CONTENTS

Atchison's Letters and the Causes
of Mormon Expulsion from Missouri
RICHARD LLOYD ANDERSON 3

"The Miracles That Didn't Come," a poem
SALLY T. TAYLOR 48

Early Mormon Perceptions
of Contemporary America: 1830–1846
GRANT UNDERWOOD 49

"My Great-Aunt's Cemetery," a poem
JOHN P. FREEMAN 62

To Overcome the "Last Enemy":
Early Mormon Perceptions of Death
M. GUY BISHOP 63

"Nature and the Bourgeois Poet," a poem
ARTHUR HENRY KING 80

Writing: The Most Hazardous Craft
EDWARD L. HART 81

What's Burning at BYU: The Role of Combustion
and Our Work to Understand It
L. DOUGLAS SMOOT 85

"The Unified Field," a poem
CLINTON F. LARSON 108

"Alpha and Omega at the End," a poem
CLINTON F. LARSON 109

"New Name and Blessing," a poem
DENNIS CLARK 110
Book Reviews

Eugene England,

*Dialogues with Myself*
and *Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel*
CLAUDIA BUSHMAN 111

Thomas F. Rogers,

*God's Fools: Plays of Mitigated Conscience*
EUGENE ENGLAND 114

Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds.

*Studies in Scripture,*
vol. 1, *The Doctrine and Covenants*
H. DEAN GARRETT 119

Samuel W. Taylor and Raymond W. Taylor,

*The John Taylor Papers, Records of the Last Utah Pioneer,* vol. 1, *The Apostle*
and vol. 2, *The President*
MARK R. GRANDSTAFF 120

Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd,

*A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism*
PAUL H. PETERSON 122

George Hu’eu Sanford Kanahele,

*Ku Kanaka—Stand Tall: A Search for Hawaiian Values*
PAUL ALFRED PRATTE 125

EDITORIAL INTERNs of BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDIES:

KARL F. BATDORFF PATRICIA DAVIS
LYLE L. FLETCHER JANI SUE MUHLESTEIN

ISSN 0007-0106

Brigham Young University Studies is published quarterly at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 84602. ©1987 by Brigham Young University Studies. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

7-87-32238-4.5M

The opinions and statements expressed by contributors to *Brigham Young University Studies* are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, the editors, or the editorial board.
Atchison’s Letters and the Causes of Mormon Expulsion from Missouri

Richard Lloyd Anderson

Alexander W. Doniphan is proverbial in Missouri Mormon history for saving Joseph Smith’s life, but an equally significant story is largely untold: the role of David Rice Atchison in restraining armed aggression against the Mormon minority. Both men were lawyers retained by Latter-day Saint leaders after the forcible expulsion of their people from Jackson County in 1833. In the next five years, both Doniphan and Atchison were periodically involved in seeking civil rights for an unpopular people. So when they took key militia posts during the 1838 Mormon troubles, these two well understood both the majority and the minority viewpoints. Doniphan was left on the scene at the surrender of Far West and registered his telling protest at the attempt to execute civilians by order of a military court. Only a few days earlier, Atchison had been removed from command because of his outspoken views. He had bluntly written Governor Boggs: ‘‘I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob.’’ Atchison’s later silence on this subject contributed to the historical obscurity of his stand.

This article will explain the Atchison letters from the 1838 Mormon conflict. He and Doniphan knew Joseph Smith’s policies, since they had negotiated with both parties for some two months prior to the Mormon surrender on 1 November 1838. Doniphan’s views have great interest because he consistently saw the Mormons as victims of intolerance throughout their Missouri experience. But Atchison’s letters have added historical value because they were written at the height of anti-Mormon tensions by the commander assigned to investigate and resolve the civil conflict.

In war the open-minded are hated by both extremes. Thus Major General Atchison was accused of helping the Mormons in order to gain political advantage. The firebrand Samuel Bogart complained

Richard Lloyd Anderson is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University and associate editor of BYU Studies.
David Rice Atchison
Photograph courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.
to the governor with one eye on Atchison: "Too many of our officers are seeking popularity with the Mormons, seeing their votes in time would be of some service to them." But "in time" shows the hollowness of the contention, since immediate unpopularity was David Atchison's reward for fairness. The gaining of a few thousand Mormon votes in one county would in any case have been more than offset by the predominant hostility against them in scores of counties. Moreover, Atchison's later political stance reflected sectional interest. Would this ultrasouthern senator have earlier supported what western Missourians perceived as a Yankee church biased against slavery? Clearly, it is the lawyer and judge, not the politician, who speaks in the 1838 Atchison documents. The failure of moderation and the helplessness of watching a minority dispossessed are the themes of these on-the-scene letters.

**ATCHISON'S LIFE**

Dissent on the Mormon question might have been expected from David Rice Atchison, inasmuch as his legal, military, and political careers were stamped with individualism. His views on the 1838 Mormon persecution should be seen in the light of a lifetime commitment to principle. Not that his virtues were neatly bounded by convention. Fellow Clay County attorney Peter Burnett pictured him even when a judge as still able to mingle with "mirth and gayety," adding that he "was very companionable, and full of anecdote, in which he was not limited by religious views." Burnett also outlined Atchison's serious side when appointed to the bench soon after the Mormon conflict:

Judge Atchison was an upright, incorruptible judge, and was a man of fine literary and legal education and of superior native intellect. He possessed a kind heart, and a noble, generous, manly spirit; but when first appointed, he seemed to me to err too often in his rulings in favor of the accused.  

Doniphan also described Atchison during his years as a judge in the early 1840s. The two had known each other intimately as young attorneys: "we kept offices together, although never partners, and were very warm personal friends." Doniphan could be objective because they had different interests: "politically we were as wide apart as the poles. He was a strong States Rights Democrat, while I was a Whig of the most orthodox school." Doniphan sized up Atchison, admitting that he spent a good deal of time away from his office in hunting, social, and political affairs:

He had a clear, bright, logical mind; had studied law well, and kept up with his profession by constant reading, when he was not engaged actively out of doors. . . . I deemed him one of the best lawyers, and consulted him more frequently than I did anyone else. As a judge
he was quick, expeditious and industrious, seemed to arrive at his conclusions almost intuitively, and his high sense of justice always enabled him to decide equitably. I never knew a judge who gave such universal satisfaction.6

These are sketches soon after Atchison indignantly wrote about the injustice of allowing the Mormons to be expelled from Missouri counties. Atchison and Burnett were born in 1807, Doniphan in 1808. All were educated in the border states. Atchison and Doniphan were Kentuckians and college graduates who had studied English and Latin classics before reading law. Atchison was the eldest of six children and was named for the devoted Presbyterian David Rice, ironically an early spokesman for emancipation.7

The young Atchison was a new attorney in Liberty, Clay County, when older settlers demanded that the Mormons leave Jackson, the county to the south. Before abandoning their homes in the Independence area, Mormon leaders countered by engaging four lawyers at Liberty, two of whom were Atchison and Doniphan. Though Joseph Smith was sarcastic about the size and circumstances of their fee, they risked careers and safety to defend an unpopular minority. They jointly signed a fee proposal at the end of 1833, expecting "to lose the greatest part" of their local practice but indicating their willingness to disregard intimidation: "as we have been threatened by the mob, we wish to show them we disregard their empty bravadoes."8

Atchison soon realized that pressure tactics overruled law in Jackson County. Governor Dunklin requested a court of inquiry, and in a supporting petition Mormon attorney Amos Rees wrote: "an examination of the criminal matter cannot be gone into without a guard for the court and witnesses."9 Governor Dunklin then ordered out the Liberty Blues under Captain Atchison, but this state inquiry collapsed. The platoon of fifty men and their baggage wagon advanced with Mormon witnesses to Independence, but after overnighting the leaders were informed by state and district attorneys that tension was too high to proceed. Eyewitness William W. Phelps described the result:

Shortly after, Capt. Atchison informed me that he had just received an order from the judge that his company's service was no longer wanted in Jackson County, and we were marched out of town to the tune of Yankee-doodle in quick time, and soon returned to our camp ground without the loss of any lives. In fact, much credit is due to Captain Atchison for his gallantry and hospitality. . . . Thus ends all hopes of "redress," even with a guard ordered by the Governor for the protection of the court and witnesses.10

That same year, the Mormons sent the "Zion's Camp" expedition of about two hundred men from Ohio, under the impression that Governor Dunklin would reinstate the Jackson exiles and that these
reinforcements would prevent attempts to eject them again. But fearing civil war, the governor refused to back up Mormon property rights, forcing the disbanding of Zion’s Camp when it reached Clay County. David Atchison appears in expedition journals as a successful intermediary: “When we got within five or six miles of Liberty, General Atchison and several other gentlemen met us, desiring that we would not go to Liberty, as the feelings of the people of that place was much enraged against us.” Two years later, Mormons left Atchison’s county by agreement under pressure. Hostility peaked in 1836, and community leaders called meetings to negotiate. When local Mormon leaders agreed to leave rather than cause confrontation, Atchison’s name appears as a Liberty representative to supervise fair removal.

Mormon sources show Atchison’s repeated position as arbitrator. Smith family journals give one important occasion. As the Daviess County crisis intensified, Joseph Smith’s brother Don Carlos and his cousin George A. Smith were given an emergency mission to raise money in the southeast for buying out Missouri settlers. Making their way through Ray County, they boarded a Missouri River steamer. It docked at De Witt in the midst of the siege of the Mormon settlers there, and the conversation centered on the Mormons when the riverboat embarked again. A number of militia officers were traveling on the boat, including Generals Lucas and Wilson of Jackson County. The latter bragged about his part in punishing Mormons in 1833. As Don Carlos Smith bluntly labeled such conduct “below the brutes,” Wilson reached for his pistol, but cousin George A. stood near, ready to topple the general into the river if he drew. Then Atchison broke the tension with an oath, “I’ll be God damned if Smith ain’t right,” and Wilson “left the company rather crest-fallen.” Such words were morally and physically intimidating from a man described as “six feet two inches high, and straight as an arrow, florid complexion, and would weigh about 200 pounds.” Atchison, who never experienced the socializing influence of marriage, was a man’s man by western and southern standards. A political and religious critic saw him as “large, commanding, dictatorial, and sometimes profane; an uncompromising Democrat, a plu-perfect pro-slavery man, and often boisterous, but always generous.” Yet this rough exterior housed “superior judgment and native mind.”

Full detail on Atchison’s later life is not necessary here, though an outline suggests the quality of his views on the Mormon question. In the Missouri legislature in 1834, he was elected again in 1838 and that winter was outspoken on measures designed to improve the lot of migrating Mormons. He was appointed to the bench of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit when it was created in 1841, but he served as judge only two years before Governor Reynolds designated him to fill a
vacancy in the United States Senate, an appointment widely approved throughout Missouri. His senatorial career lasted a dozen years, since he was reelected for two terms. His record was distinguished. Many times he was elected as president of the Senate pro tempore. Atchison was influential in measures to annex Texas and Oregon and stood rock-firm in the southern bloc in ante-bellum politics, seeking to save the Union by insuring traditional sectional interests.17

The mature Atchison was passionate about the right of extension of slavery to the territories, and his Kansas manipulations tarnish his national reputation, though he is credible as a regional patriot. Before he failed of reelection and ended his last Senate term in 1855, he was influential in establishing the self-determination provisions for Nebraska and Kansas. In the latter state, an immigration contest raged to import abolitionist or proslavery voters. Atchison threw himself into this cause, since Kansas bordered the western Missouri counties of his residence. He raised money, organized settlers, and was an influential officer in paralegal militia to protect southern interests. He could use extreme rhetoric, on one occasion writing to his friend Jefferson Davis of possible civil war in Kansas: “we intend to ‘Mormanise’ the Abolitionists.”18 Yet to Atchison’s credit, he campaigned with verbal vigor but generally stood for responsible actions within the law. His careful biographer insists that his record was exaggerated in the northern press, where he was a hated symbol of the “slave-power conspiracy.” William E. Parrish continues:

While his actions during this time have been condemned, it must be remembered that Atchison was fighting for a cause in which he strongly believed, and to him the cause justified many actions which he would not ordinarily have condoned. Atchison’s chief lieutenant on the Kansas border, Benjamin F. Stringfellow, later remarked that no matter how severe the Senator’s plans were, he always relented when the time came to put them into execution.19

The Civil War brought Atchison to another crisis of conviction. While Missouri stayed in the Union, he chose the South from the beginning, becoming chief advisor in the Confederate shadow government of Missouri, and he was on the scene in several western actions. Temporarily retiring to Texas at the end of the war, he expressed affection for his personal servant and concern for his other slaves.20 Atchison’s last two decades were spent on his large farm in western Missouri, where he died at the age of seventy-eight. He indirectly evaluated his political years in his journal entry concerning the 1874 visit of Jefferson Davis to Missouri: “the homage paid him is to virtue and great principles; he is the representative of the lost cause and all that it involved.”21 One does not have to agree with his cultural outlook to recognize that David Atchison generously served his state and nation
in public life. Answering a critic after Atchison left the Senate, Stephen A. Douglas voiced the typical view of personal friends:

He is impulsive and generous, carrying his good qualities sometimes to an excess, which induces him to say and do many things that would not meet my approval. But all who know him know him to be a gentleman and an honest man, true and loyal to the Constitution of his country.²²

MORMON EXPULSIONS BEFORE 1838

David Atchison stood for law over violence when the Mormon troubles erupted for the final time in 1838. But the outcome was heavily influenced by public opinion formed in the conflicts from 1833 to 1836. The expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from the state did not happen in a vacuum, since it essentially repeated the earlier processes of exile. So a focus on 1838 obscures real causation. The deeper question is what social dynamics caused organized demands for Mormons to leave Jackson, Clay, and Carroll counties before they had lifted a weapon in resistance.

In 1833 and 1838, Mormons responded with force but did not initiate it. Both times their armed resistance intensified the demand that they leave but was not the origin of it. An analogy illustrates both cases. A spectator happening onto a fight might conclude that both parties were equally at fault because each is striking at the other, but he cannot legitimately make that judgment without knowing how the fight began. Perhaps one party is resisting an attempted robbery by the other or responding to an unprovoked attack. A close look at only final hostilities in Jackson or Caldwell is misleading, for Mormons were using force against forcible dispossession.

The sequence of events in Jackson County in 1833 is undisputed. In July, citizen regulators threatened the Mormons in Independence with death unless they immediately agreed to leave the county. Mormons accepted terms to buy time, but also initiated appeals to state officers and engaged lawyers. But these countermeasures triggered more violence. In November, Mormon homes were terrorized to force an immediate exodus. Some lives were lost when a Mormon settlement defended itself against marauders. Then all available Mormon men marched to Independence, hearing that some of their group were imprisoned illegally. When they came face to face with lawful militia, they surrendered their arms and with their families left Jackson County in disarray.²³

It should be obvious that Mormon resistance in this series of events was essentially defensive. And yet Reverend Pixley’s version of the events manages to portray the Mormons as aggressors. Reciting the gunpoint demand in July, Pixley indicates that the Mormons agreed “to move away before another summer.” But after this “peace was made,” they
created a problem by insisting on staying, even "'arming themselves and threatened to kill if they should be molested.' This "'provoked some of the more wild and ungovernable among us to improper acts of violence, such as breaking in upon the Mormon houses, tearing off the covering, etc.'" Then Pixley reviews "'military preparations'" among the Mormons, and gives his version of the first skirmish, manufacturing a Mormon revelation "'to arise and pursue and destroy their enemies.'" He may be reporting contemporary rumors, but such a policy has absolutely no basis in Latter-day Saint sources. Pixley then interprets the Independence rescue mission as the application of his fictitious revelation on aggression. He expresses sympathy for "'the sufferings of the Mormons, and especially the women and children, in being obliged to move off so suddenly at this season of the year.'" But he draws the conclusion that nothing else could be expected in an organization "'where such principles are evolved, and designs manifested, by blood and violence, to build up the kingdom of the Redeemer.'"24 Thus the victims are made responsible for their victimization.

The parallels are striking between this first expulsion and that of 1838. In both cases, one can label Mormon resistance as aggression and argue that it caused the exile. Indeed, that is what the state tried to prove against the leaders in the Richmond hearing in 1838. The argument, however, was as spurious then as it was in 1833, though the events were more complex and involved Mormon preemptive strikes. In both 1833 and 1838, the Mormons’ physical resistance was given as the cause of their expulsion, whereas the root cause was the determination of Missouri residents not to allow Mormon influence.25

The real political motives were revealed during the Jackson meetings in July 1833:

They [the Mormon settlers] now number some twelve hundred souls in this county, and each successive autumn and spring pours forth its swarms among us. . . . It requires no gift of prophecy to tell that the day is not far distant when the government of the county will be in their hands; when the sheriff, the justices, and the county judges will be Mormons, or persons willing to court their favor from motives of interest or ambition.26

Upper Missouri society could not tolerate the prospect of political control by northerners who believed in present-day revelation. Despite similar fears, non-Mormon society allowed a Mormon majority to develop in the township of Kirtland, Ohio, with only moderate violence. But monolithic southern communities rejected coexistence when Mormons approached effective political influence in county after county. The twelve hundred Mormons in Jackson County in 1833 made up about 30 percent of the population, so violence erupted when the threat
of a majority of Mormon voters became real. A tone of tolerance was set in Clay County by more educated and sensitive leaders, but the county had nearly twice the population of Jackson and could better assimilate a minority. But two years later, Clay County citizens were just as worried about the possible domination by the Jackson immigrants plus the ongoing gathering of Mormons from eastern states. The Clay committee report is temperate in tone but nearly identical with the Jackson report on reasons for conflict. Mormon attorneys Doniphan and Atchison were on the committee, placed there partly for their influence on the Mormon settlers. The Clay leaders speculated on why religious, social, and political differences existed, but sought to avoid civil conflict by resettlement of the Mormons elsewhere: "We earnestly urge them to seek some other abiding place, where the manners, the habits, and customs of the people will be more consonant with their own." As with Jackson residents, they feared lest their county should become the main gathering place of a major religious movement:

Their rapid emigration, their large purchases, and offers to purchase lands, the remarks of the ignorant and imprudent portion of them, that this country is destined by heaven to be theirs, are received and looked upon, by a large portion of this community, as strong and convincing proofs that they intend to make this county their permanent home, the center and general rendezvous of their people.

Thus Mormon defensiveness had nothing to do with the original demands to leave Jackson County and did not figure in the negotiated abandonment of Clay County, since the Mormon leaders agreed to move on before major violence broke out. What is common to both instances is the reality that a Mormon majority would not be tolerated. This is confirmed by the neutral history of John Corrill, a key Mormon leader in Jackson and Clay counties who became disaffected from the Church in 1838 and soon thereafter penned a summary of Mormonism as he had known it. With a fair perception of both sides, he summed up the Jackson problems in the same terms as the 1833 citizens' ultimatum: "They saw their county filling up with emigrants . . . and saw also that if let alone, they would in a short time become a majority and of course rule the county." After three years in the Liberty area, Corrill saw no logic in having to move, "for the Mormons had committed no crime," but realized that Mormon growth was the main issue: "The Church also continued to gather in Clay County, till the appearance was that they would sooner or later be overrun by the Mormons."

A blunt letter from Clay County residents Anderson and Emelia Wilson to their relatives in North Carolina gives the same explanation as they argue the unfortunate necessity of expelling the religious minority. Anderson describes his participation in the anti-Mormon meetings and some vigilante work, giving his rationalizations. The letter
includes a good deal of misinformation on Latter-day Saint beliefs, but the bottom line is non-Mormon resistance to a Mormon voting bloc:

They have been flocking in here faster than ever and making great talk what they would do. A letter from Ohio shows plainly that they intend to emigrate here 'til they outnumber us. Then they would rule the country at pleasure. . . . You may depend all our officers are elected by us the people, and we might as well allow one man to give 100 votes as to allow 100 Mormons to vote at all. . . . To go away was to just give up all, for if emigration once begun, none would buy our land but Mormons, and they would have it at their own price. So we were resolved what to do. We thought of petitioning the governor, but he was sworn. We thought of fleeing. There was no place to flee to. We thought of fighting. This was cruel to fight a people who had not broke the law, and in this way we became excited. . . . Not that I boast of ourselves, but the spirit that possessed every breast plainly showed that they would either possess their country or the tomb. . . . We defend these principles at all hazards, although we are trampling on our law and Constitution. But we can't help it in no way while we possessed the spirit of 76.32

MORMON SETTLEMENT OF CALDWELL COUNTY

The Wilsons' letter estimates five hundred men available county-wide for the 'volunteer companies' and adds a list of 4,800 men expected from seven adjoining counties in case of conflict: 'By this you may see what abomination the Mormons is held in the Mo.'33 Thus an infrastructure had already developed by 1836, determined not to allow any significant number of Mormons into an upper Missouri county. Another case arose when public meetings in Ray County, adjoining Clay to the east, denied permission for Mormon resettlement there. But a solution came by agreeing that the expatriates could buy out the sparse population of the prairie to the north. John Murdock joined Corrill in negotiating with Ray committees and summarized their meeting of 30 June 1836:

According to previous agreement, I, in company with Elder John Corrill, met the Ray County Committee and laid our complaint before them and desired of them that if we could not have a home with them that they would grant us the privilege of settling on Shoal Creek in the territorial part of the State. And after calling a meeting of the county, they granted the latter but would not let us live with them.34

This consent was given with the strange rituals of a civilian treaty, reflected in the Corrill–Murdock letter to the Ray County group: 'If Ray County requires the 'Mormons' to leave it entirely, we feel disposed to do so on our part and urge and advise our brethren to do the same.' The same document alludes to a disputed strip claimed by Ray, with the proviso that until the matter was settled 'we will abstain from
making any settlements in the above stated territory.'"\textsuperscript{35} Thus the Mormon county was created not merely to give them a place to locate, but to exclude them from becoming a force in any settled area. The Clay group had pledged their support to initiate action on it, and Doniphan, then in the legislature, reviewed his role and the implied contract in upper Missouri:

The Mormons remained in Clay County until 1836 . . . when it was agreed between them and the citizens of Clay and Ray Counties that if they [the Mormons] would buy out a few inhabitants then inhabiting what is now Caldwell County, then a part of Ray County, the balance of the land being public, they could enter it at their leisure, and we would urge the legislature to create a county for them. . . . I was a member of the legislature and drew the bill organizing Caldwell County for the Mormons exclusively. . . . They continued to live prosperously and tranquilly until the summer of 1838, when Joseph Smith came out from Ohio, and soon after they commenced forming a settlement in Daviess County, which under their agreement they had no right to do. This occasioned difficulties with the citizens of Daviess County.\textsuperscript{36}

The Prophet had not been a party to negotiations and did not accept an unwritten limitation confining a world church into a twenty-mile square, when written constitutions gave free right of purchase. Doniphan's view of "their agreement" is explained in his 1837 letter informing the Mormons that the northern area (Daviess County) of his proposal had been subtracted because of "the petitions of the people of North Grand River, the statements of the citizens of Ray, the influence of her members, and the prejudices of Noland, Boggs, Jeffery, McLelland, etc." Doniphan expressed hope that bigotry would be temporary:

You are aware of the prejudice and ignorance that are to be found and combatted everywhere in this country on this subject, as well with the legislature as with the common herd. In time, I hope you may add to its limits, when prejudices have subsided and reason and common sense have again assumed the helm.\textsuperscript{37}

Should Mormons not assert their civil rights? And if powers of ownership were not valid in Missouri, where else? Mormon expansion outside of Caldwell County coincided with Joseph Smith's arrival not only because of his policies, but because missionary work and the closure of Kirtland increased immigration. In no known case did a Latter-day Saint occupy land without agreed consideration, but every county surrounding Caldwell was predisposed to shut out heavy Mormon influx. As Doniphan observed, such conceptions were not reasonable. He later insisted that while in Clay County, the Latter-day Saints "were peaceable, sober, industrious and law abiding people, and . . . not one was ever accused of a crime of any kind."\textsuperscript{38} But the arrival of faithful
Ohio Saints in 1838 fed the fears of non-Mormon society ringing their settlements. Given the Mormon determination not to forfeit citizenship and the determination in surrounding counties not to allow substantial intrusion, an irreconcilable conflict had already been framed before any Mormon acts of self-defense in that year.

Early in 1838, Joseph Smith arrived in Far West, enthusiastic about Mormon self-government, and soon dictated a statement condemning mobs and "vexatious law suits" but praising "the Constitution of our country . . . peace and good order . . . good and wholesome laws."\(^\text{39}\) Sidney Rigdon expressed the same views in his oration of 4 July 1838, a talk believed by many then and now to have sparked the Mormon expulsion. But his abrasive words are less significant in the light of the preexisting determination by Missouri residents not to allow significant Mormon occupation beyond Caldwell County. Nearly all of Rigdon's talk surveyed God's blessings to the Latter-day Saints and their covenants with him. Only the final paragraphs of the printed version speak of rights and defending them, in the context of the "mob that comes on us to disturb us." Only then "it shall be between us and them a war of extermination." But Rigdon immediately added: "We will never be the aggressors; we will infringe on the rights of no people, but shall stand for our own until death. We claim our own rights, and are willing that all others shall enjoy theirs."\(^\text{40}\)

The purpose of this declaration was to "proclaim our liberty" after "the persecutions which we have had to endure for the last nine years, or nearly that." Though it is sometimes claimed that Rigdon declared freedom from court process, he actually threatened physical resistance to "vexatious law suits," a theme also in the above Joseph Smith statement on Mormon constitutionalism. To make Rigdon the scapegoat of the Missouri expulsion is to miss the underlying problem that he and Joseph Smith addressed—if the law would not protect their minority from expulsion, they served notice that they would protect themselves. Whether such an announcement tended to promote or retard violence may be debated—it is the same question of whether pacifism or military preparation brings peace. But Rigdon's talk must be placed in the setting of the expressed convictions of other residents of upper Missouri that Mormon settlement could not expand. Thus Rigdon's speech was a defensive ultimatum.

Public discourses of principal Mormons in 1838 are not well reported, but Rigdon's comments generally exceed those of others in radical language, raising a question of whether he was emotionally fit for leadership even then, since Joseph Smith sharply cut back his role afterward. Yet his extremism appears only in the closing language in the Fourth of July oration, not the fundamental message. He indulged in some ill-advised phrases—it was never Church policy to retaliate until
"one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed." In fact, when Daviess and Carroll county Mormons were attacked, Joseph Smith's defensive policies were clearly to save life and avoid physical harm. Nevertheless, Rigdon's oration was a serious warning that Mormons would resist if told to leave another county. Joseph Smith stood behind the principle or the speech would not have been circulated afterward as a pamphlet. He consistently expressed the goal of claiming rights purchased by the blood of the revolutionary generation just before him. He was an American prophet seeking to establish a constitutional commonwealth in frontier conditions. His public and private words in Missouri do not advise replacing or resisting the state, but counsel armed defense if the state would not enforce its laws.

EARLY DAVIESS COUNTY CONFLICT

Although Mormon sources indicate there had been earlier threats, the Gallatin election in August 1838 was the visible event of beginning violence. Gallatin was the county seat of thinly settled Daviess county, the northern area Doniphan had been unable to add to the Mormon county. Nevertheless, Lyman Wight had settled the Adam-ondi-Ahman area, which was then developed as a townsite after the arrival of Joseph Smith. The chief newspaper at Liberty, Clay County, argued that both sides were aggressors in the voting scrape because Rigdon's July speech showed "a disposition to prevent the force of law." But that was a theoretical issue. The main issue was Mormon expansion, as the editor makes clear:

It is true, that when the Mormons left this county, they agreed to settle in, and confine themselves to a district of country, which has since been formed into the County of Caldwell, but they have violated that agreement, and are spreading over Daviess, Clinton, Livingston, and Carroll. Such a number had settled in Daviess that the old inhabitants were apprehensive that they would be governed soon by the revelations of the great Prophet, Joe Smith, and hence their anxiety to rid themselves of such an incubus.

While blaming Lyman Wight for fiery language in defending the Mormon Daviess settlements, John Corrill agrees that control was the key point with the prior settlers, who watched the heavy 1838 migration and realized "that the Mormons would soon overrun Daviess and rule the county." Ironically, this area would have been Mormon controlled had the legislature adopted Doniphan's first proposal. This raises the obvious question of whether Missouri Saints ever really accepted the single county concept. None seemed to be inhibited from moving to surrounding areas in small numbers. While Missouri sources refer to an "understanding" that Mormons would confine themselves to
Caldwell County, it was nowhere clearly defined. Because such a restriction on free movement was illegal, it was probably not intended to be discussed publicly. Missouri Mormons probably expected this political accord to vanish as their industry and usefulness became better known—and the many new immigrants and converts were doubtless unaware that their civil rights were supposed to be limited because of their religion. Clearly, most Mormons were as unwilling as their leaders to accept a lesser citizenship.

Thus both sides acted from their prior convictions in the election brawl of 6 August. Some Daviess settlers cursed Mormons seeking to vote at Gallatin, and swore they would not. When fighting erupted, a dozen determined Mormons picked up clubs and defended themselves before retreating safely in a body. First reports indicated casualties and unburied bodies, which brought a posse from Caldwell County to join with Wight’s Daviess group of Mormons. On finding no such crisis, the leaders nevertheless sought assurances of equal treatment under law from some local officials, including Adam Black, who was known for his anti-Mormon sentiments. Under protest, Black signed a statement of his constitutional intent, later testifying that Sampson Avard showed a “savage disposition” but that Joseph Smith answered “no” when asked “if he possessed such a heart” or justified Avard’s attitude.

Black next filed a misdemeanor action against his visitors, charging intimidation. At first Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight were wary of a hostile court but finally attended a preliminary hearing and posted bail. This hearing took place one month after the election riot, but by this time volunteers to drive out the Mormons were already organizing. On the day the Prophet posted bail, the following letter was written indicating that Daviess citizens had declared war the day after the voting riot:

> We have just conversed with General Wilson of Howard County, who states that on last Saturday he saw a letter dated on the 7th instant, from a committee of gentlemen in Daviess County, to the people of Howard County, calling on them to raise a force and come to their assistance and aid them in expelling the Mormons from the county; that the citizens of Daviess had removed their families and were making preparations for warlike operation; that the Mormons were in a state of open rebellion against the laws, and war between them and the citizens was inevitable; that the people of Daviess had come to the fixed determination of commencing the attack on Saturday last.

This September information establishes operative plans for expulsion well in advance of any Mormon military operations. Their armed countermeasures were confined to the last two weeks of October, whereas the call for volunteers against the Mormons had gone out five
weeks earlier. Thus "committees of safety" organized two years before, at the height of the Clay County expulsion, were revitalized at this time.47

The key Mormon chronicle lays the background for the first of Atchison's 1838 letters. Joseph Smith generally assigned secretaries to record his activities and official documents. In 1838 George W. Robinson kept this history, calling it the "Scriptory Book." Though not a daily diary, its narrative continues to 11 September, when Atchison's letters begin. The Scriptory Book contains few comments by the Prophet but tends to reflect Presidency views, along with many first-person notes by Robinson. In the first relevant entry, Robinson mentions the existence of "a company of Danites," gives their specific purpose "to cleanse the Church," and adds a comment on the damage the unfaithful have caused: "Kirtland has been broken up by those who have professed the name of Latter-Day Saints."48 This late July observation suggests no organization against non-Mormons. Tension with outsiders is first mentioned when the election brawl is reported, with the ride of the Mormon group to Justice Black's two days afterward. This contemporary record gives the purpose of the visit to Black: they inquired "whether he would administer the laws of our country or not in justice for people."49 The Scriptory Book next records some visits by committees of non-Mormons, and indicates the uniform answer given to them that Latter-day Saints were sworn to cooperate with laws and courts and expected evenness of justice for all parties.

