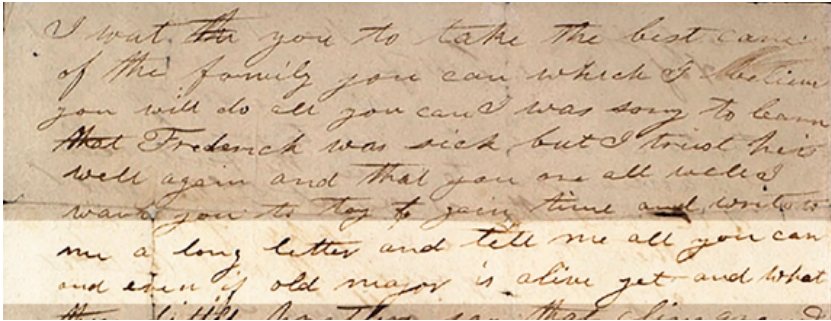


FIGURE 7. Highlighted excerpt of Joseph Smith's March 21, 1838, letter to Emma Smith in which he asks if "old major" is still alive. Courtesy Church History Library.

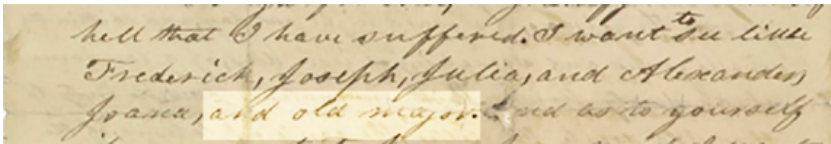


FIGURE 8. Highlighted excerpt of Joseph Smith's April 4, 1839, letter to Emma Smith in which he states that he wants to see "old major." Courtesy Church History Library.

few miles east of Quincy, Illinois. At the time, Joseph had just received a letter from Emma that included a number of particulars regarding the current condition of the members of the Church generally as well as of herself and their children.<sup>16</sup> In his response to Emma, Joseph wrote, "I was sorry to learn that Frederick was sick but I trust he is well again and that you are all well I want you to try to gain time and write to me a long letter and tell me all you can and even if old major is alive yet"<sup>17</sup> (fig. 7). Two weeks later, on April 4, in what would be his last letter to Emma from Liberty Jail, Joseph again expressed similar sentiments: "My Dear Emma I think of you and the children continually. . . . I want <to> see little Frederick, Joseph, Julia, and Alexander, Joana, and old major"<sup>18</sup> (fig. 8). Both of these letters illustrate not only that Joseph

16. "Letter from Emma Smith, 7 March 1839," in Ashurst-McGee and others, *Documents*, Volume 6, 339–40, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).

17. "Letter to Emma Smith, 21 March 1839," in Ashurst-McGee and others, *Documents*, Volume 6, 374, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#).

18. "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 April 1839," in Ashurst-McGee and others, *Documents*, Volume 6, 404–5, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). "Joana"



Smith missed the companionship of his faithful dog, but also that Major was considered part of the family.

The Smith family continued to enjoy the company of Major in Nauvoo during the early 1840s. As noted earlier, Aaron W. Harlan remembered seeing the dog during one of several visits he had with Joseph Smith at his home in Nauvoo. Another visitor, Charlotte Cole, recalled a time when she and her brother attended an evening meeting at the Prophet's home. It was a particularly cold night and Old Major was lounging in the room at the time the meeting was about to begin. Charlotte recalled hearing Joseph say, "It is too cold tonight to turn the dog out." Then, addressing his loyal four-legged friend, he said, "Major . . . you can go under the bed." To her surprise, "the dog did as he was told and stayed there while they held the meeting."<sup>19</sup>

One report in the *Times and Seasons* also makes mention of Old Major. Apparently, some individuals who were not members of the Church accused the Prophet of "enriching himself" from the Church coffers. In response to this accusation, in 1841, the Quorum of the Twelve issued a statement summarizing the extent of Joseph Smith's material wealth: "When Br. Joseph stated to the general conference the amount and situation of the property of the church, of which he is trustee, . . . he also stated the amount of his own possessions on earth; and what do you think it was? we will tell you; his old Charley horse, given him in Kirtland; two pet deer; two old turkeys, and four young ones; the old cow given him by a brother in Missouri, his old Major, dog; his wife, children, and a little household furniture, and this is the amount of the great possessions of that man whom God has called to lead his people in these last days."<sup>20</sup>

Smith family lore holds that at the time Joseph and Hyrum and their party left for Carthage, Illinois, Old Major sensed danger. "Those nearest and dearest to Joseph and Hyrum felt impending calamity," wrote Inez Davis. "Even Joseph's great mastiff, Major, for the first time in his faithful life, refused to obey orders to 'go back home,' and insisted on

---

was Johanna Carter, an orphan who apparently lived with the Smith family. See Ashurst-McGee and others, *Documents*, Volume 6, 404 n. 817.

19. Artemus S. Ward, "Kindness to Animals," *Juvenile Instructor* 39 (February 15, 1904): 125. Ward was recounting what Charlotte Cole, his aunt who was living in his home, had told him.

20. "An Epistle of the Twelve, To the Brethren Scattered Abroad on the Continent of America, Greeting," *Times and Seasons* 2 (October 15, 1841): 569.

staying close to his master, and when imprisoned in an upper room, jumped from a second-story window to follow.” The faithful dog was probably not able to follow the company any great distance and so returned home. Davis wrote that when his master never returned, “old Major transferred his loyalty to the eldest son Joseph [III], never leaving him night or day, and refusing to permit strangers to approach him.”<sup>21</sup>

If Major was born around 1832 or 1833, he would have been about eleven or twelve years old at the time of Joseph Smith’s death. Since the life span of the English mastiff is around ten years, Major probably did not live very long after 1844.

John the Revelator taught that “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them” will enjoy a state of eternal happiness (Rev. 5:13). Joseph Smith’s understanding of this verse led him to conclude that “John saw all the beasts . . . in heaven” and that “God will gratify himself with all these animals.”<sup>22</sup> No wonder, when the Prophet’s favorite horse died, he said that he expected he would have it in eternity.<sup>23</sup> He no doubt felt the same about his ever-loyal canine friend and companion, Old Major.

---

21. Davis, *Story of the Church*, 304.

22. “Journal, 8 April 1843,” in Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, vol. 2 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 346, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). For an expanded account, see “8 April 1843 (Saturday Morning): William Clayton Report,” in *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 185–86. Modern revelation also teaches the concept that the entire animal species will be resurrected and enjoy an eternal existence (see D&C 77:2–4).

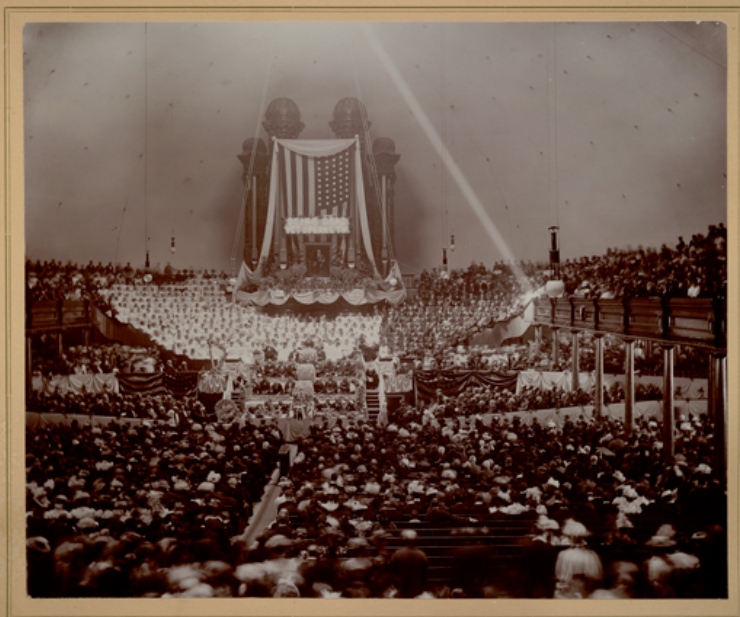
23. As cited by Orson F. Whitney, “Latter-day Saint Ideals and Institutions,” *Improvement Era* 30 (August 1927): 855. Joseph Smith was known to have owned three horses, but he likely had several others. While on Zion’s Camp, he purchased a horse, which he named Mark Anthony. See Smith, *Memoirs of George A. Smith*, 31. As mentioned, in Nauvoo Joseph Smith owned an “old” horse named Charley, which he acquired in Kirtland. See “An Epistle of the Twelve,” 569. Charley was probably the horse that died and that Orson F. Whitney referred to when he wrote that Joseph Smith hoped he would have in the next life. The third horse known to have been owned by the Joseph Smith was a horse he named Joe Duncan, after Joseph Duncan, governor of Illinois from 1834 to 1838. “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” June 27, 1843, 1587, Church History Library, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers](#)

---

Alexander L. Baugh is a professor and chair of the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University, where he has been a full-time faculty member since 1995. He received his BS from Utah State University (1981), and his MA and PhD degrees from Brigham Young University (1986, 1996). He specializes in researching and writing about the Missouri period of early LDS Church history (1831–1839). He is a member of the Mormon History Association and the John Whitmer Historical Association, having served as president of the latter organization in 2006–2007. He is also the past editor of *Mormon Historical Studies* and past codirector of research for the BYU Religious Studies Center. He also serves as an editor of three volumes of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*.

---

[website](#); “History, 1838–1856, Volume F-1, [1 May 1844–8 August 1844],” May 27, 1844, 62, Church History Library, and [on the Joseph Smith Papers website](#). Joseph Smith rode this horse to Carthage before his murder. See George Q. Cannon, *The Latter-Day Prophet: History of Joseph Smith Written for Young People* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1900), 197.



C. R. SAVAGE.

Funeral of the Late President Woodruff, in the Tabernacle, at Salt Lake City, September 8, 1898.

SALT LAKE.

**FIGURE 1.** *Funeral of the Late President Woodruff, in the Tabernacle, at Salt Lake City, September 8, 1898*, Charles R. Savage, photographer (PH 9125, 29.5 × 24 cm on mount 40 × 30 cm), Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. This interior view was taken from the east end of the Tabernacle and captured the moment Franklin D. Richards, one of the fourteen Apostles, was offering the invocation at the funeral. The mount preserves valuable information printed in gold lettering, including the name of the photographer, location, setting, and date. The Church's fourteen Apostles are seated in two rows below the Mormon Tabernacle Choir female members, dressed in white.

# Photographs of the Fourteen Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September and October 1898

*Richard Neitzel Holzappel and Ronald L. Fox*

Ninety-one-year-old Wilford Woodruff, fourth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, died unexpectedly at 6:40 a.m. on Saturday morning, September 2, 1898, during a visit to San Francisco, California.<sup>1</sup> Woodruff's well-attended funeral was held six days later, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 8, 1898, at the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah.<sup>2</sup> Sixty-six-year-old George Teasdale, one of the Church's fourteen Apostles, reported, "Weather sunshine and fair Arose early and . . . went to Woodruff villa and saw the body of our beloved President laying in state. . . . saw the body borne into the hearse and the family placed in the carriages and then entered our carriage and joined the procession to the Tabernacle. At the Tabernacle we took our seats on the stand and attended the services."<sup>3</sup>

The scene in the Tabernacle was preserved by Charles R. Savage in a stunning photograph measuring 40 × 30 cm or 15.7 × 11.8 inches (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Savage was, by 1898, a well-known and experienced photographer with

---

1. George Q. Cannon to Joseph F. Smith, September 2, 1898, Joseph F. Smith Papers, 1854–1918, Correspondence, Letterpress copybooks, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

2. "Consigned to the Tomb," *Deseret News*, September 8, 1898, 1.

3. George Teasdale, Journal, September 8, 1898, 241–42, George Teasdale Papers, 1853–1906, MS 13496, Church History Library.

4. Another print of the funeral photograph has survived with a handwritten note, in Joseph F. Smith's hand, on the reverse side: "Jos. F. Smith Sept. 10. 1898 Compliments of C. R. Savage Pres. Woodruff's funeral Sept. 8. 1898." PH 2605, Church History Library.

the necessary skills to capture an indoor scene like this one. Nelson Wadsworth, a well-known photographic historian, opines, “Of all the [Utah] photographers . . . , Savage was by far the most prolific and influential. His inspiration spread far beyond the confines of his work.”<sup>5</sup>

Savage’s photo captured the moment when seventy-seven-year-old Franklin D. Richards stood at the pulpit offering a prayer at the beginning of the service (fig. 2). Richards noted in his journal that day, “Attended funeral—went with the procession & corpse from President WW’s residence in Farmers Ward to Big Tabernacle where I prayed and spoke.”<sup>6</sup>

More significantly, Savage captured the fourteen Apostles on the stand. This was not the first time Savage had photographed the Apostles in a group setting. In 1868, Savage took the earliest known photograph of the combined members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a view that included Brigham Young and his counselors in the First Presidency, at a makeshift outdoor studio next to the Beehive House, Young’s home located at 67 East South Temple Street in Salt Lake City.<sup>7</sup> However, in the 1898 Woodruff funeral photograph, Savage captures the fourteen Apostles at a time when they, as a quorum, began to preside over the Church, without an organized First Presidency in place.

After the impressive funeral services, Woodruff’s casket was taken to the Salt Lake City cemetery, where it was removed from the hearse at exactly 2:45 p.m.<sup>8</sup> Fifty-eight-year-old Francis M. Lyman, one of the fourteen Apostles, dedicated the grave in a heartfelt prayer.<sup>9</sup> Then, according to Teasdale, “The coffin was lowered in a wealth of flowers into the grave. The flowers, florals emblems and baskets were numerous and lovely. The grave was covered with them.”<sup>10</sup>

Several Apostles who wrote about the day included an important detail about a group photography session. Teasdale wrote, “After the funeral obsequies we drove to Johnson the photographer and had a

---

5. Nelson B. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 124.

6. Franklin D. Richards, Journal, September 8, 1898, Richards Family Collection, 1837–1961, MS 1215, Church History Library.

7. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and R. Q. Shupe, *Brigham Young: Images of a Mormon Prophet* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2000), 204–5.

8. “The Line of March,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 8, 1898, 2.

9. “Line of March,” 2.

10. Teasdale, Journal, September 8, 1898, 241–42.





**FIGURE 2.** Detail of figure 1, *Funeral of the Late Wilford Woodruff*, September 8, 1898, C. R. Savage, photographer; courtesy Church History Library. *Top row at the pulpit, left to right:* Brigham Young Jr., George Q. Cannon, Franklin D. Richards (slightly blurred, praying at the pulpit—standing in front of Lorenzo Snow, who is hidden from view), Joseph F. Smith, and John Smith, Church Patriarch (facing the pulpit). *Second row, below, left to right:* Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant (blurred), John W. Taylor (partial head view), Mariner W. Merrill, Anthon H. Lund, Matthais Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, and an unidentified individual. Other Church leaders are seated in the row below. Interestingly, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith were seated in their traditional chairs as members of the First Presidency, with Cannon on the right and Smith on the left of the chair reserved for the President of the Church—occupied during the funeral services by Lorenzo Snow. This arrangement most likely reveals the transition in succession to the Presidency, which was in process.

group taken of the fourteen apostles.”<sup>11</sup> Richards mentioned, “Rode in carriage with President G.Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith & Brigham Young to the grave then with the other 13 met at Sain[s]bury and Johnson & they took our likenesses in a group.”<sup>12</sup> Forty-nine-year-old John Henry Smith, another Apostle, noted, “All of the Apostles went to Johnson’s Art Galery and sat for a group picture.”<sup>13</sup> Fifty-four-year-old Anthon H.

11. Teasdale, *Journal*, September 8, 1898, 242.

12. Richards, *Journal*, September 8, 1898. Richards’s reference to “Sain[s]bury and Johnson” reflects an earlier partnership between Charles E. Johnson and Hyrum Sainsbury in Salt Lake City that ended about 1893.

13. John Henry Smith, *Diary*, September 8, 1898, John Henry Smith diaries, 1874–1911, MS 5129, Church History Library, as quoted in Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 407.



Lund, also an Apostle, recorded, “We left the graveyard and went to Bro Johnson studio and had our pictures taken together in a group.”<sup>14</sup>

Seventy-one-year-old George Q. Cannon, an Apostle and First Counselor to Woodruff in the First Presidency, mentioned the reason the fourteen Apostles gathered at Johnson’s studio following the funeral, “After the services at the grave, we drove to Brother Charles E. Johnson’s photograph gallery, he having made a request that we should do so, and we stood in a group and had our pictures taken.”<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, the fourteen Apostles accepted Johnson’s invitation to come to his studio so he could capture an important moment in Church history—a time when the Apostles became responsible for leading the Church following the death of a Church President. The multi-attested photograph session most likely highlights the importance of this occasion for the fourteen Apostles—it was only the second time in the history of the Church that the Apostles gathered for a formal group photograph. Wadsworth tells us that Charles Ellis Johnson “was one of the most prolific and enterprising photographers on the Mormon scene. He photographed thousands of people in his modern, state-of-the-art studio in Salt Lake City.”<sup>16</sup> Johnson’s studio was located at 56 S. West Temple Street.<sup>17</sup> In this remarkable large-format photograph measuring 51 × 61 cm or 20 × 24 inches, the fourteen Apostles face Johnson’s camera in the first formal portrait of all living Apostles without an organized First Presidency (fig. 3).

The Apostles’ diaries and letters during the six-day period between Woodruff’s death in San Francisco on September 2 and the group’s arrival at Johnson’s photography studio on September 8 reveal some of their thoughts and feelings at the time. Cannon, for example, was still trying to fully grasp what had happened during the past week and what was going to happen in the next few days, weeks, and months. His biographer, Davis Bitton, observes, “Cannon was holding Woodruff’s wrist at the time of his death: ‘I took hold of his wrist, felt his pulse, and I could feel that it was very faint, and while I stood there it grew

---

14. Anthon H. Lund, Journal, September 8, 1898, Anthon H. Lund Collection, 1860–1921, MS 5375, Church History Library, as quoted in John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 44.

15. George Q. Cannon, Journal, September 8, 1898, George Q. Cannon Collection, 1825–1901, MS 4777, Church History Library.

16. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 274.

17. R. L. Polk & Co. *Salt Lake City Directory 1898* (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk and Company Publishers, 1898), 890.



**FIGURE 3.** The Fourteen Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 8, 1898, Charles E. Johnson, photographer (PH 2671, item 1, 40 × 54 cm on mount 51 × 61 cm), Church History Library. *Seated, left to right:* Brigham Young Jr., Franklin D. Richards, Lorenzo Snow, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and Anthon H. Lund. *Standing, left to right:* Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, George Teasdale, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, and Marriner W. Merrill. A notation on the photograph in the lower left just below Brigham Young Jr.'s right foot indicated, "Copyright 1898 By The Johnson Co. Salt Lake Utah."

fainter and fainter until it faded entirely.' Cannon was shaken. 'I cannot describe the feeling I had,' he wrote. 'The event was so unexpected, so terrible, and away from home! I could not understand it. I felt that I had lost the best friend I had on earth.'<sup>18</sup> Bitton adds, "The First Presidency was automatically dissolved. Just what the future might hold for the infirm and grieving George Q. Cannon was not at all obvious."<sup>19</sup>

18. Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 422.

19. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 423.

Cannon confided in his private journal his efforts to control his emotions as he spoke in the funeral, “I almost choked down once or twice, but contrived to control my emotions. I have felt quite nervous about this meeting.”<sup>20</sup> Johnson’s September 8 photograph was taken less than an hour after Woodruff’s casket had been lowered into the grave, and Cannon appears to be trying to hold his emotions steady as he stares into the camera.

Eighty-four-year-old Lorenzo Snow, the oldest Apostle and now the most senior Apostle, had earnestly prayed for Woodruff’s life to be extended beyond his own for some time.<sup>21</sup> Now responsible for dealing with several major challenges facing the Church, including its significant financial debt and obligations, Snow gazes at the camera with a look of resignation, accepting his new responsibility as the de facto leader of the Church because it was given to him, not because he sought it.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Snow had indicated earlier in the day that he was not worried about the work moving forward under the direction of the fourteen Apostles: “The Quorum of the Apostles . . . was never as able to handle such a responsibility as it was at the present time. It was fully organized and the brethren were in perfect union and accord with each other, and faithful and devoted to the trust reposed in them. . . . There was no danger as to the outcome of the work of God. It had been established for a purpose and that purpose would be accomplished, and the Church progress and increase in the earth, no matter how many of the authorities were called to another sphere.”<sup>23</sup>

At the other end of seniority among the fourteen Apostles was its youngest member, twenty-five-year-old Abraham O. Woodruff. He looks directly into the camera—appearing without long side burns, mustache, or beard—representing a new generation of Church leaders.

Woodruff, like the other thirteen Apostles, was shocked by the Church President’s death in California. However, Woodruff’s loss was more personal—he lost his ecclesiastical leader and his own father. Unfortunately, no journal of his exists for this period that would help us understand his feelings at this time.

---

20. Cannon, Journal, September 8, 1898.

21. John P. Hatch, “From Prayer to Visitation: Reexamining Lorenzo Snow’s Vision of Jesus Christ in the Salt Lake Temple,” *Journal of Mormon History* 42, no. 3 (2016): 165.

22. Edward Leo Lyman, “George Q. Cannon’s Economic Strategy in the 1890s Depression,” *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 2 (2003), 4–41.

23. “Consigned to the Tomb,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 8, 1898, 1.

In this rare photograph, the fourteen Apostles were not positioned strictly by seniority as is common in most formal photographs of the Twelve, beginning with Savage's early photograph of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taken in 1868. The seniority of the fourteen Apostles in September 1898 was as follows: (1) Lorenzo Snow and (2) Franklin D. Richards were sustained on February 12, 1849; (3) George Q. Cannon was sustained on August 26, 1860; (4) Joseph F. Smith was ordained an Apostle on July 1, 1866, and sustained on October 8, 1867; (5) Brigham Young Jr. was ordained an Apostle on February 4, 1864, and sustained on October 9, 1868; (6) Francis M. Lyman and (7) John Henry Smith were sustained on October 27, 1880; (8) George Teasdale and (9) Heber J. Grant were sustained on October 16, 1882; (10) John W. Taylor was sustained on April 9, 1884; (11) Marriner W. Merrill and (12) Anthon H. Lund were sustained on October 7, 1889; and (13) Matthias F. Cowley and (14) Abraham O. Woodruff were sustained on October 7, 1896.<sup>24</sup> A factor in the decision to somewhat ignore the seniority may have included an effort to produce an aesthetically and proportioned image (note the placement of the Apostles on the back row). Nevertheless, seniority played a partial role in staging those in the front row, as the most senior Apostles, including Lorenzo Snow, Brigham Young Jr., Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, were all seated—a traditional position in nineteenth-century portrait photography showing honor and respect. However, Anthon H. Lund, seated to the far right, is the exception, as he was a newer member of the quorum. Interestingly, Cannon and Smith were seated immediately left of Snow, not on either side of Snow as one might expect (see fig. 2). Their positions next to Snow most likely demonstrated respect for their recent assignments as counselors in the First Presidency but still recognized Snow's place as the head of the quorum.

---

24. Most issues related to seniority had been resolved during Brigham Young's and John Taylor's administrations. However, one issue had not been settled authoritatively—the positions of Brigham Young Jr. and Joseph F. Smith in the Quorum of the Twelve. This issue was finally resolved in 1900, when Lorenzo Snow ruled that Smith was ahead of Young based on when each had become a member of the quorum instead of when they had been ordained Apostles. See Travis Q. Mecham, "Changes in Seniority to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2009), 46–53.

Cannon and Smith were officially received back into the Quorum of the Twelve on the following day, Friday, September 9, 1898, “These two brethren [George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith], by unanimous vote of the Council of the Twelve (now presiding over the Church in lieu of the First Presidency just dissolved) were received back as members of that body, and took their seats in the Council according to order of ordination, with President Lorenzo Snow presiding.” In another symbolic action signaling the end of Woodruff’s presidency, Cannon and Smith were given their personal desks they had used in the President’s office and “authorized to take them away from the office.”<sup>25</sup>

The date of this historic photograph (fig. 3) is confirmed by the discovery of a smaller cabinet-size version of the same image in the Johnson Collection at the Church History Library (figs. 4 and 5).<sup>26</sup> The printed caption on the image also identifies the exact time Johnson took the photograph: “Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and President’s Counselors of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Photographed by C.E. Johnson Sept 8th, 1898, 4 P. M. Copyright 1898 by The Johnson Company.”

Two days after the funeral, on Saturday, September 10, Arthur Winter, a secretary, reporter, and recently appointed assistant chief clerk in the President’s Office, noted, “There is no First Presidency now, and it seems peculiar to us in the office. President Cannon and Smith have taken their place in the quorum of the Twelve and [the] Twelve, from present indications, are going to manage the affairs of the Church for some little time to come. President Snow is the head of the quorum and as such presides over the Church until the First Presidency is reorganized.”<sup>27</sup>

Three days later, on Tuesday, September 13, Cannon noted, “A meeting of the Twelve Apostles was called for 10 o’clock this morning. All were present—14 in number.”<sup>28</sup> Utah Senator Frank J. Cannon, the son

---

25. Journal History of the Church, 1896–2001, September 9, 1898, 2, CR 100 137, Church History Library.

26. The cabinet card consisted of a photograph mounted on a card typically measuring 10.8 × 16.5 cm. By the early 1880s, the cabinet card, introduced in 1866, had replaced the popular *Carte de Visite*, or CDV, introduced in 1859, and became the dominant portrait format and remained so until the end of the nineteenth century.

27. Arthur Winter, Journal, September 10, 1898, 227, Arthur Winter Collection, 1883–1940, MS 9641, Church History Library.

28. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898.





FIGURE 4. Fourteen Apostles, September 8, 1898, Charles E. Johnson, photographer (PH 2671, item 2, 10 × 16 cm on mount 10.8 × 16.5 cm), Church History Library.



FIGURE 5. Reverse side of figure 4, the fourteen Apostles photograph, September 8, 1898 (PH 2671, item 2, 10.8 × 16.5 cm), Church History Library. The printed logo, “The Johnson Co. Salt Lake City, Utah. C. E. Johnson, Supt. Manufacturers of Utah Views, Lantern Slides, Stereoscopic Views, etc.,” is often found printed on the reverse side of Johnson’s cabinet cards.

of George Q. Cannon, reported his recent efforts to secure an important loan for the Church in the amount of 1.5 million dollars. Still experiencing the effects of the US federal government's prosecution and persecution during the 1880s, the Church's efforts to invigorate Utah's economy, and the national financial panic of 1893, the Church needed the loan to continue operations.<sup>29</sup> After Frank Cannon finished his report, he was excused so the Apostles could discuss what to do next. George Q. Cannon noted, "No one spoke for a little."<sup>30</sup>

Realizing it was imperative to send a signal to those back East that someone was in control of the Church's financial affairs, George Q. Cannon broke the silence and proposed that a Trustee-in-trust be appointed immediately. Cannon's suggestion to appoint a Trustee-in-trust had nothing to do with an effort to appoint a new Church President, so Cannon was astonished when forty-one-year-old Heber J. Grant "threw out the idea (he was sitting down at the time) that it might be well to organize the First Presidency." Cannon added, "Brother F.M. Lyman . . . arose and advocated the organization of the First Presidency."<sup>31</sup>

This was an unexpected surprise given the traditional waiting period between the death of a Church President and the reorganization of a new First Presidency. Former BYU professor Martin B. Hickman provides a brief outline of this process from the death of Joseph Smith in 1844 to the Woodruff administration, which began in 1889:

For the next three years [following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844] the Church was governed by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles with Brigham Young as president of the quorum. In December 1847, following the pioneer journey to the Rocky Mountains, the First Presidency was reorganized and Brigham Young was named President of the Church.

Though the right of the Quorum of the Twelve to reconstitute the First Presidency was firmly established, there have been other short periods when the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles governed the Church before a new First Presidency was organized. John Taylor, president of the quorum when Brigham Young died in 1877, did not have the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles formally reorganize the First Presidency until 1880. A similar interim existed after his death in 1887. Wilford

---

29. See Ronald W. Walker, "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893," *BYU Studies*, 43:1 (2004): 115–42.

30. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898.

31. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898.



Woodruff as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles directed the affairs of the Church on the basis of that position until 1889.<sup>32</sup>

In his remarks, Lyman reminded the other Apostles of President Woodruff's instruction that, upon his death, "the First Presidency of the Church should be organized without delay."<sup>33</sup> Lyman then addressed Snow directly, saying, "And if the Lord should manifest to you, President Snow, that it was the proper thing to do now, I am prepared to not only vote for a Trustee-and-trust, but for the President of the Church." Lyman added that he "saw no reason why this action should not be taken at the present meeting."<sup>34</sup>

After several Apostles spoke in favor of reorganizing the First Presidency, the action was sustained by the council. Richards succinctly recorded, "Council in Presidents office 14 Apostles present elected Prest Lorenzo Snow 1<sup>st</sup> president he chose G.Q. Cannon 1<sup>st</sup>, & J.F. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> Counselors—Prest Snow Trustee in Trust and F. D. Richards President of the Twelve Apostles."<sup>35</sup>

Cannon continued his description of the meeting: "President Snow arose and stated his feelings. He told how he had felt very depressed, almost discouraged in his feelings, in view of the load that rested upon him, and he had g[o]ne before the Lord, clothed in his temple robes, and sought the mind of the Lord. In answer to his prayer, the Lord had revealed to him that the First Presidency should be organized, and who his counselors should be, and he had felt thankful for this."<sup>36</sup> Snow

---

32. Martin B. Hickman, "Succession in the Presidency," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1420–21.

33. Journal History of the Church, September 13, 1898, 3. These instructions are preserved in two documents found in the Church History Library. First, Minnie J. Snow, one of Lorenzo Snow's wives, recorded her husband's account of his December 2, 1892, meeting with Wilford Woodruff, in which Woodruff instructed Snow regarding reorganization of the First Presidency upon Woodruff's death; see "An Account of a Private Interview with Prest. Woodruff, Brigham City Utah, 1892 December 3," MS 3558, Church History Library. Additionally, Snow produced an account in his own handwriting regarding the same interview with Woodruff, recorded as "An Account of a Private Interview with President Woodruff, 1892, December 3," MS 20785, Church History Library.

