Dancing the Buckles off Their Shoes
Experiencing Music
Geologist's View of 3 Nephi 8 & 10
Life and Art of Effie Carmack
Golden Memories of Pioneer Villagers
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
LATTER-DAY SAINT
JOURNAL
TO OUR READERS:

BYU Studies is dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on LDS topics. It is committed to seeking truth “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It proceeds on the premise that faith and reason, revelation and scholarly learning, obedience and creativity are compatible; they are “many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20).

Contributions from all fields of learning are invited. BYU Studies strives to publish articles that openly reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view and are obviously relevant to subjects of general interest to Latter-day Saints, while conforming to high scholarly standards. BYU Studies invites personal essays dealing with the life of the mind, reflections on personal and spiritual responses to academic experiences, intellectual choices, values, responsibilities, and methods, as well as quality fiction, short stories, poetry, and drama. Short studies and notes are also welcomed.

Opinions expressed in BYU Studies are the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, the editors, the advisory board, or anyone else.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:

Please write to BYU Studies for guidelines about submitting manuscripts.

SUBSCRIBERS’ NOTICE:

Subscription is $5.00 for one issue (you may subscribe at this rate for as many future issues as you like); $20.00 for one year (four issues); and $45.00 for ten issues (tenth issue is free). Foreign subscriptions are: Canadian residents, 1 yr., $28.00; other non-USA residents, 1 yr., $40.00 (airmail) or $32.00 (surface). A price list for back issues is available on request. All subscriptions begin with the forthcoming issue or additional postage is charged. Address all correspondence to BYU Studies, 403 CB, PO Box 24098, Provo, Utah 84602-4098. If you move, you must notify us in writing four weeks before changing your address; otherwise you must pay for replacement issues and mailing costs.

BYU 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 MLA International Bibliography. BYU Studies is indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals, Index to Book Reviews in Religion, Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM.

BYU Studies is published quarterly at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. ©1998 Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. All rights reserved.

Printed in the U.S.A. on acid-free paper
4-90-46359-3.3M ISSN 0007-0106
BYU STUDIES

ADVISORY BOARD: Ardeth G. Kapp  
Gary L. Lambert  
Donald H. Livingstone  
Gerald N. Lund  
Noel L. Owen  
Stephen L. Tanner

EDITOR IN CHIEF: John W. Welch

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Doris R. Dant

MANAGING EDITOR: Nancy R. Lund

PRODUCTION EDITOR: Karl F. Batdorff

EDITORS: Michael J. Call, Humanities  
Brian Q. Cannon, Historical Documents  
Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Photography  
Casualene R. Meyer, Poetry  
Larry C. Porter, Church History  
Eric Samuelsen, Film & Drama  
Steven C. Walker, Fiction & Personal Essays

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS: Matthew R. Connelly  
Amber Esplin  
Beth G. Hamilton  
Tom Johnson  
Elizabeth M. Latey  
Kent Minson  
Amy Tolk  
Robert D. Walker

STAFF: David A. Allred  
Glenda Egbert  
Jennifer Hurlbut  
Annette Samuelsen  
Jed L. Woodworth


Back Cover: Iliamna Volcano in the Cook Inlet, Alaska, as seen at sunset from the Kenai Peninsula. View is to the west. U.S. Geological Survey photograph, 1977.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Dancing the Buckles off Their Shoes in Pioneer Utah
Larry V. Shumway 6

Words Cannot Speak: "The Song of the Heart"
Clyn D. Barrus 51

Take, Eat
Tessa Meyer Santiago 81

Of Tethering and Flight
Sundy Watanabe 91

Santa Maria
Lisa Ann Jackson 97

"A Memorable Creation": The Life and Art of Effie
Marquess Carmack 101

Noel A. Carmack

In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist's View of the
Great Destruction in 3 Nephi
Bart J. Kowallis 136

Golden Memories: Remembering Life in a Mormon Village
Ronald W. Walker 191

Without (the) Law
Paul Y. Hoskisson 219

THE DOCUMENT CORNER

The "Prognostication" of Asa Wild
Elden J. Watson 223
POETRY

Riddle
Nancy Baird 80

In the Rising
Nancy Baird 90

Side Canyons
E. Leon Chidester 254

BOOK REVIEWS

The Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young edited by Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter 231
Thomas G. Alexander

Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins edited by Noel B. Reynolds 237
Dow R. Wilson

Mormon Culture: Four Decades of Essays on Mormon Society and Personality by John L. Sorenson 242
David P. Crandall

Baptists at Our Barbecue by Robert F. Smith 246
Eric A. Eliason

BRIEF NOTICES 249

View of the Hebrews
The Ten Commandments for Today
The Exodus Story
The Primitive Church in the Modern World
A Woman's View
The Rhetoric of Church and State
Walk Along John to Kansas

A typical quadrille tune. Favored by the pioneers of the Little Colorado (Arizona) Mission, this tune—sometimes known as “Rabbit, Where's Your Mammy?”—features a nonstandard tuning. Transcription courtesy Larry V. Shumway.
Dancing the Buckles off Their Shoes in Pioneer Utah

Endorsed by Mormon leaders as a healthy and uplifting activity, dancing served the important functions of revitalizing the pioneers' spirits and nurturing their sense of community.

Larry V. Shumway

In 1997 we paused to pay tribute to the pioneer settlers who came to the desolate Great Basin area and laid the groundwork for the life that Utahns now enjoy. In our modern American society, we are surrounded by trappings that, by comparison with the lives of those early settlers, make our lives seem luxurious and opulent. In our more appreciative moments, we wonder at the magnificence of human spirit that the pioneers exhibited in their struggles against all odds to carve a meaningful and civilized life out of a forbidding wilderness.

Of the many factors contributing to the pioneer successes, I will consider here but two—dance and its associated music. The records left by the pioneers make it clear that dance and dance music played a more significant role in the successful pioneering of Utah and outlying areas than is generally acknowledged.

From the viewpoint of our present society, we might not accord dancing and music a very high status on our list of substantial factors contributing to the development of Utah. Music permeates our modern environment through radio, recordings, live music, and the background music in television, movies, and other ubiquitous forms of entertainment. Being surrounded by so much music in so many forms makes it hard for us to imagine the musical void of pioneer times, when wrestling a living from the land consumed so much time and energy that there was scant time and little opportunity for music. We have difficulty understanding the
hunger the pioneers felt for music or seeing the role music and
dancing played in relieving the harshness of their living condi-
tions and in developing the sense of community common to Mor-
mon settlements.

What music there was, was highly prized, and, in pioneer
journals and other accounts, we find people speaking of music
with great warmth and expressing delight at finding someone
who could play an instrument or sing. In the developing period of
pioneer Utah, music and dance, in a very real sense, were essen-
tial elements of the grease that helped the rough wheels of pio-
neer life turn more smoothly.

From the pioneer era well into this century, most community
musical activity centered around dancing—sometimes done in the
open air but more often in homes or public buildings. In urban
areas, such as Salt Lake City and Ogden, public halls dedicated to
dancing and theatricals were built quite early and were heavily
patronized. Out in the rural settlements, people danced first in
homes, then churches and schools, and later in public halls. Dances
were held regularly, usually on Friday evening, but were also given
in connection with any number of national and local celebrations
and events—the Fourth of July, Twenty-fourth of July, Thanksgiv-
ing, Christmas, Easter, election eve, harvesttime, barn raisings, and
even ball games or school plays.¹ In addition to the dancing and con-
vivial atmosphere, many people were interested in the music itself
and would attend a dance simply to listen.

To be sure, musical entertainments other than dancing were
to be found as well—in private or informal evenings at home with
family and friends or in the more formal settings of socials, picnics,
and holiday programs. The fiddle was the most commonly used
instrument, providing music both for dancing and for listening.²

The following three diary entries tell of a fiddler cheering
folks in the evening and describe typical situations: In his autobi-
ography, Warren Foote remembers, "There was an old Bachelor
boarding with the family I boarded with, and . . . [he] was a fiddler,
and we used to have considerable fun during the long winter
evenings."³ Hosea Stout reports, "I then came to A. J. Stout and
took supper and then came to Br J. P Harmons and after some talk,
he and Br L. W. Hancock came home with me. . . . Br Hancock
having his fiddle played on it for about one hour and a half to our satisfaction. We had an agreeable evening." Toward the end of the pioneer period, from Snowflake, Arizona, we have the following: "As good a cowhand as he [Frank Pruitt] was, his true image was that of a fiddler, sitting on a wagon tongue at day's end, cheering the souls of music-hungry riders of the range."

In addition to the fiddle, growing numbers of pianos and reed organs could be found in the homes of more settled areas. Evening get-togethers around the piano or organ with friends or the extended family were common. More formal occasions, such as a Twenty-fourth of July program, might feature brass-band music and speeches interspersed with other musical numbers by choirs, soloists, a string band, or perhaps other instruments typical of the frontier—fiddles, guitars, banjos, and harmonicas.

Social Dance in Nineteenth-Century America

In mid-nineteenth-century America, dancing had a spotted reputation at best. Given the strict Christian underpinnings of Utah pioneer society, many may find it remarkable that dancing was a widespread, Church-sanctioned activity. However, in this penchant for dancing, the pioneers shared much with the larger society, where, since the late eighteenth century, dancing had become a popular form of entertainment.

Prior to the Revolutionary War, country dances, whose origins go back to the peasant dancing of medieval Europe, were popular among the lower classes in the new colonies. The upper classes danced the minuet and gavotte, imitating the courtly balls popular in Europe, but also enjoyed genteel versions of traditional country dances. After the Revolutionary War, courtly dancing declined because of its strong association with monarchy and privilege, while the various forms of country dancing—both genteel and popular—continued. The popular forms of country dancing, however, were not accepted by the upper classes, who did not consider them to be refined, nor were they usually done in reputable places. Indeed, as Charles Hamm points out, "in almost every mention of country dancing, there is a link to some sort of impropriety: drinking, gambling, intimacy between the sexes."
Thus, dancing in public places came in for heavy criticism by numerous moralists and the clergy, a response that, in one form or another, has continued to the present time. In New England in particular, dancing was severely frowned on, the belief being that people should be continuously occupied with work so as not to be drawn into vain amusements of the world that would surely entice them to greater temptations and lead, finally, to the loss of their souls to sin. The clergy condemned not only dancing, but almost any other pastime that appeared to give worldly pleasure.

An interesting exchange in the *Philadelphia Minerva* highlights the extremes people would go to in their arguments for and against dancing. One writer states that "dancing was calculated to eradicate solid thought. . . . In fact, versatility of mind, hatred for study, or sober reflection, are the inseparable companions of dancing schools, and the miseries resulting from them are virtually incalculable." In reply another writer countered:

Dancing is incontestably an elegant and amiable accomplishment; it confers grace and dignity of carriage upon the female sex, . . . it invigorates the constitution, enlivens the role of the cheek, and in its results operates as silent eloquence upon the hearts of men. Nature gives us limbs, and art teaches us to use them.8

The dance forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were basically figure or pattern dances, most commonly called cotillions or quadrilles. Some of the step patterns could be quite complicated, and, as these dance forms gradually became more acceptable, dancing masters began to appear in many eastern cities and towns to give the necessary instruction. Since many of the step patterns were hard to remember, the practice of one of the musicians calling out the figures arose in the early nineteenth century. This custom helped the dancers considerably, probably making dancing more fun and more accessible to the general population.

The dance music included many traditional Scottish and Irish tunes. With the appearance of dancing masters came collections of music to be used, a number of which are still extant. Many of them contain tunes transcribed for the piano and show a simplified melody line with a rudimentary harmony line in the bass clef. This description does not mean the music of the pioneers was
simple—traditional fiddle tunes that survive today show a singular musical sophistication, often featuring interesting tunes as well as rhythmic and ornamental nuances that almost defy notation.

Although censure against dancing was particularly strong in Puritan New England, dance was tolerated there by high society, sometimes even with a grudging approval on the grounds that it could be something of an art form that would give a certain elegance and polish to the young lady or gentleman. Proponents argued that dancing would teach the youth genteel manners and give them a graceful carriage and bearing as well as a sense of social self-confidence. Curiously, the ministers accepted men dancing in their own company and women in theirs, but still forbade mixed dancing. In spite of this condemnation, however, “the people of New England continued the practice [of mixed dancing] and ‘people of quality’ began to give balls.”

In the South, where religion traditionally had exercised less of a normative influence, the belief in the salutary effect of dancing in the development of character and good breeding was carried even further. In this region, the migration to America had been more for economic than religious reasons, and the resulting wealth and sense of class required of its people a social polish that included fashionable and graceful dancing. Thus, dancing became an educational must for the gentleman or gentlewoman. Grand balls became gracious affairs to showcase the graceful gentility of upper-class breeding, and mixed dancing was very much accepted. Dances encompassed all the trappings of high society the new country could muster.

About this time in England, dancing had become very popular among the middle class, and as large numbers of immigrants came to the United States from the British Isles, those tastes accompanied them to the New World. For them, dancing was seen as a good form of recreation.