Robinson reported how Atchison became reinvolved with the Mormons because of their need to settle the dilemma arising from the August confrontations. If Joseph Smith did not go to Daviess County to answer the charge of intimidating Justice Black, he faced the danger that "regulators" would lynch him and drive his people out of Daviess County. Yet by going he would risk assassination, no doubt followed by expulsion of the Mormons. A questionable letter purportedly written at this time by Atchison seems intended to fit into these events. The letter, dated 1 September, reports that "Judge Black has graciously received me and has earnestly conversed with me his feelings concerning you and the Latter Day Saints." The writer goes on to tell Joseph Smith that he will come personally "in two or three days."50 However, Atchison's help was first sought the day after this odd letter is dated. Nor would he have written a letter about coming because he immediately returned with the messenger that summoned him. In view of these inconsistencies, it is important to trace the sequence of events during this period.

According to the Scriptory Book, Joseph Smith negotiated with Daviess authorities to answer the Black charge, but by the end of August anti-Mormon volunteers were "collecting from eleven counties" to
“help” arrest the Prophet: “This looks a little too much like mobocracy; it foretells some evil intentions; the whole Upper Missouri is all in an uproar and confusion.” Philo Dibble, elected as Lieutenant Colonel in the Caldwell County militia, advised the Prophet to get Atchison’s help, “and a man was selected, with the best horse to be found, to go to Liberty for General Atchison.” Robinson’s contemporary record is dated 2 September:

This evening we sent for General Atchison of Liberty, Clay County, who is the Major General of this division. We sent for him to come and counsel with us, and to see if he could not put a stop to this collection of people, and to put a stop to hostilities in Daviess County. We also sent a letter to Judge King containing a petition for him to assist in putting down and scattering the mob, which are collecting at Daviess.

The Scriptory Book notes Atchison’s arrival the next evening, and on 4 September adds:

This day was spent in council with General Atchison. He says he will do all in his power to disperse the mob, etc. We employed him and Doniphan (his partner) as our lawyer and counselor in law. They are considered the first lawyers in the Upper Missouri.

Atchison immediately scheduled the Prophet’s appearance for 7 September in a special circuit court sitting in Daviess County near the Caldwell County line in case the Mormon leaders needed a rescue party. Dibble, then military commander at Far West, said that the Liberty lawyer insisted on no bodyguards:

Joseph at first hesitated about agreeing to this, but Atchison reassured him by saying: “My life for yours.” When they arrived at the place of trial, quite a number of the mob had gathered, and on seeing Joseph, commenced to curse and swear. Atchison, however, checked them by saying: “Hold on boys, if you fire the first gun there will not be one of you left.”

Judge King found probable cause against George W. Robinson, Lyman Wight, and Joseph Smith, but took bail and released the Mormon leaders. While attending court, Atchison consulted with King, who was empowered by Article 5 of the state constitution as “conservator of the peace” within his circuit. Atchison returned home to activate two hundred men in Clay County and another two hundred in Ray, explaining in an initial report to the governor that citizens of Mormon Caldwell and non-Mormon Daviess counties had requested the action, which was ordered “by the advice of the Judge of this circuit.” Atchison, as major general in charge of the Third Division of the militia, was the military counterpart to Judge King in the western counties north of the Missouri River. He had some discretionary powers also, and used statutory language of putting down an “insurrection” in his
12 September letter to Governor Boggs, indicating that his troops would assist the judicial process but also control volunteers:

Citizens of other counties are flocking in to the citizens of Daviess County, and the Mormons are flocking to the assistance of the Mormons in those counties... and it is very much feared, that if a blow is once struck, there will be a general conflict, the termination of which, God only knows.56

Warren Foote, who had recently come to Far West, wrote that the Caldwell County militia was released from reserve duty right after Joseph Smith's trial, adding on 12 September that General Atchison was expected to return with Clay and Ray county militia "to disperse the mob" in Daviess County.57 Foote then says that General Atchison arrived with only an aide, leaving his Clay County soldiers outside of Far West because of their fear of Mormon strength. But this general was apparently Doniphan, who preceded Atchison north and wrote that he arrived at Far West with his aide late on 12 September and received prompt cooperation from the Mormons, who returned the rifle stands they had intercepted and the three men captured with them.58 Foote observed mutual respect between the visitor and the Prophet: "He had a friendly chat with Joseph Smith, and the leading men, and appeared to be very friendly to the 'Mormons.' "59

Atchison marched a Ray County contingent north to Gallatin, where he joined Doniphan's group and ordered the "armed men from adjoining counties to repair to their homes." There were 250 of these volunteers, which is a sobering foretaste of potential numbers when Daviess settlers would send more urgent calls later. This 17 September letter also shows that empty houses are no evidence of Mormon military operations, for the general noted the whole county appeared to be deserted except for a few with nerve to stay. The Daviess settlers "had left their farms and removed their families either to the adjoining counties or collected them together at a place called the Camp Ground."60 This removal was clearly voluntary, for Atchison was blunt about Mormon intimidation later. Mormon journals also speak of leaving the farms and moving to the larger centers out of fear; those involved in the election riot did so a month before this time.

Doniphan's report to Atchison also named his aide: Benjamin Holliday, who came to Utah for business a dozen years later and was given an introduction recounting his fairness to Mormons in these first militia actions of 1838. In this note, Doniphan stressed that the Mormons were under attack, saying that the goal of this first Daviess expedition was to "prevent an engagement between a self-constituted collection or army of citizens from various counties then in Daviess and the residents of Adam-oni-Ahman, who had embodied under General Lyman Wight for self-defence."61
In his letter of 17 September, Atchison is sarcastic about the intentions of the upper Missouri regulators, since they had assembled "under the pretext of defending the citizens of Daviess County against the Mormons." His viewpoint agrees with Doniphan's summary above—the Mormons were not aggressors. In addition to beginning to disperse unauthorized non-Mormon forces, Atchison insisted on Mormon compliance with legal processes: all "charged with a violation of the laws will be in today for trial." This refers to other defendants accused of menacing Justice Black. Although Joseph Smith and two associates had preliminary hearings on the charge ten days before, other members of the party did not answer in Daviess County until Doniphan and Atchison brought protecting militia. George A. Smith pictures the 18 September hearing:

I was arrested by a constable who could not read his writ, and a posse of 40 men, and taken before a court of three magistrates. The court was held near General Atchison's camp at Netherton Springs. About 300 of the mob were present, besides the 200 militia.... Adam Black, Esquire, testified against us as being the only witness.... We were detained two days and subjected to many insults, for it seemed to be the studied design of both mob and militia to annoy us with threats.... Had it not been for the stern vigilance of Generals Atchison and Doniphan, probably none of us would have left the grounds alive.... We were bound over in one thousand dollar bonds on a charge of misdemeanor.... Many times during our detention, infuriated men came up to us and holding their knives in their hands with their thumbs upon the blade said, "Damn you, I am going to put that into you so far." Others presenting their pistols said, "This is loaded on purpose to kill a damned Mormon." Notwithstanding the continued remonstrances of General Atchison, these threats were repeated over and over again.

Atchison next wrote the governor on 20 September, following with short confirmations of 23 and 27 September, indicating that the Daviess County situation had stabilized. With Mormons cooperating with the courts and extracounty regulators withdrawing, Atchison and his commanders felt that a token police force was enough, though one act of aggression could bring uncontrolled violence. As their legal counsellor, Atchison knew Latter-day Saint policies. He reported their defensive posture but predicted it would certainly change "if an attack is made upon the Mormons in Daviess County, for the purpose of driving them from that county." For they possessed an "unalterable determination not to be driven." Atchison's 27 September letter forwarded the report of General Parks, the officer left with the peacekeeping force. This Ray County general indicated his surprise at misinformation on the Mormons: "There has been so much prejudice and exaggeration concerned in this matter, that I found things on my arrival here totally different from what I was prepared to expect." In
his military assignment, Parks insisted that Mormons "have shown no disposition to resist the laws, or of hostile intentions." In sending that report, Atchison emphasized the point, warning the governor not to act upon only one side of the story:

And in fact from affidavits, I have no doubt your Excellency has been deceived by the exaggerated statements of designing or half crazy men. I have found there is no cause of alarm on account of the Mormons. They are not to be feared; they are very much alarmed.

Thus October opened with a two-month record of Latter-day Saint restraint under pressure. They had answered to authorities for the only offenses charged: intimidating Justice Black into signing his agreement not to use mob tactics, and intercepting the shipment of Ray County arms. The peace was uneasy but genuine, since neither Atchison nor field commander Parks reported dispossessions or destructions. After dismissing most troops, Atchison returned to his Liberty home, where he wrote his final September letters to the Governor before traveling to a new assignment at a midstate military board. There had been a peaceful close to the "insurrection" of unauthorized armed groups entering Daviess County, but the officers did not call this "war." Yet there was an uneasy tone in Atchison's opinions after phase one of the Daviess operations, echoed in the letters that his brigadier general forwarded on 25 September. General Parks outlined conditions in Daviess County in one letter to Governor Boggs and another to the major general. Mormon and settlers' representatives were to meet the next day to explore buying or selling out. The citizens were still unwilling to coexist: Parks reported that "the men of this county" were threatening that if negotiations failed "their intention is to drive the Mormons with powder and lead from this county."

CARROLL COUNTY CONFLICT

Just as confrontation eased in the Daviess area, private forces began hostilities in Carroll County, just east of Ray, where a Mormon settlement had formed on the Missouri River at De Witt. Though De Witt was sixty miles from Gallatin, the goal of the anti-Mormons was the same—to prevent Mormons from voting. John Murdock remembered the June settlement and the warning to be gone on the day of the August election:

George M. Hinkle and myself, being sent by the High Council by the direction of Brother Joseph the Prophet, bought the undivided half of the town plot of De Witt, Carroll County, Missouri, for five hundred dollars . . . and we with our families proceeded forthwith to settle. . . . About the last of July a committee . . . came and ordered us to leave
the county by the 7th of August, and on the 20th a mob of more than a hundred men came and ordered us off, but finally gave us ten days and threatened if we were not away in that time, they would exterminate us without regard to age or sex and throw our property into the river.\textsuperscript{70}

The date of Murdock's final warning is 20 September, since he and nearly fifty other Mormon men petitioned Governor Boggs for emergency help two days afterward, describing the same facts that he recorded in his journal.\textsuperscript{71} Organized resistance to Mormon expansion was simultaneous in two counties, but the Daviess election riot and its aftermath first attracted manpower from the surrounding committees of safety. Atchison's Daviess settlement permitted the return of over one hundred paralegals to De Witt. Ironically, General Atchison stopped there on the day fixed by the ultimatum, since the Prophet's brother and cousin were on the same riverboat and noted his verbal support of Mormons and also his purpose in traveling to attend the midstate court-martial.\textsuperscript{72} Since the emergency petition from the De Witt Mormons was sent a week before that, the governor's action in removing the strongest leader of the Mormon crisis is highly questionable. This relatively trivial assignment crippled the moral power of lower officers straining to maintain civil peace.

On 7 October, General Parks wrote Atchison that needed units did not obey his order to report, that he would be forced to wait for Doniphan's Clay County reinforcements before being effective, and that Hinkle had dug in to defend the town with nearly four hundred Mormons, while the besieging force of three hundred had a cannon and was swelling rapidly: "The Mormons say they will die before they will be driven out, etc. As yet they have acted on the defensive as far as I can learn. It is my settled opinion, the Mormons will have no rest until they leave."\textsuperscript{73}

Atchison fulfilled his duty at Boonville while the Mormon situation totally deteriorated. He continued to report to the governor, evidently on the basis of messages by courier from De Witt, fifty miles away. His first letter from Boonville reported that the citizen army was assembling "for the purpose of driving the Mormons from that county."\textsuperscript{74} This was verified by observers sent from surrounding counties; one reported that old citizens had decided the Mormons must leave and were using language of "waging a war of extermination, or to remove them from the said county."\textsuperscript{75} An arbitrator reported that the Carroll Saints rejected first offers to sell out: "The Mormons replied that ever since they had been a people they had been driven from place to place, and they had determined that they should be driven no more."\textsuperscript{76} While there was some hope for government intervention, a grim waiting game dragged on. Chariton County observers found Mormons "in the act of defense, begging for peace, and wishing for
the civil authorities to repair there as early as possible to settle the difficulties between the parties."77

This De Witt experience was the crossroads, finally proving to Mormons that state institutions would not be effective. Atchison had earlier restored civil order in Daviess County because, as he said, the vigorous presence of legal militia "has convinced the Mormons that the law will be enforced, and other citizens that it can be enforced, and is ample to redress all grievances."78 Now the opposite process worked in Carroll County. While Atchison obeyed his order to be absent, General Parks's units dissolved in disloyalty. On 13 October, an antagonistic subordinate complained to the governor that Parks had left the field without dispersing the Mormons—the general obviously retired because extracounty forces snowballed faster than he could maintain lawful forces.79

The call had already gone out for anti-Mormon volunteers, and potential manpower was immense. Rifle patrols skirmished as paralegals moved cautiously against Mormon defenses. Then they sent a frantic call for help to adjoining counties:

And we think this one of the cases of emergency in which the people ought to take the execution of justice in their own hands. . . . We will anticipate . . . assistance in expelling the fanatics, who are mostly aliens by birth and aliens in principle, from the county.80

Thus political and social forces were at work to expel the Mormons without the governor lifting his pen. Just before this call for an unofficial army, General Lucas of Jackson County had passed through De Witt on the same steamboat with Atchison and sent his opinions to the governor. Lucas had talked to the Mormon commander Hinkle and was convinced he would fight if attacked, which rumor said had happened. But one death in the non-Mormon forces would bring "four or five thousand volunteers," with the result that "those base and degraded beings will be exterminated from the face of the earth."81

Far West sent help to the besieged outpost, which only inflamed the situation. Joseph Smith arrived with a relief force.82 This was the beginning of October, and the Prophet asked a non-Mormon to travel east for a last appeal to Governor Boggs:

Several gentlemen of standing and respectability, who lived in the immediate vicinity . . . offered their services to go and present the case to the Governor themselves. A messenger was accordingly dispatched to his Excellency, who made known to him our situation. But instead of receiving any aid whatever . . . we were told that "the quarrel was between the Mormons and the mob," and that "we might fight it out."83

According to the Prophet and others there, this response obliterated hope of assistance, so a peaceful withdrawal was negotiated.84
Governor Boggs later told John Corrill that he did not send a message that the Mormons were on their own, but that is a technicality. The governor told the legislature that he "received information" of the crisis at De Witt "but took no order on the subject" because Atchison and his lieutenants "had ample force to preserve the peace." This is just what the non-Mormon courier denied. Failure to act was a clear message to a people weighing whether to fight for survival. John Taylor, who shouldered his gun at the siege, was not concerned with particular words: "After we had defended the place ten days, we obtained the heartless intelligence that his Excellency could do nothing for us." Although Atchison told the governor on 9 October that he advised the Carroll County Saints "to sell out and remove elsewhere," he was incensed when he heard the circumstances. On 16 October he wrote from Boonville and essentially accused Governor Boggs of ratifying the mob program.

As the De Witt crisis intensified, General Parks had asked Atchison to request the governor's immediate presence to dispel the illegal militia: "You know a word from his Excellency would have more power to quell this affair than a regiment." So Atchison wrote his thinly veiled rebuke of Governor Boggs that was historically justified—the governor made no appeal to Missourians to place law above prejudice. Without a strong official stand, private policy would force the Mormons out of all counties. Atchison insisted that the governor had one last chance to be effective: "Nothing, in my opinion, but the strongest measures within the power of the Executive, will put down this spirit of mobocracy." A personal visit to the area was best, but at least "a strong proclamation was required." Atchison's alternative was prophetic:

Parks reports that a portion of the men from Carroll County, with one piece of artillery, are on their march for Daviess County, where it is thought the same lawless game is to be played over, and the Mormons to be driven from that county and probably from Caldwell County.

Atchison obviously felt used. His considerable efforts produced only a show of doing something. But inaction at the point of expulsion proved that the governor had no commitment to minority rights. Atchison's 16 October letter really accused Governor Boggs of passive acceptance of the private programs of "the last two months" to drive the Mormons back to their single county, a movement "ruinous to the public and disgraceful to the State." The blunt general requested a clear executive stand or an order to discharge the troops seeking to restore order. Then all pretense would be removed: "I would again respectfully suggest strong measures to put down this spirit of mob and misrule, or permit them to fight it out."
Knowing Major General Atchison's view—shared by his brigadiers Parks and Doniphan—one can understand the Mormon reaction at this point. Their leaders reported that the militia generals told them to raise their own troops in self-defense. With lives at stake, Mormons did not always define whether this advice was given as private counsel or as official orders. The total breakdown of militia protection put the rule of survival into play, one which had been thought out beforehand as a contingency. As secretary to the First Presidency, George W. Robinson noted that Mormons were carefully avoiding attempts at "provoking us to anger," 92 and he undoubtedly reflected Church policy in explaining the limits of pacifism:

We have suffered our rights and our liberties to be taken from us. We have not avenged ourselves of those wrongs. We have appealed to magistrates, to sheriff, to judges, to governors and to the President of the United States, all in vain. . . . We will not act on the offensive, but always on the defensive. Our rights and our liberties shall not be taken from us, and we peaceably submit to it as we have done heretofore, but we will avenge ourselves of our enemies, inasmuch as they will not let us alone. 93

Robinson's contemporary comments are important because hostile remarks have been attributed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in charged situations. Robinson's words were his own, but this corporate policy was formed in calm moments by the Presidency. The above entry was written in early September just before Atchison's forces arrived in Daviess County. Robinson's entries phase out as September troubles escalated, but he repeatedly recorded Mormon restraint: "They try all in their power to make us commit the first act of violence." 94 Although he used the words "avenge ourselves," the context was totally defensive. Robinson felt the record from Jackson, Clay, and Carroll counties spoke for itself, proving that "we have no designs against any man or set of men, that we injure no man." 95 Individuals—including leaders—made angry statements under stress, but Joseph Smith never justified using weapons except in self-defense. There is a remarkable consistency on this point in official documents in Missouri and afterward. As the threat of violence returned in Illinois, the Prophet reflected back on the Missouri experience and reiterated:

I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the Kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord. . . . It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on. . . . It may be that the Saints will have to beat their plows into swords. It will not do for men to sit down and see their women and children destroyed patiently. 96

GUERRILLA TACTICS IN DAVIESS COUNTY

The 1838 expulsion went down in regional histories as the Mormon War, which deceptively suggests that both sides were fighting for some
period of time. But there was no Mormon attack until mid-October, and Latter-day Saints surrendered their weapons two weeks later. The main Mormon operations took place in Daviess County during a single week, with no goal whatsoever of bloodshed or personal harm. There is no known casualty until militia units moved into Caldwell County at the end of October. If the term must be used, here is a war of days, of limited violence, and with the clear Mormon goal of resisting ejection by vigilantes.

Dozens of wagons rolled into Far West with the De Witt refugees in mid-October. This was the point of realization that state protection was a sham. Nothing could be seriously construed as a Mormon attack before that. Regulators from surrounding counties came to help Daviess County settlers force out the Saints in early September, but there were no Mormon counterstrikes. Retaliation was first used in late October. When the news of Mormon raids reached Ray County, letters show that these actions were unprecedented. Austin King was circuit judge with the responsibility of keeping the peace within his upper Missouri district, so he had consulted with Atchison from the time of the voting scare in mid-August. He wrote in the last week of October: "Until lately, I thought the Mormons were disposed to act only on the defensive, but their recent conduct shows that they are the aggressors, and that they intend to take the law into their own hands." Such a statement from an informed source confirms the absence of Mormon offensive action during the ten weeks after the election brawl. So taking "the law into their own hands" only occurred after the militia failed to prevent banishment from Carroll County. As far as conflict with outsiders was concerned, the Richmond hearing in November focused on events in the last two weeks of October, the last 15 percent of the total period of hostility, and ignored the 85 percent of the period when Mormons cooperated with a fading legal system.

The First Presidency modified its policy after two months of calculated nonviolence because civil protection disappeared. When the vigilance forces drove the Mormons from Carroll County, the Church had to face the serious threat that Daviess, then Caldwell would follow. After passively supporting the eviction of the De Witt Mormons, Captain Samuel Bogart warned the governor that private forces would next block resettlement in Daviess County, which was really just a phase of the program of expelling all Saints there:

The Mormons are moving west—it is supposed they intend pushing the citizens out of Daviess; that county is in a state of great agitation. . . . The Daviess and Livingston county people, and many others, are on their way to Daviess County with one field piece, with the determination to prevent their settling in that county at all hazards.
The day after this letter was written, Warren Foote was in Far West when the report arrived that four hundred to five hundred armed anti-Mormons had collected in Daviess County.\(^{100}\) And Ebenezer Robinson remembered that private soldiers were gathering there again "with avowed determination of driving the Mormons from the county."\(^{101}\) Robinson adds that this sparked desires to retaliate in kind, which raises the specter of secret Danites bent on destruction. In reality, what started as an elite group of defenders of the faith was by now assimilated into the open organization, which now conscripted every able-bodied man for community defense. Albert P. Rockwood arrived from Massachusetts in September, at the end of the first phase of Daviess troubles, and he knew no organization except that which openly drilled as the "Armies of Israel." Not secretive, "they are seen from my door every day" in late October drills, and "the companies are called Dan," showing that the former name was now synonymous with the broader public group.\(^{102}\) Many Mormon records show serious reservations about founder Sampson Avar and his sworn special force, and he explained his dismissal before open conflict in mid-October: "I once had a command as an officer, but Joseph Smith removed me from it."\(^{103}\) This probably indicates disapproval of Avar's radicalism and also shows the October integration of old and new immigrants into a single Mormon force with consolidated command.

Joseph Smith's Missouri words are often filtered through interpreters trying to portray him as a conqueror instead of the defender of constitutional rights that he always claimed to be. A rare contemporary entry reports the thrust of his Far West speech asking for reinforcements to protect the Daviess Saints during their mid-October crisis:

He said that those who would not turn out to help suppress the mob should have their property taken to support those who would. He was very plain and pointed in his remarks and expressed a determination to put down the mob or die in the attempt. . . . He said that the Mormons would have to protect themselves, as they could not put any dependence in the militia of the state, for they were mostly mobocrats.\(^{104}\)

What the Prophet said about the militia agrees with Atchison's 16 October letter and Parks's 21 October report after visiting Daviess County. Both Parks and Doniphan had marched to quiet the area once more, but dismissed their troops because they were about to mutiny and attack the Mormons. Subsequent actions in Daviess County are lightly treated in Latter-day Saint documents but not covered up. Joseph Smith accurately summarized the next Mormon move in a sentence: "Accordingly, a force was immediately raised for the purpose of quelling the mob, and in a short time were on their march with a determination to drive the mob, or die in the attempt, as they could bear such treatment no longer."\(^{105}\) About three hundred men left
Far West for Adam-ondi-Ahman on Tuesday, 16 October, and one week later Albert Rockwood watched the return of those mounted, about half that number, with those on foot probably following soon afterward. Of course such a relief expedition increased hatred and hostility, but that was already so severe that Mormons could not live or travel safely in Daviess County. A week before these reinforcements were sent, John D. Lee and three others went out into the upper Daviess country to gather honey and were accosted by "a large number" of armed men, but he pretended to be an Illinois immigrant who knew nothing of local affairs. The men called themselves "state volunteers" and informed Lee of the election fracas and the common understanding that Mormons must leave before "they rule the country as they please." They then explained the coming program to "go through the Mormon settlements, and burn up every house, and lynch every damned Mormon they could find," insisting that such work would start as soon as the expected removal of militia units took place.

On 16 October the Caldwell reinforcements traveled some twenty-five miles from Far West to Adam-ondi-Ahman, and contingents were formed to search and destroy weapons, to gather isolated families, and to forage for survival supplies. From a tactical viewpoint, Gallatin and Millport were both about eight miles to the south of Adam-ondi-Ahman and were nearby centers that supported raids on the Mormons. For instance, Lorenzo Dow Young's farm was eight miles from Gallatin, and in early September a group warned him that he must leave or renounce his religion. Five days later a horseman rode up to Young's place and tensely explained: "I have rode from Gallatin to inform you that in two or three hours there will be a company of forty men here, who assert that if they find you here, they will fasten you and your family in your house and burn it down." Young loaded his wife, four children, and a few belongings into a wagon and immediately left for Far West. This incident shows the motive of preemptive strikes at the two non-Mormon centers in the region. John Corrill, a reluctant member of the Mormon forces in Daviess County, said that the understood goal was "not only to scatter the mob, but also to destroy those places that harbored them; that Gallatin and Millport were of that number, that . . . they meant to confine themselves to the mob characters in their plunderings." Gallatin was and is the county seat, and Millport was nearby, across the Grand River. Both were still small settlements in a new county. John D. Lee said that Gallatin had "about ten houses, three of which were saloons," but there was also a store and tailor shop. Millport was even smaller, but Chapman Duncan infiltrated the camp there and learned from the guards that three hundred irregulars had come from the Carroll County siege. Mormon rangers from Adam-ondi-Ahman burned buildings in both places.
About five hundred Mormons gathered in Daviess County, and their aggressive operations evidently caused the paralegals to retire. But the countryside could not be guarded, so Mormon squads evacuated those who had not already gathered to Adam-ondi-Ahman or to the southern area around Far West. Emergency conditions suspended the writing of Church records and many journals, so datable details are hard to find. Joseph Smith mentions with feeling how “a number whose houses were burned down” came to Adam-ondi-Ahman, in addition to others vulnerable because of remote locations. These late Daviess County conditions fit Nathan Tanner’s recollection of his rescue assignment:

Then the mob gathered and burned houses and drove the Saints out in the night from one place to another. I have picked up women and children that were skulking in the night in the brush to save their lives, or keep out of the hands of the mob. We were obliged to go and fetch in the families that were scattered, or in the out settlements, and guard those we could not fetch until they could be brought out.

In the later excitement after the Crooked River battle, exaggerated reports flew through upper Missouri. For a few days there were widespread fears of a Mormon invasion of surrounding counties. During this time, Atchison and Doniphan jointly wrote: “The Mormons have robbed and burned every house in Daviess but one or two.” But neither general had been in Daviess County after the Mormon counteractions. John Corrill reported rumors of cabins burned by Mormons: “some say eighty, and some say one hundred and fifty.” If Corrill’s highest figure were true, that would be 30 percent of the dwellings, since Atchison’s 20 September letter to the governor enumerates about five hundred households: “there are about two hundred and fifty Mormon families in Daviess County, nearly one half of the population.” But aside from the two dozen structures burned in the Gallatin–Millport area, no one can give an accurate figure. Reed Peck’s friend saw thirty blackened remains in a day’s ride through the county, but merely counting charred chimneys would not distinguish between settlers’ cabins and Mormon dwellings fired by opponents. The claim that all homes were destroyed is not true, since accounts like Benjamin Johnson’s indicate that houses were searched and not damaged or were found deserted and still standing. The preemptive strikes south of Adam-ondi-Ahman were intentionally destructive, but it appears that any burning elsewhere was selective.

Non-Mormon families in Daviess County were dispossessed during the last half of October, but careful history should not adopt the propaganda that Mormons indiscriminately burned out Daviess County.
For instance, Benjamin Johnson tells of razing for security. His company rode to destroy "arms and ammunition . . . held for the use of the mob." A terrified householder was assured of personal safety and told his dwellings might remain—if there was no cache of weapons "stored there . . . we should leave them as we found them." But arms were discovered, and they sent the family away on their horses, burning the place used as a base of operations. But Nathan Tanner commanded a squad that found the buried Carroll County cannon and cartridges for it under the floor slabs of a nearby house, which was not burned. Non-Mormons left statements that they were asked to leave their houses but mentioned no burning or returned to find them still standing. It is risky to make generalizations now or to accept uncritically all those made at the time.

Vacant dwellings and fields were an invitation to necessity, for the economy of the region was shut down, with Adam-ondi-Ahman swollen to a thousand inhabitants and early snows covering October fields, many unharvested. Survival required taking what was available, a reality only understandable in the light of accounts of Mormons who barely escaped from their homes and were barred from returning to get either possessions or crops. Johnson recalled how "foraging companies" returned with "whatever we could find, without regard to ownership . . . corn, beef, cattle, hogs, bee stands, chickens, etc." He insists that they were not "common robbers"; instead, they were prevented from getting to their own supplies and therefore "took by reprisal that with which to keep from starvation our women and children."

Some personal accounts question whether this foraging was carried beyond necessity, and such countermeasures caused several prominent Mormons to desert at the end of October. Joseph Smith is repeatedly quoted as justifying securing emergency supplies but not personal enrichment. For instance, John D. Lee said the Prophet allowed "spoil to subsist on during the war, but he did despise this little, petty stealing." One could remain faithful, as Harlow Redfield did, and still hold the view that protecting the Daviess territory was finally carried out by Wight and others with excess. Redfield received a vote of approval in his position on the high council after confessing continuing faith "notwithstanding he did not feel to fellowship all the proceedings of the brethren in Daviess County." Yet the policies behind those skirmishes were defensive, and personal effects taken were to be held in trust for the needy. Bishop Vincent Knight controlled materials brought into the storehouse at Adam-ondi-Ahman and four months later summarized the mid-October events to a nonmember friend in New York:
I would not have you think that all that the Mormons have done is exactly right, but when men are pushed as were the Mormons they will do almost anything to save their lives and the lives of their families. . . . There is not a Mormon in this Church that has had a better chance to know the minds of the leading men than I have, and I do know that they would let the Missourians alone had they been let alone.\textsuperscript{125}

When the Mormons took control of Daviess County, Atchison was still a hundred miles away at Boonville on the governor's strange assignment. In previous letters he had insisted that unless there were stronger executive action mobs would continue to pressure the Mormons, and that the Mormons possessed an "unalterable determination not to be driven." Just before the relief march to Adam-ondi-Ahman, Atchison told the governor that with his passive policy he might as well remove the militia so the parties could "fight it out."\textsuperscript{126} After such predictable events, Atchison returned to Liberty and wrote to the state capital with continued indignation that inaction was rapidly bringing the unjust banishment of Mormon citizens. Field Generals Doniphan and Parks continued to agree with Atchison that a Mormon persecution was in progress, even though they were shocked by the vigorous responses in Daviess County. Parks updated Atchison on 21 October, reporting that he had been in Adam-ondi-Ahman the previous week to see five hundred armed Mormons, two hundred of whom were mounted. He reiterated their determination not to be "driven from that place," adding that they had struck back and were "now the aggressors." He also reviewed how he and Doniphan were forced to dismiss the militia because their men "intended to act against Adam-ondi-Ahman." He said that calling more regional troops would do nothing unless in massive force "to fright the Mormons and drive them from the country. This would satisfy the people, but I cannot agree to it."\textsuperscript{127}

On the basis of such reports, General Atchison wrote Governor Boggs on 22 October, outlining the damage done by both sides in Daviess County, including the Mormon raids on Millport and Gallatin, and adding his evaluation: "It seems that the Mormons have become desperate, and act like mad-men." He put the burden of action on the governor with the reminder that regional militia was now unreliable because tied closely to the anti-Mormon groups. While criticizing what he regarded as their excessive countermeasures, Atchison still retained the perspective that the Mormons were citizens and that the government had silently become a party to their expulsion:

I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob. If the Mormons are to be driven from their homes, let it be done without any color of law and in open defiance thereof; let it be done by volunteers acting upon their own responsibilities.\textsuperscript{128}
ATCHISON’S REMOVAL

The next event in the conflict wrested the initiative from Atchison and destroyed his hopes of moderation. On 23 October, Captain Bogart wrote Atchison that he had marched his company through Ray County to the southern line of Mormon Caldwell, in order to repel any Mormon “outrage,” closing with his paralegal reminder to the general: “I learn that the people of Ray are going to take the law into their own hands, and put an end to the Mormon War.” Peter Burnett, Atchison’s friend who would soon be Mormon counsel in the Richmond hearing, said that the general ratified the border patrol to “preserve the peace between the people of the two counties.” On 23 October, Atchison authorized Bogart to prevent “any invasion of Ray County by any persons in arms whatever” and ordered him to keep the general informed on “the state of things in Daviess County.” Atchison obviously did not expect trouble, since he closed, “I will endeavor to be with you in a few days, etc.”