34. Journal History of the Church, September 13, 1898, 3.

35. Richards, Journal, September 13, 1898.

36. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898. The well-known story of Snow praying in the temple before meeting the resurrected Christ was published by his son, LeRoi C. Snow, in "An Experience of My Father's," *Improvement Era* 36 (September 1933): 677, 679, and republished recently as "Until We Meet Again:

further declared, “The First Presidency should be organized before the next conference.”<sup>37</sup>

Cannon reflected, “The feeling to organize the First Presidency appeared to be a spontaneous one among the Apostles. I said nothing on this point. I felt very much surprised, however, at the unanimity that was displayed.”<sup>38</sup> After being nominated to become Snow’s First Counselor in a new First Presidency, Cannon further noted:

I was very much overcome by emotion; for I have been very much exercised in my feelings, dreading to some extent a repetition of former scenes, and I had prayed most earnestly to the Lord that I might be delivered from censure or condemnation. I did not expect to be called as a counselor, and President Snow was about to put the motion to vote when I arose and requested the privilege of saying a few words. I could not talk for some little time, being choked with emotion and what I d [sic] did say was interrupted by my feelings; for I could not restrain my tears. I told the brethren that I was willing in my heart to act in any position, however humble. I did wish to retain my Apostleship, but as to station or place I had no choice, only what the Lord chose. I was deeply honored by this, and I trusted I would have the love and confidence of my brethren, and I would endeavor to the best of my ability to discharge the duties of the office and to sustain President Snow.<sup>39</sup>

When the meeting ended, John Henry Smith reflected, “The feeling was the very best.”<sup>40</sup> Arthur Winter responded positively to the decision to reorganize the First Presidency immediately:

At a meeting of the Twelve Apostles this morning, held at the President’s Office, the First Presidency was organized, with Lorenzo Snow as President, and George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his Counselors. This action was a surprise to all, as so speedy a reorganization

---

A Visit from the Savior,” *Ensign* 45 (September 2015): 80. John P. Hatch reviewed the history of the story in his essay “From Prayer to Visitation: Re-Examining Lorenzo Snow’s Vision of Jesus Christ in the Salt Lake Temple,” *Journal of Mormon History* 42, no. 3 (July 2016): 155–82. Cannon’s journal, along with those of others present in this meeting, suggests the story was documented within days of the event.

37. Journal History of the Church, September 13, 1898, 4.

38. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898.

39. Cannon, Journal, September 13, 1898.

40. Smith, Diary, September 13, 1898, as quoted in White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 408.

was totally unexpected. The Apostles themselves, when they went into this meeting, had no idea of taking such action, but in their deliberation, the Spirit of the Lord moved upon them to organize the First Presidency at once. This result was very gratifying to all at the office. Brother Franklin D. Richards is now President of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>41</sup>

Another historic photograph, well known and previously published, was taken of the fourteen Apostles after the motion to reorganize the First Presidency was sustained on September 13. Cannon recorded, “We had appointed 2 o’clock as the time that we should go to the art gallery of Brother C. R. Savage and we sat as a group—14 Apostles—for our likeness to be taken.” John Henry Smith added, “We went to Savage’s Art Galery and were taken in a group.”<sup>42</sup> Richards also noted, “With the other 13 sat at C. R. Savages for our likenesses in group.”<sup>43</sup>

Savage’s photography studio was located at 12–14 S. Main Street in Salt Lake City, not far from the President’s Office at 67 E. South Temple Street.<sup>44</sup> Savage took at least two separate photographs during this visit (figs. 6 and 7). It is clear that only a few moments elapsed between taking the photographs. Note the changed position of several Apostles’ hands. For example, in figure 6, Brigham Young Jr. placed his right hand into his coat and in figure 7 the hand is removed.<sup>45</sup> In these views, Lorenzo Snow is seated in the center, with George Q. Cannon to his immediate right and Joseph F. Smith to his immediate left, definitely demonstrating the decision made earlier in the day to reorganize the First Presidency. The group remained fourteen Apostles because a new apostle had not been chosen to fill the vacancy created by Woodruff’s death. The series of photos in this article show the evolving relationships of the Apostles.

---

41. Winter, Journal, September 13, 1898, 228.

42. Smith, Diary, September 13, 1898, as quoted in White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 408.

43. Richards, Journal, September 13, 1898.

44. *R. L. Polk & Co. Salt Lake City Directory 1898*, 890. Leonard J. Arrington wrote, “Between the Beehive and Lion House was the one-story President’s Office—really a western extension of the Beehive House.” Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 170.

45. Placing the right hand into a coat had a long tradition but had been popularized in portrait paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including paintings of Napoleon. With the invention of photography, the tradition was revived, especially during the American Civil War among military officers.



**FIGURE 6.** The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, September 13, 1898, Charles R. Savage, photographer (PH 3098, 10 × 13 cm on mount 11 × 16 cm), Church History Library. *Standing, left to right:* Anthon H. Lund, John W. Taylor, John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, Francis M. Lyman, George Teasdale, and Marriner W. Merrill. *Seated on chairs, left to right:* Brigham Young Jr., George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and Franklin D. Richards. *Seated on the floor, left to right:* Matthias F. Cowley and Abraham O. Smoot. The handwritten designation “12 Apostles” is written in ink on the mount.

George F. Gibbs, secretary and stenographer of the First Presidency, published a brief announcement of the decision to reorganize the First Presidency in a local Salt Lake City newspaper that evening addressed to “The Officers and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

A special meeting of the Council of Apostles was held this morning for the purpose of considering important business of a financial character. . . . During the deliberations the necessity of appointing a trustee-in-trust for the Church became apparent in order that its business might be properly transacted, and while thus deliberating, several of the brethren expressed themselves to the effect that the present was a most opportune time to organize the First Presidency and so unanimous was this sentiment that a motion was made to that effect and carried.



**FIGURE 7.** The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, September 13, 1898, Charles R. Savage, photographer (PH 2749, 44 × 55 cm on mount 51 × 61 cm), Church History Library. *Standing, left to right:* Anthon H. Lund, John W. Taylor, John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, Francis M. Lyman, George Teasdale, and Marriner W. Merrill. *Seated on chairs, left to right:* Brigham Young Jr., George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and Franklin D. Richards. *Seated on the floor, left to right:* Matthias F. Cowley and Abraham O. Woodruff (see variant, fig. 6). This large format image is stunning in its detail, including a handwritten copyright notice in the lower left corner, “Copyrighted Sep. 1898 C. R. Savage.”

Lorenzo Snow was then nominated and sustained as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>46</sup>

Less than a month later, on Thursday, October 6, 1898, the October general conference of the Church opened. On Saturday, October 8, 1898, the “Presidency and Apostles met at the Temple and agreed to

46. “Organization of the First Presidency,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 13, 1898, 4.



have Rudger Clawson fill a vacancy in the Council of the Apostles.”<sup>47</sup> Forty-one-year-old Clawson was the president of the Box Elder Stake in northern Utah at the time and had been incarcerated with Snow in the Utah penitentiary at Sugar House in the late 1880s. This important meeting was “held in the Celestial Room of the Temple immediately after the close of the morning session of the regular conference, all of the Presidency and eleven of the Quorum being present.”<sup>48</sup> On the following day, Sunday, October 9, the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, including Clawson, were sustained in general conference.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, Savage decided to edit and reprint his well-known September 13, 1898, photograph after Clawson was called as the newest Apostle by inserting Clawson’s photograph between George Teasdale and Marriner W. Merrill in the back row (fig. 8).

On the day following the sustaining of Church officers, Monday, October 10, 1898, the “First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, at 10 o’clock this morning, met at the President’s office and proceeded thence to the photographic gallery of Fox and Symons, for the purpose of sitting in a group for their portrait.”<sup>50</sup> Lund also noted, “We went down to [Charles W.] Symons and had our pictures taken.”<sup>51</sup> Sixty-six-year-old Marriner W. Merrill added, “Went to Simons Art Galery with the first Presidency & Twelve sat in a group for our Pictures again, This is the Third Art-Galery we have sat in since Pred Woodruff Died for Group.”<sup>52</sup> Merrill emphasized the significance of this event—it was the third time the Apostles had sat for a formal portrait since Woodruff’s death.

The Fox and Symons photography studio was located 332 S. Main Street in Salt Lake City.<sup>53</sup> Charles W. Symons had joined Alexander Fox in 1874. After Fox died in 1882, Symons kept the name and “concentrated

---

47. Smith, Diary, October 8, 1898, as quoted in White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 410.

48. Heber J. Grant, Journal, October 8, 1898, 109, Heber J. Grant collection, 1856–1945, MS 1233, Church History Library.

49. Smith, Diary, October 9, 1898, as quoted in White, *Church, State, and Politics*, 410.

50. Journal History of the Church, October 10, 1898, 353:2.

51. Lund, Journal, October 10, 1898, as quoted in Hatch, *Danish Apostle*, 47.

52. Marriner W. Merrill, Journal, October 10, 1898, Marriner W. Merrill journals, 1889–1906, MS 107, Church History Library.

53. R. L. Polk & Co. *Salt Lake City Directory* 1898, 890.



FIGURE 8. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, with Rudger J. Clawson's photograph inserted later, September 13, 1898, Charles R. Savage, photographer (PH 2495, 23.9 × 34.5 cm on mount 34.5 × 43 cm), Church History Library. The mount includes important information in gold lettering, including the title of the photograph, *First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, along with a copyright notice, "Copyright Secured"; the photographer, "C. R. Savage"; and the identification of the individual Apostles.

on studio portraits."<sup>54</sup> Symons took at least two photographs on this special occasion (fig. 9 and fig. 10). The slight variations between the photographs suggest they were taken within a few moments of each other. For example, note the position of Joseph F. Smith's right hand.

George Q. Cannon provided an explanation to why the "official" photograph was taken before Clawson's ordination took place: "We had intended, at 10 o'clock this morning, to ordain Brother Rudger Clawson,

54. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 152, 165.





**FIGURE 9.** The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2737, item 1, 33 × 43 cm on mount 41 × 51 cm), Church History Library. This image has a preprinted identification, “Fox & Symons, Photographs,” located in the lower right corner of the mount. This image also includes an identification of each Church leader and date handwritten in pencil on the mount (most likely a later identification). *Seated, left to right:* Anthon H. Lund, Brigham Young Jr., George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and Franklin D. Richards. *Standing, left to right:* Marriner W. Merrill, John W. Taylor, Francis M. Lyman, Rudger J. Clawson, Heber J. Grant, Matthais F. Cowley, George Teasdale, Abraham O. Woodruff, and John Henry Smith.

but Brother Franklin D. Richards was not here, the train having been delayed. We therefore, at 10:30, went down to Brother Symon’s photography gallery to get our portraits taken in a group The First Presidency sat in one group, and the First Presidency and Twelve in another group.”<sup>55</sup> Richards noted, “To City 37 mi a nice Autumn day Train late went directly to brother Symons Art Gallery was photographed in group

55. Cannon, Journal, October 10, 1898.



**FIGURE 10.** The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons, photographers (PH 2737, item 2, 26 × 20 cm on mount 27 × 21.5 on top and 22 cm. on bottom), Church History Library. This image is a slightly different pose than figure 9 and has the date “Oct. 10/98” handwritten in white under the feet of Anthon H. Lund and Brigham Young Jr., on the lower left corner of the photograph. Additionally, a notice of copyright was printed on the mount in the lower right corner.

with Presidency & 12 Apostles.”<sup>56</sup> Cannon noted two distinct group photographs were taken by Symons on this occasion, “The First Presidency sat in one group” and “the First President and the Twelve in another group.”<sup>57</sup> A well-known image of the First Presidency (fig. 11) is most likely the one referred to by Cannon. A close examination of the backdrop, chairs, and the men’s clothing suggest the First Presidency photograph was taken the same day as the ones of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles (figs. 9 and 10).

56. Richards, Journal, October 10, 1898.

57. Cannon, Journal, October 10, 1898.



**FIGURE 11.** The First Presidency (*left to right*, George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith), October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons, photographers (PH 2733, 13 × 16.5 cm on mount 34 × 43 cm), Church History Library. The mount has printed information in gold lettering: “Fox & Symons, Photographers” and “First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” A gold design border, printed on the mount, frames the photograph.

At twelve noon, the group “returned to the [President’s] office, and attended to the ordination of Elder Rudger Clawson as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.”<sup>58</sup> Forty-two-year-old Heber J. Grant noted, “Retd to President’s office where Rudger Clawson was ordained and Apostle 14 of us placing our hands on his head. Prest Cannon was mouth.”<sup>59</sup> The combined group of Apostles, including Clawson, then laid hands on the head of Lorenzo Snow and set him apart as the fifth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This action was followed by the setting apart of George Q. Cannon and Joseph F.

58. Journal History of the Church, October 10, 1898, 353:3.

59. Grant, Journal, October 10, 1898, 113.

Smith as counselors in the First Presidency and Franklin D. Richards as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>60</sup> Teasdale summarized the events, “Went to the office and met with the presidency and Twelve. . . . Pres Richards was detained through the train being late. We went to Fox and Symons and [for] a group picture of the Presidency and Twelve. There were present Presidents L. Snow, George Q Cannon Jos. F. Smith, F. D. Richards, B. Young, F. M. Lyman, John Hy Smith, Geo. Teasdale, H. J. Grant, J. W. Taylor, M. W. Merrill, A. H. Lund, M. F. Cowley, A. O. Woodruff and Rudger Clawson. When we had our likeness taken we returned to the office and had a meeting of great moment—Elder Rudger Clawson was ordained an apostle President Snow being mouth under the hands of Pres & Twelve Then President Snow was set apart to preside over the Church [Pres?] Geo. Q. Cannon being mouth Geo. Q. Cannon was set apart as First Counselor. [Pres?] Snow being mouth Joseph F. Smith was set apart as Second Counselor. Franklin D Richards as President of the Twelve Apostles. The President L. Snow gave the charge to Apostle Rudger Clawson and Pres Jos F Smith and Geo. Q. Cannon some items. Apostle Rudger Clawson responded.” Teasdale added, “We had a glorious meeting.”<sup>61</sup>

Following the ordinations, several of the Apostles, including Grant, Lund, Lyman, Merrill, Teasdale, and Woodruff returned to the Fox and Symons studio.<sup>62</sup> Merrill noted this visit was for individual portraits: “Then I went to art-Gallery and set alone for my Photograph.”<sup>63</sup>

Individual portraits of several Apostles are found in the collection “Joseph F. Smith Personal Photographs circa 1860–1918” (PH 2016) at the Church History Library. Each one is dated 1898 and identified on the reverse side (fig. 13). Each portrait is printed on Fox and Symons cabinet card stock (figs. 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17). A comparison of these individual portraits to the October 10, 1898, group photograph shows each Apostle wearing the same clothing, indicating that these individual portraits are the photographs mentioned in the journals as having been taken on the same day.

---

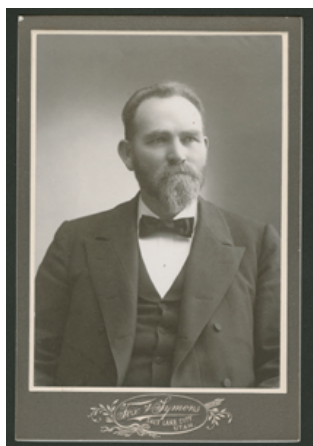
60. Journal History of the Church, October 10, 1898, 353:3.

61. Teasdale, Journal, October 10, 1898.

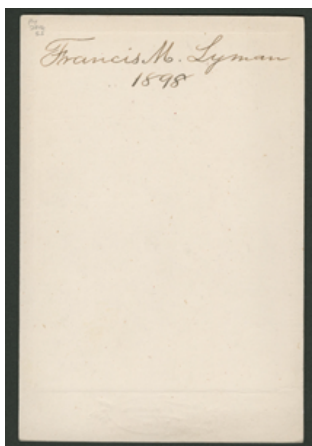
62. Grant, Lund, Lyman, Merrill, and Teasdale journals, October 10, 1898.

63. Merrill, Journal, October 10, 1898. See also Richards, Journal, October 10, 1898.

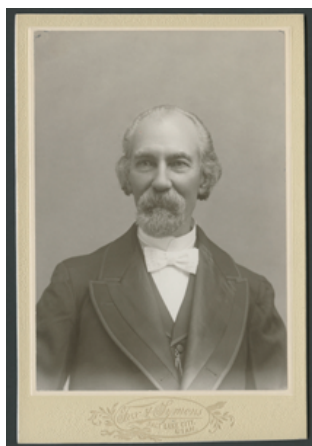




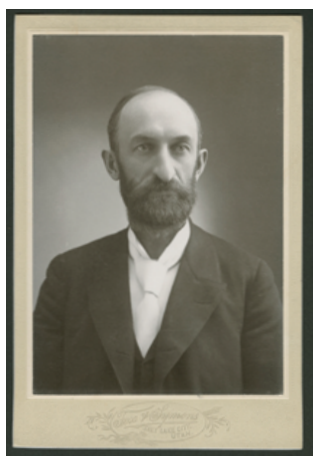
**FIGURE 12.** Francis M. Lyman, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 10 × 14 cm on mount 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library. Written on the reverse, “Francis M. Lyman 1898” (fig. 13).



**FIGURE 13.** Reverse of Francis M. Lyman portrait (fig. 12), October 10, 1898, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library.



**FIGURE 14.** George Teasdale, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 10 × 14 cm on mount 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library. Written on the reverse, “George Teasdale 1898.”



**FIGURE 15.** Heber J. Grant, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 10 × 14 cm on mount 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library. Written on the reverse, “Heber J. Grant 1898.”



**FIGURE 16.** Marriner W. Merrill, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 10 × 14 cm on mount 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library. Written on the reverse, “Marriner W. Merrill 1898.”



**FIGURE 17.** Abraham O. Woodruff, October 10, 1898, Charles W. Symons, photographer, Fox and Symons (PH 2016, 10 × 14 cm on mount 12 × 17 cm), Church History Library. Written on the reverse, “Abraham O. Woodruff 1898.”

Cannon noted on that same day, Monday, October 10, “At 4 o’clock we took dinner at Brother John R. Winder’s by invitation.”<sup>64</sup> The party consisted of the First Presidency, the Twelve Apostles, some of their wives and a few additional guests, including Emma Woodruff, President Woodruff’s widow. Bishop John R. Winder’s home, known as Popular Farm, was located three miles south of Salt Lake City. This was perhaps the first dinner the First Presidency, Twelve Apostles, and their wives had attended together since the Church had been organized—according to President Snow, “the like[s] [of which] had not been known before in this Dispensation.”<sup>65</sup> Heber J. Grant added, “After dinner Prest. Snow arose and expressed his great pleasure at this gathering, said so far as he knew that it was the first time in the history of the Church that all the Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Apostles had sat down with their wives at a table to partake of the bounties of life. Referred to the splendid dinner which had been prepared for us and complimented Bro. Winder and his family. He closed his remarks by moving that we all meet here again in six months from today.”<sup>66</sup> Cannon also noted, “It was a remarkable scene to see the First Presidency and Twelve and their wives sit down to one table.”<sup>67</sup>

These historic photographs, dated September 8, 1898, September 13, 1898, and October 10, 1898, provide a window into a specific and significant period in LDS history—a time of mourning and rejoicing, change and continuation, and the end of one First Presidency and the beginning of a new one. The precise dating of the photographs provides viewers an opportunity to gaze into the eyes of the Apostles, examine their facial expressions, notice their body language, and appreciate more fully the various emotions each may have been experiencing at a specific moment in their lives and in the history of the Church they served.

---

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel is a professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University, on a university leave of absence during 2018. He earned a BA from BYU in political science and an MA and PhD in history from University of California, Irvine. He is the author of numerous books and articles on Latter-day Saint history and Mormon historic photographs.

---

64. Cannon, *Journal*, October 10, 1898.

65. Richards, *Journal*, October 10, 1898.

66. Grant, *Journal*, October 10, 1898, 113–14.

67. Cannon, *Journal*, October 10, 1898.

Ronald L. Fox is an independent researcher and leading expert on Latter-day Saint photography. He was employed by the California Assembly and Senate and served for over twenty years as a corporate governmental affairs representative. Additionally, he served six US presidents as a professional volunteer advance man, traveling the world planning and preparing for presidential visits and events. He is the author of several books and articles in Latter-day Saint history and Mormon historic photographs.

The authors acknowledge the work of Stanley James Thayne, a former research assistant at BYU, in preparing a research report, "Images of Transition: Lorenzo Snow and the 1898 Reorganization of the First Presidency," in January 2000.



# Jewels

*Michelle Forstrom*

The first time it happened, I was seven. My grandma had mailed me a tiny ring for my birthday, an aquamarine set in silver. I clapped my hands and couldn't stop jumping when I saw it. It was the first piece of jewelry I had ever owned; like wearing a piece of the sky. I took it everywhere—presenting my hand to the world, palm down, as if I were queen. It was the most beautiful ring in the history of rings.

And then I lost it.

At first I hid under the covers. Crying and heavy with guilt. Then I looked all over the house for it. Quietly. I didn't want to tell my parents, thinking they'd be mad that I had lost something so expensive. By the end of the day, I was wrung out from worry.

That night I had a dream.

I must have just seen *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, because I was in a dark cave with perfectly cut and polished diamonds, rubies, and emeralds jutting out the walls. I could just pull them off. I grabbed as many jewels as I could, filling my pockets with them and stuffing them in my shirt and pants. I was so loaded down I could barely shuffle out of the cave.

I thought, *This is great! I'm RICH! I can have anything I want. And anyone I know can have anything they want—if they're nice to me.*

And then I woke up.

Remembering the dream, I started searching in my bed, under my pillow, and under the bed for the jewels. And oddly enough (to me at least), I couldn't find any. Not one. It was the strangest thing. One minute I was holding them and the next minute they were gone. I started crying.

And I'll never forget what happened next. A peaceful thought filled my mind and heart with perfect clarity. *You can't take "things" from one world into the next.* And as soon as I heard it, I knew it was right. I somehow understood that owning the ring was just temporary. It was all right to say goodbye to it a little early. The feeling of calm that accompanied the thought was so loving and kind that it dissolved my worry, and I found it easy to go back to sleep.



It happened again when we were teaching our investigator Tanya a second discussion in her tiny apartment. She corrected my companion. I quickly shot Sister Harper what I hoped was a supportive "I'm-sure-your-verb-tenses-are-just-fine" look, but she didn't appear to be bothered at all. I was, of course, supremely pleased that no Bulgarian had ever corrected me midsentence. But, to be fair, I *was* half-Bulgarian.

And then, three months into my mission, it happened to me! I was buying train tickets, and a total stranger corrected my Bulgarian (*the nerve!*). And then the bread man. And then a member at church. And on and on. What was going on? Were my language skills getting *worse*? What was happening?

After a few days of frustration, I sank to my knees. What was wrong with me? I cried and pled with the Lord, hoping my language skills in Bulgarian wouldn't be a total disappointment to my Bulgarian mother (who I was sure was expecting me to come home speaking like a native).

It didn't take long before a quiet thought entered my mind. *No one has corrected you before because no one has understood you before. Their correction means that they can at least guess what you are trying to say.*

The thought rang so true that I resisted the temptation to wallow in frustration and humiliation. Maybe perfect pronunciation wasn't the point. Maybe there was more to communicating than language. I decided to shift my focus from trying to speak "like a Bulgarian" to connecting with those I met. I listened more, and service became my language. I realized that it really wasn't about me. And sometimes when we spoke of Joseph and his vision and the air was charged with truth that reflected in their eyes, or wet-faced and beaming they stepped out of baptismal waters and gave me that look of pure joy and radiant disbelief, we did connect—and it didn't take any words at all.



Then it happened when pregnancy with a second child eluded me. I stashed a thermometer in my pillowcase to take my “waking temperature”—waiting for a subtle increase in degrees to announce my ovulation. I bought and practically memorized the book *Taking Charge of Your Fertility*. I hid an entire shoe box of herbs, tinctures, and homeopathic remedies from my husband in the kitchen cupboard (because *somehow* he had gotten the idea that I was becoming *obsessed*). I prayed. I fasted. I went to the temple. I cried. And pled. *Why* would Heavenly Father give me this desire without fulfilling it? Give me my baby!

But something else happened. Instead of me changing Heavenly Father’s mind, he changed me.

He held off on giving me what I asked for. He calmed me down. He filled me with peace. Several strong, brilliant, single, and married women confided in me their unfulfilled desire to bear any children at all. I started playing more with the child I did have, holding him, kissing him, reading to him, watching him splash a rendition of “Once There Was a Snowman” during his bath.

And eventually I told God that if I was able to have only one child, I was so grateful for the one I had. And a quiet thought came into my mind again: *I am in charge of when a child comes to your family, not you.* That same peace enveloped me, and I knew it was okay to loosen my stranglehold on this thing I could not control. It was okay to take a step back and trust that God knew what he was doing and that I didn’t have to understand why. It was enough that he knew.



And when financial challenges swallowed us whole—it happened again.

Moving. Paying two house payments. Surgery. Doctor visits. Dramatic job changes and losses within the tanking economy of 2008. We prayed. We fasted. We made goals. We visualized. We went to the temple. We worked. And worked. And worked. Month after month. Year after year. Fighting to keep what the Lord was trying to help us let go of.

And while I knew we had to say goodbye to the house, I just couldn’t.

People walked in to look at it, and I felt so ashamed. And angry. And sad. They walked around humoring my prattle, but really planning the color they would paint the room. In their minds they had already moved in, and I was just the sad woman who had carpeted their good luck.

Little did they know of the ants that encircled the sink in the summer, or the crabgrass, or the morning glory you had to claw out of the

flowerbeds by the roots, the aspen knots you had to mow over, or the yellow jackets that built their nests in the holes of the swing set. Or the tears I'd shed over low fences with neighbors, the "Lights On" competition at Christmas, the butternut squash and brown sugar brought over at births, the garden starts shared with unsolicited parenting advice. The deep, deep bonds we had forged over frustrations and forgiveness. They didn't know.

But there were things I didn't know either.

And when we finally let go and moved—encircling, angelic generosity from others was a daily experience. People who I had thought "had it all" opened up to me and shared their own formidable troubles: cancer, divorce, depression, wayward children, infidelity. I could not believe what they were carrying. I had no idea.

I no longer cared if I or my children (yes, we were blessed with one more) were wearing the latest fashions or watching the newest movies or playing with the latest electronics—I was free not to bother with keeping up at all.

I looked differently at the homeless people I saw; they were real people with lives and stories, and the line between us was blurring. I could feel the cold metal of their grocery cart in my hands when I saw them pushing it up a sidewalk. What was their story? What had they lost? Weren't we all just trying to go home? And then the quiet thought came into my mind during a sacrament meeting: *Money is just one resource. You have a thousand others.*

It was true.

I began to open my eyes to them. My friends I had relied on: Emily—who bartered, walked, and strategized with me daily. Kathryn—who could sense when I was depressed and would immediately offer a lunch date, or free babysitting while I went to the temple, or cheerful and tearful encouragement. My husband—who would leave love notes around the house, wash a sink full of dishes, dance around the kitchen with me, or put the kids to bed at the drop of a hat. My children—who would take my hand and lead me off to admire a new creation, or curl up in my lap to a book or movie, or giggle those light, golden giggles. I was made more aware of and grateful for relentless optimism, hope, creative outlets like writing and singing, family, good humor, good food, restful sleep, peace, and unseen angels taking care of the details and fabric of life that I could no longer control.

And the loving corrections continue, and like jewels in a cave I can just pick them up before they disappear.

I honestly used to think that obedience to the gospel naturally equaled financial stability, good health, lack of conflict with family members, and so on. Didn't challenges mean that I was being punished for some undiscovered wickedness? Wasn't ease in one's life a sign of the Lord's favor?

But then I remember my dream, and that my life here on this earth is very short. And though it feels very real, someday I will wake up from it. Luckily, Heavenly Father will whisper his jewels to me and let me pick them up along the way back to him. I remember that there are some things that only Heavenly Father is in charge of, that I can't take things from this world into the next, and that there are those who love me enough to correct me, and I hope it happens again.

---

This essay by Michelle Forstrom won third place in the 2017 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest.

## Ways of Thinking

About reasons for a lake  
whipping into November as I plow  
and steer toward my eighty-first year.

About a gray boat  
taking waves aslant old wood  
bent and stretched for what washes up.

About a jukebox, and a girl  
washing a window or waiting,  
her eyes electric jolts of green.

About a boy smelling of trees,  
his arms full of the girl  
who inhales his red flannel shoulder.

About beauty being where you are,  
any shore. My boat glides now  
into shoals of indigo, beautiful.

Find your lake, immemorial.

—Dawn Baker Brimley

---

This poem won second place in the 2017  
Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest.



# “We Believe the Hand of the Lord Is in It”

## Memories of Divine Intervention in the Zion’s Camp Expedition

Matthew C. Godfrey

On February 23, 1834, Joseph Smith attended a high council meeting in Kirtland, Ohio, and heard Lyman Wight and Parley P. Pratt explain how over a thousand members of the Church of Christ—now The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—had been violently ejected from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. The Saints had been forced to leave the county—which had been previously identified by revelation as Zion—by irate Missouri citizens who saw Church members and their beliefs as a political and ideological threat. Hearing this report, Smith arose from his seat and declared “that he was going to Zion to assist in redeeming it.” He asked for volunteers to join him. That same day, a revelation instructed Smith to recruit up to five hundred men to march to Missouri.<sup>1</sup> Church leaders planned that upon reaching

---

1. “Minutes, 24 February 1834,” and “Revelation, 24 February 1834,” in Gerrit J. Dirkmaat and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin and Matthew J. Grow (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2014), 456–63 [D&C 103], and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-24-february-1834/2>; <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-24-february-1834-dc-103/12>. See also D&C 57:1–3; John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1839*, in Karen Lynn Davidson, Richard L. Jensen, and David J. Whittaker, eds., *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*, vol. 2 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 149, and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith*

the state, the group would contact Missouri governor Daniel Dunklin and request that he call out the state militia to escort Church members back to their Jackson County lands. The members of the march—which would become known as the Camp of Israel, paralleling the name given to the children of Israel in Exodus 14:19, and still later as Zion’s Camp—would then remain in Jackson County as a protective force so that mobs could not drive the Saints from their lands again.<sup>2</sup>

Smith and a contingent of men departed from Kirtland in May 1834; another contingent was recruited in Pontiac, Michigan Territory, by Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight and joined the Kirtland group in June 1834 in Missouri. The camp totaled approximately 205 men and around twenty-five women and children.<sup>3</sup> It entered Missouri in June 1834 but was disbanded at the end of June after Dunklin expressed unwillingness to call out the militia and after Smith received a revelation stating that it was not yet time for Zion’s redemption. An outbreak of cholera hastened the camp’s dispersal, eventually killing thirteen participants and two other Church members.<sup>4</sup> By the first of August 1834, Joseph

---

*Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/john-corrill-a-brief-history-of-the-church-of-christ-of-latter-day-saints-1839/48>.

2. Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery to “Dear Brethren,” May 10, 1834, broadsheet, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE5714970](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE5714970).

3. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” 477–78, Church History Library, on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/483>; Andrea G. Radke, “We Also Marched: The Women and Children of Zion’s Camp, 1834,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 1 (2000): 147–65.

4. “Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834,” in Matthew C. Godfrey and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, vol. 4 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin, Matthew J. Grow, and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 54, and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-emma-smith-4-june-1834/1>; “Revelation, 22 June 1834,” in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 74 [D&C 105:9–11], and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-22-june-1834-dc-105/4>; Nathan B. Baldwin, Account of Zion’s Camp, 14, MS 499, Church History Library, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE8648741](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE8648741); Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography and journal, circa 1860–1871, 1:38, MS 5004, Church History Library, <https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/>

and many camp members had returned to Kirtland, and the Missouri Saints were still not restored to their lands.<sup>5</sup> On its face, then, the expedition appears to have failed in its goal of redeeming Zion, or helping the Saints regain their Jackson County lands. No Saints moved back to Jackson County because of Zion's Camp, nor did the Saints receive any compensation for their lost property.<sup>6</sup>

Although some who participated in the expedition focused on what it did not accomplish and Joseph Smith's shortcomings as a leader, many participants did not regard the excursion as a failure.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they saw the experience as valuable for several reasons. One of the main reasons was that they believed the hand of God and his intervention was prevalent throughout the journey; reminiscences and autobiographies of members of the camp are replete with examples of such intervention. This essay will examine examples given by camp participants of divine intervention and how memories of these events developed over time. In doing so, it will demonstrate that although accounts of divine intervention are present in contemporary Camp of Israel documents, they become more frequent, pronounced, and detailed in reminiscences and autobiographies written later by camp members. The increase in mentions of divine intervention does not mean that these later memories are necessarily false, embellished, or exaggerated. Rather, it shows that

---

DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\_pid=IE10179315, image 51; George A. Smith, *Memoirs of George A. Smith*, 1817–September 10, 1847, 39–40, 50, George A. Smith Papers, box 1, folder 2, Church History Library, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE714718](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE714718); Max H Parkin, "Zion's Camp Cholera Victims Monument Dedication," *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter* 15 (Fall 1997): 4–5.

5. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 528.

6. For a discussion of the success or failure of the Camp of Israel, see Matthew C. Godfrey, "'The Redemption of Zion Must Needs Come by Power': Insights into the Camp of Israel Expedition, 1834," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2014): 133–39; Roger D. Launius, *Zion's Camp: Expedition to Missouri, 1834* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1984), 166–73; and James L. Bradley, *Zion's Camp, 1834: Prelude to the Civil War* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1990), 249–50.

7. Historian Marvin Hill, for example, argued that a lack of confidence in Joseph Smith that manifested itself in dissension of many Church members in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836 and 1837 "had its roots in the failure of Zion's camp two years earlier." Marvin S. Hill, "Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent," *Church History* 49, no. 3 (September 1980): 287–88.

the events of the Camp of Israel took on additional meaning to individuals as they progressed through life and had different experiences in the Church and with the outside world. Scholars should still carefully analyze these reminiscences and autobiographies before using them, but the prevalence of accounts of divine intervention indicate that seeing God's hand in the expedition was a key factor in how participants remembered the journey.

That members of the Camp of Israel would view their experiences through the lens of divine intervention is not surprising. Drawing on a long tradition both in England and in the American colonies, many US citizens in the nineteenth century believed in both "personal providentialism" and "national providentialism"—that God operated in their individual lives and in the trajectory of the United States as a whole. Although notions of divine personal intervention were regarded by some as "superstitious and backward," many Americans still regarded God as involving himself in their personal lives. Mormon participants in the Camp of Israel, who believed that God personally intervened to restore the gospel and regularly delivered modern-day revelation, would thus naturally turn to divine intervention to interpret events in their own lives and in the Church's history.<sup>8</sup>

## Background

The historical record of the Camp of Israel includes both contemporary journals and letters and a host of reminiscences. However, contemporary documentation is not as robust as one might hope. Frederick G. Williams was the camp historian, but his records were lost at some point, although a brief letter he composed to his wife, Rebecca, does survive.<sup>9</sup> Elijah Fordham kept a record of the Michigan contingent of the camp, but his account covers only the journey from Pontiac, Michigan Territory, to the Salt River in Missouri.<sup>10</sup> Joseph Smith wrote two letters

---

8. Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607–1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5–6; Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 170–74; David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 77–78.

9. The letter to Rebecca is a postscript appended to a letter from Joseph Smith to Emma Smith. See "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834," 58–59. See also George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 43.

10. "Journal of the Branch of the Church of Christ in Pontiac, 1834," May–June 1834, MS 4610, Church History Library.

to his wife, Emma, while on the journey; he also prepared a declaration that outlined the purposes and objectives of the camp on June 21.<sup>11</sup> In addition, copies of the June 22, 1834, revelation (now Doctrine and Covenants 105) that disbanded the camp are available.<sup>12</sup> Other contemporary records include a brief letter Joseph wrote to individuals then negotiating with Jackson County citizens, stating that the camp would disband, financial sheets showing the donations made by camp members to the expedition and expenditures captains made from these funds, and minutes of meetings held in August 1834 that recount events that occurred on the expedition.<sup>13</sup> Outside of these sources, few contemporary records exist. Most participants in the camp did not keep journals—or, if they did, such records have not survived. Instead, reminiscences and recollections from participants, some made decades after the conclusion of the camp, compose the bulk of the source material.<sup>14</sup>

The concept that God intervened in numerous ways in the Camp of Israel is present in the few contemporary records that survive. In one of Joseph Smith's letters to Emma Smith, for example, he explained how observers of the expedition frequently overestimated the number of participants in the camp. "All these things serve to help us," he concluded,

---

11. See "Letter to Emma Smith, 18 May 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 48–52, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-emma-smith-18-may-1834/1>; "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834," 52–59; "Declaration, 21 June 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 59–69, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/declaration-21-june-1834/1>.

12. "Revelation, 22 June 1834," 69–77 [D&C 105].

13. "Letter to John Thornton and Others, 25 June 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 84–88, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-john-thornton-and-others-25-june-1834/1>; "Account with the Church of Christ, circa 11–29 August 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 135–55, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/account-with-the-church-of-christ-circa-11-29-august-1834/1>; "Account with the Camp of Israel, ca. 11–29 Aug. 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 156–63, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/account-with-the-camp-of-israel-circa-11-29-august-1834/1>; "Minutes, 28–29 August 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents*, Volume 4, 120–35, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-28-29-august-1834/1>.

14. For an additional discussion of Camp of Israel sources, see Godfrey, "Redemption of Zion Must Needs Come by Power," 127–29.

“and we believe the hand of the Lord is in it.”<sup>15</sup> The journal kept by Elijah Fordham in the Michigan contingent also expressed the belief that God was blessing the expedition. “Truly the Lord is with us,” Fordham wrote on May 18, 1834. “All things go smoothly and we are rejoicing.”<sup>16</sup> Several months after the journey, Joseph Smith explained to a Church conference “the circumstances attending us while journeying to Zion, our trials, sufferings &c. &c.” He then declared that “God had not designed all this for nothing, but he had it in remembrance yet” and that God would select out of those members of the camp individuals who would “be ordained to the ministry and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time.” Thereafter, Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris selected the Twelve Apostles, eight of whom had been members of the Camp of Israel. Two weeks later, Smith would select members of the Seventy, all of whom had been on Zion’s Camp. Part of the purpose of God’s intervention in the camp, then, at least in Joseph Smith’s eyes, was so that he could test individuals before calling them to be leaders in his Church.<sup>17</sup>

As time passed, and as Church members experienced persecution in Missouri and Illinois, the idea of God’s oversight of the Camp of Israel became more pronounced. Key in the development of this theme was the earliest extensive history of the camp, written around 1840 by Heber C. Kimball, at the time one of the Church’s Twelve Apostles. This account was published serially in the Church periodical *Times and Seasons* in 1845.<sup>18</sup> Kimball—who before composing the history had just

---

15. “Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834,” 56.

16. “Journal of the Branch of the Church of Christ in Pontiac, 1834,” May–June 1834, 5.

17. “Minutes, Discourses, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 225, and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-discourse-and-blessings-14-15-february-1835/1>; “Minutes and Blessings, 28 February–1 March 1835,” in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 255–64, and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-and-blessings-28-february-1-march-1835/1>. The four apostles who did not participate in Zion’s Camp were Thomas B. Marsh, William E. McLellin, and David W. Patten, all of whom were already living in Missouri, and John F. Boynton, who was preaching in Maine at the time. Introduction to “Minutes, Discourses, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 221 n. 18.

18. “Elder Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 770–73; “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1,



experienced the horrific events in Missouri that drove the Saints from that state in the winter of 1838–1839—framed his account as a narrative of persecution: The reason for the camp was religious persecution in Jackson County, Kimball feared additional persecution on the march, and persecution was continuous throughout the journey, thus necessitating God's protection.

Kimball's account appears to have heavily influenced other retellings of the expedition. The "official" account of the camp, written in Joseph Smith's manuscript history (which was published as *History of the Church*) drew much from Kimball's account and reinforced his overall themes of persecution and protection.<sup>19</sup> After these two accounts were made, and as participants in the expedition aged and achieved some sense of stability after moving to the Salt Lake Valley in the late 1840s and 1850s, they gradually began composing their own accounts of the expedition—many of them as part of longer autobiographies and reminiscences.<sup>20</sup> The tendency to begin recording reminiscences in the 1860s and beyond was not unusual; according to historian David M. Wrobel, "Within a couple of decades after the first permanent white settlers arrived in a particular western region, . . . individual settlers began to record and publish their reminiscences." These accounts, together with the formation of pioneer societies and reunions of settlers, were ways of "forging a sense of place and a sense of belonging among members

---

1845): 787–90; "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 15, 1845): 803–5. William Clayton noted in his journal that he spent "three or four days" in July 1840 "writing Brother Kimball's history." Some historians have taken this history to be the "History of the British Mission," signed by Kimball, Orson Hyde, and Willard Richards, but it appears that Clayton was referring to Kimball's autobiography, which Clayton scribed. I am indebted to Mitchell K. Schaefer for his research into this. George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 57–59; James B. Allen, *No Toil nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 35–36; Heber C. Kimball, *Autobiography*, circa 1842–1858, MS 627, box 1, Church History Library (this manuscript is closed to research).

19. Dan Vogel, ed., *History of Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A Source- and Text-Critical Edition*, 8 vols. (Salt Lake City: Smith-Peterson Foundation, 2015), 1:xv; 2:67–145.

20. For examples, see Joseph Holbrook, *Autobiography and journal*, circa 1860–1871, MS 5004, Church History Library; Harrison Burgess, *Autobiography*, 1848–1882, MS 893, Church History Library; and Levi Hancock, *Autobiography*, circa 1854, MS 8174, Church History Library.

of these older generations,” providing “a degree of self-validation for individuals,” a way to ensure that the achievements of older generations were not forgotten and that the accomplishments of those who created a foundation for later generations were celebrated.<sup>21</sup> Reminiscences of those who participated in Zion’s Camp—together with specific histories of the expedition, such as those composed by George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff—accomplished those goals. These reminiscences also largely followed the earlier reconstructions of Kimball and Smith’s manuscript history; at least one reminiscence—that of Nathan Baldwin—sometimes repeats word-for-word passages from Kimball’s history.<sup>22</sup>

Along with composing reminiscences, participants in the Camp of Israel “share[d] formally in the collective memory of the frontier process”<sup>23</sup> through holding reunions. In 1864, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Camp of Israel, President Brigham Young held a reunion for members of Zion’s Camp who were still alive, and these reunions continued annually through 1870. The reunions consisted of a large dinner, singing, dancing, a light supper, and opportunities for those who had gone on the expedition to testify about their experiences. One report stated that the reunions allowed participants to “have an opportunity of enjoying themselves, and of talking over the history of their labors for the kingdom of God when it was in its infancy.”<sup>24</sup> In doing so, camp members participated in the formation of a collective memory of the Camp of Israel—one that influenced what they remembered about the camp.

Because most of the sources about Zion’s Camp are memories, historians need to be cautious when using those sources to reconstruct the

---

21. David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 121–23, 126.

22. See George A. Smith, *Memoirs*; Nathan Baldwin, *Account of Zion’s Camp*; and Wilford Woodruff, “The History and Travels of Zions Camp, 1882,” MS 1193, Church History Library. On cautions regarding the George A. Smith account, see Godfrey, “The Redemption of Zion Must Needs Come by Power,” 128–29.

23. Wrobel, *Promised Lands*, 123.

24. “Incidents of the History of Zion’s Camp,” *Deseret News*, October 19, 1864, 4; “Festival of the Camp of Zion,” *Deseret News*, October 12, 1864, 5; “Zion’s Camp Festival,” *Deseret News*, October 17, 1866, 5; “Zion’s Camp Party,” *Deseret Evening News*, October 14, 1868, 285; “The Zion’s Camp Party,” *Deseret News*, October 13, 1869; “Party at the Social Hall,” *Deseret Evening News*, October 19, 1870, 1; Zion’s Camp festival papers, 1864–1867, October 10, 1865, MS 14789, folder 3, Church History Library.

history of the expedition. Memory scholar Daniel Schacter explains that although we sometimes think of memory as "passive or literal recordings of reality," in truth, "memories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves." As such, a wide variety of factors determine memory. Schacter notes that "we are usually correct about the general character of our pasts, but are susceptible to various kinds of biases and distortions when we recount specific experiences."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, memory is notoriously unstable and can be distorted by factors including time, the way someone else remembers the same event, and our "current knowledge and beliefs."<sup>26</sup>

Collective memory—or how communities or groups of individuals recall past events—also strongly influences an individual's memory. "The forms memory takes . . . vary according to social organization," scholars Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy have argued, "and the groups to which any individual belongs are primary even in the most apparently individual remembering."<sup>27</sup> Memories themselves, other scholars have stated, help "to create or sustain the group, just as the group supports the continued existence of the memories."<sup>28</sup> Thus, how a group or community recalls an event—such as at a Zion's Camp reunion, for example, or in a Church newspaper—can influence the way an individual remembers it.

The context in which an individual recalls something also influences memory. "Autobiographical memory is a constructive process," scholars Michael Ross and Anne E. Wilson have noted. Inevitably, when people remember, they mix their present with their past: "current goals and knowledge influence recollections." The act of writing autobiography consists of conscious decisions of what to include and exclude, and an individual's current beliefs directly impact the way memories are

---

25. Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 5–6, 9.

26. Daniel L. Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 4–5.

27. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18; see also Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. Lewis A. Coser, with an introduction by Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38. Halbwachs was one of the first scholars to meaningfully engage and explain the concept of collective memory.

28. Amy Corning and Howard Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1.

framed.<sup>29</sup> Autobiographies and reminiscences about the Camp of Israel, therefore, not only reflect events that occurred in 1834, but also the concerns and context of the later time periods in which the reminiscences were composed. As one scholar has noted, the examination of reminiscences and memories of events can serve “as a mirror to reflect the outlook of those doing the reminiscing.”<sup>30</sup>

Examining accounts of specific Camp of Israel events illuminates all of these aspects of memory. They reveal that collective, interpretive memories of God’s intervention developed over time and meshed into a narrative of God keeping watch over the camp and revealing his presence through a variety of ways, most prominently through chastisement and protection. It is not the intent of this essay to evaluate the accuracy of the memories of individuals about specific events. Instead, it will examine the interpretive memories of divine intervention in the Camp of Israel, how these memories developed over time, the context that may have influenced these memory formations, and why it was important for Camp of Israel participants to attribute events to God’s intervention.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to note that this article is not meant to be a thorough analysis of how memories found in the records of Zion’s Camp changed over time. Instead, this essay acknowledges the issue of memory in the historiography of an important event in Mormon history; by looking at when records were written, one can see that some interpretations appear to change over time and that individual recounting of the expedition—both in personal reminiscences and in reunions—formed a collective memory. This analysis is important not only to provide insight into the function of memory in the recounting of significant events, but

---

29. Michael Ross and Anne E. Wilson, “Constructing and Appraising Past Selves,” in *Memory, Brain, and Belief*, ed. Daniel L. Schacter and Elaine Scarry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 232–33; see also Paul John Eakin, “Autobiography, Identity, and the Fiction of Memory,” in *Memory, Brain, and Belief*, 290–306.

30. Wrobel, *Promised Lands*, 13.

31. Mormon historians have used the work of memory scholars to illuminate other aspects of Church history, including different accounts of Joseph Smith’s 1820 vision of deity. This area of study is also applicable to the reconstruction of Zion’s Camp. See Steven C. Harper, “Remembering the First Vision,” in *A Reason for Faith: Navigating LDS Doctrine and Church History*, ed. Laura Harris Hales (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016), 7–19; and Ann Taves and Steven C. Harper, “Joseph Smith’s First Vision: New Methods for the Analysis of Experience-Related Texts,” *Mormon Studies Review* 3 (2016): 53–84.

also to show how some of the best-known stories about the Camp of Israel developed over time and to offer ideas on why such development occurred.

For the sake of organization, I have grouped examples of God's intervention into five groups:

- Inspiring individuals to volunteer for the camp and/or to donate money;
- Providing food and water for participants;
- Chastising participants;
- Healing those who were sick; and
- Providing protection to the camp (manifested most clearly in accounts of a June 1834 storm at Fishing River in Missouri).

Although there are examples of divine intervention that do not fall into these categories,<sup>32</sup> these seem to be the five major ways in which participants saw God's hand in the journey. Elements of many of these examples appear in contemporary records. For other examples, the memories developed over time. Still others appear for the first time in reminiscences and autobiographies constructed years later. All cases provide examples of how important evidences of divine intervention were to those remembering their Zion's Camp experience.

### **Inspiring Volunteers and Donations**

Participants in the Camp of Israel saw the Lord's hand in the expedition from the very beginning—even when Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were trying to find volunteers for the camp. A February 24, 1834, revelation instructed Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Hyrum Smith, Frederick G. Williams, Orson Hyde, and Orson Pratt to "gather" together "the strength of [the Lord's] house" to redeem Zion "by power." These men were supposed to travel through "the congregations in the eastern countries" and proclaim the need for men and money to accomplish Zion's redemption.<sup>33</sup>

---

32. For example, several participants regarded the discovery of a skeleton in a mound in Illinois and Joseph Smith's identification of the skeleton as Zeph, a white Lamanite, as a revelation from heaven. For a discussion of Zeph and the sources that deal with it, see Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Zeph Story," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 2 (1989): 31–56.

33. "Revelation, 24 February 1834," 461–63 [D&C 103:22, 29–40].

Accordingly, the men held recruitment meetings in the eastern United States. Although the results of these efforts were disappointing, given that only approximately one hundred recruits joined the ranks,<sup>34</sup> Joseph Smith and others still saw the hand of the Lord in inspiring those who did respond. On one occasion, after Smith had petitioned the Lord to bless him and Parley P. Pratt “with the gift of utterance to accomplish the Journey and the Errand on which [they were] sent,” the two held a recruitment meeting in Perrysburg, New York, at the home of Freeman Nickerson. According to Smith’s journal, as he prophesied to the gathering, “the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon them and with all redyness the yo[u]ng and mid[d]le aged volunteered for Zion.”<sup>35</sup>

Smith’s journal provides a generalized account of the Spirit influencing a group of people to respond. Later reminiscences give details as to how God’s spirit convinced individuals to join. Nathan Baldwin, who was twenty-two years old in 1834, provides a good example. Baldwin recounted in his 1882 account that he was preaching in New York in 1834 when “the Spirit said to me ‘Go west.’ I immediately turned my face to the west and began to retrace my steps, asking the question at the same time, what shall I go west for? The answer was, ‘Go west to your brethren.’” Baldwin followed this counsel. When he reached Oswegatchie, New York, he was informed by Reuben Foote about the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County and about Joseph Smith’s plans to gather a force to help them. Baldwin resolved to become part of this group and headed for Kirtland. This, he believed, was why the Spirit told him to go west. Otherwise, he never would have heard about the expedition in time.<sup>36</sup>

---

34. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal: 1833–1898*, 8 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 1:9; “Elder Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 771; see also “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 474, 478.

35. “Journal, 1832–1834,” March 3, 1834; March 4–6, 1834, in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 29, 31–32, and on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1832-1834/55>.

36. Nathan Baldwin, Account of Zion’s Camp, 6–7; see also Matthew C. Godfrey, “The Acceptable Offering of Zion’s Camp,” in *Revelations in Context*, <https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-zions-camp?lang=eng>.



Parley P. Pratt, who continued to recruit after the camp began its march to Missouri, later remembered in his autobiography, which he began about 1854, a specific example of divine intervention helping him in his efforts. At one point, Pratt had been traveling the entire night to reach branches where men might be motivated to join the camp. He stopped at noon for his horse to feed and "sank down overpowered with a deep sleep." Pratt believed that he would have "lain in a state of oblivion till the shades of night had gathered about me," but a voice, "more loud and shrill than I had ever before heard," declared, "*Parley, it is time to be up and on your journey.*" Pratt instantly awoke and continued on his way. When he related this experience to Joseph Smith, Pratt recalled, Joseph "bore testimony that it was the angel of the Lord who went before the camp, who found me overpowered with sleep, and thus awoke me."<sup>37</sup> Pratt wrote his autobiography "to spread the Mormon message . . . in a narrative of the lived experience of an early Latter-day Saint."<sup>38</sup> Recounting a story of how an angel considered it important enough to wake Pratt so that he could continue recruiting for the Camp of Israel was certainly one way of indicating God's involvement with the Saints.

Wilford Woodruff also recalled in his 1882 account a specific example of funding being obtained for the expedition through divine means. According to Woodruff, sometime in April 1834, Joseph told him and several other men that he needed "money to help fit out Zion." He did not appear to be concerned, however, saying, "I know I shall have it." The next morning, Woodruff remembered, Joseph received a letter containing money "from Sister Vose of Boston," likely Mary (Polly) Vose. Showing the money to those around him, he declared, "Did I not tell you last night that I should soon have some money and here it is." Joseph did not explicitly say that the money came because of God's intervention, but the fact that he prophesied that it would come implies that connection.<sup>39</sup> Evidence of God's hand in the recruiting and funding of the

---

37. *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 122–23, italics in original.

38. Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 349.

39. Woodruff, "The History and Travels of Zions Camp, 1882," 3–4. Although other women donated funds for the Camp of Israel, the large sum of money that Vose gave—nearly half of the \$330 donated by Church members before the camp began its journey—stood out in Woodruff's mind fifty years later. Matthew C. Godfrey, "Wise Men and Wise Women: The Role of Church Members

camp was present, then, in Joseph Smith's own contemporary records. But the details of how God worked on individuals to donate their time and money mostly appear in accounts from participants remembering their individual experiences years later—perhaps in part because participants were trying to justify the expenditures of time and money to the camp by noting that they were inspired by God to make such sacrifices. For such individuals, God's spirit was behind their decision to volunteer for the expedition and behind efforts to fund the camp.

### Providing Food and Water

In addition to the Lord inspiring individuals to volunteer for and donate to the expedition, participants believed that he at times miraculously provided food and water. Interestingly, such miracles do not appear in any contemporary record of the camp, but they exist in several reminiscences. It may be that as participants recalled their experiences in the Camp of Israel, they remembered that the camp was patterned after the Israelites' trek from Egypt and looked for similarities to the biblical exodus. Several recalled that, like the Israelites, the camp at times did not have sufficient food and water, although those instances were the exception rather than the norm. Deprivation of these necessities occurred most frequently when the camp was crossing prairies or long stretches of sparsely inhabited land. Camp members remembered God sometimes providing for them in these times when provisions were "scant."<sup>40</sup>

In the Old Testament, Numbers 20 describes an incident among the children of Israel when, as they marched to their promised land, they complained about the lack of water. The Lord told Moses to smite a rock with a rod. Moses did, and water poured out of the rock. Some participants in the Camp of Israel remembered God replicating this miracle on their journey to Missouri. At a location where fresh water could not be found, some explained, God inspired a member of the camp to dig in the ground, thereby discovering a spring.

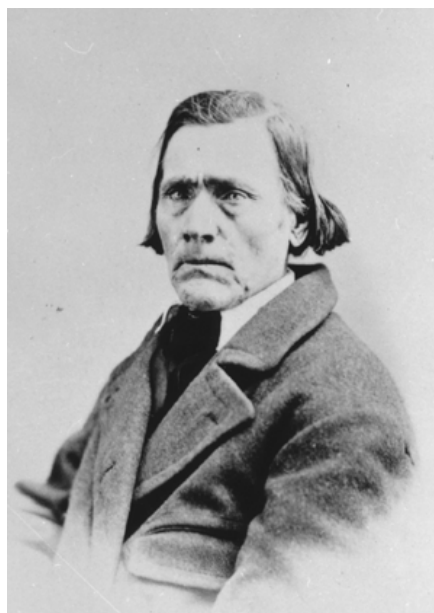
For many Latter-day Saints today, this has become one of the defining miracles of the Camp of Israel, in large part because of a video produced by the Church's Seminaries and Institutes department that is sometimes shown in classes on Church history. This video depicts this

---

in Financing Church Operations, 1834–1835," *Journal of Mormon History* 43, no. 3 (2017): 10–11.

40. "Elder Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 771.

miracle and portrays Joseph Smith as the man inspired to dig in the ground.<sup>41</sup> Examining the records around this miracle—all of which are later reminiscences—provides instructive material into how memories of a camp miracle were constructed. Levi Hancock, one of the camp participants, was apparently one of the first to record the event, probably around 1854. Hancock did not specify who discovered the spring. "One man took a spade and said, 'Who knows but what I can find water here,'" Hancock remembered, "and put the spade in the ground and dug a small hole and it filled with water, good water." Hancock declared that "some said it was as much of a miracle as when Moses smote the rock and water came out," but he did not find it significant to record who had discovered the spring—and perhaps he did not even remember who it was.<sup>42</sup>



Levi Hancock was one of the first individuals to recount the miraculous discovery of a spring of water, although he did not identify who discovered the spring. Courtesy Church History Library.

George A. Smith also gave an account of the miracle, probably in the 1870s, stating that he was the one who found the water: "We camped on the West Bank" of the Kaskaskia River, Smith recalled, and because the water was "very poor, I discovered a wet place at the foot of the West Bluff and commenced digging and found a spring of excellent water."<sup>43</sup>

---

41. *Zion's Camp*, in *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Visual Resource DVDs* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), beginning at 5:00, also available online at <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2010-07-090-zions-camp?lang=eng>.

42. Levi Hancock, *Autobiography*, circa 1854, 144.

43. George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 20. It is not clear when Smith wrote his account. He put together "a series of notes" about the journey around 1845 and

But later recollections placed Joseph Smith—who, like Moses, was the leader of the camp—as the spring’s discoverer. In 1888, Oliver B. Huntington, who was not on the expedition, said that participants Zera Cole and William Cahoon insisted that Joseph Smith dug the well.<sup>44</sup> Huntington said that Cahoon informed him of Smith’s digging of the well when they attended the dedication of the temple in Manti, Utah Territory, in May 1888—a time when the Church was under intense pressure from the federal government to end plural marriage. Perhaps the identification of Joseph Smith as the one who found the water was one way for Cahoon—and Huntington—to remember Joseph Smith’s prophetic abilities at a time when the Church he founded was under extreme fire.

B. H. Roberts’s *History of the Church*, published in the early 1900s, followed George A. Smith’s account by identifying George as the one responsible for finding the well.<sup>45</sup> Yet when Seminaries and Institutes produced a Zion’s Camp video, it instead portrayed Joseph Smith as the responsible party. It is not clear why the creators of the video made that choice, but they were perhaps influenced by what scholars Terryl Givens and Matthew J. Grow have referred to as the “hagiographic tradition surrounding Joseph Smith,” wherein Smith is depicted in historical events as “a hero of inspiring proportions.”<sup>46</sup> Huntington’s account of Smith miraculously finding water to stave off the thirst of Zion’s Camp participants fit well into this heroic mold.

---

then constructed his narrative “from memory” some ten to thirty years later. George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 43; George A. Smith, *Autobiography and journals*, Tuesday, May 17, 1834, MS 17190, image 37, Church History Library, [https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE7698183](https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE7698183).

44. Oliver B. Huntington, *Diary and reminiscences*, 1843 June–1900 January, 301, MS 1648, Church History Library.

45. Joseph Smith Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 2:73.

46. Givens and Grow, *Parley P. Pratt*, 144. See also Andrea Radke-Moss, “Silent Memories of Missouri: Mormon Women and Men and Sexual Assault in Group Memory and Religious Identity,” in *Mormon Women’s History: Beyond Biography*, ed. Rachel Cope and others (Vancouver, B.C.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, forthcoming, 2017), wherein Radke-Moss discusses Joseph Smith’s “Majesty in Chains” speech in the jail in Richmond, Missouri, as an example of this hagiographic tradition.

## Chastisement

Not all memories of divine intervention in the Camp of Israel were positive. Just as the children of Israel were sometimes chastised by the Lord,<sup>47</sup> many Zion's Camp participants saw the hand of the Lord in misfortunes and illnesses that beset them, regarding these as divine punishments for disunity and disobedience. This outlook on disasters stemmed from long-standing Protestant beliefs that the judgments of God awaited those who were disobedient, that "violation of the moral order would provoke awful warnings or more awful judgments."<sup>48</sup> Such beliefs were prevalent in the June 22, 1834, revelation that disbanded the Camp of Israel. In that revelation, God told camp participants that his "people must needs be chastened, until they learn obedience if it must needs be by the [things] which they suffer."<sup>49</sup> Camp members thus knew on June 22 that God did chasten them because of their disobedience, but the idea that specific events constituted that divine chastisement was a later conclusion and largely came in later reminiscences.

