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Martin Luther: The First Forty Years
In Remembrance of the 500th Anniversary
of His Birth

Hans-Wilhelm Kelling

On 10 November 1983 the Protestant community throughout the
world will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s
birth. In honor of this event conferences and symposia will be held
throughout Western Europe and the United States. Although
Luther’s accomplishments are primarily acclaimed by Protestant
scholars and theologians, the Catholic position towards the reformer
has softened considerably, and recent Catholic scholarship has viewed
Luther’s reforms objectively and often with a considerable sense of
appreciation.

Not only the Protestant denominations, and lately the Catholic
church, acknowledge Luther as a spiritual leader, but The Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well esteems him and the other
reformers highly and regards them as prominent forerunners of the
Restoration. Statements by Church leaders underline the vital role
which the reformers played in preparing the way for Joseph Smith,
and it is fitting to review some of Luther’s considerable accomplish-
ments and to recall his major contributions in recognition of his birth-
day anniversary.

Hans-Wilhelm Kelling is a professor of German and former
chairman of the German Department at Brigham
Young University.

1 Since Luther was born in Saxony, an area which is now
located in East Germany, even the German
Democratic Republic is holding a Luther symposium to
which scholars from all over the world are invited.
The places where the main events of the Reformation took
place have been restored or renovated, and a flood
of tourists is expected. Although 1983 is also
the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, it is Luther,
ironically, who is receiving top billing since the state expects
to earn much more Western currency from
visitors who will visit the Luther shrines than it would from
Marxists. (See “Mit Luther Ist Alles in Butter” in
Der Spiegel, 7 March 1983, pp. 103–13.)

2 John M. Todd, Martin Luther (Westminster: The
today concede that Luther was a profound
spiritual force and that he was driven into open rebellion by
the corruption of the church and the intransigent
and unenlightened position of the popes and their
advisers. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) adopted
many of Luther’s demands without, however, officially giving
him credit: the use of the vernacular in liturgy,
the priority of scripture over church tradition, Christ as the central focus of man’s faith, the serving of the
Lord’s Supper (both bread and wine) to the laity, and the church as the people of God who all share in the
priesthood of Christ.

131
Probably the best-known and most frequently paraphrased reference in the Church to Martin Luther is a remark made by the Prophet Joseph Smith during spring conference in Nauvoo on 7 April 1844 concerning the excellence of the German Bible translation. Actually, the Prophet does not mention Luther by name, but it seems certain that he referred to Luther’s translation of the Bible when he stated: “I have an old book in Latin Greek Hebrew & German, & I have been readg. the Germ: I find it to be the most correct that I have found & it corresponds the nearest to the revns. that I have given the last 16 yrs.”¹ In view of Joseph Smith’s long labors of translating scriptures and giving voice to many revelations, his remark is indeed a significant tribute to Germany’s most famous Bible translator. In Sunday School and seminary lesson materials and on certain appropriate occasions, the Church has acknowledged the gratitude of the Saints to the German reformer. In their centennial message to the Saints and to the world published in April 1930, the First Presidency stated: “When . . . Martin Luther and others gave the Holy Scriptures to the people of the world, and in the strength of Israel’s God declared the truth, the beginning of the end had come.”² An even more encompassing statement concerning the Reformation was made in 1907 by President Joseph F. Smith in an editorial entitled “Fountain of Truth,” published in the Improvement Era:

Calvin, Luther, Melanchthon, and all the reformers, were inspired in thoughts, words, and actions, to accomplish what they did for the amelioration, liberty, and advancement of the human race. They paved the way for the more perfect gospel of truth to come. Their inspiration, as with that of the ancients, came from the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the one true living God.³

This article validates President Smith’s statement and also identifies some of the limitations of Luther’s reformatory efforts.

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, reared and educated in Mansfeld, Erfurt, and later in Wittenberg, small towns then located

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¹Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1980), p. 351. See also pp. 358, 366, and 402. “Joseph then observed that he considered the German translation of the Scriptures more correct than any other and furthermore he believed the German people were more honest than many other nations” (ibid., p. 402).

²James R. Clark, ed., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 5:279. In a discourse delivered in Rexburg, Idaho, on 17 August 1884, President John Taylor reviewed the accomplishments of Martin Luther and his able co-worker Philipp Melanchthon and acknowledged that they performed their labors under the influence of the Spirit of God: “They were good men. They sought to do good, and did do good: for he that doeth righteousness is righteous. They followed the leadings of that portion of the Spirit of God which is given to all men to profit withal. They operated in the interests of humanity.” (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854-86; reprint ed., 1967], 25:263-64.)

³Joseph F. Smith, “Editor’s Table: Fountain of Truth,” Improvement Era 10 (June 1907): 629.
Portrait of Martin Luther by his friend Lucas Cranach the Elder
in the Electorate of Saxony but now in the southwest section of the
German Democratic Republic. Luther's father, an ambitious man
who had advanced from miner to part-owner and manager of several
mines, planned for his son to become a legal counselor or diplomat at
the court of one of the numerous German rulers. Consequently,
Martin attended good secondary schools and then studied law at
Erfurt, receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees in 1502 and 1505. His
legal training provided him with the basis for clear and logical
argumentation which distinguishes him in his many debates and
publications. The passing of a friend and a close encounter with
death during a violent thunderstorm in July 1505 caused him to
change his career and enter the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt to
devote his life to the Lord. Although his decision to become a monk
is sometimes depicted as unfounded and rash, it must be pointed out
that Luther was reared as a devout Catholic by pious parents and that
devotion to God and the church had been a natural and daily part of
his life since childhood. The study of theology and service to God
had been considered as an alternative to the legal profession for some
time. In 1507 he was ordained a priest and in 1512 was awarded the
Doctor of Theology degree from the newly founded University of
Wittenberg. In addition to his duties as a member of the Augustinian
order and as a priest, he was entrusted with an ever-increasing amount
of administrative duties and with the chair of Bible Studies at the
university.

During the years in the monastery, as a student of theology, as a
minister of the gospel, and as a professor, Luther was plagued by a
fundamental question: What can sinful man expect from God's
justice? Luther longed for God's grace but feared His condemnation.
He endured agonizing mental and painful physical torture. How
could he please a God who was angry with him, and how could he es-
cape His vengeance? The church had prescribed the way of meticu-
lous confession and of the performance of good works. In order to
gain God's forgiveness and favor, man has to confess his sins and
become pure. Luther went to confession daily, often several times a
day. At least once he confessed for six hours, and when he was finally
finished he had still forgotten to confess a minor detail. He pan-
icked. Man cannot be forgiven if he does not confess, yet how can
he confess if he cannot remember every single detail of his wrong-
doings? When his confessors in exasperation and his superiors in

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6Germany did not become a unified nation until 1871. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
"Germany" was divided into more than three hundred principalities which more or less solemnly pledged
allegiance to an emperor.
loving sympathy assured him that his minor transgressions were inconsequential and that there was nothing to fear, he became convinced that they did not understand the sacrament of confession and that all his confessions thus had been to no avail. Luther was desperate. He was certain that his immortal soul would be summoned to eternal damnation by the dreaded adversary. He chose twenty-one saints, three for each day of the week to intercede for him at the Father’s throne, but still God remained angry. Luther began to hate God, which is the most terrible of all sins. He later recalled:

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, “As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience.8

Finally, after years of agonizing struggle, he received insights and light from the study of the Bible. To us it seems strange that Luther did not turn to the scriptures earlier for answers, but it must be remembered that the study of the Bible was not part of a theological education in his day. The many commentaries on the Bible written by church authorities, as well as the laws and rules of the church originating from pronouncements of popes and church councils, were the primary sources for the study of theology. In reading the Old Testament, Luther came across the first verse in the 22d Psalm: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Instantly able to sympathize with David, and with what became the agonizing cry of the Savior on the cross, for the first time he felt understood. God’s own son had also experienced the total alienation from the Father. Because of His identification with man and His participation in man’s alienation, Christ, the judge, will understand Luther, the man; and the Father, who raised up Christ triumphantly after having totally abandoned Him, will also raise up man. This miracle, Luther explained, remains mysterious and cannot be explained or fathomed by human reason, but must be accepted with simple, childlike faith.

8In the Catholic tradition a saint is a person who has accumulated during his lifetime more merits than are necessary for his own salvation. Because saints are considered to be especially favored by God, their intercession with the Father is believed to soften His heart.

Luther continued his search into the Bible, and as he compared the Latin vulgate—the standard translation accepted officially by the Church—with the more original Greek manuscripts, he gained additional insights. Thus he came to understand, for example, that the Greek word for *justice* has the double meaning of “justice” and “justification,” and he was comforted by the thought that the judge can justify the sinner and express confidence and personal interest in him and thus reclaim him from the clutches of Satan. Particularly the epistles of Paul shaped Luther’s understanding, and he accepted Paul’s terminology of justification by faith. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17) became a basic tenet of his philosophy and the source for his reading and interpretation of all scripture.9

In order to appreciate Luther’s attack on indulgences, one needs to understand his emphasis on salvation through faith. The sale of indulgences had become a major scandal decried by honest and concerned men throughout Europe. An indulgence in Catholic theology is a remission of temporal punishment which is due here on earth or in purgatory by divine justice for sins “whose eternal punishment has been remitted and whose guilt has been pardoned by the reception of the sacrament of penance.”10 The practice of transferring merits had become a lucrative proposition for the church and was being shamelessly exploited by insensitive church officials for their own private gain. It had become standard procedure to sell indulgences to raise money for “holy” wars against unbelievers, for the building of churches, and for the payment of church offices and privileges.11

Although Frederick the Wise, the Elector and ruler in Saxony, to which Wittenberg belonged, did not permit the sale of indulgences

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9Ibid., 34-337.

10*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, s.v. “indulgence.” The pope’s right to grant indulgences was based on the view that although sins must be accounted for individually one by one, goodness can be pooled. The pope assumed stewardship of the huge pool of good deeds which, over centuries, were thought to have been accumulated by Jesus, Mary, and the hundreds of saints who had done more good deeds than were necessary for their own salvation. This treasury of merits could be dispensed to sinners by the pope, who claimed the keys to bind and to loosen on earth. Such a credit transfer was referred to as an indulgence. In Luther’s time the papacy had decreed that indulgences could be granted not only to living persons but would be efficacious even for the souls of dead ancestors or family members who were believed to be suffering in purgatory. (See Luther’s *Ninety-five Theses* as quoted in Luther’s *Works*, 31:25-33.)

11Ostensibly the indulgence of 1517 was offered to raise money for the building of St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome, but in reality huge sums were diverted to kings and bankers for their personal coffers. King Henry VIII of England, for example, was permitted to keep a fourth of the proceeds collected and King Charles I of Spain was advanced a loan of 175,000 ducats (approximately $10,000,000). In Germany the Augsburg banking house of the Fuggers was allowed to take 20,000 florins which they had loaned to Albrecht of Brandenburg, who had to pay huge sums to the pope for his confirmation as Archbishop of Mainz. (Will Durant, *The Reformation: A History of European Civilization from Wyclif to Calvin*, 1300-1564, vol. 6 of *The Story of Civilization* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957], p. 338. According to Durant’s estimate, 20,000 florins would be equivalent to approximately $500,000 in 1957 dollars, but if we accept the price of gold at $500 an ounce, it would now be $1,000,000. See ibid., p. 295.)
in his territory, his subjects had no difficulty availing themselves of the documents by simply crossing the river to the neighboring territory. They joyfully returned to Wittenberg with the letters of indulgence and believed that their sins had been forgiven them. This greatly troubled Luther, who knew that contrition and deep sorrow were necessary prerequisites for divine forgiveness and that his parishioners were in danger of losing their salvation by believing the claims of unscrupulous salesmen. He decided to act and call on his learned colleagues to debate the issue of indulgences. He proposed that the basis for the academic disputation should be ninety-five short, crisply worded propositions or discussion points called theses. Following established custom, he posted the ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on the eve of a major holiday, All Saints' Day, 31 October 1517.

The issues which Luther raised were of considerable public interest, and Luther's arguments were very quickly circulated throughout Europe. This was made possible through the medium of the printing press which had only recently been perfected by Johannes Gutenberg. Although the original propitiosions had been penned in Latin, within weeks German translations were made available to the lay people.

At the outset (theses 1–5), Luther asserted that the entire life of a believer must be one of repentance and that the sacrament of penance does not meet the Savior's requirement as stated in Matt. 4:17: "Repent: for the kingdom is at hand." The Latin version of the word repent, poenitentiam agite, was interpreted by the church to mean "do penance." Referring to the Greek text, however, Luther contended that the actual meaning was "be penitent," "change your heart," or "turn away from your sins." Luther denied the power of the pope to release sinners from purgatory and to absolve sins. No storehouse of credits exists, he stated, from which the pope could dispense indulgences:

5. The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons. . . .

12Frederick did not forbid the sale for theological reasons but rather because he wanted to protect his own profit-making business. Special shrines with sacred relics had been established throughout the Catholic world—but especially in Rome—which devout pilgrims believed had the power to remit sins. Frederick was an ardent collector of relics and accumulated so many that Wittenberg was often referred to as the German Rome. His collection contained thousands of bones, teeth, hairs, and pieces of clothing of various saints; one piece of bread eaten at the last supper, one piece of stone on which Jesus stood to ascend into heaven. The viewing of these relics, accompanied by stipulated contributions, made possible the reduction of a stay in purgatory for oneself or others "to the extent of 1,902,202 years and 270 days." Frederick did not intend to lose considerable income for his own coffers and for this reason forbade the indulgence salesmen to enter his territory. (Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand [New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950], pp. 69–71.)

20. Therefore the pope, when he uses the words "plenary remission of all penalties," does not actually mean "all penalties," but only those imposed by himself.

21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.

22. As a matter of fact, the pope remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to canon law, they should have paid in this life.

23. If remission of all penalties whatsoever could be granted to anyone at all, certainly it would be granted to the most perfect, that is, to very few.

24. For this reason most people are necessarily deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty. . . .

25. They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges preach unchristian doctrine. . . .

27. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letter.14

The two most appealing arguments are stated in theses 82 and 88. If the pope were a loving Christian, concerned with the salvation of Christians, and if he has the power to release souls from suffering, why does he not freely do so for everyone?

82. "Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church? The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

Why are indulgences only issued during certain specified time periods? Luther objected to the idea that one had better hurry and buy before the sale ends.

88. "What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?"15

In other theses Luther contended that indulgences are actually harmful to the recipient since they impede his salvation. Christians must be taught to love one another and freely give to the poor, not to the rich princes of the church. The pope, cardinals, and bishops must not amass huge fortunes but should distribute their wealth among the needy and serve for the love of God and man.

14Luther's Works, 31:27-29.
15Ibid., 31:32-33.
The great appeal of Luther’s arguments is readily appreciated. It must be remembered that Luther’s intent at this point was not to attack or abolish the papacy or the church, but to correct gross errors and practices which were committed by unworthy men who Luther thought were possibly acting without the pope’s full knowledge. It was the Dominican order which had been commissioned to spearhead the sale, and the ensuing debate matched the Dominicans against the Augustinians, who generally sided with Luther. Thus Luther quickly made several powerful and influential enemies, who misrepresented his position in Rome, and he consequently incurred the wrath and anger of the papacy and the church hierarchy. Several attempts by well-meaning men at reconciliation failed, mostly because of the intransigence of the church hierarchy and because of the veritable flood of acrimonious writings against Luther to which he felt compelled to reply, often in language equally as sharp, insulting, and crude as his opponents’.

Three monumental events brought about Luther’s final break with the church and led to his establishing a new denomination: (1) the debate with Professor Johann Eck in Leipzig in July 1519, (2) the issuance of the papal bull of excommunication in late 1520, and (3) the stripping of Luther’s civil rights by the imperial Diet of Worms in May 1521.

The ninety-five theses were the subject of discussion between Eck and Luther. Johann Eck, a formidable debater, skillfully maneuvered Luther onto dangerous ground. He pressed his opponent to declare that the only head of the church is Christ, that popes had often erred in matters of doctrine, and, most serious of all, that church councils had been fallible in the past and issued contradictory decrees. For Luther, Holy Scripture was the final and true authority, not the canon law of the church, the pronouncements of popes and councils, or the statements by honored church fathers and theologians. Eck succeeded in associating Luther with John Huss, who had been burned at the stake as a heretic and whose teachings had been condemned as abominable. Luther was tricked into accepting some of Huss’s articles as Christian and evangelical. By getting Luther to express such sentiments, Eck inflicted heavy damage on Luther’s reputation and standing in the church, associated him with the despised Hussites, and succeeded in labelling him a heretic. Not only Luther’s repeated

16John Huss (1369–1415) opposed the growing secularization of the church and called for reforms and closer adherence to the gospel principles as they are taught in the Bible. Huss was burned at the stake at the Council of Constance. His followers, who were located mostly in Bohemia, rose in arms against the Catholic forces and desired privileges.
outbursts against the papal office and the person occupying the Chair
of the Bishop of Rome and also his various publications directed
against church doctrines, led to his excommunication on 2 January
1521. He had been warned repeatedly that he would be excommu-
nicated if he did not accept the church's ultimatum to recant com-
pletely and submit himself to church authority in Rome. Luther's
answer was to burn the papal decree and a set of church laws in a bon-
fire in Wittenberg attended by his students and fellow faculty. A few
months later he was summoned before the imperial Diet of Worms.

Until the spring of 1521 the Emperor Charles V, a staunch
defender of the church, had been too occupied with political and
military matters in territories outside of the German principalities to
pay much attention to the situation within. When he finally managed
to call the Reichstag, the assembly of German princes and rulers, into
session, Luther had won the sympathies of many of the dignitaries
and was much more popular with the people than the emperor. On
18 April, before the emperor and the august gathering of princes,
bishops, and potentates, Luther defended his writings and when
pressed hard to recant his views, he uttered these famous and
dramatic words:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the scriptures or by clear
reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it
is well known that they have erred and contradicted themselves), I am
bound by the scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to
the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is
neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise,
here I stand, may God help me, Amen.17

The assembly did not agree on what action to take. Some wanted
to move very cautiously so as not to arouse the knights and the people
to violent action. Others found it politically expedient to side with
Luther. Finally, on 26 May 1521 after much debate and after most of
Luther's supporters had left Worms, the emperor signed the edict,
which had been prepared by papal emissaries. Luther was stripped of
all civil rights. It also placed anyone who would shelter, feed, or aid
him in danger of similar censure. All of his writings were condemned

17The scene has lent itself readily to dramatic embellishment in writing and painting, and indeed it was
one of those rare moments when an outstanding individual is about to change the course of history forever.
Tradition has it that Luther actually spoke the words "I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me,
Amen." It is generally assumed, however, that the words "here I stand, may God help me" were inserted
later by an admiring scribe to the officially printed text of the proceedings. The German words inserted into
the official Latin text read: "Ich kan nicht anderst, hie stehe ich. Got helff mir. Amen." (See D. Martin
7:838; Luther's Works, 32:113; and Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V, ed. Adolf Wrede [Goettingen:
Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1962], 2:555–56, especially n. 1.)
and forbidden to be printed or distributed. Luther himself had already left the city in April and on his way home had been taken into protective custody by his sovereign, Frederick the Wise. For ten months he stayed in hiding in the Wartburg Castle near Wittenberg, where he occupied his time with the translation of the New Testament from Greek manuscripts into German.\(^{18}\)

While Luther was in retreat, his followers in Wittenberg, many of whom were much more radical than he, took matters into their own hands and started to reshape the church. They encouraged monks and nuns to leave their monasteries and marry; they changed the celebration of the mass and served the Lord’s Supper, both bread and wine, to the laity even without requiring previous confession.\(^{19}\) They removed images and pictures from the churches, stripped the priest of his vestments, instituted adult baptism by immersion, established societies which held all things in common, encouraged a paradisiacal Garden of Eden atmosphere in which people would walk around naked, and advocated the death penalty for those who did not accept these reforms. The more moderate elements were losing control and appealed to Luther for intervention. Luther returned to Wittenberg, took firm control, and condemned most of the radical changes. In consultation with such eminent scholars as Philipp Melanchthon,\(^{20}\) Luther in the ensuing years instituted the following reforms: permitting monks and nuns to leave the monasteries and marry if they so desired; dismissing priests whose only responsibility had been to read masses for the dead; changing the mass—giving the sermon a more central importance—and reading the mass and the scriptures in German; and serving the Lord’s Supper in both kinds to everyone who wished to partake. Luther himself married a former nun, Katharina von Bora, in 1525 and became a devoted father to his six children.