The sequel is well known in Mormon history. Burnett, a militia member close to the Liberty generals, told how Bogart managed his defensive assignment:

But Captain Bogart was not a very discreet man, and his men were of much the same character. Instead of confining himself and his men within the limits of his own county, he marched one day into the edge of Caldwell, and was not only rather rude to the Mormons residing there, but arrested one or two of them, whom he detained for some little time.

The Mormon militia was immediately sent with the purpose of freeing hostages and repelling an assumed invasion. The Battle of Crooked River followed, where some men were killed or seriously wounded on both sides, and in these circumstances the Mormons were unfortunate enough to be victorious. As magnified rumors of the clash spread, Ray County leaders panicked and sent the governor emergency calls for help to prevent wholesale slaughter and the burning of Ray County cities. But Mormon sources show no intention of invading Ray County—only the intent to defend their own county from mobs.

For whatever reason, Governor Boggs had no difficulty prejudging the Mormon menace. As chief executive, he had an immediate responsibility for protecting the public peace. Why did he not feel the same urgency on earlier occasions when Mormons sent desperate calls for protection? Given his perception of imminent invasion and bloodshed, the situation required firm use of police power to restore peace. But Governor Boggs used an extreme remedy without hearing from both sides, which suggests that he had already made up his mind on the problem and its political solution. He adopted the slogans long used by private regulators in every problem county: Mormons “must be
treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace.'"134

At this point General Atchison still held military jurisdiction over the area of conflict. Assuming the danger of the Mormons invading Ray County, and no doubt the reverse possibility, he joined with the commanding general of the next militia district to remind the governor that his presence was "absolutely necessary." But this 28 October appeal made no impact, since Governor Boggs had issued the Extermination Order the day before. Atchison was evidently out of contact with Mormon leaders when he moved to "keep them in check" three days after the Crooked River battle. Both he and Lucas were major generals and wrote from their Ray County headquarters: "From late outrages committed by the Mormons, civil war is inevitable. They have set the laws of the country at defiance and are in open rebellion."135

Such language does not show that Atchison turned against the Mormons as much as that he was consistently on the side of legal solutions throughout this conflict. To the extent that their late tactics exceeded the law, he could not justify them. On the other hand, Atchison continued to believe that they were victimized by the lawlessness of those who drove them out of Carroll County and began to repeat the process in Daviess County. His views on the Mormon crisis are condensed in the request that he and Doniphan made to the federal commander at nearby Fort Leavenworth. Writing two days after the Crooked River battle, Atchison and Doniphan requested additional small arms to leave in their communities as the able men took weapons in the militia campaign against the Mormons. They added a summary of the causation, which emerges as an essential statement because it was written by the generals best informed on both Mormon and citizen actions up to the time of the Crooked River engagement:

> The citizens of Daviess, Carroll, and some other northern counties have raised mob after mob for the last two months for the purpose of driving a community of fanatics (called Mormons) from those counties and from the State. Those things have at length goaded the Mormons into a state of desperation that has now made them aggressors instead of acting on the defensive. This places the citizens of this whole community in the unpleasant attitude that the civil and decent part of the community have now to engage in war to arrest a torrent that has been let loose by a cowardly mob, and from which they have dastardly fled on the first show of danger.136

Though public opinion and the governor's Extermination Order would not allow it, the Mormons needed negotiation, not subjugation. After a day of adjusting to the shock of facing state militia, Mormon leaders surrendered without a shot. Atchison was senior field officer as the army marched from Richmond to Far West, but he surrendered command when word reached him that Clark of Howard County had
been placed in charge of state troops. However, the new commander did not arrive on the scene until after Lucas and Doniphan had accepted the surrender of Far West. While finalizing terms, Doniphan first read the Extermination Order, which directed his operations. As lawyers, he and Atchison would have similar reactions. Doniphan later said, "In my report to Governor Boggs I stated to him that I had disregarded that part of his order, as the age of extermination was over, and if I attempted to remove them to some other state it would only cause additional trouble."137

Did General Atchison leave the field in protest over the governor's illegal command? Evidently not. Instead he was removed from command because he had previously insisted on constitutional principles. Commentators have puzzled over Atchison's "seemingly unnecessary withdrawal from the conflict," but he clearly was dismissed.138 His personal feelings about the release crop up in General Clark's bootlicking comment to the governor: "I regret exceedingly to learn that any acts of yours should create any heart burnings... to such an extent as I understand exists with General Atchison."139 However, such emotions were not the cause of Atchison's withdrawal, according to all sources close to him. Atchison's pattern was to take Boggs's policies (or lack of them), make the best of them, and not eliminate his chance of tempering their result by quitting. Governor Boggs simply used characteristic indirection in dismissing him, later commenting that Atchison "was not ordered out" because he should be at the coming legislature, and because "there was much dissatisfaction manifested towards him by the people opposed to the Mormons."140

In the same letter Governor Boggs indicated that co-commander Lucas was not ordered out either, though he had the option to act in lesser rank and command the brigade authorized from his Jackson County district. The governor had issued two activation orders, one based on information from Daviess County and the stronger extermination directive after he heard of the Crooked River battle. Atchison's district was passed over, but Lucas's district was named, giving him a reason which Atchison did not have for continuing with the expedition.141 According to Lucas, the two had led their forces some seven miles short of the Mormon capital when they received the two mobilizing orders of the governor: "at this point Major General Atchison left me and returned home to Liberty."142 An articulate aide of General Parks was in staff meetings then and wrote at the time: "General Atchison returned home, considering himself dismissed by the governor in appointing General Clark to the command."143 This was 30 October, the day before Joseph Smith gave himself up as a hostage. Fellow attorney Peter Burnett edited a Liberty newspaper and agrees with the other best sources: "General Atchison and his staff returned
home, having considered himself virtually ordered from the field by General Boggs.'\textsuperscript{144}

The general who saved Joseph Smith's life added details within this framework. When later requesting Mormon leaders to help his former aide get established in business, Doniphan said that Atchison asked him to remain as an influence for fair treatment of the Mormons:

I commanded a brigade from Clay under General Atchison. When in Caldwell and about to open negotiations, General Atchison received an order from Governor Boggs requiring him to yield up the command to General Lucas. Thereupon Atchison withdrew and retired home.

And feeling indignant at the treatment of our Major General, I should also have retired, had I not been persuaded by General Atchison and others that by remaining I might save the effusion of blood and much arising. We did remain, and I feel assured that every family then resident of the county will bear witness that we did save much suffering and spared no pains to prevent much that did occur.\textsuperscript{145}

\textbf{ATCHISON'S ACCURACY AND STATURE}

Strong sentiment in Clay County supported Atchison, despite Governor Boggs's dismissal. Peter Burnett's \textit{Far West} insisted that the governor "has done himself very little credit by so illiberal a course of procedure."\textsuperscript{146} Not only was friendship expressed, but also approval of Atchison's Mormon policies:

There will be a dinner given to General Atchison on Monday next at the Liberty Hotel, a tribute of the high regard and esteem entertained for his personal character, and his meritorious and prudent course in the late difficulties with the Mormons. The citizens of this and the surrounding counties are respectfully invited.\textsuperscript{147}

Mormon militia officer Philo Dibble said that Atchison spoke in the "public dinner" in Liberty, threatening the governor if he did not "restore my commission." If this remark is reported accurately, the meaning is ambiguous. But the physical reaction to Atchison's speech is no doubt accurate: "On hearing this the audience became so enthusiastic that they took him upon their shoulders and carried him around the public square."\textsuperscript{148}

Atchison the soldier returned to practice law and serve his term in the state legislature, where he was no longer subordinate to the governor. As in the militia letters, constitutionalism was still his theme. He proposed a bill to remove the trial of Mormon leaders to "some circuit where prejudices against them do not exist."\textsuperscript{149} He vigorously argued for a thorough legislative investigation that would expose all wrongs:
In the course of this debate, Mr. Atchison, who was for having an immediate investigation, alluded to the Governor’s order to General Clark, requiring him to exterminate or expel the Mormons from the state, if necessary for its peace and safety. This order he looked upon as unconstitutional, and he wished to have an expression of the Legislature upon it. If the Governor of the state, or any other power, had the authority to issue such orders, he wished to know it, for if so, he would not live in any state where such authority was given.\(^{150}\)

Since history is ill-equipped to speculate, it is impossible to determine whether Mormon rights to live in Missouri could have been preserved by giving Atchison firmer support in early October or keeping him in command to negotiate peace at the end of that month. But he should be recognized as the commanding officer who kept the courts functioning, minimized violence, and protected the Mormons from deportation in Daviess County. His explanation of the causes of the Mormon troubles is broader than that of General Clark and Governor Boggs because Atchison insisted on ultimate instead of immediate causation. Clark’s speech at the surrender of Far West was taken down and circulated soon afterward:

You have always been the aggressors. You have brought upon yourselves these difficulties by being disaffected and not being subject to rule. And my advice is, that you become as other citizens, lest by a reoccurrence of these events you bring upon yourselves irretrievable ruin.\(^{151}\)

Governor Boggs took the same short-term view in his Extermination Order, referring to the Crooked River battle two days before:

I have received . . . information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state.\(^{152}\)

One can ask analytically, not politically, why lawful militia defending Caldwell County were any less “the people of this State” than the contingent they clashed with that was defending Ray County. One can ask why only Latter-day Saints were guilty of “defiance of the laws,” though preventing them from voting or holding land in Daviess and Carroll counties was not labeled the same. The final conflict “entirely changes the face of things.” But should Mormon resistance in a two-week period have outweighed aggression against the Mormons during the previous two months? The governor’s two orders were only reasoned from the most recent events. Within this limited scope, the argument went that Mormons were aggressive and caused their own downfall. But going beyond this chopped logic, what caused them to be aggressive?

Civil violence is not unlike domestic violence, for the party who initiates it will likely rationalize that he was incited to anger by the
words or hostility or habits of the other. But social and religious tension is no justification for a factional war. Atchison’s letters take the long view of causation. Instead of two weeks of October, his reports to the governor began six weeks before that, when threatened Daviess Saints were acting on the “defensive” and “much alarmed.” In midperiod, naked force emerged in Carroll “for the purpose of driving the Mormons from that county.” The same week that Mormons began systematic defensive operations, Atchison reviewed the “spirit of mob and mistrust” that had eroded their confidence in Missouri law “for the last two months.”

Atchison’s letters contain an informed perspective for the 1838 Mormon conflict, distilled in the Atchison–Doniphan request for small arms from Fort Leavenworth: first “mob after mob” was raised against the Caldwell–Daviess Mormons by northern Missouri regulators; afterward the Mormons decided to meet force with force. Clark and Boggs insisted that the Mormons must be expelled from the state because they used arms against citizens. But Atchison and Doniphan reversed the reasoning—the Mormons finally used arms because they resisted being thrust again from their counties.

Instead of the “Mormon fault” theory of Clark and Boggs, Atchison and Doniphan, who had experienced earlier events, gave an explanation of sequential response. Even if we were to modify “Mormon fault” to be “mutual fault,” it would still miss the mark, for Mormons first sought peaceful solutions to repeated efforts to expel them. Their efforts at compromise, at surrender and evacuation, or at seeking administrative and judicial relief did not maintain their rights of residence. Their final choice of self-defense came after exhausting all other remedies. It came after appeals to regional and state authorities failed to prevent their ejection from Carroll County. And while they finally used extreme resistance strategy, these counteractions were really not central in their banishment from Missouri. Even before the burning of Gallatin and the attack on Bogart’s company, the vocal segment of upper Missouri was already organized, demanding Mormon exile from the state, and had the momentum of events to accomplish it, including the passive cooperation of Governor Boggs.

Mormon defensive operations began because they believed the clear statements of intention of the citizen–volunteers after their Carroll County victory. General Atchison interpreted anti-Mormon intentions similarly when he told the governor that the cannon and many paralegal patriots were headed to Daviess County, where it was expected that Mormons would “be driven from that county, and probably from Caldwell County.” A member of the non-Mormon arbitration team at De Witt gave the same view after conversing with older citizens. The latter would now keep their pledge “to assist any county who assisted
them." Thus the Mormons headed for their own county would not
find security, since "the adjoining counties to Caldwell will never be
contented until they leave the State." \footnote{155} Carroll regulators marched
north and released two prisoners with a promise: "they meant to drive
the Mormons from Daviess to Caldwell, and from Caldwell to hell." \footnote{156}

Atchison was in regular contact with the anti-Mormon forces and
believed that they had the intention and capacity to drive the Latter-
day Saints from upper Missouri—prior to the Mormon counteraction
that sought to prevent it. Mormon leaders made the same informed
judgment: they could choose to do nothing and be expelled or choose
to resist and give their enemies the excuse to drive them out in the
name of defending the state. Of course the latter happened, with the
administrators of expulsion explaining that the Mormons were being
justly punished.

It is a truism that both sides contribute to misunderstanding in
a dispute, but that view of the 1838 expulsion does not reach the real
historical issues. An episodic view of these events is a mistake, as though
"chance might so easily have given events a happier turn." \footnote{157} Upper
Missouri society might have tolerated quiet minorities in small numbers,
but the Latter-day Saints had a powerful program of conversion and
gathering. Moreover, the Mormon center shifted from Ohio to Missouri
at the beginning of 1838. All Missouri tensions that year really reflect
the heavy migration and unlimited prospect of more. The removal of
the Carroll County Mormons was only a reminder of this unsolved
problem, for Captain Bogart complained to the governor that the
Mormons at De Witt "were mostly Canadians," a phrase meant to
suggest several things, one of which was the specter of immigration. \footnote{158}
An irritating reminder was the Canadian group of John E. Page, arriving
at De Witt "the first week of October, with a company occupying thirty
wagons." \footnote{159} Such arrivals were regular in Latter-day Saint centers that
fall. Albert P. Rockwood wrote from Far West at the same time:
"Emigration to the west is quite fast; every day witnesses about
30 teams." \footnote{160}

Both sides realized then that moving Mormons from one county
to another was no longer possible. A thousand new Mormons arriving
in September and October did more to strengthen anti-Mormon resolve
than the symptomatic skirmishing in Daviess County. No Mormon
pacifism or diplomacy would change the fundamental problem. The
migration that threatened to shift control of Jackson County in 1833
cast a dark shadow on a whole region in 1838. The mutual suspicions,
provocations, misconceptions, and skirmishes were all stage props in
a drama pitting a Missouri Mormon population that increased from
one thousand to ten thousand in five years against a traditional society
resistant to cultural and religious differences. This central source of
tension explains why Mormon provocations, whether slight or serious, were immediately acted upon with intensity and without sustained negotiations.

In these conflicts, Atchison managed to cause some dissatisfaction among both non-Mormons and Mormons, an indication of his independent position. In the frustration of his long imprisonment at Liberty, Joseph Smith saw Atchison as an obstacle to justice: ‘I would just name also that General Atchison has proved himself to be as contemptible as any of them. We have tried for a long time to get our lawyers to draw us some petitions to the supreme judges of this State, but they utterly refused.’\textsuperscript{161} Although the context here is the failure of justice in the legislature, Atchison had in fact supported the Mormons there. The Prophet is evidently complaining that Atchison and other Liberty attorneys should have long since made some sort of appeal to give him a chance at freedom. Atchison may have made a procedural judgment, whereas the Prophet was concerned with justice. Perhaps Joseph Smith misconceived the power of the Missouri Supreme Court. He was bound over for trial that winter, and his case had to be decided before appeal could be taken. And clemency would have to come from the executive.

Was the ultimate cruelty of Liberty Jail receiving false information that the Prophet’s Missouri friends had turned against him? Whether a planted rumor or exaggerated statement, it came to Joseph at the end of imprisonment that General Atchison had joined in the regional outcry that the prisoners should die: ‘This is according to the information I have received, which I suppose to be true.’\textsuperscript{162} But this report is corrected by Heber C. Kimball’s comments on visiting Andrew Hughes and other members of the Clay County bar in order to get legal assistance for Joseph Smith and the other ‘brethren’ in Liberty Jail. In his early memoirs Heber wrote of the attitude of these lawyers two weeks after the above statement of Joseph Smith:

There were several men in Liberty who were very friendly to the brethren. I called on them when I went there, and they treated me with great civility. Among these were General Doniphan and Atchison and the keeper of the tavern where I put up at. . . . Those men whom I have named and several others revolted at the scenes enacted against the Mormons.\textsuperscript{163}

Atchison still was sympathetic when Heber C. Kimball and Lyman Wight visited him in Washington, D.C., in 1844. He mildly encouraged their congressional petition for Missouri losses, but added that they should not ignore the courts. The report of these veterans of the expulsion indicated that Senator Atchison still felt the Mormons had been victims of injustice in 1838: ‘General Atchison is of the opinion if we could sue the State of Missouri for redress of grievances,
that there was virtue enough in the State to answer our demands, 'for,' said he, 'they are ashamed of their conduct.'

In Nauvoo Joseph Smith did not list Atchison among the officers who were the "leading characters in the unparalleled persecutions against the Church of Latter Day Saints." And Hyrum Smith also paid Atchison the same compliment of eliminating him from the list of leaders who brought about the Mormon expulsion—Atchison was not one who violated "the Constitution and laws of the State of Missouri." Indeed, Mormons at that time realized that there were others besides Alexander Doniphan who understood their plight and sought to protect the rights of a minority with unpopular beliefs. Eliza R. Snow not only described how Alexander Doniphan had saved Joseph Smith from an illegal firing squad, but she added that other Missourians deserved to be recognized as moral heroes in the expulsions of 1838: "There are those who, actuated by the spirit of republicanism and without any partiality to the religious views of our society, have risked their reputation and endangered their lives by pleading the cause of the innocent." One addition to Doniphan in this select group is his law associate and military commander, David Rice Atchison.

NOTES

1 David R. Atchison to Governor Liburn W. Boggs, Liberty, Mo., 22 October 1838, in Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons; and the Evidence Given before the Hon. Austin A. King (Fayette, Mo.: Boon's Lick Democrat, 1841), 46 (hereafter cited as Document). Quotations in this article are generally standardized in spelling and punctuation.

2 See, for example, the Kansas City Daily Journal interview, 12 June 1881, where he gave religious bigotry and opposition to suspected abolitionism as the main causes of aggression against a people who in the main were "law abiding citizens."

3 Samuel Bogart to Governor Boggs, Elk Horn, Ray County, Mo., 13 October 1838, in Document, 42.


5 Peter Burnett, Recollections of an Old Pioneer (New York: D. Appleton, 1880), 76, 80-81.

6 These Alexander W. Doniphan quotations come from his biography of Atchison in the History of Clinton County, Missouri (St. Joseph, Mo.: National Historical Co., 1891), 441-42. See also Atchison's obituary by J. T. Child in the Richmond Conserver, 28 January 1886: "a mind well stored with literary lore."

7 See the summary of Atchison's early life in the preface of the scholarly Parrish biography. See also biographical summaries published in Atchison's lifetime by Doniphan in the History of Clinton County, Missouri, and by Walter Bickford Davis and Daniel S. Durrie in An Illustrated History of Missouri (St. Louis: A. J. Hall, 1876), 466.


9 Amos Rees to Governor Daniel Dunklin, Liberty, Mo., postscript to letter of 29 November 1833, in Times and Seasons 6 (1 June 1845): 913; also cited in History of the Church 1:448.

10 W. W. Phelps to Kirtland LDS Leaders, 27 February 1834, The Evening and the Morning Star 2 (March 1834): 139; also cited in History of the Church 1:481-82.


12 Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal, Times and Seasons 6 (15 March 1845): 838. Compare George A. Smith, "Memoirs," 24 June 1834, typescript, 24, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah: on the upper Fishing River "we were met by General Atchison and other gentlemen, who informed us the people of Liberty were very much excited."
Atchison’s Letters


14Journal of Don Carlos Smith, in Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith (Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1853), 283–85. Supplemental details are given in Smith, “Memoirs,” 50–51. The latter explains why Atchison would leave the scene of conflict though he was commander of the military district: “These military chieftains were summoned by Governor Boggs to attend a court martial to be held at Columbus for the trial of Major General Powell, who was charged with having been drunk on parole.” The trial was evidently held at nearby Boonville, since the letters of Atchison and Lucas originate there from 4 October through 16 October. See n. 72.


16W. M. Paxton, Annals of Platte County, Missouri (Kansas City: Hudson–Kimberly, 1897), 53.

17See n. 4. This account of the remainder of Atchison’s life depends upon the detailed narrative and documentation in the final chapters of Parrish.

18Atchison to Davis, 24 September 1854, State Historical Society of Missouri, Manuscripts, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.; also cited in Parrish, David Rice Atchison, 164.

19Parrish, David Rice Atchison, 164. For his operational influence against violence see ibid., 200–202 and 203–7.


21Cited in Parrish, David Rice Atchison, 23.

22Congressional Globe, 34th Congress, 1st Session, 546; also cited in Parrish, David Rice Atchison, 197.

23Events are narrated with documents in chaps. 27–51 of vol. 1 of History of the Church.


27In the 1830 census Jackson County had a population of 2,823 and an estimated population in 1836 of 4,522 (see Alphonso Wetmore, Gazetteer of the State of Missouri [St. Louis: C. Keenle, 1837], 267). The percentage figure is based on 1,200 Jackson Mormons in 1833 (see n. 26) and an estimate of about 3,800 total population then. For cultural–religious conflict, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Jackson County in Early Mormon Descriptions,” Missouri Historical Review 65 (April 1971): 270–93.

28Compare "The History of Thomas Baldwin Marshall" (1857), Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star 26 (1864): 391. Recalling his presentation to the Clay County committee, Marsh recounts: “I was appointed by said committee, spokesman, and was enabled to speak so feelingly in relation to our previous persecutions and expulsions, that General Atchison could not refrain from shedding tears.”


30John Corrill, A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints (St. Louis: Privately printed, 1839), 19.

31Ibid., 26.


33Ibid., 508. Wilson’s addition has been corrected.

34John Murdock, “An Abridged Record,” typescript, 29, in Library–Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Compare Murdock, “Synopsis of My History,” typescript, 163: “John Corrill and myself were appointed a committee to meet the people in Richmond and intercede with them for the privilege to go to Shool Creek.”


36Kansas City Daily Journal, 12 June 1881.

37Alexander Doniphan to William W. Phelps, Jefferson City, Mo., 8 January 1837, LDS Church Archives.

38Kansas City Daily Journal, 12 June 1881.

39Motto of the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints,” in George W. Robinson, “The Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith, Jr., President of The Church of Jesus Christ in All the World,” 16, LDS Church Archives; also cited in History of the Church 3:9.

40Oration Delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon, on the 4th of July, 1838 (Far West; Journal Office, 1838), 12; reprinted in Peter Crawley, “Two Rare Missouri Documents,” BYU Studies 14 (Summer 1974): 527.

41Ibid.

42Editorial statement, 14 September 1838, Western Star (Liberty, Mo.), cited in Missouri Argus (St. Louis, Mo.), 27 September 1838, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as BYU).

See the Black statement in *History of the Church* 3:60. Black's testimony at Joseph Smith's 7 September hearing confirmed the basic contents of his agreement to treat the Mormons lawfully (see Document, 162).

*Document, 162.*

Doovnill Emigrant, 13 September 1838, cited in *Missouri Republican Daily* (St. Louis), 19 September 1838. This and other newspaper articles cited are conveniently found in the typescript collection of newspaper articles entitled "Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri," Special Collections, BYU.

See the proceedings of public meetings in Independence on 4 and 8 September 1838 printed in the *Southern Advocate* (Jackson, Mo.), 29 September 1838. They met to consider "an express, from a committee of Daviess Co. under date of the 29th Aug., 1838." Resolutions were made to send help "when called on by proper authority," though men were asked to travel to Daviess County the following Monday without a legal order of the militia.


Ibid., 67.

The purported Atchison letter exists in the LDS Church Archives only in photocopy and was acquired in 1961, as the Hofmann forgeries began to appear. In form it is D. R. Atchison to Joseph Smith, 1 September 1838, but the writing differs from Atchison’s informal handwriting, which is angular and assertive, with heavy vertical strokes. However, the supposed Atchison-Joseph Smith document has more flourishes and is more rounding, though it appears to be an intelligent attempt to copy many of Atchison's characters. The document is accepted without comment in Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 79.

Robinson, "Scriptory Book," 2 September 1838, 77-78.

"Philo Dibble's Narrative," in *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 88.

"Scriptory Book," 78.

Ibid.

"Philo Dibble's Narrative," 88-89. LeSueur adds the imagined dramatic detail that Atchison's warning was given while "fingering his gun" (LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 80-81). But his threat probably hinted at Mormon resources, including a contingent stationed nearby that would retaliate immediately. George A. Smith apparently refers only to the friends of Joseph at the trial itself. "Many of the brethren from Far West had accompanied Joseph and Hyrum, and concealed their arms in the woods, fearing treachery, as a great number of the mob were in attendance" ("Memoirs," 48). However, William Moore Allred was part of a Caldwell County rescue mission: "On the seventh of September previous to this, Joseph was put on trial in Daviess Co., and we heard that a mob was collecting to take him, so a company of us went out to lay in ambush near the court, in case we were needed. . . . We lay in ambush till night, and Joseph was discharged, and we returned home" (Journal, photocopy, 5, LDS Church Archives).

General Atchison to the Governor, Richmond, Mo., 12 September 1838, in *Document*, 19 (no signature).


Atchison to the Governor, Grand River, 17 September 1838, in *Document*, 26. See *History of the Church* 3:80-81 for a copy of the whole letter. For Atchison’s tactics with the irregulars in the first Daviess operations, see Sidney Rigdon’s testimony in the 1843 Nauvoo hearing: "And General Atchison said, in my presence, that he took the following singular method to disperse them. He organized them with his troops as part of the militia called out to suppress and arrest the mob. After having thus organized them, he discharged them and all the rest of the troops, as having no further need for their services, and all returned home" (*Times and Seasons* 4 [15 July 1843]: 271; see also *History of the Church* 3:454).


See n. 60.

Smith, "Memoirs," 49-50. The date comes from an abstract of the legal record, *Document*, 158, which is confirmed by Atchison’s 17 September letter to the Governor (see n. 60).

Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 20 September 1838, in *Document*, 27. See *History of the Church* 3:81-82 for the first, middle, and last parts of this letter—printed without location of ellipses.


Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 27 September 1838, in *Document*, 34. See *History of the Church* 3:85 for the main part of this short letter. In narrating phase one of the Daviess County difficulties, Mormon dissenter Reed Peck said that some who went to defend Adam-ondi-Ahman told him they appropriated animals and honey from deserted homesteads. If so, this seems an exceptional case by individuals, since Atchison, Doniphan, and Parks all say that up to this point the Mormons were not lawbreakers. Possibly Peck confused the appropriations that took place in the open hostilities later (see Reed Peck, "Sketch of Mormon History," 1839, MS, 68-69, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.).
Atchison's Letters

68 Parks to Atchison, Millport, Mo., 21 September 1838, in Document, 33, which also has Parks to the Governor, with a postscript giving the same caution. Compare n. 65.
69 For details on early public opposition, see Leland H. Gentry, A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839 (Provo: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Schools, 1965), 288 ff.
70 Murdock, Abridged Record, 30. Compare the High Council minutes, which have a 6 July entry noting Hinkle’s move to De Witt, in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, Far West Record (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 197.
72 The George A. Smith entry is critical in understanding Atchison’s absence and was written to explain their emergency journey to border states to get money to buy out Daviess County settlers. George A. and Don Carlos Smith boarded at Richmond landing in Ray County: “We went on board the Kansas Steamer, September 30th, taking a deck passage at $4.00 and helped to wood. We soon found that the cabin contained a big swarm of mobocrats. Major General Samuel Lucas, Brig. General Moses Wilson of Jackson County notoriety, and Colonel Thompson from Platte country were the most prominent among them. General D. R. Atchison of Clay was also on board. These military chieftains were summoned by Governor Boggs to attend a court-martial to be held at Columbia for the trial of Major General Powell, who was charged with having been drunk on parade. The boat stopped at De Witt, where we found about 70 saints surrounded by a mob of 200 men, who threatened their extermination the next day” (Smith, “Memoirs,” 49–50). The report of Atchison’s verbal defense of the Mormons follows, discussed in the text at n. 14. The trial was evidently at Boonville instead of Smith’s nearby Columbia, since Atchison’s letters to the governor come from Boonville on 5, 9, and 16 October (Document, 35–39). However, he wrote from his home at Liberty on 27 September and 22 October (Document, 34, 46). Lucas also wrote from Boonville on 4 October (Document, 34), saying that he had talked to the De Witt Mormon commander “as we passed down the Missouri River on Monday last,” which was 1 October. So Atchison’s absence is reconstructed by integrating the above dates. He left Liberty no later than 30 September and returned no earlier than 18 October, a critical absence of almost three weeks when the government lost its power to control the conflict in Carroll and Daviess counties. Compare nn. 14 and 166.
73 Parks to Atchison, near De Witt, Mo., 7 October 1838, in Document, 37. See History of the Church 3:156–57 for most of this letter.
74 Atchison to the Governor, 5 October 1838, in Document, 35.
75 Chilcotin County Committee Report, 5 October 1838, in Document, 36.
76 William F. Dunkin to Editor, Glasgow, Mo., 7 October 1838, Missouri Republican Daily, 11 October 1838; also cited in Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons, 99.
77 See n. 75.
78 Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 20 September 1838, in Document, 28. Compare n. 64.
79 Captain Samuel Bogart to the Governor, Elk Horn, Mo., 13 October 1838, in Document, 41–42. Compare a Carroll County resident’s report that exaggerates casualties but shows the alliance between the irregulars and the militia: “There are 2 or 300 Mormons at De Witt . . . and nearly all the men of our county have been called out against them. . . . The militia have been called out to suppress the mob, but I believe they intend helping to kill them. They have taken a few shots and the report seems to be established that about 5 Mormons have been killed” (Edward Lampkin to Thomas Bradford, Carrollton, Mo., 14 October 1838, cited in Dialogue: A Jour. of Mormon Thought 11 [Winter 1978]: 113).
80 De Witt Citizens to Howard County Citizens, near De Witt, Mo., 7 October 1838, in Document, 40.
82 Albert P. Rockwood’s first letter from Far West was written Saturday, 6 October, noting that two relief groups left Friday: Brunson and forty-two men in the morning, and “Friday another company started under Bro. Joseph.” Rockwood had a report that Brunson’s group had arrived at the time of his letter, though he says nothing more about Joseph Smith’s group. The De Witt citizens also mention the arrival of two Mormon reserve groups at this time. Writing Sunday, 7 October, they noted the arrival of a hundred “two nights ago” and added: “About two hours ago the Mormons were reinforced by sixty-two mounted men, well armed, from Far West.” BYU archivist David Whittaker shared his transcription of the Rockwood letter—journal held by the Beinecke Library, Yale University.
84 Compare Murdock, Abridged Record, 34: “And for a month or two we had been importuning to the . . . Circuit Judge, and the Governor . . . and all hope of protection or right of citizenship failed us;”
85 Carroll, A Brief History, 36: “This, the Governor has since told me, was a mistake; for . . . Gen. Archison and other officers had full power to act when necessary, without an order from him.”
88 Atchison to the Governor, Boonville, Mo., 9 October 1838, in Document, 38. This letter is not printed in the History of the Church but is important enough to reproduce in full from the above source:
Boonville, Oct. 9, 1838.