Heber C. Kimball was one of the first (writing in 1840) to explain how God chastened the camp. He recalled that on Saturday, May 17, 1834, the expedition made camp for the weekend in Richmond, Indiana, so they would not have to travel on the Sabbath. That evening, Sylvester Smith, one of the camp participants and a member of the Kirtland high council, exhibited a "rebellious spirit." Displeased with Sylvester's disunity and with others that exhibited a similar spirit, Joseph Smith called the camp together and told them, according to Kimball, "that they would meet with misfortunes, difficulties and hindrances '*and you will know it before you leave this place.*'"<sup>50</sup>

The next morning, Kimball remembered in his 1840 history, camp members discovered that nearly every horse was "so badly foundered" that they "could scarce lead them a few rods to the water." According to Kimball, the condition of the horses was the fulfillment of Joseph Smith's prophecy. Upon seeing the horses, Smith, perceiving "the

---

47. See, for example, Exodus 32:35.

48. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 78.

49. "Revelation, 22 June 1834," 73 [D&C 105:6].

50. "Elder Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 772; italics in original.

hand of God . . . in this misfortune,” declared that if camp members “humble[d] themselves before the Lord,” God would restore the horses’ health. By noon, Kimball recounted, “the horses were as nimble as ever, with the exception of one of Sylvester Smith’s which soon afterwards died.” To Kimball, who remembered these events just after Joseph Smith and Church members had experienced intense persecution in both Ohio and Missouri at least in part because of dissenters from within, the incident starkly depicted “the effects of discord” and the Lord’s displeasure with disunity.<sup>51</sup>

A couple of weeks later, Kimball explained in his 1840 account, the expedition heard another dire prophecy from Joseph Smith that, in Kimball’s retelling, again touched on calamities that would befall those who dissented. Concerned about “the fractious and unruly spirits” in the camp, Smith said that God had shown him a great scourge that would afflict the camp, making them “die like sheep with the rot.” Repentance and humility would alleviate the severity of the scourge, Smith continued, but the Lord was determined to punish camp members “for giving way to their unruly temper.”<sup>52</sup> Sometime probably in the 1870s, George A. Smith also recalled this prophecy in his autobiography, stating that when he heard Joseph Smith make the prophecy, he interpreted it to mean that a battle would break out between the camp and mobs of non-Mormons in Missouri, resulting in the deaths of several camp members.<sup>53</sup> Instead, most participants remembering the scourge depicted it as a disease much dreaded in nineteenth-century America: cholera.

In 1832, a cholera epidemic began in the eastern United States, killing over two thousand individuals in New York City alone by the end of July. It continued to afflict residents of the United States into 1834, especially along waterways.<sup>54</sup> As the epidemic raged, Joseph Smith and others in 1832 saw it as a judgment from God “upon all the face of the earth”—the

---

51. “Elder Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 772; Levi Hancock, Autobiography, circa 1854, 138. In his autobiography, George A. Smith provided an account of this incident that closely resembles Kimball’s. George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 18.

52. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 788.

53. George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 26–27.

54. Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 25–34; J. S. Chambers, *The Conquest of Cholera: America’s Greatest Scourge* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 64; “The Cholera,” *Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (September 1832): 1.



cultural context for those later remembering the cholera outbreak in the Camp of Israel.<sup>55</sup> Around June 23, 1834, after Joseph had dictated a revelation directing that the camp be disbanded, some participants began exhibiting symptoms of cholera. Within the next few days, the disease hit the camp in full force. By the time it subsided, thirteen members of the camp had died, as well as two other members of the Church who were living in Missouri.<sup>56</sup>

For camp participants recalling the epidemic, cholera was the scourge that Joseph Smith had prophesied. Writing around 1835, Wilford Woodruff saw the Lord's hand in the disease. "Brother Joseph prophesied That . . . a scourge awaited the camp," Woodruff said. "And as it was prophesied of So it was fulfilled. For soon after we had camp'd . . . we were visited by the destroying angel and 8 or 10 of our brethren were immediately lade helpless beneath the stroke."<sup>57</sup> Likewise, William Cahoon, writing probably sometime in the late 1870s, stated that God "sent a scourge among us (*The Cholera*)," which "caused great sorrow and mourning in our Camp." The plague, Cahoon continued, taught him that "it is a fearfull thing to fall under the displeasure of the living God & to openly rebel against Him & murmer at the council of His servant the Prophet."<sup>58</sup>

John Murdock, whose young daughter Phebe was one of the Missouri Saints who died from the disease, likewise saw the cholera epidemic as a judgment from God. "Although the Lord delivered us from our enemies," Murdock recalled, "yet he had a whip for us, for whom he loveth he chastens, and some of us had become slothful in duty and found fault." Murdock stated that as he traveled through Liberty, Missouri, a non-Mormon told him that it looked like cholera was "a judgement on our people." Murdock agreed, declaring, "Judgement is to begin at the house of God' and I think it has begun."<sup>59</sup>

---

55. "Letter to William W. Phelps, 31 July 1832," in Matthew C. Godfrey and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*, vol. 2 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee and others (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013), 267.

56. "Revelation, 22 June 1834," 72 n. 334 [D&C 105].

57. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:12.

58. William Cahoon, Autobiography, 43, in Autobiography and family record, 1878–1931, MS 20731, Church History Library; emphasis in original.

59. John Murdock, autobiography, 31–32, in Journal and autobiography circa 1830–1867, MS 1194, Church History Library; 1 Peter 4:17.



John Murdock believed the outbreak of cholera among the Camp of Israel was a judgment from God. His daughter Phebe died from the disease. Courtesy Church History Library.

Outside of Woodruff's 1835 account, the attribution of cholera as a divine punishment, as well as the notion that Sylvester Smith's disunity led to God foundering the horses, is not present in contemporary records. Indeed, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Emma the day that the camp's horses were supposedly afflicted because of Sylvester Smith's disobedience, but he did not mention anything about Sylvester Smith or any problems with horses.<sup>60</sup> Sources from 1834 do indicate that Sylvester Smith exhibited a rebellious spirit during the camp, and the death of individuals from cholera in late June and early July is a fact.<sup>61</sup> But it appears that participants such as Heber C. Kimball, who at the time of writing his recollections had just seen the Church

nearly ripped apart by dissenters, provided specific meanings to these events when they remembered them later in their lives. The afflictions and disease became stark examples of what happened when Church members refused to follow their leaders or complained about them.

### Healing the Sick

Some Camp of Israel members recalled several examples of the Lord extending healing to those who were ill. Contemporary records do not provide any examples of healings, although Joseph Smith did write Emma on June 4, 1834, that camp members were "all in

60. "Letter to Emma Smith, 18 May 1834," 50–52.

61. See, for example, "Minutes, 28–29 Aug. 1834," 125–32; "Afflicting," *Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (July 1834): 176.

better circumstances of health apparently than when we started from Kirtland."<sup>62</sup> Specific memories of healing came in later recollections.

Thomas Colburn, for example, told a Zion's Camp reunion in 1865 that after he was "seized with cholera," he "knelt down & prayed & covenanted with God" that he would serve the Lord if his life was spared. Colburn then "got some tea & was healed."<sup>63</sup> Joseph Bates Noble recalled contracting the disease and being blessed by Brigham Young, Joseph Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Peter Whitmer, "and three or four others." Noble believed that he was healed "through the faith of my brethren." "Never," he concluded, "had I experienced before such a manifestation of the blessings of God as at this time."<sup>64</sup>

Hiram Winters also recalled in an account published in 1883 an incident where Joseph Smith not only healed Burr Riggs of cholera but also apparently raised him from the dead. Winters, who was "sergeant of the night-guards," commenced checking on the guards one night around midnight and discovered that "Riggs was missing from his post." Looking around the area, Winters discovered Riggs "behind a log that lay about a rod away, as stiff as the log itself." Winters asked Alexander Whiteside to carry the body to Winters's tent and then found Joseph Smith and told him what had happened. Joseph, Hyrum Smith, and Frederick G. Williams came to the tent and administered to Riggs, who was brought back to life in full health. According to Winters, "It was not over fifteen minutes from the time I found him till he was back at his post."<sup>65</sup>

Even those who were not on the expedition recalled instances of healing—including one example where Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, declared in a memoir published in 1853 that Joseph and his brother Hyrum were healed by divine intervention at Lucy's behest. Lucy explained that during the cholera epidemic, Joseph and Hyrum were both so afflicted that they "were greatly alarmed fearing that [they] should die in this western wilderness so far from [their] families without even the privilege of blessing [their] children or giving them one word of parting counsel." They prayed to God for deliverance, Lucy continued,

---

62. "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834," 54.

63. Thomas Colburn, in Zion's Camp festival papers, 1864–1867, October 10, 1865.

64. Joseph Bates Noble, Autobiography, 7, in Reminiscences, 1836–1866, MS 1031, Church History Library. Noble may have written his account as early as 1836, but possibly much later.

65. Hiram Winters recollections, in Lycurgus, "Recollections of Zion's Camp," *Juvenile Instructor* 18 (March 15, 1883): 86.

but “still grew worse.” It seemed to them that “the Heavens seemed sealed against [them] and every power that could render [them] any assistance shut within its gates.” At this crucial moment, the brothers beseeched the Lord again to heal them. Hyrum then “sprung to his feet and exclaimed Joseph we shall return for I have seen an open vision in which I saw mother on her knees under an apple tree praying for us and she is even now asking in tears God to spare our lives that she may behold us again in the flesh and the spirit testifies to me that her prayers and ours shall be heard.”<sup>66</sup> Lucy, of course, was not on the expedition, and one presumes that she heard this story from Joseph and Hyrum. No contemporary records mention this event, but Lucy—writing after her two sons had been assassinated in Illinois in 1844—portrayed it as an example of God’s hand protecting and healing her sons. Remembering the incident in this way allowed her to focus on a time when her prayers were instrumental in God protecting her sons, in contrast to what had occurred in 1844. It also followed Lucy’s process in her memoir of depicting Joseph Smith as a heroic figure whom God protected.<sup>67</sup>

Although numerous accounts of healing appear in reminiscences, other participants remembered Joseph Smith specifically being forbidden to heal those who suffered from cholera. Levi Hancock explained that after his brother Joseph contracted the disease, Joseph Smith prayed for him but was told that he “must stand aside or [he] shall [be] smitten of the Lord.” Without a blessing from Smith, Levi had to care for his sick brother, who survived the disease, but only after night-and-day attention from Levi.<sup>68</sup> According to Heber C. Kimball, when Smith tried

---

66. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 13, pp. 13–14, on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/165>.

67. For example, Lucy Mack Smith recounted an incident in New York that occurred when Joseph Smith was taking the manuscript of the Book of Mormon to a printer in Palmyra for printing. According to Lucy, although there were rumors of a mob of forty men lying in hiding to ambush him on his way in order to steal the manuscript, Joseph told his mother to disregard the rumors and that God would protect him. On his way to Palmyra, Lucy said, he encountered the leader of the mob, tipped his hat to him, wished him a good morning, and passed on without any incident occurring. Upon returning, he told his mother, “Did I not tell you that I should be delivered from the hands of all my enemies?” “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845,” 157, on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/164>.

68. Levi Hancock, *Autobiography*, circa 1854, 147. Interestingly, a later family history of Joseph Hancock stated that he “was healed under the administration

to offer a healing blessing to John S. Carter, Smith was "smitten blind" and told that he "must not stay [God's] hands, or he will slay us."<sup>69</sup> Wilford Woodruff remembered a more general proclamation from Joseph Smith when the cholera epidemic hit. "I told you what was coming to pass," Woodruff remembered Smith saying, "'and when affliction came I stretched out my hand to stay it, and I came very near falling by it myself.'"<sup>70</sup> Yet, as explained above, other accounts clearly stated that Joseph Smith and others blessed those with cholera and in some instances healed them.

Reasons for these discrepancies are not entirely clear. Perhaps in the case of John S. Carter, Kimball was trying to find a reason why a diligent Church member like Carter died and concluded that it was because Joseph Smith had been prevented from healing him. Perhaps Wilford Woodruff was similarly trying to clarify in his own mind why thirteen members of the camp died even with Joseph Smith present. Smith, however, was apparently not concerned with such things. Joseph Young recalled in 1878 that in February 1835, Joseph Smith declared that he had seen that those who had died from cholera in the camp had received a mansion in heaven.<sup>71</sup> They may have suffered temporally, but their spiritual state was secure.

Over time, members of the camp recorded these instances of healing and of being forbidden to heal, possibly because they wanted to memorialize Joseph Smith, who had died by that time, but also because such instances provided key examples of God's oversight of the expedition. Why these were not recorded by anyone at the time of the expedition may be just because participants did not have time to put on paper their experiences until later in their lives. But it is also likely that these instances took on new meaning for the Saints as they experienced continued hardship, including sickness and disease, as they made their

---

of Joseph Smith, the Prophet." This indicates that Joseph Hancock may have later attributed his recovery from cholera to a blessing from Joseph Smith and not from his brother's care. Amy Hancock, "Biography of Joseph Hancock, circa 1893," MS 11362, Church History Library.

69. Heber C. Kimball, in *Zion's Camp festival papers, 1864–1867*, October 10, 1864.

70. Wilford Woodruff, in *Sixty-Eighth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing, 1898), 29–30.

71. Joseph Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventies: Names of First and Second Quorums* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing Establishment, 1878), 1.

way from Missouri to Illinois and from Illinois to the Great Basin. At times in these later years, God did not heal those who were sick; recalling instances in the Camp of Israel where healing did and did not occur likely comforted those who had seen friends and loved ones pass on.

### Providing Protection

Although participants tended to see God's hand in misfortune and disaster, members of the Camp of Israel also recalled the Lord protecting them from their enemies. This apparent contradiction shows that camp members could see God's hand in both good and bad events; they could believe that God is in all aspects of life. God can be both in the reward and in the punishment, in both chaos and order.<sup>72</sup> The overlying belief, at least for members of the Camp of Israel, seemed to be that when the expedition was in need of chastisement, God provided it; when they were obedient, God protected them from misfortune.

The idea of the Lord's protection appears in contemporary documents of the camp. In June 1834, for example, Joseph Smith wrote a letter discussing the Lord watching over the camp and protecting it from enemies. "The Lord shows us to a good advantage in the eyes of their spies," he stated, "for in counting us the[y] make of our 170 men from five to seven hundred and the reports of the people are not a little calculated [to] frighten and strike terror through their ranks."<sup>73</sup> Yet most examples of protection come in reminiscent accounts. Heber C. Kimball, for instance, noted that when the company crossed the Illinois River on June 2, 1834, the ferryman believed they were 500 in number, although they were closer to 150.<sup>74</sup> Joseph Bates Noble, meanwhile, explained that he had heard individuals say the camp was "a thousand strong" and that he "never heard of our being numbered less than twice our actual number."<sup>75</sup>

Kimball provided other examples of divine protection, drawing on the Old Testament's record of angels going before the children of Israel.<sup>76</sup> "God was with us, and angels went before us," Kimball declared, "and

---

72. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 77–78.

73. "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834," 56.

74. "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 788.

75. Noble, *Autobiography*, 6.

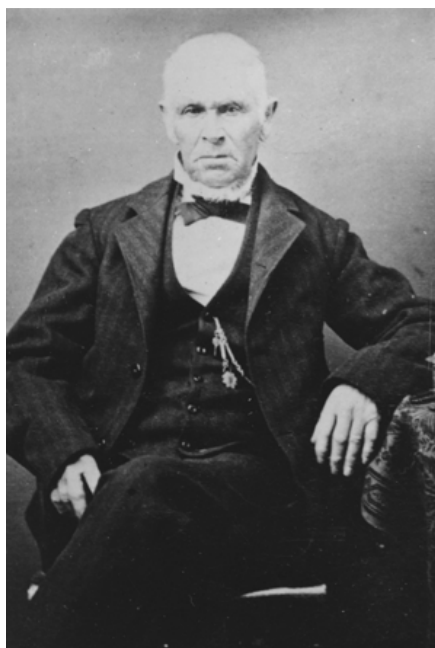
76. See Exodus 23:20.



we had no fear of either men or devils."<sup>77</sup> Later, at an 1864 Zion's Camp reunion, Kimball provided a specific example. To cross a stream near Indianapolis, Indiana, Kimball explained, the camp had to go down a steep embankment. When an out-of-control wagon flew over the embankment, "some of the brethren saw an angel hold up the wagon until it came right again in the track." Indeed, Kimball continued, "angels were with us all the time."<sup>78</sup> Joseph Smith's manuscript history, written in the mid 1840s, made a similar assertion: "Notwithstanding our enemies were continually breathing threats of violence, we did not fear, neither did we hessitate to prosecute our jiurney, for God was with us, and his angels went before us . . . for we saw them."<sup>79</sup>

Reuben McBride echoed these declarations, saying that on one night, enemies threatened the expedition. Camp members felt safe, however, because "Joseph said he knew the angels of God were with us for he had seen them."<sup>80</sup>

As the camp got closer to Clay County, Missouri, where the bulk of Church members in Missouri were living, tensions ran even higher—something that Joseph Smith recognized. In a June 1834 letter to several individuals who had served as legal counsel for the Church, Smith declared



Reuben McBride was one of several Camp of Israel participants who believed that God protected the camp from danger. Courtesy Church History Library.

---

77. "Elder Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 772.

78. Heber C. Kimball, in Zion's Camp festival papers, 1864–1867, October 10, 1864.

79. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 481. See also Woodruff, "History and Travels of Zions Camp, 1882," 20.

80. Reuben McBride, *Reminiscence*, 3, MS 8197, Church History Library.

that Governor Daniel Dunklin's "ears [were] stifled with reports from Jackson [County] of our hostile intentions &c."<sup>81</sup> Smith also received resolutions from a committee of citizens in Lafayette County, Missouri, declaring that they had "120 to 130 persons assembled in the Town of Independence County of Jackson" ready to "interfer[e]" if the Camp of Israel crossed the Missouri River into Jackson County.<sup>82</sup> Another newspaper account declared that rumors were rampant that the Mormons intended to enter Jackson County in hostile array. If that occurred, the report asserted, much blood would be shed.<sup>83</sup>

In this atmosphere, an event occurred that Church members later interpreted as an example of divine protection. A June 1834 Missouri newspaper reported that a boat carrying several Jackson County citizens, including Samuel C. Owens and James Campbell, sunk as they were crossing the Missouri River, presumably to preemptively attack the Camp of Israel. Because of the sinking, Campbell and four other men drowned.<sup>84</sup>

Sometime between March 1842 and August 1843, William W. Phelps, who was working on Joseph Smith's manuscript history and who had been living in Clay County in June 1834, recorded a description of this event into the history.<sup>85</sup> According to Phelps's account, a group of about fifteen individuals, led by Owens and Campbell, tried to cross the Missouri River with the intention of preventing the Camp of Israel from entering Clay County. Campbell swore that "*the eagles and Turkey buzzards shall eat my flesh if I do not fix Jo. Smith and his army so that their skins will not hold shucks before two days are passed.*" As the group crossed the river, the history continued, "the angel of God saw fit to sink the boat, about the middle of the river, and seven out of twelve that attempted to cross, were drowned." Campbell himself "floated down the river some four or five miles, and lodged upon a pile of drift wood, where the eagles, Buzzards, ravens, crows, and wild animals [ate] his

---

81. "Letter to John Thornton and Others, 25 June 1834," 86–88.

82. "Resolutions of Committee from Lafayette County, Missouri, 23 June 1834," in Godfrey and others, *Documents, Volume 4*, 79–80, and on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/resolutions-of-committee-from-lafayette-county-missouri-23-june-1834/1>.

83. "The Mormon Controversy," *Daily National Intelligencer*, July 23, 1834.

84. "Distressing," *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon's Lick Advertiser*, June 28, 1834.

85. Vogel, *History of Joseph Smith*, 1:clxxxiv; 2:113–14.

flesh from his bones, to fulfill his own words." Owens, the history explained, survived "after floating fourteen miles down stream" and returned home, "rather shy of the vengeance of God."<sup>86</sup> Phelps's account—written at a time when Joseph Smith was facing the possibility of extradition to Missouri by his enemies—depicted the misfortune of Campbell and Owens as God intervening to protect the Camp of Israel. Perhaps Phelps hoped that a similar fate would befall those who, in his mind, continued to persecute Joseph Smith.

The best-known memory of God's protection came in accounts of a storm that occurred at Fishing River, Missouri, just a few days after the sinking of the boat. Charles C.

Rich provided what appears to be the only contemporary record of this storm: "it commenced raining at dark and rained and litteniged and thunderd to exceed all an alarm of an atack but no attack."<sup>87</sup> Reminiscent accounts provided meaning to this storm and the lack of a suspected attack. According to Heber C. Kimball's 1840 account, as the camp approached Fishing River, an old woman—identified in George A. Smith's record as an African-American woman—told camp members that "there is a company of men laying in wait here who are calculating to kill you this morning as you pass through." Kimball recounted that



Charles C. Rich provided what may be the only contemporary account of the Fishing River storm. Courtesy Church History Library.

---

86. "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1," 494–95, emphasis in original. See also Woodruff, "History and Travels of Zions Camp, 1882," 55–56.

87. Charles C. Rich, Diary, 1834 May–July, MS 703, Church History Library. This version of Rich's journal was copied by Thomas Bullock and contains a notation that it is "a revised copy," meaning some of what is in the journal could have been added by Bullock.

throughout the day, wagons broke down, wheels fell off of wagons, and “many things . . . hinder[ed] our progress,” meaning that the group did not encounter a mob in the morning as expected. That night, however, a group of men rode into the camp proclaiming that it would “see hell before morning” and that a large contingent of men “armed with guns” were preparing to attack that night. “Nothing but the power of God could save” the camp, Kimball recalled the men declaring.<sup>88</sup>

Not long after the men threatening destruction had left the camp, Kimball noted, “a small black cloud” began “rising in the west; and not more than twenty minutes passed away before it began to rain and hail.” “The thunders rolled with awful majesty,” he continued, “and the red lightnings flashed through the horizon.” The storm had such fury that “the earth quaked and trembled, and there being no cessation it seemed as though the Almighty had issued forth his mandate of vengeance.” Fierce winds blew down the tents of the camp, and the wind and rain forced camp members into a nearby log meetinghouse. Because of the storm, Kimball explained with perhaps some exaggeration, the river rose nearly forty feet, and the mob, which was on the opposite side, could not cross it. Although little to no hail fell on the Camp of Israel, it “fell so heavy” on the camp’s enemies “that it beat holes in their hats, and in some instances even broke the stocks off their guns.” Horses ran away, gunpowder was soaked, “and it was evident the Almighty fought in our defence.” Because of the storm and the rise of the river, the mob could not attack the camp.<sup>89</sup> Just as the Lord used the Red Sea to protect the children of Israel from Pharaoh’s army, so too did God intervene at this time—at least in Kimball’s memory—through nature.<sup>90</sup>

Perhaps influenced by Kimball’s account of the divine origin of the storm, nearly every participant who left a record of the Fishing River storm thereafter attributed it to God’s intervention. Elias Hutchings, for example, informed a meeting in 1845 that “the Lord protected [the camp] by sending a storm of Hail Thunder & Lightning snow & rain upon” the mob, while Levi Hancock, after relating other miracles that he believed had occurred on the expedition, stated that “the greatest

---

88. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 789–90; George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 36.

89. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1, 1845): 790.

90. See Exodus 14:21–31.

miracle" was the storm that God produced at Fishing River.<sup>91</sup> Joseph Bates Noble agreed, declaring, "One thing I was assured of—the God of our fathers was our defense. . . . How plain we could discern the hand of the Lord in our preservation."<sup>92</sup> Nathan Baldwin concurred. "The Lord had previously said He would fight the battles of His saints," Baldwin explained, "and it seemed as though the mandate had gone forth from His presence, to ply the artillery of Heaven in defense of His servants. . . . All were conscious that God was engaged in the conflict, and thankful that they were under his special care and protection."<sup>93</sup> George A. Smith echoed these sentiments: "I have ever felt thankful to my Heavenly Father that he by this storm and sudden rise of the streams prevented our having a bloody conflict with our enemies who were thereby prevented from attacking us."<sup>94</sup> As Lyman Littlefield, who was only fourteen years old when he was on the journey, stated nearly sixty years later, "We understood that the Almighty had sent that storm for the special preservation of Zion's Camp"—a "great truth that was plain to our comprehension."<sup>95</sup>

According to Mormon sources, even members of the mob acknowledged that the Fishing River storm came from God. Kimball stated in his 1840 writing that when a delegation of men from Ray County, Missouri, came into the Camp of Israel a couple of days after the storm, their leader, who apparently had been one of the mob, admitted that there was "an Almighty power that protects this people."<sup>96</sup> In an addendum to Joseph Smith's manuscript history of the Church added around 1845, Thomas Bullock, probably using notes provided from George A. Smith, explained that during the storm, one of the Saints' enemies was killed by lightning and another lost a hand when a horse he was holding bolted. These circumstances led one of the mob to declare, "If that was the way, God fought for the God damd Mormons, they might as well go home

---

91. 3rd Quorum of the Seventy Minutes, January 8, 1845, 51, in *Seventies Quorum Records, 1844–1975*, CR 499, reel 4, Church History Library; Levi Hancock, *Autobiography*, circa 1854, 144.

92. Noble, *Autobiography*, 9.

93. Baldwin, *Account of Zion's Camp*, 12.

94. George A. Smith, *Memoirs*, 36–37.

95. Lyman O. Littlefield, "The Prophet Joseph Smith in Zion's Camp," *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (March 1, 1892): 147.

96. "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (February 15, 1845): 804.

about their business.”<sup>97</sup> Joseph S. Allen had a similar memory, stating that the day after the storm, members of the mob said “that the Mormons carried hell with them, and they swore that they would be friends with the Mormons.”<sup>98</sup> At least some participants of the Camp of Israel, then, remembered the storm as being so powerful that even those who were bitterly opposed to the Church recognized God’s hand in it.

These examples indicate that camp members believed that God’s protection was evident throughout the expedition, especially in making the group’s numbers larger in the eyes of their enemies than they actually were, in providing angels to guard the camp and prevent misfortune, and in pronounced displays of power such as the Fishing River storm, which prevented a mob attack. Although evidences of such protection are contained in some contemporary records, most of the details come in later reminiscences as camp participants had time to record their experiences and as they reflected on them in light of the persecution the Saints had faced in Missouri, Illinois, and even in the Great Basin. Seeing protection from God during the Camp of Israel likely helped them to cope with the memories of other difficulties they had faced.

### **Reasons for Perceiving the Hand of the Lord**

As these examples show, those who participated in Zion’s Camp remembered God exhibiting his hand in numerous ways throughout the expedition, just as the Old Testament recounted divine intervention among the children of Israel. The accuracy of some of these memories may be called into question. For example, if, on the one hand, several individuals remembered that God would not allow Joseph Smith to heal those afflicted with cholera, why, then, did the Lord permit Smith to heal Burr Riggs, or why did several members of the camp recall being healed? Historians need to ask such questions, but it is also important to remember that such discrepancies are normal when dealing with memory. Historian Steven Harper has argued that “memories are both accurate and inaccurate. They are both distorted reconstructions of the past and true perceptions of the past as seen from the present.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, what is important is that participants believed that the events they described had happened and that they had specific reasons for believing it.

---

97. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 16 [addenda] n. 16.

98. Joseph S. Allen, in Zion’s Camp festival papers, 1864–1867, October 10, 1864.

99. Harper, “Remembering the First Vision,” 10.



Why were those in Zion's Camp prone to see God's hand so prominently in the expedition? Certainly one reason is simply that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both then and today, strongly believe that God is aware of them and that he will intervene in their lives when necessary. These beliefs are part of their identity, prompting members to look at ways in which the Lord has interacted with them in their lives, both in the present and in the past. The fact that these Saints believed themselves to be modern-day members of the House of Israel also likely encouraged them to see ways that the Lord protected them as he had the children of Israel.<sup>100</sup>

Another reason for so many accounts of God's intervention may have been to answer critics who asserted that God had nothing to do with the camp—that it was just one of Joseph Smith's follies. Eber D. Howe's book *Mormonism Unveiled*, published in late 1834, depicted camp participants as "dupes" who believed Joseph Smith's false declarations that God commanded the formation and march of the Camp of Israel.<sup>101</sup> T. B. H. Stenhouse's 1872 publication *Rocky Mountain Saints*, meanwhile, declared sarcastically that the Missouri Saints, who were chastised in a December 1833 revelation commanding the organization of the camp, "could not be expected to command so great a manifestation of divine power as would have been necessary to restore them to their homes and farms."<sup>102</sup> This kind of skeptical attitude from detractors, combined with the believers' will to interpret their lives in terms of divine intervention, likely motivated members of the camp to recall times when they felt that God *was* with the expedition.

In addition, experiences of the Saints in the years after 1834 may have informed how participants remembered the camp. As Taves and Harper have argued, "Remembering involves *piecing together a past that*

---

100. Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Church's governing First Presidency, for example, counseled Church members in 2007 to keep a record of how they see the hand of God in their daily lives. By doing so, he continued, Church members would be able to see "how much God loves us and how much we need Him." Henry B. Eyring, "O Remember, Remember," *Ensign* 37 (November 2007): 66.

101. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* [sic]: or, a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 158.

102. T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York: Appleton, 1872), 56–57.

*makes sense in the present.*"<sup>103</sup> Therefore, it is important to explore what the "present" of the Saints was when Camp of Israel reminiscences were made. Heber C. Kimball initially composed his recollections of Zion's Camp in 1840, only about a year removed from Church members' violent expulsion from the state of Missouri.<sup>104</sup> In that case, there was no storm provided by God to protect the Saints from their enemies, nor was there any other intervention from the Lord to prevent the expulsion. When Kimball's recollections were published in 1845, it was at a time when the Church was again facing persecution from its enemies, which would result in the migration of the Saints from Illinois, and just a year removed from the death of Joseph Smith—a time when God did not protect his prophet. For Kimball, recollecting times when God was with the Camp of Israel and when Joseph Smith exerted prophetic leadership perhaps helped him deal with the loss of his beloved leader.<sup>105</sup>

Much of what was composed in Joseph Smith's manuscript history about Zion's Camp was likewise heavily revised in 1845 and then revised again in 1859, not long after the 1857–1858 Utah War, when Church leaders in the Great Basin believed they were under siege from the federal government because of the march of US soldiers to Utah Territory.<sup>106</sup> Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, when many of the reminiscences of individual members of the Camp of Israel were written, Church members faced legal prosecution because of their practice of polygamy, reinforcing their belief that the world was against them.<sup>107</sup> In such circumstances, it would be natural for Church members to turn to the past to find examples of God acting on their behalf and for their well-being, as well as finding specific examples of God protecting them from their enemies.