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\(^{18}\)The Old Testament translation was completed about ten years later. The Bible translation became a best-seller because it was written in language and style which the common man could easily understand. It also became the basis for the development of the German literary language and made possible the great flowering of German literature in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

\(^{19}\)The church had strictly required confession before participation in the Lord’s Supper and only the bread was served to the laity. The cup was served to the priest, who drank the wine vicariously for the congregation.

\(^{20}\)Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) became Luther’s closest associate and worked diligently but unsuccessfully to avoid a complete break with the Catholic church. He was a brilliant scholar and humanist who possessed extensive knowledge of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and the liberal arts. He aided Luther in his debates and in composing his pamphlets, and he clearly enunciated the principle of scriptural authority against the primacy of the pope. His writings are systematic and authoritative statements of theology in Protestantism. Melanchthon composed the Augsburg Confession (1530), the basic statement of Protestantism which constituted the irreparable break with the Catholics, and the famous Apology (1531), which is regarded as one of the most intelligent theological writings of the Reformation and a fundamental statement of Lutheranism. Melanchthon is also called the “Preceptor of Germany” for his ground-breaking work in founding preparatory schools and reorganizing the university system. He, not Luther, is the actual founder of the Protestant public school system.
Among Luther's voluminous writings, the three reformatory treatises, except for the Bible translation, are his most famous and popular works. They were all composed and published in 1520 before Luther was summoned before the Diet of Worms. The best known of the three, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, was addressed to the German political leaders, written in German, and printed on 18 August. The second, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, was published on 6 October, originally in Latin because it was not intended for the average Christian, but for theologians and scholars. The third pamphlet, *The Freedom of a Christian*, was completed in early November and was also in Latin. It, along with a letter, was addressed to Pope Leo X and is more conciliatory in tone than the first two publications.

When writing *To the Christian Nobility*, Luther benefited from the advice and cooperation of officials of the Saxon Court who were anxious to make him their eloquent spokesman. In it he placed the responsibility for reform firmly on the nobility and denounced the three basic claims of the church: (1) that the power of the church is superior to power of the state, (2) that only the pope may interpret scripture, and (3) that only the pope may convene church councils. In denying the Catholic claim of the fundamental distinction between the priestly class and the laity, Luther asserted that all Christians are equal, that through baptism all men are priests (obviously it was much too early even to consider the equality of women), and that every soul—including the pope's—is subject to secular authority. This latter point is important in that it reverses the centuries-old period of church domination in secular affairs. By placing the church under the protection and guidance of civil authority, Luther laid the foundation for the national church, the *Landeskirche*, the concept that church and state are involved with each other to the extent that the state collects and distributes church taxes, pays the clergy, and, in a way, supervises church affairs. This concept originated early during the Reformation since the various Lutheran church communities, breaking off from the mother church, obviously needed supervision and guidance which was best provided under the auspices of the lords and city councils. The legal basis for this arrangement was initially formed after the religious wars in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and

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22The German title is *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*. The second part of the title, *von des christlichen Standes Besserung* ("Concerning the Improvement of the Christian Estate"), is usually left out in English translations. (See Luthers Werke, 7:381, 404-60.)
24Tractatus de liberatate christiana in Luthers Werke, 7:12-38, 49-73.

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the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and buttressed through the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, which asserts that the government determines the religious affiliation of its subjects.

In the main body of the treatise addressed to the Christian nobility, Luther strongly indicted specific abuses practiced by the church and made numerous proposals for reform. Again and again Rome was taken to task for having dominated both the German emperor and his feudal lords in Germany and for having extorted heavy taxes from the people:

Some have estimated that more than three hundred thousand guldens a year [§15,000,000] find their way from Germany to Rome. This money serves no use or purpose. We get nothing for it except scorn and contempt. And we still go on wondering why princes and nobles, cities and endowments, land and people, grow poor.25

Luther then challenged the noblemen to oppose the pope and to stop the flow of gold to Rome, advice which was all too eagerly accepted since it provided them the opportunity to confiscate rich church properties and keep the church taxes for themselves.

The Babylonian Captivity of the Church reinterpreted the church sacraments. Since the church controlled her members from birth to death through a well-butressed sacramental system, Luther struck at the heart of the church and set the stage for his arguments in *The Freedom of a Christian*. Babylon, of course, was Rome, and as the Jewish people were carried into captivity by the Babylonians, so Christians had become enslaved by the Romanists and the papacy through the misuse and misinterpretation of the sacraments.

According to Luther, there is no scriptural basis for five of the traditional seven sacraments: Penance, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Extreme Unction. He retained Baptism and the Lord’s Supper and devoted half of the treatise to these two, deploiring the withholding of the cup from the laity, the doctrine of transubstantiation,26 and the sacrifice of the mass.

In view of Luther’s frequent and urgent appeals to scripture and his insistence that he was guided by the Holy Spirit, his views on baptism, to a Latter-day Saint, are disconcerting. To be sure, he perceived baptism as an essential ordinance for salvation, but while stressing the spiritual implications and blessings, he completely

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25Luther’s Works, 44:143.
26The official Catholic doctrine teaches that in the sacrament the substances of bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ while retaining their appearance and taste. Luther rejected this doctrine in favor of the position that Christians, while partaking of the bread and wine, are mystically united with Christ and the body of believers. The body and blood of Christ join with the bread and wine (consubstantiation).
deemphasized the significance of the baptismal prayer, the external form (immersion and adult baptism), and priesthood authority. He rejoiced that God

has preserved in his church this sacrament [baptism] at least, untouched and untainted by the ordinances of men, and has made it free to all nations and classes of mankind, and has not permitted it to be oppressed by the filthy and godless monsters of greed and superstition. For he desired that by it little children, who are incapable of greed and superstition, might be initiated and sanctified in the simple faith of his Word; even today baptism has its chief blessing for them. But if the intention had been to give this sacrament to adults and older people, I do not believe that it could possibly have retained its power and its glory against the tyranny of greed and superstition which has overthrown all things divine among us. Here too the wisdom of the flesh would doubtless have devised its preparations and dignities, its reservations, restrictions, and other like snares for catching money, until water brought as high a price as parchment [letters of indulgences] does now.27

Luther never questioned the practice of baptizing infants; in fact, he defended it by maintaining that God has obviously accepted this mode of baptism because He has poured out His Holy Spirit on so many:

Since God has confirmed Baptism through the gift of his Holy Spirit, as we have perceived in some of the fathers, ... and others who were baptized in infancy, and since the Holy Christian church will abide until the end of the world, our adversaries must acknowledge that infant Baptism is pleasing to God.28

He anticipated and refuted the argument that children do not yet have faith by stating that faith is conferred by baptism and develops in the person after the sacrament has been performed. Besides, the vicarious faith of those who bring the infant to the font is quite sufficient.

Luther was well aware that the word baptism means "immersion" and much preferred this mode of baptism to any other. "I would have those who are to be baptized completely immersed in the water. ... And this is doubtless the way it was instituted by Christ."29

There were three modes of administering baptism in use at this period [Luther's time]: immersion, i.e., total immersion of the child in the

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27Luther's Works, 36:57.
29Luther's Works, 36:68.
font; *superfusio*, i.e., holding the naked child over the font and pouring water over him profusely; and *infusio*, i.e., dipping only the head of the child in the font. Luther strongly favored immersion.  

Nevertheless, Luther accepted other forms of baptism as well.

Baptism truly saves in whatever way it is administered, if only it is administered not in the name of man, but in the name of the Lord. Indeed, I have no doubt that if anyone receives Baptism in the name of the Lord, even if the wicked minister should not give it in the name of the Lord, he would yet be truly baptized in the name of the Lord. For the power of baptism depends so much on the faith or use of the one who confers it as on the faith or use of the one who receives it.  

This kind of argument seems strange since in other matters Luther was so adamant and insistent on correctness and truth.

He was equally as unconcerned about the question of authority in baptism, or, for that matter, in other priesthood functions. The man who performs the baptism is “simply the vicarious instrument of God,” and it is really God who “thrusts you under the water with his own hands, and promises you forgiveness of your sins, speaking to you upon the earth with a human voice by the mouth of his minister.”

Luther’s position on baptism and some other gospel ordinances validates John Taylor’s assessment of him as a “good” and “righteous” man who “operated in the interests of humanity” and who was guided by the “Spirit of God” and not by the Holy Ghost, a vital distinction which accounts for Luther’s limitations and for the fact that he was a reformer and not a restorer and prophet. This does not diminish his accomplishments in his calling as a reformer whose basic conservatism did not allow him to revolt against orthodox doctrine and theories but rather against practices. Thus he objected strenuously to the indulgence traffic and to the domination of the church hierarchy in the daily life of its members through the sacramental system; however, to the end he accepted and defended the traditional doctrines: infant baptism, the trinity, the spiritual nature of God’s person, the actual presence of Christ in the Last Supper, a personal devil, hell, and a noncorporeal resurrection.

In the struggle to retain control of his movement and to save it from dissipating or falling into radical hands, he transferred the power held by the church to the state and advocated the divine right of kings, thus opposing political upheaval and revolution directed  

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30 Ibid., 53:100, n. 2. See also 35:29.
31 Ibid., 36:63–64.
33 *Journal of Discourses*, 25:263.
toward governmental change. While freeing his followers from the tyranny of an infallible pope, he subjected them to the tyranny of an infallible book—just as restrictive when a narrow and incorrect interpretation leaves little or no room for additional insight and revelation. Nevertheless, his emphasis on regular scripture reading, on Jesus Christ as the Lord and the only source of man’s salvation, on rejection of false traditions, and on the quest for truth must be viewed positively, since such an approach, if honestly and sincerely pursued, prepares man to accept the fulness of the gospel and the restoration of all things. For that, most of all, we honor Martin Luther.
Perpetuation of a Myth: Mormon Danites in Five Western Novels, 1840–90

Rebecca Foster Cornwall and Leonard J. Arrington

In Caldwell County, Missouri, during the spring and summer of 1838, there had been instances of vandalism, theft, and terrorism against Mormon settlements. Mormons, fearing a repeat of the occurrences in Jackson and Clay counties, from which they had been driven by force and political maneuver in 1833 and 1836, were determined not to lose their properties again. Therefore, over a period of eight to sixteen weeks, a small group of Mormon men met in private homes to plan defensive tactics against “gentiles” and dissenting Mormons.

The initial targets of these Brothers of Gideon, as they called themselves, were Mormon “dissenters”—several leaders who, by violating economic or moral codes, had given “aid and comfort” to the enemy, anti-Mormon mobs.1 These defecting leaders and their families were intimidated by the Brothers of Gideon into leaving Missouri. A more general purpose for the band then emerged—direct retaliation against the anti-Mormon terrorists.2 After recruiting additional members, the band included as many as three hundred of the estimated two thousand Mormon men in Missouri.3 Many Danites, as they came to be called, were simultaneously members of the Mormon wing of the state militia, a fact which confused the identities and purposes of the two groups.4 One Danite member even claimed that their plunder was deposited in the cooperative storehouses maintained by Mormon bishops.5

Sampson Avard, founder of the Danites, was arrested for these illegal activities and brought to a preliminary hearing of charges in

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2Ibid.
5Ibid., pp. 435–36.
November 1838. There he claimed to have been following orders from the Mormon First Presidency (Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon). 6 Although witnesses sympathetic to the Mormons denied this, other witnesses were hostile, and the First Presidency spent the winter in jail waiting for trials which never came. 7 By testifying against the Church leaders, Avard escaped conviction.

The short-lived existence of the Danite band created controversy both inside and outside the Mormon church. Most of the Danite leaders were speedily excommunicated. 8 Even in the early Danite meetings, contentions had arisen over the volatile and secretive tendencies of its leaders. 9 It was during this period that some Church members began to distrust Sidney Rigdon, who may have supported the band by his incendiary public rhetoric. 10 One constructive result of the Danite affair was that it defined more clearly for the whole Church the religious ethic of forbearance, which later guided Mormon response to Joseph Smith’s murder, the forced exodus from Nauvoo, Indian harassments, and the Utah Expedition of 1857. 11

But it required “the grace of God without measure” (which Joseph Smith called for) to equitably bear intolerance, violence, and governmental apathy. Joseph (and later Brigham Young) constantly found it necessary to instill some of this grace into members who were overeager for revenge. It can safely be said that although Church authorities occasionally let off steam in public, in action they were usually restrained, counseling nonprovocation.

Incidents of violence on the Utah frontier were rare considering the expanse of the Mormon settlement and almost immediate interruption of its isolation. Surrounding the most tragic and widely reported incident, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, was an inflammatory circumstance: Utah was in a state of war, preparing for

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7Gentry, “‘Danite Band,’” pp. 434–35, 450.
8Ibid., p. 426.
9Ibid., p. 437.
invasion by a federal army. Unfortunately, the details of the massacre and the harassment of Johnston’s Army by the Utah Nauvoo Legion and Minute Men (originally formed to protect settlers from Indian attacks) were usually distorted in the national press. Fiction writers were quick to use these incidents, along with tales of the short-lived Danite band. Between 1850 and 1900 these writers created a fictitious horde of “Danites” in dozens of short stories and more than eighty novels, travel books, and pseudomemoirs published in America and Europe. By 1900 at least fifty-six anti-Mormon novels alone had been published in English, incorporating one or more aspects of the Danite myth, beginning with the false assumption that there was a functioning Danite organization in Utah.12

What made the Sons of Dan, alias Destroying Angels, alias Brothers of Gideon, so absorbing a topic for Victorian writers? On what did these writers base their notions? As creators or borrowers of a legend, how did they treat it? In this paper we trace the Danite theme in five of the more palatable and popular novels published between 1840 and 1890.

Monsieur Violet (1843)13

The Danites (and indeed the Mormons) made their fictional debut in Frederick Marryat’s Monsieur Violet: His Travels and Adventures among the Snake Indians . . . (London, 1843). This was one of six novels for boys written by Captain Marryat, a British naval hero who later forged an equally illustrious career as an author.14

Monsieur Violet purports to be the story of a young French nobleman as told to Marryat. It is a loosely strung narrative of

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encounters with plains Indians; the Mormons are seemingly brought in as an afterthought. Joseph Smith is introduced on the pretext of Monsieur Violet’s visiting Nauvoo as a representative of an Indian chief who wishes to unite with the Mormon “kingdom.” This gives Marryat the chance to editorialize for fifty or more pages on the new religion, “the most extraordinary imposition of the nineteenth century” (p. 298).

And editorialize he does. Through Violet, Marryat comments, “Perceiving how anxious I was to learn anything about this new sect, my host introduced me to a very talented gentleman, who had every information connected with their history” (p. 298). This introduction, however, was in printed form and took place after Marryat’s return to England, not during his 1837 visit to St. Louis. No admirer of democracy, Marryat was susceptible to books and theories which discredited frontier culture. The gentleman who supplied Marryat’s fictitious Violet with information about Mormonism could have been any one or a composite of several Protestant ministers and disaffected Mormons who wrote anti-Mormon “histories” between 1834 and 1843. However, Marryat’s wording and thought most closely resemble Henry Caswall’s The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century, a seemingly erudite work (there are footnotes on every page) but one which borrowed extensively from John C. Bennett’s and earlier dissidents’ polemics.15

According to Marryat, probably borrowing from Caswall, a secret Danite society was formed shortly after Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and others arrived at Far West, Missouri. The society was “bound by an oath and covenant, with the penalty of death . . . to defend the presidency, and each other, unto death, right or wrong. They had their secret signs, by which they knew each other, either by day or night” (pp. 152–53).16 Marryat, through Violet, mentions the “Salt Sermon” in which Sidney Rigdon reportedly threatened dissenters with being trodden “under the foot of the Church” like washed-out salt, “until their bowels should gush out” (p. 154). With an independent touch, Marryat has Violet describe a beautiful but fortified Nauvoo, the description based on a letter from a superior officer of the U.S. artillery (pp. 161–66).

Marryat precedes this secondhand information with an improvisation which is intended to explain Americans’ susceptibility to

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15Henry Caswall, The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century (London: Printed for J. G. F. and J. Rivington’s, 1843); John C. Bennett, History of the Saints, or, an Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842). Caswall was an Anglican divine in St. Louis; Bennett was an ex-Nauvoo politico and Mormon defector.

16Compare Caswall, Prophet of the Nineteenth Century, pp. 155–57.
religious mutations and which becomes the prototype of succeeding fictional Danite settings. Spiritualism, Violet muses, can be expected 
in the western country of the United States, on the borders of the im-
mense forests and amidst the wild and broken scenery of glens and 
mountains, where torrents roll with impetuosity through caves and 
cataracts; where, deprived of the amusements and novelties which 
would recreate his imagination, the farmer allows his mind to be op-
pressed with strange fancies, and ... is a slave to the wild phantasma-
goria of his brain. (Pp. 135–36.)

In a final flight of strange fancy and colorful diction, Marryat refers 
to the Mormons as "warlike fanatics" (p. 166). Because of their in-
tent to "annihilate all other sects, ... we may therefore, see the 
time when this gathering host of religious fanatics will make this 
country [America] shake to its centre. A western empire is certain" 
(pp. 164–65).

Voila! Religious polemic breeds historical inaccuracy which gen-
erates literary myth. Few would continue to read Caswall or Bennett, 
but many would read Marryat for a long time to come, including fledg-
ing authors who would reject his antirepublicanism but remember 
his art.

THE WILD HUNTRESS (1861)"17

The Wild Huntress (3 vols., London, 1861) was one of many 
romances by Captain Mayne Reid, an Irishman who trapped and sol-
diered in America as a young man and returned to England to be-
come an author of adventure stories. His popularity is indicated by 
the inventory of Mudie's circulating library for 1848–69 showing titles 
of authors kept in stock: 41 volumes by James Fenimore Cooper; 
32 by Sir Walter Scott; 24 by Marryat; 23 by Charles Dickens; 
20 by Reid; 15 by William Makepeace Thackeray; and 11 by Robert 
Ballantyne.18

Huntress was not a relative favorite among Reid's fans, although 
written at the height of his career and sold in impressive enough 
numbers. The plot and structure were borrowed from his own past 
works. Reid knew his readers' taste for authentic detail mixed with 
violence and camouflaged sexual fantasy, but he had supplied these 
needs so often by the time he wrote Huntress that his storytelling 
had become almost slick. Still, Huntress demonstrates why Reid's

18For biography and criticism of Reid, see Joan Steele, Captain Mayne Reid (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 
a Division of G. K. Hall and Co., 1978). Sara Keith's tabulation of Mudie's library holdings is on p. 112.
works were so popular. Their republicanism thrilled British boys and American readers. Their heroes represented a number of races and social classes; villains in *Huntress* include a white Mormon (a Danite chief), a red outcast, and a black mammy. The glory of Reid’s work was his power of description. The Reid canon as assessed by the *Spectator* was that, in spite of his weak characterizations and muddled plots, he was able to “create atmosphere—he could make the reader conscious of residence under a new sky.”\(^\text{19}\)

*Huntress* opens with a matchless description of a Tennessee hunter’s cabin and clearing. Into this clearing wanders a British gentleman, who falls in love at first sight with the hunter’s blonde, poetry-reciting daughter. Next, from the cabin steals the tempestuous half-breed huntress of the book’s title to meet her backwoods lover. Finally, enter greasy Josh Stebbins, the Mormon blackmailer. Compared to Stebbins, even Holt, the gullible, surly hunter, seems decent, despite the fact that he betrays a daughter to the Mormons to avoid prosecution for an alleged past murder. After the introduction of characters, the melodrama quickly deteriorates into a chase across the Great Plains to rescue Holt’s daughter from dishonor, but even this silliness is subservient to dangerous encounters with Indians told “with the finish of an artist.”\(^\text{20}\)

How did Reid work Danites into the Tennessee wilderness? Josh Stebbins is a Mormon missionary. He seeks converts and wives for the Mormon prophet and recruits for the band of “Destroying Angels” with which he is confederate—men whose “strong arms and stout hearts” qualify them to defend their faith with violence and bloodshed. Stebbins flatters the dour old hunter Holt, telling him that he would make a good Danite: “You’re just the man to be one of them; and I have no doubt you’d be made one, as soon as you joined us” (3:237).