During the nineteenth century, despite the persistent climate of religious censure, mixed social dancing became acceptable throughout most of American society. In many areas, the population was sparse and spread out, and an occasion for dancing was something looked forward to and savored for as long as possible.
Very often dancing went far into the night, sometimes right up until morning. In 1824, in Franklin, Ohio, Luman Shurtliff records:

In November there was a quilting in the neighborhood to which the ladies were invited to quilt in the afternoon and the men to chop wood. At evening we had a good supper and then a dance. I was one of the guests. There were more ladies than gents and I danced most of the night.\(^\text{11}\)

The sociality of such occasions nurtured something of a sense of community, and the people returned home much refreshed, both physically and psychologically. On the other hand, dancing sometimes led to overly exuberant celebration and disruptive behavior, fueled by consumption of liquor, which seemed to bear out the contention of the persistent critics of dancing—that it was an activity surely leading to sin and all its consequences.\(^\text{12}\)

**Dancing among the Early Mormons**

Because many early members of the Church came from the strict religious traditions that looked with disfavor on dancing, the widespread practice of dancing among the Mormon pioneers is very surprising. Equally surprising is that the person who, more than any other, shaped the Mormon view of dancing and gave it its peculiar stamp of approval was Brigham Young. President Young was a New Englander, raised in a strict household where “to listen to the sound of a violin was an unforgivable sin.”\(^\text{13}\) Yet, as Elizabeth Haven Barlow notes, “later President Young became a wonderful dancer and loved all sorts of art and music.”\(^\text{14}\)

The issues surrounding social dance among the early Mormons were complex. A journal entry made by Gilbert Belnap, who moved to Kirtland and was eventually baptized in 1842, illustrates the negative attitude toward dancing that existed among many Christians in the 1840s:

Prior to my arrival in Kirtland, the forces of my education had taught me to detest the slightest variation from morality in a religion of any kind. The minister that would participate in the dance or in many other amusements was discarded by his fellows and looked upon by the unbelieving world as a hypocrite and deserved to be cast without the kingdom.\(^\text{15}\)
A similar attitude is apparent from the following incident in which official Church action was threatened against Benjamin F. Johnson for supposedly participating in dancing:

In the early spring of 1838 an effort was made by the local authorities to draw the line of fellowship on practices which then seemed tending to demoralize, among which was dancing and late night associations, to which little heed was paid; and soon a long list of names was left with the High Council to be dealt with, and notice was given to each by its clerk. I had never danced, and rarely attended a party, but from some cause my name was in the list, and I received notice to appear and answer. I answered by letter in a spirit of meekness, ... and this spirit was conveyed to the hearts of the council, and they said Brother Benjamin's letter was satisfactory and carried with it a purpose to be a true Latter-day Saint. 16

Quite the opposite attitude, however, is seen in the writings of Elizabeth Whitney, wife of a prominent early Church leader, who says the following about her childhood:

I was the eldest child, and grew up in an atmosphere of love and tenderness. I received all the advantages of education, such as young ladies usually enjoyed at that time, and was taught dancing among other things, which, in the religious world in that day, was not considered orthodox. My parents were not members of any church, and they wished me to enjoy life, and thought dancing added grace and easiness to one's manner. 17

Dancing parties were common among the Mormons during the Nauvoo period (1839–46), which, given the varying background and expectations of its citizens, raised some real questions in the minds of many about the propriety of the practice. In an 1844 letter to the editor of the Times and Seasons, "a father and elder in Israel" requests a clarification of the Church stance on dancing:

DEAR SIR: As you are placed as a watchman in Zion, and your opinion is respected by the members of the church, I should be very much gratified by your informing me, and not only me, but the public, through the medium of your valuable paper, the Times and Seasons, what your views are in regard to balls and dancing, as it has lately existed in our city. ... I make the request ... as I am the father of a family, having both sons and daughters, over whom the great God has placed me as a father and a watchman, and to whom I feel responsible for the conduct of my children. ... I feel desirous to know what to teach my children. ... There are many others who
possess the same feelings as myself, and who would feel highly gratified by an expression from you relative to this subject. 18

The reply from the editor, probably written by Elder John Taylor, was included in the same issue and began with the following observation:

We have always considered that there existed on the minds of the religious community, a great deal of unnecessary superstition in relation to dancing, but perhaps this feeling is engendered more through other associations and evils connected with it, than from the thing itself. There certainly can be no harm in dancing in and of itself, as an abstract principle, but like all other athletic exercises, it has a tendency to invigorate the system and to promote health. . . . Therefore, looking at dancing merely as an athletic exercise, or as something having a tendency to add to the grace and dignity of man, by enabling him to have a more easy and graceful attitude, certainly no one could object to it. So much then for dancing as a science. 19

The editor traces the record of dancing in the scriptures, quoting from 2 Samuel 6:13–15, where David dances before the Lord with all his might. He then observes that while dancing “was adopted for the purpose of celebrating the praise of God,” the dancing of the day was not that kind, for “we never heard God’s name praised, nor his glory exalted in any of them. Nor do we think that there is the least desire to glorify God in the dancing of the present day . . . and that it has not a tendency to glorify God, or to benefit mankind.” In conclusion, he reiterates the neutrality of dancing and focuses rather on the contexts of time and place:

As an abstract principle . . . we have no objections to [dancing]; 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 lead to profligate and intemperate habits. And so far as it does this, so far it is injurious to society, and corrupting to the morals of youth. 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, two, three or four o’clock in the morning. 20

Three ideas emerge from the editor’s reply, which formed the basis for later policies governing dancing in Mormon Utah pioneer communities: First, dancing, as an exercise, tends to “invigorate” the body and promote health and well-being if done in moderation. Second, dancing has a “tendency to add to the grace and dignity of
man, by enabling him to have a more easy and graceful attitude.” And third, dancing, illustrated in the scriptural record as a “part of the service to God,” should be conducted in a proper atmosphere of piety and loving sociality, without which the evils stemming from dance, as per its critics, could become a real possibility.

That such a proper atmosphere was lacking in some of the dances at that time is apparent from a reminiscence of a young girl denied the opportunity of attending a dancing party because of a warning to her father from Joseph Smith about dubious company in attendance:

During the winter of 1843, there were plenty of parties and balls, and many were held at the [Nauvoo] Mansion. The last one that I attended there that winter, was on Christmas Eve. Some of the young gentlemen got up a series of dancing parties to be held at the Mansion once a week. . . . I had to stay at home, as my father had been warned by the Prophet to keep his daughter away from there, because of the blacklegs and certain ones of questionable character who attended there . . . but I felt quite sore over it . . . for no girl loved dancing better than I did, and I really felt that it was too much to bear. 21

After the assassination of Joseph Smith, Church leaders felt the need to discourage worldliness and excess of frivolity, believing that dancing and other amusements had the tendency to distract people from the real and pressing needs of the hour. These grim and somber times prompted a sternly worded epistle from the Council of the Twelve over the signature of Brigham Young. The letter was published in the *Times and Seasons* and pointed the Saints’ attention to what was required of them:

In order to do this [build the kingdom] we must not only be industrious and honest . . . but we must abstain from all intemperance, immorality and vice of whatever name or nature; we must set an example of virtue, modesty, temperance, continency, cleanliness and charity. And be careful not to mingle in the vain amusements and sins of the world. . . . Among the most conspicuous and fashionable of these we might mention, balls, dances, corrupt and immodest theatrical exhibitions, magical performances, etc., all of which are apt not only to have an evil tendency in themselves, but to mingle the virtuous and vicious in each others society; nor for the improvement of the vicious, but rather to corrupt the virtuous. . . . And 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; they have been borne with, in some instances heretofore for the sake of peace and good will. But it is not now a time for dancing or frolics but a time of mourning, and of humiliation and prayer.22

This statement may appear to be a general indictment of dancing, and it certainly is a warning of the ill effects of worldly and unfettered revelry in the public dances. Yet subsequent events, as well as statements by Brigham Young, indicate that this deep concern was more for the time, place, and especially the environment in which dancing was done. President Young had to sort through a number of pros and cons about the practice of dancing. As previously noted, there was always the potential for worldliness and excess of frivolity that might distract people from important issues. On the other hand, within certain bounds and constraints, dancing was a commendable practice because of the exercise it gave, the sociality it promoted, and the social graces it engendered.

After weighing the one side against the other, Brigham Young concluded that in appropriate circumstances and atmosphere, dancing had a strong potential to be uplifting to the people. Using this rationale, he gave the practice of dancing a spiritual and intellectual coherence that enabled the pioneers to enjoy all of its benefits while limiting any ill effects that it might be perceived to have on their piety.

Brigham’s ideas about dance developed while the Saints were still in Nauvoo and ultimately shaped the ideals and forms of dancing among the Utah pioneers, from the time of crossing the plains to the founding of Salt Lake City and on to the establishment of settlements extending to the far reaches of the Great Basin. Saints were “encouraged to conduct and attend their own dances,”23 rather than to go to the places where public dances were held. In this way, they could control the atmosphere and thereby let the act (or art) of dancing be unhindered in filling its role as a wonderful means of recreation and wholesome social interaction. To be sure, controversy about dancing continued, even down into this century, but usually centered on whether the conditions of Brigham’s pronouncements were being met in actual practice.
Under Brigham Young's approval, dancing resumed in Nauvoo and continued around evening campfires after a hard day on the pioneer trail. At Winter Quarters, a particularly discouraging time, Brigham Young is reported to have "called his people together and told them: "I want you to sing and dance and forget your troubles. We must think of the future that lies ahead and the work which is ours." Rachel Simmons, who had moved from Nauvoo to Winter Quarters in 1846 as a young girl, mentions that the first dancing party she attended was on one of the few boats that ventured that far up the Missouri River:

I remember one came up and the officers gave a ball on landing and invited some of the young folks, myself among the number . . . . Mother consented and I had a delightful time. Previous to this I had been to dancing school and was considered by my teacher to be the best dancer in his school of one hundred scholars. I know that I like to dance today as well as ever I did in my young days. That was my first dancing party, but I have been to hundreds since, for the Saints are a dancing people and believe in engaging themselves in all legitimate pleasures.

A large farewell party and dance were given at Winter Quarters in honor of the Mormon Battalion prior to their departure for California. William Draper notes that "within twenty four hours the required no. 500 was more than made up, and there was immediately a large bowery was erected at a little [place] known as Trading Point settled only by Indians and their traders on the Bank of the Missouri there we had [a] jolly parting dance." Colonel Thomas Kane gives a fuller description of the event:

There was no sentimental affectation at their leave-taking. The afternoon before was appropriated to a farewell ball; and a more merry dancing rout I have never seen, though the company went without refreshments, and their ballroom was of the most primitive. . . . With the rest attended the elders of the church within call, including nearly all the chiefs of the high council, with their wives and children. They, the gravest and most trouble worn, seemed the most anxious of any to be first to throw off the burden of heavy thoughts. Their leading off the dancing in a great double cotillion, was the signal bade the festivity commence. . . . None of your minuets or other mortuary processions of gentles in etiquette, tight shoes, and pinching gloves, but the spirited and scientific displays of our venerated and merry grandparents, who were not above following the fiddle to the Foxchase Inn, or Gardens of Gray's Ferry.
Mormon Battalion Ball, July 1846, by C. C. A. Christensen (1831–1912), oil on canvas, 13\(\frac{7}{16}\)" x 22\(\frac{3}{8}\)". Prior to the departure of the Mormon Battalion from Winter Quarters, the beleaguered Saints quickly erected a bowery and gave a spirited farewell ball. Courtesy LDS Archives.
French Fours, Copenhagen Jigs, Virginia Reels, and the like forgotten figures executed with the spirit of people too happy to be slow, or bashful, or constrained. Light hearts, lithe figures, and light feet, had it their own way from an early hour till after the sun had dipped behind the sharp sky line of the Omaha hills.28

Zadoc Judd, a member of the battalion, notes in his autobiography that even while on the march, dancing was one of the recreational activities among the predominantly male personnel and that it seemed to lift everyone’s spirits in spite of the lack of female company:

We travelled down the Missouri River for Fort Leavenworth; Happy and cheerful, singing and dancing. . . . There [were] several good fiddlers among us and some one had managed to get his fiddle stowed away in a captain’s wagon and after a hard day’s march, the fiddle was brought out and a lively dance would commence and would continue for the entire evening. There were no girls but many of the boys would take the girls side and do the dance all right. The boys did say it was the best way to rest and do the dance all right. The boys did say it was the best way to rest and they felt better than they would to set down and sit still.29

The main migration of pioneers, including leaders, likewise engaged in musical and dancing activities after supper as a relief from the tedium and fatigue of the day’s journey. This activity took their minds off the cares and worries of the day, and in a convivial atmosphere, they were rejuvenated both mentally and physically and able to face the arduous requirements of the next day’s journey. Eliza R. Snow, who crossed the plains later in the summer of 1847, notes in her diary how singing hymns around a blazing campfire lifted the people’s hearts to a contemplation of the sublime:

Had it not been for the rich seasons of refreshing from above which we experienced from time to time, with renewing influence, it really seemed as though many must have yielded beneath the weight of fatigue and exposure, who were thus enabled to struggle through.30

Since the pioneers “had many a dance while on the plains,”31 numerous diaries and reminiscent accounts give us something of the flavor of those recreational activities: “Sometimes on week nights,” Harriett Pulsipher recalls, “they would clear away the brush and engage in dancing.”32 “We enjoyed ourselves very much at the
last two places we camped,” Sophia Goodridge Hardy writes. “Had two violins in our ten. Had some music and dancing.”