---

103. Taves and Harper, "Joseph Smith's First Vision," 60, italics in original.

104. Godfrey, "The Redemption of Zion Must Needs Come by Power," 127–28.

105. Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 525–50.

106. Vogel, *History of Joseph Smith*, 1:xv; 2:xii. For an explanation of Johnston's Army and the conflict in Utah Territory in the 1850s, see Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict: 1850–1859* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960); David L. Bigler and Will Bagley, *The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857–1858* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).

107. Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 47–50.

The Camp of Israel may have served as a perfect model because, just as in Missouri, Illinois, and the conflict surrounding plural marriage, the expedition did not end with the Saints triumphing over their enemies. Yet the narrative still provided numerous instances of God working on Church members' behalf. In this way, the interpretive memories of Zion's Camp could comfort the Saints and highlight that even if the outcome was not what was expected or desired, it did not mean that God was not with them.

Church leaders also used examples from the camp to warn Saints of what could befall them if they were not obedient to leaders' directives. Believing that "a lack of unity and obedience" among the Saints was one cause of Joseph Smith's death in 1844, Brigham Young and other Church leaders preached frequently on the necessity of obedience.<sup>108</sup> Yet examples of disobedience abounded in Utah Territory, including in the late 1860s and early 1870s when a group of Latter-day Saints led by William Godbe opposed Young's economic teachings, believing that he was too focused on economic concerns.<sup>109</sup> Facing such opposition, Young and other leaders could point to the fate of Sylvester Smith's horse and the cholera outbreak as examples of what misfortunes God could bestow upon individuals who refused to take counsel from the prophet and complained about directions from their leaders. Memories of the Camp of Israel and of the Lord's hand in the expedition thus could serve not only as comfort but also as warning.

## Conclusion

Whatever the reasons, those who participated in the Camp of Israel strongly remembered God being with them and often intervening in the camp's affairs, whether that was through assistance in recruiting, funding, feeding, healing, or chastising. Examining examples of these memories helps historians see the need for caution when using reminiscences and autobiographies by highlighting how some of the memories evolved. It also shows that a collective memory of God's intervention developed over time as participants interpreted their experiences in

---

108. John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 146.

109. Turner, *Brigham Young*, 355–58. For the best discussion of the Godbeite movement, see Ronald W. Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998; repr., Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2001).

a context of violence, forced relocations, and persecution in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah Territory. Perhaps the most striking point coming from this analysis, however, is that the participants strongly believed that God's intervention was both ubiquitous and necessary in Zion's Camp. Participants clearly portrayed that God did not forsake them during the expedition, even if the camp did not meet its goal of helping Church members regain their Jackson County lands. Such memories reinforced to them that even in times when God seemingly is absent, his hand is there if individuals choose to see it. "We believe the hand of the Lord is in it," Joseph Smith wrote to his wife Emma in June 1834 about the expedition.<sup>110</sup> The accounts of many camp members overwhelmingly agreed.

---

Matthew C. Godfrey is the managing historian of the Joseph Smith Papers and coeditor of volumes in the Documents series. He holds a PhD in American and public history from Washington State University and is the author of *Religion, Politics, and Sugar: The Mormon Church, the Federal Government, and the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1907–1921* (2007), which was a co-winner of the Mormon History Association's Smith-Petit Award for Best First Book. He thanks Steven C. Harper, David W. Grua, Matthew J. Grow, and Brent M. Rogers for their careful reading of drafts of the article and their helpful feedback.

---

110. "Letter to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834," 56.

# Animals in the Book of Mormon

## Challenges and Perspectives

Wade E. Miller and Matthew Roper

When the Book of Mormon first appeared, skeptics said that references to horses, asses, elephants, and other animals (such as swine and cows) were out of place. During the first century after its publication, Book of Mormon critics argued that such animals never existed anywhere in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus and western Europeans in the late fifteenth century. In time, however, scientific discoveries showed that species of horses, asses, elephants, and other animals had once been present in North America, although dating to an earlier period than that covered in the Book of Mormon.<sup>1</sup> Encouraged by such discoveries, the present authors and some other specialists reasoned that future research and investigation would show that some of these species survived into historical times consistent with the account in the Book of Mormon.

It can no longer be argued that there were no horses, asses, or elephants in the Americas. The issue has shifted to *when* such animals became extinct. As we approach the end of the second century since the publication of the Book of Mormon, the skeptical reader is more likely to claim that these animals disappeared before the advent of modern humans or long before the time covered by the Nephite record. Some

---

1. Fred James Pack, "Revelation Ante-dating Scientific Discovery: An Instance," *Improvement Era* 10 (February 1907): 241–47; (June 1907): 595–97; B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), 3:534–43; Franklin S. Harris, *The Book of Mormon: Message and Evidences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1953), 70–94.

Latter-day Saints are challenged by what they consider a lack of evidence supporting the historicity of the animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon. People of faith, however, are not alone in their challenges. Secular scholars have their own difficulties interpreting the past. An understanding of some of these challenges and the nature of the tools and evidence needed to address such questions can provide a helpful perspective to those who may be troubled by this issue.

In this article, we address factors that provide important perspectives on animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon.<sup>2</sup> For many Latter-day Saints, the subject may be of peripheral interest. For others, these matters may be a challenge. The truth of the scriptural text, whose primary purpose is to testify of God's dealings with an ancient group of his covenant people, is first and foremost a matter of faith. However, this should not stop scholars from seeking all available truths that can be derived from this sacred text. B. H. Roberts wrote, "Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena [science], may be of first rate importance and mighty factors in the achievement of God's purposes."<sup>3</sup>

Discussing the animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon requires a review of a variety of disciplines, including archaeology, geography, biology, paleontology (including extinctions), geology, taphonomy, and more. A number of authors have presented hypotheses relating to where the Book of Mormon history took place, so we will touch on this topic only lightly. Relevant points discussed in this paper include the limited scope of Book of Mormon lands, their possible Mesoamerican location, the issue of domestication, the cultural naming of animals, and some of the challenges relating to questions of extinction and the nature of faunal remains from the past. Specific information on animals named in the Book of Mormon text will be addressed later.

---

2. The authors have benefited greatly from the pioneering research and publications of John L. Sorenson on this subject, which represent the essential starting place for those who approach this subject. See John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 288–99; John L. Sorenson, *Animals in the Book of Mormon: An Annotated Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992); and John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex: An Ancient American Book* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2013), 309–21.

3. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 2:viii.



## Book of Mormon Lands

One important topic bearing upon the issue of animals in the Book of Mormon is the location of the lands described in the text. In our view, an ancient Mesoamerican setting is best supported by the information given in the Book of Mormon. The evidence for this conclusion, as has been addressed by many scholars, includes the limited geography of events and travel described in the text and a historical chronology consistent with the archaeological record of the region.<sup>4</sup> Cultural evidence for an ancient Mesoamerican setting includes proof of a sophisticated tradition of writing in a variety of media,<sup>5</sup> a complex society with large populations, many large and complex buildings and fortifications, warfare, a high degree of art, a good understanding of astronomy, highly accurate calendar systems, an advanced knowledge of agriculture and husbandry, and sophisticated cement technologies introduced over two thousand years ago. These combined characteristics of advanced civilization are not known anywhere else in North America, north of Mesoamerica.<sup>6</sup>

Additional convergences are found in the Book of Mormon account, including the destruction in 3 Nephi 8–10, which is consistent with volcanic events accompanied by earthquakes.<sup>7</sup> Middle America is one of the most volcanically active regions in the world.<sup>8</sup> Also, gold and silver are two precious metals mentioned as being abundant in Book of Mormon lands (1 Ne. 18:25; Hel. 6:9; Ether 9:17; 10:23). Both gold and

---

4. J. A. Washburn, *An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography* (American Fork, Utah: Alpine Publishing, 1939); John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Map* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000); John E. Clark, "Revisiting 'A Key for Evaluating Nephite Geographies,'" *Mormon Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2011): 13–43; Matthew Roper, "Plausibility, Probability, and the Cumorah Question," *The Religious Educator* 10 (2009): 135–58; Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex*, 119–43. For archaeological correlations, see Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex*, 499–707; and John E. Clark, "Archaeological Trends and Book of Mormon Origins," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 89–91.

5. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex*, 184–232.

6. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex*, 265–495.

7. Bart J. Kowalis, "In the Thirty and Fourth Year': A Geologist's View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 3 (1997–1998): 136–90; Wade E. Miller, *Creation of the Earth for Man* (Laguna Niguel, Calif.: KCT & Associates, 2010); Jerry D. Grover, *Geology and the Book of Mormon* (Vineyard, Utah: By the author, 2014).

8. Robert H. Dott and Roger L. Batten, *Evolution of the Earth* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 4.

silver are plentiful in Mesoamerica. “Fine pearls” are mentioned as an important luxury item (4 Ne. 1:24). While pearl-bearing oysters and other clams occur in both fresh and salt waters the world over, the most precious pearls come from tropical to subtropical seas. The “fine” pearls are known to be abundant off the coasts of southern Mexico and were prized by Mesoamerican peoples from preclassic times.<sup>9</sup> Descriptions of climate and its implications in the Book of Mormon text suggest that warm and mild conditions were typical (Alma 51:33). There is no mention of snow and ice in the land of promise, and the single reference to hail is atypical (Mosiah 12:6). While not proof of warm to semitropical climate, this combination of factors is suggestive of them. These and other factors seem to point toward a pre-Columbian Mesoamerican setting for the Book of Mormon.

### Domestication

Scientifically, *domestication* is the process of changing an animal genetically through selective breeding to benefit humans. *Taming* is the process whereby an animal simply becomes accustomed to humans. Most mammals (as well as some other animals) can be tamed if raised by humans from birth. However, relatively few can be truly domesticated.<sup>10</sup>

A majority of animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon are domestic, which makes sense because they are the ones most useful to humans. When domesticated animals are mentioned, they are usually associated with the Nephites. However, the Lamanites did at least maintain flocks, presumably of sheep (Alma 17:25), and had horses (Alma 18:9). The Jaredites were the earliest peoples mentioned in the Book of Mormon to have domesticated animals in what is now America. They brought the most useful ones from the Old World in their barges. Although no specific

---

9. Michael D. Coe, “Archaeological Synthesis of Southern Veracruz and Tabasco,” in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, ed. Gordon S. Willey (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 3:697; Alfonso Caso, “Lapidary Work, Goldwork, and Copper Work from Oaxaca,” in *Handbook of Middle American Indians: Volumes 2 and 3, Archaeology of Southern Mesoamerica*, ed. Gordon R. Willey (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 915.

10. For several attempts to grapple with these definitions, see Eugenia Shanklin, “Sustenance and Symbol: Anthropological Studies of Domesticated Animals,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 14 (1985): 380–81; Charles A. Reed, “Wild Animals Ain’t So Wild: Domesticating Them Not So Difficult,” *Expedition* 28, no. 2 (1986): 8–15; and Nerissa Russell, “The Wild Side of Animal Domestication,” *Society and Animals* 10, no. 3 (2002): 285–302.

animals are listed, the text mentions “flocks and herds,” which most likely included sheep and goats (Ether 6:4). In addition to sheep and goats, the Jaredite record later mentions cattle, oxen, cows, horses, and asses (Ether 9:18–19), presenting the possibility that these animals were brought along too. What we don’t know is the kinds of animals they found native in the New World, with the probable exceptions of the elephant and the so-called curelom and cumom. Some of these animals could well have been domesticated, which is suggested by the text’s indication that they were “useful unto man” (Ether 9:19).

There is no mention in the Nephite record of animals being brought to America by Lehi and his group, although they might have done so. The account states, however, that they found animals upon their arrival in the promised land. The ones mentioned are the cow, ox, ass, horse, goat, and wild goat. It is further noted that “there were beasts in the forests of every kind” (1 Ne. 18:25). Based on animals now living in North America (including Mesoamerica), there would have been many, many other kinds of mammals present when both the Jaredites and the Nephites arrived. North America, for example, has 474 indigenous species of mammals,<sup>11</sup> and Mesoamerica has a large majority of these species within its borders. Therefore, the Book of Mormon account of the kinds of animals brought to or found in the land of promise is extremely incomplete.

All the animals except the “wild goat” in both the Jaredite and the Nephite records could have been domesticated. One problematic animal, though, is the elephant (Ether 9:19). It is probable the elephant in the Book of Mormon refers to the mammoth. The earliest descriptions of the mammoth in scientific literature refer to it as an elephant—which indeed it is.<sup>12</sup> Although mammoths generally were considered to have been extinct for ten thousand years, new discoveries show that they

---

11. Robert J. Baker and others, “Revised Checklist of North American Mammals,” *Texas Tech University, Occasional Papers* 229 (2003): 1–22.

12. For example, David R. Yesner, Douglas W. Veltre, Kristine J. Crossen, and Russell W. Graham, “5,700-Year-Old Mammoth Remains from Qag-nax Cave, Pribilof Islands, Alaska,” in *The World of Elephants: Short Papers and Abstracts of the 2nd International Congress*, ed. L. D. Agenbroad and R. L. Symington, Mammoth Site Scientific Papers vol. 4, 2d ed. (Hot Springs, S.D.: Mammoth Site of Hot Springs, South Dakota, 2005), 206–10; Henry F. Osborn, *Proboscidea: A Monograph of the Discovery, Evolution, Migration and Extinction of the Mastodonts and Elephants of the World, Volume 1, Moeritherioidea, Deinotherioidea, Mastodontoida* (New York: American Museum Press, 1936), 32–33.

lived on in North America much later.<sup>13</sup> As we will explain later, extinction dates for species do not represent their latest existence on earth. We believe that the “elephants” cited in the Jaredite record were accurately identified. The most widespread and abundant North American mammoth was *Mammuthus columbi*. In all probability, this was the elephant referred to in Ether 9:19. This particular mammoth shows a very close relationship to the Indian (or Asian) elephant, *Elephas maximus* (the circus elephant). These two proboscideans have a closer relationship to one another than either has to the African elephant, *Loxodonta africana*. The Indian elephant is easily tamed and trained (but not actually domesticated), while the African elephant is not. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that *Mammuthus columbi* could also be tamed and made useful to a human colony. Archaeological evidence shows the Indian elephant was tamed back to at least 2500 BC in the Indus Valley.<sup>14</sup> Coincidentally, this is the approximate time when the Jaredites arrived in North America. If these people traveled through Asia, as thought by Hugh Nibley,<sup>15</sup> then Jared and his group possibly observed men working elephants. They would have seen how useful these large mammals were.

### Cross-Cultural Naming Challenges

When discussing Book of Mormon animals, we need to consider that the Lehite, Mulekite, and Jaredite migrants may have applied Old World terms to New World species. Many migrant peoples through time have applied familiar names to animals on lands where they immigrated. This system, of course, applies to plants as well as to animals. As far back as 1885, Edward Vining wrote of the “natural tendency of a man who arrives in a new country to assimilate the animals which he finds there to those which he sees in his native land.”<sup>16</sup> In the context of the

---

13. J. M. Enk and others, “Phylogeographic Analysis of the Mid-Holocene Mammoth from Qagax Cave, St. Paul Island, Alaska,” *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 273 (2009): 184–90.

14. S. S. Bist and others, “The Domesticated Asian Elephant in India,” in *Giants on Our Hands: Proceedings of the International Workshop on the Domesticated Asian Elephant*, ed. I. Baker and M. Kashio (Bangkok: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2001), 129–48.

15. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1988), 194–204.

16. Edward P. Vining, *An Inglorious Columbus* (New York: Appleton, 1885), 115.

Book of Mormon, the naming of animals could have been a result of cross-cultural interaction rather than a feature of Joseph Smith's translation of the text. What would Nephi have called a peccary or a bison if he sighted one? What word would he have chosen to write on the plates? What we learn from cross-cultural encounters with strange or unfamiliar animals suggests that the answer may not always be clear. An example is when Europeans first began coming to the West Indies. "It should be mentioned," wrote Henry B. Nicholson, "that at this early period, before the newcomers became better acquainted with the resources of the 'Indies,' many European terms were applied to things which had no exact counterpart in the Old World."<sup>17</sup> Some called native American turkeys "peacocks,"<sup>18</sup> peccaries have often been called "hogs" or "pigs,"<sup>19</sup> and alpacas have been called "sheep."<sup>20</sup>

Sometimes the uniqueness of an animal poses even greater difficulties for description. One early account describes tapirs found in the jungles of Central and South America as "beasts that be as big as an ox or a cow and be of great color."<sup>21</sup> Another early explorer, in describing tapirs, indicated, "They are as big as small cows, and have no horns."<sup>22</sup> Yet another person called the tapir "a species of buffalo of the size and somewhat looking like an ass."<sup>23</sup> A description of a tapir seen in Chiapas, Mexico, stated that "without doubt it is an elephant."<sup>24</sup> The latter description refers to the tapir having a proboscis, albeit a very short one.

---

17. Henry B. Nicholson, "Montezuma's Zoo," *Pacific Discovery* 8, no. 4 (1955): 5.

18. Wilma George, "Sources and Background to Discoveries of New Animals in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *History of Science* 18 (June 1980): 90.

19. Lyle K. Sowls, *The Peccaries* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984), 1–3, 8.

20. Joseph de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, trans. Edward Grimston, ed. Clements R. Markham, 2 vols. (1604; London: Hakluyt Society, 1880), 1:277.

21. George, "Sources and Background to Discoveries of New Animals," 83.

22. Garcilaso de la Vega, *El Inca, Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, trans. Harold V. Livermore (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), vol. 1, book 8, part 1, ch. 18, p. 518–19.

23. Pedro Francisco Javier de Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, trans. P. Pablo Hernández (1766; Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1910), 51.

24. Francisco Ximenéz, *Historia Natural del Reino de Guatemala*, quoted in Carlos Navarrete, "El hombre Danta en una pintura de la costa de Chiapas: una aportación a la iconografía del Preclásico Superior," in *Homenaje a Roman Piña Chan* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1987), 240.

## Extinction of Animals and the Record of Past Life

Extinction is a topic that the scientific literature has dealt with extensively. Of specific interest here are the widespread extinctions that occurred at the close of the Pleistocene epoch (or Ice Age), especially throughout North America.<sup>25</sup> The mammoth (elephant), horse, and ass are animals listed in the Book of Mormon that presumably became extinct in North America at the close of the Pleistocene, about ten thousand years ago. Cureloms and cumoms mentioned in the book of Ether (9:19) probably represent extinct animals too. This seems likely, since Joseph Smith apparently wasn't able to relate them with any living animals. He seems to have simply transliterated the words on the gold plates.

Though figures vary among researchers, the total number of plant and animal species living today is probably no more than 1 percent of all that ever lived on earth.<sup>26</sup> This means that about 99 percent of all species that ever lived on earth are now extinct. Sometimes extinctions affect a single species, but more often they affect many because life forms are interconnected. In the history of the earth, there have been times when mass extinctions occurred over a relatively short period of time.<sup>27</sup> Dinosaurs have often been used as a classic example of this. Extinctions are a natural process in the history of the earth. Since conditions are ever changing on earth, life forms are forced to adapt or else die out (become extinct). The dying out of the mammoth, horse, and ass in North America is only a small part of the mass extinction that occurred at the end of the Pleistocene, which affected mostly large mammals.<sup>28</sup> It is this extinction that is most relevant to the present article.

---

25. For example, Paul S. Martin and H. E. Wright, eds., *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Paul S. Martin, *Twilight of the Mammoths: Ice Age Extinctions and the Rewilding of America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 1–2; and Gary Haynes, ed., *American Megafaunal Extinctions at the End of the Pleistocene* (New York: Springer Publications, 2009).

26. Robert M. May, John H. Lawton, and Nigel E. Stork, "Assessing Extinction Rates," in *Extinction Rates*, ed. John H. Lawton and Robert M. May (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2.

27. For example, see Stephen K. Donovan, ed., *Mass Extinctions: Processes and Evidence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Helen Thompson, "How Long Does Mass Extinction Take," *Smithsonian.com*, February 18, 2014, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-long-mass-extinction-180949711/>; and Donald R. Prothero and Robert H. Dott, *Evolution of the Earth*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 507.

28. Anthony D. Barnosky, "The Late Pleistocene Event as a Paradigm for Widespread Mammal Extinction," in Donovan, *Mass Extinctions*, 236.



What causes organisms (plant and animal) to become extinct? Basically, it is a change in the environment, usually sudden in the geologic sense, to which organisms cannot adjust. These events might be climatic changes, changes in worldwide sea level, volcanic activity, atmospheric changes, bolide impacts, new and more competitive species arriving in the area, or a disease for which the organism has no defense. In recent times, humanity has caused the extinction of many organisms. Such animals include the passenger pigeon, the dodo (a bird), the quagga (a type of zebra), and the Tasmanian “tiger” (or Tasmanian “wolf”). While some Pleistocene extinctions were possibly (or even probably) caused by humans (this is still a hotly debated topic), most extinctions apparently were the result of environmental factors such as those named above.

The fact that the mammoth (elephant), horse, and ass were supposed to have been extinct in North America before Book of Mormon time has caused many to doubt, if not disbelieve, the book’s authenticity and divine origin. It is therefore vital to have a clear understanding of when these animals actually became extinct. Obtaining an exact date for the last surviving member of any extinct species would be next to impossible—winning the lottery would be thousands of times more likely. As one team of scientists has recently observed, “The youngest reliably dated macrofossil (usually a bone or tooth) of an extinct species is commonly taken to represent the approximate time of its disappearance. In practice, however, there is a very low probability of discovering fossil remains of the last members of any species, so ages for extinction based on dated macrofossil finds will likely be older than the true ages.”<sup>29</sup> Only a minuscule number of animals that have lived on earth have become fossilized or preserved. And even though an animal might have been abundant in an area in the past, its remains (including fossils) could well go undetected or no longer exist. The fossil record clearly shows that extinction is fact; but extinctions are not limited to the distant past. Numerous extinctions have occurred in modern times as well and are continuing.

Populations of animals (or plants) could have lived for prolonged periods and yet provide little or no evidence of their existence. A classic example of this is the coelacanth. This rare fish can reach lengths over six feet and weigh nearly two hundred pounds. It was once considered

---

29. James Haile and others, “Ancient DNA Reveals Late Survival of Mammoth and Horse in Interior Alaska,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106 (December 29, 2009): 22352.

to have become extinct over sixty-five million years ago. Then, in 1938, it was found living in the ocean off the coast of eastern Africa.<sup>30</sup> Recently, this fish has also been found in the seas of Indonesia.

Twenty-five years ago, archaeologists announced the discovery of woolly mammoth remains on Wrangle Island in the Siberian arctic dated as late as 2000 BC. "Hardly anyone has doubted that mammoths had become extinct everywhere by around 9,500 years before present," noted these archaeologists in one report. These new discoveries "force this view to be revised."<sup>31</sup> On St. Paul's Island in Alaska, additional remains of the same species have subsequently been found that have been dated to 5,700 years before present,<sup>32</sup> and on the Alaskan mainland, remains were found that date to 7,600 years before present.<sup>33</sup>

Given these fairly recent discoveries, it is certainly possible, as one researcher insists, that many important species could well have been allowed (albeit unknowingly) to slip into extinction without ever becoming known to science. And certain "officially" extinct species that may have persisted in small numbers within remote, rarely visited localities could have died out by now.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, it is certainly possible for a species to live on a few thousands of years after its last recorded appearance. This undoubtedly has happened in the case of Pleistocene vertebrates, whose last occurrence dates have become more recent in the scientific literature.<sup>35</sup> The extinctions of these vertebrates likely took thousands of years and were the

30. Edwin H. Colbert and Michael Morales, *Colbert's Evolution of the Vertebrates* (New York: Wiley-Liss Publishers, 1991), 67.

31. S. L. Vartanyan, V. E. Garutt, and A. V. Sher, "Holocene Dwarf Mammoths from Wrangle Island in the Siberian Arctic," *Nature* 362 (March 25, 1993): 337; Veronica Nystrom and others, "Temporal Genetic Change in the Last Remaining Population of Woolly Mammoth," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* (March 31, 2010): 2331-37.

32. Douglas W. Veltre and others, "Patterns of Faunal Extinction and Paleoclimatic Change from Mid-Holocene Mammoth and Polar Bear Remains, Pribilof Islands, Alaska," *Quaternary Research* 70 (July 2008): 40-50.

33. Haile and others, "Ancient DNA Reveals Late Survival," 22352-57.

34. See Karl P. N. Shuker, *The Lost Ark: New and Rediscovered Animals of the 20th Century* (London: Blandford Publishing, 1993), 11.

35. For example, see Jonathan Adams, *Species Richness: Patterns in the Diversity of Life* (New York: Springer Publications, 2009), 14-15; R. D. E. MacPhee, "Insulae infortunatae: Establishing a Chronology for Late Quaternary Mammal Extinctions in the West Indies," in *American Megafaunal Extinctions at the End of the Pleistocene*, ed. Gary Haynes (New York: Springer Publications, 2009), 186; and Samuel T. Turvey, "In the Shadow of the Megafauna: Prehistoric

result of unfavorable environmental conditions that had developed for certain species. This extinction undoubtedly occurred at the close of the Pleistocene epoch (Ice Age), when much of the world's climate changed in a relatively short period of time. Climate and environment changes would have caused Pleistocene mammals to move into more restricted areas where they could still survive. As favorable areas continued to shrink and food supplies lessened, the populations of a given species would have also decreased. Finally, a point would be reached where the breeding population would become too small to sustain itself for long. The species would then become extinct. As numbers within a species dwindled over a prolonged period, the number of potential fossils would also diminish, making them increasingly difficult to find and identify. One reason why scientists are discovering extinct animals from more recent dates is that more and more are searching for them. Mammals other than the mammoth and horse in North America now have more recent last-occurrence dates. For example, the mastodon was considered to be extinct at the end of the Pleistocene, about ten thousand years ago. But this presumed last-occurrence date had to be revised with more recent finds. The remains of a mastodon, for instance, were discovered in Utah and dated at 7,090 years before the present.<sup>36</sup>

One question of concern to scholars is what the known collection of faunal remains reveals in terms of what once existed. This record of past life is of immeasurable value to our knowledge, but it is also incomplete and we often encounter a discrepancy between historical accounts and the archaeological record. Hamblin and others have observed, for example, that the Huns of central Asia and eastern Europe reportedly had hundreds of thousands of horses, yet remains of these horses are exceptionally rare given what we would expect.<sup>37</sup> "The presence of horses among the Huns is not at issue," explains Lindner. "The crux of the problem is the presence of *large numbers* of horses, numbers suitable for sustaining a nomadic life and ensuring the mobility, speed and range of

---

Mammal and Bird Extinctions across the Holocene," in *Holocene Extinctions*, ed. Samuel T. Turvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19–20.

36. Wade E. Miller, "Mammot Americanum, Utah's First Record of the American Mastodon," *Journal of Paleontology* 61 (January 1987): 168–83.

37. Sándor Bökönyi, *History of Domestic Mammals in Central and Eastern Europe*, trans. Lili Halápy (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974), 267; William J. Hamblin, "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (1993): 194.

a nomadic horde.”<sup>38</sup> Obviously, few Hun horse remains that could be identified by archaeologists were preserved. While the Book of Mormon mentions horses, nothing in the text indicates that their importance approached anywhere near that of horses in Hun society. So, given the rarity of Hun horse remains, we should not be disturbed if so far we do not have incontrovertible evidence of Nephite horses. However, some possibilities exist. Archaeologists were earlier convinced that camels were not present in Egypt during the time of Abraham; however, it was later found that they were indeed continually present from prehistoric times to the present. Remains of the tapir (a relative of the horse and rhinoceros) were among the famous Pleistocene deposits discovered at Rancho La Brea in Los Angeles, California. However, only three small foot bones attest to its presence there.<sup>39</sup> It was just fortuitous that these bones were found among the more than one million fossils collected in the area. Otherwise the existence of this animal there would have remained unknown. Albarella writes about the discrepancy between historical accounts of medieval European domesticates and the archaeological record of such animals. It is “difficult to understand why some animals that are frequently mentioned by the documents turn up so rarely on archaeological sites.” We have historical records that indicate particular animals were there, but their remains, for whatever reason, are far less abundant than we would expect; hence, “how unwise it would be to rely just on the archaeological evidence and how essential it is to consider these data along with the historical evidence.”<sup>40</sup> Latter-day Saints hold that the Book of Mormon is an authentic, albeit limited, historical account of pre-Columbian groups of people. Like other historical accounts, it provides additional insight that may not be available in our current archaeological inventory.

Most ancient animals and plants are known only through their fossils. Although fossils number in the many trillions, the percentage of organisms that have become fossilized is minute—probably much less than 0.1 percent. Therefore, most ancient animal remains have not survived into modern times and are not available for study. In the case of

---

38. Rudi Paul Lindner, “Nomadism, Horses, and Huns,” *Past and Present* 92 (August 1981): 13, emphasis added.

39. John Harris and George Jefferson, “Treasures of the Tar Pits,” *Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Science Series* 31 (1985): 87.

40. Umberto Albarella, “‘The Mystery of Animal Husbandry’: Medieval Animals and the Problem of Integrating Historical and Archaeological Evidence,” *Antiquity* 73 (1999): 873.

animal remains at archaeological sites, Reitz and Wing observe, “The remains of all animals used by people living at the site will not be recovered from the site, because either their remains were discarded beyond the excavated portion of the site or their remains did not survive deposition.”<sup>41</sup> Another challenge has to do with the lack of bone and tooth preservation, resulting from many factors, including how animals were butchered and cooked (if eaten) and the physical and chemical properties of the bones and terrain upon which they were discarded.<sup>42</sup> Terry O’Connor has observed that the bones and teeth that survived to become part of the archaeological record are only a tiny proportion of the original sample.<sup>43</sup> One authority on the Olmec of southern Mexico, whose culture once thrived more than three thousand years ago, thinks it probable that the Olmec domesticated dogs, turkeys, and other animals, “but the destruction of any sort of bone remains, both human and animal, by the dampness and the acidity of the soil keeps us from being certain of this.”<sup>44</sup> Archaeologist Michael Coe lamented, “We never did find an Olmec burial at San Lorenzo. Given the terrible conditions of bone preservation in the acid soils of the Olmec heartland, it is likely that surviving skeletons would have been few and far between,” though he was unsure if this was due to the destruction of human remains at the site or their deposition elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Simon Davis writes:

A long chain of events occurs between the original collection and slaughter of animals in antiquity, their incorporation within an archaeological site, their ending up on the faunal analyst’s workbench, and their final publication. One sometimes wonders whether there is any similarity between a published bone report and the animals exploited by ancient humans. In an ideal situation the data and conclusions contained in the final faunal report would reveal something about the original population of animals exploited by man. Sadly, this is rare.<sup>46</sup>

---

41. Elizabeth J. Reitz and Elizabeth S. Wing, *Zooarchaeology*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 118.

42. Raymond E. Chaplin, *The Study of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (London: Seminar Press, 1971), 14–19.