Because Reid relished contrast and foil, one can predict that his Danites will be lurid. The hero describes a band of these avengers who guard a Mormon wagon train: “Six more villainous-looking individuals I had never beheld. There was no sign of the angelic, neither in their eyes nor features—not a trace; but, on the contrary, each might have passed for an impersonation of the opposite character—a very ‘devil incarnate!’” (3:327).

Their baseness happily illuminates the chivalric soul of our British hero, whose heart is so pure that his desires do not include avenging

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\(^\text{19}\)Ibid., p. 49.

\(^\text{20}\)According to Steele, Edgar Allan Poe uses this phrase in describing Reid (ibid., p. 20).
evil, but only preserving innocence. The "executive myrmidons of the Mormon faith" at last prove their impotence against the valor and cunning of our heroes. Josh Stebbins falls with a purple hole in his forehead, while his men retreat like buffalo through the gorge—but not until they've offered formidable opposition (3:334–35).

How much personal knowledge did Reid possess about the Mormons? Early in Huntress his narrator states: "Accident had made me acquainted with the Mormon religion; not with its tenets—for it has none—but with the moral idiosyncrasy of its most imminent [eminent?] 'apostles.'" No personal expertise is necessary, he claims; to understand Mormonism "in all its cruel significance," one need only read "its history and its chronicles" (1:308). At that time these chronicles were limited to Marryat and the anti-Mormon "histories" Marryat had appropriated.

Before Reid's return to England in 1848, he had opportunities for vicarious if not firsthand acquaintance with the Mormons, for he had lived and traveled on the Mississippi River. He spent the year 1839–40 working and teaching near the docks of New Orleans, the disembarking port for Mormon immigrants to Nauvoo. During the next three years, he joined trapping and exploring expeditions which originated in St. Louis, even then a trade and travel center to which Nauvoo was oriented. The naturalist James Audubon, one expedition leader, is said to have taken a liking to him and to have taught him western horticulture and, no doubt, lore. Missouri newspapers were of course interested in the Mormons, reporting on them regularly, or with rare exception, in a tone akin to that of Bennett and Caswall.

It is difficult to explain why in Huntress Reid abandoned his customary magnanimity in characterizing not just a few Danites but Mormons in general as "vulgar" and "brutal," their leaders as "conspirators, charlatans, hypocrites, and imposters, if you will... [having] neither faith, dogma, nor doctrine" (1:312). His absorption in rhetoric went beyond the requirements of drama. Always in financial trouble, Reid perhaps turned to this footnote in his experience as a vehicle for "saleable exoticism." What he wrote was not entirely true, but if the rumors that the Mormons were practicing polygamy were true (and in 1852 they proved to be), then, Reid felt, the Mormons were a threat to traditional decency and thus fair game for a

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21 Ibid., pp. 18–19.
22 Steele describes the dreamlike quality of Reid's fiction as offering "a great deal of instinctual gratification of a sadomasochistic nature" and "satisfaction of a euphoric state depicted in... shades of black and white containing hidden appeals to their [readers'] deepest psychological nature" (Ibid., pp. 129–30).
writer of moral tales, whose business was to superficially uphold decency while actually offering a legitimate release from it. Moreover, Reid was not prone to discriminate between fact and fiction in his stories any more than in his life. Edgar Allan Poe, whom Reid met in New York City through a mutual friend, accused him of every day fibbing "on a surprising scale," calling him "a colossal but most picturesque liar." 23

FIRST FAMILIES OF THE SIERRAS (1876) 24

During and immediately after the Civil War there was a hiatus in anti-Mormon literature. In 1870, however, Albert Aiken and John Beadle resurrected the Danites, and by 1875 a new generation of writers and reformers were at work, carrying the theme of the evils of Mormonism through at least thirty-four novels in two decades. 25 One of the most popular and perhaps the finest of all the Danite novels was First Families of the Sierras, published in Chicago in 1876 and again in 1881 under a new title, Danites in the High Sierras. Its author, Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, had posed in London under the assumed name Joaquin as an American cowboy-poet in chapskins and sombrero. He liked to compare his poetry to Byron's. In New York, critics snubbed his poems, but his novel was adapted into a hit play which went through several revivals. 26

At fifteen, too young to be critical, Miller had started his education as a miner and cook in the Oregon and California camps. He seems never to have gained the critical spirit. He lived his life virtually unedited, romanticizing the mining camp on paper and letting others smooth over his poetry. The result is not unpleasant.

Miller treats the Danites, as he does all his characters, without malice (or, for that matter, accuracy). He considers Danites to be synonymous with all the followers of the Prophet Joseph: "As a rule those who followed the prophet, as well as those who murdered him, were wild, ignorant men, from the mountains of Tennessee, the wilds of Virginia and their own Missouri" (p. 63). Beginning with a most gentlemanly reference to the historical conflict between the Mormons

23Ibid., p. 20.
24Joaquin Miller, First Families of the Sierras (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg and Co., 1876).
25By the authors' count.
and the Pikes ("Pike's Peakers" or transplanted Missouri rednecks),
Miller sets up the Mormons in his novel as an artifice for suspense:

The prophet of God, as these men professed, had been slain. Unlike
the Christians, they proposed to slay in revenge. I fancy you might trace
this on till you came to the awful tragedy of Mountain Meadows. Put-
ting the two tragedies together, side by side, and passing them on to the
impartial judgement of some pagan, I am not certain that he would not
pronounce in favor of the Mormon. (Pp. 64-65.)

The reader does not encounter a real Danite anywhere in the story.
But a pretty young woman (whose brothers, it is rumored, helped to
kill Joseph Smith) comes to the Forks in the Sierras.

The woman's fate entwines with those of the townspeople,
mostly miners bred on hard religion and low life. They are the "first
fam'lies," later joined by hatchet-faced men "not from Missouri"
who, with their "idecated" (educated) ways, put terror into the old
timers (p. 205). But more terrible still are the Danites, who have
no faces. They are goblins who strike at night in vengeance for
wrongdoing. They are the adder in the path, cunning beyond the
comprehension of simple men whose sins boil down to ignorance,
drunkenness, and whoring. "In a land where few men feared death
. . . these Danites alone were crafty, venomous and subtle; and so it
was that the fear of them was no common fear" (p. 155).

Miller acquired much of his knowledge about the Mormons from
newspapers, but because he knew Ina Coolbrith (whose family was
Mormon), he was not overly influenced by negative reports.
Furthermore, his personal morality strayed far enough from Vic-
torianism that the Mormon practice of polygamy, which earned
instant animosity from other sources, could not have offended his
sensibilities very much. This lack of animosity towards the Mormons
is evident in his mild and deliberate handling of the Danite theme.
With typical ambivalence, according to an editor of the Deseret Eve-
ning News, Miller in 1889 seemed remorseful for misrepresenting
the Mormons, although he continued to boast that he had been respon-
bible for popularizing the Danites in literature.28

27Ina Coolbrith (1842-1928) was the daughter of Don Carlos Smith, brother of Joseph Smith. In 1852
(after her father's death) her mother, Agnes Coolbrith Smith, took Ina (whose real name was Josephina, after
her uncle Joseph) and her sister to San Bernardino, later Los Angeles. Ina, who adopted her mother's maiden
name, kept in touch with her cousin, Joseph F. Smith, but was basically reared as a non-Mormon. (See
Leonard J. Arrington, "Divinely Tall and Most Divinely Fair: Josephina Donna Smith—Ina Coolbrith," Utah
Libraries 13 [Spring 1970]: 8-14.) Ina Coolbrith, an American poetess, was poet laureate of California
in 1915. She, along with Bret Harte, edited the Overland Monthly (1868).
28See report of Miller's visit to Salt Lake City in the 19 December 1889 Deseret Evening News, p. 2, cols.
**THE DYNAMITER (1883)**

The novel and stage versions of *Danites in the High Sierras* mark the height of the literary portrayal of the Danites. Unfortunately, the stereotype had by this time come into full currency; hence many inferior and biased imitations of Miller's works were being written. Support for anti-polygamy laws enacted in the 1880s must have been aroused partly by the twenty-one book-length works of anti-Mormon fiction published in that decade by American and British houses. Many of these works play upon the myth of the Danites. Of the twenty-one, two are moderately competent and only one of these is still read today. This is *The Dynamiter*, which satirizes the whole genre of anti-Mormon fiction and is therefore valuable as a capsulization of the myth.¹⁰

*Dynamiter* is a tangle of contrived plot and attitudes. It might help to note at the outset how it was created: Robert Louis Stevenson was temporarily blinded and bedridden from one of his many bouts with consumption. His wife, Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, nursed him constantly, perhaps tyrannically, as shown by the fact that in desperation Robert persuaded her to leave him and take a walk each day. While outdoors, she was to concoct a tale to tell him on her return.³¹ Some months afterwards, short of money, they worked these tales into a novel. This helps explain the shifts in tone and skill, although it is unfair to attribute, as some did, only the vivid passages to Fanny.³²

The novel parodies just about everything Victorian: middle-class decency, feminine innocence, masculine chivalry, German revolutionaries, British fear of revolutionaries, and literary stereotypes of the spunky old dowager, the avenging Mormon, and the voo-dooing West Indian. In brief, three young Londoners, down and out but barred from menial jobs by bourgeois pride, decide to go detecting. Each is independently duped into dangerous subterfuge by the same beautiful anarchist. One of these young gentlemen, Mr. Challoner, meets her on a train—or rather, she accosts and beguiles him into a wild chase involving secret messages and futile rendezvous. Then she disappears. Realizing that he has been hoodwinked, the young man returns to London, happens on a wonderful rental opportunity, and settles into a bland existence, until one day his house is blown up.

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³¹The decade 1875–85 brought the height of anti-Mormon publishing. We have counted twenty-four full-length books; this does not include plays, short stories, poetry, articles, and journalistic works.
³³Ibid., p. 305.
Whom should he capture fleeing from the explosion but the beautiful girl, who at last confesses her story in a long flashback to her childhood in Utah. Her parents, it seems, misled into Mormonism, had reared her a Saint. In her young maidenhood, haunted by the prospect of a polygamous marriage, she fled Zion, only to be pursued by the very Danite who had just dynamited Challoner’s house, which by coincidence is owned by the girl’s aunt.

The Stevensons drew upon stock images of the Mormons for their portrayal of the Danite “Destroying Angel” and his territory. Marryat’s frontier had long since been moved to the “still unknown regions of the West” (p. 23), in particular Utah. Here is a vast and melancholy desert through which strangers guide themselves “by the skeletons of men and animals” and where “neither beast nor bird disturb[s] the solitude” (p. 23). The elders of Zion are “hair-oiled” and “chin-bearded,” the women of their harems mentally stunted (p. 30). The heroine, on the other hand, has a smile of touching sweetness, eyes deeply violet, and honest eloquence of soul. Her life consists of “glad simplicity . . . not a thought to coquetry or to material cares,” until the Mormon elders demand from her father “some signal mark of piety” (p. 34). Of course her father refuses, and during his midnight attempt to smuggle his family out of the valley he is hunted down by Brigham Young’s henchmen, never to be seen again. The poor daughter flees to the States and finally across the ocean, followed by the Mormon Eye.

The dynamiter, however, turns out to be like no other Danite we have seen before. The Stevensons had great fun with him. Both knew better about the Mormons—Fanny had lived in two desert defiles (Austin, Texas, and Virginia City, Nevada) with her first husband, Sam Osbourne. Robert had spent a year in which he frequented bookstores and became acquainted with western literary society.33 As much as manipulating a stock theme, they were satirizing anti-polygamy novels, public response to them, and British respectability to boot, which comes across in the story as inane self-justification. The dynamiter himself maintains his alias as a chemist only until he too can escape Brigham Young. Self-rationalization is the joke behind all three adventures.

It is probably inaccurate to say that the joke was made at the expense of the stereotype. Here was the humorous, enlightened use of a literary image which had been treated very soberly, often ignorantly,


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in newspapers, magazines, and third-rate novels of the day. Two types of individuals perpetuated the Danite myth: writers and politicians who catered to the mass preference for exaggeration and hysteria, and the literati who laughed at the mass preference but nevertheless courted it, although in a saner and more skillful manner. With few straightforward sympathetic treatments of the Mormons and virtually none that reached the mass audience, nothing counteracted the total effect of bad press. But the Stevensons must be credited with an attempt to kill the literary Danite, with the hope that he could never again be used with harmful effect.

A STUDY IN SCARLET (1886)

In 1886, when Arthur Conan Doyle needed a macabre backdrop for a detective story, he readily and misguidedly found it in Danite country. At the time he wrote A Study in Scarlet, Doyle, alone of the six authors considered here, had no firsthand knowledge of Mormonism but derived his notions entirely from written sources.

One inspiration for Study was The Dynamiter, the Stevensons’ bestseller of three years earlier from which Doyle borrowed his heroine’s name and situation and the anarchist motif. But Doyle himself had grown up on such myths and did not need the Stevensons. As a child he had read everything by Mayne Reid at least once. With an appetite “voracious and indiscriminate,”67 he had devoured newspapers and magazines since his teenage years.68 The British yellow press at the time was urging hanging for Mormon missionaries, who were widely believed to be kidnapping English servant-girls.69 Doyle would have encountered articles about the Mormons not only in the mass press but also in better journals, which reported on the subject with a frequency equivalent to Atlantic, Harper’s, and Saturday Review, each printing Mormon pieces at least twice a year.70

It is possible to identify even more immediate sources for A Study in Scarlet. Doyle wrote the story from March to the middle of

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67Arthur Conan Doyle, A Study in Scarlet (New York: A. L. Burt, [1900]).
70For one example, see London Quarterly Review 2 (1884): 115–22.
71By the authors’ count.
April 1886. In the International Review of February 1882, a copy of which was found in Doyle’s papers, an unfriendly report on the Mormons appeared which contained a description of the Great Basin markedly similar to Doyle’s in Study.\(^4\) On 30 March 1886, a report appeared in the London Times on the latest government efforts to rid Utah of polygamy. Entitled “The Last Struggle of the Mormons,” this article too was sensational in tone and suggested conditions in Utah—suppression of dissent, threat of violence—for which the Danites had elsewhere come to serve as a convenient unifying symbol.\(^4\)

Study is interestingly (some say badly) plotted, with two entirely different settings. The narrator, Dr. Watson, begins his tale in contemporary London in an imaginary neighborhood described so vividly that tourists still seek it. This framework is distinguished by the debut of Sherlock Holmes, whose brilliantly flawed personality, surely one of the most satisfying character developments in English literature, provides the sole vindication of Study’s continued appeal. To Holmes’s delight, a murder takes place; by page ninety it is solved. The remaining sixty pages are devoted to the confession (a story which takes us to Utah) and some wrapping up.

Even early readers of Study found the Danite flashback to be, as Pearsall says, “melodrama of the most off-putting kind.”\(^4\) But Doyle was always fascinated with the unearthly, and at the time he badly needed money. So he borrowed an alkali basin of desolation and silence where “there was no bird in the still-blue heaven” but where the “coyote skulks, . . . the buzzard flaps heavily through the air, and the clumsy grizzily bear lumbers through the dark ravines” (p. 101). Into this dreary district snakes a caravan of “grave, iron-faced men” with meek, pale-faced women (p. 109): the Mormons. Their children toddle beside the wagons. Along the trail the Mormons discover an old, long, thin man and a starving little girl (p. 111).

Among these Mormons,

to express an unorthodox opinion was a dangerous matter. The victims of persecution [in Missouri] had now turned persecutors . . . of the most terrible description. Not the inquisition of Seville, nor German Vehmgericht, nor the secret societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the Territory of Utah. (Pp. 127–28.)

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\(^4\)Higham, Adventures of Conan Doyle, p. 74.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Pearsall, Conan Doyle, p. 30.
The invisibility of the Danites makes life there doubly terrifying: a dissenter's family never knows who struck or when, since a victim never lives to tell. When the supply of women runs short in the Mormon harems, immigrant camps are rifled. "To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and ill-omened one" (p. 129).

Obviously the myth had ossified by the time Doyle took it up. Undaunted, he preserved it for future generations of mystery and Western writers who, like himself, were willing to capitalize on a ready-made plot. In 1922, upon Doyle's impending visit to Salt Lake City, an Englishman wrote to him complaining that *Study in Scarlet* gave the impression that murder was a common practice among the Mormons. Doyle apologized for having written "in my early days, a rather sensational and over-colored picture of the Danite episodes, a passing stain in the early history of Utah." He hoped that the truth would be noted "by a certain section of the British press."43

**CONCLUSION**

In overview, how did these six authors treat the Danite theme?

Frederick Marryat introduced it to fiction when he plugged into *Monsieur Violet* almost verbatim passages from contemporary anti-Mormon chronicles. Out of this beginning Mayne Reid created an individualized Danite of audacity, courage, deceit, lustfulness, vindictiveness, slimy vulgarity, murderousness, and devilishly sardonic wit. He stretched Marryat's already stretched truth by identifying as Danites, if not all Mormons, at least the best Mormons—those with the strongest arms and hearts. From this time on, the image of the Danite was synonymous with that of the Mormon. Joaquin Miller knew as much about the Mountain Meadows Massacre as was available in 1875, enabling him to write more credibly about the Danites and to speculate in his novel as to why the spectre was so persistent in the minds and imaginations of poor, sinful Pikes. In spite of this sensitivity, largely through the success of stage versions of *First Fam'lies*, Miller can be credited with fixing the stereotype of the Danite in the popular mind. In the Stevensons' burlesque may be seen the main elements of Danite literature: the stereotypes of ruthlessly obedient henchmen and broken-spirited women, a morbidly naturalistic setting, and a sinister view of Mormon authoritarianism. In the matured

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myth, the Mormons—carnal, hard-lipped men who keep harems of mentally-stunted women—patrol the silent, melancholy reaches of the West where no man “but an occasional fair-haired maiden” defies Brigham Young and lives to tell the story. Conan Doyle made no innovations in this tradition; he simply overbaked it.

Where did these six authors acquire their ideas about Danites and Mormons? Five of the six had travelled in regions of Mormon influence—the central Mississippi, the Great Basin, and California—where they had gained a personal knowledge of hearsay about the Mormons, if not about Mormonism itself. The Stevensons seem actually to have reacted against stances commonly taken in the press, structuring their stories in opposition to some prevalent attitudes. Even the writings of Marryat and Reid were less virulent in tone than the class of anti-Mormon subfiction being printed, and their bias can be ascribed to their first conditioning to Mormonism in the 1840s in Missouri, the region and period of most intense anti-Mormon feelings and actions. Extent of exposure to the real product did not consistently correspond with how realistically any of the six portrayed Mormonism. Other considerations, such as artistic and philosophical intent, played a more important role than historical fact did in treatments of the Danites.

Aside from personal travels and the media, fiction writers inherited their notions about Danites from each other. Being borrowers and lenders, they quickly developed a convention from which they rarely strayed. Once established, the myth endured with only minor adaptations.

These authors seem to share, too, an inborn taste for the kind of sensationalism that explains Victorian absorption in Mormonism. More serious students who happened upon Utah in person or print were impressed with the Mormons’ agrarian and social accomplishments wrought so quickly in isolation. But our authors did not dwell on innovations or achievements; Mormonism appealed to them for its peculiarities, notably polygamy. The evil fact of polygamy made credible almost any fiction about Mormonism. To minds so inclined, an isolated crime such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre unsaid a hundred denials of a Danite conspiracy.

Accompanying this negative predisposition to Mormonism were the novelists’ affinity for “phantasmagorias” of all kinds seen through contrast, exaggeration, simplification, and generalization. A few misrepresentations about the Mormons could easily become “torrents” rolling with impetuosity through the “caves and cataracts” of Marryat’s or the Stevensons’ or Miller’s imaginations. Conan Doyle
invoked this explanation when asked to retract *Study*. It was best to leave the matter alone, he said; besides, things were always depicted more luridly in fiction than in history.44

Finally, use of the Danite theme arose out of simple opportunism. Fiction writers, moralists at heart, could not be expected any more than journalists to overlook such a topic. More to the point, these authors wrote their "Mormon" books during financially difficult phases of their careers. A lucrative market existed for Mormon stories, which appealed both to the reform-minded and the curious, the pious and the prurient. Fiction writers would not lean toward financially unprofitable, authentic studies on the order of Remy's *Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City*; 45 they turned to more sensational and marketable approaches. Victorian novelists dwelt on myths about the Mormons because the facts were simply too mundane.