To the Commander-in-Chief.

Sir: —Enclosed you will receive a communication from Gen. Parks, which I deem my duty to forward to your Excellency. I have required Gen. Doniphan with the troops from Clay, Clinton and the Platte, to co-operate with Gen. Parks; I have also instructed Parks to prevent armed Mormons from marching to De Witt, and also to send back or take into custody, all the Mormons from Caldwell county, who may be found in arms in Carroll county; also to disperse all armed bands of citizens from other counties found in Carroll.

I have also suggested to Parks to urge it upon the Mormons in Carroll county to sell out and remove elsewhere, and also to urge the citizens to make the proposition to buy. I have no doubt but your Excellency, if you should deem it your duty to proceed to Carroll county, could restore peace. I would have forwarded this communication by express, but was informed that you were at St. Louis. It is therefore sent by mail. If you deem it necessary to proceed to Carroll county, I would respectfully suggest that it should be done as quick as possible.

I have the honor to be, &c.,
D. R. ATCHISON.

P.S. If your Excellency should deem it necessary to proceed to Carroll county, Boonville will be in your route, when it would give me great pleasure to see your Excellency, at which time I will be prepared to give all information as to the difficulties between the Mormons and citizens, as far as it could be obtained.

D. R. A.

---

89Parks to Atchison, near De Witt, Mo., 7 October 1838, in Document, 38. See History of the Church 3:155–56 for part of this letter. How firm leadership might have aided the community conscience is illustrated by the waverings of a Carroll County resident, who wrote at the peak of prejudice after he marched on Far West. Before being mobilized in the militia, he volunteered in the private attack on De Witt: "I have until recently been disposed to pity all except the leaders—in them I never had any confidence. The mob which raised in this county some weeks since and drove those who had settled in a little place called De Witt, I did not at first approve of, but I finally believed they were right, and I joined in with them" (Arthur Bradford to Thomas Bradford, Carrollton, Mo., 13 November 1838, cited in Dialogue 11 [Winter 1978]: 115).

90Atchison to the Governor, Boonville, Mo., 16 October 1838, in Document, 39. The 16 October letter is not in the History of the Church but is pivotal and reproduced here from the above source.

To His Excellency, L. W. BOGGS.

Sir: —From a communication received from Gen. Parks, I learn that the Mormons in Carroll county have sold out and left, consequently everything is quiet there, but Parks reports that a portion of the men from Carroll county, with one piece of artillery, are on their march for Daviess county, where it is thought the same lawless game is to be played over, and the Mormons to be driven from that county and probably from Caldwell county. Nothing, in my opinion, but the strongest measures within the power of the Executive, will put down this spirit of mobocracy.

The troops ordered into the field, from Parks' report, partake, in a great degree, of the mob spirit, so that no reliance can be placed upon them; however, in this I believe Parks to be mistaken. I would respectfully suggest to your Excellency the propriety of a visit to the scene of excitement in person, or at all events, a strong proclamation. The state of things which have existed in the counties of Daviess and Carroll for the last two months, has been, in a high degree, ruinous to the public, and disgraceful to the State. I would again respectfully suggest strong measures to put down this spirit of mob and misrule, or permit them to fight it out. If your Excellency should conclude the latter expedient best calculated to produce quiet and restore order, issue an order to the Major General, 3d Division, to discharge the troops now engaged in that service.

I have the honor, &c.,
D. R. Atchison.

---

91Ibid.
92Robinson, 1 September 1838, 75.
93Ibid., 1 September 1838, 76.
94Ibid., 9 September 1838, 82.
95Ibid., 1 September 1838, 76.
97See Murdock, "Abridged Record," 34: "on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of Oct. the brethren arrived in Caldwell County." Compare Rockwood's letter-journal, 15 October 1838: "The brethren have all returned from De Witt."
Atchison's Letters

9Judge Austin A. King to the Governor, Richmond, Mo., 24 October 1838, in Document, 53.
10Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," The Return 1 (December 1889): 189.
11Rockwood, retrospective entry in letter of 29 October 1838.
12Sampson Award, testimony at Richmond hearing, November 1838, in Document, 99. Compare the text in this article at n. 43.
15Foote and other sources indicate that the relief expedition started at the beginning of the week of 15 October. Rockwood’s letter of 29 October 1838 sequences earlier events, noting 23 October that 130 cavalry from the reinforcing expedition returned "last night, 7 o’clock."
16A new study leaves the impression at several points that serious violence to the Mormons came after their military actions in Daviess County, but the opposite is true—Mormon actions there responded to serious expulsion threats of the kind just carried out in Carroll County. Moreover, they were reported by responsible people in touch with the public defenders operating against the Mormons: see nn. 154–56. Le Sueur’s The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri inverts sequence twice in trying to document attacks on Mormons in retaliation for the Mormon initiative in Daviess County, which began when Caldwell reinforcements arrived on 16 October. The first case is the harassing of William H. Walker’s immigrant group (Le Sueur, The 1838 Mormon War, 128), but Walker says that their harsh warning was received before Daviess hostilities: "About the 15th we were surrounded by a mob while travelling . . . and robbed of all their firearms and ammunitions." The second case is that of the formidable anti-Mormon Cornelius Gilliam, who supposedly "later cited the Mormon depredations in Daviess County as the reason why he called out his regiment" (Le Sueur, The 1838 Mormon War, 129). But Gilliam’s rationalizing Missouri Senate speech simply says that he saw families dispossessed, not that his self-sustained local unit was called up after that (see the Missouri Argus [St. Louis], 15 February 1839, microfilm). Gilliam’s daughter is quoted (ibid.) for the proposition that their relatives had been burned out by Mormons and her father’s overdone campaign was retaliation. But that tradition hardly reaches historical standards—Martha was born the year after the Mormon expulsion, and her father died before she turned nine (see Fred Lockley, "Reminiscences of Mrs. Frank Collins," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society 17 [December 1916]: 358, 366).
18"Lorenzo Dow Young’s Narrative," Fragments of Experience (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 48–49. The detailed biography-autobiography which is the source of this narrative was made by Lorenzo’s nephew and gives specific dating here. Lorenzo was called for two weeks of guard duty at Adam-ondi-Ahman after the 6 August election fight. His final warning to leave was given about two weeks after that. See James Amasa Little, "Biography of Lorenzo Dow Young," Utah Historical Quarterly 14 (1946): 48–51.
19Corril, A Brief History, 38.
20Lee, Mormonism Unveiled, 59. For the buildings used as a store and a tailor shop, see Joseph H. McGee, Story of the Grand River Country (Gallatin, Mo.: N.p., 1909), 12.
21Chapman Duncan, "Biography," typescript, 36–37, BYU. A secondary but responsible county history indicates that Millport stood "about three miles due east of Gallatin" and consisted of the Peniston mill, a blacksmith shop, and a few stores. "In 1837 Gallatin was founded and much of Millport’s business was transferred to the new town, and in 1838 the Mormons burned the buildings that remained, and all that was left of Millport was the memory of its name and the place where it once stood" (John P. Jordan, Memoirs [Gallatin, Mo.: North Missoulian Press, 1904], unabridged; in the chapter on Theodore Peniston).
22"Extract from . . . Joseph Smith," Times and Seasons 1 (November 1839): 4. For instance, Chapman Duncan had his house shot up after the Gallatin election, and his family moved to Adam-ondi-Ahman, evidently at once: "The mob burned all of my buildings and destroyed all my bees. I never saved one hog out of eighty head" (Duncan, "Biography," 36); also in Jesse, Personal Writings, 436.
23Nathan Tanner, "Incidents in the Life of Nathan Tanner," MS, 28, BYU; also see ibid., typescript, 10–11, BYU.
24David R. Atchison and A. W. Doniphan to Col. Mason, Liberty, Mo., 27 October 1838, photocopy of National Archives MS. Compare McGee, Story of the Grand River Country, 12–13, who lived at Gallatin and afterward with his father at Winston; McGee claims: "There was scarcely a Missourian’s house left standing in the country." But he saw burnings only on the horizon and had personal experience only at the locations south of Adam-ondi-Ahman. The occupation general of Adam-ondi-Ahman also reported that "the whole country is laid waste," but gave his view "as far as my observation and information extanted," suggesting perhaps knowledge of the south of the Daviess area (Robert Wilson to Clark, Keyesville, Mo., 23 November 1838, in Document, 88).
25Corril, A Brief History, 38.
26Peck, "Sketch of Mormon History," 151.
28Tanner, "Incidents in the Life of Nathan Tanner," 32–33; also ibid., typescript, 12.
30Johnson, My Life’s Review, 37.
31Ibid., 42–43.
To His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief:

Sir:—Almost every hour I receive information of outrage and violence—of burning and plundering in the county of Daviess. It seems that the Mormons have become desperate, and act like mad-men; they have burned a store in Gallatin; they have burnt Millport; they have, it is said, plundered several houses; and have taken away the arms from divers citizens of that county; a cannon that was employed in the siege of De Witt, in Carroll county, and taken for a like purpose to Daviess county, has fallen into the hands of the Mormons. It is also reported that the anti-Mormons have, when opportunity offered, disarmed the Mormons, and burnt several of their houses.

The great difficulty in settling this matter, seems to be in not being able to identify the offenders. I am convinced that nothing short of driving the Mormons from Daviess county will satisfy the parties opposed to them; and this I have not the power to do, as I conceive, legally. There are no troops at this time in Daviess county, nor do I deem it expedient to send any there, for I am well convinced that it would but make matters worse; for, sir, I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob. If the Mormons are to be driven from their homes, let it be done without any color of law, and in open defiance thereof; let it be done by volunteers acting upon their own responsibilities.

However, I deem it my duty to submit these matters to the Commander-in-Chief, and will conclude by saying it will be my greatest pleasure to execute any order your Excellency shall think proper to give in this matter with promptness, and to the very letter.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't.
David R. Atchison.
Maj. Gen'l. 3d Div. Mo. Mi.

N. B. I herewith inclose to you a report from General Parks; also one from Capt. Bogart.

D. R. A.

---

123Lee, Mormonism Unveiled, 90.
125Vinson Knight to William Cooper, Esq., Spencerburg, Mo., 3 February 1838, family copy courtesy of Brent Belnap.
126See Atchison's letters to the Governor of 20 September and 16 October, in Document, 39.
128Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 22 October 1838, in Document, 46–47. The letter does not appear in History of the Church but is reproduced here from the above source because it shows that Atchison continued in his convictions that an illegal dispossession of the Mormons was in process, in spite of their Daviess defensive tactics:

Liberty, October 22, 1838.

To His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief

Sir:—Almost every hour I receive information of outrage and violence—of burning and plundering in the county of Daviess. It seems that the Mormons have become desperate, and act like mad-men; they have burned a store in Gallatin; they have burnt Millport; they have, it is said, plundered several houses; and have taken away the arms from divers citizens of that county; a cannon that was employed in the siege of De Witt, in Carroll county, and taken for a like purpose to Daviess county, has fallen into the hands of the Mormons. It is also reported that the anti-Mormons have, when opportunity offered, disarmed the Mormons, and burnt several of their houses.

The great difficulty in settling this matter, seems to be in not being able to identify the offenders. I am convinced that nothing short of driving the Mormons from Daviess county will satisfy the parties opposed to them; and this I have not the power to do, as I conceive, legally. There are no troops at this time in Daviess county, nor do I deem it expedient to send any there, for I am well convinced that it would but make matters worse; for, sir, I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob. If the Mormons are to be driven from their homes, let it be done without any color of law, and in open defiance thereof; let it be done by volunteers acting upon their own responsibilities.

However, I deem it my duty to submit these matters to the Commander-in-Chief, and will conclude by saying it will be my greatest pleasure to execute any order your Excellency shall think proper to give in this matter with promptness, and to the very letter.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't.
David R. Atchison.
Maj. Gen'l. 3d Div. Mo. Mi.

N. B. I herewith inclose to you a report from General Parks; also one from Capt. Bogart.

D. R. A.
Atchison's Letters

Governor to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 26 and 27 October 1838, in Document, 61-63. The 26 October letter includes an activation order for four hundred men to the commander of the Fourth Division, who was Lucas. Copies of both are in History of the Church 3:473-75.

Samuel D. Lucas to the Governor, Independence, Mo., 5 November 1838, in Document, 71. Compare Lucas to the Governor, near Far West, Mo., 2 November 1838, in Document, 72, stating that "we received" the 26 October order, and that "I received" the 27 October order: "At this point Maj. Gen. Atchison left me for Liberty, when I was left in sole command." See n. 141.

Letter to A. B. Chambers, Richmond, Mo., 13 November 1838, mentioning that the author was activated and in the field eight weeks, beginning 1 September: "I acted as aid to General Parks, who was in the field with me all this period."

Far West, cited in Missouri Republican Daily, 17 November 1838. The context indicates that the Far West was repeating what had been said right after Atchison’s return. Compare Burnett’s autobiography in telling of 1838 events: "I also edited a weekly newspaper, ‘the Far West,’ published in Liberty" (53).

Cited at n. 61.

Ibid. at n. 144.

Ibid. The Western Star, another Liberty newspaper, is cited in the same article: "The course of Gov. Boggs, in superseding Gen. Atchison, we hear much complaint about. Why the Gov. did this we are at a loss to know. So far as we have heard an expression of opinion, the people appear to be satisfied with Mr. A. as a General."

"Philo Dibble’s Narrative," 89.

Missouri Republican Daily, 30 January 1839.

Ibid., 27 December 1838.


Governor to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 27 October 1838, in Document, 61; see n. 134.

Atchison to the Governor on dates of 27 September 1838, in Document, 34; 5 October 1838, in Document, 35; 16 October 1838, in Document, 39. For the text of the letter, see n. 89.

Atchison to Governor, Boonville, Mo., 16 October 1838, in Document, 39. For the text of the letter, see n. 90.

William F. Dunnavut to Editor, Glasgow, Mo., 12 October 1838, Missouri Republican Daily, 18 October 1838.

Corrill, A Brief History, 36. Compare the quotation in the text at n. 99.

Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons, 97.

Bogart to the Governor, Elk Horn, Mo., 13 October 1838, in Document, 41.


Rockwood. Letter of 6 October 1838, near end.

Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., to the Church at Quincy, 20 March 1839, Liberty Jail, Clay Co., Mo., in Jesse, Personal Writings, 393; also cited in History of the Church 3:292-93.

Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland, 22 March 1839, cited in Jesse, Personal Writings, 417, includes Atchison among those who “have made public proclamation” that Mormon leaders should be hung. But the rumor lacks confirmation, and Joseph evidently changed his mind since no comment of the kind comes from Nauvoo sources.

President Heber C. Kimball’s Journal (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 72. Kimball gives his Liberty visit as approximately 8 April 1839.

Lyman Wight and Heber C. Kimball to Joseph Smith, Philadelphia, Pa., 19 June 1844, LDS Church Archives; see also History of the Church 7:438, italics in original. On 9 August 1850, John Bernhisel wrote Brigham Young from Washington, D.C., that Atchison had voted for Utah’s territorial status. He referred to “Senator Atchison, of Missouri extermination memory,” but the sarcasm may have been uninformed, since Bernhisel did not come west until the Nauvoo period (cited in Journal History).

Extract . . . of Joseph Smith,” Times and Seasons 1 (November 1839): 7. Those listed in the roll of dishonor were all militia leaders: Clark, Wilson, Lucas, Price, Gilliam, and Bogart.

Statement of Hyrum Smith, 1 July 1839. Times and Seasons 4 (1 July 1843): 254--56; also cited in History of the Church 3:424. This roll of dishonor includes officials Boggs and King, and militia leaders Clark, Lucas, Wilson, and Gilliam. This statement of Hyrum Smith has been misread with regard to Atchison, where Hyrum was actually quoting the intriguing view of their jailor, Samuel Tilley, claiming that the expulsion plan was “concocted by the Governor down to the lowest judge in that upper country, early in the previous spring, and that the plan was more fully carried out at the time that General Atchison went down to Jefferson City, with General Wilson, Lucas and Gilliam” (Times and Seasons 4:254--55; also cited in History of the Church 3:424). LeSueur misstates Hyrum Smith as the source, and thinks the statement included Atchison in the expulsion “plan” (LeSueur, The 1838 Mormon War, 245). But the key here is George A. Smith’s memoirs, telling that Atchison and other officers were ordered to be absent at the height of the Mormon problems, as narrated in the biographical section at the beginning of this paper. Tilley was sympathetic to his prisoners and unlikely to be criticizing his fellow townsman Atchison, who had similar views. Instead, he apparently claimed that Atchison’s assignment to the court-martial was a useful tool to remove him so Mormons could be evicted from Carroll County. Actually, George A. Smith and Turnham have near misses on where Atchison went. Since Atchison wrote several letters from Boonville, near Jefferson City, his location is clear. See nn. 14 and 72 and the text at these notes.

Snow to Streator, 546, cited at n. 151.
The Miracles That Didn’t Come

Beside the bitter water lay bison skulls,
Rancid pools stalked by carrion birds;
Water, stale and green blanketed,
Promised no healing, but death.
   Pioneers passed the pools
   Watching for an Elisha.¹

Food ran short. No culinary skills
Could compensate for nothing. Birds
Ate more. A pall of hunger blanketed
The camp, stalked by death.
   Looking for their provisions,
   They waited for an Elisha.²

Sallow children, skin tight to their skulls,
Strained against the air. Like tiny birds
Their heads bobbed loose in the blankets
Until they fell into death—
   Buried on the trek by parents
   Who wished for an Elisha.³

—Sally T. Taylor

¹² Kgs. 2:19–22.
²² Kgs. 4:7.
³² Kgs. 4:32–37.
Early Mormon Perceptions of Contemporary America: 1830–1846

Grant Underwood

Since scholarly study of Mormon history parted company with polemics several decades ago, historians have become increasingly interested in locating Mormonism within the social, intellectual, and religious geography of Jacksonian America. Over the years much has been learned about how antebellum Americans perceived their "curious" counterparts, but far less has been documented about the reverse. It is still largely terra incognita. One proponent of social history, Christopher Lasch, has criticized Mormon historians for "detaching their subject from its surroundings." It seems clear that one of the best ways to relink the Saints with those surroundings would be to examine their perceptions of the ideas, institutions, and events that constituted the Age of Jackson. Extensive scrutiny of early Mormon primary sources ranging from periodicals and pamphlets to letters and diaries has revealed that the Saints commented on a wide variety of secular as well as sectarian aspects of nineteenth-century society. This paper, however, samples five such strands of their cultural and intellectual history—the Mormon response to contemporary medicine, polite society, reform movements, science, and perfectionism.

MORMONS AND MEDICINE

As it entered the second quarter of the nineteenth century, American medicine was still the embattled site of conflicting theories. No suitable body of comprehensive theory had as yet been developed, and a great many ailments remained uncured. The lack of regulatory laws and the embarrassing variations in standards combined to undermine public confidence. It was in this context that a number of exotic nostrums were invented in the name of science. In addition, an approach of more ancient vintage—botanic medicine—achieved a dramatic resurgence sparked by an enterprising New Jersey farmer, Samuel Thomson. The notion that the art of healing had its origin in the woods rather than in the university appealed to the common

Grant Underwood is director of the LDS Institute of Religion serving Cal Poly Pomona and Claremont Colleges. Note: This paper was written for the 1980 MHA meeting in New York. It, therefore, reflects both the author's perspectives as well as research available seven years ago.
man. If the forest was still the best medical school, then anyone who purchased and perused Thomson’s manual could tap its secrets and cure themselves.\textsuperscript{5}

For some Saints, at least, modern scripture seemed to sanction such natural approaches within the proper framework. To the Saint who might have missed or misinterpreted the Book of Mormon reference to “the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases” (Alma 46:40), an 1831 revelation elaborated: “And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness, with \textit{herbs} and mild food” (D&C 42:43, italics added).

Clearly, though, there was a prioritization of cures. Joseph Smith reminded Nauvoo Saints “to trust in God when sick, and not in an arm of flesh, and live by faith and not by medicine.” While the power of the priesthood was paramount in the Prophet’s mind, he was not fanatical. The suffering Saint who had called for the Elders and was still not healed was “to use herbs and mild food.”\textsuperscript{6}

If the medical monopoly was generally shunned by the Saints, Thomsonian and eclectic herbal cures abounded. Frederick G. Williams, member of the First Presidency, styled himself a “botanic physician” and regularly ran a full column ad in the Kirtland weekly \textit{Northern Times}. It advertised the complete line of “Dr. Samuel Thomson’s \textit{Vegetable Medicine},” including an impressive array of vegetable elixirs, bitters, antibilious pills, peach cordial, and nerve powder. In addition, Williams developed his own cure for the “fever and ague” so common among frontiersmen in the alluvial plains and river bottoms of the upper Mississippi valley. It was even endorsed by a satisfied customer: “I hereby certify, that I have taken Dr. Williams’ Vegetable Ague Drops, after having been afflicted more than 7 months, and . . . found immediate relief, and an effectual cure.” Realizing the liabilities that certainly could have accompanied such homespun remedies, one appreciates his closing comment: “I am happy to add, that my system is not in the least impaired from any effects produced by said medicine.”\textsuperscript{7}

The basis of botanic medicine suggested still another approach to the problem of ill health: dietary reform. Although the Word of Wisdom has elsewhere received considerable coverage,\textsuperscript{8} less divine direction occasionally found its way into print. The following appeared in the Nauvoo-based \textit{Times and Seasons} under the caption “Important”:

Dr. Bennett is of the opinion that most of the bilious affections to which our citizens are subjected during the hot season, can be prevented by the free use of the Tomato—we are of the same opinion, and as health is essential to our happiness and prosperity as a people, we would earnestly recommend its culture to our fellow-citizens, and its general use for culinary purposes. Do not neglect it.\textsuperscript{9}
If it seems farfetched to the modern mind, Russel Nye reminds us, "There were so many common nagging ills the doctors could not cure . . . that the ordinary man could hardly be blamed for trying something which promised relief." Like other rural Americans, most Mormons were prevented by the lack of cash and confidence from patronizing orthodox medicine during this period. They did not, however, swing the pendulum to the other extreme of faith-healing fanaticism. Rather, the Saints' blend of priesthood blessings and basic botanical cures seems to bespeak moderation and practicality.

MORMONS AND POLITE SOCIETY

Moderation and practicality are also discernible in Mormon perceptions of such facets of polite society as clothing and attire. Significant in this light is Sidney Rigdon's 1836 analysis of contemporary dress:

Indeed among some that would be called wise . . . they think that the cut of their coat and the shape of their hat is of great importance and has a considerable to do with their salvation; hence we have to this day the broad brimmed hat and the long tailed coat, and the vest with skirts, worn as a badge of righteousness; but let the saints know assuredly that their righteousness does not consist in putting on some old antiquated dress: but in enterprise in accomplishing the will of God.

This is not to say that extravagance was indulged, but Mormons clearly permitted and even encouraged modest fashion. In the same article, Rigdon asked the Saints how they ever contemplated fulfilling their prophetic destiny to become Zion and the showplace of the earth if they wore "apparel untastefully arranged." Fortunately, the likes of tailor Peter Whitmer, Sr., were on hand for just such needs, promising the "Latest Fashions" and "neat fits" for all.

Sometimes, however, a fit could be a little too neat, as, for instance, in the case of the cursed corset. "Of every thousand females who die of consumption," warned the Times and Seasons, "over three-fourths are sacrificed by the prevailing false ideas of beauty of form produced by the continued practice of tight lacing."

Another inherent feature of Mormonism becomes visible by examining the Saints' pre-Utah perceptions of contemporary recreation and "amusements." An 1833 revelation promised that the Lord would "give unto the faithful line upon line and precept upon precept" (D&C 98:12), and such is plainly manifest in the maturing Mormon position towards recreation. In 1835, the Church newspaper Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate renounced "the frivolous practice of playing ball" as something liable to "bring reproach upon the glorious cause of our Redeemer." Two years later, no less distinguished a group
of Church leaders than the Presidents of the seventies met together in council and resolved, "That we discard the practice of ball-playing, wrestling, jumping and all such low and degrading amusements and . . . have no fellowship with any member of our quorum who indulges himself in the practice of such things."16 By 1844, however, John Taylor, editor of the Times and Seasons, would be able to write that "wrestling, running, climbing, dancing, or anything that has a tendency to circulate the blood is not injurious, but must rather be considered beneficial to the human system, if pursued in moderation."17 What had happened? It seems clear that by the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith himself, never burdened by overpious inhibitions,18 had clarified that contrary to the religious upbringing of many converts, athletics, dancing, and appropriate dramatic and musical events were not inherently evil. As T. Edgar Lyon explained, "This released the Saints from old mores and gave them a new sense of freedom. It opened new avenues for finding refreshing diversion in activities many had been taught were the works of Satan."19 An obvious caveat, then, for students of early Mormonism is caution in labeling as "Mormon" what might only have been a Calvinistic carryover surfacing occasionally until corrected by revelation or prophetic fiat.

The fact that by the 1840s Mormonism was opening formerly forbidden paths did not, however, make them any easier for some to walk in. Orson Hyde’s delightful reminiscence of Parley P. Pratt’s adventure in adjustment provides the classic example. Hyde recalled how "'trammelled'" his fellow Apostle’s mind was when dancing was first introduced in Nauvoo: "I observed brother Parley standing in the figure, and he was making no motion particularly, only up and down. Says I, 'Brother Parley, why don’t you move forward?' Says he, 'When I think which way I am going, I forget the step; and when I think of the step, I forget which way to go.'"20

If dancing was no longer evil, evil use could still be made of it. As a large river town, Nauvoo attracted a sizable gentile population, and not all diversions were either conducted or sanctioned by the Saints. A concerned father wrote a letter to the editor of the Times and Seasons asking about the propriety of "balls and dancing as it has lately existed in our city." The reply forthrightly distinguishes between evil by nature and evil by association. Consistent with a Mormon concern for scriptural sanction, John Taylor cites various biblical precedents for dancing and then concludes:

As an abstract principle . . . we have no objections to it; but when it leads people into bad company and causes them to keep untimely hours, it has a tendency to enervate and weaken the system and leads to profligate and intemperate habits. And so far as it does this . . . it is injurious to society, and corrupting to the morals of youth.21
Besides, he added, "Solomon says that 'there is a time to dance,' but that time is not at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, nor at one [or] two . . . in the morning."

The tension between appropriate and inappropriate amusements ultimately required a policy statement from the Quorum of the Twelve who had been leading the Church since the Prophet's death. "If the people were righteous," wrote Brigham Young, "it would do to dance, and to have music, feasting and merriment. But what fellowship has Christ with Belial? . . . All amusements in which saints and sinners are mingled tend to corruption." The conclusion, therefore, was inescapable: "So far at least as the members of the church are concerned, we would advise that balls, dances, and other vain and useless amusements be neither countenanced nor patronized." 22

Occasionally, even Mormon events crossed the line of propriety. In the days before elaborate newspaper advertising, points of interest or special events might be heralded by a staged theatrical or musical exhibition. 23 In late 1844, the Nauvoo library decided to put on a theatrical exhibition in an attempt to renew interest in its presence. The trustees employed several local youth as actors for the evening. One of them recorded the aftereffects: "The next day brother Brigham blew up everything that had evil consequences attending it and frequent exhibitions among the rest." 24

Another contemporary conveyor of "evil consequences" was the novel. As pointedly as any Puritan primer, the Messenger and Advocate warned that novel reading led to "lightness and lechery." 25 Even in the later Nauvoo years, one had to look hard to find what few novels there were in the holdings of the library. 26 The problem was that Mormons, like other Americans, liked their literature to be didactic. An 1832 revelation had admonished them to seek "words of wisdom" out of the "best books" (D&C 88:118), and novels never seemed to qualify. In the words of a John Taylor editorial, they were "as destitute of truth, true science and practical knowledge as Satan's promises were to Eve." Why, continued Taylor, "read the fancied brains of disappointed men and women, and then go to the theatre; and ten to one, but you will be just like them." 27

In denouncing social and artistic evils of the day, the Saints were little different from other religious groups. 28 What was unique, however, was that they recognized redeeming value in some amusements and modified them to suit themselves, appropriating for their own use purged versions of what, in other settings, had been the objects of their scorn.

Mormons and Reformism

Historians have long considered the reform impulse of the early 1800s as one of the major characteristics of antebellum America. These
attempts to shape and transform the national character took many forms
and touched nearly every facet of life as they swept across most of the
country in the decades preceding the Civil War. Gerald Grob and
George A. Billias summarized the prevailing sentiment: ‘‘No problem
was so difficult that it could not be solved; and no evil was so extreme
as to be ineradicable.’’

The Mormons, however, uniformly opposed the reform societies
of the day. In their eyes, reformism, whatever its laudable objectives,
was destined to fail because it ignored scriptural eschatology. ‘‘Though
they were ten times as vigilant and their reformatons ten to one,’’
explained the Evening and the Morning Star, ‘‘still when the Savior
comes the people will be as they were in the days of Noah.’’ The
intimate relationship between millennialism, revivalism, and reformism
is a commonplace. Charles G. Finney, perhaps the most famous
contemporary crusader for Christ, confidently predicted, ‘‘If the Church
will do her duty [and by that he meant to reform and regenerate
mankind] the millennium may come in this country in three years.’’

While early Mormons shared Finney’s faith in the imminence of Christ’s
coming, they did not endorse his postmillennialism since they believed
that the Bible nowhere spoke of the wholesale reformation of man before
the Second Advent. ‘‘The ignorance of the religious teachers of the
day,’’ wrote Sidney Rigdon, ‘‘never appeared more glaring in any
thing than in an attempt to create a Millennium by converting this
generation.’’ To the Mormons, reformism was a tragic waste—like a
climber who spends time and energy to scale the mountain only to
discover he has climbed the wrong one.