43. Terry O’Connor, *The Archaeology of Animal Bones* (Thrupp, Eng.: Sutton Publishing, 2000), 28.

44. Jacques Soustelle, *The Olmecs: The Oldest Civilization in Mexico*, trans. Helen R. Lane (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 23.

45. Michael D. Coe and Richard A. Diehl, *In the Land of the Olmec: Volume 1, The Archaeology of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 392.

46. Simon J. M. Davis, *The Archaeology of Animals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 23.

One of the goals of the paleontologist (or archaeologist) is to obtain accurate dates for the artifacts or fossils uncovered. Arguably, one of the most precise methods of obtaining dates for artifacts from the past seventy thousand or so years is carbon-14 (C-14), or radiocarbon, dating; however, for various reasons, many if not most of the bones and teeth tested by one of the authors (Miller) lack sufficient collagen (an animal protein useful in C-14 dating) for this process.<sup>47</sup> So it is indeed fortunate when a date for a given sample yields usable results.

The Book of Mormon includes animals that possibly became extinct in North America. Those specifically named include the elephant (mammoth), horse, and ass. While the horse and ass belong to the same biologic genus, *Equus*, they are separate species. Both are known to have been native to North America during the Pleistocene epoch and earlier. There are records of extinct animals in North America being associated with humans.<sup>48</sup> However, the dates of these associations either predate Book of Mormon peoples or else are not known. So, why do none of these dates correspond to the time Jaredites and Nephites inhabited North America? As discussed above, species on their way to extinction continue to live on, but in greatly reduced numbers, beyond their last *recorded* date of existence. The problem is finding specimens from immediately prior to their extinction. This is a serious problem because at times when fewer and fewer animals of a given species were alive, their remains become ever more difficult to find. At the same time, the area(s) where they still survived would almost always become more restricted. And if these areas were in highlands, the problem is exacerbated. Highland (mountainous) areas undergo erosion, decreasing the chance of remains being preserved in them. Mesoamerica consists of many highland areas. Additionally, this area is mostly humid, especially in its southern extent, with subtropical to tropical conditions. In areas such as this, animal and plant remains quickly decompose and are destroyed without leaving a trace. Even if an organism is buried before it decomposes, the commonly acidic soils continue the rapid process of

---

47. O'Connor, *Archaeology of Animal Bones*, 24–25.

48. For examples, see Joaquín Arroyo-Cabral and Ticul Álvarez, “A Preliminary Report of the Late Quaternary Mammal Fauna from Loltún Cave, Yucatán, Mexico,” in *Ice Age Cave Faunas of North America*, ed. Blaine W. Schubert, Jim I. Mead, and Russell William Graham (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 262–72; and Richard S. MacNeish and Antoinette Nelken-Terner, “The Preceramic of Mesoamerica,” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 10 (1983): 71–84.



decomposition. Also, with the generally abundant vegetation in such a region, very limited areas of exposed ground exist where bones or teeth might be observed. Because of this combination of factors, a significant record of past life in Mesoamerica would be very difficult to uncover. As archaeologists as well as paleontologists have discovered, most animal remains are not preserved and are lost for all time.<sup>49</sup> The best opportunity to find remains appears to be in caves. Some caves in the Yucatan, for instance, have yielded human artifacts associated with an extinct horse.<sup>50</sup> Verification of more associations of Book of Mormon peoples and animals may be possible at some future date.

### Indirect Mention of Animals in the Book of Mormon

Animals are mentioned in the Book of Mormon in different contexts. On the one hand, they are directly cited as having an interaction with Jaredites, Nephites, or Lamanites, or else this interaction was implied. On the other hand, indirect references to given animals are also made. Examples of this include: “they shall be driven before like a dumb ass” (Mosiah 12:5,) and “what shepherd is there among you having many *sheep* doth not watch over them, that the *wolves* enter not and devour his flock?” (Alma 5:59). In order to make sense of this second sentence, one must have some understanding of sheep or sheeplike animals and wolves or wolflike predators. Helaman 7:19 includes this phrase: “he shall scatter you forth that ye shall become meat for dogs and wild beasts.” These “dogs” and “wild beasts” are not specified. In Mosiah 8:21, Limhi likens the Lord’s people to “a wild flock which . . . are devoured by the beasts of the forest.” In this instance, “beasts” seems to refer to one or more types of carnivore. In 2 Nephi 5:24, Nephi states that the Lamanites “did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey.” The beasts here could well have referred to the jaguar or cougar, or possibly the bear.

---

49. Elizabeth J. Reitz and Elizabeth S. Wing, *Zooarchaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 117–52; O’Connor, *Archaeology of Animal Bones*, 19–28; Chaplin *Study of Animal Bones*, 14–19.

50. For example, see Joaquín Arroyo-Cabral and Oscar Polaco, “Caves and the Pleistocene Vertebrate Paleontology of Mexico,” in Schubert, Mead, and Graham, *Ice Age Cave Faunas of North America*, 273–91; Peter J. Schmidt, “La entrada del hombre a la península de Yucatán,” in *Orígenes del hombre Americano*, comp. Alba González Jácome (México: Seminario Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1988), 245–61; Clayton E. Ray, “Pre-Columbian Horses from Yucatan,” *Journal of Mammalogy* 38 (1957): 27; and Robert T. Hatt, “Faunal and Archaeological Researches in Yucatan Caves,” *Cranbrook Institute of Science* 33 (1953): 1–42.

Mosiah 20:10 states that the people of Limhi “fought like lions.” These statements indicate that the people at this time were aware of lions or at least lionlike animals. The mountain lion is and was common throughout North and South America, and the jaguar was well known in Mesoamerica. Spanish chroniclers such as Bernal Diaz del Castillo and Diego Duran designated both of these predators by the name “leones,” or lions, in language that mirrors Book of Mormon usage: “They came to meet us *like* fierce lions,” and “Great bands . . . attacked us fiercely, like brave lions.”<sup>51</sup> Other examples might also be given. The point is that the animals mentioned in this metaphorical manner must have been familiar to those who were hearing the preaching or reading the record. In other words, these were animals that most likely lived in the area and interacted with the peoples there. This same inference has often been made with animals given by name in the Bible.

### Direct Mention of Animals in the Book of Mormon

The mammals spoken of in the book of Ether are cattle, oxen, cows, sheep, swine, goats, horses, asses, elephants, cureloms, and cumoms (9:18–19). Those listed in 1 Nephi, which were already present in the promised land when the Lehighites first arrived, are cow, ox, ass, horse, goat, and wild goat. Both lists of animals are obviously incomplete. Regardless of the location of Book of Mormon lands, there had to be far more kinds of animals there than those specifically listed in the text. Perhaps the record keepers, especially Mormon and Moroni, chose to directly reference only the animals they thought important or useful. Ether 10:26 states that the Jaredites “did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts.” This suggests that the Jaredites were able to work some of their animals with plows or other such contrivances to grow crops. Verse 25 of the same chapter also states, “And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash.” What animals did the term “beasts” have reference to in verse 26? Based on those listed in Ether 9:18–19, they might include oxen and cows, the horses and asses, elephants, and probably cureloms and cumoms. These latter two animals,

---

51. Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 327, 305, 395. For additional examples, see Fray Diego Duran, *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 426. “Throughout his manuscript Duran mentions leones and tigres when he means jaguars, ocelots, pumas, wildcats, and mountain lions.” Duran, *History of the Indies*, 207 n. 6.

along with the elephant, were deemed especially useful, and it is implied that they were even more useful than horses. The elephant, for example, is currently used in Southeast Asia for logging and as a beast of burden, and in Thailand, the elephant has been used since ancient times to plow paddy fields.

In the records of the Nephites and Jaredites, it is acknowledged that there were other animals of use to humans, though they are not mentioned directly. In Ether 9:18, the comment is made, “and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man.” And 1 Nephi 18:25 informs us, “and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men.” In each record, we see that there were many unnamed useful animals. No mention is made of the kinds of animals that were not useful.

### Discussion of Specific Animals in the Book of Mormon

Certainly, problems exist in correctly identifying the animals listed in both the Jaredite and Nephite records. John Sorenson felt that some of the animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon might not be what we think. But he did say, “Present knowledge of the species in Meso-america indicates there were enough of the right sorts of animals in that setting that all twelve of the Book of Mormon’s beasts can be plausibly accounted for.”<sup>52</sup>

It is unfortunate that the record of Ether does not give us more information on the specific kinds of animals the Jaredites brought over on the barges with them. We are only introduced to some types of animals after the Jaredites had lived in America for a long period of time, and some of these might well be animals that were native to the promised land. All we know for certain about the transported types is given in the statement that the Jaredites “also [took] food for their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them” (Ether 6:4). We do know that the number of the vessels used to transport the people along with their belongings, food, and animals was eight (Ether 3:1). The size of the barges is unknown, other than that they were said to be the length of a tree (Ether 2:17).

Determining which animals the Jaredites brought with them from the Old World and which ones they found living in America presents some complex problems. Comparing animal names in the Jaredite record with usage in the Bible can be helpful. Sheep, goats, swine, and even cattle,

---

52. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 291.

horses, and asses could all have conceivably been brought with them in the barges. Conversely, all these types of animals could have been found by the Jaredites upon their arrival in America. The term “flocks” used in Ether (6:4) probably referred to sheep and goats. These Jaredite flocks could also refer to types of birds like geese, though this seems less likely. “Flocks,” as used in the Old Testament, does not include birds as the term does now, and the Book of Mormon seems to distinguish “beasts” from “fowl” (Ether 2:2; 6:4; Alma 34:10). The term “herds” probably included just cattle. While this term could mean horses and asses, it doesn’t seem to fit with Old Testament usage. In addition to “flocks” and “herds,” the statement is made, “and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them.” Swine were probably among these animals (see Ether 9:18) and could have been brought over with the Jaredites. Although we don’t know the sizes and numbers of the animals involved, “herds” has a certain connotation. If cattle, horses, and asses are included in the term, what numbers could be carried? Surely enough to ensure that breeding populations could be established and maintained once in the promised land. This certainly would mean more than one male and female of each species. A few of each sex would have been wise. Concerning the larger animal species, probably younger individuals were chosen in order to conserve limited space. Younger animals would also require less food. With the above factors in mind, cattle, sheep, goats, swine, asses, and horses could all have conceivably been brought over on the barges. While very unlikely, it might have been possible to even bring over very young elephants. Their size and food requirements are what make this occurrence so unlikely. Whether any of the animals discovered by the Nephites (1 Ne. 18:25) were descendants of those known to the Jaredites is unknown.

Both paleontologists and archaeologists have found and are finding more associations of animals with humans in early cultures. Most of these animals are extant species. However, there are instances of extinct animals being associated with pre-Columbian humans in America. These finds are increasing as more field studies take place.<sup>53</sup>

---

53. For example, see Martin, *Twilight of the Mammoths*, 250; Arroyo-Cabrales and Alvarez, “Preliminary Report of the Late Quaternary Mammal Fauna,” 262–72; Mario Pichardo, “Redating Iztapan and Valsequillo, Mexico,” *Radiocarbon* 42 (2000): 305–10; Mario Pichardo, “Valsequillo biostratigraphy III: Equid Ecospecies in Paleoindian Sites,” *Anthropologischer Anzeiger Jahrgang* 56 (2000): 275–98; Sorenson, *Mormon’s Codex*, 313–14; Schmidt, “La

## Cows, Oxen, and Cattle

Cows and oxen are mentioned among both the Jaredites and the people of Lehi (1 Ne. 18:25; Ether 9:18). These animals could be the ones we envision with these names today, or the names could possibly apply to closely related forms of these animals. The terms “cow” and “ox” might refer to distinct species. As Sorenson noted, some early Spanish explorers in America called the bison or American buffalo *vaca*, which means “cow” in Spanish.<sup>54</sup> Hernando De Soto, Francisco Coronado, Cabeza de Vaca, and their contemporary Spanish explorers referred to American bison as “cattle,” “cows,” and “bulls.”<sup>55</sup> In Finland and Sweden, even reindeer have been called “cow” and “ox” in the past. The word translated as “wild ox” in the King James Version of Deuteronomy 14:5 has been interpreted by some translators as gazelle, antelope, or some other species of deer.<sup>56</sup> In any event, good evidence exists for separate types of bovids being present in ancient America. Different kinds of these animals may have been brought over by the Jaredites. However, in the book of Ether (9:18), it is simply stated long after they were in the New World that they had “all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows.” The text does not say if these were Old World species introduced by the Jaredites or if these were native to the land of promise. Much later, as Lehi and his group journeyed in the wilderness, they encountered “both the cow and the ox” among the beasts of the forests (1 Ne. 18:25). Again, it is possible these terms refer to the American bison, which apparently survived

---

entrada del hombre a la Peninsula de Yucatán,” 245–61; and Miller, “*Mammut americanum*,” 168–83.

54. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 294; Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex*, 315.

55. Enrique Pupo-Walker, ed., *Castaways: The Narrative of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 63, 101; Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore, eds., *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539–1543*, 2 vols. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 1:241, 304; Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman, eds., *The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541–1543: Proceedings of the De Soto Symposia 1988 and 1990* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 117–18, 127–28; Pedro Casteñeda, *The Journey of Coronado* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1966), 41, 140–41, 177; Richard Flint, *Great Cruelties Have Been Reported: The 1544 Investigation of the Coronado Expedition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 147.

56. Edward R. Hope, “Animals in the Old Testament—Anybody's Guess?” *Bible Translator* 42 (January 1991): 128, 132.



FIGURE 1. Wild cattle include living and extinct species of bison as well as other extinct but closely related types. Shown here are two extinct species, *Bison latifrons* (left) and *Bison antiquus* (right). Illustration courtesy of the George C. Page Museum in Los Angeles, California.

throughout various regions of Mexico and as far south as Nicaragua until fairly recent times.<sup>57</sup>

Different species of bovids are and have been native to the New World. The bison (often misnamed buffalo) is one, for which there are different species (fig. 1). Also, although now extinct, the shrub-ox and southern woodland muskox could have survived well past the end of the Pleistocene. Remains of the shrub-ox were found in a cave in Mexico and assigned to the late Pleistocene, though they have not been subject

---

57. Manuel Maldonado-Koerdell, "The Status of Ethnozoologic Studies in Meso-America," XXXV *Congreso Internacional de Americanistas: México* (México: Editorial Libros de México, 1962), 3:133. See also Howel Williams, *Geologic Observations on the Ancient Human Footprints near Managua, Nicaragua* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1952), 28; Doris Stone, *Pre-Columbian Man Finds Central America* (Cambridge: Peabody Museum Press, 1972), 21–22; Alan L. Bryan, "New Light on Ancient Nicaraguan Footprints," *Archaeology* 26 (April 1973): 147.



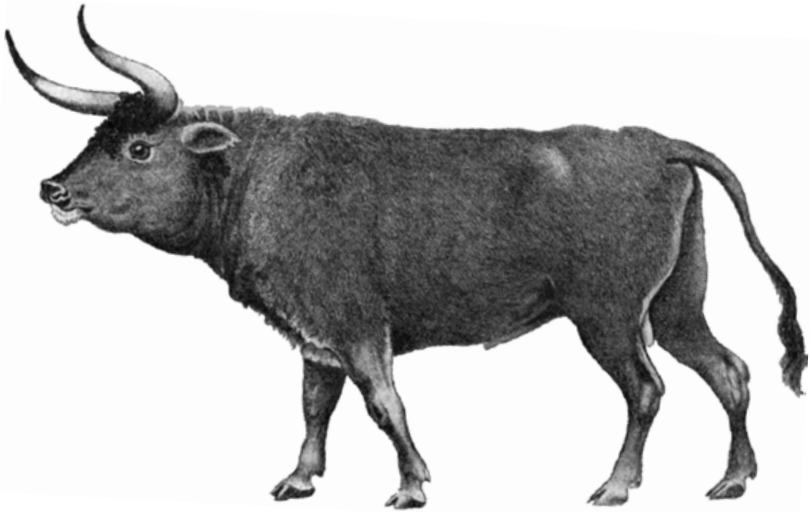


FIGURE 2. *Bos taurus* is a basic type that represents cattle in general and is apparently the species from which most of our modern cattle descended. Its remains have been identified from a number of archaeological sites, including some from the Yucatan Peninsula. Illustration courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

to radiocarbon dating.<sup>58</sup> One of the authors (Miller) has examined the skull of this oxlike animal from southern Mexico and determined that this species may have survived into Book of Mormon times.<sup>59</sup> When first described by paleontologists, these animals were placed in the same genus (*Bos*) as modern cattle. Current practices show that the American bison can be semidomesticated. Certainly, it is conceivable that both the woodland muskox and shrub-ox were capable of domestication as well. This is substantiated by some living northern muskoxen that have been semidomesticated.

Bones of domesticated cattle (*Bos taurus*, fig. 2) have also reportedly been found in different caves in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.<sup>60</sup> In one instance, these bones were found with those of an extinct horse, *Equus conversidens*. It is especially interesting that along with these cow and horse remains, human artifacts were found in association with

58. Arroyo-Cabrales and Polaco, “Caves and the Pleistocene Vertebrate Paleontology of Mexico,” 286–87.

59. Oscar Carranza-Castañeda and Wade E. Miller, “Rediscovered Type Specimens and Other Important Published Pleistocene Mammalian Fossils from Central Mexico,” *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* 7 (September 1987): 339–41. Bison remains were also discussed.

60. Hatt, “Faunal and Archaeological Researches in Yucatan Caves,” 1–42.

them. This indicates that domesticated cattle and horses coexisted with humans in pre-Columbian time.<sup>61</sup>

## Swine

Swine are mentioned among those animals known to the Jaredites that were “useful for the food of man” (Ether 9:18). All references to swine in connection with the Nephites are negative and proverbial, which indicates that they were known to them but were considered unclean or unfit for eating, at least in times when the Nephites were keeping the law of Moses (3 Ne. 7:8; 13:6). They may also have been familiar with swine through their contacts with the Lamanites and other indigenous peoples who raised and kept them. No evidence shows that Old World pigs (true swine) were present in the Americas before the time of Columbus. If we assume swine were brought over by the Jaredites, we still do not know how long they might have survived before becoming extinct. If they existed in limited numbers in a restricted region, any evidence of them might not have been detected yet. The widespread and intense battles between different Jaredite factions could have been instrumental in the swine’s demise in Mesoamerica.

Another reasonable possibility is that references to “swine” do not denote an Old World species at all, but rather American peccaries.<sup>62</sup> While not a true pig, the peccary (fig. 3), known throughout much of Mesoamerica and South America, is most definitely a piglike beast and is closely related to it. The early Spanish who encountered them called them “pigs.” In regions of Mesoamerica where peccaries are found today, they are almost always called “wild pigs,” “wild hogs,” or their equivalents in Spanish.<sup>63</sup> “The peccary,” argues Lyle Sowls, “if properly treated, could perhaps become a domesticated animal.”<sup>64</sup> Brian Dillon has recently summarized evidence that the Maya may have captured and

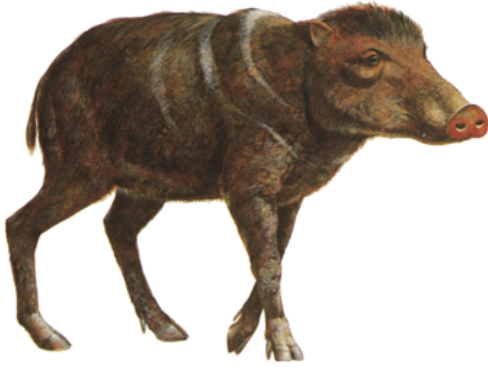
---

61. Arroyo-Cabrales and Polaco, “Caves and the Pleistocene Vertebrate Paleontology of Mexico,” 273–91.

62. Sorenson, *Mormon’s Codex*, 319–20.

63. Lyle K. Sowls, *The Peccaries* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1984), 1–8, 105. Latham notes that South American peccaries, which were called *puerco del monte* (mountain pigs) were according to some chroniclers “raised” in Peru and appear to have been tamed and kept by the Guarani. See Richard E. Latham, *Los animales domésticos de la América precolombina* (Santiago: Imprenta Cervantes, 1922), 150–54.

64. Sowls, *Peccaries*, 105.



**FIGURE 3.** *Platygonus* is an example of an extinct peccary that might have been present when humans first came to Mesoamerica. It was somewhat larger than the peccaries that live in the region today. It can be seen that both types are very piglike, and they both could easily be called a pig. Illustration courtesy of the George C. Page Museum in Los Angeles, California.

tamed peccaries and concludes that it is “probable” that “the modern Maya pattern of peccary taming owes much to Precolumbian tradition.”<sup>65</sup>

Presently, two distinct species of peccary live in Mesoamerica: the collared peccary (*Pecari tajacu*) and the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*), both of which can be found in the tropical regions of southeastern Veracruz.<sup>66</sup> The Jaredites, who presumably established settlements in Mesoamerica, no doubt would have encountered them. The peccary was

hunted and eaten as early as Olmec times. Remains of these animals have been found associated with humans for several thousands of years. There is a Paleo-Indian bone carving in the shape of a peccary, made from an extinct camel sacrum. A picture of this bone is shown in Evans’s work.<sup>67</sup> The bone of this extinct camel came from deposits in central Mexico and indicates ancient interaction between this extinct animal and pre-Columbian natives. Remains of the pre-Columbian peccary have been found in Loltún Cave in the Yucatan<sup>68</sup> and in several other caves in the region containing human artifacts.<sup>69</sup> There is no question that peccaries and humans shared this area since prehistoric times.

65. Brian D. Dillon, “Meatless Maya? Ethnoarchaeological Implications for Ancient Subsistence,” *Journal of New World Archaeology* 7 (1988): 65.

66. A. Starker Leopold, *Wildlife of Mexico: The Game Birds and Mammals* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 493–500.

67. Susan Toby Evans, *Ancient Mexico and Central America: Archaeology and Culture History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 70.

68. Arroyo-Cabrales and Alvarez, “Preliminary Report of the Late Quaternary Mammal Fauna,” 266.

69. Hatt, *Faunal and Archaeological Researches in Yucatan Caves*, 1–42.

## Sheep and Goats

Sheep and goats are very closely related animals and can be confused with each other.<sup>70</sup> As we have discussed, problems *sometimes* arise in understanding exactly how we should interpret references to Book of Mormon animals. It might not be wise to take all those named at face value, though most could well be the animals we think they are. Sheep mentioned in the Book of Mormon were probably like sheep in the Bible. Of course, many different species of sheep exist worldwide. The Jaredite record lists “sheep” by name (Ether 9:18). The Nephite record does not. However, it seems likely that the Nephites raised these animals. Whenever “flocks” are mentioned (for example, Enos 1:21 and Alma 17:27), it is generally understood that these are flocks of sheep. References to sheep among the people of Lehi appear in a metaphorical context too (for example, Alma 5:38; Hel. 15:13; and 3 Ne. 15:17).

In addition to Old World sheep, apparently brought to the New World by the Jaredites, there are sheep native to America. The most common type is the mountain sheep, *Ovis canadensis*. Their current geographic range extends south only to northern Mexico. However, their past range was more extensive before human settlements expanded.<sup>71</sup> Mountain sheep are animals that can be tamed or at least semidomesticated. According to Geist, “It is hard to imagine a wild animal more readily tamed than mountain sheep.”<sup>72</sup> Sorenson noted the apparent recovery of sheep wool from a pre-Columbian burial site near Puebla (southeast of Mexico City).<sup>73</sup> Petroglyphs from Mexico and the southwestern United States show many prehistoric depictions of sheep. Sheep would have been useful to Book of Mormon peoples for both food and clothing.

Goats are mentioned among the animals once had by the Jaredites (Ether 9:18). Later, after their arrival in the land of promise, Lehi’s family encountered “the goat and the wild goat” as they traveled in the wilderness in the land southward (1 Ne. 18:25). Sometime after the death of his father, Jacob, Enos wrote that the Nephites raised “flocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats”

---

70. Valerius Geist, *Mountain Sheep: A Study in Behavior and Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1–7.

71. E. Raymond Hall and Keith R. Kelson, *The Mammals of North America* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 1031–32.

72. Geist, *Mountain Sheep*, 41.

73. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 296–97.

(Enos 1:21). The text gives no indication that the Lehites brought goats with them to the land of promise; however, it is possible that the Jaredites included goats among the flocks and herds they brought with them over the sea (Ether 6:4). If so, it is possible that some of those encountered later by Lehi's people had descended from goats brought by the Jaredites. Goats would have been a useful animal to both the Jaredites and Nephites, just as they were for humans throughout the ages in the Old World. Evidence of goats associated with pre-Columbian humans has also been found in Yucatan caves.<sup>74</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this evidence is from a wild or a domesticated type of goat.

Mention of the "wild goat" may at first seem peculiar. What animal could this refer to? Biblical animals that could be eaten under the law of Moses included the "goat" and the "wild goat" (Deut. 14:4-5). In postbiblical Jewish literature, some writers distinguished between wild and domestic animals such as goats. Both were considered clean and could be eaten, but only the domestic variety was thought acceptable for sacrifice.<sup>75</sup> The variety that lived in the wild was hunted, while the tame animal was raised in flocks by the community. This literature, however, dates to centuries after the texts of the Hebrew Bible were first written and to a time after the destruction of the temple when the practice of animal sacrifice had been discontinued. We do not know if this later distinction between tame and wild goats was applied in earlier times. Another possibility is that when Lehi's group arrived in the land of promise, they encountered two different animals, one perhaps with long horns and one with shorter ones. Both of them were probably of comparable size to Old World goats. These might have been identified as "wild goats" and "goats," respectively, simply because the terms fit the vocabulary of migrating Book of Mormon peoples. A third option is that "goat" and "wild goat" referred to a domesticated and a wild variety of a single species (whether an actual goat or not). In this case, the Lehites' encounter with the domesticated animal would imply that the land, at the time of their arrival, was already populated by other indigenous groups (including Jaredite survivors who had previously tamed, husbanded, or domesticated the animal in question).

The only native wild goat in North America is the mountain goat, *Oreamnos americanus*. Its geographic range, though, currently only

74. Hatt, "Faunal and Archaeological Researches in Yucatan Caves," 29.

75. Jehuda Feliks, "Animals of the Bible and Talmud," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2d ed., 22 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 2007), 2:167.

extends south from southwest Alaska to the northwest United States. Even with a possible extended range for this animal during Book of Mormon time, it is extremely unlikely it got as far south as Mesoamerica. A closely related but extinct species is *Oreamnos harringtoni*. This goat did have a much more southerly distribution, extending into Mexico. While this goat might have survived long past the terminal Pleistocene along with other animals, there is not sufficient evidence yet for this.

As indicated above, an animal name in the Book of Mormon could actually refer to a somewhat different animal but with a similar appearance. Diego de Landa wrote, “There is a certain kind of little wild goats, small and very active and of darkish color.”<sup>76</sup> “There are wild goats which the Indians call *yuc*,” according to the *Relación de Yucatan*. “They have only two horns like goats and are not as large as deer.”<sup>77</sup> Fray Alonso Ponce also reported that there were “great numbers of deer, and small goats” in the same region.<sup>78</sup> These descriptions were applied by the early Spanish friars to the red brocket deer, *Mazama americana* (fig. 4). Unlike other deer, it has but a single goatlike horn—which is really an antler that is shed and regrown annually like those of other cervids.<sup>79</sup> In the Yucatan today, there is also a closely related gray brocket (*Mazama gouazoubria pandora*), which is smaller in size, lacks facial marks, and is gray to brown in color.<sup>80</sup>



FIGURE 4. The *Mazama americana*, or the red brocket deer, is a common mammal found in Mesoamerica. This animal could be easily confused with a goat. Its single “horn” on each side of the head is really an antler. Antlers are shed each year, while horns are not. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

76. Alfred M. Tozzer, trans., *Landa's relación de las cosas de Yucatan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Peabody Museum, 1941), 203–4.

77. See Tozzer, *Landa's relación de las cosas de Yucatan*, 204 n. 1134.

78. Ernest Noyes, ed. and trans., *Fray Alonso Ponce in Yucatan, 1588*, Middle American Research Series Publication 4 (New Orleans: Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University, 1932), 307.

79. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 299.

80. Victoria Schlesinger, *Animals and Plants of the Ancient Maya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 178–79.



Another possibility for the wild goat is the American pronghorn, indigenous to North America. It has one horn (single in females but bifurcated in males). Its scientific name, *Antilocapra*, means “antelope-goat.” The pronghorn was and is abundant in much of western North America, with its present range extending into Mexico.<sup>81</sup> Historically, its range extended to just north of Mexico City.<sup>82</sup> A related genus, *Capromeryx*, had a geographic range farther south, well into central Mexico. While extinct, evidence of it appears in the latest Pleistocene sediments, and it could certainly have coexisted with man. This antilocaprid is smaller than the extant form of pronghorn but is more goatlike in appearance. If known to the Jaredites in the land northward, the pronghorn might well have been considered a goat. Since this animal was not known in the Old World, it is likely, when Book of Mormon peoples encountered it, they would have named it after a similar-looking Old World animal.

### The Horse and the Ass

Like sheep and goats, the horse and ass are very closely related mammals. This can be seen in their biological classification, both belonging to the genus *Equus*. Equid fossils are among the most common and diverse of large vertebrates from the Pleistocene in North America, including Mesoamerica (fig. 5). One of the authors (Miller) has done many years of research in Mexico. This research has confirmed that equid and mammoth fossils are the most abundant types of vertebrate fossils from the late Pleistocene. Horses first came into being in North America and from there spread to the rest of the world through natural dispersals. The fossil history of the horse (and ass) shows that this animal was most numerous and varied in North America. It has not been satisfactorily explained why, after so much success here, they likely became extinct. After being reintroduced, horses did well in a feral state. Although it is commonly held that both the horse and ass became extinct in the Americas at the close of the Pleistocene (about ten thousand years ago), a growing body of evidence shows that at least some survived on this continent for much longer.