44 *ibid.*
Saints and Dancers

1.
A body quickening the air above the stage
Instills, with arms and legs, a pattern
Flowing like an image echoed
In a thousand transitory mirrors.

The quick, quick pirouette
Then slow
And still
The fingers' delicate extension.

Then collapsing into motion,
Circles breaking into circles,
The body pulsing in and out of brightness,
Brilliant braiding of the mind and flesh
Ignited into flame
By something quite beyond them both.

2.
Saints and dancers know
That only through the disciplined and slender stem
Is glory and the flowering of grace.

—Randall L. Hall

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Two Meiji Scholars Introduce the Mormons to Japan

Frederick R. Brady

By the time Mormon Apostle Heber J. Grant and his three companions arrived in Yokohama to begin their missionary labors in August of 1901, other Christian denominations had been proselyting actively in Japan for over thirty years. The entire Bible had been translated into Japanese nearly fifteen years earlier, and a native clergy had arisen. Influential, though few in number, the Christians were firmly entrenched in Japan, and they were both curious about and apprehensive of Mormonism.

Heber J. Grant had never been a missionary before, so he had chosen two experienced men as his companions: Louis A. Kelsch and Horace S. Ensign. The fourth elder, Alma O. Taylor, was barely nineteen. None of the four could speak Japanese, and none knew much—if anything—about the land or people of Japan.¹

The press soon learned of the arrival of the Mormon party and Apostle Grant found himself the center of much attention. His notoriety increased when he and his companions were denied rooms in a foreign-owned boardinghouse. The landlord’s excuse was that Elder Grant was a polygamist.² The incident was reported in several English and Japanese newspapers, and at about this time Elder Grant was interviewed by reporters from two leading papers, the *Jiji Shinpō* and the *Nihon Shinpō*. Both interviews were highly informative and relatively free of bias, but they, like the articles in the other newspapers, focused on polygamy.³

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³See Brady, “Japanese Reaction to Mormonism,” chap. 5.
Many of these articles and letters in the newspapers exhibited great animosity toward the Mormons, mainly because of the polygamy issue. In order to lay to rest some of the rumors about himself and the Church, and to actively begin his labors, Elder Grant met the editors of some English-language newspapers. He also had calling cards which were printed in Japanese and bore his portrait. A major activity was replying to letters and editorials. Although Elder Grant and the others could do this by themselves in English, when it came to working with the Japanese language it was difficult to find a teacher. Many qualified teachers were missionaries of other churches and were hostile toward Mormonism. Finally the Mormon elders were fortunate to find two Christian Japanese gentlemen who willingly gave them assistance. One of these was Takahashi Gorō.

Takahashi was a teacher and scholar of renown who had participated in the translation of the Bible into Japanese. Impressed with a magazine article in which Takahashi defended the Mormons, Elder Grant decided to invite the scholar to dinner. Takahashi spoke fluent English, and during his weekly dinners with the elders he learned a great deal about the history and doctrines of Mormonism. He offered to write a book about the Church, finance its publication from his own pocket, and receive his reimbursement from its sales. Elder Grant was very enthusiastic, and he lent Takahashi a number of books and photographs to use in research.

Takahashi’s book, *Morumonkyō to Morumon kyōto* (Mormonism and Mormons), was published in August 1902. It is a thick tome, filled with philosophizing about polygamy and speculation about the origins of the American Indians. It might have sold better without this padding; as it was, the poor sales were to prove disillusioning. But the basic material about the history and teachings of the Mormon church, illustrated with photographs, is excellent. For one thing, the first translation of the Articles of Faith into Japanese is found here. The modern version differs only slightly from Takahashi’s version in some articles and not at all in others. Another strong point is the fine

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4One of Grant’s autographed calling cards is in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
8Ibid., pp. 17–22.
Horace S. Ensign, Alma O. Taylor, Heber J. Grant, and Louis A. Kelsch— the first Mormon missionaries to Japan—at what is most likely present-day Yamate Kōen, in Yakahama, dedicating Japan to the preaching of the gospel.
translation of Joseph Smith's personal account of the First Vision. The viewpoint of the entire work is that of an admiring nonmember.

Takahashi eventually had a falling out with the missionaries late in 1903, several months after Elder Grant’s release from the mission and return to America. The circumstances were very tragic, and in order to relate them we must backtrack to March 1902.

Shortly before leaving to attend the Church’s general conference in Salt Lake City in the spring of 1902, Elder Grant baptized his first two Japanese converts. The first, Nakazawa Hajime, was a Shintō priest who spoke no English. Nakazawa began to be disaffected when Elder Grant refused to lend him money to start a new vocation. Finally, he was caught red-handed in an attempt to burglarize the mission headquarters. Elder Ensign, who had become mission president in Grant’s place, and the other elders excommunicated Nakazawa on the spot and then turned him over to the police. News of the arrest caused a small sensation, and Takahashi wrote a disgruntled letter to Elder Ensign. Following are excerpts from that letter as well as Elder Taylor’s comments on it:

My Dear Rev. Mr. Ensign,—

I am very sorry to learn that Nakazawa has become a thief on account of his poverty. You know the fact better than any other in the world. I heartily sympathize with him. . . . Everybody knows that Nakazawa lost his lucrative profession for sympathizing with "Mormonism." You cannot forget it, as no one can. But Mr. Grant quite cold-bloodedly, has left him destitute of help. . . . Mr. Grant’s sudden change of his proceedings have contributed more than any other to check your progress, or rather to annihilate your prospects. . . . The public has forgotten you, and my book has sold only a few copies. . . .

In short, some persons are now very angry with you for this unhappy issue of one of your "brothers," and ready to assail you to crush your prospects trumpeting your cold-bloodedness in respect to Mr. N. Of course, I shall and will endeavor to defend you, the consequence is to be much feared. I believe you remember what I have often spoken about Nakazawa’s future. I was right to my great grief. I cannot write any more. Adieu!

Yours truly
Takahashi Goro

The purpose for inserting this letter here [in Taylor’s journal] is to record the sentiments of a soured friend. This man, Takahashi’s name, appears many times in this journal of my mission to Japan. He was our

Heber J. Grant and Nakazawa Hajime, the first convert in Japan, on the day of Nakazawa’s baptism
Elder Taylor was saddened by what he saw as Takahashi’s duplicity, but apparently not surprised. The rest of the journal entry quoted above indicates Elder Taylor was used to such treatment, though he deeply regretted it. It is also obvious from this incident why he did not ask for Takahashi’s help when translation of the Book of Mormon into Japanese began in 1904.

The missionaries lent and sold Morumonkyō as a proselyting tool, and they may have thought it the first book about Mormonism ever published in Japanese. If so, they were mistaken. Eight months earlier, in January 1902, a writer named Uchida Yū published a booklet entitled Morumon shū (The Mormon sect).12 There is almost no information available to us about the author, but he was probably a young scholar—perhaps Christian.13

Uchida’s book is brief and to the point, but a wealth of misinformation suggests careless scholarship, prejudiced sources, or both. He never cites a source (in contrast to Takahashi) but occasionally refers in passing to “accounts by Joseph Smith’s enemies” and “Smith’s own history.” Though he continually asserts his objectivity, Uchida does express frank distaste for certain aspects of Mormonism in some instances and guarded admiration in others. Still, in spite of its flaws, Morumon shū is an adequate introduction to Mormonism so long as the reader does not stop there. It is certainly sufficient to arouse curiosity and raise questions.

While we know that Takahashi spent many hours with Heber J. Grant, the extent of Uchida’s contact with the Mormon missionaries is not at all clear. He never mentions meeting the elders, but he does note the death of President Lorenzo Snow in October 1901, and it is possible he learned about it from Elder Grant. On their part, the missionaries experienced a steady stream of callers, many of whom


14An Uchida Akira wrote a book entitled Jidai no doryoku (Efforts of an era) in 1928. I identify him with Uchida Yū because it was and is common for Japanese writers to use pseudonyms, and scholars prefer Chinese-sounding names, which are often adapted from their given names. The character for “Yū” is the same as one of the characters in “Akira.”
seemed to want only to practice their English.\textsuperscript{14} If Uchida were among these callers, he would not have stood out much. Also, his clumsy renderings of Mormon and American names show that he must not have spoken long with the elders, if at all.

The matter of terminology shows another great difference between the scholarship of Takahashi and Uchida and the extent of contact with the Mormon missionaries. Uchida’s translations of Mormon terms are at great variance with the terms used by the Church in Japan today; some are from the Protestant lexicon and others are merely translated badly. In contrast, Takahashi’s translations show that he had discussed the meanings with Elder Grant before giving interpretations. He seems even to have coined a few new words. In helping the Mormons in Japan to thus develop a lexicon of their own he did the Church a great service, and most of his terms are still in use by the Church today.

There are many important similarities and differences between the two books \textit{Morumonyō} to \textit{Morumon kyōto} and \textit{Morumon shū}, but we will here confine ourselves to two major subjects: the character of Joseph Smith and the polygamy question. They show more clearly than any others the differences between Takahashi’s point of view and Uchida’s.

In Uchida’s opinion, polygamy and Joseph Smith’s character cannot be considered separately. His book begins with a denunciation of polygamy, and he plainly saw Joseph Smith as an undisciplined, irresponsible charlatan and country boor whose natural abilities were obscured by a taste for adultery. Of polygamy he says,

\begin{quote}
If a man hears the word ‘‘Mormonism’’ he immediately associates it with polygamy. . . . However, at present, due to legal prohibitions against polygamy in the United States, where Mormonism arose, and also because of society’s condemnation of polygamy as an immoral practice, the Mormon Church abolished the doctrine sanctioning polygamy ten years ago. Nevertheless, while appearing outwardly to conform, we see that the Mormons are in fact continuing to adhere to this evil practice.

Polygamy is a barbaric custom. . . . Even so, . . . strange religious customs still exist in . . . uncultured lands. But Mormonism has appeared in an enlightened society, in . . . America! . . .

Since the American government abolished polygamy, the Mormons have ceased to preach it publicly as a doctrine; still, even now it is practiced privately. Of course the Mormon scriptures prohibit it too, but it originated when Smith received a so-called revelation about it on July 12, 1843, in Nauvoo. Smith from the first had had affections for many women besides his legal wife Emma, but when that fact began to
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14}Nichols, ‘‘History of the Japan Mission,’’ p. 17.
be openly and loudly criticized in public, Smith said he had received a
revelation stating that polygamy was a divine mystery approved by God,
and he ignored the rage of his wife and the reviling of society. But it
was not until 1852 that polygamy was announced publicly. . . .

. . . within the sect there are those who oppose polygamy and have
formed a new, monogamous faction within Mormonism. . . .

There is no other single reason for the Mormons' having been
ostracized.15

Such an attitude may seem hypocritical to those familiar with the
ancient practice of concubinage in Japan, but Uchida is speaking
for those Japanese who had accepted traditional Christian morality
as their standard. Almost since the opening of their country, the
Japanese had felt that a certain amount of Westernization (often con-
fused with "civilization") was necessary in order to gain acceptance
among the industrialized Western nations. Internal and external
pressures had forced a number of political and social reforms, and
forward-thinking Japanese—many of whom were greatly influenced
by Christianity—were ready to repudiate anything looked at with dis-
approval by the "Christian" nations. This is the view finally taken
by the Jiji Shimpo and the Niroku Shimpo articles concerning
polygamy and Mormonism, though these newspapers had at first
treated Heber J. Grant with great kindness.16

Uchida took an antagonistic view of most of Joseph Smith's deeds
and was as ready as anyone to believe and pass on various rumors and
exaggerations:

His parents were so poor that they were subjected to suspicions of
being stupid, lawless, and given to thieving. Of course, one need not
hesitate to state that Smith's lack of proper education was due to his
disadvantaged childhood. According to accounts by his enemies, he was
given by nature to idle fancies and was, though deluded, a good person;
and when we refer to Smith's own history of his life we find that this is
true. . . .

Smith was from among the illiterate masses and was not a polished
speaker. Whenever he was cornered during a discussion it was his
custom to assume a dignified attitude, open his mouth in the manner of
a holy prophet of God, and expound a didactic conclusion convincing to
the simple-minded. He also managed all of the church's internal and
external affairs, suppressing any internal discord, through the use of
these revelations. . . .

Because Smith was an uneducated prophet with no self-control nor morals, because these flaws became known to some people, and because among the Saints some influential members were loudly criticizing him, some gradually began to forsake him, and even his inner circle of associates started to show evidence of a coming rift. At the same time, the brethren of the church’s rank and file were being persecuted by the Gentiles and there was a movement in Missouri to throw the Saints out of the state. Being anxious about the sect’s prospects during this time, Smith’s faction set up a secret clique called the Danites in October 1838. Their sworn purpose was to protect Smith and his doctrine from enemies and to make him governor of the state, then president of the United States, and finally ruler of all the world. . . .

In this way Smith was using his sect at Nauvoo as the gateway to power, . . . and thus the seeds of his evil and immoral actions began to blossom and bear fruit.17

Takahashi did not believe Joseph Smith was a prophet either, but he did believe in his sincerity. He also did not hold the view that polygamy was a relic of barbarism, and he took the Mormons at their word when they said they would not preach it in Japan.

Polygamy is the characteristic by which Mormonism is known throughout the world, but Mormonism is not alone in the practice. In Buddhism, too, polygamy—or, rather, concubinage—is allowed under some circumstances. And India is a polygamous country. Tibet is a polygamous country. Concubinage is practiced in China. Is not concubinage practiced in Japan? . . .

. . . over ten years ago, President [Wilford] Woodruff, in accordance with federal law, abolished plural marriage. Are the Mormons going to preach it in Japan? Though suffering cowardly slander, they have determined not to preach it, in keeping with Smith’s spirit of submitting to governmental authority. Some continue to loudly attack the Mormons concerning this matter of polygamy, but they are wasting their arrows without a target.18

Because of polygamy’s long history and considerable prevalence throughout the world, including Japan, Takahashi saw no reason why the Mormons should not be allowed to practice it. But here he is side-stepping an issue: does popularity alone make concubinage or polygamy right? And the adversaries of Mormonism might have replied that Elder Grant was indeed preaching polygamy in Japan, for that was how they saw his futile attempts to explain the practice when it was attacked in the newspapers.19

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Takahashi included in his book a brief summary of the doctrine of plural marriage as it appears in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 132, but this summary does not do the subject justice. When one considers his excellent translations in full of the Articles of Faith and the First Vision account, his treatment of the plural marriage revelation is a keen disappointment.

Takahashi makes fewer judgmental comments about Joseph Smith and his character than Uchida does; he was frankly admiring and obviously considered Joseph Smith a great man. He continually gives Joseph the benefit of the doubt. In his introduction to his translation of the First Vision, he reminds the reader that Joseph Smith was "only an artless youth," asks how "such a one [could] sinisterly aspire to take advantage of the confusion of society and deceive the whole world," and then says with emphasis, "However much we want to call Smith an imposter and a deceiver, it is yet too early to make such a statement."  

He is neither for nor against Joseph’s claims to prophethood:

It is claimed that Peter, James and John appeared to Smith and Cowdery in June of 1829 and ordained them to . . . the priesthood of Melchizedek. Earlier, John the Baptist had ordained them to the priesthood of Aaron . . . Though Smith did not belong to any church, it is claimed that—like Saint Paul of old, who received the apostolic witness directly from Christ—Smith was given the power of the highest priesthood directly from this ancient group. Of course, this is hard for an outsider to accept. But if it is true that Christ appeared to Paul, is it unreasonable for Peter, John and others to have appeared to Smith?  

Though Heber J. Grant had reported happily on the upcoming publication of Takahashi’s book at the April conference in 1902, Morumonkyō was not able to do as much good as had been hoped. Uchida’s book probably did not do much harm, either; Japan was a hard mission for all Christian missionaries during that period. Polygamy continued to be, or to be used as, the major reason for Japan’s cold reception of Mormonism. And the missionaries continued to protest the accusation that they were preaching polygamy:

"We here forcefully reaffirm that no missionary, officer or member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan is permitted to practice polygamy, nor is authority given to preach this doctrine to the inhabitants of any part of the Empire. Enemies of our religion who claim...

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20Takahashi, Morumonkyō to Morumon kyōto, p. 33; see Brady, "Japanese Reaction to Mormonism," p. 168.
22Grant, Address, 4 April 1902, Conference Reports, 1901–1904. See also Nichols, "History of the Japan Mission," p. 64.
in writing or speech that the Mormon Church is anywhere in the world preaching, urging or allowing its members to practice plural marriage are guilty of falsehood.23

The Mormon elders eventually learned Japanese well enough to begin producing their own literature; the history noted previously, translated by John W. Stoker, was a significant early effort which owes much to Takahashi’s Morumonkyō to Morumon kyōto. At present, the Translation Department of the Church is vigorously working to produce Japanese translations of Church literature. Native Japanese Mormon literature is at this point nonexistent, but the time is fast approaching when Mormons in Japan will not have to rely on others to produce books about the Church and the gospel of Christ for themselves and their neighbors.

Stranger

When the stranger came, asked
for bread, I said Welcome, told
the women bring linen, meat, fresh
melons, the finest dates, figs torn
from the valley floor. I knew
the tales: the widow's son, the old
man who touched her cruse of oil.

But the stranger ate in silence.
More Wine! I called the pantry
maid, The best we always save
for last. My guest pushed his plate
away, tugged at his tie, slipped back
into shoes beneath his chair, stood
up to leave. Don't go! I touched
his sleeve, held tight. Stay the night.
Desert sands blow cold, pack hard
as stone. He wrestled free. I reached
out again. Wait! You forgot my name.
He turned, face to face, his eyes
flames. My thigh burned hollow.
Too late. Alone, I listened to the wind.

—Donnell Hunter

Donnell Hunter is on the faculty of the English Department, Ricks College, Rexburg, Idaho.
Making the Porch

It started in a dream of woods,
Sequoia, Douglas Fir, and Cedar,
The giants in this Western earth,
Blending down the coastal range:

I lay on moss in redwood valleys,
Looked up through tiered branches at worlds
Of birds, insects, three hundred feet,
Touched long-grained shingles, whole and scented
Though cloven and stacked for eighty years.
And up the hills were darker fir
With limbs like ladders crowding up
Until I could glimpse the silent sea,
The same cold current from Oregon
Where Indians carved sixty foot canoes,
Massive lintels, forests of totems
From the bouyant, spirited cedar logs.

I chose the wood in the dream’s retreat,
White, close-fibered fir for strength
In the supporting beams and joists,
And for delight the redwood heart—
Soft, buried for its centuries
Inside the living tree, the grain
True in sixteen foot lengths, and graced
With patina for deck and rails,
And for variety, above,
On the balcony, seen from below
As well, the knotted cedar planks
Whose grain bleeds rich, brown in the rain.
My daughter helped, clumsy but calm
And careful as the structure grew
And rhythms grew upon our minds:
Evenings lengthening into June,
The ritual of measure, mark, and cut,
Driving each nail with four slow strokes.
We planned and changed and found our way,
Fitting the dream to what was there:
Supports bolted to brick spanned out
To posts for rails and steps, one joist
On the stump between two trunks of a tall,
Three-pronged juniper we’d saved.
The sap of juniper and fir
Melded on the stump, welding house
To tree. We molded the decking free
Only an inch for the trunks to sway.

The whine of power jarred against
The rhythms, so I sawed by hand;
And even speaking slowed until
We moved on silence in the dusk,
Increasingly obsessed with fit—
Spacing, adjusting lengths of scrap,
Spare cedar from another job,
So that it seemed mere time would hold
And let us make the pieces blend,
With only sawdust left, to feed
The earth—and us, to lie on wood
And make a dream again of dreams.

—Eugene England
Desert Woman

Everlasting sand drifts
Against the thick canvas
Of my father's tent.
I drop my burden to the dunes
And rest. A staid maiden

Adorned with veils
And baubles, my youth is tolled
By the passing bells of goat herds.
Shall I have no sons,
Relish no daughters?