But even if reform had been the right answer, the organizations
of the Benevolent Empire were not the right agents. The Evening and
the Morning Star reminded its readers of:

The perfect folly of all the pretended reformatons of ancient and modern
times, when there were not inspired men at the head of them, both
apostles and prophets; for without such, the God of heaven never at any
time produced a reformation, nor did he ever bring back an apostate race
at any time, by any other means, than by raising up and inspiring men
from on high.

To think otherwise was ludicrous. With obvious satire, the Messenger
and Advocate remarked, ‘‘God has done his work and we don’t need
any more prophets. We have Bible societies, missionary societies,
abolition of slavery societies and temperance societies to convert the
world and bring in the Millennium.’’

Thomas G. Alexander recently argued that ‘‘one method which
promises a great deal in furthering our understanding of Joseph Smith
and Mormonism is what Robert Berkhofer has called ‘behavioralism.’
This is the technique of analyzing a particular set of experiences by
looking at them through the eyes of the actors.”35 Through the use of such a technique in this study, it seems clear that to place Mormonism within the realm of contemporary reform movements, as David B. Davis has recently done, violates both the reasoning and rhetoric of the Saints and, thus, presents a major misreading of Mormonism.36

MORMONS AND SCIENCE

In the days before Darwin forced geologists to joust with Genesis, Benjamin Silliman—Yale professor of chemistry, mineralogy, and natural history—would customarily commence his classes by paying homage to religion. “It is,” he would say, “at the head of all science. It is the only revealed one, and it is necessary to give a proper use and direction to all the others.”37 Such sentiments were widespread in antebellum America. As George Daniels has observed, “It was generally held, by scientists and laymen alike, that one of the Scientists’ main duties was to demonstrate the ‘entire harmony’ between nature and revelation.”38

Mormon efforts to bring about such a marriage began early and have continued, undaunted even by Darwin, down to the present day.39 An early example was Parley P. Pratt’s Times and Seasons article “Philosophy of the Resurrection.” Consistent with contemporary usage, Pratt employs the word philosophy as essentially synonymous with science and characterizes the debate over a physical resurrection as the conflict between “philosophical objections” and sectarian superstition. He refuses to take refuge in the easiest answer that God’s ways are beyond human understanding and quickly dismisses religionists’ efforts “to throw a veil of sacredness over the whole subject, as if it were a mystery to be believed without the possibility of understanding it.” He then settles into a rigorous attempt at reconciling natural laws with a bodily resurrection. His conclusion would have earned him honors had he been in one of Silliman’s science classes. “Every truth in theology,” Pratt declared, “and every truth in philosophy mutually strengthen, illustrate and confirm each other.”40

In a cosmology such as that, miracles, as commonly conceived, had no place. “Hast thou seen no miracle,” queried Pratt. “Yes, it was all miraculous . . . but it was all upon the most natural, easy, simple, and plain principles of nature in its varied order.”41 An 1832 revelation had already given resonance to such Newtonian notions when it explained that “there is no space in which there is no kingdom . . . and unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions” (D&C 88:37-38).

When a brilliant comet blazed across the American skies in March of 1843, Millerites saw it as a sign of the end of the world. On the other hand, certain Bostonians raised $25,000 to buy a telescope
for Harvard. Irving Bartlett, in his study of the American mind at midcentury, cites the latter as an example of a "growing secular-mindedness, a growing tendency, among educated people at least, to look for natural causes behind even the most extraordinary events." The Mormons, however, combined both mentalities, and the union is nowhere more obvious than in two back-to-back articles in the *Times and Seasons*. Orson Pratt, early Mormon Apostle and scientist, published a very sophisticated article dealing with the astronomical phenomena halos and parhelia. What others would have seen as strange and wonderful heaven-sent signs "doubtless owe their origin," concluded Pratt, "to the refraction of the sun's rays through the minute, though differently shaped prismatic crystals of ice and snow, which float in the atmosphere." Editor John Taylor's "Signs of the Times" article followed as an intelligent and faithful defense of both Christ and the crystals. "Many of these signs," he admitted, "can be explained on philosophical principle, and no doubt but all of them could, if we were only sufficiently acquainted with the philosophy of the heavens. But this does not alter the principle that is taught by our Savior, as being a criterion whereby the saints are to judge of the signs of the times." That there was a science or philosophy to the heavens had earlier been made clear. In principle, the idea could have emanated from the Enlightenment, but Mormonism left its mark upon it by providing a unique twist rooted in the Restoration and speaking hope to the common man. "Whether considering the creation of a world, the blossoming of a flower . . . or the resurrection of the body, all these," declared Parley P. Pratt, "were too sublime for an arch angel to comprehend by his own capacity," and yet even "the simplest [mental] capacity . . . aided by the Spirit of God" could understand them all. In the Mormon mind, then, the Holy Ghost was every man's key to the wonders of the universe as well as theology, but every man had to acquire it in the same divinely designated way by becoming a fellow-citizen with the Saints. In an era in which monopolies roused Jacksonian rhetoric to grandiloquent heights, the notion that God dispensed the Holy Ghost solely through Mormon elders promised little popularity. Nonetheless, determined disciples would not dilute what they considered a cornerstone of restored religion. Foreshadowing similar sentiments expressed by Joseph Smith to Martin Van Buren, the *Messenger and Advocate* announced, "It is the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . which makes the difference, and it is this alone, and the society which has this power are the people of God and those who have not are not."  

**MORMONS AND PERFECTIONISM**  

Just how deeply the role and value of the Spirit was embedded into the very warp and woof of Mormonism becomes evident in
turning to their perceptions of perfectionism. In the estimation of Sydney Ahlstrom, the doctrine of Christian perfection was John Wesley’s “most original contribution to Protestant theology” and one of the Methodist denomination’s “most distinctive features.”47 Spilling over into secular as well as sectarian concerns, perfectionism had currency far beyond the camp meeting. Such was its pervasiveness, subtle and explicit, that some church historians have called the early nineteenth century “the Methodist Age.”48

Significantly, the Mormons consistently condemned the doctrine. What is even more revealing was their rationale for doing so. It was not the possibility of perfection or even the fact that some claimed to have achieved it in mortal flesh that bothered the Saints. Rather, it was the Protestant procedure. The Mormon periodical Gospel Reflector decried the “hypocrisy” of professing perfection and yet at the same time denying the very vehicle for achieving it—“the gifts and graces of the gospel.”49 If the gifts of the Spirit had long since ceased to exist among men, then so had the possibility of perfection.

Perfection in the Mormon mind was more than the absence of sin; it was the acquisition of power. “Perfection,” wrote Sidney Rigdon, “consists in putting [men] in possession of the powers of the Deity.”50 For the Saints, God’s spiritual gifts to man were not only vital proofs of the Church’s divinity, but the very essence of their ability to become perfected. The process was as ancient as it was irrevocable. “It will be seen,” explained Rigdon, “that as soon as the gospel was received, the power which was according to their heirship began to be exercised by them, and kept increasing, and increasing, until they had power over water, and over fire, and could command the very elements...and they would obey them.” Ultimately, these endowments of the Spirit culminated in making them “partakers of all power, in heaven and on earth” and therefore “joint heirs with Christ”—in a word, perfect.51

Whether discussing the pathway to perfection, or the errors of certain antebellum “isms,” the early Saints consistently pointed to the Holy Ghost as their sine qua non. If there is value in a behavioralist approach to Mormonism, it is in bringing to light what was so obvious to the participants and yet so apparently elusive to later observers. When Joseph Smith was asked how his church differed from others, he did not mention communitarian experiments, latent theocracy, or religious authoritarianism. Nor did he focus on new scripture or his own prophetic role, though he could appropriately have discussed any one of them. Instead, he singled out the Holy Ghost, the hub from which all other facets of Mormonism, as so many spokes, drew strength and meaning.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

By way of summary, at least three elements of early Mormonism have been discernible in the present study. First, the Mormons were concerned with moderation and flexibility whether in their approach to sickness or society. Where dogmatists died or fanatics faded, the Mormon middle course made the Church one of the most viable and vital churches to emerge out the of the early nineteenth century. Second, Mormons should not be placed within the reformist tradition since it was antithetical to their basic theology. And third, the Saints’ view of the quintessential role of the Holy Ghost informed their perceptions of and reactions to various secular philosophies and features of contemporary America.

Undergirding it all, however, was a bedrock belief in the scriptures. This not only served as the basis for their doctrine, but also as their standard of judgment for all things secular or sectarian. If Paul said that in the last days perilous times would come, if the Savior said that the world immediately preceding his coming would be as wicked as it was in the days of Noah, then it was the duty of every Mormon elder and editor to disclose the overwhelming evidence that such an age was upon them. Thus, their refutation of reform societies and perfectionism, both optimistic by nature, sprang not from the brooding pessimism of dissatisfied souls displaced in society, but rather from a perceived incompatibility with the scriptures. Revelation, ancient or modern, was the ultimate touchstone of truth for the Mormons. Even if the burden of contemporary evidence pointed to the contrary, faithful Saints dismissed it as merely one more example of the discrepancy in judgment between inspired and uninspired men. For them, prophecy was irrevocable history in reverse.

There are those, however, who hold to what might be called the “alienation thesis” as an explanation of Mormonism and its origins. “The people who joined Mormonism,” declared Klaus Hansen, “were by and large . . . those who had suffered more than most Americans from the dislocations of an America in ferment.” 52 The problem with this imaginative thesis is that in some ways it is little more than imaginary. How can it be advanced that the Saints had been displaced if, as a recent demographic study suggests, the majority were never “in place?” 53 Where is the evidence that in the age of individualism men blamed their misfortunes on society rather than on themselves? Even more importantly, though, is that a careful scrutiny of primary sources nowhere suggests that the Saints saw themselves as victimized outcasts soured on a society that had cut them out of their fair share. On the contrary, they wanted nothing to do with Babylon. “Gather ye out” (D&C 133:7) was the watchcry.
If, then, in certain ways the Mormons do not reflect the characteristic Jacksonian ethos, should a fit be forced? Does it not seem more reasonable to argue that the Mormons were motivated more by the Holy Book than the pocketbook? "For every gentleman who read a learned pamphlet," reports Gordon Wood, "there were dozens of ordinary people who read the Bible and looked to their ministers for an understanding of what was happening in America." In an era when the religious press was growing more rapidly than the secular press, can the influence of the religious idea be ignored? The conclusion seems inescapable. Above all else, Mormons were a profoundly religious people for whom God's revealed word was preeminent as the shaper and fashioner of thought and deed, meaning and destiny.

NOTES


2Richard D. Poll notes, in "Nauvoo and the New Mormon History: A Bibliographical Survey," Journal of Mormon History 5 (1978): 117, that for the Nauvoo period the nonpolitical secular aspects have received little attention and that "social history is sparse." This is even more true for the first decade of LDS church history as is revealed by a survey of the annual "Mormon Bibliography" published in Brigham Young University Studies. Most social history deals with the later Utah period for which sources seem more plentiful.


4My research thus far has turned up some thirty facets of antebellum America that drew more than passing mention from the Saints. It should also be noted that all but four of these categories deal with nonpolitical secular features.


8Northern Times (Kirtland Ohio), 2 December 1835.

9The major work is still Paul H. Peterson, "An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).

10Times and Seasons 2 (1 May 1847): 404.

11Nye, Society and Culture in America, 344.

12Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate 3 (December 1836): 422.

13Ibid., 421.

14Northern Times, 2 December 1835.

15Times and Seasons 2 (15 March 1841): 356. The warning originated from a Boston paper.

16Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate 1 (July 1835): 154.

17Ibid. 1 (May 1837): 511.

18Times and Seasons 5 (1 March 1844): 459.


*Journal of Discourses* 6:150.

*Times and Seasons* 5 (1 March 1844): 460.


Olivier B. Huntington, Journal, TS, 22, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2 (November 1835): 223.


*Times and Seasons* 5 (1 November 1844): 697.

Furnas, *The Americans*, 564.


*Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (June 1834): 163. The prediction made in the quotation is based on the Savior’s words to his disciples recorded in Luke 17:26 and Matthew 24:37.


*Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (June 1834): 165. Postmillennialism is the belief that Jesus will establish his millennial kingdom gradually and largely through human means. Premillennialism, on the other hand, contends that he will do so suddenly, cataclysmically, and supernaturally. Further, in typical millennial typologies, postmillenials are characterized as reform-minded optimists who believe that the world must first be Christianized before Jesus can return, whereas the premillenials maintain that, with the exception of the relatively few believers then extant, the world would, in sin and apostasy, be brought to an end. An excellent starting point for additional study of Christian millennialism is Robert G. Clouse, ed., *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1977). Especially good on the relationship between reformism, revivalism, and postmillennialism is Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957).

*Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (May 1834): 135. The “Benevolent Empire” is a collective term for the major interdenominational associations and reform societies that grew out of the revitalization of evangelical Protestantism in the years following the Revolutionary War. These societies reflected the contemporary theological emphasis that sin, both personal and societal, could be totally eradicated, and that it was the obligation of every true Christian to continue to struggle against sin by seeking to convert and reform his brother through acts of benevolence. The story of this phase of American church history is told in detail in Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers’ Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800–1865* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1960), and Charles I. Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front*, 1790–1837 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960).


See the David Brion Davis section in chap. 16 of Bernard Bailyn et al., *The Great Republic*, especially 528–41. Davis is not unaware of the differences, but from my present perspective, the differences are more important than the similarities.


*Times and Seasons* 3 (2 May 1842): 769–71.


*Times and Seasons* 4 (1 April 1843): 152.


*Times and Seasons* 3 (2 May 1842): 771.

*Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2 (January 1836): 245.


*Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 3 (November 1836): 407.

Ibid.

Klaus Hansen, “Mormonism and American Culture: Some Tentative Hypotheses,” in F. Mark McKierman, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards, eds., *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1973), 11–22. My disagreement with the alienation thesis is not that the Saints did not feel alienated, for in their eyes the gospel always alienated Christ’s disciples from the world, but that some students of Mormonism have misread the meaning of this. The basic difference is that I am arguing for the primacy of ideas, whereas Hansen and others stress an implicit economic determinism. From my vantage point, the Saints’ frequent complaints about the evil in all the world are seen as derivative from a scriptural rather than a social or economic source. For the “dislocated” theory to hold, it would have to be shown that the Saints wanted wealth and power in this world. The whole burden of their writings seems to argue the contrary; theirs was an other than worldly concern. It was the “riches of eternity” they sought for and the right to rule with Christ, not for pelf or posts in Babylon.


Bailyn et al., *The Great Republic*, 403.

In woods tangled with briars, she finds the path
That leads us into what was once a clearing—
The cemetery they used before the War.
She cuts the high grass back with her hand scythe,
And we disturb the vines to find the blacksmith
Who sired her grandfather; though only hearing
About him, she is well versed in our family lore.
His sunken grave is smothered in the leaves of second growth.

What’s left of the headstone says someone named Seth
Died of malaria. Grey as an old, gnawed bone
A nearby marker says his bride Marie
At the age of seventeen died in childbirth. . .
My aunt informs me that Seth Hartfield’s strength
Was a legend in her childhood: how he’d thrown
His anvil at thieves, and once uprooted a tree
To bridge a flooded creek. He had an enormous girth. . .

She stoops to touch the intricate carved wreaths
On monuments to kin she has not known.
Try as I might, I am unable to see
Them living. My mind’s eye cannot call them forth.
Only the markers confirm their deaths and births.
But wind and rain have labored hard on the stones
To return them to the anonymity
They had before they were dug out of the earth.

And they have become more the substance of myth
Than anything lingeringly human;
Through all my aunt’s lively embellishments,
Their stories have not held tightly to the truth.
They are beyond imagining, lying beneath
My feet, though I am the son of their great-great-grandson
And my own days disappear in the strange sense
Of the unreality of what is over with.

As we come out of the woods, the midday warmth
Glares in my face; a sudden flutter of wings
Startles me out of my dark dreaming, the way
A diver surfaces from a great depth,
Breaks through to the air, catches his first breath.
Grateful, I walk beside her, listening
To my living aunt’s tales of the family tree,
Her voice, rough as bark, rasping for all it’s worth.

—John P. Freeman
To Overcome the "Last Enemy": Early Mormon Perceptions of Death

M. Guy Bishop

American society in the years prior to the Civil War was, generally speaking, "saturated" by a concern with dying. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century the specter of physical demise was, to quote a recent study of the subject, a "familiar personage in most Victorian households" and on most Victorian minds. However, in contrast to the fearful vision of death dictated by the strict Calvinism of early New England, Americans of the 1800s responded to it with qualified resignation, as is manifested in the following verse, published in 1820, which combines a sense of the futility of mortal existence with the prospect of justification for having faithfully served the Lord while in the earthly probation:

Through sorrow's might, and danger's path,
Amid the deepening gloom
We, soldiers of a heavenly King,
Are marching to the tomb.

Instead of the eternal agony conceived by earlier generations, these later ones, the cultural offspring of romanticism and Jacksonian enthusiasm, expected an immortality that offered a cessation of evil and an endless time of peace and harmony. David E. Stannard has noted that mid-nineteenth-century Americans, often disenchanted with their rapidly changing society, "sought a return to their lost sense of community in the graveyard and the heavenly world of the dead." Early Mormons had much in common eschatologically with their countrymen. Consistent with the basic tenets of contemporary Christianity, faithful Latter-day Saints also espoused a fervent hope in an eternal bliss. Having regularly confronted the harsh realities of life as they were persecuted, reviled, and driven from place to place, most Mormons were more than willing to place their trust in a benevolent God and optimistically looked forward to immortality. Peter L. Berger has observed that the "power of religion depends, in the last resort, upon the credibility of the banners it puts in the hands of men as they

M. Guy Bishop is Assistant Curator of Social History at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.
stand before death, or more accurately as they walk, inevitably, toward it.\textsuperscript{14} Devout Mormons sought, and often found, comfort and assurance in their perception of immortality. Deep faith, buoyed up by optimistic prophetic promises in regard to the next life, alleviated many death-related anxieties for pious Latter-day Saints.\textsuperscript{5} The afterlife forecast for valiant Saints was indeed awe-inspiring, a highly structured heaven in which mankind was rewarded in varying degrees based on worthiness displayed during the earthly sojourn.

A recent study by Mary Ann Meyers concluded that the murder of Joseph Smith in 1844 inaugurated a revision of Latter-day Saint eschatology. According to this thesis, the despondent followers of the martyred prophet recreated the community of the Saints beyond death.\textsuperscript{6} In other words, Meyers argues that Mormon perceptions of the hereafter were drastically altered in the second half of the nineteenth century in order to compensate for the loss of the Church's beloved organizer. However, this assessment was based on a marginal amount of primary documentation from the early years of the religion and consequently overlooked the extensive development of Latter-day Saint thought on death prior to the assassination of Joseph Smith. A more thorough survey demonstrates that Mormon attitudes on this subject were formulated mainly under the tutelage of the Prophet, not as a belated response to his death.

Like their countrymen in antebellum America, the Saints displayed an abounding fascination with death. As Mormon mortality rates rose in the late 1830s and early 1840s due to the persecutions suffered in Missouri and the unhealthy conditions in Nauvoo, the literary records repeatedly refer to death and the afterlife. The newspapers, diaries, journals, and personal letters of this time, as well as the canonized writings of the Prophet recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, provide a historical guide to the creation of a Mormon eschatology—one which was almost fully matured by 1844.

In its early stages, the philosophy of Mormonism in regard to dying and the hereafter could not be easily distinguished from the contemporary beliefs. It focused primarily on the promise of a resurrection and individual postmortal rewards for the righteous. The \textit{Evening and the Morning Star}, an official organ for the Church, had admonished its readers in 1832, ""Remember that you were born to die, and to live again."" Mormons were, from their earliest years, generally optimistic believers in an afterlife. As a consequence of this position, mourning was, theoretically, held to a minimum. A regular reassurance that the inevitability of death would be mitigated by the blessings of eternity helped ease anxieties.\textsuperscript{8}

Mormon obituaries and funeral sermons customarily sought to encourage righteousness by recounting the positive traits of the deceased.
This approach was common in nineteenth-century encomiums and, in fact, has remained standard fare in similar writings and orations to the present. As one eulogist noted in 1833, such accolades could not assist the dead, but nevertheless they were deemed to be justified.9 Or, as a Mormon woman observed in her diary after having witnessed a moving funeral service, the speakers had “preached to the Living.”10 If properly directed by obituarists and orators, the emotions evoked by the demise of a loved one or close acquaintance could be channeled into a renewed dedication to worthy pursuits.

A noteworthy example of the use of death to mold the behavior of the living was a panegyric written in remembrance of Hilah Carter, a Mormon woman who died in 1834:

Her friends and near relatives, though deeply sensible of her personal worth and virtues, are consoled with the assurance which she left of her acceptance with God; and though they cannot but drop a tear in consequence of their loss, yet they can, with propriety cherish the pleasing reflection, that they soon will meet her in the rest prepared for the saints.11

Two fundamental aspects of Mormon thought about death are revealed by this obituary: first, that the bereaved would be reunited with the deceased at some future moment; and second, that the next life would be a place of rest for the righteous. Both of these features were common to basic Christianity, and by the mid-nineteenth century many Americans regarded dying as a transition to a state of blessedness for the faithful.

Though many conventional sentiments continued to characterize Mormon thinking about death, a more distinctive note gradually came in. By at least the early 1840s, Latter-day Saint eschatology had come to espouse eternal family relations as the greatest blessing of immortality. This was, however, recognized as a reward reserved for only the most valiant of God’s children. Facilitated by the endowment and sealing rituals, devout Saints could by the mid-1840s look forward to the promise of unending kinship bonds.12

Although this concept of a heavenly family reunion was gradually emerging, Mormon thought on death during the first decade of the Church’s history still centered on the expectation of an individual restful bliss in paradise. When Sally Knight died in 1834, her eulogist recalled that she had made many sacrifices and faced countless tribulations for the sake of the gospel and suggested that her stalwart devotion assured her an immortal prize. Her obituary read, in part, “She had fled to those mansions prepared in the economy of the Lord, to dwell there till she comes triumphant to receive a reward with the sanctified when peace shall crown the blessed, and the wicked shall cease from troubling.”13
When Parley P. Pratt’s wife Thankful Halsey died after childbirth in 1837, the bereaved widower wrote, “My dear wife had now lived to accomplish her destiny, and when the child was dressed, and she had looked upon it and embraced it, she ceased to live in the flesh.”¹⁴ The rhetoric of this lamentation reveals two important elements about Mormon eschatology. First, Pratt readily embraced what might be called optimistic sorrow: he sincerely mourned his wife’s passing but was able to assuage his grief by assuring himself of her eternal reward. Second, he refused to even consider the possibility that they had been permanently separated, but only that she had “ceased to live in the flesh.”¹⁵

Not all of the Saints were able to so readily accept the inevitable end to physical life as had Parley P. Pratt. Some members of the Church were stunned by the untimely death of Elder Joseph B. Brackenbury in January 1832. He was the first recorded Mormon missionary to have died while preaching the gospel. At that time it was apparently assumed that the Lord would always prolong the life of one in his service. Benjamin F. Johnson wrote of Brackenbury’s death:

To us, then young and inexperienced members of the Church, his death came as a sore trial to our faith, as well as a very great grief. To think that so good a man, in such a field of useful labor, and far from his home and family, should be permitted to die, and that too so suddenly, was naturally a test to [our] faith and integrity.¹⁶

Another example of faithful optimism being outweighed by the realities of the moment was evident in the recollections of Nancy Tracy. In 1836, while on a trek from Kirtland, Ohio, to western Missouri with the William Corey family, she witnessed the death of one of the Corey sons. The harsh facts of a frontier existence were noted by the chronicler when she wrote: “We were quite a long distance from a settlement, so we camped while the [men in the party] made a rude coffin for the child and buried it in the forest. Sister Corey thought this was a great trial and so it was.”¹⁷ It is very possible that this grief-stricken mother had her sorrow intensified by the crude nature of the burial, the apparent absence of any institutionalized funeral services, and the fact that the interment was not in a designated cemetery. Most mid-nineteenth-century Americans placed great significance on the deceased being laid to rest in hallowed ground.¹⁸

The evolution of the Mormon elegy reveals an increasingly complex eschatology as the 1830s progressed. A simple stanza published in the *Evening and Morning Star* in 1832 documented the rudimentary character of Latter-day Saint thought on death at that early date:

> The body is but chaff—
> The soul may live in glory,
> When the Earth’s epitaph
> Is written in its ashes!¹⁹
Early Mormon Perceptions of Death

While hope for an afterlife obviously existed for the Saints at this time, the eventual doctrine on the subject was still largely undeveloped. In March 1835, William W. Phelps, a prominent churchman, theologian, and poet, provided additional insight on the seeming futility of human existence:

What is life? 'tis to exist
In a world of wealth and woes
Where the wickedness and death
Makes one shudder as he goes.
'Tis to come like morning fair;
Rise and rove like ocean wave,
Fall and fade like shooting stars,
Leaving nothing but—a grave.²⁹

In these verses Phelps highlights a gradually emerging Mormon trend toward fatalism in regard to mortality, which would be coupled to an increased emphasis on eternity.

This resignation about physical life is similarly manifested in the “Funeral Hymn” composed by Parley P. Pratt at some point following the death of his wife, but the poem also radiates the author’s faithful optimism and offers solace to the bereaved:

For sickness, sorrow, pain, and death,
With awful tyranny have reigned;
While all eternity has shed
Her tears of sorrow, o’er the slain.
No longer let creation mourn;
Ye sons of sorrow, dry your tears;
Life—life—eternal life is ours,
Dismiss your doubts, dispel your fears.

After having played down the temporary afflictions of mortality, Pratt gives the following assurances in regard to conditions in heaven:

No tears, no sorrow, death or pain,
Shall e’er be known to enter there;
But perfect peace, immortal bloom,
Shall reign triumphant ev’ry where!²⁰

As a reaction to the suffering endured by the early Saints because of the natural hostility of a frontier environment and the frequent persecutions dispensed at the hands of anti-Mormon agitators, Pratt clearly attempts to overshadow the often bleak reality of their temporal situation with the glorious expectations of the next world.

Latter-day Saint doctrine from its inception had made eligibility for the richest blessings of immortality contingent upon satisfactory performance during the earthly probation. The following revelation, recorded by the Prophet, was published for the edification of the Saints in July 1832:
Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass, that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; and they that die not in me, wo unto them; for their death is bitter. 21

This disclosure dictated much of the Mormon thought on death and the afterlife until 1836, establishing the criteria for mourning, promising eternal rewards for the righteous, and warning the ungodly that their future estate was in jeopardy.

This doctrinal position obviously necessitated that the survivors make some kind of value judgment concerning the deceased: had he or she truly been numbered among the faithful? The vast majority of Latter-day Saint obituaries, eulogies, and personal accounts answered with a resounding affirmation of the piety of the departed soul. As has been correctly surmised by one scholar, the Saints “were loath to predict anyone’s condemnation to hell.” 22 Excerpts from the encomiums of several early Mormons attest to the belief that death was but an easy, and joyous, transition for those who had proven themselves worthy. The obituaries published in a single issue of the Evening and Morning Star in 1834 note that Louisa Ann Stickney had “left this world rejoicing in a crown of glory”; that Joanna Roberts “fell asleep in the full assurance of a glorious immortality”; and that Bathia Fordham, who is described as a faithful friend, worthy sister, and devoted Saint, had “gone home” to “the glorious hope of a happy immortality.” 23 A eulogy written about Mary Bradbury, who died that same year, similarly recounts that:

During the latter part of her sickness she manifested a calm resignation to the will of a divine Providence; and when death was about to grasp her in his icy arms, she stayed herself on the promises of Him who is able to save, and who gave himself a ransom for her soul. In her last moments, when kindred spirits waited . . . to escort her spirit to the Paradise of rest, she said, “I am dying—glory to my Jesus, even so Lord Jesus come quickly.” then . . . she reposed her weary head, and without a sigh or struggle,—

‘breathed her life out sweetly there.’ 24

Joseph Smith recorded the death of his brother Hyrum’s wife in a like manner: “She left five small children and numerous relatives to mourn her loss,” the Prophet lamented. In the expected noble fashion of the period, the dying Saint reportedly instructed her children, “Tell your father when he comes that the Lord has taken your mother home and left you for him to take care of.” With that final gesture, she then died “in a full assurance of a part in the first resurrection.” 25 Optimism in the face of death was not limited to adults but was occasionally manifested by younger Mormons as well. When the fourteen-year-old son of Thomas B. Marsh died at Far West, Missouri, in May 1838, his
obituarist observed that the youngster had, from a most tender age, "manifested a love and reverence towards his heavenly Father" and at nine years old "had a remarkable vision, in which he talked with the Father." He also was said to have died with a full assurance that he would come forth in the resurrection of the just.26

A similar phenomenon, which has been aptly labeled a "triumphant" death, was a common occurrence among antebellum Americans. In 1838, an Indiana couple wrote to a relative concerning the death of one of their mothers, noting with pride that "she left the world in the triumphs of faith. . . . Such a great witness that she went happy out of the world." 27 An account from the same time period of the funeral of a little girl also bears a striking resemblance to the eulogy accorded the Marsh child. The clergyman who directed this particular service praised the youngster as having been "sanctified from her infancy." She was reportedly very fond of Bible stories and never tired of hearing the scriptures read. When her mother asked if she was afraid to die, the response was said to have been "No, . . . for I trust in Jesus." 28 Such optimism on the deathbed, by Mormons and non-Mormons alike, was a distinct departure from the pessimistic self-doubt which had plagued an earlier generation. Ever unsure of the prospects for eternity, a devout Calvinist of the seventeenth century questioned his status with God up to the very end. For the conscientious Puritan, adult or child, "doubt of salvation was essential to salvation." 29 In adopting a more optimistic attitude, Mormonism was well within the mainstream of nineteenth-century-American thought.

A new element of Mormon thought about the afterlife can be found in the 1836 vision Joseph Smith related of the celestial kingdom of heaven. Much to his amazement, he beheld his brother Alvin as an inhabitant of that highest postmortal estate.30 This beloved brother had died before the Church was organized and had never been baptized as a Latter-day Saint. Therefore, according to the accepted dogma of the religion, he could not dwell among the most valiant. Joseph reported that when he inquired of the Lord concerning this seemingly impossible matter, he was informed, "All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it . . . shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God" (italics added). Furthermore, children who died before the age of eight years were also heirs of the celestial kingdom.31 There is a precedent for this position in the Book of Mormon, where the doctrine of infant depravity had been rejected and little children declared to be incapable of sin.32

This direct admittance of the very young into the celestial kingdom, along with the possible sanctification of the faithful dead, must certainly have been gratefully received by many early Mormons, not the least of them being Joseph Smith and his family. The Smiths had suffered
extreme sorrow as a result of Alvin's death. This grief had been intensified when a local Presbyterian minister had vocally condemned him to hell for his supposed lack of religious propriety. Joseph and his wife, Emma, must have been elated to learn that small children were to be numbered among the valiant in the next life. Since their marriage nine years previously, the couple had lost three babies out of four live births. In 1832 the Prophet had expressed his sense of sadness concerning these losses in a letter to Emma in which he referred to the death of his brother's infant. "I was grieved to hear that Hiram [sic] had lost his little child," he wrote. "I think we can in some degree sympathize with him but we all must be reconciled to our lots and say the will of the Lord be done." Here Joseph reveals his empathy for bereaved parents, the loss he and Emma felt for their babies, and a degree of fatalism about death. He later tempered this submission to divine prerogative by advancing the theory that

the Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again.