Some researchers have suggested that references to horses in the Book of Mormon could refer to other animals in the land of promise that had characteristics that in certain ways resembled those of the horse or the

81. Hall and Kelson, *The Mammals of North America*, 1022–23.

82. “Pronghorn, *Antilocapra americana*,” San Diego Zoo Global, May 2009, <http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/pronghorn/pronghorn.htm>.



FIGURE 5. Horses were extremely abundant in all of North America prior to the close of the Pleistocene epoch, about ten thousand years ago. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

ass.<sup>83</sup> Though this is possible, we believe it is most likely that the horse mentioned in the Book of Mormon was the horse as we know it. However, this does not mean that horses survived everywhere in the Americas or that they were numerous. There is a strong case for the survival of the horse well past the close of the Pleistocene epoch in the limited regions occupied by Book of Mormon peoples in the Formative Mesoamerican period. Therefore, the horses referenced in the Book of Mormon text seem plausible, although it is interesting to note that horses are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon after the time of Christ (3 Ne. 6:1). Horses possibly existed among the Nephites but were not mentioned later in the limited commentary of 3 Nephi; the subsequent disasters associated with the death of Christ (3 Ne. 8–10), coupled with wars and famines of later years (Alma 45:11; Mor. 2:8), may have led to their final extinction. If there were limited numbers of horses and asses in Nephite or Lamanite cultures, it would not be surprising that evidence for them could be difficult to find. The horse and the ass, along with other animals, dispersed more than once between Asia and North America via Beringia (a large, late Pleistocene land bridge that joined Asia with Alaska). The Beringia land bridge formed and reformed throughout much of the Pleistocene

---

83. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 295–96. Sorenson did not exclude the possibility of a late survival of the horse but offered the association with deer as a secondary alternative. One of the writers of this article (Roper) once suggested a possible correlation between the Mesoamerican Baird's tapir and the ass. Daniel C. Peterson and Matthew Roper, "Ein Heldenleben? On Thomas Stuart Ferguson as an Elias for Cultural Mormons," *FARMS Review* 16, no. 1 (2004): 202–4. The present article reflects his current view.

epoch as sea levels fell and rose. Because of this land bridge, the two continents shared some mammal species.<sup>84</sup> Some of these species adapted to their new environments, resulting in new species. The horse was one of these animals so affected. Similarity between new and old species of horses has caused and still does cause confusion as to which species existed at different time periods.<sup>85</sup> For instance, horses reintroduced by the Spaniards would be difficult if not impossible to distinguish from native forms based on discovered bones and teeth. If the Jaredites did bring horses to America from Asia, it is unlikely that they could be distinguished from those that came through natural dispersals. According to Azzaroli, a noted expert on Pleistocene horses, *Equus ferus* (a modern caballine horse) was widespread in the Pleistocene of Eurasia and well represented in North America during the latest Pleistocene.<sup>86</sup>

It seems reasonable to assume that the Jaredites had domesticated horses. Certainly, horses were present among the Nephites and Lamanites (Enos 1:21; Alma 18:9). Their domestication by these peoples should not be surprising. The horse has been domesticated by various peoples for millennia, and new evidences keep pushing the date back. Outram and others, based on discoveries in eastern Europe and central Asia, placed this date to about 3500 BC,<sup>87</sup> which well predates the Jaredite record. An even earlier date was suggested by Achilli and others based on DNA.<sup>88</sup> If, as Nibley argued, the Jaredites journeyed through central Asia, this data could be relevant.<sup>89</sup> They surely would have seen the value of horses as they came across peoples using them. Whether they obtained horses along the way and brought these with them is not important. As noted above, horses native to America were most likely in existence then.

Regarding horses, a concept discussed earlier cannot be overstated: extinctions take time. Too often, nonspecialists have the impression

---

84. See Prothero and Dott, *Evolution of the Earth*, 528–29.

85. Wade E. Miller and others, “Preliminary Report of Pleistocene Mammals from the State of Coahuila, Mexico,” *Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County Science Series* 41 (2008): 346.

86. Augusto Azzaroli, “The Genus *Equus* in North America: The Pleistocene Species,” *Palaeontographia Italica* 85 (1998): 1–60.

87. Alan K. Outram and others, “The Earliest Horse Harnessing and Milking,” *Science* 323 (2009): 1332–35.

88. Alessandro Achilli and others, “Mitochondrial Genomes from Modern Horses Reveal the Major Haplogroups That Underwent Domestication,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 7 (2012): 2449–54.

89. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 183–98.

that extinctions occur very suddenly. Almost always, however, the extinction of organisms takes place over thousands to hundreds of thousands of years. Some plants and animals thought to be extinct turn out to still be living even millions of years later. Until the past few decades, almost all researchers on the subject believed that the majority of North America's large mammals became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene. This, of course, excludes modern species of the bison, elk, moose, and bear. New finds, however, show that proboscideans and horses, thought to have become extinct at the end of the Pleistocene, actually lived on far past the ten-thousand-year limit that earlier scholars had placed on them. In the past few decades, an ever-increasing body of evidence shows that some of these species survived much longer. It should be kept in mind, though, that these animals were restricted to various refugia. In time, as the refugia disappeared, the animal finally became extinct. As noted above, the woolly mammoth, thought to have been extinct by the close of the Pleistocene, survived much longer on Wrangle Island, northwest of Alaska. Radiocarbon dates reveal that this animal was still living until approximately 2000 BC.<sup>90</sup> Proboscideans and horses also survived past the terminal Pleistocene much farther south in North America, extending into Mesoamerica. Of course, their populations were ever dwindling.

One reason more is not known about the horse and other extinct animals in Mesoamerica is that their remains are much less likely to be preserved there than in more arid environments and also less likely to be found even when they are preserved. In general, as noted above, organisms do not preserve well in subtropical and tropical environments because of a high rate of decay. Even bone decomposes very quickly. Another problem is that in these environments thick vegetation usually covers sediments that might contain fossils, making the fossils extremely difficult to find when they do exist. One exception is caves. The caves found in the Yucatan Peninsula, for instance, have produced some rare and important finds. Both extinct and extant faunas have been discovered in these caves along with human artifacts.<sup>91</sup>

---

90. K. A. Arslanov and others, "Consensus Dating of Mammoth Remains from Wrangle Island," *Radiocarbon* 40 (1997): 289-94; S. L. Vartanyan and others, "Radiocarbon Dating Evidence for Mammoths on Wrangle Island, Arctic Ocean, until 2000 BC," *Radiocarbon* 37 (1995): 1-6.

91. Arroyo-Cabrales and Alvarez, "Preliminary Report of the Late Quaternary Mammal Fauna," 263-64.

Reliable evidences for ages of post-Pleistocene to pre-Columbian horses in America are admittedly few. Nevertheless, more continue to be discovered over time. Archaeologists in Alaska recently discovered horse remains with DNA material that dated to 7,600 years before present, showing that “small populations of these megafaunal species persisted well into the Holocene [the current geological epoch] in northwestern North America.”<sup>92</sup> Horse teeth, which remain undated, discovered in a cave in the Yucatan, were said by Clayton Ray to be pre-Columbian in age. These teeth were reported to be part of a large collection made near Mayan ruins at Mayapan. Additional extinct horse remains from another cave were identified as *Equus conversidens* and were found associated with pot shards and other artifacts of man.<sup>93</sup> At Loltún Cave in Yucatan, according to an article by Velázquez-Valadez, “a good number of bone instruments was found directly associated with remains of Pleistocene megafauna, principally the horse (*Equus conversidens*) and animals now extinct.” An age of 1805 BC ( $\pm$  150 years) was given in this article.<sup>94</sup> Other caves in Mexico have also yielded horse remains. At Cueva de Lara (Actun Lara), archaeologists found the bones of cow (*Bos taurus*) and other living animals from the region in association with the extinct horse (*Equus conversidens*). Researchers need to pursue further work and, where possible, obtain carbon-dating results for faunal remains, at these and other sites, since it is possible “that the sediments are from the Holocene and that the Pleistocene horse survived into historic time, as has been suggested from remains found in Loltún Cave and other sites in the Yucatán Peninsula.”<sup>95</sup> Some of the radiocarbon ages given above demonstrate that the horse existed in North America during the time of both the Jaredites and the Nephites. Additional evidences for the late survival of the horse has been presented by Daniel Johnson, who showed the presence of horses with pre-Columbian humans in Mesoamerica.<sup>96</sup>

There are a few post-Pleistocene, pre-Columbian dates for horses that have come to light in the past several years. A recent discovery in southern California serves as an example. Philip Ireland reported,

---

92. Haile, “Ancient DNA Reveals Late Survival of Mammoth and Horse in Interior Alaska,” 22356.

93. Ray, “Pre-columbian Horses from Yucatan,” 278.

94. R. Velázquez-Valadez, “Recent Discoveries in Caves of Loltún, Yucatán, Mexico,” *Mexicon* (1980): 54.

95. Arroyo-Cabralles and Polaco, “Caves and the Pleistocene Vertebrate Paleontology,” 283.

96. Daniel Johnson, “‘Hard’ Evidence of Ancient American Horses,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2015): 149–79.

“Archaeologists working against the clock in Carlsbad have unearthed another nearly intact skeleton of a horse that may have lived and died 50 years before the Spanish began their conquest of California.” This article further reported that remains of another horse and a burro (ass) were buried at the same level.<sup>97</sup> Archaeologist John Sorenson relayed two radiocarbon dates—2600 and 200 BC—for horses from Beringia.<sup>98</sup> In an unpublished article, three other pre-Columbian dates were given for horses. One was based on remains found in a cave near El Paso, Texas, and the date was determined to be between 6020 and 5890 BC. Another radiocarbon date was based on evidence from a cave in Colorado, identified as between AD 1260 and 1400. A third date, based on horse bone from a cave in the Yucatan, is between AD 1230 and 1300.<sup>99</sup> If these last ages and the one from Carlsbad, California, prove valid, they provide evidence that some horses still survived in western North America at the time Spaniards first reintroduced them in 1493.

Recently, one of the authors (Miller) received results from C-14 dating of horse fossils. This material came from his field research in Mexico. A date of 2,540 years before the present was provided by the Radiocarbon Laboratory at the University of Arizona. This would place the horse in Mexico during the time of the Nephites.

How many evidences it will take to convince the major body of scientists, especially paleontologists and archaeologists, to accept this new paradigm is unknown. However, there are more horse specimens from Mesoamerica for which the current authors are seeking additional radiocarbon ages. There is a need for more researchers to pursue work

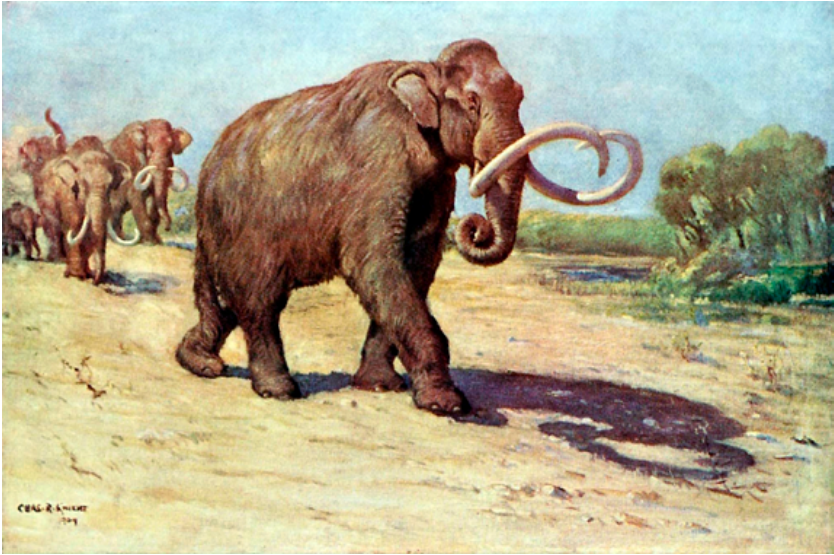
---

97. Philip Ireland, “Centuries-old Bones of Horses Unearthed in Carlsbad [CA],” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 17, 2005, <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-centuries-old-bones-of-horses-unearthed-in-2005jul17-story.html>.

98. Personal communication, John Sorenson to Wade E. Miller, 2007.

99. This was a report submitted to the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) by Steven E. Jones and Wade E. Miller: “State-of-the-art Physical Analysis of Archaeological Finds and Historical Artifacts: Pre-Columbian Horses in the Americas, July 30, 2004,” unpublished. For several years, FARMS provided partial funding for this project. According to the report, forty-nine samples were obtained and tested. Of these, eighteen resulted in radiocarbon dates, while thirty-one samples had insufficient collagen in the bone to permit dating. Of the eighteen successful dates, twelve were found to be post-Columbian, three dated to the last Ice Age. The remaining three yielded dates that were post-Pleistocene and pre-Columbian: Pratt Cave, Texas, 6020–5890 BC; Wolf Spider Cave, Colorado, AD 1260–1400; and Cozumel Island, Mexico, AD 1230–1300. There is some uncertainty as to whether the last sample was horse or cow.





**FIGURE 6.** This illustration of a late Pleistocene scene in North America shows a small herd of Columbian mammoths, as drawn by Charles R. Knight, famous painter of prehistoric animals. Illustration courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

on obtaining Holocene ages for equid specimens. A problem is that C-14 dating is expensive. Unless there is a very good reason to obtain this data, important specimens will probably continue to be overlooked.

### Elephants, Cureloms, and Cumoms

The only references to elephants, cureloms, and cumoms in the Book of Mormon occur at an early point in Jaredite history (Ether 9:19). There are no subsequent references to these animals in the text, which could point to their extinction not long afterward. There is no indication that the people of Lehi were acquainted with these animals.

The most likely candidate for the Jaredite elephant is the Columbian mammoth (fig. 6), *Mammuthus columbi*. It was a true elephant, and its range extended over most of North America, including Mesoamerica. Although its fossils are found throughout northern Mesoamerica and are numerous,<sup>100</sup> the mammoth never did range as far south as South America. Many people think of the woolly mammoth, *Mammuthus*

100. Miller and others, "Preliminary Report of Pleistocene Mammals from the State of Coahuila, Mexico," 344–46.



*primigenius*, when they think of mammoths, but this species was limited to the northern areas of North America and Eurasia.

Evidence for the late survival of the elephant can be found in Native North American myths and traditions. Some of these may be rooted in Amerindian discoveries of the bones of extinct fauna, while other myths could be founded on actual encounters with living species that had notable elephant-like characteristics. Indigenous people along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico have traditions of giant beasts with long noses that could trample people and uproot trees.<sup>101</sup> Similar traditions have been documented for Native American groups from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, persuading some scholars that these stories are based upon a core memory of actual historical encounters with elephant-like species that may have survived in the region as late as three thousand years ago. Based upon such traditions and other evidences, Ludwell Johnson concluded, "There can no longer be any reasonable doubt that man and elephant coexisted in America."<sup>102</sup>

Evidence of human and mammoth association have been found at a number of Mesoamerican localities.<sup>103</sup> Paul S. Martin reported that spear points have been associated with fossil mammoths at a number of sites, some still embedded in bones. Mammoth kill sites are known from Mesoamerica.<sup>104</sup> Martin also reported a spear shaft straightener made from a mammoth bone.<sup>105</sup> Several petroglyphs in Mesoamerica dating to ancient times depict elephant-like animals.

Along with a number of large mammals, mammoths were thought to have become extinct about ten thousand years ago. It is now known that the mammoth survived for a few thousand years longer. Mead and Meltzer provided an age of 4,885 years before the present for one

---

101. John R. Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 355.

102. Ludwell H. Johnson, "Men and Elephants in America," *Scientific Monthly* 75 (1952): 216.

103. Joaquín Arroyo-Cabrales, Oscar J. Polaco, and Eileen Johnson, "A Preliminary View of the Coexistence of Mammoth and Early Peoples in México," *Quaternary International* (January 2006): 81–82.

104. Martin, *Twilight of the Mammoths*, 150.

105. Martin, *Twilight of the Mammoths*, 150–51; see also Mario Pichardo, "Valsequillo Biostratigraphy IV: Proboscidean Ecospecies in Paleoindian Sites," *Anthropologischer Anzeiger Jahrgang* 59 (March 2001): 41–60; Richard S. MacNeish and Antoinette Nelken-Terner, "The Preceramic of Mesoamerica," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 10 (1983): 71–84.

dated mammoth specimen.<sup>106</sup> The late Larry Agenbroad, a specialist on the mammoth, published a 2005 survey in which he states that more than two thousand mammoth localities have been reported for North America. Of these, less than 10 percent have been radiocarbon dated; but among those that have been dated, twenty sites are less than ten thousand years old. Two of these twenty sites yielded ages on the order of seven thousand years before the present, or about 5000 BC. These data, he notes, point to “the possibility that post-extinction, refugial populations [of mammoth] may have existed” in various regions of North America.<sup>107</sup>

These dates are recent enough to place the elephant in the time of the Jaredites. A date for a mammoth in northern North America was cited at 3,700 years before the present. An Alaskan mammoth was dated at 5,720 years ago.<sup>108</sup> As more mammoth (elephant) finds are made, even younger dates will no doubt arise. Generally, when animal species’ populations decrease, they survive longer in southern refugia. Small populations of mammoths could have survived in Mesoamerica well past the close of the Pleistocene. The fact that known dates of mammoths in Mesoamerica are numerous up to the end of this epoch lends support to this view.

Of all the animals named in the Book of Mormon, cureloms and cumoms have to be the most peculiar and mysterious. While all the other animals are familiar to us, these two definitely are not. Apparently cureloms and cumoms were animals not known to Joseph Smith either. Quite possibly, these are extinct forms. Although we do not have all the details regarding Joseph Smith’s translating procedures, he most likely transliterated certain words—those with which he was unfamiliar. He seemingly did this with “cureloms” and “cumoms.” What could these two animals have been? They had to be animals that lived in Book of Mormon lands, ostensibly in Mesoamerica, and during the time the Jaredites lived there. LDS archaeologist John Sorenson was of the opinion

---

106. Jim I. Mead and David J. Meltzer, “North American Late Quaternary Extinctions and the Radiocarbon Record,” in *Quaternary Extinctions: A Prehistoric Revolution*, ed. Paul S. Martin and Richard G. Klein (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984), 440–50.

107. Larry D. Agenbroad, “North American Proboscideans: Mammoths: The State of Knowledge, 2003,” *Quaternary International* 126–28 (2005): 84.

108. David R. Yesner and others, “5,700-Year-Old Mammoth Remains from Qagnax Cave, Pribilof Islands, Alaska,” in Agenbroad and Symington, *World of Elephants*, 200–204.

that cureloms and cumoms were probably large animals.<sup>109</sup> This seems reasonable, since in Ether 9:18–19 they are grouped with the elephant and designated as being especially useful. This suggests they likely were beasts of burden. Using limited criteria, we will try to narrow the search for identification to the most probable animals.

One relatively large animal currently living in Mesoamerica (and also now living in South America and Southeast Asia), but doubtfully known to Joseph Smith, is the tapir. In the past, this animal had a much greater northward geographic range in North America. It lived all throughout Mexico and north well into the United States. At least one species of Pleistocene tapir somewhat exceeded the living form in size. Currently, a large tapir can grow to six hundred pounds or more and reach a height of three and one-half feet. The problem with this animal qualifying as a curelom or cumom is its usefulness. They are not noted as an especially good food item and, more importantly, are not easily tamed for use.

Another animal to consider is the American pronghorn (often mistakenly called an antelope). Its current geographic range is from Canada to central Mexico. They are occasionally tamed and sometimes even semidomesticated.<sup>110</sup> However, even if they were tamed, it is hard to imagine them being used for any serious type of work. There is apparently no record to support this. These animals, including extinct species, are deer-sized animals. Though known to live in northern Mexico, they apparently do not inhabit Mesoamerica proper. Rather, they tend to inhabit the plains.

The edentates, or xenarthrans as they are known scientifically, are a relatively diverse group of New World mammals. With the exception of the armadillo, which ranges into the southwestern United States, these animals presently live from Mesoamerica to South America. Anteaters and tree sloths belong to this group. All these animals are ones with which Joseph Smith would probably have had no acquaintance. While existing forms are all relatively small, many extinct species were large. The largest ground sloths, for example, reached eighteen feet in length and approached the size of a small adult elephant. Some of these ground sloths lived in Mesoamerica to the end of the Pleistocene and probably longer. In several localities, ground sloth hair and dung are abundant in caves, some with associated human artifacts. Additionally, ground sloth

---

109. Sorenson, "Animals in the Book of Mormon," 41.

110. John Caton, *The Antelope and Deer of America* (New York: Forest and Stream, 1877), 51–56.



FIGURE 7. Two extinct species of llama (a type of camel) are shown here. Either could conceivably be a curelom or cumom. Both are known from Mesoamerica and probably existed when humans came into this region. Illustration courtesy of the George C. Page Museum in Los Angeles, California.

skin and nail materials have been found.<sup>111</sup> Even if these mammals had lived long enough to have been known by Jaredites, their role as a curelom or cumom is highly unlikely. Based on brain size (determined from endocranial dimensions of the skull), ground sloths would not likely have been sufficiently intelligent to train for work. Also, based on their foot structure, they walked on the back of their “hands” and “feet.” The movement of these large beasts must have been very slow and awkward. With these factors in mind, it is difficult to see how they could have been useful animals to man.

So, what other Mesoamerican animals are left as candidates for the curelom or cumom? One good candidate, in our opinion, is a member of the camel family. The present New World members of this family are the llamas (fig. 7). We think it extremely doubtful that Joseph Smith

111. H. Gregory McDonald, “Sloth Remains from North American Caves, and Associated Karst Features,” in Schubert, Mead, and Graham, *Ice Age Cave Faunas of North America*, 1–16.

would have known much about these animals in the early 1800s. In fact, knowledge of llamas was not widespread among the general public in North America until later in the 1800s. Would a llama, either an existing or recently extinct species, have been an “especially useful” animal to the Jaredites (Ether 9:19)? Quite likely they would have been. One of the authors (Miller) has done extensive paleontological field work in Mexico and has noted a number of sites with a joint occurrence of giant llamas and mammoths. This might explain why elephants were listed with cureloms and cumoms in the book of Ether (9:19).

Although llamas are no longer native to North America, extinct species were. And like other large mammals thought to be extinct by the close of the Pleistocene epoch, some probably lived on much longer. As evidence suggesting this proposition, an undated skull of a llama from a lava tube in Utah was recovered with dried muscle tissue intact and an oily residue in the bone.<sup>112</sup> This animal certainly survived the late Pleistocene extinction event. Several archaeological sites, including some in Mesoamerica, have yielded evidence of co-occurrences of llamas and man.<sup>113</sup> Dates recorded in North America showing the late survival of extinct species include 3,800,<sup>114</sup> 8,527, possibly 3,000,<sup>115</sup> 7,432,<sup>116</sup> and 7,400 to 8,200 years ago.<sup>117</sup> Petroglyphs in the American Southwest also show very llama-like animals. One of the authors (Miller) saw the figure of a llama carved in a stela from an archaeological site in central Mexico. Again, it should be emphasized that the last recorded date for an extinct animal does not mean it vanished from earth at that time. Undoubtedly, small populations survived for at least hundreds if not

---

112. Alfred S. Romer, “A Fresh Skull of an Extinct American Camel,” *Journal of Geology* 37 (1929): 261–67.

113. Arroyo-Cabrales and Polaco, “Caves and the Pleistocene Vertebrate Paleontology of Mexico,” 273–91; Schmidt, “La entrada del hombre a la Península de Yucatán,” 245–61; Cynthia Irwin-Williams, “Associations of Early Man with Horse, Camel and Mastodon at Hueyatenco, Valsequillo” (Puebla, Mexico), in *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause*, ed. Paul S. Martin and Herbert Edgar Wright (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 337–47.

114. Arroyo-Cabrales and Alvarez, “Preliminary Report of the Late Quaternary Mammal Fauna,” 255–66.

115. Mead and Meltzer, “North American Late Quaternary Extinctions,” 440–45.

116. George C. Frison and others, “Paleo-Indian Procurement of *Camelops* on the Northwestern Plains,” *Quaternary Research* 10 (1978): 385–400.

117. Jim J. Hester, “Late Pleistocene Extinction and Radiocarbon Dating,” *American Antiquity* 26 (1960): 58–77.

thousands of years after the current extinction date. Sorenson noted several examples of camelid-like figurines, which suggests a knowledge of such animals could have extended into Central America and Mesoamerica.<sup>118</sup> The first of these is a Costa Rican effigy vessel, dating between 300 BC and AD 300, which depicts an animal with a large bowl on its back. The animal resembles a llama.<sup>119</sup> The second is a stone figurine from Chiapas, Mexico, of an animal with a long, extended neck carrying what appears to be a large basket, which apparently dates to the post-Classic period. This latter figure could possibly represent a dog or a deer, but the extended neck is suggestive of a camelid.<sup>120</sup> These examples could indicate a knowledge of South American camelids among pre-Columbian peoples or perhaps the late survival of some form of camelid in these regions.

Some of the extinct llamas were considerably larger than living forms. One type stood seven feet tall at the shoulder, and another species six feet. Not only is there good evidence that American llamas and humans coexisted, but also that these animals could be domesticated. Anthropologist Ricardo Latham stated that New World camelids (the llamas) were domesticated in pre-Columbian times.<sup>121</sup> Archaeologist Jane Wheeler claimed that the domestication of the llama in South America goes back several thousand years.<sup>122</sup> This would include the time of the Jaredites in America. As far as being an especially useful animal, consider how useful humankind has found the llama. As stated by one source, "It is easy to realize the importance of the llama to the Indian, as he utilizes it almost 100 percent, from its smallest hairs to its most insignificant droppings. Jerked llama meat nourishes the Indian; its woven fleece keeps him warm; its hide is made into the crude sandals with which he is shod; its tallow is used in making candles; braided, the long hairs serve him as rope; and the excrement, dried, constitutes a fuel."<sup>123</sup> Additionally, the

---

118. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 295.

119. Michael J. Snarskis, "Stratigraphic Excavations in the Eastern Lowlands of Costa Rica," *American Antiquity* 41, no. 3 (1976): 348, 350, fig. 6.

120. Franz Termer, "Antigüedades de 'La Violeta,' Tapachula, Chiapas," *Estudios de cultura Maya* 4 (1964): 90–91, fig. 8.

121. Latham, *Los animales domésticos de la América precolombiana*, 7–8.

122. Jane Wheeler, "Evolution and Origin of the Domestic Camelids," *Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association ILR Report* 8 (2003): 1–14.

123. Ernest P. Walker and others, *Mammals of the World*, 2d ed., rev. and ed. John L. Paradiso (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 1377.



FIGURE 8. *Cuvieronius*, or gomphothere, is also a good candidate for a curelom or a cumom. It has been associated with man in Mesoamerica. Illustration courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

llama makes an excellent beast of burden, and its pelt is used for blankets and outerwear. It has also been shown that llamas are good at guarding flocks. All these factors make the llama an extremely useful animal for humans. This would have been especially true with the larger size of the extinct llamas. It seems to us

that this animal could well be either the curelom or cumom mentioned in the book of Ether.

If the llama in fact represents a curelom or cumom, what could the other one be? Again, it has to be an animal that lived in the right place at the right time. And it also must be an animal especially useful to humans. Although now extinct, two viable candidates are related to the elephant. They belong to the same group (order Proboscidea). The two species superficially look quite similar but have long, separate histories. One is a gomphothere with the genus name of *Cuvieronius* (fig. 8), and the other is named *Mammuth*, the American mastodon (fig. 9). Like the elephant, both the gomphothere and the mastodon are very large animals having tusks and a proboscis, or trunk. Both were intelligent animals, based on the size and configuration of their braincases as determined from fossils. Consequently, they were likely capable of being tamed and trained, but probably not domesticated. One or even both of these could qualify as a curelom or cumom. This is a distinct possibility. But if the llama is one of these animals, then we would probably need to choose between the gomphothere and the mastodon for the other. This is not an easy choice to make. However, there is a possibility, with such similarity in appearance, that these animals might have been called by the same name (curelom or cumom). As an example among living proboscideans, both the Asian and African forms go by the same general name, “elephant,” despite belonging to two separate genera.

The gomphothere and the mastodon coexisted into the late Pleistocene in Mesoamerica, with the former being more common in the southern part of this land and the latter in the more northern part. In





FIGURE 9. The American mastodon (*Mammuth americanum*) is a distant “cousin” of the mammoth, since both proboscideans have long, separate histories. Because of its clear association with humans in Mesoamerica, it is a candidate for either a curelom or a cumom. Illustration courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

fact, the gomphothere is fairly well known in South America, where there is no record of the mastodon. Not as much is known about the age and distribution of the gomphothere in North America, however.<sup>124</sup> The American mastodon has several dates placing its terminal existence well past the close of the Pleistocene.<sup>125</sup> There is also evidence of some associations with this animal and humans.

Regarding the usefulness of either the American mastodon or the gomphothere, both would have made a good beast of burden that could move large objects. They possibly rivaled the elephant (mammoth) in

124. Marisol Montellano-Ballesteros, “New *Cuvieronius* Finds from the Pleistocene of Central Mexico,” *Journal of Paleontology* 76 (2002): 578–83.

125. Pichardo, “Vasequillo Biostratigraphy IV,” 41–60; Oscar J. Polaco and others, “The American Mastodon: *Mammuth americanum* in Mexico,” in *The World of Elephants: Proceedings of the 1st International Congress, Rome, Italy* (2001), ed. G. Cavarretta, P. Gioia, M. Mussi, and M. R. Palombo (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 2001), 237–42; Miller, “*Mammuth Americanum*, Utah’s First Record of the American Mastodon,” 168–83; Mead and Meltzer, “North American Late Quaternary Extinctions,” 440–45.

this role. While the mastodon was shorter, it was also stockier. Other potential uses for either proboscidean would be similar to the elephant as well: meat for food, leather for footwear or outerwear, tallow from fat for candles, droppings for fuel, ivory for tools and objects of art, along with other possible utilizations. That the elephant and mastodon were used for food has been shown by various prehistoric kill sites. At one such site, a projectile point was found embedded in a mastodon rib.<sup>126</sup>

Though it may never be known which animals are the ones designated as cureloms and cumoms by the Jaredites, we have listed some likely candidates. That humans in pre-Columbian times were associated with extinct llamas, elephants, mastodons, and gomphotheres is a matter of record. That the non-elephants in this group could represent a curelom or cumom is a distinct possibility.