Jessie Belle Stirling Pack describes a typical evening on the trail:

We left Council Bluffs Aug. 15, 1862, and arrived in Salt Lake October 20, 1862. . . . When we would camp we gathered buffalo chips and wood where we could and built our fire and cooked a little bacon. Then the boys would get their fiddles and we would clear off the brush and dance and sing Scotch songs. Then we would sing hymns and have prayers and go to bed.

“Another memory,” according to Mary Culmer Simmons, “is of moonlight nights when the camp was all settled and made safe; the people would gather around the campfire and after some singing and prayer, there would be dancing.” Mary Mole Smith chose to write about the positive aspects of the trek:

It is not my purpose to write of our wanderings in the wilderness; of the desert sands, the brackish waters, the hot sun by day and chill skies by night, illuminated by sagebrush fires; but rather to recall the evenings of song, of conversation, dancing and revels which closed each day.

From an anonymous author, we read, “No matter how difficult had been the journey during the day, when dusk came and the camp had been pitched, the evening meal eaten, the weariness of the day was forgotten in a dance.” Aroet Hale recalls that the 1848 companies of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball traveled close together and that “they frequently Stop within a Mile or So apart. The Young youl [sic] Viset from One Camp to the Other. and frequently would get musick and have a good Dance on the Ground. Some times the Older Folks would Join with us.”

For some pioneer immigrants, dancing on the plains was an extension of activities they had participated in on the ships bringing them to America. Caroline Hopkins Clark, sailing on the ship *John Bright* from Liverpool, England, April 30, 1866, with 747 Latter-day Saints aboard, notes, “We have plenty of music and dancing on board. . . . We had a concert and dancing on deck,” and later, while on the plains near the Platte River, she continues, “Yesterday was the anniversary of our people who first entered the valley. We traveled about half the day, then we had singing and dancing, and all enjoyed ourselves.”
Wherever the immigrants camped, prayers and devotions customarily preceded or followed dancing, and the people were continually reminded of the noble purposes of their migration and the need to guard against frivolous or negative attitudes. Nevertheless, the frailties of human nature occasionally led to disturbances at the dances. In her diary, Eliza R. Snow notes that “last eve the young people met for a dance & bro. Baker’s boys & others intruded with much insolence—they are tried this eve before the bishop’s court.”

Brigham Young’s Views on Dancing

After the pioneers arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley and began spreading out into numerous settlements, dancing continued as a favored activity. Mary Isabella Horne, who arrived in the valley in October 1847, three months after the first pioneers, notes that the first year was hard, but during the second year, “we had more time for amusements . . ., having our social parties, dancing parties, etc.”

Dancing always had the Church leaders’ blessing, but with it also came their admonishment to preserve a proper atmosphere and attitude. Every occasion was to be opened and closed with prayer, and the people were to be unrelentingly vigilant in keeping out worldly influences, particularly liquor, rowdy behavior, and suspicious strangers who might bring harm to the community. This type of setting is what Brigham Young envisioned as necessary for dancing to fulfill its raison d’être—providing the wholesome recreation requisite for physical, mental, and social growth. In a speech entitled “Recreation and the Proper Use of It,” delivered at the Legislative Festival on March 4, 1852, Brigham Young once again articulated his view toward the practice of dancing:

I want it distinctly understood, that fiddling and dancing are no part of our worship. The question may be asked, What are they for, then? I answer, that my body may keep pace with my mind. My mind labors like a man logging, all the time; and this is the reason why I am fond of these pastimes—they give me a privilege to throw every thing off, and shake myself, that my body may exercise, and my mind rest. What for? To get strength, and be renewed and quickened, and enlivened, and animated, so that my mind may not wear out. . . . I do not wrestle, or play the ball; all the exercise I do get is to dance a little.
Speaking on another occasion, President Young emphasized that dancing under the right auspices was not only good for the people but was also as wholesome an activity as any sport—the only requirement for purity being a proper attitude:

If you want to dance, run a footrace, pitch quoits or play at ball, do it, and exercise your bodies, and let your minds rest. . . . If you wish to dance, dance; and you are just as much prepared for a prayer meeting after dancing as ever you were, if you are Saints. If you desire to ask God for anything, you are as well prepared to do so in the dance as in any other place, if you are Saints. Are your eyes open to know that everything in the earth, in hell, or in heaven, is ordained for the use of intelligent beings? . . . Those who cannot serve God with a pure heart in the dance should not dance. 45

In the matter of the training and education of his own children, President Young said the following:

I had not a chance to dance when I was young, and never heard the enchanting tones of the violin, until I was eleven years of age; and then I thought I was on the high way to hell, if I suffered myself to linger and listen to it. I shall not subject my little children to such a course of unnatural training, but they shall go to the dance, study music, read novels, and do anything else that will tend to expand their frames, add fire to their spirits, improve their minds, and make them feel free and untrammled in body and mind.44

A number of times, President Young chastened the critics of dancing by offering the following opinions on the prevalent religious censure of fiddling and dancing: “Tight-laced religious professors of the present generation have a horror at the sound of a fiddle. There is no music in hell, for all good music belongs to heaven”; 45 “every decent fiddler will go into a decent kingdom” ;46 and “I have heard many a minister say that there were no fiddles in heaven. At that time I did not understand as I do now, for I now know that there are no fiddles in hell. There may be many fiddlers there, but no fiddles; they are all burned that go there.” 47

The fruits of Young’s policies in encouraging dancing are summarized nicely by his daughter, Susa Young Gates:

People would have had in those grinding years of toil, too few holidays and far too little of the spirit of holiday-making which is the spirit of fellowship and socialised spiritual communion, but for Brigham Young’s wise policy. He manifested even more godly inspiration in his carefully regulated social activities and associated
pleasure than in his pulpit exercises. He kept the people busy, gave legitimate amusements full sway and encouraged the cultivation of every power, every gift and emotion of the human soul.\textsuperscript{38}

In an article that appeared in the \textit{Utah Musical Times} not long after Brigham Young's death, the authors list once again the positive aspects of dancing that were envisioned by President Young and that more or less reflect the popular attitudes toward dancing at the time:

A social dance is certainly one of the best things to drive away dull care, disperse sour and sombre feelings, dispel melancholy thoughts, banish hypochondriacal ideas, and infuse in a company a spirit of cheerfulness, geniality, affability, and kindly courtesy. It will also do much to abolish bashfulness, awkwardness, and boorishness in social intercourse . . . and to impart a more satisfying self-possession and ease and repose of deportment, and a very desirable self-collectedness of manner, when in company . . . Further than this, dancing is physically a most beneficial exercise, and if people generally were accustomed to dance frequently, but in moderation, there would not be so much heard of terrible suffering from indigestion, biliousness would be banished, and dyspepsia would measurable be destroyed.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Dancing in Utah Territory}

The celebration dance on the Twenty-fourth of July 1868 in Coalville was typical of celebrations in territorial Utah:

At daybreak the citizens were serenaded by the brass and martial bands. At nine o'clock everyone was at the Church where speeches, singing and oration finished the forenoon program. At 2 p.m. dancing commenced and continued until the grey morning light dawned. All was peace and joy.\textsuperscript{50}

In keeping with Brigham Young's stated views about proper atmosphere, the pioneers strove to make their celebrations and their dances "harmonious," "well-ordered," and "conducted with decorum and propriety:" Dances were opened and closed with prayer. A floor manager was employed to make things go smoothly—limiting the number of dancers to the space available and making sure that everyone who wanted to had a chance to dance. He was also arbitrator, arbiter, and occasionally bouncer as he sought to keep civility at a proper level. Sometimes dances were stopped because of unruly or untoward behavior.\textsuperscript{51}
Cello belonging to George Wardle. Wardle entertained the first 1847 pioneer company with his music as they traveled across the plains. On assignment from Brigham Young, Wardle taught dance classes in communities throughout pioneer Utah. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.
The sociality and community spirit engendered by dancing made the activity even more desirable. In a letter to his sister in England, John Barker writes, "We have been to several dancing parties and expect to go to more this winter, for all in the town mix together and enjoy each others company & friendship."\(^{52}\)

Dances were for the whole family; so that no one need stay at home, even babes in arms were brought and put to sleep in bedrooms, on benches, or even in beds made on the floorboards of a carriage or wagon: "Often a lady was compelled to leave the floor—her baby was crying. No mother remained at home on account of children, except in cases of sickness. Babies were brought along and beds were arranged on seats with coats and shawls for coverings."\(^{53}\) In this setting, there was no generation gap—children learned about being part of the community and the adult world and its expectations for them in the future. They also picked up a sense of dancing—its forms and steps.

Important elements of dancing included knowing the proper steps and the etiquette associated with dancing, such as properly asking a partner to dance and giving a correct thank-you. As early as 1850, Brigham Young asked George Wardle to conduct a dancing school so people would get proper training in the art of dancing. A wheelwright by trade, Wardle had been an "ardent student of music in his native England," and thus equipped, he began instruction, first in Marcy Thompson's log cabin\(^{54}\) and later in a dance hall he constructed in 1851 on Second West between North and South Temple. The hall was a social center for a number of years,\(^{55}\) and President Young and other leading Church authorities were among Wardle's students.\(^{56}\) Eventually, President Young asked Wardle to go to Provo to start a dancing school and later to go to Midway for the same reason.

Knowing the proper dance steps was important, and, in order to enable everyone to participate, officiators commonly took time at a dance to teach the steps. As a resident of early Kanab reports, "Edwin Ford, who after 1873 played his violin at all dances, also called for the cotillions. It is said he expected the participants to dance the figures correctly, and if anyone made a mistake he would stop the music, give instructions, and then begin the music again."\(^{57}\)
Though whole families attended community dances, on special holidays such as the Fourth or Twenty-fourth of July, Christmas, or New Year, an afternoon dance was often held just for children. During the 1876 Fourth of July celebration in Cedar City, there was "dancing by the children in the afternoon and by the adults in the evening. Peace and good order did everywhere abound throughout the whole day." Of the same day in Paragonah, an observer writes, "We had a very pleasant celebration of the Fourth. . . . Dancing commenced at 1 o'clock for the children, and in the evening adults indulged in the same way, which was kept up until a late hour. The whole affair went off very pleasantly." Another diarist in Mt. Carmel in Kane County wrote:

At two p.m. the little folks assembled and occupied a few hours in dancing. Then they gave way for the more elderly ones, who occupied the time to good advantage until midnight when the dance was dismissed and all went home in peace, feeling well satisfied.

While children's dances were for the young ones' amusement, they were also viewed by Church authorities as an opportunity to teach the steps as well as proper dancing manners and etiquette to the children. In a letter to the officers of the children's Primary Association in Farmington, Aurelia Spencer Rogers, then the president of the association, requests such instruction: "I regret very much not being able to attend the children's party, knowing they will have a fine time, especially if they observe good order. And to have order, there should be some regulations in regard to their dancing." She then lays out in some detail a number of such regulations, which, if followed, would teach the children proper dancing habits and manners.

In a reminiscent account, Emma B. Lindsay remembers the setting in which Brigham Young conducted dances and also mentions his abilities as a dancer:

During the holidays, I well remember my father taking my sister Rebecca and me to a dance at the old Social Hall on State Street at Salt Lake City. . . . I remember seeing President Brigham Young, his fine appearance and how he danced. He was very light on his feet and good at dancing. I also remember the order maintained during the dance.
Emmeline B. Wells notes that during President Young’s visits to the large home of Isaac Chase “there would soon be a Cotillion, Money Musk, Sir Roger de Coverley, or a Schottish Reel. Pres. Brigham Young was a famous dancer, and certainly one of the most graceful pictures of all those popular men of the olden time.”

As a child in Nephi, Utah, in the 1860s, Charlotte Evans Adams was thrilled when, at a party given in honor of his visit to that town, President Young “asked her to dance with him for he was such a graceful dancer, executing the intricate figures of the Lancers, quadrille, and Schottische so beautifully.” With regard to the benefits of dancing, the famed English traveler Richard Burton notes that among the Mormons “dancing seems to be considered an edifying exercise. The Prophet dances, the Apostles dance, the Bishops dance.”

**Dancing Venues in Pioneer Utah**

Lack of a large, enclosed space for dancing did not deter the pioneers from dancing. If nothing else was available, they would dance in the open air, but as time and means became available, they built various structures either specifically for dancing or for a variety of purposes, including dancing.