This rationalization of the fortuitous nature of an early death was not unusual during the period.

The doctrine regarding the salvation of those who died before the age of eight apparently received increased emphasis in the late 1830s, when the migration from Kirtland to western Missouri brought a high mortality rate among children. Samuel Tyler, who kept a daily journal of the trek, noted on 12 August 1838 that those departed souls had "gone to their Maker & they are saved in the celestial kingdom and we if we are faithful will meet them there" (italics added). Three years later in Nauvoo, the exaltation of the young was still a source of comfort for many. Upon the death of Hyrum and Jerusha Smith's son, "aged 7 years lacking a few day," the eulogist wrote:

Relying upon the promises of Jehovah, the parents need not mourn over the early death of their promising child. Omnipotence, in his wisdom, has seen fit to take him from them just ere he arrived at the years of accountability; and the parents have the blessed assurance that he has been taken from the evils to come, to bask in the endless felicity and heavenly beatitude, in the mansions of his heavenly father.

In this particular instance, a devout faith in prophetic dictates concerning the afterlife had transformed what might have been a disheartening premature demise into a timely blessing from God: the young boy had died just before the age of eight and gained automatic admission into the celestial kingdom.
By the mid-nineteenth century, American society generally adhered to the belief that the death of young children, as well as pious adults, was a blessed transition to a more glorified existence. It took only a simple adjustment in perspective to allow a grief-stricken parent to see a deceased child as "specially called to heaven." For the surviving parents in the Latter-day Saint culture, their dead offspring had received all that a benevolent God had to give. According to Mormon eschatology, the victims of childhood demise not only secured a release from the pain and trials of mortality, but they held a distinct advantage in the world to come. Those who passed on to eternity before the age of eight years were natural heirs of the celestial kingdom, whereas all who lived to maturity had to prove themselves worthy.

The Saints' expectations for postmortal happiness developed into a more complex, family-oriented system in the 1840s. Even with the new tenets added by the Prophet's 1836 revelation, which opened the door to the highest degree of glory to two groups of deceased persons whose eternal status had been unknown prior to that time, the Mormon afterlife did not completely assume the emphasis of familial associations, which came to be characteristic of the religion, until the Nauvoo period. As a result of the deaths suffered from the Missouri persecutions and the unhealthfulness of their new city in Illinois, the Saints became even more preoccupied with death and immortality. And their God and his prophet provided further insight into eternity and the blessings awaiting the righteous.

While recent historians have disagreed as to the severity of health conditions which prevailed at Nauvoo during the Mormon settlement, all are in agreement on one basic point: it was the most sickly environment yet encountered by the Mormons. Levi Jackson, who was one of the first Saints to inhabit the site, recalled that it was "very sickly the first year." And by most available reports, it never progressed much beyond that initial judgment. In July 1839, during their first summer at the new headquarters of the Church, the family of Zina Huntington recorded her demise. Oliver B. Huntington noted that "my mother died. I suppose from or on account of the persecutions of Missouri, at the same time I was so sick I could not attend the funeral." Concerning the untimely death of his wife, William Huntington lamented, "My companion [was] taken from me and consigned to the grave in a strange land and in depth of poverty." Like his son, the older man also commented that the rest of his family and numerous others were sick due to the unhealthfulness of their surroundings. But, stalwart Latter-day Saint that he was, William Huntington rejoiced because "all our afflictions [are] for Christ's sake [and we are] looking forward for the recompence of reward as did Paul through[the] goodness of God."
Joseph Smith had chosen to move Church headquarters to this swampy lowland regardless of its questionable reputation. In his official history of those early years, the Prophet noted that the vicinity "was so unhealthful, very few could live there." But believing that divine intervention could reverse the natural conditions, construction of a city was attempted. Unfortunately, heavenly blessings never proved sufficient to stay the calamitous effects of disease which annually ravaged the community. Malaria was endemic in the region, and murderous epidemics repeatedly plagued residents of the upper Midwest until the mid-nineteenth century. The situation was so bad for the Latter-day Saints in 1839 that one wrote, "I never saw so sickly a time," while another noted, "It truly seemed like a time of pestilence." The following year, as the situation grew steadily worse, Joseph Smith issued a "Proclamation" in which he optimistically promoted the city. In addition to recurrent fevers, the Mormons also had to combat such afflictions as consumption (tuberculosis), chronic bouts with diarrhea, and an assortment of childhood maladies.

Prophetic expectations aside, disease and death remained rampant at Nauvoo. Newel Knight, a prominent Church member and early settler in the community, sadly commented in 1841, "I believe no place was more infested with sickness. . . . Some of your best men were swept down by the destroyer." The fever epidemic of that year was so disastrous that Sidney Rigdon found it necessary to preach "a general funeral sermon." The realities of sickness and death for the Mormons at Nauvoo were documented by the official sexton's reports published in the city newspapers. Available studies of mortality rates in other mid-nineteenth-century locations have tended to indicate that the Latter-day Saint community had, on the average, a significantly higher incidence of death. The crude mortality rate for the United States from 1830 to 1840 has been estimated at 13.8 deaths per 1,000 persons. In the following decade this figure had declined only slightly to 13.5 per 1,000. The state of Illinois had a mortality rate identical to this second ratio for the same date. While the estimates for larger American cities ranged from 25–26.5 per 1,000 in the antebellum period, one student of the topic has calculated that a rate as low as 10 per 1,000 might be considered reasonable for many smaller Massachusetts towns. He has further theorized that this figure might well have been close to the national average for similarly sized communities.

However, based on information compiled from the sexton's reports for Nauvoo from January 1843 through October 1845, it would appear that the Saints were subjected to an incidence of death which was consistently above the mortality statistics cited above. In 1843 the crude estimate for the city was 22 per 1,000; the following year this
had increased to nearly 26 deaths per 1,000 persons before it declined somewhat in 1845 to 19.5 per 1,000. These statistics represent only those deceased residents who were buried within the city limits and thus included in the official notice.\(^5^2\)

The specter of death had been constantly with the Mormons throughout much of their early history, but during this period from 1839 to 1845 it became even more pronounced. Although its population grew quickly, Nauvoo never was able to meet the full expectations of Joseph Smith and his followers and become a garden spot. As a consequence of these natural conditions, the Prophet directed a sizable portion of his pedagogical activities to discussing the afterlife and to the promulgation of the concept of the celestial family. Latter-day Saint eschatology grew to maturity in the early 1840s—perhaps by a natural process, or possibly one hastened by necessity. Mormon rhetoric of this period images them as engaged in a battle with the devil for the right to obtain the riches of the next life. Their victory or defeat was dependent upon how valiantly they had lived: the price could be steep, but the product was without comparison.

Martha Coray, a resident of Nauvoo, recorded a sermon by Joseph Smith in which he taught that “salvation is for a man to be saved from all his enemies, even our last enemy which is death.”\(^5^3\) On another occasion, the Prophet had instructed his followers, “Death is the last enemy to conquer on the pathway to salvation.”\(^5^4\) An example of this perspective in Latter-day Saint writing from the Illinois period appeared in a eulogy delivered at the funeral of Joseph Smith, Sr., the father of the Prophet, in September 1840. Robert B. Thompson said of the deceased that “his spirit now free and unincumbered, roams, and expatiates in that world, where the spirits of just men made perfect dwell, and where pain and sickness, tribulations and death cannot come.”\(^5^5\)

Latter-day Saint expectations about the afterlife displayed a sense of special entitlement during this period. The triumphant death was now associated with being the Lord’s anointed people. This feeling in regard to eternity had been fostered by Joseph Smith since at least 1832 and was not an uncommon attitude among many other antebellum Americans as well. The obituary of Mary Fate, published in the \textit{Times and Seasons} in 1841, concluded, “We sorrowed, but not as those who have no hope; death has a sting, the grave has a victory now, but thanks be to God who will give us the victory when the last enemy shall be conquered” (italics added).\(^5^6\) At about this same time, Mormon eschatology continued its transition to encompass the family and friends of the deceased. When Robert B. Thompson died in September 1841, his panegyrist rejoiced in the faithfulness he had exhibited in life and in death. One sought to comfort his wife and child further with the
observation that they could look forward to that happy period when they would again meet in a brighter and better world, where the "wicked cannot trouble, and where the weary may find rest."57

An excellent example of the evolution of Latter-day Saint eschatology is contained in an elegy written by Eliza R. Snow and published in 1843. She was a plural wife and confidante of the Prophet, and her works generally reflect accepted gospel precepts. In this particular poem, entitled "Apostrophe to Death," she traces the changing Mormon views on death as it was transmuted from a fearful tyrant into a "portal to the worlds on high." Modern revelation, as received by the Prophet Joseph Smith, is credited as the source of the enlightened change. Excerpts from the poem contrast the initial thought on death with the new philosophy:

Where art thou Death?—I've seen thy visage and
Have heard thy sound—and the deep, low murm'ring sound
That rises on thy tread!
Thy land is called a land of shadows: and thy path
A path of blind contingency gloominess and fear—

Later the author enunciates the welcome transition:

But thou art chang'd—the terror of thy looks—
The darkness that encompass'd thee is gone;
There is no frightfulness about thee now:
Intelligence, the everlasting lamp
Of truth, of truth eternal, lighted from
The world on high, has pour'd its brilliant flame
Abroad, to scatter darkness and to chase
The horrors that attended thy approach!
And thou art chang'd—for since the glorious light
Of revelation shone upon thy path
Thou seem'st no more a hideous monster. ... 58

As is evidenced by the above poem, Latter-day Saint eschatology had, by the date of this publication in 1843, elevated death to a position of high importance: for the faithful Mormon it represented the passageway to eternal life. While this concept was by no means limited to any specific antebellum American denomination, it did enhance the importance of adherence to gospel precepts for the faithful.

Funeral sermons preached by Joseph Smith in 1843 and 1844 served to further develop Latter-day Saint thought on death and the afterlife. These discourses consistently linked dying with other necessary prerequisites for exaltation. By this time, the familial unit had evolved into a primary focal point in the Saints' concept of eternity. In a eulogy rendered in August 1843, Joseph Smith expounded upon the necessity of priesthood sealings in order to weld a family together forever. The Prophet pronounced the deceased, Judge Higbee, to have been a "just
and good man." He then admonished his survivors to live so that they could be "reunited" with Brother Higbee in the hereafter. Two months later, on the occasion of the demise of James Adams, Joseph Smith further emphasized the necessity of sacred rituals. He taught that "knowledge . . . [which is required for admittance into the celestial kingdom] can only be obtained by experience in these things, through the ordinance of God set forth for that purpose." The true travail which accompanied death, defined by mid-nineteenth-century Mormonism as being eternally orphaned by the absence of sanctified familial bonds, could be overcome only through the prescribed ecclesiastical ministrations. It was for this reason that the Saints were so vigorously employed in the construction of the Nauvoo Temple, the established edifice wherein the needed religious observances could be properly practiced. The Prophet and his associates in the Church hierarchy constantly admonished the disciples to hasten the work so that the provisions for eternity could be met.

In the spring of 1844, Joseph Smith preached the most renowned eschatological sermon in Latter-day Saint history. The reason for the oration was the accidental death of King Follett, whom the Prophet described as "our worthy brother." The elegy, known in the annals of Mormondom as the "King Follett Discourse," was given approximately one month after Follett's demise. It was delivered to a large congregation at the April conference of the Church. The speech lasted over two hours and touched on twenty-seven theological topics, including the character of God, the final state of the righteous, and the relation of man and deity. The Prophet reiterated the promise of continuing family ties and gave the Saints the charge to do the necessary ordinance work vicariously in order to save their ancestors. Those who had suffered the sorrow of losing a friend or relative were urged not to weep or mourn. "I have a father, brothers, children, and friends who have gone to a world of spirits," the Prophet lamented. But he was confident that they were parted only "for a moment" and all would soon be together again. For those who were worthy, Joseph Smith promised that theirs would be an "eternity of felicity." Needless to say, Mormon optimism in regard to the next life was even further enhanced by these remarks.

It seems clear, then, that from the early 1830s until just months before the Prophet's murder in 1844, the eschatology of Mormonism had continuously expanded from the rudimentary Christian belief in an individual reward for the righteous to a complex, highly structured immortal existence. Similar concepts can be found in American Protestantism during the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, many tenets espoused by the Latter-day Saints concerning the postmortual reunion of loved ones had been nurtured at an
earlier time in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. However, for Swedenborgians this joyous occasion lasted only for somewhere between a few hours and one year. At that juncture, each spirit then either went on to a more glorious realm or was consigned to hell. The basic difference which separated these two strains of thought is evident in the duration of the period of togetherness: for one group it was a temporary restoration of earthly ties followed by an unattached eternity, whereas for the other family ties were perceived as continuing forever. This emphasis upon the celestial family is the most notable point of variance between Mormons and their contemporaries.

Following the murder of the Prophet in June 1844, the teachings of the surviving Church leaders continued to have a profound impact on many Mormons’ perceptions of death and immortality. For example, Zina Young recorded her attendance at the funeral of the wife of Peregrine Sessions, in January 1845. She was deeply moved by the sermon and wrote in her diary that she prayed for help from the Lord to do his bidding and to seek after divine truths. In conclusion she beseeched her Heavenly Father: “O help me to do thy will, and to bring my mind in a perfect subjugation of thy will.” Yet many of the Saints, despite their faith in the gospel, were still not easily reconciled to the death of a loved one. Even the most devout believers could be expected to reveal natural human responses to such a loss. Levi Jackman, whose wife died in 1846, recorded the following sentiments in his journal some time following her passage:

That was a gloomey day for me. We had lived together . . . twenty-eight years without a jar or contention. She was true and faithfull under all circumstances. She was a . . . loving wife, a tender mother, and a neighbor whose loss was lamented. In short she lived and died a Saint.

While Jackman may have harbored hope for being with his deceased spouse in the next world, he expressed a deep sense of grief concerning her death.

The innermost thoughts of many early Mormons may never be known. To express any dissatisfaction, either verbally or in writing, was deemed to be improper behavior and possibly even sacrilegious. As Nancy Tracy observed in her autobiography, “We . . . felt that the Lord was very mindful of those who trusted in Him and we never felt to murmer or complain.” Obviously some Latter-day Saints accepted life’s tragedies more easily than others, and many more were not inclined to disclose their private anxieties. Nonetheless, the literary history of Mormonism displays a culture that was increasingly reconciled to death and confident of an exalted eternity. The banners with which mid-nineteenth-century Mormonism armed its adherents as they faced eternity were powerful. While Latter-day Saint eschatology remained
basically within the mainstream of antebellum American thought, it also developed some distinct aspects which were dictated by (or possibly dictated) fundamental Mormon theology. In April 1846, as the harried emigrants fled Nauvoo, William Clayton penned the words to a well-loved Latter-day Saint hymn. Part of the final stanza captures in a simple manner the focal point of the Mormons’ basic immortal expectations:

And should we die before our journey’s through
Happy day! All is well!
We then are free from toil and sorrow too;
With the just we shall dwell!66

NOTES


2The verse cited was written by Henry Kirke White and is quoted in McDowell, “American Attitudes toward Death,” 16.


7D&C 45:26. See also Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt: One of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts, in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), 297–98.

8Journal History, 7 January 1832.


**Evening and Morning Star** 1 (June 1832): 8.

**Messenger and Advocate** 1 (March 1835): 80.

Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennium and Other Poems* (N.p., ca. 1839), 89–90, copy located in LDS Church Archives.

**Evening and Morning Star** 1 (July 1832): 1. See also D&C 42:45–47.

Meyers, “*Gates Ajair,***” 117.

**See Evening and Morning Star** 2 (August 1834): 186.

Ibid. 2 (March 1834): 141.

Journal History, 15 October 1837. The “first resurrection,” as was mentioned by Joseph Smith, is understood in Mormon theology to be the coming forth of the valiant to usher in the Second Advent of Christ. See D&C 88:96–102. The term “resurrection of the just” is used synonymously.

Elders Journal (Kirtland, Ohio), July 1838.

Saum, “*Death in the Popular Mind,***” 492.


Ibid.


Joseph Smith, Letter, 6 June 1832. microfilm copy, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville (original located at Chicago Historical Society).

Journal History, 20 March 1842. Late nineteenth-century Mormons generally continue to hold this optimistic attitude about the death of infants (see Brent A. Barlow, ed., “Children and Death,” sec. 4 of *Understanding Death* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979]).


Journal History, 4 October 1838.

**Times and Seasons** 3 (15 November 1841): 592.


William Huntington, Diary, n.d., 10–11, LDS Church Archives.

**History of the Church** 3:375.


Newel Knight, Diary, ca. 1839, 30, LDS Church Archives; Erastus Snow, “*Sketch Book,*” n.d., 52, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

See **Times and Seasons** 2 (15 January 1841): 274. Refer also to Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 54; and **History of the Church** 4:268.

Knight, Diary, n.d., 33.


Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, Notebook, n.d., LDS Church Archives.

Smith, *Teachings*, 297.
Early Mormon Perceptions of Death

59 *Times and Seasons* 1 (September 1840): 170.
60 Ibid. 2 (15 February 1841): 325.
61 Ibid. 2 (1 September 1841): 519.
62 See the *Wasp* 1 (21 January 1843): 38.
64 *Times and Seasons* 4 (15 September 1843): 331–32. For the entire discourse, see *History of the Church* 6:50–52.
67 Young, Diary, 26 January 1845.
69 Tracy, "A Sketch of the Life of Nancy Naomi Tracy."
Nature and the Bourgeois Poet

On emerald pasture set in fiery seas
Of harvest ruminated sated cows.

Then rain blurred summer in a veil of scent.

The cows remained at ease;
but I, Nature's haberdasher, jeweler, parfumier, went
back unrapt and wet to the house.

—Arthur Henry King
August 1943
Writing: The Most Hazardous Craft

Edward L. Hart

I greet you today as practitioners of the most hazardous craft known to man—that of writing; and I salute your intrepidity. Any kind of writing is dangerous enough, but to be a Mormon writer is to face double jeopardy. I have to confess, first of all, though, that I am not sure what a Mormon writer is. It may be a Mormon who writes, or it may be a writer who happens to be Mormon. (You will notice in the preceding sentence how skillfully I avoided sexist language by referring to the writer as it instead of he, while at the same time avoiding the tediousness of he or she. This is one of the lesser hazards of the craft.) I suspect that it makes a difference whether a person is a Mormon who writes or a writer who is a Mormon. I imagine, further, that both kinds may be present; and for fear of offending one kind or the other (another hazard) by any definition I might come up with, I bequeath the task of defining to my successor, John Tanner, along with all the other equally valuable perquisites of office.

I speak in all seriousness when I say that writing, if it is done seriously, is dangerous. Any time the imaginative forces of the mind are released and given free rein (and they have to be given free rein or they do not work) there is a danger, because the imagination leads into the exploration of new worlds. Ariel had to be released by Prospero in order that the creative imagination could function unhampered by the dull pall through which the conscious mind sees everything. But the question of what may lie ahead if the imagination is freed is as puzzling to the would-be writer as was the prospect of the next world to Hamlet. We simply don’t know what lies beyond. To explore the beyond is compared to the exploring of the dark side of the moon by my friend Radcliffe Squires, a Utah poet though he teaches at the University of Michigan. His essay is called, appropriately, “The Dark Side of the Moon.” He delivered it originally at a function honoring our former teacher Brewster Ghiselin on his retirement, and the essay

---

Edward L. Hart is a professor emeritus of English at Brigham Young University. This article was originally presented as the 1986 presidential address to the Association for Mormon Letters.
is now, at least in part, in the fourth edition of *The Norton Reader*. I want to summarize some of his ideas.

When the imagination is turned loose, says Squires, "We neither can keep an unconscious solution to a problem from arising nor can we force it to arise."1 There is, in short, no guarantee as to what will happen when we begin to write imaginatively. We may not like at all the solution that arises. Squires continues:

The act of creation in the arts . . . involves really two processes or aspects that are at war with each other but which must nevertheless be made one. One of these aspects concerns the release of an anarchistic, quite feral voice, and it quarrels with the other aspect, a voice that is formal, debonair, and legal. The formal and legal side is so terrified of the feral that it seeks to cover it, to hide it away.2

As the process of composition continues, says Squires, the rational mind tires in its censorship, and then "the wilder faculty makes some kind of composition and in so doing gives point to reason and depth and beauty to formality."3 But what if that accommodation to each other is not made? "When, for reasons that are always obscure, the cooperation fails and the task is not performed, then the artist is in Hell. He may in fact by such stoppages be driven mad."4 I recommend the reading in its entirety of Squires's essay.

Yes, writing is hazardous to your health and probably should bear a warning label from the Surgeon General. Those who fear the imagination and who would therefore banish creativity perceive correctly that it is a potential threat to the established order. But to follow their advice and give up creativity leads us into another danger, worse than the perils opened upon us by creativity; and, of course, that new danger comes from being uncreative. Lack of creativity leads to another Hell—the Hell of stagnation. According to Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." And surely, falling back for a moment into Radcliffe Squires's language, a creative act that "gives point to reason and depth and beauty to formality" is one form of vision.

The would-be writer who has followed me to this point faces Hamlet's dilemma: to be or not to be creative. Logically, the choice of not to be leads to a certain death, the Hell of stagnation, whereas the other choice, the option to be creative, though potentially open to failure, as every course in life is, offers an equal hope for success. No oddsmaker could fail to recommend the way that at least has a chance of winning.

Assuming, then, that we have made the choice to be creative writers, we have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain by facing the hazards squarely. Let us assume that a young Mormon has decided to try to write and wants to project in written words a unique experience. I suppose almost the first thing any writer discovers is that it is impossible
to transform any living experience directly into words. The reason is that words have a life of their own, and once they have been called into play they lead the mind that brought them forth into avenues and nuances of thought and feeling that didn’t exist before the writing started. T. S. Eliot talked about “finding an ‘objective correlative’” that should serve as a “formula” for a particular emotion, but Eliseo Vivas pointed out the fallacy in the assumption that there can be any A=B correspondence between the words of a finished work and the original emotion that prompted the writing of it. Vivas uses the example of García Lorca writing about the death of a bullfighter in the ring. Says Vivas, “The emotion originally felt by García Lorca . . . was transmuted into something quite different as he began to produce the poem,” and he concludes that García Lorca had to discover the precise meaning of the poem through the act of composition.

The would-be writer has thus discovered the impossibility of simply taking an experience out of the mind and putting that precise same experience onto paper. But let us not be discouraged by this state of affairs. There is hope in it if we look closely. Though we cannot, in effect, take a picture of an experience and hold it up for examination, we can do something better: we can transform the experience through the creative imagination and in the process, if we are lucky, discover its meaning—which almost surely we didn’t know before we started to write. I said “if we are lucky,” because there is always the chance that our effort won’t succeed. There is always the chance, also, that the meaning we discover may be disturbing—since when we took that walk into the unknown there was no guarantee of what we’d run into.

What I have just said applies to all writers, of course: not just to Mormon writers. I also said, near the beginning, that the Mormon writer faces double jeopardy—a second hazard in addition to those that face every creative writer. That second hazard is the risk of being misunderstood. The writer’s attempt to express a new perception may be mistaken for rejection or rebellion. Chaucer is still mistakenly thought by some beginning students to be attacking the whole Catholic church when they read about the Pardoner and his relics, failing to see that in the whole context, including the treatment of the Parish Priest, Chaucer was motivated by love of the institution he was attempting to cleanse. Similarly, Jonathan Swift was a devout believer in the Church of England, though he was misunderstood even by Queen Anne, whose influence kept him from becoming a bishop.

Those insights produced by the most devoted Mormon creative writer may not be immediately appreciated by other people in the Church—or even by members of the family. In this connection, I refer to a letter sent to me as president of the Association for Mormon Letters by Virginia Sorensen Waugh, who praised the association for providing
the kind of support for writers that they are not likely to receive from family and friends. The letter happened to come just as I had arrived at this point in the preparation of this paper, and it fits so well that I’m going to read a relevant section:

During my years of trying to say what I felt about my childhood—and I still try, though age and infirmities limit the product sadly—I felt deeply the lack of sympathy "out home" and perhaps rather more deeply, the booing. Even the family—only "Can’t you let Grandma lie in peace?"

When I hoped to give her a kind of eternal life?

I do not say what I have been saying to frighten anyone away from the attempt to be creative. I can think of no legitimate grounds for doing that. President Kimball called upon Church members to become new Miltons or Shakespeares. I heartily concur with that aspiration. But at the same time I have to say what I have said: that creative expression may be misunderstood and that that misunderstanding may lead to an alienation of the kind that was the last thing the writer wanted upon embarking on a career.

What, then, if anything, can be promised the beginning writer who wants to be creative and who, at the same time, wants to keep a faith intact. For one thing, such a writer cannot be promised immunity from the perils that universally beset all mankind. No one can promise that regarding any pursuit. I think I can promise this, however: that the kind of thing one discovers in the process of creation will depend a great deal on what was deep inside to begin with. A person has, after all, the control over the process to insist that it does not stop at the first level but goes deeper and deeper to the point where one recognizes one’s truest self.

In the full light of all the possibilities and problems, I still conclude that creative writing is a way of expression not to be withheld from even the most devout Mormon. If the faith is real and based on genuine conversion to principle, and if one survives the hazards and delves to the richest and deepest sources of being, there will be no loss, but rather an enhancement—in the discovery of that deeper self in the context of the deeper truth.

NOTES

2Ibid., 516.
3Ibid., 517.
4Ibid.
7Virginia Sorensen Waugh to Edward L. Hart, 10 January 1986.
What's Burning at BYU: The Role of Combustion and Our Work to Understand It

L. Douglas Smoot

PRE-FIRE OBSERVATIONS—INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

I have been fascinated by combusting or exploding fuels for as long as I can remember. When I was a boy, firecrackers were a favorite, though not always lawful, hobby. As my wife and I sit at a fireplace, she reflects on our home and family, and I think of the cellulose in the wood pyrolyzing and thermally cracking to produce soot. I have spent the past twenty-four years researching one aspect or another of this "burning subject."

I have been continuously at BYU since the fall of 1967 and have conducted research during this entire period in a field that we call "combustion." This is a very general term that refers to an interdisciplinary subject of broad interest and application. Topics may range from forest fires to rockets, from jet engines to power plants, from automobile motors to candles, and from coal mine explosions to fireplaces. The word combustion refers to the chemical reaction of a fuel with an oxidizer such as oxygen, with significant release of heat. Such chemical processes are complicated by the transfer of heat, the turbulent flow of the reacting fluids, or the motion of droplets or particles. Illustration 1 shows many of the physical and chemical processes that take place during combustion of coal in a large furnace that generates power for our use. Because of the complexity of these processes, the understanding of combustion requires broad insight from several fields.

I have organized this presentation after the manner of a burning candle, so often used as the symbol of combustion. A candle is first lit by an ignition source; it radiates light and heat to its surroundings; it provides a flame to start other fires; and it burns brightly until it is extinguished. Thus it proceeds through the phases: (1) ignition,
ILLUSTRATION 1. PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROCESSES DURING COMBUSTION OF COAL IN A LARGE FURNACE
(2) radiation, (3) flame spreading, (4) combustion, and (5) extinguishment. My presentation will follow these same phases with these introductory comments referred to as “pre-flame observations.”

Before we light the candle, I must acknowledge the contributions of many. It has been said by someone that in art it is “I,” but in science it is “we.” So much of what I say is due to others. Just at BYU, I have worked with over sixty research students and at least ten faculty members directly in our combustion work. I have received continuing support from administrators at every level. I have found only encouragement at this university for creative endeavor. In fact, it is difficult to identify any one accomplishment for which I have been solely responsible.

But my sense of acknowledgment goes far beyond this. My wife and children—all present at this lecture, and who by Friday will number seven, counting marriage unions—are each bright candles in my soul. My parents and hers, all here, add fuel to my flame. And I glow more brightly when I listen to you, my university associates, talk about the flames in your lives such as “The Bard and the Lord,” “Families and Contracts,” “Scriptural Fingerprints,” “Flora and Fauna,” “Bridges in Our Lives,” or “Nineteenth-Century Mormon Communities.” So much about the fire of a great university derives from the different fuels of our various disciplines. And as I walk this campus I sense the sacrifice of those before me, particularly, for me, my great-grandfather Abraham Owen Smoot; and this fans my flame of dedication to this university. But now, let me tell you about the burning candle of my professional life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house” (Matt. 5:15). I only hope my candle will give light to all that are in this house.

IGNITION—WHEN DID THE FIRE START?

The history of combustion parallels the history of mankind. Natural fires must have occurred before man’s footprints were made in the sands of the earth. Volcanic lava, lightning, and the desert sun must have helped to form the earth. I learned, during last year’s lecture-trip to mainland China, that Peking Man, according to present knowledge, performed the first combustion experiments a half-million years ago. The ashes of organized fires remain in these prehistoric caves as a record of these early researchers.

F. J. Weinberg suggests that mankind learned to ignite fires as recently as thirty thousand years ago. Then followed the use of fire for making tools, somewhere from five thousand to ten thousand years ago. Ancient civilizations expressed these events in myths. According to the Greeks, Prometheus brought man the fire he stole from Zeus,
the god of lightning and thunder. In the legends of Japan, Earth Mother, Izanami, after having given birth to the various deities, gave birth to the god of fire, who burned her terribly and caused her death. Well before the time of Christ, Empedocles of Acragas (fifth century B.C.) had thought of fire as one of the basic elements of primal matter. From Vergil’s sixth eclogue (43–37 B.C.), we read:

He sang how in the mighty Void, the seeds of Earth and of Air and of Ocean, and of Fire—that pure thing—ranged themselves together, and how from these principles all the Elements arose, systematically cohering in the tender globe of the World.

Following the alchemists, in rapid and recent succession, came the early explorations of combustion and the role of oxygen by Priestley and Lavoisier in the 1770s; the discovery of the nature of the explosion, propagation, and flammability of premixed gases by Le Châtelier in 1883; and the description of the candlelike diffusion flame by Burke and Schumann in 1928. Of course, these discoveries only illustrate the vast scientific contributions on which our present understanding of combustion is based. Thus the role of fire has been with us from the first and has pervaded all facets of our lives.

RADIATION—HOW DOES THE FLAME WARM US?

Fire has continued from early man to pervade our lives and warm our souls. In the scriptures, we find frequent reference to fire, sometimes to brighten our souls, as in Isaiah 50:11: ‘‘Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled’’; and sometimes to quench our natural tendencies, as in Doctrine and Covenants 43:33: ‘‘And the wicked shall go away into unquenchable fire, and their end no man knoweth on earth’’.

Reference to fire is also common in our best literature. You will remember Pippin, the discontented youth in the country of Gaul, who sought life’s fulfillment through power, war, and love. Recall these lines from near the end, where Leader tries to entice Pippin to a spectacular, if destructive end:

When he does it, it’s just a trick. But when you do it, it’ll be for real.
When I do it? You mean you want me to get into that thing and set myself on fire?
Wait a minute....
You will step into that flame, Pippin....
Become part of that flame....
Become flame itself....
And for the moment shine with unequalled brilliance....
And in that flame you’ll become a glorious synthesis of life and death.
The Role of Combustion

Shakespeare also dramatized with fire. From the *Taming of the Shrew*, can you hear Grumio in Petruchio’s house, warming himself by the fire?