Remnant of a wicked generation,
I am wounded in spirit, untried.
In those desolate cities I would have been
A prize—sturdy, stalwart,
Enduring valleys and sandstorms.

I wait for a warrior's venison breath
To fall hot upon me,
His voice whispering, "Sariah, Sariah,"
As the arrows in his quiver
Catch my thick black braids.

—Helen Walker Jones

Helen Walker Jones is a poet residing in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is the sister of Jim Walker, whose poems appear on pages 196-97.
Changing Patterns
of Mormon Financial Administration:
Traveling Bishops, Regional Bishops,
and Bishop’s Agents, 1851–88

D. Gene Pace

INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints relies heavily on two kinds of bishops—Presiding and ward—to help manage its temporal affairs. In the nineteenth century, traveling and regional bishops also played an important role in financial administration. These “other bishops” assumed a prominent place in the economic structure of the Church between 1851 and 1888.

The Church administration in the nineteenth century needed to supervise the tithing on income and increase, as well as other religious donations of the membership. The common practice of donating “in kind” (such as pigs, eggs, or butter) rather than in cash compounded the difficulty of the task, since such tithing not only had to be accounted for but also fed or kept from spoiling. The Presiding Bishopric relied on a storehouse system and on traveling and regional bishops to assist them in caring for these resources.

As the chief administrator of voluntary donations, Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter used traveling agents from 1851 to 1888 in

D. Gene Pace is a Ph.D. candidate at Ohio State University. The author expresses appreciation to D. Michael Quinn for assistance in the formulation and completion of the M.A. thesis upon which this article is based and to Keith W. Perkins for his helpful suggestions concerning both substantive and stylistic matters in the thesis.

1The Mormons often called such a tithing house the “bishop’s storehouse,” since those holding the ecclesiastical office of bishop generally supervised the storehouse on the local, regional, and central levels. In “The Mormon Tithing House: A Frontier Business Institution,” Business History Review 28 (March 1954): 24–25, Leonard Arrington describes the network of bishop’s storehouses functioning under the direction of a bishop or presiding elder at the local level, a stake president or a regional presiding bishop at the regional level, and the Presiding Bishop of the Church at the central General Tithing Office in Salt Lake City. Arrington’s designation of the three levels of tithing administration serves as a good general guideline for looking at financial administration on the Mormon frontier.

For an expanded treatment of the major topics of the present article, see D. Gene Pace, “The LDS Presiding Bishopric, 1851–1888: An Administrative Study” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1978).
administering the temporal affairs of the Church. These agents included traveling bishops and regional presiding bishops between 1851 and 1877, and bishop's agents from 1877 to 1888.

TRAVELING BISHOPS, 1851-77

At the fall 1851 LDS general conference John Banks, Alfred Cordon, and Nathaniel Felt were approved and ordained as assistant presiding traveling bishops. They were sustained at each subsequent general conference until October 1853. In the April 1852 general conference five additional men were selected as assistant presiding traveling bishops: Seth Taft, David Pettigrew, Abraham Hoagland, David Fullmer, and Daniel Spencer. How long the eight men served as traveling bishops remains unknown, except for Seth Taft, who was formally released at the 1858 general conference.2

The duties of the assistant presiding traveling bishops were an extension of the temporal duties assigned to the Presiding Bishopric. The traveling bishops were to settle accounts periodically with the various bishops and then report to the Presiding Bishop. They were to see that the local bishops were faithful in gathering and forwarding tithing to the General Tithing Office. They also taught the local bishops acceptable tithing methods—how to keep accurate records and how to fill out the required reports. Also, as implied by their title, the traveling bishops traveled.3 Nathaniel H. Felt, for instance, visited practically every Utah settlement in fulfilling his duties.4 A. Milton Musser, probably the Presiding Bishopric’s most influential traveling agent or traveling bishop,5 wrote in 1868: “Since I commenced traveling I have seen to the tithing business and all of its

2Journal History, 6 October 1851; 6 April 1852, p. 1; 7 April 1852, p. 1; 7 October 1852, p. 1; 7 April 1853, p. 1; 11 April 1852; and Deseret Weekly News, 15 October 1853. Seth Taft’s release date was taken from William G. Hartley, “Edward Hunter as Presiding Bishop.” Task Paper, Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, Brigham Young University. A list of traveling bishops who served in nineteenth-century Utah is provided on page 193 at the end of this article.

3Journal History, 22 September 1851, p. 6.


5Documentation showing A. Milton Musser’s official title was traveling agent for the General Tithing Office is found in his letter of appointment, Brigham Young to A. Milton Musser, 14 November 1860; Brigham Young to Bishop Hunter, his counselors and the bishops throughout the territory, 13 November 1860; and Brigham Young’s Office Journal, 1858–63, 14 November 1860—all in the Brigham Young Papers, Library–Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives). The interchangeability of the terms traveling bishop and traveling agent is also suggested in a description of Elijah F. Sheets found in his obituary: “He was also for many years one of the traveling bishops, or agents of the Presiding Bishop.” (Journal History, 4 July 1904). Primary evidence that A. Milton Musser was a traveling bishop is found in the George Barber Journal, Joel E. Ricks Collection, Church Archives, typescript, March 1863, 28 June 1863; and Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848–1876 (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1955), 2:135, 210. George Barber and John D. Lee refer to A. Milton Musser as a bishop, which seems to imply traveling bishop, since A. Milton Musser is not known to have been a ward bishop. For secondary evidence that he was a traveling bishop, see Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah (Salt Lake City: 184
ramifications. Some years I’ve visited all the larger settlements twice & many of them often."

Bishop Musser was a traveling bishop from 1860 to 1876. As early as 1861 he set out to establish a uniform, simple method of bookkeeping among the bishops. By 1866 he was satisfied that he had succeeded. Early in 1869, he mailed to President Brigham Young a detailed report of twenty settlements that he had evaluated in terms of the number of families, the poor, day schools, sabbath schools, sheep, cooperative stores, gristmills, sawmills, carding machines, machine shops, and Relief Societies. This account was only part of an even larger report which he later mailed to President Young. In 1875 Bishop Musser sent a letter to the First Presidency reflecting his eye for detail and also his desire to improve local resource management. Reporting on what he considered to be gross neglect by a certain local bishop, A. Milton Musser provided a summation of the bishop’s negligence figured down to the last penny: “The aggregate losses of tithing produce” during the decade in which that man had been bishop, he complained, totalled $12,804.91.

In 1871 the First Presidency called Musser’s brother-in-law, Elijah F. Sheets, as a traveling bishop. In their letter of appointment to Brother Sheets, Brigham Young and his counselors assigned him to assume general supervision of tithing donations in Utah, Juab, Sanpete, and Millard counties, as well as in other areas which might be assigned to him later. The First Presidency instructed Bishop Sheets to see that the tithing was forwarded to the General Storehouse at Salt Lake City and authorized him to counsel and advise local members on temporal matters. In his brief autobiography,
Elijah Sheets did not specify clearly if or when he was ever formally released as a traveling bishop, but his tenure must have ended by the 10 October 1880 conference, when Orson Pratt remarked that the Church at that time had no traveling bishops.9

REGIONAL PRESIDING BISHOPS, 1851–77

During the Brigham Young administration a number of “presiding bishops” helped direct the temporal interests of the Church.10 Unlike Presiding Bishop Hunter, whose jurisdiction encompassed the entire Church, these presiding bishops possessed only regional authority. To distinguish them from the Presiding Bishop, the terms regional presiding bishop or regional bishop will be used.

At an 1852 “bishop’s meeting” held in Salt Lake City, the bishop of American Fork, Leonard E. Harrington, suggested the need for a regional bishop in his area when, after asking about storehouses and the disposition of tithing produce, he “wanted to Know if a Sectional organization Could not be entered into where a number of the neighboring Bishops Could assemble and make reports to an individual that might be appointed to preside.”11 In an 1865 letter to Brigham Young, Traveling Bishop Musser suggested stepping up the use of regional presiding bishops:

It has seemed to me that the interests of the Tithing office and the people would be promoted by making the following blendings and appointing presiding Bishops over them. It would certainly lessen the labor of the Genl. Tithing office & by having central places of deposit for tithing produce instead of so many small ones, the losses also would, I think, be materially abridged.

Bishop Musser then detailed the “blendings” he had in mind and recommended seven men for Brigham Young to consider as regional bishops.12

In his letter appointing Samuel F. Atwood as a regional bishop in Summit County, Brigham Young instructed him to oversee tithing collection, care for public property, counsel with the local bishops, “and generally to attend to, and transact business pertaining to the

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9Brigham Young, George A. Smith, and Daniel H. Wells to Elijah F. Sheets, 28 April 1871, Brigham Young Papers; Elijah F. Sheets Journal, Elijah F. Sheets Collection, Church Archives; Orson Pratt in journal of Discourses (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86; reprint, Salt Lake City, 1966), 22:34–35.
10See list of regional presiding bishops on page 194. The list was compiled from various sources encountered during research. See also bibliography in Pace, “LDS Presiding Bishopric,” pp. 173–79. The names of the final regional presiding bishops appeared in Desert Evening News, 3 July 1877, p. 4.
11Musser’s recommendations are found in A. Milton Musser to Brigham Young, 2 October 1865, Brigham Young Papers.
temporal interests of the Church” in the settlements under his charge.13

Use of regional bishops became widespread but not universal in the Mormon West. By July 1877 about three of every five Mormon settlements or wards came under supervision of a regional bishop. This does not include Salt Lake County wards (twelve percent of the total), which apparently required no regional bishop because of proximity to the Presiding Bishopric and the General Tithing Office.14

The era of the regional presiding bishops closed with an official pronouncement by the First Presidency in an 11 July 1877 circular:

In consequence of it having been thought more convenient in some of the Stakes for the tithing to be concentrated in one place, and for one bishop to receive reports from others and keep charge of the tithing, &c., the idea has grown up that such a bishop is a presiding bishop, and in many places he has been so regarded. This idea is an incorrect one. Brother Edward Hunter is the only one who acts as presiding bishop in the Church.15

Certainly members of the First Presidency were aware that the regional presiding bishops had not simply evolved independently in their areas in response to a desire for more efficient tithing administration; Brigham Young himself had promoted the idea by calling men to serve as regional bishops. The First Presidency’s later rejection of the idea of regional presiding bishops seems to have been a reaction to the exaggerated importance some Mormons had ascribed to their regional leaders. The 1877 circular, part of a general priesthood reorganization,16 limited the power of the regional bishops while clarifying and enhancing the authority of the Presiding Bishopric.

BISHOP’S AGENTS, 1877–88

In abolishing the regional presiding bishops, Brigham Young did not create an administrative void. Although he rescinded the idea of regional presiding bishops, he perpetuated the use of regional bishops. Only four days after the 11 July 1877 circular, George W. Bean was selected as a regional bishop of Sevier Stake. Bean’s journal account of his call seems to link the emergence of the bishop’s agent

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14The percentage of settlements under the direction of regional bishops was derived from the list of settlements headed by a local bishop or presiding elder (Deseret Evening News, 3 July 1877, p. 4).
15A copy of the entire 11 July 1877 circular of the First Presidency can be found in James Ratcliffe Clark, ed., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:287.
system to Brigham Young’s 1877 reorganization movement. Bean’s description also demonstrates some confusion over terminology.

In July, President Young and Counselors directed the more perfect organization of Sevier Stake, and many changes and additions were made in the governing Priesthood. Apostles Orson Hyde and Erastus Snow came and set everything in working order. . . . I was ordained and appointed Bishop Edward Hunter’s financial agent for this Stake with instructions to see that all tithing matters such as grain, hay, and all kinds of produce shall be more properly cared for. I was set apart by Apostle Orson Hyde as a Stake Presiding Bishop, in this special calling.17

The imprecise use of titles also occurred in Beaver Stake where William Fothersingham was sustained at various conferences as “traveling Bishop and General Church Agent for Bishop Hunter,” “traveling bishop,” and “Travelling Bishop of Beaver Stake.”18

In January 1878 the Deseret Evening News published the minutes of a “bishops meeting” at which John Taylor explained a new system of bishop’s agents. In a manner recalling Brigham Young’s objection to the misuse of the term presiding bishop, President Taylor stated that the bishop’s agents were not to preside over the other bishops in their stakes but were, as their title implied, agents of the Presiding Bishop, or Presiding Bishop’s agents.19

The bishop’s agent system provided the most extensive and uniform overseeing of regional tithing matters that the Church had ever enjoyed. Between 1877 and 1888 the Presiding Bishop depended on his agents to solve problems on a decentralized level, communicate necessary information, provide accurate financial reports, care for tithing resources, and even act as loan officers and sales representatives.20 For example, in Sevier County a problem arose which involved the financial interests of the Church as well as those of a man who had complained in a letter to the Presiding Bishopric. In response to this complaint, John R. Winder of the Presiding

18Examples of the varying titles given William Fothersingham appear in Beaver Stake Historical Record, Book B, 1877–93, 3 March 1878, 3 June 1878, and 30 December 1882.
19John Taylor’s remarks were published in Deseret Evening News, 28 January 1878, p. 3. The original minutes are found in Bishop’s Meetings with Presiding Bishopric, 24 January 1878.
20A comparison of the 3 July 1877 list of regional bishops with the 17 May 1884 list of bishop’s agents demonstrates the superior geographical coverage provided by the latter. See Deseret Evening News, 3 July 1877, p. 4, and 17 May 1884, p. 4. The list of bishop’s agents appearing on p. 195 at the end of this article, like the list of regional presiding bishops, came from a number of sources. For more detailed information regarding sources consulted, see the bibliography in Pace, “LDS Presiding Bishopric,” pp. 173–79.
Bishopric wrote Bishop’s Agent George W. Bean, asking him to find a solution to the problem, and another letter to the man involved notifying him that the whole matter had been placed in the hands of Agent Bean. In 1884 Bishops Leonard W. Hardy and Robert T. Burton of the Presiding Bishopric asked Bishop’s Agent George Osmond of Bear Lake Stake to help a new family of German immigrants with food and shelter when the family arrived in Paris, Idaho.

The Presiding Bishopric looked to the bishop’s agents to help provide the effective communication needed to direct the Church’s temporal affairs. Frequently the Presiding Bishopric sought information regarding the tithing resources available in various regions. “‘How many car loads of well assorted potatoes do you think you will have in your stake?’” was typical of the nature of the Presiding Bishopric’s questions to their agents.

The bishop’s agents were also a central part of the Presiding Bishopric’s efforts to maintain accurate financial records. These agents imparted instructions to local bishops relative to tithing matters and bookkeeping. The bishop’s agents settled accounts with the ward bishops, a duty made more difficult by “‘in kind’” donations and at times by the local bishops’ inadequate record keeping and tithing management practices. The agents were also responsible to keep abreast of stake tithing matters and to report periodically to the Presiding Bishopric. But by 1882 many agents neither received nor disbursed tithing.

Regional tithing administration led the bishop’s agents into other related areas of work. The Presiding Bishopric seemed especially willing to allow loans to the “‘worthy”, poor. Consequently, in some cases the bishop’s agents assumed the roles of loan officers or sales agents for the Presiding Bishopric. For example, in 1884 Bishops Hardy and Burton of the Presiding Bishopric instructed Morgan Stake’s agent, Charles Turner, to loan a man ten tons of

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21For the Presiding Bishopric correspondence with their agents, see John R. Winder to Geo. W. Bean, Esq., 9 June 1888, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks, Church Archives.
22Leonard W. Hardy and Robert T. Burton to George Osmond, 21 March 1884, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.
24Joseph Fish Journals, 15 December 1882, Church Archives, typescript; Edward Hunter to William H. Dame, 15 March 1882, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.
tithing hay, take the man's "obligation" for the amount alloted, and then expect repayment the ensuing fall.

In Territorial Utah most Church members paid their tithing "in kind," and what cash they did donate was so badly needed to pay for consumer goods, immigrant transportation fares, and farm supplies that most monetary donations quickly left the Territory. The challenge of converting "in kind" items to cash became a major concern. In 1884 Presiding Bishop William B. Preston asked Bishop's Agent Francis Gunnell to forward to him samples of wheat from three different settlements so that the central office could present them to a prospective buyer. A letter from the Presiding Bishop to Agent George Osmond demonstrates the advantages of a centrally co-ordinated sales network: "You had better sell the Wool at home if possible. The Highest price here is 15¢. If you can get 14¢ or near that in Cash you had better sell, if not send it to this Office."27

Between 1887 and 1889 stake tithing clerks replaced bishop's agents. This change was to prevent stake presidents from acting in a dual role as president and agent as well as to allow the Presiding Bishopric to interact with bishops and stake clerks directly. Capacity to do this had increased with railroad development. Bishop's agents were discontinued first in regions located sufficiently near railroad lines to allow the Presiding Bishopric to attend to stake business personally. On 24 December 1887, the bishop's agents in Cache, Box Elder, Weber, Morgan, Summit, Wasatch, Davis, Tooele, Utah, San Juan, and Salt Lake stakes were discontinued. On 1 March 1888, the Council of the Twelve chose to discontinue all bishop's agents.28

DEFINING PRIESTHOOD ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS

The discontinuation of the bishop's agents spelled the end to an era in which centrally appointed bishops served as regional administrators for the Presiding Bishopric. By abolishing their regional agents and assuming more direct responsibility for ward and stake tithing matters, the Presiding Bishopric increased centralization. Yet simultaneously they promoted the decentralization of tithing

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26 Wm. B. Preston to Francis Gunnell, 20 June 1884, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.
27 Wm. B. Preston to George Osmond, 15 July 1884, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.
28 Wm. B. Preston, R. T. Burton, and John D. Winder to George C. Parkinson, 14 July 1888; W. B. Preston and John R. Winder to James H. Martineau, 24 December 1887; W. B. Preston, R. T. Burton, and John R. Winder to R. J. Taylor, 24 December 1887—all in the Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks. Other letters of the same date to bishop's agents are conveniently grouped together in the Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks. The agents in Salt Lake and Davis stakes were not actually discontinued at this time. Salt Lake never had an agent and the Davis agent had been discontinued earlier because of nearness to Salt Lake City. (John Taylor to John Q. Cannon, 12 February 1886, John Taylor Letterbooks, Church Archives; W. B. Preston and John R. Winder to George Farnsworth, 2 October 1888, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.)
administration by allowing regional church leaders to select their own "stake tithing clerks" to replace the centrally appointed agents.29

The decision to abolish the bishop’s agents may have been part of an ongoing redefinition of the relationship between the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods within the Church. The administrative systems used by Church leaders between 1851 and 1888 were part of a larger administrative framework consisting of the all-encompassing Melchizedek Priesthood. Joseph Smith’s statement that this priesthood was subdivided into two branches—the Melchizedek over the spiritual and the Aaronic over the temporal— influenced the nature of Church government in the Mormon West. During the presidency of Brigham Young, a division of priesthood duties occurred on the general, regional, and local levels. On the general level the President of the Church presided over the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Presiding Bishop over the Aaronic. On the regional level an Apostle or stake president served at times as the Melchizedek leader while a regional presiding bishop headed the Aaronic Priesthood. Even on the local level a president and bishop sometimes functioned side by side as Melchizedek and Aaronic leaders.30

When John Taylor became President of the Church, Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood leaders functioned jointly at only the general and regional levels; the use of local presidents and bishops had been discontinued. During the Wilford Woodruff administration, the office of bishop’s agent was abolished. Its replacement, the stake tithing clerk, was basically an agent of the stake president, not of the Presiding Bishop. The only Melchizedek–Aaronic relationship to survive the 1851–88 period was that of the President of the Church and the Presiding Bishop. An administrative balance had been achieved by 1889. The President and the Presiding Bishop balanced each other at the general level, while the stake presidents and ward bishops balanced each other in the various regions. The stake Melchizedek Priesthood leaders—the stake presidents—emerged as the spiritual and temporal heads of their regions, while the local Aaronic Priesthood leaders—the bishops—exercised both spiritual and temporal leadership in their wards.31