**Boweries.** Of necessity, dancing was an open-air activity during the trek across the plains, but as dancing continued to be a favored activity in the Great Salt Lake Valley, the Saints began to find more agreeable venues for their dances. The earliest pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley built two boweries—large, temporary structures that were basically arbors. The boweries were used for public functions, including dancing. The first notable event celebrated by the Saints in the valley was the “harvest feast” of 1848, held at the “second” bowery at about Fourth West and Fourth South. The harvest feast was a celebration and dance to give thanks for the fruits of the Saints’ labors of the first year in their new home.

On the 10th of August we held a public feast under a bowery in the center of our fort. This was called a harvest feast; we partook freely of a rich variety of bread, beef, butter, cheese, cakes, pastry, green corn, melons, and almost every variety of vegetable. Large sheaves of wheat, rye, barley, oats and other productions were hoisted on poles for public exhibition, and there was prayer and
thanksgiving, congratulations, songs, speeches, music, dancing, smiling faces and merry hearts. In short, it was a great day with the people of these valleys, and long to be remembered by those who had suffered and waited anxiously for the results of a first effort to redeem the interior deserts of America, and to make her hitherto unknown solitudes “blossom as the rose.”

Private Homes. As new pioneer settlements began to be established farther and farther from Salt Lake City, the settlers took with them the same expectations for dancing and other social occasions. Realizing the importance of entertainment as a means of keeping people's spirits high and of promoting community social cohesion, President Young chose the personnel for each pioneer company with a careful eye to providing a full complement of skills necessary for its success. Thus he selected not only a variety of artisans, but musicians as well; groups of Saints sent to settle an outlying area were seldom without a fiddler.

With few resources at first, dances and other parties took place in private homes. In fact, in both Salt Lake City and in the outlying communities, commodious homes of leading citizens furnished most of the dancing space. In Salt Lake City, the home of Isaac Chase, built in Liberty Park (ca. 1853–54), was a very popular site for parties and dancing, especially among young people. According to Emmeline B. Wells, the Chases were warm and hospitable hosts and entertained many guests and visitors, young and old, some of whom would just drop by:

At that time there were not many houses convenient for dancing, but the big kitchen, or living room at Chases', with its wide open fireplace, and big stout andirons with blazing logs across in winter-time and the great crane swung high, and the pot-hooks with kettles hanging, was a bright picture and when one came in cold from the sleigh, the fireplace was in itself like a great welcome. Sister Chase always had the spinning wheel, with some soft, white rolls, and the old fashioned reel with a skein of yarn on it, and the table put out of the way somewhere. The floors had no carpet to be removed, nor any waxing to be done, and if the fiddlers came, or even one, Jesse Earl, was sure to be there if there was to be a gathering of young folks, and it seems to me that John Gleason had a fiddle, too... . There were no restrictions about time, and it was often in the early morning hours when the young people wended their way homeward.

Pioneer Emma B. Lindsay of Taylorsville records that “many dances were held at our home; the only music was that of the
violin. Sometimes step dances were part of our entertainment. We also held dances at Wm. Parker's home. One room was all that they had. When the dance was held, beds and other furniture were taken out.” She also remembers other dances when “a mid-night supper was served and then dancing continued a while after. Some of the girls who had two dresses would change them at this point, and then finish the dance in a different attire.”  

The dances often included not only the usual ones done in the United States, but also “step dancing’ or later, ‘Toe dancing’ when some of the old dances learned in Scotland or Ireland were danced by those who had learned them in their childhood.” In Tooele the Saints danced even when a fiddler was not available:

The first dancing party occurred in Bishop Rowberry's house on Christmas Day 1849. Josiah Call whistled and someone had a Jews Harp, and that furnished the music. In the summertime a bowery was built and especially on the evenings of July Fourth and July 24th they danced, sometimes all night. The dances were opened and closed with prayer.

This reference to the music for the dance being furnished by a whistler is echoed by Charles R. Bailey in the following note in his diary in 1859:

In Wellsville we had a dance on Christmas night and New Years also; our meetinghouse was very small—14 x 16 and our music was very scarce only one violin and there was too many for the house so we divided up and one part went to Brother John Maughan's house but when we got there we had no music so I was called to make music for the dance being a good whistler. I had to do my best. John Maughan and Brother Frank Gunnell did the calling. We had a good time all the same but in those days I could make as good music as a flute or piccolo.

Dancing was such an important social event that some people even built their homes with one especially large room to accommodate dancers. Josie Patterson notes that her father built such a home in Salt Lake City before being called to go to Arizona. Aaron Johnson, the first bishop of Springville, Utah, who settled the area with some thirty other families, “built a larger adobe house in the spring of 1852 . . . [that] was the only place for several years that was large enough for meetings, dances and public gatherings.”

“During the winter of 1852-53, . . . Johnson told the boys that if
they would furnish fuel and lights, his large front rooms could be used for dancing.” They immediately organized some sleds to carry the wood and after several trips to the forest had gathered a number of cords of firewood. Myrtle H. Conover records:

Levi Curtis secured the “Assembly Rooms” for cotillion parties which were held weekly during the winter. Levi and James O’Banion were the fiddlers. Old and young would gather for dancing; everybody came early and left about the midnight hour. The bedrooms opening from the hall were generally filled with babies snugly tucked away, while the mothers enjoyed the dance. . . . The huge fireplaces at either end of the hall were piled high with dry cedar fagots, the flames from which, seemingly endowed with the spirit of the dance, leaped and danced up the chimneys with a roar that laughed the winter blasts to scorn. Candles held in place by three nails driven into wooden brackets were ranged high along the walls. . . . Tickets were paid for in any kind of produce that the fiddlers could be induced to accept. Usually a couple of two-bushel sacks could be seen near the door, into which the dancers deposited their contributions. . . . The New Year of 1853 was danced in with extra ceremony; more candles were furnished and another fiddler, William Smith, procured.

The townspeople of Clarkston, on the Bear River, also contributed to a private home to make it suitable for dancing. Catherine H. Griffiths notes that in 1863 “when the people first settled Clarkston, they didn’t have any place for public gatherings. William Steward had the largest house in the settlement so the citizens told him that they would put in a lumber floor if he would let them use it for dances. This he did and the dancing began.”

Further south, in Beaver, John Mathews “built his home knowing that he would be called upon to offer it for such purposes [dancing]. He built partitions between certain rooms that could easily be moved, making a larger space for dancing and other functions. Needless to say, many parties were held here.” When homes were used for dancing, the furniture and carpeting were all moved out, leaving room for one or two squares. Often the fiddler would stand in the doorway so that people in two or more rooms could hear the music.

In the small community of Washington, near St. George, dance parties were held at private homes “until the large meeting house was built in 1877. Bishop Covington’s home had two stories; the upper story, which consisted of one big room with a fireplace, was
reached by an outside stairway; here dances could be held without people having to invade the privacy of Bishop Covington’s living quarters.”

**Public Buildings.** As settlements became more established, churches and schoolhouses were built, and they became the places for dancing. Though many were small and some had dirt floors, the buildings sufficed for a people who would have their entertainment. A typical story was recorded in the community of Fillmore, where they completed the new schoolhouse in late 1851, and everyone attended the first dance:

It had one big room and was made of cottonwood logs with a large fireplace in one end, rude benches made of split logs and a dirt floor that was sprinkled and swept before each social event. On the evening of the first dance, the whole town turned out to enjoy the event. The light from the fireplace and candles revealed the happiness these early pioneers felt in thus being able to enjoy a sociable time together. Their hardships were forgotten for the time as the musicians tuned up their fiddles and banjos. The evening began with prayer, then Brother Hiram Mace, the dance master, taught some step-dancing to the younger people, after which everybody, old and young, joined in the square dancing.80

The occasional alternative to the dirt floor was one made of logs sawed lengthwise and laid closely together:

Sometimes a dance would be given in some home which boasted a “puncheon floor.” Most floors were the hard-packed earth; but when the good man of the house possessed both gumption and logs, he could set sawed-off logs close enough in the dirt to make quite a respectable flooring, called puncheon. Then came the dance! It was some job, you may be sure, to turn a “pigeon wing” on that uneven, bumped-up surface. But it could be done and it was done.81

**Orderville** offers a view of how dances took place in that communal settlement. The large dining hall, where the whole community ate their meals in three shifts (first the men, then women, then children),82 became their dance hall. Charles William Carroll, who moved there in 1878, recalls:

We had dances in the dining hall. We would shove all the tables against the walls and shave soap on the floor to make it smooth. . . . We had good music for our weekly dances. Brother Covington and Lon Cox would trade off with the fiddle. That was all the instruments we had, but we thought it was great.83
Halls Built Primarily for Dancing. In addition to the bow-ersies, during the first years in the valley an enclosed public space large enough to accommodate dancing was constructed at some hot-water springs located several miles north of the temple lot. The area was known as Warm Springs:

In the summer of 1850, a commodious bath house was built over the springs, boarding in one inner pool for women, an outer one for men and boys, with several private rooms fitted with wooden bath tubs. . . . The Bath House was dedicated with prayer and religious services on November 27, 1850. The morning service was followed by a great afternoon and evening celebration of feasting and dancing. . . . In front of this Bath House was an adobe cottage for the caretaker, and soon an immense dancing hall, also built of substantial adobe, was added, with a roomy dining-room and equipped with kitchens, all fitted with benches and tables. Public parties and even theatrical entertainments were given here, even after the completion of the Social Hall.84

The following July, Warm Springs was the site of a state ball and supper given in honor of the chief justice visiting the territory from the United States.85 At least one wedding also took place there that year, as described by the bride, Rachel Simmons:

We were married on the 18th of December 1851 in what was called the Warm Springs Bath House. It was at that time the largest and best place for large parties. It was a fashionable place. I had as nice a wedding as could be had in those days. . . . After the ceremony, we had supper, then danced until next morning.86

The most famous recreational facility of the early pioneers was the Social Hall, located on State Street in the center of Salt Lake City between South Temple and First South. It was a substantial building, measuring 40' x 80' and made of adobe with a shingle roof. The ground floor was used for theatricals and was built with a sloping floor leading down to the stage. The basement floor, on the other hand, was designed for dancing, parties, and banquets. The hall was formally opened and dedicated on New Year's Day 1853, with Heber C. Kimball calling the meeting to order and Amasa Lyman offering the dedicatory prayer. There were congratulatory speeches, musical numbers, and recitations, but "a ball was the main feature of the evening."87
Streetcar at the Warm Springs Bathhouse, ca. 1875. Built in 1850, Warm Springs provided public facilities for bathing and soon after for dancing as well. Courtesy LDS Archives.

On November 29, 1855, a special dance was held in the Social Hall to welcome back missionaries returning from foreign lands. Jedediah M. Grant of the First Presidency directed the proceedings, noting that

those missionaries that cannot dance, and do not try, we shall consider have not fulfilled their missions this evening. He then led off in the dance, which he executed in right good earnest. The whole company caught the electric spark, and "good earnest" characterized the exercises of the evening. . . . When the evening was well advanced, and the party had exercised themselves much in the dance, President Grant addressed the returned missionaries.88

As communities developed throughout the territory, buildings dedicated primarily to public entertainments gradually began to be built. Following the Warm Springs model, some were built next to water and featured trees, flowers, and lawns in garden settings where people could enjoy the natural beauty while partaking of good food and dancing. Many resorts with dancing pavilions were built around Utah Lake at American Fork, Pleasant Grove, Geneva, and Lincoln Beach, to name a few.
Social Hall, Salt Lake City, 1858. A ball was the highlight of the dedication of the Social Hall in 1853. The basement was designed for dancing and the ground floor was used for theatricals. Courtesy BYU Archives.

Near Manti in 1873, Daniel Funk even created a man-made lake by diverting the water of Six-Mile Creek into what was known as the Arapene Valley. Though it presented a number of engineering problems, in the end his lake covered seventy-five acres at a depth of twenty feet. In this previously dry area, he planted six thousand fruit and shade trees, as well as a variety of vegetables, notably sugarcane and melons. He built dance pavilions both on shore and over the lake where “the hard working people of southern Utah” could come for wholesome entertainment.89

In nearby Sevier county, a family-enterprise, do-it-yourself dance hall was constructed by musician Lars Nelson (later Neilson) in the mid-1880s. He had grown “tired of playing for entertainments in boweries, hay barns, log cabins, churches and large front parlors.”

The dance hall was a modest frame building about 100 feet long and 40 feet wide, facing west, overlooking the pasture lands. . . . The dance floor was made of smooth planed boards on which generous
amounts of candle wax was whittled, then polished to a slick gloss by the sliding, dancing feet. . . . The place was reached by following a narrow dirt road which hugged the curving mountainside from Glenwood to Annabelle.