Was ever man so weary? I am sent before to make a fire, and they are coming after to warm them. Now, were not I a little pot, and soon hot, my very lips might freeze to my teeth, my tongue to the roof of my mouth, my heart in my belly, ere I should come by a fire to thaw me: —but I, with blowing the fire, shall warm myself; for, considering the weather, a taller man than I will take cold.

(4.1.3–11)

Or do you recall Petruchio in reference to the taming of Kathrina:

And where two raging fires meet together, they do consume the thing that feeds their fury. Though little fire grows great with little wind, yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all.

(2.1.132–35)

From early art through the Dutch masters and on to modern art, men have captured fire on canvas. Rembrandt used the path of the fire’s light to immortality as is suggested in his painting *The Holy Family*.

More than this, fire warms our bodies. Few of us have stopped to consider the role of fire in our way of life. The present annual world consumption of energy is equivalent to one hundred and forty million barrels of oil per day, with the United States consuming over one-third of the total. More than 97 percent of this total comes from the burning of wood and the fossil fuels—coal, oil, and gas. Most of the balance is from hydroelectric and nuclear energy sources.8

Nearly all of the world’s transportation moves on fire’s released energy—aircraft, cars, trucks, ships, trains. Agnew estimates that the spark ignition and combustion of a small quantity of gasoline occurs over ten quintillion times (10^{19}) each year (or three hundred billion times a second) in the United States alone. And he documents the significant contributions of combustion research on today’s auto engines in control of knock, increased mileage per gallon, and reduction in pollutants.9

Most of the world’s industrial power is generated from the combustion of fossil fuels. The power in our homes, whether electric or gas, whether in the fireplace or the furnace, is provided through combustion. We cook through fire, directly or indirectly. When you bake a roast, do you envision the remote coal fire of a large power generating plant? The weapons in our national defense arsenal, from conventional weapons such as rifles and cannons to advanced rockets, burn fuels to achieve their destination. And we relax by fire. Who here does not love the warmth of a log fire on a winter’s night?

Our high standard of living is related somewhat to the use of energy from combustion. Illustration 2 shows the relationship between the
ILLUSTRATION 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT, PER CAPITA
ILLUSTRATION 3. PATTERNS OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN THE UNITED STATES—CONSUMER CATEGORIES AND MAJOR END USES
gross national product for several nations and their energy consumption. Per capita energy consumption in the United States is about four hundred thousand megajoules per year, which some have estimated to be equivalent to the work that could be done by twenty-five servants working around the clock for every United States citizen.¹⁰ And nearly all of this energy is made available to us through controlled combustion processes. How is this energy used in our country? Illustration 3 shows proportions of use in transportation (25 percent), by industry (41 percent), in our homes (19 percent), and in commerce (14 percent).

But we have also known, from the time we were little children, that the fire that warms our bodies can also burn. I refer here to more destructive fires that consume buildings and forests and bring explosive death in our coal mines. These problems are secondary to the indirect hazards of combustion that presently and appropriately focus our national attention. The worldwide burning of fossil fuels has brought us carbon monoxide from our automobiles, smog over our large cities, and acid rain downwind from our generating plants. With the present public rejection of nuclear power, and with no near-term alternatives to the use of fossil fuels to provide our energy, these problems will require our increased attention.

The atmosphere that we breathe is made mostly of nitrogen and oxygen, which we know as life-giving gases. Yet, when nitrogen and oxygen combine during high temperature combustion, a new compound, nitrogen oxide, is formed which is a hazardous pollutant to humans, animals, and plants, and causes smog. About one trillion pounds per year of this pollutant are emitted from automobiles, power stations, and aircraft around the world. This is equivalent to two hundred pounds per year for every soul living in the world.¹¹

About two hundred times more per year of sulfur oxides (or one hundred billion tons per year) are also emitted, with 70 percent coming from fossil-fueled (mostly coal) electric generating stations.¹² These sulfur oxides in the atmosphere combine with rainwater to form an acid that threatens our forests and marine life. We also worry, though without firm evidence, about the possibility of increasing carbon dioxide concentration in our atmosphere causing undesirable changes in our weather. We call this the "greenhouse" effect.

We suffer in still other ways from this fire that otherwise frees us from a life of hard labor. We kill over forty-five thousand souls per year on our country’s highways with vehicles powered by combustion. We and our adversaries use fire to power our defense weapons that bring us an uncertain peace while we sleep with an uneasy sense of security.

Thus, we see that fire provides us with the high standard of living that we enjoy while presenting us significant challenges that we must
solve through research to wisely use our combustible resources. And that is where our research comes in.

FLAME-SPREADING—HOW DID WE GET STARTED AT BYU?

Just as a flame spreads across the logs in a fireplace or through a forest, so has combustion research expanded at BYU from modest beginnings. This is not the place to give a comprehensive history of combustion research work at BYU. But a brief summary of some key decisions and events may illustrate why we are burning what we burn. However, I must emphasize that this brief historical perspective will not account for combustion-related research conducted by those not associated with the Combustion Laboratory.

For me, it all started with Sputnik, the first Russian launch of a space capsule in 1958. The American response to this development brought to the state of Utah a new business in solid propellants for missile power. Hercules and Thiokol were among early pioneers in these fuels. By 1960, when I joined the BYU chemical engineering faculty of four, fresh from Ph.D. work at the University of Washington, the state's propulsion work was expanding and in need of technical help. I had never taken courses in combustion or propulsion, but summer employment and consulting opportunities were irresistibly challenging. This was my first introduction to combustion. A four-year period of full-time employment at Lockheed Propulsion Company from 1963 to 1967 helped to develop the critical experiences in the marketing of research ideas.

After I returned to BYU in 1967, my combustion research work dealt with rocket exhausts, hybrid propellants, and air-breathing rockets. Early contracts from the Navy, Air Force, and NASA provided a foundation. Professor Ralph Coates joined Professor Duane Horton and myself in 1968, and much of the early aerospace combustion work at BYU was conducted by this group of three, without a doctoral program and with limited test facilities. This general focus continued for a very few more years until it seemed apparent that propulsion-related combustion research would decline. In the early seventies, Professor Coates started a small coal research program, and shortly afterwards the three of us obtained a new contract with the U.S. Bureau of Mines to study coal-dust explosions.

Not many universities were doing energy-related combustion research. So, when the oil crisis of 1973 occurred, we were in the right place at the right time, even though our experience was limited. Since then, our work in the combustion of fossil fuels, particularly coal, has continued to expand. My two early associates developed separate research efforts, and both subsequently left the university. I started to think
about burning coal in gasifiers and furnaces. Somehow, it seemed a
natural transition from burning metal particles in rocket propellants to
coal particles in furnaces. The basic physical and chemical processes were
similar. And coal is the world's most plentiful fossil fuel reserve. Coal
makes up nearly three-quarters of the world's known fossil fuel reserves
and nearly 90 percent of the known reserves in North America. The
United States has nearly a third of the world's known coal reserves.
With declining United States oil reserves, we now import about half of
our oil needs. Since fossil fuels provide nearly all of our energy needs
and since coal is the most abundant reserve, the need for further research
on this fuel seemed particularly important. Yet, at the time of the oil
embargo, research in the United States on this fuel was modest, indeed.

Two large contracts with the U.S. Department of Energy (then
ERDA) and the Electric Power Research Institute on coal gasification
and combustion in 1974 launched the BYU Combustion Laboratory.
One of these two studies is still active after a decade while the second
lasted about eight years. Since then, we have obtained about five million
dollars in grants and contracts from DOE, EPRI, TVA, Utah Power and
Light Company, Foster-Wheeler, Babcock and Wilcox, the U.S. Bureau
of Mines, the National Science Foundation, and others. We have grown
to include six faculty and about twenty-five to thirty graduate students.
It requires more than a half-million dollars a year to do our research
work. Since 1970, fifty-six students have completed master's degree
work, and twelve students have completed doctoral work. Our research
space has expanded from seven hundred square feet in 1968 to 10,500
square feet today.

Today, we are still working on the gasification and combustion of
coil and on coal-dust fires and explosions. Our work has expanded to
include combustion of coal-water mixtures, char combustion, and
the dynamics of flowing particle-gas systems. We have, for a decade,
worked on the development of computerized models for describing
these combustion processes. These predictive methods have been
adopted by about thirty organizations in the United States, Europe,
and Japan. Since 1977, we have published two books, six invited review
papers, over 120 publications, including fifty-three journal publications
and thirty-five contract final reports. During our two decades of
development, the university's contributions and encouragement have
been significant. And, while we never received or expected to receive
all we asked for, we were never discouraged.

COMBUSTION—HOW DOES THE FIRE BURN?

I have discussed what we burn but not why or how. Now, I'd like
to illustrate our method of working, with just one example. I noted
earlier that control of pollutants will be vital to acceptable increased use of our vast coal reserves. I also mentioned that the oxides of nitrogen, which form during most combustion processes, pollute our cities and hurt our lungs. The obvious question is easy—how can we burn fossil fuels efficiently while producing lower levels of nitrogen oxide? If you burn coal in just an ordinary fire, the oxides of nitrogen might exceed one part in a thousand parts in the gaseous products of combustion. That doesn’t sound like much, but federal law requires a three-fold reduction from uncontrolled levels while the Japanese want a ten-fold reduction. This is certainly an international problem.

But just identifying this problem as a possible research topic isn’t enough. We must ask other key questions. Is the research already being done? Can we contribute? Do we have the right background and equipment? Are we competitive? And inevitably, does some agency with money want to know the answers we can provide? Much creative work can be done with a pen and paper and some quiet time. But we need equipment and supplies and computers for our work. And graduate students these days expect to eat, and they want the research contracts to pay.

Well, in the midseventies we found positive answers to all of these questions. And we found ourselves with a research contract. Now, what did we do next? First we had to find out what was already known about the problem and its solution. For any technical research effort, a foundation of information is available in the library. We found that much was already known. Here are some things we learned from the work of others:

1. Most coals contain about 1 percent of nitrogen, called fuel nitrogen, as a part of the chemical structure of the coal.
2. When the coal burns, this fuel nitrogen is released and reacts with oxygen to produce the nitrogen oxide pollutants.
3. A very common way being considered to reduce the oxides of nitrogen was to keep oxygen away from the fuel nitrogen.14

We noted that most of the pollutant measurements were made in the exhaust and not in the combustor. We also determined that nobody had devised a way to predict the formation of nitrogen oxides during coal burning. So we set out to make measurements of this pollutant inside the combustor and to develop a computerized model to calculate this process.

Completing this kind of work didn’t happen overnight. One doctoral student built a combustor and taught us how to make flame measurements,15 and a second made our first nitrogen oxide measurements in a coal flame.16 Two more then did detailed studies of this pollutant for different coals.17 It took us about six years to do this work.
ILLUSTRATION 4. COMPARISON OF PREDICTED (—) AND OBSERVED (□) EFFECT OF SECONDARY SWIRL NUMBER, ON EFFLUENT NO CONCENTRATION FOR (A) A SUBBITUMINOUS COAL AND (B) BITUMINOUS COAL.
ILLUSTRATION 5. FORMATION AND DECAY OF NITROGEN OXIDE POLLUTANT DURING COMBUSTION OF A PULVERIZED UTAH BITUMINOUS COAL.
Illustration 4 shows one of the more important results from these last two studies. We found that by swirling the combustion air, we could lower the pollutant concentration by a factor of three and get even better combustion of the coal. We also measured the rate at which the pollutant forms throughout the combustor, as shown in illustration 5. Notice how it forms early in the combustor and then declines toward the exit. And we published the results of our work in prominent technical journals.

This doesn’t end the story. While we were making these measurements, we were also working on ways to model this pollutant formation process. It is presumed that if you can predict a natural occurrence, you may be able to use the predictive method to identify ways to control the event, or at least to accommodate it. Thus, scientists and engineers strive to predict big events, such as weather and earthquakes, as well as smaller events, such as an automotive crash or the combustion of coal.

Just how does one go about predicting a natural event? The key is that natural occurrences always take place according to the laws of nature. A model, then, is a mathematical solution of these laws, often simplified, which can be used to obtain information that wasn’t known before. Let’s look at a simple example. Suppose you wanted to determine the loss of weight that took place when you baked a cake. When the cake bakes, water in the cake mix is evaporated. Further, the baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) decomposes at high oven temperatures to release carbon dioxide which helps the cake to rise. Other losses may also occur. The cake is thus lighter than the weight of its ingredients, as shown in illustration 6. To determine the loss in weight, you would simply weigh the cake batter in the pan before you baked the cake, and then weigh the cake after baking. The difference is the loss of weight, as anyone can see.

In making this analysis, we have applied a basic physical law. In any natural process, matter (or more exactly, mass) is neither created or destroyed. We think conceptually of the “universe,” which we divide into two parts: the system to be investigated, and the balance of the universe we call the surroundings. The system may be a cake, a furnace, a rocket engine, or the cylinder of an automobile engine. While the mass of a system can change, as shown in illustration 7, the mass of the “universe” must be constant. Thus, for the cake, the mathematical expression determining the weight of ingredients lost to the atmosphere is:

\[
\text{weight loss on baking} = \text{weight of ingredients} - \text{weight of the baked cake}.
\]

In a much more complex way, this is how we calculate the formulation of nitrogen oxide during coal combustion. Here we need several natural laws, including, among others:
ILLUSTRATION 6. WEIGHT COMPARISON OF BAKED CAKE AND ITS INGREDIENTS
ILLUSTRATION 7. CONTROL VOLUME FOR A MASS BALANCE
The Role of Combustion

1. Mass balances for each chemical element such as carbon, hydrogen, etc.
2. Energy balances for the gas and the coal.

These equations are written for each of the little rectangles of the coal reactor in illustration 8, just like the mass balance that was written for the cake. Illustration 9 shows some of the complex balance equations that must be solved. But these equations are not enough, because they contain too many quantities (that is, variables) that we don’t know. A rule of mathematics is that you can only calculate one new quantity that you didn’t already know from each equation. We used the cake weight balance equation to calculate loss of weight during baking. But to do so, we had to weigh the cake before and after. That’s what we have to do with the coal furnace—not weigh it before and after, but make many basic measurements of quantities to be used in our equations. For example, we measure the rate at which small coal particles react in oxygen for various temperatures. We measure the fraction of the various elements contained in the coal before it is burned, such as carbon, hydrogen, and of course nitrogen. We measure the size of the furnace and the flow rates of coal and air into the furnace. We measure the size of the coal particles after they are finely ground. Some of the measurements are made in our laboratory and others are basic measurements made at other laboratories. Thus, a single calculation of nitrogen oxide formation is based on literally hundreds of measurements from laboratories throughout the world.

Taking this approach, we launched into our model development. But it wasn’t a trivial exercise. In fact, we have spent a decade of time, consumed more than one million dollars in contract research funds, and graduated four Ph.D. students, all of whom made vital contributions to the effort. After all of this, we now have a model, thought to be the first of its kind, which will calculate how nitrogen oxide pollutant forms during coal combustion. Now other questions arise. Does it predict what really happens? Will anyone else want to use it? Is the cost of a solution acceptable?

We have used this model now for hundreds of predictions, but I’ll refer to only two. Illustrations 4 and 5 show comparisons of predicted measured nitrogen oxide in a coal reactor. The model predicts the magnitude and the trends observed in the measurement. In fact, given the complexity of this entire process, the agreement was quite satisfying and, admittedly, surprising to us. This same type of agreement has been observed in many other cases. To our knowledge, this is the only such method available for predicting nitrogen oxide formation during coal combustion, and we think of this as a significant contribution.
ILLUSTRATION 8. CONTROL VOLUME AND FINITE NUMERICAL ZONES FOR A TYPICAL SMALL COAL REACTOR
(40 cm long x 11 cm radius)
Illustration courtesy of Philip J. Smith.
A. GENERAL EQUATION FORM

\[
\frac{\partial}{\partial x} (\rho u_s) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r \rho v) - \frac{\partial}{\partial x} (\Gamma \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x}) - \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r \Gamma \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial r}) = S_\rho
\]

B. SPECIFIC EQUATIONS

\[
\begin{align*}
\rho & \quad \Gamma_\rho & \quad S_\rho \\
\mu_e & \quad \mu_e & \quad \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x} (\mu_e \frac{\partial u}{\partial x}) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r \mu_e \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial r}) + S^u + \bar{u}^m & \quad \text{Momentum} \\
\nu & \quad \nu_e & \quad - \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x} (\nu_e \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x}) + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (r \nu_e \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial r}) - 2 \mu_e \bar{v}^2 + S^v + \bar{v}^m & \quad \text{Momentum} \\
k & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_k & \quad \phi - \bar{\phi} & \quad \text{Turbulence} \\
\epsilon & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_c & \quad \left(\frac{c}{k}\right)[C_1 \phi - C_2 \bar{\phi}] & \quad \text{Turbulence} \\
\tau & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_f & \quad 0 & \quad \text{Mass} \\
g_\tau & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_g & \quad C_{g1} \nu_e \left(\frac{\partial \tau}{\partial x}^2 + \frac{\partial \tau}{\partial r}^2\right) - C_{g2} \tau & \quad \text{Mass} \\
- & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_h & \quad S^n_p & \quad \text{Mass} \\
g_\eta & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_g & \quad C_{g1} \nu_e \left(\frac{\partial \eta}{\partial x}^2 + \frac{\partial \eta}{\partial r}^2\right) - C_{g2} \tau & \quad \text{Mass} \\
\bar{n} & \quad \nu_e/\sigma_h & \quad q_{rg}^g + \bar{u} \frac{\partial \bar{\phi}}{\partial x} + \bar{v} \frac{\partial \bar{\phi}}{\partial r} + \bar{s}^h + h\bar{s}^m & \quad \text{Energy}
\end{align*}
\]

ILLUSTRATION 9. SOME OF THE MODEL EQUATIONS USED TO DESCRIBE THE STRUCTURE OF A TURBULENT, COMBUSTING PARTICLE-LADEN SYSTEM.
With this success, it would be natural to wonder now whether our findings and methods have been used to reduce the level of nitrogen oxide in large industrial systems. Today's answer is "most likely not yet." But the computer program of our mathematical model has been obtained by about twenty-five organizations in the United States, Europe, and Japan. It's not a tool that you can just enter into the computer and let the answers start printing out. It may take a qualified professional a year or so to become really familiar with the method. Then, you may wonder, will these methods ever be used to help provide us clean power? I hope so. That's what we want to occur. That's why we offer a summer course to teach these methods. That's why we've written two books on coal combustion. But it takes time to transfer new ideas and technology to industrial use. We just reached this state of development a couple of years ago.

Maybe this will give you some idea of what we work on and how we do it. I've told you about one problem that interests us. We are also working on several other combustion problems. For example, we are studying the basic combustion processes of mixtures of pulverized coal and water. A coal–water mixture forms a thick, liquidlike, pumpable fuel that might be used to replace oil in some important applications. One promising potential use would be to burn the slurry in existing electricity-generating furnaces that were designed for oil. We, and other researchers in the United States, have shown that such mixtures can be burned quite efficiently. But much is yet to be learned about the use of coal in this manner.

We are continuing our work on combustion in dusty atmospheres. Explosions of coal dust or grain dust or a host of other finely divided substances occur far too commonly in our society. We think that a detailed understanding of the mechanisms governing these explosions will be very important in achieving greater safety for the miners and workers. Our research has already led to a significantly improved knowledge of slowly moving (laminar) dust–air flames. We want to work more on fast-moving (turbulent) flames in the future.

Our research on the gasification of coal is also adding new understanding on this important process. Coal can be partially burned to produce fuel-rich gases, particularly carbon monoxide and hydrogen, which have a variety of uses. For example, these gases can be converted to a substitute for natural gas for use in heating our homes. We have been characterizing the basic reaction processes during coal gasification at high temperature and high pressure. We think that the detailed data from our laboratory gasifier are the only such data available. In all of these studies, which involve graduate students and faculty, we try to make basic measurements and describe the processes mathematically, so we can understand what
happens and with this understanding obtain some control over the result.

**EXTINGUISHMENT—WILL THE FLAME GO OUT?**

It depends on which flame we refer to! How about the flame of the Combustion Laboratory? It burns as brightly today as ever. And candle wax still remains. We are just concluding negotiations for our largest research grant ever—about $1.2 million over four years. We will develop a new model for application to full-scale furnaces, like that shown in illustration 10. And maybe, after that, what we’ve done will have helped.

We won’t always work on fossil fuels. But there will always be important combustion problems to be solved. Young, outstanding faculty in our group are finding ways to mold their own candles, and, before my candle flickers, maybe I will have helped to light theirs.

How about the flame of the university? Present and past prophets have spoken about this. In fact, the last six presidents of the Church have been quoted, in one direct way or another, regarding this matter. President David O. McKay said:

> Because of its combination of revealed and secular learning, Brigham Young University is destined to become, if not the largest, at least the most proficient institution of learning in the world, producing scholars, with testimonies of the truth who will become leaders in science, industry, art, education, letters and government.²⁰

President Kimball told us:

> I am both hopeful and expectant that out of this University and the Church’s Educational System there will rise brilliant stars in drama, literature, music, sculpture, painting, science, and in all the scholarly graces. This University can be the refining host for many such individuals who will touch men and women the world over long after they have left this campus.²¹

We have been warmed by these promises of prophecy. The university candle is lit, and its flame will surely burn more brightly, and each of us can brighten that flame.

To complete the candlestick analogy from Matthew cited at the beginning, we read further: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Then, how about the flame of life itself? Pindar, the ancient Greek poet, reportedly said it this way: “The loss of flame brings darkness but His glory burns brightly forever.” Or from the Master himself we learn: “And that which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).
ILLUSTRATION 10. LARGE SCALE FURNACE FOR GENERATION OF POWER THROUGH COMBUSTION OF COAL
Illustration courtesy of Phillip J. Smith.
The Role of Combustion

NOTES

3Vergil’s sixth eclogue, quoted in Oliver Ellis, A History of Fire and Flame (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1932), 75.
10Chigier, Energy, Combustion and Environment, 22.
11Ibid., 520.
12Ibid., 20.
The Unified Field

An endless line cast to a curve in the pearling dark
Allows the universal light. They, wending together,
Found and are divinity. All turning is eternity, stark
Vacuum of nothing but the echo or the gusting heather
Of energy. There, beyond, is the mind’s fine tether
That we cannot drop abroad in a meadow where a lark
Rises to warble and trill. We cast our linear wishing
Along the imperial curve, but straighten it to fit
Lines of the parallax whose points are the nearby sun
Of our envisioning. If the two become one, swishing
The void and starring it, they are the endless One,
Infinitesimally then drawn into the infinite heat,
The circling Alpha and Omega, the decimal One.

—Clinton F. Larson

Clinton F. Larson is a professor emeritus of English at Brigham Young University.
Alpha and Omega at the End

This dream, arising from a cloud of seeming,  
Is a sea of glass that first in fusion  
Formed from the pyre of a once delusion,  
Siftings of earth and sky, and of dreaming,  
Quite near in fond regularity as a reliquary  
Of early history. The crane of imperial light  
Seized the light and cast it high as yearning  
That stopped at the precipice and the ferning  
Uplands of sintering magma and labradorite,  
Nestling in gemming nitre, carbon, and feldspar  
Into pools of the Unified Field. But you might bar  
The real, or disclose it. See the encumbering star  
That will fail as others did, and this that warms us  
Is memory, but the soul’s retention harms us  

If we think that aught might remain. What remains,  
In my candor, is the illusion that out there  
Can be recorded and kept in an error called here,  
Or within. Within, the fragment of was, stains  
The solipsism. I am the bridge, not the land  
Or a shore, but a bridge with no end of passing,  
Air to air, space to space, no stream, but the massing  
Of the diaphane, the pavane, and the incredible sand  
Washed into the luminous sea of glass, in fire.  
Fond illusion, you persist in me as I tire,  
For I am your memory, your faith in the first spire,  
Rustling through me as memory, the aery lyre,  
And my song. I gather you in at a balustrade  
Of sapphire, and begin again as Alpha and Aubade.  

—Clinton F. Larson
New Name and Blessing

She holds her breath in sitting under green water, fearful to breathe, especially breathe what looks sedate indoors, as if in captivity brooks turn grave and sink, when on rocks they spray her to laughter. She sinks, supported by Grampa, who bathes her a Latter-day Saint in an echoing font awash among bricks, and rises into the prayer that has echoed to fix her name in new birth: Meadow, now Jesus’ daughter.

Confirming her choice of new father, her father’s breath calls for the burning of spirit to light and to dry her, warming the assembly of Saints, as her baptism chilled him, and a few family friends, witnessing death—on her he calls a blessing down the stilled attention held like tinder for the fire.

—Dennis Clark

Dennis Clark is a poet living in Orem, Utah.
Book Reviews

EUGENE ENGLAND. *Dialogues with Myself.* Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1984. xii; 205 pp. $7.50.

______. *Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986. viii; 149. $8.95.

Reviewed by Claudia Bushman, executive director of the Delaware Heritage Commission.

Eugene England is a well-known figure in contemporary Mormon intellectual circles. He has influenced a generation of young people, and his voice has been increasingly heard. These two volumes of collected works show a consistent, if developing, voice, over a twenty-year period, that speaks for devotion, tolerance, openness, and endurance.

Who is he? England began in the wheat fields of Idaho and became, somehow, a professor of literature. He is a sixties liberal who is a convinced Christian, a strong believer in the Mormon message and its saving power who has synthesized those seemingly contradictory styles and writes about the tension of that life. He may have been the first "sensitive" Mormon man, willing to give women more than a fair shake and known to weep from time to time. He is a great confessor who opens his life and heart to others and encourages reciprocation. Though buffeted by the slings and arrows of critics and officials who have not particularly appreciated his style, and despite the fact that his worldview is basically tragic, he maintains a boyish cheerfulness and has not fallen victim to the bitterness that afflicts other liberal Mormons when the Church has not "come around."

His "Letter to a College Student" illustrates to me the position he could have moved to. He could have adopted the same disillusion with the Church's refusal to jump on the social-welfare bandwagon. He could have been disgusted at preaching to, rather than cooking for, hungry people. Instead, he accepts the actual suffering caused by the Church as we attempt our miserable duties, and calls it good. In this essay and in "Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel," he illustrates what I call England's "Mormon Optimism Once Removed," or "Mormon Optimism After-the-Fact." He considers the Church "the best medium, apart from marriage ... for helping us gain salvation by grappling constructively with the opposition of existence" (*Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel*, 4 [hereafter cited
as Gospel]. In fact, he goes on to say that the "Church's characteristic problems' are among its strengths" (Gospel, 11) and that steadiness brings the best rewards. "Most of my profound spiritual manifestations . . . have come 'as a natural sequence to the performance of duty' in the Church" (Gospel, 122). The Church itself is the refiner's fire. England's tempered affirmation is convincing:

Going to conference made it possible for me to feel more strongly than ever that the great soul-satisfying truths of the gospel and my experiences of love and growth in the Church are much more important than the things that give me trouble. (Dialogues with Myself, 112 [hereafter cited as Dialogues])

He is not a "Mormon optimist," a category which affirms simply that all is for the best. These optimists welcome trial as strengthening and death as salvation. If things go well, they are being blessed. If they go badly, the sufferers are being chastened to emerge victorious later on from their "growing experiences." England, by contrast, sees the evil, the unjust suffering, the contradiction, the inevitability of sin, and while not calling them good, sees redemption, despite pain and suffering, enhanced by this misery. His essay on Hawthorne, subtitled "The Virtue of Sin," made me think that he might say, "'Tis better to have sinned and repented than never to have sinned at all." Can this notion be true? The lesson of the Garden of Eden, Martin Luther, and Paul—it is a dangerous, but appealing, idea.

The two collections contain essays uneven in length, tone, and purpose. Dialogues with Myself seems misnamed, as England is not reflecting inner conflict but presenting his own point of view. Though billed as "personal essays on Mormon experience," these books are collections of occasional pieces. Many are doctrinal gospel discourses. Some seem dated now. Most were presented as talks at Sunstone symposiums or BYU conferences or were written as chapters for books or columns for Dialogue. One was published in the New Era. Despite an attempt in the introductions to impose a unified shape, the books remain collections.

England is at his best, I think, in the shorter, more personal pieces such as his justly celebrated "Blessing the Chevrolet" in which he unites the world of belief in God and the everyday world of failing autos, and uses the power from one to heal the other. This synthesis is his great strength, and the piece is faith-promoting literature at its best while also being, as in the title, outrageous England. This stance gives credibility to his world, as in the case where he civilizes such bizarre doings as the Hosanna Shout.

His role models are Orson Pratt, Juanita Brooks, and, most of all, Joseph Smith, all of whom suffered for living up to what seemed to them the best of their inner light and for doing their duty. You see
England, the young liberal, taking up this cross in the early works, determined to speak the truth as he saw it despite the unpopularity of the message. The "deep sense of sinfulness" as well as the "divine purpose and mission" (Dialogues, 6) he attributes to Joseph Smith are poles of his own life. The endurance of Brigham Young and Spencer W. Kimball inspire him. He grapples with the paradoxes of obedience and inner light and uses several times the mystifying quotation from Joseph Smith, "By proving contraries, truth is made manifest" (Dialogues, ix).

England stands at the juncture of two cultures. It is his identity as an intellectual, academic liberal that causes him to write at all, and his mythic, primitive believer's stance that informs his content. He defines Mormon intellectuals as having the gift that makes them "curious about why as well as how, anxious to serve [the Lord] by being creative as well as obedient" (Dialogues, 57). He is at his best when the tension of these two positions is clear. Unlike many people who take strong stands, England is always tolerant of other views. As he says, "True disciples of Christ, true Christians, will ignore persecution and resist the paranoia it naturally brings, will bend their energies to loving and serving others, whatever their differences, and thus will endure and be saved" (Dialogues, 190).

This is a Mormon "Song of Myself," an exploration of a personal world made more universal by definition. England has developed an intricate thought system, but also a community where his old pals turn up. It will be possible to trace a whole subculture, "Mormon people of letters," from these essays and references to them. I keep wishing for some marginal comments from his wife, Charlotte, who is so frequently cited.

These books are a result of his life, but they do not stand alone as literature apart from that life. They are uneven, the fruit of his striving rather than polished gems. This is a record of his odyssey. The books are valuable, but not good enough to represent his life, which has probably had a greater personal impact than his writings.

There is some repetition here. Readers are heartless. They don't want to hear anything again. A writer must outdo himself at every appearance, or eyes will glaze over even at the best lines. So I was less than thrilled to get another dose of at-one-ment, not my favorite subject. I even regretted another journey through the wonderful journal of Joseph Millett. England may have collected more than he should. He would also do well to make his essays more personal. His consideration of Shakespeare and Hawthorne will not add one jot or tittle to the stature of those two giants. And a reconsideration of what Shakespeare really meant in Hamlet and King Lear which leads to the
conviction that he was a closet Mormon is not helpful to the general reader.