29W. B. Preston, R. T. Burton, and John R. Winder to Bishops of the Several Wards in the Utah Stakes of Zion, 6 January 1888, Presiding Bishopric Letterbooks.
31The time period in which bishops and presidents functioned simultaneously needs further documentation. By the time of Brigham Young’s 1877 reorganization movement, wards were being established consistently with bishops as the sole ward leader.
CONCLUSION

Between 1851 and 1888 the Presiding Bishopric relied on traveling bishops, regional presiding bishops, and bishop’s agents to help keep the storehouse system running smoothly, to assist ward bishops with financial matters, and in general to assist the Presiding Bishopric in directing the temporal affairs of the Church. The various agents of the Presiding Bishopric were ordained bishops because of their dealings in temporal matters, but, unlike ward bishops, their jurisdiction extended beyond a single ward. Traveling bishops served during the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s. Regional presiding bishops functioned during those same decades and were replaced beginning in 1877 by bishop’s agents. The traveling bishops, regional presiding bishops, and bishop’s agents played leading roles in Church financial administration, and an awareness of their existence and functions allows us to better understand how the Presiding Bishopric managed the temporal affairs of the Church during its first four decades in the West.
TRAVELING BISHOPS

Banks, John
Cordon, Alfred
Felt, Nathaniel H.
Fullmer, David
Hoagland, Abraham
Musser, A. Milton
Pettigrew, David
Sheets, Elijah F.
Spencer, Daniel
Taft, Seth
REGIONAL PRESIDING BISHOPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>County / Stake</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atwood, Samuel F.</td>
<td>Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bigler, Jacob</td>
<td>Juab</td>
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<td>Bear Lake</td>
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<td>Millard</td>
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<td>Morgan, Summit, Wasatch</td>
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<td>Box Elder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preston, William B.</td>
<td>Cache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowberry, John</td>
<td>Tooele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Willard G.</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoot, Abraham O.</td>
<td>Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanner, Joseph S.</td>
<td>Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West, Chauncey W.</td>
<td>Weber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BISHOP'S AGENTS

Name                             Stake

Arthur, Christopher J.           Parowan
Bailey, Langley A.               Juab
Bean, George W.                  Sevier
Bleak, James G.                  St. George
Budge, William                   Bear Lake
Cluff, William W.                Summit
Crosby, Jesse W., Jr.            Panguitch
Dame, William H.                 Parowan
Farnworth, George                Sanpete
Foreman, William                 Beaver
Fotheringham, William            Tooele
Gowans, Hugh S.                  Cache
Gunnell, Francis                 San Juan
Hammond, F. A.                   Oneida
Hendricks, William D.            Tooele
Hunter, Edward, Jr.              Utah
John, David                      Chihuahua, Mexico
Johnson, William D., Jr.         Parowan
Jones, Thomas J.                 Millard
Kimball, Abraham A.              Emery
Larsen, Christian G.             San Juan
Lyman, Platte D.                 St. Joseph
Martineau, James H.              Cache
Martineau, Lyman R.              Box Elder
Nichols, Alvin                   Kanab
Nuttall, L. John                 Bear Lake
Osmond, George                   Morgan
Parker, Wyman D.                 Juab
Paxman, William                  Utah
Paxman, William                  Cache
Preston, William B.              Bear Lake
Pugmire, Jonathan                Bannock
Ricks, Thomas E., Jr.            Summit
Smith, Alma L.                   Eastern Arizona
Smith, Jesse N.                  Snowflake
Smith, Jesse N.                  San Luis
Smith, Silas Sanford              St. George
Snow, Frank R.                   Davis
Stayner, Arthur                  Weber
Stewart, D. M.                   Weber
Taylor, Richard J.               Juab
Teasdale, George                 Morgan
Turner, Charles                  St. Johns
Udall, David K.                  Kanab
Woolley, Edwin D., Jr.
Father's Garden

Daisies loop eloquently across the path
To your secret place,
Your hideaway.

This tiny Eden bursts with blossoms,
Pledge of peach, plum and pear,
Swarm of strawberry and cherry.
Spraying down walls like Cameron Falls
Cascades of grapevine tangle.

Yet in a dark corner,
Jagged thorns of blackberry,
Sinister silver of a wasp nest
And the squalid smell of compost.

Twisting back apricot branches
You snip off snails with your fingers
To crush them with the rounding heel
Of a cracked black shoe.

Humming your fingers through deep rich dirt
You dream new wonders—
Impressionist, sculptor of sun and seed,
Life-giver.

—Jim Walker

Jim Walker is chairman of the Communications and Language Arts Division at Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus. He is the brother of Helen Walker Jones, whose poem appears on page 182.
Rocky Mountain Runoff

Between pudding gray and barnyard brown,  
The water rolls smooth through evening  
Cool from its mountain source,  
Life force to the desert prairies.

Breezing from the Rockies,  
The summer winds stream  
Barley tufts and heading wheat into  
Fieldsful of shimmer, undulant ripples  
Ripening seaswells of motion.

Eastward patches of sugarbeets sprout  
Thick cauliflower leaves, rich green,  
Their heavy white roots fattening  
Towards harvest.

Clouds along the mountain rift  
Reveal a clear thin line of gold  
Silhouetting distant, hawk-sharp peaks  
Staged by the lingering chinook arch.

As sunset brightens, the chill of dusk  
 Begins to settle like an unseen fog  
From the bare sky over fallow fields.  
Only a fluttering grasshopper breaks  
The easing fluidity of wind,  
The silent flow of darkening water,  
The long-dying sun's luxurious descent.

—Jim Walker

Jim Walker is chairman of the Communications and Language Arts Division at Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus. He is the brother of Helen Walker Jones, whose poem appears on page 182.
Silver Fish

Politics is like a silver fish bug,
Generally flitting over a stagnant pond,
In which nothing grows, nothing lives,
And all who gaze in wonderment,
Transfixed with the darting insect
Alighting now and then
To accomplish nothing special
Until its dried-up carcass disintegrates
As more winged creatures continue
As though nothing happened to begin with.

Politics exhilarates, when one has won,
When one is listened to,
Or wins a major battle for good—
At least, we think for good.
But wins are transient
In the never-ceasing changeover
From one person to another,
From one regime to yet one more,
Until the win is transmogrified
Into the floor, outside the door,
Through which it earnestly came—
To begin with.
Politics is shaped, influenced, drawn anew
Each day, each hour, by press and you.
Press, with admitted double standards,
Much kinder and accepting
Towards the more liberal view;
You—sometimes apathetic,
Sometimes true,
Yet never knowing and seldom caring,
At least enough, you knew.
You should have worked, studied,
Perhaps prayed—perhaps,
But why? What can one person do?

Politics sometimes is one simple vote,
The vote which makes a difference,
Which defeats or passes:
That, upon which life and/or death depends,
Unless oblivious to the end.
Even that lies relatively unimportant
In our sight,
And calm regression,
To the daze of watching silver fish,
Puts us asleep
Or into lethargy once more.

—Orrin G. Hatch
God’s Apprentice

The bench-lit yellow morning
With its dew dripping softness
Hanging yellow walls;
Your parabolic eager banging
Coining the given mettle:
Hammering out the pure
Purposive craft:
While the membered machines
And the tools lay waiting
For the zealous simple rhythm
Of your glad and boyish heart.

—Paul G. Allen

Paul G. Allen is a poet residing in Hertfordshire, England.
The Historians Corner

Edited by Ronald W. Walker

"Sorted till I was stupified," James Boswell penned in his journal in June 1786. He was, of course, trying to arrange the mountains of material he had collected on Samuel Johnson before starting the latter's biography. Latter-day Saint historians have experienced similar despair. The large LDS-related manuscript collections that must be mastered have been both the boon and bane of the historian's craft.

Therefore, scholars will presumably greet this issue of the Historians Corner as a mixed blessing. Dr. Roger Launius, who is currently a civilian historian with the U.S. Air Force Military Airlift Command, describes an important manuscript collection that LDS scholars have scarcely mined. The papers of the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS), located at the Amistead Research Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, help to illustrate Mormonism throughout its nineteenth-century hegira. Written by Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and Associate Reformed frontier ministers, the LDS-related papers in the AHMS collection provide an outside and not always friendly view of the Saints. Consequently, they help to explain the negative image of nineteenth-century Mormonism, a continuing interest of present-day scholars.

THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY COLLECTION AND MORMONISM

Roger Launius

Historians of American religion have long known of the wealth of material contained in the collection of the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS), located at the Amistead Research Center, the

Roger Launius, a civilian historian with the Military Airlift Command, United States Air Force, has recently finished a two-volume dissertation at Louisiana State University on Joseph Smith III.
Old U.S. Mint, New Orleans, Louisiana. Occupying 234.8 linear feet of shelf space, the AHMS collection is a significant part of the Center’s holdings and consists of over 100,000 letters from Calvinist ministers traveling on the American frontier as well as 150 letterpress books containing official correspondence from the New York office.

Although the collection dates from 1816 to 1936, the great bulk of the material is dated between 1826 and 1893, the effective period of the society’s existence. The incoming correspondence of the AHMS collection is arranged alphabetically by state and chronologically within states. It contains letters from missionaries in every state and territory except Alaska, Arizona, and New Mexico, having exceptionally large sets from missionaries in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The outgoing letterpress books are bound and filed chronologically. Most of the letters concerning the Latter-day Saints are found in the following state subsections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Inclusive Dates</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1849–93</td>
<td>1 Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1860–93</td>
<td>1 Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>1872–93</td>
<td>1 Folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1839–46</td>
<td>7 Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1831–39</td>
<td>1 Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1819–31</td>
<td>9 Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1831–38</td>
<td>4 Boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1864–93</td>
<td>2 Folders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A major difficulty of the collection for historians interested in Utah Mormonism will be two significant gaps in the incoming correspondence. For some unknown reason no letters exist for any state’s operations during 1874–75 and 1878–91. In spite of this problem, the letters found for other periods still make this collection a valuable resource.

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The American Home Missionary Society was founded in 1826 to provide money and leadership to fledgling Calvinist groups on the American frontier and to support their efforts until they could become self-sufficient. Within a year of its organization the society had a budget of $18,000 and employed 169 missionaries in fifteen states; by 1832 it supported 506 missionaries in twenty states.¹ The society continued to grow almost steadily thereafter.

For the student of Mormon history, the AHMS collection could be of value principally because of the correspondence sent by missionaries to the central office. Each man working for the society was required to make periodic reports to supervisors. Although these generally contained accounts only of current activities, number of services held, number of conversions, and general comments on the state of the mission, in some cases ministers wrote about the activities of other Protestant denominations, about the success of revivals, about the nature of life and culture in their districts, and, in a few cases, about the early Mormon movement.

The ministers’ observations were based on experience with the Latter-day Saints at the local level. The AHMS missionaries had no sympathy with Mormonism and commented harshly, but oftentimes with a freshness not seen among others.

In 1830 the AHMS had over twenty-five missionaries in New York State. Geneva (a small town about twenty miles southeast of Palmyra) was the seat of the society’s western New York district. Missionaries operating in the area quickly learned about Joseph Smith, Jr., and his work. John Sherman, Congregational missionary at Colesville, wrote of his personal experiences with Mormonism. “I will relate a circumstance that has given me pain,” Sherman wrote to his superiors in a November 1830 report.

A member of the church at Sandford, a young female, has renounced her connexion with the church, and joined another, a church in Colesville founded by Joseph Smith. This man has been known in these parts for some time, as a kind of [charlatan], who has pretended, through a glass, to see money under ground, &c, &c. The book, on which he founds his new religion, is called the “Book of Mormon.” It contains not much, and is rather calculated to suit the marvelous, and unthinking part of the world. . . . No man in his right mind can think the Book or the doctrines it contains, worthy

of the least notice, yet there are a number who profess to believe
in it.4

Observations by missionaries in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois are
equally intriguing. For example, one Congregational minister from
Painesville, Ohio, wrote to the society’s New York office in 1831
complaining of the rise of the Mormon community at Kirtland: “The
sweep of this new denomination in this vicinity has been humiliating
& distressful.”5 However, the files containing correspondence by
AHMS missionaries from western Illinois during the 1840s are by far
the most useful of those files treating early Mormonism. Society mis-
sionaries wrote extensively about Nauvoo society, politics, culture,
and religion. They particularly directed their comments toward the
relationship of the Saints with the rest of society. For instance, on
5 July 1839, the Reverend T. K. Hawley wrote from LaHarpe (located
in the northeastern part of Hancock County) to his superiors about
the Mormon migration from Missouri: “The population of this vi-
cinity is increasing quite rapidly, but much of this increase is not of a
very desirable character. Three families of Mormons have recently
come in, & others are expected.”6

The Reverend Milton Kimball, who operated an AHMS mission
in Augusta (a farming community in the southeastern part of Hancock
County), began his work in early 1844. In a series of letters spanning
three years he wrote to the society’s directors, never failing to mention
the Saints. Describing the Mormons as evils “worse than famine &
pestilence,” and as “malignant fanatics, thieves, robbers, & assas-
sins, on principle,” the Reverend Kimball exclaimed:

We know that God can arrest and fix the attention of men amidst the
strong excitements which agitate this region infested with Mormonism.
But how few will see the hand of God in such a calamity as the location
of the Mormons in this county, although it is as true that he has sent
them as that he sent the lice or the frogs upon Egypt. We know that we
ought to seek him who has smitten us for help.

Out of the Mormon adversity the residents of the county could
become better Christians, the reverend told his superiors.7

4 John Sherman to Absolem Peters, 18 November 1830, AHMS Collection. The Reverend Wesley P.
Walters suggests that the woman referred to in this reference may have been Emily Austin (Wesley P.
Walters, “The Abduction of Emily Austin,” Address to the John Whitmer Historical Association Annual
Meeting, 25 September 1982, St. Louis, Mo.).
5 William M. Adams to Absolem Peters, 14 March 1831, AHMS Collection.
6 T. K. Hawley to Milton Badger, 5 July 1839, AHMS Collection.
7 Milton Kimball to Milton Badger, 11 November 1844, 15 May 1845, 10 February 1845, AHMS
Collection.

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The following letter describes from a non-Mormon perspective the interaction of the Saints and the other residents of Hancock County. The Reverend Kimball probably spoke for many of the non-Mormons of the area when he described the Saints’ block voting patterns and their courting of officials. His charge that Latter-day Saint “voters never think, or reason, but go by direction of immediate revelation to the party that will give the most, and hence there is no portion of the people so highly valued by our demagogues as the mormons” is of particular interest. But the Reverend Kimball also wrote forebodingly of future conflict between the Saints and the gentiles in the county, suggesting that peaceful coexistence was no longer possible and concluding that in order to avoid open conflict the Saints would have to leave the county or “the citizens have some better pledge of safety than the principles or practices of the mormons have hitherto afforded them.” Kimball’s letter of 11 November 1844 follows:

Augusta Han Co. Ill. 11 Nov, 1844.

Cor. Secy. A.H.M.S.

Owing to the delays in procuring my commission, it did not arrive, till some four months of the year had elapsed, & I thought it best to include in my first report, one half the year, specially as in these times postage is a consideration & a draft upon N.Y. in these distant parts of fifty doll$8$ is much more salable than one of half the amount.

I have pursued my work the last six months, under circumstances, of much difficulty. We learn that at the east you have, of late, witnessed two great revivals: the one of politics, the other of business. The former we have had in common with you, but the revival of business, has hardly reached us, The destructive rains of the last two seasons, having cut-off most of the surplus produce. But instead of this, the revival of Mormon agitation has swept like a hurricane over these parts, leaving many marks of its destructive fury. It has not yet ceased, and tho there is now an apparent calm, it cannot cease until this whole region is abandoned to the mormons, or the citizens have some better pledge of safety than the principles or practices of the mormons have hitherto afforded.

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$^8$This may have been a reference to the Sixth Congressional District election of 1843 in which Hyrum Smith, at the direction of the Prophet, proclaimed a revelation which stipulated that the Saints should vote for the Democratic candidate, Joseph P. Hoge. In this case the Mormon vote gave Hoge the election, for while Hoge won a majority of votes in the district, receiving 7,796 ballots to 7,222 for the Whig Cyrus Walker, Hoge’s plurality in Nauvoo was an overwhelming 2,088 to 733. (See George R. Gaylor, “The Mormons and Politics in Illinois, 1839–1844,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 49 [Spring 1956]: 48–66; Robert Bruce Planders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965], pp. 234–39; Theodore H. Pease, “Illinois Election Returns, 1818–1848,” *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* 18 [1923]: 117, 125, 140.)

$^9$Milton Kimball to Milton Badger, 11 November 1844, AHMS Collection. I have maintained Kimball’s spelling and punctuation throughout this document, including cross-outs and underlining.
them. We know that nothing should separate christians from God, the rock of their strength. But the temptation amidst such causes of constant irritation as here exist, is very great to indulge such feeling as cannot consist with acceptable prayer. We have reason to believe that the brethren, notwithstanding that our people have maintained to some good degree the Spirit of prayer and I believe, that last Summer; we were saved from witnessing scenes of massacre, by by [sic] the prayers of those that trusted in God —He heard their cry, and restrained the rage of those who delight in war.

What will be the end of these things, we cannot conjecture. The mormons
great question now is, will God give them union, & a head, capable, like Jo, of putting down the factions. If So they will be formidable beyond what is commonly imagined. Scarcely had they commenced their city, when they obtained the control of the legislation of the State, acquired privileges which no others would have the impudence to ask for, and they have maintained an influence over the other departments of government wholly disproportionate to their numbers. This is done by the same means that have expelled the bible, from so many of the schools of N York.

Nauvoo is a true daughter of Rome & has played the harlot with the political parties in the same manner & with similar success — The party press she has held in subservency. The voters never think, or reason, but go by direction of immediate revelation to the party that will give the most, and hence there is no portion of the people so highly valued by our demagogues as the mormons. The Romanist always excepted, since the government of the county has fallen into the hands of these men Our people feel themselves in great difficulty. But God will scatter his enemies, and save his heritage.

The arrangement that all the missionaries shall preach on the subject of Home Miss. I am glad to see adopted. & if it pleases the Lord, I Shall Soon preach on that Subject.

Yours in the Lord
Milton Kimball

Almost at the same time the majority of the Church migrated to the Great Basin under Brigham Young’s leadership, AHMS missionaries began moving into western territories to organize Calvinist congregations. Soon after arriving in mid-1864 to oversee the AHMS activities in Colorado, the Reverend Jonathan Blanchard began to hear stories about a fruitful missionary field in Utah and became intensely interested in opening a mission for the benefit of the non-Mormons living in the territory. Consequently, on 10 October 1864 the Reverend Blanchard wrote to Milton Badger, corresponding secretary for the Society, explaining the opportunity for the AHMS in Utah and asking permission to begin work there. “Salt Lake City has twenty thousand people, without religious teaching except the ribald
babbling of Mormons,'" he told Badger. The "children are growing up without Sabbath Schools, and there are not one hundred decent books in the whole territory. . . . If the Gospel is preached in the whole territory I do not know where.'"\textsuperscript{10}

Just a few days before sending this request the Reverend Blanchard had written to Brigadier General Patrick Edward Connor, commander of the District of Utah, to inquire about the potential for a non-Mormon mission in Salt Lake City. General Connor and his Third California Volunteers, comprising between 750 and 1,500 troops, had been mustered into the Union army and sent to Utah in 1862 to protect the overland stage and telegraph routes during the Civil War, to prevent Indian hostilities, and to keep an eye on the Mormons.\textsuperscript{11} Immediately tensions between the Mormon and gentile populations had arisen, prompting General Connor to boast that he would "invite hither a large Gentile and loyal population, sufficient by peaceful means and through the ballot box to overwhelm the Mormons by mere force of numbers.'"\textsuperscript{12} He soon found what he thought was an ideal means of luring gentile immigrants into the territory when he discovered valuable minerals in the canyons surrounding Salt Lake City.

The following letter is Connor's reply to the Reverend Blanchard. It invites the AHMS to begin work in the territory, promises military protection if necessary, and predicts that the non-Mormon population of Utah will increase rapidly as a result of mining interests and other opportunities in the region. A transcription of Connor's letter follows:\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{HEAD-QUARTERS DISTRICT OF UTAH,}
\textit{Camp Douglas, Utah Territory,}
\textit{Near Great Salt Lake City}
\textit{October 25th 1864}

Rev J Blanchard  
Pres't Wheaton College  
Wheaton, Ill's.