The first ball was a rousing success. Curious people who had watched the building proceedings with growing interest came from surrounding towns, filling the hall to capacity. The hillside was covered with wagons, buggies, horses and mules. A strict dance manager allowed no rough antics to be carried on . . . although sometimes the quick quadrilles, whirling and jumping polkas might be considered rough. People came expecting amusement, and the Neilsons' reputation as entertainers fulfilled their expectations.90

This dance hall was unique in that the music was provided entirely by Lars and his family. Their antics and sheer musicianship contributed substantially to the hilarity and the entertaining atmosphere of the dances.91

One dance hall with a singularly unique building feature was the American Fork Opera House built in 1883. It was modeled

Saltair, ca. 1897-1900. The queen of all early Utah entertainment facilities, Saltair, located on the south shore of the Great Salt Lake, advertised the world's largest dance floor. Courtesy BYU Archives.
Bathers at Saltair, ca. 1897-1900. Saltair, established by the Church in 1893, was intended to provide a wholesome family atmosphere for bathing by day and dancing by night. Courtesy BYU Archives.
somewhat after the Salt Lake Theater, built in 1862, and was constructed in a T-shape with each part measuring 40' x 80'.

[The] unique feature of the building was the movable floor which could be raised and lowered to accommodate the particular type of entertainment. . . . One end of the floor swung on a mammoth hinge secured in the front section of the foyer. Huge iron screw jacks, operated by hand, raised the opposite end of the floor flush with the stage area, thus permitting the full expanse of the stage floor and auditorium to be used for dancing and similar entertainments. When theatricals were to be presented, the auditorium floor was lowered on the same jacks.92

Opera houses were built in a number of other communities as well, and at least one, the St. George Opera House, shared the same feature of a moveable floor.93

In 1893 the queen of all pioneer entertainment facilities, Saltair, was built on the shores of the Great Salt Lake. It was the ultimate recreational resort for the area’s citizens, and in size and scope it had no peer in the United States at that time. The dancing pavilion itself was 140' x 250', with a roof supported by an iron framework that left no pillars or other obstructions on the floor. A railway brought hundreds of recreation seekers to Saltair daily, and activities continued into the night, since the structure was “lighted with 1,250 incandescent and forty arc lights, giving the place a fairylike appearance as they were reflected in the placid waters of the lake on a calm summer night.”94

Pioneer Dance Music

The music used in dancing consisted largely of traditional tunes from Scotland and Ireland, where they had accompanied reels, jigs, and hornpipes. These were lively tunes in either duple time (2/4 or 4/4) or triple time (9/8), and they were played primarily on the fiddle, accompanied occasionally by whatever other instruments might be available, including the accordion, flute, guitar, reed organ, harmonica, or banjo. In the absence of any of these instruments, whistling or even humming through a comb covered with paper might be employed. In Salt Lake City were several wind bands that often provided music for dancing.

The fiddle, however, was undoubtedly the instrument of choice because of its large repertoire of tunes and because, as an instrument,
it offered those things most necessary for dancing: a clear and carrying sound; droning, which gave a semblance of harmony; and, just as importantly, a driving rhythm that gave dancers the impetus to move their feet. To be sure, fiddlers ranged tremendously in talent from those who could merely scrape out a tune to those whose music had the touch of the artist. But the sound of a fiddle worked magic in the minds of those who loved a dance; the better the fiddler, the more profound the inspiration for dancing and its enjoyment. Mosiah Hancock tells the following story about his father, Levi, who was not only a fine fiddler but was also something of "a fancy dancer" himself:

While on a mission in Indiana, he stopped at a building where 400 people had gathered to dance. The man who was to furnish the music could not get his violin to work. Father's shoes were gone, and his pants were holey at the knees and behind, but he stepped up to the man and asked him what was the matter with his goose. Father took the thing and tuned it and made it fairly sing! The people danced until satisfied; then one of the men suggested that they get father a new suit, hat, and boots because he had fixed the violin and because they had had so much enjoyment. So they bought him a new suit, hat and boots! 

All this for the sound of a good fiddler.

K. C. Kartchner, another fine old-time fiddler who lived at the end of the pioneer period, recorded a similar incident that took place in the Manzano Forest in New Mexico. He was sent to deal with a group of people who were adamantly opposed to a new government regulation relating to their grazing animals in the forest. They had recently become extremely upset by ensuing rumors that they were to be removed from their homesteads. As a forest supervisor, Kartchner's duty was to allay their fears and convince them to listen to his explanation of the new regulations. His ranger's uniform, however, was like a red flag, and they would hardly give him the time of day.

[People] were literally up in arms, carrying Winchesters at work and threatening to use them. . . . Among the belligerents was a bachelor and World War I veteran from Texas, known as Red Pickens. Noticing a flock of chickens on his place, we stopped to buy some fresh eggs since our food supplies were getting short. He had been playing a violin that lay open on the kitchen table. Completing the egg deal,
I asked him to play a piece, as we were both fond of the violin. It took some urging to get him started, but when I called for old-time pieces that should be foreign to "Guv'ment Men" his reluctance waned. A two-hundred pounder with red hair and freckles, he clomped his number twelves to the tempo on the kitchen floor. We voiced delight and he was pleased.

When Red Pickens inquired how I became familiar with old-time fiddle tunes, [my companion] Laney said, "Why don't we have the supervisor play some himself?" "Why, shore thing," said Red, with some astonishment. His fiddle was not much and the bow was patched up with wire, but after a series of hoedowns, some he did not play, we became choice guests. "We must stay for lunch and play some more fiddle."
Pickens’s great surprise that the rangers could be so down-to-earth changed his attitude; his antipathy toward these “Gov’ment Men” dissolved, and he became extremely interested in the new regulations, asking innumerarable questions to clarify all points. Since he “knew everybody in the neighborhood” because of his fiddling and his forceful personality, Pickens was influential in getting others to listen to the rangers’ message. In the end, Kartchner notes, “the hostility died down and little trouble was encountered thereafter”98—again, all because of the sound of the fiddle.

The power of the fiddle to attract people is illustrated in an anecdote by Kartchner’s daughter, Merle. As a young child in Snowflake, Arizona, she was put to bed in the buggy outside the schoolhouse, where a dance was being held. Merle remembers seeing shadowy forms standing just outside the circle of light coming through the windows. Apparently, even though these people may have been extremely shy or, more likely, they did not want to be seen, the drawing power of the fiddle music was such that they would come to the dance anyway, if only to listen from the shadows.99

A Touch of Elegance on the Frontier

The lively nature of the dances—reels, jigs, two-steps, marches, and quadrilles—required lively music. Little wonder then that one attractive aspect of dancing was the exercise it gave its participants. On the horizon, however, was a dance that was destined to have a great impact on the pioneers and bring to them both controversy and a touch of elegance that was lacking in the more vigorous forms of dancing. The dance was the waltz with its attendant set of variations.

The waltz arrived in the United States about the turn of the nineteenth century and soon became popular. However, it was met immediately with cries of outrage and shock at the untoward familiarity of a couple dancing in closed position, closely facing each other—especially if they were not married or were married to someone else. For some, including many social arbiters, the dance was simply vulgar. For the moralists and clergy, its consequences were more dire: “When the young gentlemen put their arms about the ladies’ waists and whirled them about the room, the older
generation warned the girls that they would lose all modesty and self-respect, and predicted where such intimacies would lead." The kind of controversy followed the waltz wherever it went.

There was also a second type of criticism, not of the dance itself, but rather of the simplistic way in which it was being taught and danced. This criticism came from numerous dancing masters whose life's work had been to teach not only the dance steps, but more particularly the graceful use of the body while dancing. For them dancing was not just the proper steps, but rather a discipline to develop strength of muscle and grace of carriage and bearing, which in turn would lead to the cultivation of the social graces that attend people of culture. The waltz steps themselves were not difficult to learn, and upstart teachers of the waltz and the popular dance crowd seemed satisfied to learn only the steps. Thus, a whole host of the other important little things that were supposed to accompany dancing lessons—the cultivation of which led to airs and graces—were never learned, and this deficit was anathema to the traditional dancing masters.

The older Utah pioneers knew about the waltz and frowned on it as being in poor taste. To their generation, it was absolutely scandalous, but for the younger set it was an intriguing dance requiring strength and grace, but, more to the point, it allowed a new familiarity between the sexes as they danced. In his account of dances in the town of Fillmore in the 1850s, Dean Robison notes that in the first dances held in the newly completed schoolhouse “everybody, old and young, joined in the square dancing. Only dances that required the gentleman to take the hands or one arm of his lady were allowed. At this time waltzing was considered in poor taste, as it permitted too much familiarity between partners." Sometime later, thanks to two young men who had spent some time in Salt Lake City, the waltz was introduced to Fillmore:

Two lads, Wise and Leigh Cropper . . . had been to Salt Lake City attending school and were eager to demonstrate a new dance they had learned . . . The Dan Olson Orchestra . . . played the music "Blue Danube Waltz," and the first waltz ever danced in Millard County was expertly executed by the two Cropper boys and their partners. It was the first time a boy had ever been allowed to take a girl in his arms when dancing. Before the evening was over, everyone in the hall had tried the new dance.
There were frequent admonitions from the pulpit against the waltz, and in many places it was censured and stopped altogether.\textsuperscript{105} In Bear River, for example,

the Retrenchment Association was organized in January 1876. . . . By the end of the first year, there was an enrollment of sixty-seven members. . . . At their second meeting it was voted, unanimously, to discontinue “round dances” [the waltz and like dances].\textsuperscript{104}

In Snowflake, Arizona, in 1881, Jesse N. Smith, president of the Eastern Arizona Stake (name changed to Snowflake Stake in 1887) called the waltz “the dance of death.” After returning from a visit to his old hometown of Parowan, Utah, and having seen their dancing practices, he not only gave his opinion that “we had lost more than we had gained by dancing,” he also took action:

Notwithstanding the partial permit of Pres. [John] Taylor I felt to use my influence against round dancing [here] . . . [I] asked the people to use their influence against round dancing and against excessive dancing. . . . Musicians in the Church who played for round dancing were accessory thereto.\textsuperscript{105}

Smith was undoubtedly alluding to a statement on round dancing issued in what was known as the “Epistle of the Apostles” some four years earlier over the signature of President John Taylor: “We do not wish to be too restrictive in relation to these matters, but would recommend that there be not more than one or two permitted in an evening.”\textsuperscript{106}

Typical of most areas of the Great Basin, the pioneers in northern Arizona were divided along age lines about the waltz. The older people opposed it, while the younger people favored allowing the waltz at the dances, as may be seen from the following diary entry regarding the waltz in the St. Joseph Ward of the Snowflake Stake:

[In] February (1893), several of the young men of the St. Joseph Ward petitioned the Bishopric to allow waltzing in their dances. . . . Their petition, circulated among the young people and children had 41 signers. To counteract this, the Relief Society got up a petition to the Bishopric not to grant the petition for waltzing. Their petition contained the most signers.\textsuperscript{107}

In the late 1890s, in President Jesse Smith’s own hometown of Snowflake, the waltz had a similar allure:
It appealed greatly to the younger set, and frequently teenagers would sneak over to a large cement slab in front of the Co-op Store [A.C.M.I.] ... and dance the waltz surreptitiously to the accompaniment of Kartchner's fiddle.\textsuperscript{108}

Obscured by all the raucous contentions over the waltz was the elegance of the music and of the dance itself when done well. Waltz music differed substantially from the lively tunes used for the reels and quadrilles. It was smoother flowing, sweeter sounding, and moved at a more graceful tempo, calling to mind the beauty of music rather than a driving rhythm. The feeling of variety that the waltz music brought was as welcome as the dance itself.

Over a period of some years, resistance to the waltz and its music gradually faded, and soon after the turn of the century, as the pioneer period came to a close, the dance became universally popular. Its potential for showing "the graceful use of the body and the [proper] deportment of the ballroom"\textsuperscript{109} became increasingly apparent, inspiring people's efforts to learn to waltz properly. In many areas, the ability to waltz well became almost a visual index of a person's attainment of social grace. The daughter of a pioneer family in Snowflake, Arizona, where pioneer conditions continued into the first decades of this century, Merle K. Shumway frames the popular thought of her generation: "A man was not thought to be all he ought to be if he could not waltz well."\textsuperscript{110}

Shumway further states that in her small frontier community, even in her childhood, the waltz and its derivatives, such as the Chicago Glide and Rye Waltz, were graceful dances that gave expression to frontier desires to partake of elegance—to be a part of something more elevated than their mundane, workaday world. She mentioned in particular the Chicago Glide as a typical example of a graceful dance setting an elegant ambiance.

The Chicago Glide featured couples in a circle executing graceful promenading, bowing, and foot-pointing figures interspersed with longer sections of waltzing. The first parts were done either in a duple meter or a slow $\frac{3}{4}$ meter with extensive rubato. As the music went into waltz time, the couples moved across the floor, turning in keeping with the music until the last four measures, when the lady began a series of twirls under the extended
arm of the man. As the musical phrase ended, the couple returned to their position side by side in the circle and began all over again.