### Summary

We again emphasize that the Book of Mormon is primarily meant to provide another testament of Christ and to proclaim his doctrines. Additionally, though, there is a significant amount of information provided about what the peoples in this book did and the environment in which they lived, including some of the animals with which they interacted, which gives us a deeper look into their lives.

Various lines of evidence based on geography, geology, archaeology, climate, and more point to an area in Mesoamerica as the place where Book of Mormon events occurred. The fossils known from the area are also compatible with this view. Doubts regarding the historicity of the Book of Mormon, however, have arisen for many since horses, elephants, and other animals listed in the Book of Mormon were thought to be extinct in North America long before the record was written. Continuing research, on the other hand, shows that in fact many of these animals may have lived into Book of Mormon times. During the past century, a number of animals and plants once thought to have become extinct much earlier in time lived hundreds, thousands, and even millions of years later. Populations of organisms in decline, for several reasons, leave a diminishing fossil record. These population declines were occurring, for example, immediately prior to the time of Book of

---

126. Carl E. Gustafson, Delbert Gilbow, and Richard D. Daugherty, "The Manis Mastodon Site: Early Man on the Olympic Peninsula," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 3 (1979): 157.

Mormon events, and it became pronounced with large mammals, especially during the terminal Pleistocene (Ice Age) and Holocene (current geological epoch). Even so, fossils of horses, elephants, mastodons, and other animals that may relate to the Book of Mormon have been uncovered in Mesoamerica and may date to the time period covered in that. We conclude that once all the facts are known, the scientific record will not conflict with the scriptural one.

---

Wade E. Miller is Emeritus Professor of Geology at Brigham Young University. His earned degrees are an AA from El Camino College, a BS from Brigham Young University, an MS from the University of Arizona, and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley. These are in geology and paleontology. His main research interests have been on fossil vertebrates and the geology of the strata from which they have been recovered, with specialization on Cenozoic mammals. He has written over eighty peer-reviewed publications on these topics. Additionally, Wade has written two books directed toward an LDS audience: *Creation of the Earth for Man* and *Science and the Book of Mormon*. He has also received many research grants, including five from the National Science Foundation and two from the National Geographic Society. Wade appeared on *Good Morning America*, the *Today Show*, and other television programs, one with Walter Cronkite. Wade also appeared on national television in Italy and in Japan relating to his research. He is a research associate at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and has served as a paleontological advisor to various institutions. Wade is a member of Phi Kappa Phi.

Matthew Roper received a bachelor's degree and an master's degree in sociology from Brigham Young University and is a researcher and writer for Book of Mormon Central. He has had a long and abiding interest in the Book of Mormon and has published on issues of warfare, Lehite social structure, and other issues relating to the ancient pre-Columbian setting for the book. He also compiled and is responsible for the Harold B. Lee Library's electronic collection Nineteenth Century Publications about the Book of Mormon, 1829–1844. His current research and publication efforts focus on questions of Book of Mormon authorship, historical and contemporary interpretations, and the intellectual history of Latter-day Saint scripture. He is married to the lovely Julie (Kane). They live in Provo, Utah, and have five children.

Herman du Toit. *Masters of Light:  
Coming unto Christ through Inspired Devotional Art.*  
Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2016.

*Reviewed by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel*

Herman du Toit is the former head of audience education and research at the BYU Museum of Art (MOA). A gifted and talented art educator, curator, critic, and author, du Toit caps his long career of considering, thinking, teaching, and writing about the power of religious art with a beautifully written and illustrated volume, *Masters of Light*.

As Richard Oman, a well-known LDS art historian, states in the foreword, “Most of us strive for a closer relationship with Christ. Among frequently used external aids are written and spoken words in inspirational talks, sermons, and books. In this book, Herman du Toit helps us better understand and use an additional source: inspired visual art” (x).

The book highlights the work of four influential nineteenth-century Protestant European artists—Bertel Thorvaldsen, Carl Bloch, Heinrich Hofmann, and Frans Schwartz—who have captured the imagination of Latter-day Saint audiences for the last half century.

However, the book is much more than the story of four artists and the devotional art they produced during their careers. Du Toit carefully crafts word pictures equally as beautiful as the art he uses to illustrate the book. The result is a theological discussion of the centrality of Jesus Christ in the lives of believers. Du Toit ties this fundamental core doctrine of the restored Church to the art the Church uses to proclaim Christ to the world.

As Oman states, chapters 1 and 2 “contain the most comprehensive compilation and analysis of scriptural and prophetic commentary on the subject of art and faith” ever published by a Latter-day Saint (x). These chapters are a real treasure written to an interested lay audience of non-art historians and scholars, thereby providing a lens to examine and experience art as a means of worship, study, and contemplation of

the reality of Christ. Du Toit's purpose is to help viewers experience a "mighty change" in their hearts, minds, and actions (5).

As du Toit discusses the work of these four artists, he weaves into his analysis stories from art encounters by MOA visitors and how the encounters converted, convinced, and convicted them. From a pool of visitors' comments, du Toit provides a moving testimony of the power of religious art in the lives of men and women, young and old.

In one sense, the book was written for those who look at religious art; however, it is also a book for those who create religious art. Du Toit has a lot to say about creating religious art today that has the power to move souls toward the Savior.

In addition to the paintings depicting Jesus Christ, du Toit also highlights Thorvaldsen's famous *Christus* statue and the twelve stunning sculptures of the Apostles Thorvaldsen made to accompany the *Christus* statue for the Church of Our Lady (Danish: *Vor Frue Kirke*), the cathedral of Copenhagen in Denmark. Three photographs of these statues are included for readers to view as they consider the thoughtful insights du Toit provides about Thorvaldsen and the statues he created in an effort to tell the story of Jesus Christ.

One of the many insights du Toit provides is found in a singular paragraph. He writes, "One of the chief characteristics of a corporeal sculpture is the profound stillness inherent in its material form. Sculptures are traditionally cast, carved, modeled, or constructed in impassive materials such as stone, marble, bronze, wood, or clay. It is the motionlessness of a static sculptural work that acts upon the viewer's sensibilities in arresting transitory thoughts and impulses that the viewer might bring to the experience. During the time that it takes the viewer to take in and apprehend the full meaning of an immobile and silent work of art, the viewer is required to be still also" (52). Such perceptiveness comes only after a lifetime of careful prayer and educated and informed thinking on the relationship of art and religion.

Chapter 3, "The Master Artists: Bertel Thorvaldsen," is a good example of what readers can expect in this book when it focuses on specific artists. Du Toit provides a brief life sketch of Thorvaldsen (43–47) and then highlights particular works—in this case, the *Christus* and the Apostles (48–58). In his descriptions of the statues under consideration, du Toit provides historical framing so readers can place the artwork in context.

In this chapter, du Toit tells the compelling story of how the *Christus* "came under the purview of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (50). Du Toit then takes time to provide stories about the statues, including the famous incident at the cathedral when President

Spencer W. Kimball commanded the Danish mission president, Johan Helge Benthin, in an uncommon firmness, “Tell everyone in Denmark that I hold the keys!” (56). The group of Church leaders had paused at the statue of Peter, who is holding a set of keys in his hands, a typical way of depicting Peter.

Du Toit, like all authors, has undoubtedly thumbed through his published volume and wished he could make a few changes. But unlike many authors, du Toit most likely does not find anything to change with his written word. However, he may have taken a deep breath and sighed when he noticed several blank pages in the book (17, 59, 81, 131, 141, 161, 171, 190, and 196). This is unfortunate. An art book should also be an art piece. This is likely a design failure. The blank spaces yearn to be filled and stand in striking contrast to the beautiful pages filled with ideas, stories, and art.

Although additional time and thought would have been required, the designers could have exploited the twenty-three paintings from the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle, Hillerød, Denmark. Crammed into four pages (72–75), these paintings could have been arranged in a way to highlight them even more and possibly help with the blank pages. Unlike the MOA’s own art-book publications, Cedar Fort does not have the resources, training, and dedication to provide a well-constructed art book. The publisher deserves recognition for the decision to use high-quality paper to reproduce the paintings. Few things are more frustrating to art connoisseurs than an art book with poor-quality illustrations published on inferior paper.

In the end, du Toit has provided readers a treasure in word and art. His book provides some important skills to help readers as they visit a museum and carefully and thoughtfully examine religious art published in books and periodicals. In the end, like those who preserved the sacred teachings and insights found in the holy scriptures, Herman du Toit has preserved his lifelong training, experience, and thoughtful reflection for another generation to consider. For those who take the time to read, ponder, and look, they will see the message of Christ in new, exciting, and dynamic ways.

---

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel received his PhD at the University of California, Irvine, and is Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. His professional work includes studies on the New Testament and Christian and Latter-day Saint art depicting biblical stories, especially images of Christ.

Thomas W. Simpson. *American Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism, 1867–1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

*Reviewed by Heather M. Seferovich*

Virtually all Mormon historians are familiar with Thomas G. Alexander's seminal work *Mormonism in Transition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). In some important ways, Thomas Simpson's work continues Alexander's study by examining the role that university education played in the Americanization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1867 to 1940. If you are a fan of Alexander's book, or if you are a Mormon who cares about higher education, *American Universities and the Birth of Modern Mormonism* should be required reading.

Presently an instructor in religion and philosophy at Phillips Exeter Academy, Simpson believes "modern Mormonism was born in the American university, and the Mormon path to citizenship—to a genuine, passionate sense of belonging in America—ran right through it" (1–2). This thesis plainly guides his entire study.

Although physically the book is rather thin for a university press publication, the content is quite heavy—and yet it is surprisingly engaging. His prose is clear and readable. I appreciated how the author took the role of a disinterested storyteller.

Many of the stories and episodes Simpson details are quite well known, such as those of Romania Pratt and Benjamin Cluff Jr. But there are several accounts that receive far greater attention by him than they have in other works, such as those of Franklin S. Harris and Osborne Widtsoe. And there were even a handful of stories that were entirely new discoveries to me, including those of LeGrand Young and Hannah Sorenson.

Simpson's meticulous research was evident in the notes as well as in the rich back matter. The depth of Simpson's research shines in his appendices: (A) Mormons Studying "Abroad" before the Woodruff



Manifesto (1890); (B) Mormons at the University of Michigan, 1874–1913; (C) Mormons at Harvard, 1891–1913; (D) Mormons at Columbia, 1882–1921; and (E) Advanced Degrees Earned by Mormons in Religion, History, and the Social Sciences, 1920–1940.

After the Saints settled in the Great Basin, Brigham Young and other Church leaders quickly realized that their community lacked trained professionals in fields such as medicine, engineering, and law. By the 1870s, Young was sending some of his own children and other Church members to reputable schools to try to fill these voids. Most of these students had their tuition either subsidized or entirely paid for with the stipulation they would return and share their training with the larger Mormon society, through both practicing their trade and offering apprenticeships—thus making these educational expenses an investment for the community. And, “with their star students as proxies, Mormons in Utah could participate vicariously in the students’ transformation” (2–3), especially as a wide variety of Mormon periodicals reported on the studies and adventures of these students.

In what is perhaps an oversimplification, Simpson states, “Education became the main battleground in the twentieth-century war to define Mormon identity, the struggle for the soul of modern Mormonism” (3). Fortunately, the majority of the students who studied outside of Utah were also good ambassadors for their faith. In the case of James Henry Moyle and Henry Rolapp, Simpson assessed, “They earned the clear, abiding respect of their peers not by proselytizing but by engaging them in rational discourse and debate about law and politics” (35). The Mormon students’ strong intellects coupled with their high ethical standards allayed much religious prejudice in Victorian America, a time when the nation was up in arms over polygamy issues (both pre- and post-Manifesto). Educational degrees and achievements, in turn, brought the Church a modicum of respectability and forged a few new allies in the cultural wars. One example of this came in the early 1890s when Harvard’s president, Charles Eliot, “praised his Mormon students as model citizens of the university” and compared Mormons to “the early Puritans in their willingness to endure hardship and travel great distances in pursuit of a religious ideal” (43).

Two subplots within the pages of *American Universities* caught my eye as I read the book: the tension between populists and pluralists, and the tension between science and religion.

This tension was constant between what Simpson calls populist Mormons—common believers (many of whom happened to be in leadership

positions) who tended to be suspicious of educational professionals, and the pluralists—forward-thinking progressives who tended to have had broader cultural experiences and who welcomed more interaction with the “gentile” world. Populists prayed that the students’ testimonies would stay intact, and they wanted the students to remember that the Holy Ghost trumped worldly knowledge. The populists also frowned on students developing loyalties outside of the faith. Pluralists “assured the Utah Saints that Mormons could flourish at [some academic institutions], which felt neither viciously anti-Mormon nor awash in godlessness” (49). However, at least one Mormon student, Josiah Hickman, admitted that his studies had challenged his faith: “It takes constant prayer and reading of scriptures to keep me from becoming doubtful at certain hours. I find several of the young people here growing indifferent and skeptical” (51). This tension between the populists and pluralists continued, and it was an ongoing topic at nearly all levels of Mormon interaction with secular higher education in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Similarly, Simpson’s narrative in chapters 3, 4, and 5 highlights the tension between science and religion in the LDS faith. Two episodes in particular seem to embody the complex elements of this uneasy juxtaposition: the firing of two BYU science professors in 1911 for undermining students’ testimonies and promoting theories of biological and sociological evolution and Sterling B. Talmage’s public challenge of Church leader Joseph Fielding Smith on BYU campus in 1953. Simpson’s accounts set these well-known episodes in their broader cultural context.

The struggle between populism and pluralism and science and religion occurs because of such scriptural phrases as “the glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36) and the last portion of the Thirteenth Article of Faith: “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” How should Church authorities and members balance revealed revelation with the thoughts of great minds who are still mortal and not of the same faith (or of any faith in some cases)? Each generation of Mormons has had to grapple with this question, and each has arrived at slightly different answers.

After reading *American Universities*, readers come away sensing some of the impact that higher education has had on the Church. (At the same time, the book would have been more effective if it had been more analytical and critical of academia and the diversities within; it also would be interesting for Simpson, or perhaps another author in the

future, to try to determine what reciprocal impact Mormons have had on higher education.)

In the nineteenth century, virtually all Mormons who received advanced degrees went to eastern universities, but in the twentieth century Mormons studied at major universities all across the country. Education broadened the horizons of these individual Mormons who obtained degrees and immediately benefited large groups of Church members (primarily those living in more populated areas while having a trickle-down effect on rural areas). Education also afforded the students a far larger sphere of influence than they likely otherwise would have had. In many ways, these educational achievements made the Church and its members more American, and these students, with their impressive degrees, demystified Mormonism for many of the educational elite who acted as influential cultural gatekeepers.

---

Heather M. Seferovich worked on *The Story of Masada* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* exhibitions at BYU in 1997 and was Senior Executive Editor at BYU Studies for twelve years before becoming the curator at the Education in Zion Gallery in 2011.

Robert L. Lively Jr. *The Mormon Missionary:  
Who IS That Knocking at My Door?*  
Wilton, Maine: By the Author, 2015.

*Reviewed by Tim Zeidner*

Robert L. Lively Jr. is dean emeritus at the University of Maine at Farmington. While not a member of the LDS Church, he has interviewed over 275 missionaries, mission presidents, various Church leaders (including President Hinckley), and other key figures involved in the missionary work of the LDS Church. He has visited the Provo Missionary Training Center and observed classroom instruction. Lively is a student of missionaries and of their desires to serve and bless others through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The genesis of this book comes from an experience years ago in a class that Lively taught, exposing his students to various religions by inviting adherents of those religions to come and explain their beliefs. When he suggested that the Mormons be invited, his students balked. Most had had some type of experience with Mormons and preferred not to revisit it. Lively persevered, and the Mormons became the favorite presenting group. As these experiences mounted, Lively realized that no one had ever written, from an outsider's perspective, why members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints serve missions.

As a result, this may be the most exhaustive effort by any author in providing insights into the various aspects of what missionary work is really about. It touches on the expectations to serve; training in the MTC; early service in the field; core prospects of finding, teaching, and baptizing; international service; sister missionaries and senior missionaries; returning home and next steps, including, for some, a decision to leave the Church, in part because of their experiences as a missionary.

Nearly all, if not all, other books that treat missionary work are either designed to instruct how to have successful, spiritual missions or are histories of missionary work and labor in different time periods. Lively's book, because it comes from an outside perspective, offers a candid and

unvarnished look at the experiences of missionaries largely in their own voices. The book is half autobiographies, since it is largely composed of missionaries' accounts, in their own words, about different aspects of their service. The candor and experiences shared cannot be found anywhere else. Because it does not rely on the teachings of Church leaders or experts about the vision and goals of missionary work, the book presents an authentic voice of how missionaries think and feel about their training and service. Consequently, this book speaks with a unique authority.

*The Mormon Missionary* should appeal to anyone interested in taking a deep and enriching dive into the minds and hearts of missionaries, sharing their reasons for service, their experiences in their service, and how that informs their lives during and after their mission experience. Because it is written by someone not of the LDS faith, it should appeal readily to others who are not of the faith but who want to understand why Mormon missionaries do what they do. For those who are of the LDS faith, this book offers a rare glimpse into a diverse collection of missionaries talking candidly about why they serve and the experiences they are having.

---

Tim Zeidner is Director of Research and Evaluation and adjunct teacher of Missionary Preparation at the Provo Missionary Training Center.

Carol Wilkinson and Cynthia Doxey Green.  
*The Field Is White: Harvest in the Three Counties of England.*  
Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2017.

*Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew*

From the outset, authors Carol Wilkinson and Cynthia Doxey Green are clear regarding the purpose of this book: to respond to the request of a member of the Cheltenham stake presidency in Great Britain to find out “more about the missionary work of Wilford Woodruff in the early 1840s” and to “provide clarification of the number of baptisms that took place during this time period” in the Three Counties area (comprising Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire Counties) in England (ix). The authors readily admit that while much has been said and written regarding Elder Woodruff’s contributions as an apostle-missionary in this area, “some people have questioned the actual number of baptisms” (ix).

At first glance, the scope of this book appears to be too narrow to warrant the interest of the scholar whose research focus is nineteenth-century British Church history and/or missiology, much less the layperson with similar interests. However, my assessment is this: what makes this volume an invaluable contribution to the corpus of scholarly literature on LDS Church history and missiology in general, and to scholarship on nineteenth-century Great Britain specifically, is the authors’ unparalleled research methodology, which they describe and analyze in detail. Now, such a narrowly focused study would have to be distinctively noteworthy to warrant an entire volume (much less a book review), but Wilkinson and Green have delivered such a gift—at least to the scholarly community. I, therefore, begin with the assertion that while the authors adequately respond to the query regarding the actual number of baptisms in the Three Counties area during Wilford Woodruff’s mission to Great Britain, the central focus and theme of this work leans more toward their research methodology and less toward the history. This book may, therefore, possess less appeal for the casual reader

or lay historian. Having said that, I maintain that because of the book's strength in its description and analysis of its research methodology, it is an important addition to the body of literature.

Wilkinson and Green's explanation of how they gathered their data into two different databases is thorough enough that interested scholars or historians could easily duplicate the process in future studies. Essentially, the authors acquired details such as the name, gender, age, and baptismal date of converts in the Three Counties area from two different source categories: First, they gathered data from the extensive personal journals of Wilford Woodruff and the journals of other members and missionaries that lived and served in this area. They titled this collection of information "journal database." To verify the convert baptisms in the area, the authors additionally gathered similar information from extant (although incomplete) Church records—primarily branch records—as well as other online sources such as the Mormon Migration Index, Mormon Pioneer Overland Trails, etc. This collection is entitled their "branch database." Their data gathering and analysis are singularly and exceptionally thorough—leaving no stone unturned. Chapters 5, 6, and the appendix comprise clear and detailed descriptions of the information contained in these databases, how that information was obtained and from which sources, and the relationship between the two distinct databases. Having been absorbed in similar research pursuits myself over the last fifteen years, I am not only convinced their research methods are sound, but I also believe they are superior to those in any other study I have encountered to this point and should be emulated by scholars engaged in similar studies in the future. In other words, Wilkinson and Green set the standard for future missiological or historical studies of this kind.

The weaknesses of this volume are twofold. Chapters 1 and 2 succinctly summarize the early history of LDS faith, segueing into the genesis of missionary work and the organization of the Church in England, first in Lancashire in 1837 and later in the Three Counties area in the early 1840s. The first weakness of this section is that it offers little, if any, new information on this overly researched aspect of LDS Church and mission history. Even chapter 3, "Wilford Woodruff's Mission to the Three Counties," follows the same outline and contains much of the same information as Green's own prior publication, "Wilford Woodruff: Missionary in Herefordshire," including the references to other scholars' work in the footnotes.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. See Cynthia Doxey Green, "Wilford Woodruff: Missionary in Herefordshire," in *Banner of the Gospel: Wilford Woodruff*, ed. Alexander L. Baugh and



The second weakness, in my opinion, is this: In chapter 4 and more particularly in chapter 5—“The Missionaries and Their Labors” and “The Harvest of Converts,” respectively—it is apparent from the authors’ descriptions of the massive amount of data they collected and analyzed that they have access to many primary-source accounts of numerous missionaries and converts, and I continually found myself desiring that they had included more of *that* material. In fact, doing so would have helped solve what I consider the book’s first weakness; by providing historical details of interest from heretofore unpublished accounts, the authors would have added color and depth to the study. Instead, I was met with phrases like “Diaries and journals are available for several of these local missionaries, including . . .,” followed by the names of only four men and examples from only two of their journals (67–68). Another paragraph that left me hanging began, “Many of the early missionaries from the Three Counties had been baptized only days or weeks before they went out to preach the gospel. Many were experienced preachers for the United Brethren, but they were still young in their understanding of the restored gospel” (70). While this information seems to come from the diaries and journals Wilkinson and Green discovered, no references to those primary sources are included or noted. In the authors’ defense, inclusion of those kind of primary-source accounts is beyond the stated scope of this book, which is to simply provide an accurate number of convert baptisms in the Three Counties during the missionary service of Wilford Woodruff. And the volume is not completely bereft of examples from primary sources; in fact, there are many, but the social historian in me yearned for more, especially considering the text’s many allusions to the large volume of primary source material the authors apparently had in their possession.

An additional contribution of this work that I believe will have a lasting impact is Wilkinson and Green’s identification and photographs of Church historic sites in the Three Counties area. Using public records and information they had gathered in their databases, the authors were able to locate and photograph many buildings and other sites where Wilford Woodruff and his converts-turned-missionaries preached and met in the early 1840s. High-quality images of these several locations are dispersed throughout the volume and, for those interested in the beginnings of the Church in this area, are worth the purchase price alone. Most of these sites were heretofore unknown or yet undiscovered

locations of extreme significance to the history of the LDS Church and its missionary labors in this area, thus making these findings an original and significant contribution to the corpus of scholarly literature of this time and place.

---

Ronald E. Bartholomew received a BA and MA from BYU and a PhD in sociology of education from the University of Buckingham in London, England. He has published scholarly articles in academic journals in the United States and Europe and has written several chapters in various published volumes. His research interests include nineteenth-century missionary work in Victorian England (nonurban areas) as well as assorted topics in ancient scripture and Church history. As a missiologist, he was instrumental in changing the LDS Church's international classification from "Marginal Christians" to the more accepted "Independent Christians," and he was the first Mormon scholar to present his research at the Ecumenical American Society of Missiologists Conference in 2014 and, with a group of colleagues, at the International Association for Mission Studies Conference in Seoul Korea in 2016.

Jad Hatem. *Postponing Heaven: The Three Nephites, the Bodhisattva, and the Mahdi*. Trans. Jonathon Penny. Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2015.

*Reviewed by Spencer L. Green*

Jad Hatem teaches and publishes in philosophy, literature, and comparative religion at Saint Joseph University in Beirut, Lebanon. Jonathon Penny, a published poet, has translated Hatem's book into English with helpful and unobtrusive footnotes. *Postponing Heaven* is a comparative look at human messianicity in Mormonism, Buddhism, and Twelver Shiism (a branch of Shia Islam) as seen in the Three Nephites, the Bodhisattva, and the Twelfth Mahdi. In this philosophical examination, Hatem seeks to "underline the specific character and conditions of [human messianicity] and to bring its implications into full flower" (3). While it may not reach full flower for all readers, the book is rich in implications on the significance of human messianicity across religious traditions.

Human messianicity for Hatem is "the disposition to desire to save others" (1), and he sees it as a fundamentally human quality and the ultimate expression of compassion. It has both its ordinary and exceptional examples, and the subjects of this book are the latter. While life, and prolonging it, are usually understood in selfish terms, Hatem argues that human messiahs (not his term despite the subject) forgo death in an act of selflessness because their desire to serve others is so strong. Hatem concludes that their sacrifice allows these figures to become wholly devoted to God or, in other words, subsume being-before-men, being-before-self, and being-before-the-world into being-before-god (65).

In chapter 1, "The Vow," Hatem describes the figures he'll be looking at. In describing the Three Nephites, he compares them to John the Beloved and the biblical and extrabiblical references to his lengthened life and even includes the Apostle Paul's claim that he would be cut off if it would help his people. This impetuosity to do the work of the Lord exhibited by these human messiahs, which Hatem also sees in Joseph

Smith, should spark a host of examples for Mormon readers: Aaron rebuking Ammon for his boasting (Alma 26:10), Alma's critique of his desire to speak with the voice of an angel (Alma 29: 1–3), not to mention Peter's impetuosity in desiring Christ to wash his whole body rather than just his feet (John 13: 6–10).

Next Hatem describes the Twelfth, or hidden, Imam of Twelver Shiism. The Twelfth Mahdi is immortal but hidden, and his existence preserves the world. While the Three Nephites are taken away, or hidden, due to sin in the world, the Mahdi seems to be concealed to preserve his life because, despite not aging, he can be killed. His long life is neither earned nor granted but seems a simple fact.

The bodhisattva, on the other hand, earns his lengthened life that he may continue to acquire merit, which he can then transfer to others (19). The bodhisattva works tirelessly to help others enter nirvana and will be "the last to enter into nirvana" (23).

In chapter 2, "Nistar," Hatem discusses these figures as *homo absconditus*, or concealed humans. He sees the purpose of the Nephites' concealment to be anonymity, though he does not discuss why this is important to them. The Hasidic nistar, which give the chapter its name, are righteous individuals who preserve the world while remaining hidden from it and sometimes even from themselves to avoid vanity. They are, nevertheless, important and fulfill a mission of "existing in truth," the importance of which is unexplored. The Mahdi, somewhat like the Three Nephites, exists in partial concealment to protect himself from his enemies while revealing himself to his followers when needed. The bodhisattva is the least concealed of the three figures but does, by magical means and for purposes of conversion, disguise himself as he works among mortals. Hatem concludes this chapter with Jesus's own messianicity, which, though he is the Twelfth Mahdi in some interpretations, does not make him a mortal messiah, as these other figures are, because in Twelver Shiism he is completely concealed and plays no role until his final appearance.

Chapter 3, "Kerygma" is a short chapter comparing how focused or unfocused the figures are on proselyting: The Three Nephites are hidden and proselyte; the Bodhisattva proselytes, or does his work, through his disguises; and the Mahdi is a nonproselyting messianic figure.

Chapters 4 and 5, "Contemporaneity" and "Nephite-Mahdite Time," tackle the idea of time and these human messiahs' place within it. Where, between the timelessness of deity and the temporality of humanity, do these translated beings fall? Certainly, Hatem argues, they bridge the

two, for these figures are mediums of contemporaneity with deity. If they were present with deity and become present with someone else, that person is brought into closer proximity with God. Hatem views the essential temporal moments as the time of the messiah, which is the short moment when the messiah first appears; then there's messianic time, the expectant time that grows from past to present; and finally Nephite-Mahdi time is a human but enduring time. Hatem differentiates messianic time, or the time between the now and the world to come, from Nephite-Mahdi time, which, due to the concealed nature of the messiahs, further divides the here and now between the "manifest and the hidden" (56). All of this is to reconcile the reality of the Apostasy with the Islamic idea that for God, or Allah, to be "worship-worthy," he cannot have neglected humanity as seems to have been the case during the Apostasy. With the Three Nephites present and doing hidden but real work, the Mormon belief in the Apostasy and the Islamic belief in what constitutes the divine can be reconciled. Hatem's inclination to resolve such disparate traditions in the first place is what makes this book so engaging and valuable.

Finally, in chapter 6, "Lehi's Axiom," Hatem uses Lehi's assertion that "it must needs be, that there is an opposition to all things" to argue for anti-human-messiah figures. He cites the apparently ageless Cain in Mormon folklore as one such figure and notes also the Buddha's conflict with Mara and the Mahdi's with Dajjāl, an antimessiah figure in the Sunni tradition. He ends the chapter speculating about the limits to which "all things" refers and admits that Mormon doctrine does not recognize a God who is both "the Maker and the Unmaker" (63).

The appendices are a nice addition and much lighter reading than the bulk of the book. In the first appendix, Hatem seeks to reconcile Lehi's axiom with Schelling's similar ideas in responding to Sterling McMurrin's argument about the presence of evil in the world. Hatem doesn't agree with McMurrin's resolution for Mormons, but it is refreshing to read a serious philosopher apply his mental tools equally to Lehi and to Leibnitz, exploring how these ideas fit together and hold up under scrutiny. Hatem suggests a satisfying resolution for Mormon theologians on whether God is perfect and thus changeless or whether his perfection depends upon progress and thus change. Hatem favors the latter, arguing that, to my reading, part of God's perfection is his continuing to choose to do only good while the potential to choose otherwise is always present. His outsider perspective on Mormonism is fair and valuable to insiders and interested outsiders of the faith alike.

Hatem knows his topic well, and despite some moments of disagreement with his analysis, I believe his insights should be interesting to scholars of Mormonism, whether cultural, religious, theological, or philosophical. *Postponing Heaven* is a fascinating if uneven read. The length of chapters varies widely, and the main text is dense and difficult, unless the reader has considerable familiarity with philosophy. The appendices, by contrast, are interesting and readable for a less academically trained audience. And though the line of argument is easy to lose among the many examples, for the diligent reader it honors its promise to bring the implications of these figures into “full flower” (3).

---

Spencer L. Green studies children's and religious folklore, play, and nature. He completed a PhD in American studies at Penn State in Harrisburg with a dissertation on Mormon adolescent folklore. He currently teaches composition at Penn State.