Dear Sir.

Your favor of the 6\textsuperscript{th} inst. Making inquiry concerning the Gentile population of G S Lake City and the practicability ofEstablishing an orthodox church therein, has been received.—In response I have to say that the present Gentile population of Salt Lake City numbers, perhaps, from four to five hundred,

\textsuperscript{10}Jonathan Blanchard to Milton Badger, 10 October 1864, AHMS Collection.
\textsuperscript{12}General Connor is quoted from Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{13}Brigadier General Patrick E. Connor to Jonathan Blanchard, 25 October 1864, AHMS Collection. I have maintained Connor's spelling and punctuation, including where he has crossed out words and where he has written capital letters over small ones.
including many families. This class is increasing very rapidly; and without being too Sanguine, I feel justified in saying that in another twelve months the permanent Gentile population will number not less than two thousand. Already a large portion of the business community is composed of Gentiles, and the country and trade being opened up here, in the heart of the Continent, are attracting hither Capital. Enterprise and ability — The development of the Silver Mines in near proximity to the City, is progressing with wonderful energy and rapidity; and there is now adjoining the mines in Rush Valley, a town of no less than forty comfortable houses already erected. Most of these are tenanted by families, who are almost exclusively Gentiles. The great want, however, which has long been sorely felt by the Gentiles in this Territory, has been and still is an orthodox Christian Ministry. Now, they have no place to attend on the Sabbath, for public worship, nor are the restraining and humanizing influences of the Christian religion thrown around the Community. To me it has long been a source of no little surprise that, while the several denominations of the church send their missions to the "uttermost bounds of the earth," to redeem mankind, it has never been seriously thought that here, between either Verge of the great Continent, is to be found the grandest field for Missionary labor. — Leaving out of View, Entirely, the wants and religious necessities of the Soldiers of this command, and Gentiles congregated here, the Mormon people themselves have greater need of missionary labor than any other people or community on the face of the Earth." —

"Without expressing any preference for any Sect or division of the Church, I would, in common with hundreds, soon to be augmented to thousands, of my fellow Citizens here, hail the coming of a "Man of God" to teach Christ and him Crucified in this community. —

In reference to the other point suggested by you, I have to add, that so long, at least, as the troops remain here, freedom of opinion and the expression of it, in its broadest American sense, will be protected, and a Church could be established here without any apprehension of interference from the Mormon authorities — I have every confidence, too, that an orthodox Minister would be well sustained in a pecuniary point of view; but with the organization for Missionary purposes, now so happily Extant throughout our country, this could, surely, be but a trifling point in the consideration of the question." —

I have the honor to remain
Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt —
P. Edn. Connor
Comdg Dist.

Although General Patrick Connor's dreams of flooding the Salt Lake Valley with gentile settlers did not materialize, on the basis of
Brigadier General Patrick Edward Connor
his favorable report about prospects in Utah the AHMS sent Norman McLeod to Salt Lake City in early 1865, thus opening the first Congregational mission in the territory. The Reverend McLeod immediately began sending to his New York supervisors picturesque descriptions of the Mormon kingdom. The first missionaries encountered some opposition from the Saints, and virtually every letter described an actual or perceived threat to the welfare of the mission. These men also reported on their general lack of success among the Mormons, on their efforts to maintain an operation in the Great Basin, and on political problems between the Saints and the Union.

Numerous letters other than those in this article could be quoted. However, this note has only described the AHMS collection. It has introduced the contents of the collection by quoting two letters and excerpts from other letters that show the tenor of the collection’s holdings about the Latter-day Saints. Much more remains to be done with this rich source of primary material. Its use could broaden the scope of Mormon scholarship beyond denominational studies, creating a more rounded portrait of the Church’s history. The American Home Missionary Society collection is readily available at the Amistead Research Center, but it is also accessible on microfilm for those researchers who cannot travel to New Orleans. The microfilm collection containing 385 reels of 35mm film can be purchased from the Center along with a guide, briefly describing the holdings. There is, unfortunately, no general index to the collection; however, a search of the state files listed previously should allow historians to focus on virtually all correspondence relating to the Mormons.

15Norman McLeod to Milton Badger, 21 August 1865; and Jonathan Blanchard to Milton Badger, 11 February 1865, both in AHMS Collection.
Mormon Bibliography 1982

Scott H. Duvall

The publishing on LDS topics continues to increase each year. This bibliography for 1982 contains about one hundred and fifty more entries than the 1981 bibliography. A large portion of this increase occurred in the Biography and Family History section which has more than twice as many entries as last year’s.

Part of the reason for this dramatic increase is a new periodical entitled Horizon: Tijdschrift over de Mormoone Gemeenschap (Horizon: A Journal about the Mormon Community). (In the bibliography the title is abbreviated to Horizon.) Horizon is published in Belgium under the editorship of Wilfried Decoo. The first issue appeared in January 1982, and the periodical has been published bi-monthly since then.

The editorial policy of Horizon is simply to provide for the Dutch-speaking members of the Church a “positive forum for news about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Part of this news in 1982 was, of course, information about current activities of the Church in Europe. Doctrinal and historical articles, however, also help make Horizon a well-rounded magazine. For instance, Dr. Douglas F. Tobler, professor at Brigham Young University, with Barton W. Marcois and J. L. W. van Langendijk, published a three-part article (March, July, and September) entitled, “Geschiedenis van de Mormoone Kerk in Nederland en Vlaanderen” (“The History of the Mormon Church in the Netherlands and Flanders”).

In addition, there are several articles in each issue which deal with the lives and contributions of various members of the Church. A few of these “human interest” articles are reprinted from This People magazine. But many articles are original with Horizon and highlight the activities and life histories of European Mormons. Articles of this nature help the Church members in these areas develop Church identity; the Church becomes an integral part of their national, as well as their spiritual, lives.

Scott H. Duvall is assistant curator of Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.
As the Church becomes more and more an international church, the members throughout the world expect to feel a heightened sense of belonging to an important organization. In the December 1982 Sunstone Review (pp. 5–7), José Susurro suggested that the “tramontane” Saints need a perspective on their unique communities. This perspective would include an understanding of Church history in the various countries as well as factual information on the condition of the Church in the world and in the local country. Susurro pleaded for a publication to help these Saints acquire such a perspective. Horizon has shown a good beginning.

Wilfried Decoo and his staff are to be congratulated for their ambitious endeavor. Horizon is a worthy example of what may be the first of several such privately published periodicals, designed to inform Latter-day Saints in different parts of the world about local LDS happenings and history.

ARTS AND LITERATURE


**BIOGRAPHICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY**


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CONTEMPORARY


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On 16 August 1981, Ervil Morrel LeBaron was found dead in his cell at the Utah State Prison, the victim of a massive heart seizure. At one time he was recognized by a small group of zealous disciples as “The One Mighty and Strong”—a divinely anointed prophet who was called to usher in the second coming of the Lord. For others, however, including his religious opponents and a host of law enforcement officials, Ervil LeBaron was Satan incarnate—the accused perpetrator of death and destruction throughout the western United States and in Mexico. But wherein does the truth lie? In Prophet of Blood, two skilled journalists try to answer that query. It is an intriguing and disturbing tale of polygamy, lust for power, conspiracy, and murder.

The Lambs of God, the name assumed by Ervil LeBaron’s followers, constituted a socio-ideological subculture of Mormonism which advocated the continuance of the practice of plural marriage. Although polygamy was officially suspended by the leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints late in the nineteenth century, “the principle,” as practitioners choose to refer to it, continued unabated by a scattering of devotees. Acting on the assumption that the prophetic mantle of Joseph Smith, which sanctioned polygamy for the faithful, had been secretly passed on in the 1880s to a small group of men specifically chosen to preserve it, the practice continued to thrive in isolated pockets of rural Mexico and the American Southwest. And it was from this heritage that Ervil LeBaron would eventually emerge.

By the mid-twentieth century clusters of polygamists inhabited the United States and at present are estimated to number near thirty thousand. However, Prophet of Blood focuses on the activities, and
rivalries, of just two groups: the Church of the Firstborn, with fundamentalist roots in the infamous Short Creek, Arizona, colony founded by John Y. Barlow in the 1930s, and the Lambs of God, a band of dissenters which seceded from the former organization in 1971. Led by Ervil LeBaron, himself the son of a polygamous union, the dissidents quickly assumed an aggressive, no-holds-barred approach to winning converts. LeBaron’s ultimate goal included not only the conquest of the Firstborners but an eventual usurpation of the leadership of the LDS church as well. If religious polemics failed to change hearts and minds, then the Lambs of God were willing to employ violent means.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the entire book is the description of the careful development of an us-versus-them mentality which Ervil LeBaron nurtured among his “sheep.” As described by the authors, it was the almost paranoid fear of persecution which drove the group to commit murder with a sense of impunity. Just as religious fervor, when properly directed, can be a tremendous force for good, misguided zealots can be made to feel justified in killing for the Lord. LeBaron evidently convinced the Lambs that such was their cause. Traitors, so-called false prophets (which came to encompass everyone but “The One Mighty and Strong”), and assorted other opponents were possible targets for assassination. One member of the cult boasted that the group was responsible for up to seventeen unsolved homicides.

Although not an actual participant, Ervil LeBaron was convicted in May 1980 of first degree murder in the slaying three years earlier of Rulon Allred, then the head of the Church of the Firstborn. The death of Allred, a long-time challenger for the mantle of Joseph and one whom the Lambs of God had frequently called to repentance, was viewed as the will of God. Such a position was well within the dictates of cult orthodoxy: opposition was to be silenced and false prophets to be eliminated. Therefore, the murder was applauded by LeBaron’s followers.

Prophet of Blood is a powerful, well-written book. Ben Bradlee and Dale Van Atta appear to have done their homework thoroughly and mastered a very complex subject. At the same time, it is a disquieting study. The reader cannot help but wonder how Ervil LeBaron persuaded his adherents to murder in the name of true religion. Obviously this was not the first time in history that violence had been so justified, nor, unfortunately, is it likely to be the the last. One has to look no further than the evening news to find similar incidents. But for the spiritual and ideological descendants of nineteenth-century

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Mormonism, these subjects from the past, such as plural marriage and blood atonement, strike closer to home. Whether the LDS church now sanctions, or ever did sanction, principles such as these, it is fascinating to consider a contemporary subculture which accepts them.

Any criticisms of this book would, in general, be dictated by the tastes of the reader. Scholars might find the total lack of footnotes or bibliography to be unforgivable. I, for one, would have appreciated at least some clues as to other works on fundamentalism as well as insight regarding the authors’ occasional attempts to analyze the LeBaron movement from a psychological standpoint. For example, they surmise that Ervil LeBaron was full of the “persecution complex” (which, from an amateur point of view, seems justified), but they never really outline this trait in even a rudimentary fashion. Also, Bradlee and Van Atta often mention Joseph Smith and the political kingdom of God but fail to place the concept within its proper historical context by demonstrating even a passing awareness of fine recent treatises on the subject. Finally, there are sections of Prophet of Blood which smack of journalistic sensationalism. For example, several pages of the third chapter seem to identify a member of the LeBaron family as prone to nudism and free love—perhaps a true observation, but largely irrelevant to the matter at hand.

Minor shortcomings aside, I highly recommend the book. It provides important insight regarding this very real subculture of Mormonism which has often been overlooked. And while Ervil LeBaron and the Lambs of God were, without a doubt, the more negative aspect of polygamous society, between the lines is also a chronicle of hardworking people who sincerely practice what they hold to be true. Whether or not their claims are valid, the entire fundamentalist movement certainly goes much deeper than the more remembered exploits of a handful of misdirected individuals portrayed herein.


Reviewed by Richard H. Cracroft, dean of the College of Humanities, Brigham Young University.

“It is mormonism or nothing for me” (p. 382). So confided thirty-two-year-old Ruth May Fox to her journal on Sunday, 14 July
1895—in the same week that she became a member of the Salt Lake County Republican Committee, went bathing in the Great Salt Lake, started summer school at the University of Utah, attended Primary general conference, recited some of her own poetry at Saltair, attended sacrament meeting at the Tabernacle, and performed sealings in the Salt Lake Temple. Little did she know that she would continue such a pace until her death in 1967, at the age of 104.

It is into this kind of active and vigorous female life—a life firmly centered in Mormonism—that we are permitted to dip, some twenty-five times, in Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900; and it is the compilation of these lives into one rich and notable volume which makes this book a truly significant addition to the increasing number of published memoirs and journals of Mormon women.

After culling nearly 250 diaries, letters, and journals left by Mormon women of the nineteenth century, the editors, Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, have carefully selected for inclusion a variety of women's voices from across the spectrum of nineteenth-century Mormon history. And while one might expect to hear the powerful voices of such forceful Mormon women as Mary Fielding Smith, Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, Susa Young Gates, and Ruth May Fox, one may be surprised to hear a timbre in their voices not heard before, and in a context which makes such familiar voices representative of the entire Mormon sisterhood.

And we also hear the less familiar but powerfully moving voices of such women as Mary Ann Weston Maughan, Caroline Barnes Crosby, Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith, Patty Bartlett Sessions, Patience Loader, Nancy Abigail Clement Williams, and Martha Cragun Craig. These voices proclaim to us, their great-grandchildren, not only that they lived but also that they lived fulfilled, rich, individual lives of commitment to God, to church, to family—a commitment which unifies their various tones and enables the reader to understand more fully the remarkable vibrancy of nineteenth-century Mormonism, "It is mormonism or nothing for me."

To present such diverse voices in their historical context, the editors have ordered six decades of Mormon history into nine sections, presented chronologically and introduced by brief historical notes which skillfully set the stage for the ensuing excerpts. The nine sections range from "Becoming a Mormon" through "Kirtland," "Missouri," "Nauvoo," and "The Trek Westward," to "Immigration," "Colonization of the Great Basin," "The 1870s: A Decade of Collective and Personal Achievement," to the final section,
"Persecution, the Manifesto, and Statehood" (which includes Colonia Juarez). Each section features two to five excerpts from journals, letters, and diaries by women who were "anxiously engaged" in the momentous events of the era; each of these women is, in turn, carefully but briefly introduced—biographically, literarily, and historically.

The thrust of the editors is clear: "Mormon women are not unsung heroines, ... but neither are they fully understood" (p. 1). To assist the reader in coming to an understanding of Mormon women, the editors have selected "the most moving, important, and informative" (p. vii) passages for inclusion, passages which faithfully reflect the "great movement" of nineteenth century Mormonism" (p. 22). In their excellent and informative introduction, the editors make an important clarification: While only 15–20 percent of the Church populace practiced plural marriage, "plural wives seem to be disproportionately represented among Mormon women whose writings have been preserved" (p. 16). Perhaps this "faithful fifth" were more willing to obey the prophetic injunction to write, or perhaps they saw their roles as historically unique. For whatever reason, they wrote, and the volume reflects that disproportion—doubtlessly because in the voices of such committed women are heard the tones of the greatest drama, the greatest trials, and the greatest devotion to Mormonism, and the greater need to be understood by a generation of Latter-day Saints to whom plural marriage (and perhaps the other great sacrifices endured) seems not only remote but unthinkable. The volume reflects, however, though it does not underscore, both the trials and tensions of plural wifehood and the selfless love and shared affection which, as Martha Cragun Cox wrote, "single wifery never knew" (p. 15).

In our day when a few Mormon women pit themselves, quietly or vociferously, against their church, it is interesting to read of the devotion of women to that same church and of the fulfillment found in that commitment, a theme which is sounded repeatedly throughout each of the twenty-five accounts. And there are other unifying tones as well: persecution (even by Mormon families and friends), terrific hardship and discomfort, heartache at the frequent loss of babies and loved ones, ill health, the drudgery of farming, building, midwifery, home industry, constant cooking, church service, sending sorely needed husbands on foreign missions. Such hardships are ubiquitous in the volume and are lightened all too infrequently by such interludes as ward dances, concerts, plays, clubs, debates, politics, and an endless round of visits—a major activity in the lives of
these women. Conclude the editors: The contributions of Mormon women, "while not as visible as those of men, were in many ways of greater import partly because of the difficulties they faced" (p. 396).

Also common to these voices, summarize the authors, is the universal desire for beauty and the ability to recognize and foster it, whether in dugout or clapboard house, in England or Nauvoo or St. George. Common, as well, is the great importance of familial love (even for the single sister, represented here in Hepzibah Richards) and the fact that these women—along with so many other women (and men) whose records are yet to be published (or whose stories will never be known)—lived lives of commitment to a cause greater than themselves, "lives that deserve to be remembered" (p. 396).

Well-documented and edited, Women's Voices is an important volume—for the library, the Western- or Mormon-history buff, the historian. The voices heard in this volume remind us that every life is laden with the stuff of drama, but such drama is more certain when that life is one of steadfast devotion to a cause, especially when that cause means changing one's beliefs, leaving one's home, enduring persecution, adopting a new and generally unacceptable lifestyle, fleeing into a wilderness, and building a community—all the while teaching and rearing a family, attempting to promote some vestiges of culture—and sending the family breadwinner on repeated, unremunerated missions to convert the very people who had caused the upheaval. These voices, in various tones, and at various amplitudes, murmur, speak, sometimes shout to us from the past with such vigor and realism as to lend these accounts literary as well as historical importance, for in these powerful records of personal lives we see enacted and recorded day-by-day, year-by-year, those little human acts which add up to important literary expression about individuals whose lives came to mean "mormonism or nothing," and whose lives, thanks to this fine volume, now mean so much more to many.


Reviewed by F. Ross Peterson, chairman of the Department of History and Geography, Utah State University.

It has been over a decade since J. Bracken Lee retired from Utah public life. For over forty years, Brac Lee was immersed in Utah
politics, serving as mayor of Salt Lake City for two terms. He also sought election to both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. He gained national attention as a critic of the graduated income tax and federal deficit spending. As a dominant force, Lee combined natural political knowledge with tremendous energy and sustained amazing political popularity. Dennis Lythgoe has spent the time since Lee's retirement preparing a political biography of this colorful and controversial Utahan. Utilizing extensive personal interviews and the Lee papers, Lythgoe has attempted to evaluate Lee's political impact.

Although Lee gained considerable national attention, his career was Utah-centered and his influence on Utah was considerable. As governor and mayor, J. Bracken Lee was willing to fight many battles, some important and others mere shams. When he fired those who opposed him, be they liquor commissioners, police chiefs, or university presidents, he did it with flair and finality. Those who despised Lee were numerous, yet the voters kept electing him. This is why Lee is still an enigma. Although J. Bracken Lee is a non-Mormon (his wife is LDS), he usually had the support of many General Authorities of the predominant church in Utah. That fact is confusing as Lee was often accused as mayor, both of Price and Salt Lake City, of running open cities. "Open" means that his administration was easy on prostitution, vice, and liquor law enforcement. However, in every Lee election, even when he ran as an independent, there was a large LDS constituency that voted for him. Lythgoe's explanation of his electoral success is that Lee's fiscal conservatism, his passion for economy in government, and his Republicanism endeared him to such LDS leaders as J. Reuben Clark, Thorpe B. Isaacson, and Ezra Taft Benson, who in turn influenced the Mormon vote.

Lee's political career is fascinating, and this book has certain elements of captivation. There is no doubt that the author knows his subject and handles it fairly. Lythgoe does not fall into the biographer's trap of being so close to his subject that he loses objectivity. However, Bracken Lee is such an exciting subject that more is expected than the author delivered.

The long-awaited biography has definite limitations which are somewhat surprising. There is no bibliography included, immediately hampering the critical reader. More upsetting is the fact that Lythgoe relies almost totally on oral interviews, newspapers, magazines, and the Lee papers. Why the papers of Republican contemporaries such as Senators Arthur V. Watkins and Wallace Bennett were not used is a mystery. The papers of Governors George Dewey Clyde
and Herbert Maw are available and contain many items on Lee, yet these sources do not play a major role in the biography. The many congressmen who served while Lee was active are also ignored as primary sources. These criticisms do not negate the value of the oral interview nor the significance of Lee’s papers, but the use of other papers would have added essential interpretations. Noticeable by their absence are articles in scholarly journals or theses and dissertations on Utah political history. There are some excellent studies of specific elections, campaigns, and people.