Merle Shumway's memory of this dance is of ladies in their best, long-flowing dresses dancing in a hall lighted with coal-oil lamps. She describes the dance as a thing of great beauty, which, despite the homespun quality of the scene, lifted the frontier spirits in a way very different from the more vigorous reels and quadrilles that gave a more natural vent to exuberance and robustness.\textsuperscript{111} Apparently the waltz, with its flowing movements and smooth fiddle music, brought a much-sought-after touch of grace and elegance to that part of the frontier, which in turn brought beauty and meaning to the lives of the settlers.

**The Passing of the Pioneer Period**

As the pioneer period faded and Utah society moved into mainstream American life,\textsuperscript{112} dancing remained as a mainstay of community activity in Mormon communities, though its accompanying music began to change. In the more remote areas, the fiddle continued to be the principal source of dance music, but in more established areas, additional instruments began to appear alongside the fiddle. The Lars Neilson family band included at least ten children. Along with their father, the children played the clarinet, violin, banjo, guitar, triangle and drums, organ, trombone, E-flat cornet, D-flat cornet, alto horn, bass horn, and bass viol. "All were trained on several instruments and could substitute for each other. At times they would divide their group, some playing while the others danced."\textsuperscript{113} Organs, guitars, and banjos were well suited to accompanying the fiddle, but as the piano became more widely available, it began to take a much larger role in providing dance music because of the large tonal resources at its command.

Although ensembles still played many of the old tunes by ear, they began to rely more and more on new tunes learned from sheet music that could be ordered from catalogs. With the advent of radio and recordings, the once-remote jazz and other types of eastern, big-city, popular music became accessible to Utah audiences, resulting in the gradual replacement of the once-popular fiddle music with new tunes played by ensembles.
Interestingly, pioneer-type dances continued well into the mid-twentieth century in a number of Great Basin areas, stretching from Idaho to Arizona, and they remain in the memory of many of the generation born before 1940. Since 1985, folklorist Craig Miller of the Utah Arts Council has been actively engaged in field research in Utah communities where this tradition persists. He has discovered that the early music is still played in communities at special occasions commemorating town history, and occasionally dances are organized as well, providing some transmission of pioneer cultural practices to the younger generation, if only as artifacts of the past.

In addition, Miller has also documented at least two communities where such dances still function as an integral part of community life, places where the old community dance is a vital part of the present—Bluffdale, a few miles south of Salt Lake City, and Colorado City in southern Utah. Except for a few modern touches, such as the new cars parked outside the hall and the clothing style of the participants, an outsider attending their dances might feel transported back in time to the last century.

Fortunately, this heritage of dance music and social dance, although somewhat neglected, is not destined to be forgotten. In 1996, after more than a dozen years conducting fieldwork throughout the state, the Utah Arts Council produced a ninety-minute cassette tape entitled *An Old-Time Utah Dance Party: Field Recordings of Social Dance Music from the Mormon West*. An edited, seventy-two-minute version of that tape is on a compact disc inserted in this issue of *BYU Studies*. The Arts Council research has been conducted not only to preserve the data and to document cultural practices of the past for folklorists and historians, but also to create a resource for dancers, musicians, community activists, and other persons interested in reviving these dances and the sense of community they once engendered. Perhaps the Mormon tradition of social dance will survive, not only in the memories, but also in the experience of twenty-first-century Utahns.

Larry V. Shumway is Associate Professor of Humanities and Music, Brigham Young University.
NOTES


2The term fiddle is generally understood as an old generic term for bowed lutes, in this case for violins. There is no substantial difference between a fiddle and a violin, though occasionally the former are homemade and thus of a somewhat rougher workmanship. “Fiddling” refers specifically to a style of playing the violin in which there are techniques, particularly in the bowing, which account for the fiddle “sound.” Fiddle music is characterized by pervasive offbeat accents and often droning, which is playing the melody on one string with the bow also touching another, usually open, string.

3Warren Foote, Autobiography, typescript, 36, Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as BYU Archives).

4Hosea Stout, Diary (1845), typescript, vol. 2, 25, BYU Archives.


9Marks, America Learns to Dance, 21; see also 19–22.

10Marks, America Learns to Dance, 62.

11Luman Shurtleff, Autobiography, typescript, 11, BYU Archives.

12Hamm, Music in the New World, 69. See also Andrew Karl Larson, I Was Called to Dixie (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961), 458–60.


15Gilbert Belnap, Autobiography, typescript, 13, BYU Archives.


"To the Editor of the Times and Seasons," Times and Seasons 5 (March 1, 1844): 459.

"To the Editor," 459-60.

"To the Editor," 460.


Brigham Young, "An Epistle of the Twelve, to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:—Greeting," Times and Seasons 5 (October 1, 1844): 669.


It is not clear exactly when the Saints resumed dancing in Nauvoo, but Brigham Young records one interesting incident of dancing in the Nauvoo Temple on December 29, 1845:

The labors of the day [in the temple] having been brought to a close at so early an hour, viz.: eight-thirty, it was thought proper to have a little season of recreation, accordingly Brother Hanson was invited to produce his violin, which he did, and played several lively airs accompanied by Elisha Averett on his flute, among others some very good lively dancing tunes. This was too much for the gravity of Brother Joseph Young who indulged in dancing a hornpipe, and was soon joined by several others, and before the dance was over several French fours were indulged in. The first was opened by myself with Sister Whitney and Elder Heber C. Kimball and partner. The spirit of dancing increased until the whole floor was covered with dancers, and while we danced before the Lord, we shook the dust from off our feet as a testimony against this nation. (Joseph Smith Jr., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev. 7 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971], 7:557.)

Utah Pioneer Recreation Centers," 8:428.


William Draper, Autobiography, typescript, 25, BYU Archives.


Zadoc Judd, Autobiography, typescript, 22, 26, BYU Archives.


Sophia Goodridge Hardy, Diary, quoted in Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 15:254.

38Aroet Hale, Diary, typescript, 17, BYU Archives; [sic] in typescript.
39Caroline Hopkins Clark, Diary, quoted in Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 10:43–44, 47.
40Snow, quoted in “Utah Pioneer Recreation Centers,” 8:430. For other references to rowdy or improper behavior and its consequences, see Larson, I Was Called to Dixie, 458–60; and Kartchner, Frontier Fiddler, 158–60.
44Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 2:94, February 6, 1853.
45Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 9:244, March 6, 1862.
46Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 8:178, September 9, 1860.
47Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 10:313, June 10, 11, 12, and 13, 1864.
48Gates, The Life Story of Brigham Young, 266.
49Utah Musical Times 2 (February 1, 1878): 169.
51See Larson, I Was Called to Dixie, 458–60; and Kartchner, Frontier Fiddler, 158–60.
57“Kane County,” in Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 8:470.
60“Centennial Celebrations,” 20:14.
Dancing the Buckles off Their Shoes


Emma B. Lindsay, quoted in "That They May Live Again," in Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 8:170.


"That They May Be Remembered," 18:164.


Matilda Josephine Anderson Patterson, "Personal Journal and Other Writings of Matilda Josephine Anderson Patterson," typescript, 3, copy in possession of author.


Conover, "Springville," 8:488–89.

Catherine H. Griffiths, quoted in Ann Godfrey Hansen, Wood Stoves and Woolen Stockings ([Salt Lake City]: Covenant Communications, 1991), 113.

"Pleasure—Beaver, Utah," in Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 8:455.

Merle Kartchner Shumway, personal communication with author, summer 1987.

Larson, I Was Called to Dixie, 458.

Dean Chesley Robison, "Utah Pioneer Recreation Centers," 8:473.


Gates, The Life Story of Brigham Young, 262.


Fackrell, "Sevier County," 8:478.


Mosiah Hancock, Autobiography, typescript, 14, BYU Archives.
The exact time of the passing of the pioneer period varied from place to place. It should be understood that in remote settlements, especially those in Nevada and Arizona, pioneer conditions continued into this century. While many of these communities had been established for some twenty years by the turn of the century, the general outlook and the quality of life was decidedly frontier and pioneer. This was so until WWI, which was also about the time when electricity, that harbinger of modernity, came into general use in these areas.

Kartchner, Frontier Fiddler, 238–39.

Kartchner, Frontier Fiddler, 239–40.

Shumway, personal communication.

Marks, America Learns to Dance, 76.

Robison, "Utah Pioneer Recreation Centers," 8:473.

Robison, "Utah Pioneer Recreation Centers," 8:473.


Quoted in Larson, I Was Called to Dixie, 461. The context of this quote was a set of rules laid down by the St. George Stake high council to govern dancing in the stake, one of which stated their opposition to "round dancing, and in regard to waltz, schottische, or polka, or any other dance embracing the features of these dances" (461).


Kartchner, Frontier Fiddler, xviii.

Marks, America Learns to Dance, 76.

Shumway, personal communication.

Shumway, personal communication.

See note 96.

Fackrell, "Sevier County," 8:479.

In the summer of 1998, a companion booklet will be available that discusses the role of dance as it has been lovingly handed down from generation to generation. The booklet, Social Dancing in the Mormon West, includes an essay by Utah Arts Council folklorist Craig R. Miller, which summarizes the community-based dance traditions that evolved in Utah and places these traditions in the unique context of Utah geography and culture. Another essay by ethnomusicologist Larry V. Shumway discusses how the Mormon pioneers' love for music and dance laid the foundation that enriched subsequent generations. The booklet is illustrated with more than three dozen photographs from the Arts Council Archives of community-dance musicians and dancers, as well as images of the state's best-loved outdoor dance halls. Perhaps most significant are the musical transcriptions, prepared by Shumway, that make the dance tunes accessible to musicians who wish to revive the music for their own community dances. For further information, write the Utah Arts Council, 617 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84012, or call 801-533-5760.
Words Cannot Speak: “The Song of the Heart”

Clyn D. Barrus was chair of the Department of Music at Brigham Young University from 1993 until 1996, when he became director of BYU’s newly organized School of Music. This article combines two talks—one to his department on November 5, 1991, and the other to the Church Music Workshop on August 2, 1994. Professor Barrus died on February 27, 1998.

Clyn D. Barrus†

I feel nervous about the responsibility I have in speaking to you this morning. You have come deserving to hear something of value, and I am aware of my need for the Spirit to communicate the deepest feelings I have in my heart.

Music and the Spirit

Let me first express my gratitude for being at this institution where things of the Spirit can be openly discussed and accepted. I know of no other music school on earth where what I am discussing with you today would be accepted with anything more than scorn or ridicule. I can’t possibly tell you how much joy I feel in beginning orchestra rehearsals with a sincere prayer from one of the orchestra members, seeking the Spirit of the Lord to inspire our efforts of the day. What a contrast this is to the thousands of rehearsals I have participated in over the twenty years I performed professionally.

I love my colleagues here. They are not only marvelous musicians and scholars, but more importantly are deeply spiritual people with a vision of eternal life. I look to them for both musical and spiritual inspiration and appreciate the help, encouragement, and example they offer.
I must also express my feelings about the music students that come here to study. Nowhere have I observed a more gifted group. They have been touched with the most precious gifts our Father in Heaven can give his children, and their desires to learn and grow are inspirational. Our challenge at this school of music is to offer these students a program worthy of their abilities, and sometimes I fear we fall short of those needs.

It is not an easy challenge they give us, but I can say without any hesitation that what BYU offers its music students cannot be gained anywhere else in the world. I don't speak of only musical training, for this can be received in equal or in some cases better measure at other institutions I could name. Rather, I speak of the spirit of music and its relationship to our Creator, our Father in Heaven. Here we are unique. Through both example and experience, one can understand the words of Paul when he said, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). All of the faculty hope to be a source of artistic and spiritual inspiration as we unitedly strive to serve the Lord through the great art of music.

I know of nothing quite like the musicians of the Church today. As important as all areas of learning are to the Lord and the Church, I am not aware of a Church chemistry workshop, or a Church literary workshop, or even a Church football workshop, as important as that sport is to many of the members of our congregations. Does music serve spiritual needs in distinctive ways? Why do we have a Church Music Workshop?

Certainly there are many possible answers to this question, the most obvious being that as a part of our sacrament meetings, music plays a vital role in our worship services. All of our General Authorities as well as Church leaders and musicians throughout the world are concerned that the volatile—and at times misused—gift of music be presented appropriately. Music must enhance the worship of God and not detract from the gentle and simple message of the gospel. Learning ways this may be done is one of the purposes of our workshop this week. However, I feel that there are also other reasons why music answers our spiritual needs.
"The Song of the Heart"


“No Tongue Can Speak”

Several years ago, I had a lengthy discussion with an LDS friend about the value of music in a spiritual context. My friend contended that while music may provide an aesthetical experience—that is, an appreciation for form, beauty, and nature—it cannot provide a spiritual experience unless it uses an inspired religious text as its basis. Even in this case, he contended, the spirituality comes not from the music, but rather from the scripture that the music uses as its basis—you see, the scripture comes from God; music comes from man. I felt strongly the falseness of his claim at the time of our discussion. I have contemplated his words for many years and have come to the conclusion that great music itself can express the deepest spiritual feelings we possess, if we are prepared both physically and spiritually to present them.