By writing, England is taking custody of the future. These frank essays, with the author’s willingness to reveal himself, will be discovered again and again and will influence many searches. By contrast, the influence of some current General Authorities, with their reluctance to commit any but the blandest thoughts to paper, will be diminished. England has not always been trusted, but rebuffs have made him less guarded rather than more, and he continues to speak openly. What he writes is significant; future readers will find it invaluable. His steady affirmation is that

the Church community is blessed, not fractured, by those who express themselves sincerely and openly—even their disagreements and their vulnerability—rather than those who keep silent in public but criticize in private or harbor resentment or guilt or gnaw alone on the bones of their failures and hurts. (Dialogues, 55)

This alone is a good message.


Reviewed by Eugene England, professor of English at Brigham Young University.

Fires of the Mind, by Robert Elliot, is the best single play yet written about Mormon experience. But the best Mormon playwright, on the evidence of cumulative, consistent achievement, is Tom Rogers. The scripts of his four best plays, Huebener, Fire in the Bones, Reunion, and Journey to Golgotha, are now available through the generous efforts of Thomas Taylor, the young BYU student preparing to be a professional small press director who prepared the first edition, and Signature Books, which has republished that edition.

Rogers is ambitious. His plays fearlessly address two of the most troubling tragedies in Mormon history: the Mountain Meadows Massacre (and subsequent scapegoating and execution of John D. Lee) and the excommunication and execution of the young anti-Nazi Helmuth Huebener. Rogers also takes on two of the most devastating contemporary dilemmas: the breakdown of communication and forgiveness in a “religious” Latter-day Saint family, and the torture and corruption of citizens by their own governments. In addition, all four of these
plays are patterned thematically on the perennial tragic struggle between the generations, a struggle that has energized our greatest literature in Western culture, specifically the Oedipal struggle of estranged sons with tyrannical fathers or mentors. And Rogers does not hesitate to take a firm and clear position on this dilemma: only through responding to Christ's example and demand on us—that we as sons cease licking our wounds and "return our fathers' enmity with understanding and forgiveness" and that we as fathers cease exercising unrighteous dominion—can we "break the curse that would have us perpetuate the same misery in our offspring" (ix).

As is apparent from these quotations from his preface, Rogers is an earnest man. Perhaps too earnest. The plays' major fault is a persistent romanticism which, though far from insisting on a simple answer to life's paradoxes as traditional or official LDS drama does, still wants the paradoxes laid out too neatly, with characters providing too careful a balance of conservatism and liberalism, obedience and integrity, Russian and American absurdity and duplicity. The plays need more of the surprising, unpredictable complexity within individual people, as well as between them. But finally Rogers's earnestness is a fine resource. He is a seriously, naively religious man—as opposed to expediently, or traditionally, or wisely, or enthusiastically religious. He is one of God's fools.

A friend, seeing an early copy of this book, objected strongly to the title: "That's not a Mormon idea at all, the notion that religious faith is essentially foolish or absurd. Traditional Christian, perhaps, but not Mormon." I think he's wrong. Besides the strong New Testament theme of the gospel as foolishness to the Greek mind, and the universal scriptural idea that God will use the weak and foolish things of the earth to confound the mighty and wise, there is the startling Book of Mormon assertion that "the wise and the learned, and they that are rich, who are puffed up because of their learning, and their wisdom, and their riches" are the ones whom Christ despises—that is, until they "cast these things away, and consider themselves fools before God" (2 Ne. 9:42). And section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants should give a chill to anyone who has power over others—parents, teachers, church or government leaders—when it warns that "almost all" who get a little authority "immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion." The only defenses against these terrible dangers are what often seem, not only to "the world" but also to Mormons and other religious people, to be forms of foolishness: "persuasion," "long-suffering," "gentleness and meekness," "love unfeigned," "faithfulness . . . stronger than the cords of death."
Huebener, the first play in this collection—and the first one Rogers wrote, some ten years ago—faces directly the dilemmas and costs of just such active pacifism. A young German becomes convinced, by listening to British broadcasts and comparing them meticulously to Nazi news, that his government is lying and eventually that it is immoral. This shakes the foundations of all his preconceptions, and, motivated particularly by his Mormon faith, he recruits other young Mormons to help him produce and disseminate anti-Nazi fliers throughout Hamburg. He is caught and beheaded, the prosecutor successfully arguing that though German law would prevent execution of a seventeen-year-old, Huebener must have a much older mind to have conceived and carried out his rebellion. These events have made Huebener a symbol of conscience to postwar Germans, particularly writers such as Gunther Grass and Nobel laureate Heinrich Boll. Huebener should also be a hero to Latter-day Saints all over the world because of his courage in finding his own resolution to perhaps the most harrowing of human paradoxes: integrity to self versus obedience to accepted authority. The paradox for Huebener—and for Mormons who are moved by Rogers’s play to ponder his life—is compounded by additional facts: he used the Hamburg branch typewriter and duplicating machine to produce the fliers; his branch president discovered this and threatened to expose him; after he was actually denounced by someone else, the branch president, under pressure from the Gestapo, excommunicated him from the Church.

But what makes this play powerful drama, rather than merely challenging history, is Rogers’s effective creation of devastating conflicts of loyalty within and between persons, not just between ideas:

Zoellner: Where the Church is concerned, I am in authority here, not you, Helmuth. And so I tell you this: if you persist in this most unwise and totally fruitless course . . . you will place the Church itself in great jeopardy. . . .

Helmuth: Bruder Zoellner, what will the Church be worth, if everywhere we have to sacrifice our Solomon Schwartzes [a Mormon Jew refused entry to the chapel by a cautious Zoellner], if we can only hold those meetings and say those things the Fuehrer approves of . . .

Zoellner: Don’t you realize how dangerous this is—for you alone?

Helmuth: I do. And I’m . . . very frightened.

Zoellner: And are you sure you are justified in opposing the Church in this way? Because that is what you are doing!

Helmuth: Bruder Zoellner, it is the Gospel itself that impels me to do these things.

(36–37)

John D. Lee felt impelled by the gospel to what looks like the opposite conclusion: that he must obey his Church authorities even
in an act he believed to be profoundly immoral. But Rogers shows us many similarities to Huebener. Lee was also a faithful Latter-day Saint who did what he did because of his faith; he too was excommunicated by his Church and executed by his government. And his story has also tended to be avoided, even suppressed, by Mormons unwilling to face the tragic dimensions of our history. Rogers’s work on John D. Lee is carefully based on the meticulous, courageous research of Juanita Brooks, who as a faithful Mormon historian was the first who fully uncovered the main facts concerning the massacre of more than 120 emigrants by Mormon militiamen at Mountain Meadows during the tinderbox conditions of September 1857 when a federal army had been dispatched to Utah. Like Brooks, Rogers has helped Mormons not only to face a terrible moral failure of their own people but to do so in the healing context of art. As Levi Peterson showed us in his intelligent and compassionate essay on Brooks (“Juanita Brooks: The Mormon Historian as Tragedian,” *Journal of Mormon History* 3 [1976]: 47–54), she herself, because of the quality of her human spirit and her powerful writing as well as her careful research, has functioned much like a classic tragedian to arouse the tragic emotions of loss of innocence, of pain and anguish and sympathy at intolerable loss, but in a way that is healing and redemptive. Rogers does this even more directly by taking us imaginatively into Lee’s most intimate relationships (especially with his heroic, insightful wife, Emma) and his personal reflections about his own responsibility and about those who used him as a scapegoat:

> These were all once my friends. They all know better. Jacob [Hamblin] too. Is it because we want so to be right, right at any cost—so that we don’t know how to handle what is circumstantial or contradictory, specially in ourselves? . . . Some may not believe in eternity enough for that to make any difference, but I do . . . . That’s why I will face the punishment they insist on meting out to me—so my family can still revere my good name, even if no one else ever does. That will be their blessing, and they will understand. And maybe I’ll be blessed too—because others forced me to take on the entire responsibility, I will leave this life seeing some things far more clearly than most of them ever will.

(115)

The other similarity to Huebener is that in 1961, partly through the efforts of Juanita Brooks, John D. Lee was reinstated as a Church member and his temple blessings restored. (Huebener was reinstated after the war, upon review by the Church General Authorities.) The most important idea in these two cases—certainly the most powerful force in Rogers’s dramas about them—is forgiveness.

Forgiveness is also the central theme of the other two plays in this collection. Both of them seem to me less effective as drama than the
first two. (Like Hawthorne, Rogers seems better at dramatizing a
given past than at creating a believable present.) But *Reunion*
succeeds in doing something no other Mormon play to date has
done: It gives us a believable Mormon family who have real conflicts
and make real mistakes and suffer and struggle with each other
but who also learn, grow, love, forgive, and partially resolve their
conflicts and accept atonement despite their mistakes. There is
some simplistic stereotyping of typical Mormon liberals and conserv-
aves and some awkwardly contrived explication of a host of too
typical Mormon "issues," but the harrowing dialogue is generally
successful and often gripping, and the ending is courageously innovative
and yet believable.

*Journey to Golgotha* takes on larger issues than *Reunion*, but,
ironically, that very fact may be what makes it less effective as drama.
Here Rogers deals with the costs of the current confrontation between
superpower governments, especially the costs paid by "victims of
conscience"—or God's fools, those who value life above political
expedience, loyalty to the divine over idolatry of the state. The
story traces the disillusionment of a young Russian, who has been
hired by the secret service to persecute Christians, and dramatizes
his eventual conversion and his rediscovery of his Christian artist
father, who had been liquidated by Stalin. The play develops some
rather interesting and complex characters, especially an American
who is every bit as cynically corrupted by his "democratic" country's
power and reliance on the arm of flesh as his Russian counterparts
are by their totalitarian country's similar idolatry. But overreliance
on coincidence and on some rather hokey props (such as an icon
in which the father's face appears) makes this play less satisfying overall
than the others.

What can we hope, then, for Mormon drama? Robert Elliot has
done nothing since *Fires of the Mind*. Orson Scott Card, whose early
work was extremely promising, has turned, apparently permanently,
to more lucrative genres, and other talented beginners, like Susan Howe
and Robert Lowder, have not yet been given a proper production (though
there is hope). Rogers himself has suffered from some neglect at BYU,
where he is also one of the most talented directors. For instance,
*Reunion* has not yet had the benefit of a full-scale professional
production. Rogers deserves much better, and my hope for continued
development of serious Mormon theater depends on my faith that he
will continue to write and that his plays will be increasingly read and
produced.

Reviewed by H. Dean Garrett, assistant professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

This book was prepared as a "collection of essays written to give deeper insight into historical and doctrinal aspects of those revelations, epistles, and instructions which constitute the Doctrine and Covenants" (1). It consists of fifty-two chapters written by thirty-three different authors who represent a broad range of scholarly expertise in the areas of the Doctrine and Covenants and Church history. The editors have attempted to achieve a blend of the sequential approach and the topical approach to the study of the Doctrine and Covenants. Overall, this blend works well. Not all sections of the Doctrine and Covenants are discussed, nor are those sections treated given equal weight. The emphasis is on those sections where the writers' expertise would best be used.

This approach allows for the meaningful application of each scholar's particular strengths. For example, in the essay on the mission to the Shakers and section 49, the writer makes good use of the diary of the Reverend Ashbel Kitchell, which was discovered only recently. Kitchell was a minister in the Shaker community, and his diary is an aid to understanding both the actions of Leman Copley and the problems concerning the doctrines of the Shakers to which section 49 is addressed. Similarly, in the essay on section 111 the writer draws upon recently discovered documents to give insights into the travels of Joseph Smith and his companions to Salem, Massachusetts, and the challenges they faced there.

Another strength of the book is in its doctrinal insights. The essay on sections 6, 8, 9, and 11 is very instructive on the process of revelation and develops the idea that God had first to reveal how to receive revelation to a people who were not used to receiving revelation.

As with any book, there are flaws and deficiencies. Some of these are the result of editorial decisions. For example, there is no discussion of the incident of Martin Harris and the lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. The doctrine of the foreknowledge of God and his preparation to protect a prophet and his work seems important enough to be discussed in a work of this magnitude.

There is some redundancy of information in the essays. This is especially obvious in the treatment of the united order, where the same basic historical background material is repeated in three different essays. Some of the essays do not seem to answer the questions raised by their
authors. For example, the author of the essay on section 89 declares that two questions will be answered: "When the Lord revealed the Word of Wisdom, why did he not issue it as a commandment?" and "Amid the varieties of Word of Wisdom practice, how should section 89 be interpreted?" (359). The first question is answered fairly well, but the second is not. The writer goes to considerable lengths to describe how not to interpret the Word of Wisdom, but spends very little time on how it should be interpreted. The question of what one should do to meet the requirements of the Word of Wisdom is not discussed.

Some writers seem to do no more than rehash the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants with little evidence of research and analysis. Some dealt well enough with some themes but neglected others. For example, the chapter on sections 101, 103–6 presents an excellent discussion of the preparation for the Millennium but gives very little insight into the history surrounding Zion's Camp, the problems of Church members in Missouri, and the impact that history had on these sections. This leads to perhaps the greatest weakness of the book. The editors have tried to do too much in too little space. A two-volume work would have allowed the writers to expand their themes a little more, to provide scriptural commentary as well as explore the historical context.

The book's strengths, however, outweigh its weaknesses. The introductory chapter prepares the reader well for the study of this book. It discusses the historical changes that were made in the headings of the Doctrine and Covenants between the former editions and the 1981 edition and also gives an excellent historical overview of the Doctrine and Covenants and explains how that history impacted on many of the sections. The scripture and subject indexes make this a very usable resource book. The work represents a major contribution to the understanding of the Doctrine and Covenants and gives valuable insights into the doctrines of the Church. The essays should aid both the novice and the serious student.


Reviewed by Mark R. Grandstaff, a missile officer at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana.
In 1974, Samuel W. Taylor delivered a paper at the University of Utah rightly suggesting that his grandfather John Taylor was the "Forgotten Man of Mormonism." Only a casual perusal of current Mormon bibliography corroborates Taylor's assertion. There are no major scholarly biographies, few essays, and what is available has been written by his two grandsons.

Most Mormons recognize John Taylor as one of Joseph Smith's close friends and inner confidants. He joined the young church in 1836, was quickly appointed to the position of Apostle in 1838, and in 1839 served on a successful mission to England. In Nauvoo, Taylor was a member of the Council of Fifty, and served on the board of regents and the city council. With Joseph and Hyrum when they were murdered, he sustained severe gunshot wounds and barely survived. As a writer, John Taylor edited the last three volumes of the *Times and Seasons* and published the *Nauvoo Neighbor*. He was also instrumental in writing and circulating the first LDS periodicals in Germany and France (1851) as well as publishing the *Mormon*, a New York City newspaper (1852). In 1877, upon the death of Brigham Young, he became the third President of the Church and guided the Mormons for the next ten years through a period of intense political and social crises. Obviously, Taylor was a talented and complicated man who deserves an incisive treatment.

I suppose that is why *The John Taylor Papers* are such a disappointment. Instead of being a handy, well-annotated compilation of primary-source material, the work is polemical. The speculation that runs through the work does much to detract from its usefulness. For example, the interpretation of the ongoing feud between Brigham Young and John Taylor is based on an interview some fifty years after the fact. The authors perceive their grandfather as the final supporting brace for Mormon doctrinal integrity, for upon Taylor's demise the Church recanted polygamy and interwove itself into the seamless web of American pluralism. Hence, as the authors claim, the pioneer period ended and modern Mormonism began. This is a well-worn thesis that has been dispelled by the recent writings of Jan Shipps, D. Michael Quinn, and Thomas G. Alexander.

While some of the chapters provide insight into John Taylor's life, others lack substance. Poor coverage is given to Taylor's monumental essay *The Mediation and the Atonement*. In the introduction, Samuel Taylor asserts that this monograph not only repudiated Brigham Young's Judaic theocracy in favor of a New Testament ideology, but completely eclipsed the Adam–God doctrine. Both of these perceptive points deserve further discussion and clarification. Unfortunately, except for one or two passing references in the second volume, the subject is not explored again. A better annotation of
President Taylor’s reasoning processes and ideological development is needed.

Finally, standardized editorial procedures could have enhanced the usefulness of these two volumes. This editorial weakness, in combination with the aforementioned problems and the lack of any new and substantial source material, makes it difficult to compare this work with Dean Jesse’s “John Taylor’s Nauvoo Journal” (*BYU Studies* 23 [Summer 1983]: 1–105) or Jesse’s volume on Joseph Smith’s writings. In fact, *The John Taylor Papers* is more reminiscent of nineteenth-century biography than something produced for today’s scholar.


Reviewed by Paul H. Peterson, assistant professor of Church history and doctrine, Brigham Young University.

Sociologists Gordon and Gary Shepherd believe that leader rhetoric is generally an accurate reflection of organizational and ideological change, especially in regard to Mormonism. Hoping to learn something about how the LDS church has changed and maintained itself, they made a detailed analysis of general conference addresses. The Shepherds divided Mormon history into five thirty-year periods beginning in 1830 and systematically recorded the themes and subthemes which appeared in each paragraph of each address sampled from conference records. All of the themes identified in a given address generated scores based on the number of paragraphs in which each theme appeared, divided by the total number of paragraphs in the address. The Shepherds focused only on the most salient general themes addressed in each thirty-year period of conference history.

Some scholars will question the underlying assumption of this work and argue that leader rhetoric is representative only of an urbanized, Wasatch Front strain of Mormonism. While allowing that isolated communities of Saints receive (or have received) leader rhetoric in a filtered form, I think it is clear that a majority of Church members in all generations have regarded sermons given by General Authorities at general conference as divine “marching orders,” and that, therefore, the perception of the Shepherds is accurate. Perhaps less accurate is their claim that by examining official records “it is possible to discern
organizational patterns and long-term institutional trends which would not otherwise be apparent" (3). Informed students of Mormon history will not find much that is novel in this study, and certainly historians have little need to revise or discard cherished notions. Still, it is reassuring to know that current historical interpretations are validated by statistical analysis.

The Shepherds found some conference themes that clearly belong to past eras, others that are distinctly modern, and several that have persisted since the inception of the Church. Those themes that went out of vogue long before the nineteenth century elapsed were utopian and defiant. They included Church government (institutional governing procedures), building the kingdom of God and Zion, plural marriage, and persecution, enemies, and Gentiles. Many themes which are exclusive to the twentieth century are family-oriented, such as parenthood, family, and marriage. Other modern themes include preoccupation with respectability and public image, Word of Wisdom, and Church growth.

Not surprisingly, the themes which have endured through time deal with fundamental teachings which stress the uniqueness and advantages of Mormonism. Among these are God’s plan, missionary work, restoration and divinity of the Church, Joseph Smith, and Jesus Christ. Interestingly the Shepherds found that while the elect status of Mormons has been a constant, the means of imprinting or demonstrating it has varied. In former times Church leaders stressed the hardships Church members endured and the need for divine protection. In the less combative twentieth century the emphasis has shifted to the unique blessings and special virtues of Latter-day Saints.

A major portion of the book deals with Mormon commitment mechanisms and commitment rhetoric. Transcendence themes (those which emphasize the ultimate divinity of the Church) have been and continue to be a major motivation for Church members. Church members take comfort in their ideology and their continued guidance from inspired leaders. They derive satisfaction from being involved in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Clearly, transcendence themes will continue to exert influence on Latter-day Saints.

Commendably, the Shepherds rely on historical sources to fashion social contexts. Their reading of Mormon sources is extensive, and I was impressed with their grasp of Mormon history. The book consists of far more than statistical tables and explanations of sociological models, and even those readers who are numbed by lifeless numbers and graphs or uninterested in sociological theory will find the observations and interpretations of the authors rewarding. While I have few qualms about their basic interpretations, I did detect some hard-edged
observations that need softening. The statement that ‘‘members are encouraged to fraternize with nonmembers insofar as the ultimate goal of proselytization is facilitated’’ (110) is not representative of consensus leader rhetoric. While many Church members are occasionally frustrated by heavy demands on their time, few become inactive because of it (112). I suspect that comparatively few Latter-day Saints make mental notes as to who doesn’t participate in testimony meetings (118). To state without qualification that testimony meetings serve a surveillance function is unfair. While it is admittedly true that Mormon suborganizations can promote ‘‘invidious aspirations for leadership’’ (120), I would like to think that this happens less often than the Shepherds would have us believe. I would also emphasize that Mormonism has not canceled its ideas about societal reconstruction (157–58, 161, 202); it has merely postponed them until the Millennium.

There are other observations that are similarly unflattering (and some that are flattering) but which candid Latter-day Saints would find some validity in. The intensity of Church involvement can make it difficult to develop or maintain meaningful non-Mormon relationships (114). The Shepherds are probably right when they point out that Mormonism is plagued with its fair share of pharisaism (122). Their observation that ‘‘the Mormons’ appetite for social respectability has become a powerful force for shaping their course in the world’’ (163) might even be understated. Certainly there is a segment of Mormons who believe the superiority of the Church can best be demonstrated by beating the world at its own games, be they beauty contests or athletic events. Finally, one could hardly contest the observation that modern Mormonism has had comparatively little theological explication (198).

The epilogue is very good. The Shepherds rightly conclude that Mormonism will never become mainstream because of its claims to truth and authority and its distinctive theology. They observe that the primary appeals of the Church haven’t changed much in its history and by implication suggest they will not change. Active involvement in a transcendent cause, a strong central authority, and a strong community involvement will always be attractive inducements for significant numbers of people. The authors assert that future challenges of the Church are severe: sheer growth, the status of women, and the extension of the Church into Third World nations. While they suggest that the future of Mormonism is not entirely removed from its own institutional control, I suspect I am probably more optimistic than they are that the Church will make whatever adjustments and adaptations are necessary to survive and succeed.

Reviewed by Paul Alfred Pratte, associate professor of communications, Brigham Young University. Pratte is also the founder and a former associate editor of the Hawaii LDS Record-Bulletin.

Most of us who have visited or resided in the Hawaiian islands or other parts of Polynesia for any period of time sense a certain subjective something about the people and their lifestyle which defies objective description. How nice it would be if we could pin down and put some of that intangible aloha (Hawaiian), aroha (Maori), alofa (Samoan), aroha (Tahitian), alofa (Tongan) spirit in a bottle or box and bring it back to use on an ongoing basis with our families, in business, or in politics.

For those who are looking for a better idea of those valuable primal values, George Kanahele’s Ku Kanaka—Stand Tall, succeeds to a great extent. In a rigorous and comprehensive volume, the former BYU student carefully defines the qualities influencing the lives of pre-Captain Cook Hawaiians, qualities that still cling to some like a scent of leis today. Without minimizing such atrocities as human sacrifice which have been practiced in other countries around the world, Kanahele suggests that by increasing our awareness and adopting Hawaiian values we can do more than we are currently doing to adapt to the changes being wrought not only on the Hawaiian islands but on all of us in the areas of technology, economics, leadership, and politics.

The book is a massive labor of scholarship and love by Kanahele, who has been referred to by the New Yorker as “the spiritual father of the Hawaiian renaissance,” a movement he has also helped through his editing of Hawaiian Music and Musicians. His latest book serves as an important means for Hawaiians to shake off the extensive guilt trip laid on them with the arrival of Captain Cook and the Western missionaries who came to do good and did very well in exploiting the Hawaiian’s generosity and making them strangers in their own land. More so, the book provides haoles as well as Hawaiians with guidelines to move them beyond the cultural cliches to the specifics of a primal value system less materialistic than those of the Western world. In short, Kanahele’s book, along with Lawrence H. Fuch’s Hawaii Pono: A Social History (1961) and Gavan Daws’s Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands (1968), is an essential for anyone who wants to learn about the real Hawaii beyond Waikiki.

The key, according to one elderly Hawaiian woman who participated in a series of conferences leading to Kanahele’s book, lies more
in living aloha than in trying to define the elusive concept which according to one study has at least 123 definitions. Kanahele focuses on such concepts as love, sharing, cooperation, and stewardship. In a most provocative concluding chapter on the "Dynamics of Aloha," Kanahele helps define the term which has become as commercialized as "Zion" and "Deseret" in Utah by tracing it from an extended love of kin to beyond the 'ohana, or family, to aloha's marriage with the gospel of love. As a result, Kanahele's book is not just a discussion of Hawaiian values. It is also a celebration of the values of other primal peoples including Eskimos, Africans, and American Indians. In particular, Kanahele says that Hawaiian civilization probably resembled the American Indian Zuni culture (101).

A part-Hawaiian educated at Hawaii's Kamehameha schools, BYU, and Cornell who served in the administration of former Governor John Burns, Kanahele says he first saw the need to define what a Hawaiian is when he was a part of a trade mission in New Zealand in 1981.

Unlike his own people who were struggling as strangers on their own land to recover their identity, the Maoris had already been partially successful. As a means of helping reassert their own unique value system, and with help from the nonprofit Waiaha Foundation, Kanahele set out to answer the painful question of who and what is a Hawaiian and related questions. For those of us who do not have Hawaiian genes, the question is what can we learn from these people.

At the heart of Kanahele's thesis (outlined in the first part of his book on religion, mythology, and ritual) is his contention that the Hawaiians were not inferior to other major cultures of the world. "We are a people with a profound capacity for experiencing that which is extraordinary, sacred, or kapu (taboo); a people with an abiding faith in the shared divinity—the mana (spiritual power) of man, nature and the cosmos beyond; a people able from the primal past to explain through myth, symbolism, and ritual, the transcendent realities of life; a people 'in sync' with the rhythms of the universe; a people who see time not as a linear measurement but as a qualitative experience; a people with an unsurpassed sense of place and the unity of things" (497).

One of the first conclusions from Kanahele's review is that although they were isolated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and shut off from intellectual, economic, and political contact with most of the world, Hawaiians before 1778 dealt with many of the same social, economic, and political issues, the same philosophical questions about the meaning of life and earth.

Kanahele takes to task what he describes as the mistaken interpretation of aloha as the Hawaiian way of avoiding confrontation by
such writers as Francine du Plessis Gray in her book, *Hawaii: The Sugar-Coated Fortress* (1972). "'Until commentators on Hawaiian developments, whether they come from inside our culture or outside it, truly understand Hawaiian values, their conclusions will be as full of errors as those of du Plessis Gray,'" he asserts.

In his second section on space, time, and place, Kanahele develops another idea central to the concept of aloha: that the people are but stewards of the *aina* (land: that which feeds) and *kai*, trusted to take care of the islands on behalf of the gods, our ancestors, ourselves, and our children. This idea, which flies in the face of Western concepts, is best stated in Kamehameha III’s declaration which now serves as the motto of the fiftieth state, "'Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono'" (the life of the land is preserved in righteousness). The land will surely be lost forever if we who have been entrusted with its care should betray our leadership.

Concerning leadership and destiny, Kanahele writes that the Hawaiians idealize leaders who have shown such tested qualities as caring, humility, integrity, wisdom, and courage. "'We have made aloha a central value, but one no more elevated than hospitality, generosity, graciousness, harmony, industry, spirituality, helpfulness and excellence'" (497).

As for technological lessons from the Hawaiian past that can be applied to the universal condition of "'the technological animal,'" it is that clearly the responsibility for making decisions that affect the fate of man and his tools must be returned to the control of man. Disputing charges that the Hawaiians were ignorant, Kanahele notes that the Hawaiians had at least half of the world’s six basic machines: the lever, wedge, and inclined plane before Cook’s arrival. The book also provides a list of the "'peaks of the Hawaiian culture'" designed to give Hawaiian audiences an ethnic lift. The items from such recognized authorities on Hawaiian and Polynesian cultures as Kenneth Emory, E. S. C. Handy, and Peter Buck include canoes, featherwork, wooden bowls, gourd bowls and bottles, twine baskets, sleeping mats, bark cloth or kapa, musical instruments, chants, agriculture, fishing equipment and fishing ponds, sports and pastimes, religion and dance or hula instruments.

In his fourth section, Kanahele provides insights for modern economists who shun intangible values because they are imprecise and unquantifiable from a more mystical point-of-view that would insist that intangibles must be a part of our understanding. In sum, when Hawaiians think about the ratio of relative abundance to limited wants, it is not just a simple one-to-one material relationship, but a psychological, social, and spiritual relationship as well. The relationship is not only an abundance of natural resources fulfilling economic
needs, but also noneconomic wants. Such wants may vary from the finite to the infinite—a happy home; a loving relationship with a spouse, child, relative, or friend; a certain kind of recognition from the 'ohana, the konobiki (manager of surplus goods), or even a high chief; a deeper spiritual rapport with nature, communion with an 'amukua (family guardian spirit), and so on (331).

Kanahele contends that the true test of Hawaiian socioeconomic values now, as it has always been, is whether or not we take care of ourselves. The self-sufficient 'ohana survived as an institution not because of any great technological or organizational capability, but because of its ideals based on a cluster of social values: generosity, reciprocity, kokua (help, assistance), laulima (cooperation), industry, loyalty, and giving.

“We may not live any more in an ahupua'a or under the rule of an ali'i born with 'divine right' but these values are important and applicable in our modern political and economic world as they were back then, in the years before the westerners came. They are timeless and universal, and they speak not only to Hawaiians but to all people’’ (393).

Despite concerns over such problems as unemployment, a low spot on the economic totem pole, and the fact that for many Hawaiians there is still a haunting ghost of inferiority, Kanahele concludes on an optimistic note. Because of the Hawaiian renaissance and a growing positive self-awareness, Kanahele believes that chances of resolving problems are better than ever because more Hawaiians are better educated, better trained, better organized, better informed of their needs and resources, better at managing within the system, and better prepared spiritually. Thus, the present challenge offers an unparalleled opportunity to laulima and kokua, to share in a collective pride as Hawaiians that no other generation has felt in this century.

Kanahele's optimistic words to the Hawaiians also contain the same challenge to others with primal values and for those of us with a lighter shade of skin and set of genes. Through Kanahele’s fine book we can learn a lot about Hawaiians and the elusive aloha spirit of loving and sharing for all ethnic groups.
Brigham Young University Studies is a quarterly journal dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and intellectual are complementary avenues of knowledge. Contributions from all fields of learning are welcome. Articles should reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view while at the same time conforming to high scholarly standards, and they should be written for the informed nonspecialist. Quality fiction, poetry, drama, and personal essays are also welcome.

Contributions should not exceed five thousand words in length. Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, and should conform to the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style. They should be submitted in duplicate, with stamped and self-addressed envelope.

Each author will receive complimentary offprints and complete copies of the issue in which his or her contribution appears.

Send manuscripts to:

Edward A. Geary, editor
Brigham Young University Studies
1102 JKHB
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
84602

Brigham Young University Studies is abstracted in Current Contents: Behavioral, Social, and Management Sciences; indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals (articles) and Index to Book Reviews in Religion; and listed in Historical Abstracts, Arts and Humanities Citation Index, American History and Life Annual Index, and the MLA International Bibliography. Member, Conference of Editors of Learned Journals.

SUBSCRIBERS NOTICE

Subscription is $10.00 for four numbers, $19.00 for eight numbers, and $27.00 for twelve numbers. Single numbers are $4.00. All subscriptions begin with the current issue unless subscriber requests otherwise. Send subscriptions to BYU Studies, 1102 JKHB, BYU, Provo, Utah 84602.

If you move, please let us know four weeks before changing your address. A Change-of-Address Postcard, available at all Post Offices, sent in advance, will aid us in getting your journal to you promptly. Your courteous compliance with this request will help us solve a serious and costly problem.