Another major problem with the volume is organization. Lythgoe chooses to use a short chapter format (an average of fourteen pages) which means that some of the chapters are vignettes which stand like a picture of an isolated city in the midst of a seascape. There is little attempt at transition, and the abrupt shift hampers the narratives. Three examples illustrate this point. One chapter is mistitled: “Hatred for Lawyers: Parnell Black and the Taylor Case”; and another is “Battle with Bateman.” Sandwiched between them is a potentially important chapter on Mormon church influence. Both outside chapters discuss Lee’s attempt to force resignations from public officials. As Lee lost both cases and there are definite similarities, the two topics would make for effective treatment in a single chapter. The third example concerns a brief chapter, “Don Jesse Neal and Capital Punishment.” This chapter could have been located anywhere, but written as it is, it should not be included. Lee is incidental to the story. There were six executions during Lee’s gubernatorial tenure; Neal is the only one discussed. The author does not develop Lee’s ideas or philosophy on the subject. Lythgoe does suggest that the “Neal Case was to Governor Lee what Joe Hill was to Governor William Spry” (p. 191), but that conclusion is unfounded and undocumented, and indicates simply the chapter is a filler.

Lythgoe’s main difficulty in Let ’Em Holler is a lack of analysis. Unfortunately, he rarely asks why events took place or why Lee did what he did. For instance, why was Lee admired by ultraconservative groups so much? Was it his opposition to the United Nations, his refusal to pay personal income tax, or his spirited defense of Senator Joseph McCarthy? Why did he attack Utah’s senior Senator, Elbert Thomas, as being “a stooge, who has been too long associated with the reds, the pinks, and the fellow travelers?” (p. 87). Although, Lythgoe entitles one chapter “McCarthyism and Justice Wolfe,” he never reveals why Governor Lee was caught up in the McCarthy phenomenon, why he used the tactics of fear and smear. If
accusations were wrong, as they have been shown to be, then the author needs to evaluate that behavior.

Lythgoe comes very close to handling the delicate subject of LDS influence on Utah politics, but he again falls short in his conclusion. Lee was absolutely brilliant in maintaining a close relationship with Church leaders and simultaneously rejecting their counsel on numerous occasions. Lythgoe never uses the evidence to state that some individual General Authorities used their position to influence politics. The best evidence is contained in a footnote on Douglas Stringfellow. This tragic and significant occurrence should not be buried in a footnote, yet it is. Governor Lee and Senator Watkins argued over whether or not Representative Stringfellow, who ultimately admitted that he had parlayed false war stories into a term in Congress, should be dropped from the 1954 GOP ticket. Agreement was reached only when Ezra Taft Benson called and said "drop him!" Because Lee was open, apparently honest, and cooperative, Lythgoe has accumulated massive evidence on the topic of Church influence, but he does not analyze that information and provide answers as to why the Church leaders did what they did to exert influence. In this regard, Lythgoe fails to mention one of the most controversial events in Lee's gubernatorial career. Together with Thorpe B. Isaacson, a Mormon General Authority, and also chairman of the Utah State Agricultural College Board of Trustees, Lee fired Louis Madsen as president of USAC. Although there are two chapters on education, Lythgoe never mentions the Madsen firing or Isaacson's part in it. This is admittedly touchy material and would have to be handled carefully, but Lythgoe has elsewhere demonstrated the capacity to do so. One is left to question why he sidestepped the matter. Lythgoe also needs to deal more directly with the sensitive question of when is a General Authority acting in his capacity as a representative of the Church and when he is acting in a professional role or as a common citizen.

J. Bracken Lee requires more analytical study. He was an amazing person who incited intense feelings of hatred and devotion, the very kind of material that lends itself to biographical analysis. Lythgoe, who was able to gain the trust and cooperation of numerous people, was in a good position to make such an analysis. Perhaps in the final consideration, however, his connection with people and his wide use of personal interviews may have caused him scholarly difficulty, because, in the end, he is reluctant to write hard conclusions.

At times J. Bracken Lee was narrow, arrogant, petty, and wrong. At other times he was broad, compassionate, understanding, and right. It is the biographer's obligation to help the reader reach conclusions.
about the personality and character of the person under study. In this case, the reader is never given the help needed.


Reviewed by R. Lanier Britsch, professor of history and coordinator of the Asian Studies Program, Brigham Young University.

A sure sign that a book is making some kind of impression is the number of reviews it receives. *Shrinking History* has received more than its share, and not without reason. Few books in recent years have made a more convincing case (if you accept it) for the abandonment of a major, though relatively new, historical methodology. Because so much time has passed since this book’s publication, it seems that a review of the most useful reviews is in order.

Publication notices found inside and on the back cover of the paperback edition would lead one to believe that all reviewers are agreed on the unqualified virtues of *Shrinking History*. But as usual, these selections are misleading. Reviewers do, however, agree on one major point, that *Shrinking History* is a “cogent critique of the present state of the newly developed field of psychohistory.”1 What *cogent* implies is another matter. To those critics who had rejected psychohistory before reading this book, it is the death knell for a floundering field. To those who believe that psychohistory is a worthy new means of discerning the past, *Shrinking History* is little more than a clever polemic. Few reviewers, however, have been able to discount its contents and arguments without careful consideration of Stannard’s major points.

What are his major points and what, briefly, is the controlling idea of the book? “The central point of his thesis is,” according to critic Irving E. Alexander, “that much of the work in psychohistory uncritically and mistakenly utilizes the tenets of psychoanalysis as explanatory principles. The exposition then unfolds in five polemical chapters exposing the weaknesses of Freud’s theory, followed by a chapter essentially restating the case.”2

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2Ibid.
I have observed that a reviewer's perspective on whether the work is simply a polemic depends on previous intellectual commitments. Psychologists (of nearly all varieties) seem not to care for Stannard's thesis, which is, simply stated, that Freud's work was seriously flawed and therefore could not serve as a solid scientific foundation for psychohistory. Reviewers from the psychology side almost universally take issue with Stannard's broad sweeps and general lack of depth in understanding how far and in how many different directions psychology has come since Freud. If there is one outstanding criticism, it is that Stannard throws the psychohistoric baby (although somewhat spotted) out with the bath water, and, as one reviewer has said, with the kitchen sink as well.  

Psychohistorians also find Stannard's approach too limited. He "relies on certain presuppositions. He accepts a narrow view of psychology," writes reviewer Nathan C. Hale, Jr. Stannard often overgeneralizes and oversimplifies.

If the book has such major shortcomings, why have so many scholars paid attention to it? One reason is that it is a well-written, entertaining book. A reader cannot help chuckling from time to time at the seeming naivété of some Freudian positions. Stannard has selected his material carefully in order to destroy his opposition; his case seems tight and well reasoned. In fact, from a limited view, it is. In Hale's words:

Stannard is at his best exposing the flaws of psychohistory: the reductionism and oversimplification, the presumption of traits and events for which little or no evidence exists, the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy, the attribution to the past of viewpoints parochially rooted in the present, the assumption of psychological causes for matters better explained by social custom. Each objection is ably argued, with illustrations ranging from Erik Erikson's Luther to Fawn Brodie's Jefferson.

However, it has been noted widely that Stannard devotes only one chapter to close examination of a psychohistorical work, Freud's Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood, which was written in 1910.

The real issue of Stannard's book comes down to whether or not the word psychohistory means "Freud based psychoanalytic history" or whether it means history supplemented by the various insights of the psychological disciplines. Stannard clearly believes it means the

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3Ibid., p. 889.
former and carefully destroys psychoanalysis as a basis for historic insight. His point seems well taken: many historians do believe psychoanalysis is the basis of psychohistory. Many psychohistorians, however, do not accept a Freudian foundation for their work, nor do the majority of empirical psychologists still accept Freud’s theories, his historic contributions to psychology notwithstanding.

Psychologists and psychiatrists who have analyzed Shrinking History find Stannard’s debunking passé. They point out that his arguments have long been discussed within their professions. Has he nothing new to add? From the historian’s point of view, perhaps he has. He clearly makes the point, one so often overlooked, that applied psychology—whether one refers to psychoanalysis, counseling in all its forms and schools, or some other name for delving deeply into the unconscious part of man—requires direct interaction between the practitioner and the subject (that is, the client, the patient, or whatever the revealer of inner motivations might be called). Herein lies a major weakness in psychohistory. No historian, no matter how skilled, can probe into the inner depths of his subject’s mind without that subject’s direct response. Without that interaction there can be no psychoanalysis, there can be no free association, there can be no self-revelation or personal insight, and that is what psychoanalysis is all about. Stannard implies that psychohistorians are trying to do what psychiatrists would generally be loathe to attempt, that is, to psychoanalyze a corpse.7

Nevertheless, Stannard seems not to recognize that there are other realms of psychological knowledge (as well as other behavioral and social science disciplines) from which it is possible to borrow legitimate methodologies. As Rudolph Binion wrote: "Ever more psychohistorians are working directly from full and straight facts with ever less regard for clinical theory. . . . For, Freudianism aside, historians out for explanations cannot escape psychohistory. History is what people did, singly or collectively. Why people did what they did means motives both conscious and, like it or not, unconscious."8 Finding the basis for people’s motives is the heart of most historical inquiry. Certainly psychology can lend insights into the reasons for personal actions, and psychoanalysis is not necessary to accomplish this task.

Aside from Stannard’s blind spots, Shrinking History is a useful study. It makes clear the weaknesses in the field of psychohistory and

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causes its readers to think carefully about what they do and do not believe about historical methodology. As a result of reading this book, I do not believe in long-distance psychoanalysis. However, I do believe more strongly than ever that it is possible to use the psychological disciplines for research in history, especially biography. But this conclusion I did not get from Stannard's book; rather, it was substantiated by the reviews.
Afterwords

To the Editor:

The review of John Lefgren's *April Sixth* by S. Kent Brown, C. Wilfred Griggs, and H. Kimball Hansen (Summer 1982) claims that Lefgren's work "abounds in unjustified assumptions, misinformation, and misunderstandings." But, on the contrary, Lefgren's book contains valid scientific research, giving new insights on the Savior's birth date. The reviewers' objections are either unfounded or irrelevant.

Lefgren states that his intent is "to show how the modern revelation concerning the significance of April 6 is in perfect harmony with other sacred writings" (p. 12). That is, he proposes that the belief that Jesus was born on 6 April 1 B.C. is consistent with all LDS scripture, but not necessarily with all secular sources. (All dates refer to our Gregorian calendar.) The reviewers claim that Lefgren also believes the "resurrection of Jesus fell on April sixth." He does not; his date for the Resurrection is 3 April A.D. 33 (p. 61).

The reviewers characterize Lefgren's methodology as "unscholarly," but he actually followed the scientific approach of testing a theory that had been proposed to explain certain observations. Lefgren observed (1) that some LDS leaders had interpreted D&C 20:1 to mean that Jesus was born on 6 April 1 B.C. and (2) that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon discuss chronological aspects of the Savior's life. His theory was that if these observations are accurate they should be self-consistent, and he tested the theory by examining every relevant scriptural reference. He found none that conflicts with a birth date of 6 April 1 B.C.

But Lefgren's greater contribution is that he also found another witness to that exact birth date. Through an impressive demonstration of interscriptural self-consistency, Lefgren shows that by beginning on a biblical crucifixion date and then counting back the number of years and days of the Savior's life from the Book of Mormon one arrives at 6 April 1 B.C., the exact birth date implied by the Doctrine and Covenants. This is new evidence for the 6 April birth date because it is not based solely on a literal interpretation of D&C 20:1.

Let me summarize the main points of his argument. Although the Bible is vague about the date of the Savior's birth, it is so precise about his death that the day Friday, 1 April A.D. 33, is indicated. Another possible date is 5 April A.D. 30, but Hoechner concludes persuasively that "the A.D. 33 date for the death of Christ best explains the evidence of both sacred and secular history."

The Book of Mormon account is so precise as to suggest the exact number of years and days that the Savior lived. It describes the appearance of a sign that heralded the Savior's birth on the following day (3 Ne. 1:19) and states that time was later reckoned from that sign. It also describes a great destruction at the Savior's death on the fourth day of the thirty-fourth year (3 Ne. 8:5). Thus, if Jesus was born on the first day of the first year, he lived thirty-three Nephite years and three days.

Orson Pratt first suggested that the Savior's birth date could be calculated by starting on the better-established crucifixion date and counting back the number of years and days from the Book of
Mormon (Journal of Discourses, 15:253). He proposed that the Nephite year probably had exactly 365 days as did the Mesopotamian calendar and the ancient Egyptian calendar.

Having identified the fourth day of the thirty-fourth Nephite year as April 1 A.D. 33, one counts back three days more than 33 Nephite years. Because our calendar would insert eight leap days in those thirty-three years, one must count back five days less than thirty-three of our years, arriving at 6 April 1 B.C. for the birth date. (The year before A.D. 1 was 1 B.C.) It is not surprising that Lefgren interprets such impressive inter-scriptorial accuracy in minute chronologically details as evidence that Joseph Smith was a prophet.

The reviewers’ principal objection seems to be that secular history ‘‘proves beyond a doubt’’ that Herod, who was visited by the Magi after Jesus’ birth, died in 5–4 B.C. If so, Jesus must have been born about 6 B.C. rather than 1 B.C. But this objection is irrelevant to Lefgren’s thesis that the scriptural sources are consistent with a 1 B.C. birth. Moreover, there is doubt about Herod’s death date, which some historians still claim occurred about 1 B.C.. Because Lefgren was unconvinced about Herod’s death date, the reviewers conclude that ‘‘April Sixth is exposed as a house built upon sand.’’ But to me it was refreshing to see Lefgren use the scriptures as a standard to judge secular sources, rather than vice versa.

In order to correlate with our calendar, Lefgren had to choose one date from secular history. Lefgren is not especially concerned with the dispute over Herod’s death date because, implicit in his choice of crucifixion date, he has anchored his chronology to secular history through the undisputed death date of Augustus Caesar, which the reviewers agree is ‘‘known almost to the minute.’’ It is ironic that when the reviewers insist that ‘‘there exists no tolerance of at least two years’’ in determining the beginning of his successor’s reign, they unwittingly undermine the principal argument for the A.D. 30 crucifixion date, which they presumably favor.

Lefgren notes that Luke’s chronology implies that Jesus was born in 2–1 B.C. The reviewers attempt to discredit Luke’s account by appealing to Tertullian because they believe he supports their theory that Jesus was born about 6 B.C. But Tertullian states, ‘‘Augustus survived, after Christ is born, fifteen years’’ (Finegan, p. 224). The death of Augustus in August A.D. 14 is in the fifteenth year after April, 1 B.C., so Tertullian actually agrees with Luke and Lefgren, not with the reviewers. In fact, most of the early Christian writers support a 2–1 B.C. birth date.

The reviewers criticize Lefgren’s choice for the crucifixion year of A.D. 33, maintaining that Parker and Dubberstein ‘‘raise serious questions about Fotheringham’s work and all but show that the Passover of A.D. 33 fell on May second.’’ But on the contrary, Parker and Dubberstein claim their tables are based on Fotheringham’s calculations. They list Nisan as postponed one month in A.D. 33 on the Babylonian calendar, which intercalated years according to a fixed nineteen-year cycle. In Jerusalem, intercalation was done both by astronomical and local agricultural conditions. Finegan, after examining the Parker and Dubberstein results, concludes that the A.D. 33 and A.D. 30 dates are the only possible candidates (Finegan, p. 300).

The reviewers also attack Lefgren’s astronomy, but their objections are either irrelevant or based on their misunderstanding of the observational lunisolar calendar. For example, the reviewers claim that Lefgren assumes ‘‘that the sky was clear on the dates chosen’’ so that the thin crescent of the new moon could be seen. But the Judean court used calculations to determine the first day
of the month during bad weather (Maimonides, pp. 75–77). The reviewers also claim that a twenty-eight-hour old moon would be "among the earliest sightings ever recorded," whereas it would have been so commonplace as not to have even been considered marginal.5

The reviewers note that Lefgren's results hinge on some "unproven assumptions." True, as does all scientific theory, but if his assumptions are correct, then his result is valid. Let us then examine these assumptions.

Lefgren assumes the Nephites used a 365-day calendar as did the Egyptians and the Mesoamericans. The Jewish lunisolar calendar may seem more reasonable, but it does not fit the data: The Savior's death occurred on the fourteenth day of the lunar month (John 19:14), not the fourth day (3 Ne. 8:5). I can think of no better assumption than Lefgren's, and the reviewers offer none. Orson Pratt made the same assumption, and he cannot be accused of having "preconceived notions" because he counted back from the earlier crucifixion date and thus did not arrive at 6 April or at 1 B.C.

The scripture states the Nephites reckoned from the "time" or the "period" when the sign was given (3 Ne. 2:7–8), which Lefgren interprets to mean from the very night of the sign. Again, Orson Pratt made the same assumption, which seems justified by the wording used. The reviewers suggest an alternate assumption that they reckoned only from the year of the sign, not changing the first day of the year. Perhaps, but in that case the first day of the year would still be 6 April 1 B.C. (given the 365-day year), and the Savior would have been born thereafter (3 Ne. 1:1). But that contradicts the reviewers' idea that Jesus was born in 6 B.C., even using the earlier crucifixion date.

The final objection is that the belief that Jesus was born on 6 April 1 B.C. is based on D&C 20:1, which alone is inconclusive. True, but we have prophets to interpret scripture. For example, President Harold B. Lee interpreted that verse to mean that 6 April was the anniversary of the Savior's birth (Ensign, July 1973, p. 2); President Spencer W. Kimball taught likewise (Ensign, May 1980, p. 54). The reviewers instead cite an Apostle who says only that he "cannot state with finality when the natual day of the Lord Jesus actually occurred."

It should be clear from these observations that April Sixth is a far more valid book than the reviewers claim. A thesis founded on the prophets and scripture cannot be "exposed as a house built upon sand."6

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NOTES


5Using the equations of H. Goldstine, New and Full Moons 1001 B.C. to A.D. 1651 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973), I calculate the elongation in question to be over 13 degrees, which was deemed "visible" by the court (Maimonides, p. 65).
Response:

The accompanying correspondence from John Pratt concerning John C. Lefgren’s work, April Sixth, has merit and has been instructive. Weaknesses, however, still persist. While others could be mentioned, we need only focus on the two notions which buttress the entire position of both Lefgren and Pratt, items which we discussed at some length in our review (BYU Studies 22 [Summer 1982]: 375–83).

I. The first key to the position adopted by Lefgren and Pratt rests on the chronometrical system supposedly employed by the people of the Book of Mormon. It is assumed by both that because the Egyptian and the Mesoamerican calendars each have 365 days, the latter must have been derived from the former by way of the Nephite time-reckoning scheme. Several difficulties immediately appear. (1) Why must the two chronometrical systems be linked? Is it not possible—even more likely—that astronomical observations made independently in each culture led to a similar calendar? (2) Why suppose that the Nephites employed the Egyptian calendar when their religious observances must have been based on the Israelite reckoning of Lehi’s time? (3) As we noted in our earlier essay, the accompanying point that the Nephites counted time from the very day of the sign of Jesus’ birth is but an assumption. The one clearly relevant passage is not precise enough to allow any such definitive conclusion (3 Ne. 2:5–8). (4) For purposes of establishing Jesus’ birthdate, we note that had the Nephites adopted the Egyptian 365-day calendar, the first day of the year at the time of Jesus’ birth would have fallen in July, not April! Simply stated, we do not know the length of the Nephite year. Period.

II. The impossibility of dating Jesus’ birth in 1 B.C. arises from the date of Herod’s death. For one to draw attention to a variety of astronomical possibilities or to advance arguments based on sources written more than a millennium after the time of Jesus (e.g., Maimonides) misses the point. We know how long Herod reigned and when his reign began. Historical and numismatic evidence are conclusive: Herod died in 4 B.C. Try as one might, one cannot escape this fact.

Other observations could be made, for example, concerning the chronological differences between the synoptic Gospels and John’s Gospel in the accounts of Jesus’ death and concerning the anachronistic arguments about how the lunar month is begun when the new crescent moon is not or can not be seen. But such would be connoisseurs’ points which do not affect the fundamental position adopted by author and correspondent. The two key issues detailed briefly above, particularly the latter, in our view, stand decisively against any historical attempt to date Jesus’ birth to 1 B.C.

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