A great philosopher wrote, “Where words end, music begins.” In my mind, this in no way diminishes the “words” of the scriptures as they express the message of God, or the “words” of a testimony, or the “words” of a great sonnet as the writer attempts
to react to God’s inspiration. Words, however, can be limiting as we try to express our sincere human reactions to the Lord’s influence. As the Book of Mormon records:

No tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father. (3 Ne. 17:17)

“No tongue can speak, neither can there be written.” What then can express our feelings? “Where words end, music begins.” Consider the following example.

While living for several years in Vienna, Austria, Marilyn and I became closely acquainted with the branch president of the first Vienna branch. President Mieka was an unusual person. He not only served diligently in his ecclesiastical responsibilities, but also recognized the power of music.

One would expect the great musical capital of Vienna to produce outstanding musicians, but our little branch was only sparsely talented when it came to musical performance. We did have a small branch choir of fifteen to twenty members, with no tenors and two altos. After long, diligent, and at times discouraging rehearsals, we would perform periodically in sacrament meeting and felt grateful when our performance was not outright embarrassing. You can imagine how we felt when President Mieka came to us in September and expressed his desire to have us perform all three sections of Handel’s Messiah at Christmastime, two and a half months later. The few musicians in the group, myself included, thought that President Mieka must be delirious for suggesting such an impossible task. We realized his resolve, however, when he showed us the choir music he had already purchased and indicated that he had budgeted 800 schillings (32 dollars) from the branch budget to hire a small orchestra and soloists where they were not available in the branch. We were lucky to have a soprano who could carry a tune, let alone sing a solo that would be recognizable. There was, however, no way we could convince President Mieka that his request was impossible, and we began the grueling task of trying to fulfill his wishes.
Through the preparation process some significant blessings came to us. Dr. Alma Dittmer, who taught music at Ricks College and Utah State University for many years, came to Vienna on a semester sabbatical. He generously helped in the preparation of our struggling choir (now increased to fifty members) and offered to sing the bass solos. We were able to convince an inactive member who was a well-known alto soloist in Vienna to sing with us, and a fine soprano who was a member of the Church came to Vienna to study music at the Vienna Academy. One of the members knew a well-trained tenor soloist and convinced him to complete our solo quartet.

By December 1, I had lined up a string quartet from the Vienna Academy to join with the organ to create our tiny orchestra, and our final rehearsals began. The state of our preparation was best described when a close friend, a member of the string quartet, came to me during our final rehearsal and whispered in my ear, "We're not going to make it, are we?" I put my arm around him and said, "Of course we will," but then I realized he might be right. We worked hard and long trying to prepare this gigantic masterpiece. People who had only sung simple hymn melodies were now struggling with the complex melismatic phrases that are so prevalent in the Messiah. Others simply could not read music and were singing totally by ear. They had given every ounce of their dedication and large amounts of their time to prepare for this performance.

The Sunday before Christmas is an important part of the religious worship in Austria. Most Austrians attended a midnight mass, even if they never visited another church service during the year. President Mieka scheduled our performance of the Messiah on that Sunday at 7:00 P.M. so that it would be completed in time for nonmembers to attend later services. He then asked the entire elders quorum of the branch to distribute flyers throughout the area of Vienna surrounding the church building.

Handel's Messiah is not sung with regularity in German-speaking countries, even though Handel was German by birth. Translating scripture from one language to another with musical cohesiveness is very difficult, and the German translation of the Messiah is at times awkward. One Jewish convert to the Church who was singing in the choir was distressed about the translation
in “For unto Us a Child Is Born” where the choir sings “goodwill” several times. The German translation used the words “heil, heil” as a replacement, and our Jewish member felt it recalled too closely the salutation given to Adolf Hitler just twenty years earlier. He sang in spite of his concern.

The unfamiliarity but strong reputation of the Messiah brought an enormous crowd of music-loving Viennese to our concert. As the crowd grew in size, the hearts of our poor choir shriveled, and some seriously considered heading for the nearest exit. Our trembling was climaxed when two full rows of priests and nuns from the neighboring Catholic church entered our chapel. Clergy of the Catholic Church do not normally enter buildings of other denominations, and as we looked at them we imagined written on their faces, “This had better be good.”

The concert began with a warm welcome and assurance of the quality of the performance by President Mieka. This, in spite of the fact that he sang bass in the choir and knew well the status of our ability. He then offered a prayer, most of which I still remember in detail. He asked the Lord to touch the hearts of the choir and other performers. He said we do not do this for ourselves but desire to testify to all present of the life and mission of Jesus Christ, our Savior. He then prayed, “O Lord, we are inadequate to express our testimony through this masterwork without thy presence. We ask thee to send angels from heaven to stand at our side and sing this message with us, that we may hear, not only in spirit, but in actuality the heavenly choirs of which the scriptures speak.” The sincerity of his prayer was so powerful that, though we may not have seen the angels, we felt and heard their presence at our side as we sang praises to our Lord. At the conclusion of the performance, the audience sat in solemn silence. They had been deeply moved as the Spirit of our Father in Heaven touched their hearts. “No tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard.” It was one of the most significant musical and spiritual experiences of my life.

The vision of music and the gospel that President Mieka held was considerably more mature than my own at that time. He helped me realize that experiences of that nature never just happen but
are created through vision, hard work, discernment, and inspiration. Maintaining and nurturing the great art of music will never happen by itself. If there are not champions of those things that are beautiful and uplifting, they quickly give way to those that display passing fancies and frivolity. We often forget that even the most inexperienced people can be deeply moved by the art of music if it is well presented in a spirit of love and humility. If Church musicians and others do not accept from the deep wellsprings of their hearts the responsibility of being the champions of beautiful music in the Church, this unique and valuable means of communication will quickly die away.

"The Song of the Heart"

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants the following statement: "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me" (D&C 25:12). This scripture poses an interesting concept. What is the Lord speaking about when he says, "the song of the heart"? Is he speaking about that marvelous instrument in our chest that pumps life-giving blood to every portion of our body? Without its energy, physical life immediately ends, and cells and tissues that make up our body begin to decay until they become once again the "dust of the earth."

Of course we know that in addition to a physical body there is an eternal spirit in this frame of ours, but I believe there is deep significance that the Lord used a physical entity, the heart, to describe the "song" that delighteth him. While we can understand the role of this magnificent organ and observe its physical properties and functions, it is still a mystery how that pulsing process begins. Only in the scriptures do we gain insight into the beginning of our physical life: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The heart seems to be the link between physical and spiritual life. Without it our body dies, but without the touch of God, the life-giving heartbeats never would begin. Music is both of the earth and of the heavens when it originates from the heart. The Lord said, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
Directing the Chamber Orchestra, ca. 1995. Courtesy Office of Performance Scheduling, BYU.
Music is one of the greatest expressions of our heartfelt human and spiritual emotions. I am sure we all feel that individuals who have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ possess more potential for the expression of heavenly beauty than others. I have learned so much about music from students who have strong testimonies of a loving and caring Father in Heaven. Because of their testimonies, they should and do perform these masterpieces with more feeling and emotion than most other musicians.

My first experience with this "song of the heart" came when I was only six years old. A woman who had been a friend of our family for many years was dying a slow, torturous death with cancer. Her once vital and energetic body had now shriveled up, her hair was gone, and in every sense she looked as if death had already taken her away. The day before she died, my parents took me to visit her in her home. I was afraid to enter the bedroom where she lay because of the pitiful sight she presented, so I just stood in the doorway. After some brief and, for her, painful conversation, my parents gave indication that they must leave in order to let her rest, but she insisted on singing us a song before we departed. She had loved to sing all of her life and this parting gesture seemed appropriate though the physical pain involved for her to sing must have been excruciating. She sang all verses of "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning," and though her voice was no longer as eloquent as it used to be, the communication she flooded us with was of both heaven and earth. I felt her gratitude for life as she sang. She was not afraid to die, and her communication to us could not have been more noble and penetrating than it was as she sang her "song of the heart." I will never forget the impact she left me with as a young boy. For her, the veil had already opened, and she saw into eternity. Only the beating of her heart kept her in mortality, and we were able to participate in a sacred event—the passing from mortal life into eternal life.

**Spiritual Communication through Music**

As performers of great music or as composers of new music, we can open our hearts to the inspiration of our Father in Heaven and express our spiritual feelings as deeply or perhaps more deeply
than we can in our most sincere spoken testimony. There are, however, significant preparations we must make in order to do this and devastating pitfalls that we must guard against. "Songs of the heart" do not happen without deep concern, humility, preparation, and commitment.

One of the greatest challenges we face in championing beautiful music is the sometime justified feeling that no one really cares, so why bother. Even in an institution of higher learning such as BYU, it is easy for people generally to become overpowered by this feeling. As memorable as their music is, the chamber orchestra is difficult to sell to an inexperienced sponsor or audience.

A recent poll of radio stations in this country estimated that only 5 percent of the music listened to is of the type normally referred to as "classical." Included in this "classical" description is the music we would usually anticipate hearing in our sacrament meetings, including Church hymns, whether of a historic or recent vintage. Is this music an antiquated and archaic form that is no longer valid? As long as beauty, sincerity, and depth of expression are still important, the answer is a resounding NO.

How then do we show this beauty to a seemingly disinterested public? Certainly one way is by providing opportunities for them to absorb this beauty. In the twenty-plus years that I performed professionally before coming to BYU, the orchestras in which I performed played to audiences who were well educated in music and paid high ticket prices to listen to works of the great masters. With the chamber orchestra, however, we usually play to audiences that have had very little, if any, experience with classical music. Here are a few comments from some of the many letters we have received over the past nine years. Writing how they felt before the performance, audience members wrote:

The term "chamber orchestra" always makes me think of a few old guys poured into too-tight tuxedos sitting in a circle and playing dusty, cold classical music.

A second stated:

I must admit that I came to your concert only because my wife made me come. She came only because her sister, the Relief Society president, said she should. The Relief Society president came because she
was in charge of the pre-concert dinner. None of us knew what to expect when we sat to listen to your performance, except that we were nervous about being there and prepared for a boring evening.

And a third remarked:

I have always considered accordions, bagpipes, operas, and orchestras to belong to the same family, BORING.

Expressing their feelings after the performance, the same people said the following:

Now I see forty-seven young people playing energetic, passionate, finely crafted pieces that were not just notes on a page, but music as it is intended to be. There was a joy in their eyes that I can't explain—a youth, a commitment, a spirit.

And then:

This was one of those rare moments where I was penetrated to the very core. There was a sense of urgency, commitment, and intensity that stood out in both the interpretation and performance.

Finally:

If someone were to ask me why the performance meant so much, I don't know what I would tell them. At first, I was enthralled by the energy and commitment of the young people, then by the true beauty of a music that I had never heard before. Finally, however, I felt that this performance was trying to tell me something—that these young people were united in expressing a much greater message than just beauty through their music. There was a spiritual communication in what I heard and saw, and I feel that most of the people in attendance had that same experience. Somehow we were different at the conclusion of the performance.

I truly feel that the success of the young performers in this orchestra deals directly with their desire to communicate a spiritual message through the art of music. That message has nothing to do with personal pride, showmanship, or arrogance, but is communicated through humility and love. This message will be received by all who listen, whether educated or not, if it is presented in the proper way.

I was deeply moved by a young student who performed a clarinet solo in a sacrament meeting some time ago. She was asked to speak before she performed, and at the conclusion of her remarks
she spoke briefly about the number she was going to play. She chose to perform a work of Johann Sebastian Bach entitled "Come Sweet Death." She explained that this number was part of a great religious cantata of Bach describing the death and resurrection of the Savior. As the Savior hangs dying on the cross, the choir sings this haunting hymn, "Come Sweet Death." She then expressed how this title had two meanings for her. The first was a recognition of the agony of the dying Savior and a realization that with his death the pain of crucifixion would finally end. The second meaning had much more significance, however, as she expressed that with the Savior's death, life is given to all people. In his death, she said, life becomes eternal. Therefore, come sweet death. Her expression was so sincere and filled with the Spirit of God that when she then performed, everyone listening was touched beyond words by what they heard. It was a moment of deep spiritual communication coming from a student of very tender age.

"Learn in Thy Youth"

As my brother, my sister, and I grew up in our home, we were constantly instructed in music. The other arts (literature, painting, sculpture, theater, and so on) were also present. I never remember, however, receiving an overt lesson in art appreciation from my mother and father. Still, our house was filled with inexpensive but beautiful reproductions of some of the greatest art in the world. Above my bed was a small eight-by-twelve-inch reproduction of a work by Rembrandt. I took the picture for granted, only glancing at it sporadically as I passed through the room during the seventeen years I lived in that home. Later, on a gloomy day while serving a mission in Vienna, my companion and I decided to visit the Art History Museum in that magnificent city. It was our preparation day, and we were both homesick. Because of our downtrodden spirits, we walked without meaning through the museum, only briefly glancing at the thousands of paintings that are housed there. Upon entering one large room, however, I saw a painting that filled a huge wall almost eight feet wide. It was the same painting that hung in miniature above my bed. As I looked at it, a flood of emotions coursed through me. I felt like I was home again in the
warmth of my small room in the comfort and care of my loving parents. Strong wonderful memories of my childhood came to my remembrance, and I sat for two hours in front of that masterpiece absorbing every color and emotion. That painting was, and is, a part of my childhood and life.

How can we expect children to love beautiful art and great music if they never experience it in their homes? How can we hope for appreciation of sacred and artistic music in our worship services if we fail to present it? It is impossible for inexperienced and uneducated people to educate themselves. We must be the champions of sacred beauty. We who have felt and who love beauty must help others in their learning process.

Paying the Price of Training

I was moved recently to reread the story of my grandmother. She and my grandfather, as a newly married couple, moved to Marysville, Idaho, in 1901. As a wedding present, she had been given a piano by her family, and with great difficulty she transported the instrument, first by train, and then by wagon to the wilderness south of Yellowstone Park. The population consisted of small farm settlements. The schoolhouse where my grandfather taught and the small church were the only public buildings. The church had a small pedal organ, but grandmother had the only piano in the settlement for several years. Nevertheless, she was determined to give lessons to the children in the area who would consent to study. She loaded the piano in the back of a wagon and pulled it with horses from home to home giving lessons. Because she had the only piano, it was an ideal situation for the students; they only took lessons and were never able to practice.

Several years later, the family moved to Blackfoot, Idaho, where she was tragically left alone to raise nine children. During a four-year period, three of her children died of various illnesses, and sorrow filled her heart. This was a time when neither Church nor state welfare was available, so the family survived by making paper flowers and temple aprons and of course by my grandmother teaching piano lessons. All of her children studied piano and were required to practice diligently. After several years, however, a gifted woman who had studied at the Boston Conservatory came
to Blackfoot with her husband, and my grandmother told her most
gifted students and her older children that they must now study
with this new teacher. "I am just a pioneer teacher," she told them.
"She will take you far beyond my ability to teach."

My grandmother was faced with a difficult dilemma, how-
ever, as she had no money to pay for her own children to study.
One morning she showed up on the steps of the woman from
Boston and said, "I have four children who must study with you.
I have no money to pay for lessons, but I will come to your home
every morning for two hours and clean house and do your laundry
if you will teach them." The woman gladly accepted.

Today, we are fortunate to have superb, sensitive music teach-
ers in most communities for our children. And as these well-trained
students come to us at BYU, they enter a unique atmosphere at the
School of Music. In a recent discussion my wife and I had with
close friends and world-famous French performers Nell Gotkovsky
and her brother Ivar, they expressed their joy in being able to
relate music to spirituality and their pleasure in having students
who were not only musically sensitive, but spiritually alive. "This is
a special place," they said, "one that is different than any other music
school in the world."

President John Taylor foresaw this atmosphere. Discussing
the Sunday Schools in October 1877, the First Presidency made the
following statement:

The "Mormon" Church will have a music of its own, of the Hebraic
order, and inspired with prophetic themes, and hence, like as in the
Catholic Church, it will be universally cultivated as the highest
branch of art, and in this in time will give birth among our people to
great singers and great composers.¹

This vision of John Taylor is now being fulfilled, but there are
many things we must do and guard against. First, we must train
ourselves to be outstanding musicians and artists. There is no sub-
stitute for hard work and labor. We must train our technical facili-
ties to be competitive with musicians everywhere in the world.
There are teachers who will help and guide you in your endeavor,
but the most significant preparation you will ever do will be in the
privacy of your own practice room and study.
There are no free gifts when it comes to preparation. We can only become true artists when we are prepared in every way to create great works. Singing the “song of the heart” without the ability to be artistic, creates work that is sentimental, trite, and trivial. Such works are around us all the time, and they will fall back into the same obscurity in which they were created. Mediocre art is insignificant and will never last. Great art is born out of keen preparation and hard work. In the scriptures it says, “Be not idle but labor with your might” (D&C 75:3) that ye may have “great joy in the fruit of [your] labors” (Alma 36:25).

Secondly, we must live close to our Father in Heaven, keep his commandments, and serve him with our heart and soul. I feel that the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants applies not only to missionary work, but also to us who are striving to become musicians. Listen to these words and compare them to the vision of President John Taylor:

For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store

Directing the Chamber Orchestra, ca. 1990, BYU. Courtesy Office of Performance Scheduling, BYU.
that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul; And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work. Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence. Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (D&C 4:4-7)

Finally, we must learn the great "songs" that have gone before us and those that are now being created. We must have known and experienced great art from many sources in order to be able to define, understand, and create art ourselves. We create from a lifetime of experience in which we cherish every avenue of inspiration we can explore. We must know the great composers and interpreters well and learn from them, for great art never was created from a void. We must learn and grow with every step we take and have a fertile mind in which new concepts can be realized out of the vast knowledge we gain throughout our lives.

Learning Together

Several years ago there was a program on educational TV that was part of the Nova series. This program was entitled "Why Do Birds Sing?" It introduced us into a kind of Garden of Eden, and everywhere were the songs of birds—an ecstasy of melody piled on melody. Species of birds of every color and variety were melodists in their own dialect in their particular guarded area, each singing his own song of life and joy. The narrator, a famous ornithologist, whose special study was to try to learn what makes birds sing, talked about the results of his study. He took many nestlings (just emerging from their shell) of the same species and put each of them in an isolated chamber which was perfectly soundproofed. Into some chambers, he piped a recording of the song of the parent or adult bird of that species, varying, however, the period of time it was introduced—some nestlings heard the song for a brief period at two weeks of age; others when four weeks of age; still other were six weeks of age before they heard the adult song; and some heard the adult song much later than that. Then there were the nestlings that grew in absolute silence except for that sound which each made in his own isolation. Of this last group, each nestling did finally sing the song of his species, but it was a dull, flattened version,
without sparkle, embellishment or joy. A later reunion with the adult family of his species did not change his song—it ever remained a dull, mediocre song of life. On the other hand, experimentation with the first-mentioned groups, who were introduced to the adult song at different periods of their isolation, revealed an ability to imitate the high and low tessituras and joyful embellishments of the parent birds. In this same spirit, we cannot learn our “song” in isolation, but must hear the singing of others to create beauty within ourselves.

Through our testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we, too, have learned together the “songs” of our Father in Heaven. Through music we have been given an avenue of expressing these songs that can penetrate the souls of those who will listen. This is why you are unique! Those who know the Father and who bear witness of his love for his children have a different song to sing than anyone else on this earth. We must not be afraid to sing it with all the love, humility, and courage that we possess. This is what President Taylor saw in his vision. Young people, hundreds of them, singing together unto the Lord “a new song” (Psalms 98:1). The Lord said to Job: “Where wast thou . . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4, 7). This is our calling, to sing the songs of the morning stars and shout for joy, embracing and clinging to life.

Moved by Experience

Music is an expression of what we are and have experienced. The more significant our experiences and the greater our understanding of life, death, and eternal life, the deeper our ability will be to speak from the heart. If you will permit me, I would like to parallel three deeply personal experiences with the masterpiece Death and Transfiguration, by Richard Strauss. This great piece of music expresses so dramatically the gamut of human feelings.

“Ringing Silence and Death.” The first part of Strauss’s masterpiece begins with the sorrow and pain of death. It approaches death with fear and trembling and views it as the end of life. “There is nothing more for us,” it seems to say, “just ringing silence and death.” Suddenly the music explodes in what can only be
described as a gigantic scream. "No," it seems to cry. "No, this cannot be the end!"

One of the significant blessings we have on our campus at BYU is a Performing Arts Management that helps our performing groups arrange concerts in all parts of the world. The group that I have the privilege of working with is the BYU Chamber Orchestra. In 1990, this orchestra had the privilege of touring Central Europe, where we performed twenty-eight concerts in thirty-two days. We had many memorable experiences while touring and felt the love of many people as we performed great music for them. One particular event, however, brought us close to the pain and sorrow that life can bring.

During the last week of our tour, we visited the small Austrian town of Mauthausen on the Danube River. During the Second World War, the countryside surrounding the river served as a concentration camp for the Nazi regime, and most of the buildings and walls of this "place of death" are still standing. The camp was

The Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen, Germany. Clyn Barrus and the BYU Chamber Orchestra members were deeply moved by their visit to this site on their 1990 European tour. Courtesy Marilyn Barrus.
Cliff near Mauthausen. This is the cliff at which many Jews and other prisoners met their deaths. Courtesy Marilyn Barrus.
situated above a large open granite mine, and the survival of the prisoners depended on their ability to work in the mine. Access into the open quarry was only possible by using a long and very steep open staircase that had been constructed out of granite stones. The stones had been purposely placed unevenly so that the process of walking up the narrow stairs was difficult and painful, especially when prisoners were forced to carry large stones out of the mine on their shoulders. The stairs became known as the “stairs of death” when, at specific times each day as it was crowded with prisoners carrying heavy stones, two guards would push the top prisoners backward, creating a domino effect of bodies and stones that would crush and kill as the heavy stones plummeted downward. Those that were not killed by the stones and long fall were shot, and all were buried in mass graves.

Many Jews from Holland were sent to Mauthausen. When they arrived, they were chained to a wall just inside the camp to await “processing.” Often they were left here without warmth, food, or sanitary facilities for days, and many of them died of exposure with their hands chained to the walls. Rather than unchain them from the walls, their captors often just severed their hands, and they were thrown in mass graves for burial, some of them still alive.

During the last few years of the war, a quicker method of bringing death was found. As the prisoners arrived at the camp, they were lined up at the top of the huge cliff that overlooked the granite quarry. Below the cliff was a large pond of water five or six feet deep that had been created from falling rain. As the prisoners approached the cliff in single file, they were forced to push the person in front of them off the cliff to his or her death below. Death was certain, because if the brutal fall did not kill them, they would drown in the water below, being unable to swim out with mutilated and broken bodies. Hundreds were killed each day in this fashion, and their dead bodies were dragged out of the mine by other prisoners and then buried in mass graves or burned in the newly created ovens.

We saw one area of the camp where so-called high priority prisoners were held. If the Nazis did not get from them the answers they wanted, they were taken from their barracks, stripped naked, and chained standing between two posts. Most died from exposure to the bitter Austrian winters.
The effect of learning of these atrocities and standing in the place where they occurred was overwhelming to all members of the chamber orchestra. I remember seeing three girls of the orchestra standing with their arms around each other in a desolate corner of the camp with tears of sorrow streaming down their faces. I will never forget one of the young men in the orchestra walking solemnly at the bottom of the granite pit, now covered with grass, bushes, and wild flowers. In his face, I saw the agony of the thousands who had been brutally murdered in that place. My heart agonized with him and for all those who had died. I thought of the words of Isaiah when he said, "In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough . . . and there shall be desolation" (Isa. 17:9). The words recorded in 3 Nephi following the crucifixion of the Savior rang in my mind, "Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people" (3 Ne. 9:2).

Life is not intended to be without pain and sorrow. Lehi, in the blessing to his son Jacob, said, "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Ne. 2:11). As does the first part of Strauss's tone poem, the "song of the heart" must be able to express pain and sorrow.

That evening before our concert, we met in a testimony meeting to express our overwhelming feelings of the day. Several attempted to put their thoughts into words, but they couldn't possibly express the power of what they felt. At the concert, we performed the Adagio for Strings of the American composer Samuel Barber. This is a masterpiece for string orchestra with a slow-moving melody gradually building to a dramatic, powerful climax. We had performed the work many times and it was deeply loved by the musicians. That night, however, after our experience in Mauthausen, the piece became a means for all of the young people to express their feelings. Truly "where words ended music began," as the composition was performed as I had never heard it before. The combined desire of these young people to express their sorrow, compassion, and love for the people who died at that
camp created a performance that none who were present will ever forget. "No tongue can speak, neither can there be written" what was expressed that night.

"Let Me Live." The second section of *Death and Transfiguration* dramatically expresses the desire to live. It is a passionate portrayal of life and a desperate grasp to hold on to it. "Let me live," it appears to cry. "Let me live, for life is too beautiful to be lost."

Almost twenty years ago, my dear wife and I and our two oldest children, then one and two years old, were involved in a terrible car crash. The two children and myself survived with only minor injuries, but my wife was severely injured in the accident. She had many internal injuries and broken bones, including many fractures of the pelvic bone. Though she was not pronounced dead upon arriving at the hospital, the doctors gave her little hope of survival. She was immediately taken into surgery for many hours and then put in an intensive care unit where I was told, "We have done all that we can do; we don't know if she will recover."

It was Christmas day when the accident occurred, and the night was long, painful, and filled with deep emotions and fears. There were many severely injured people in this unit of the hospital, and when one of them would reach a crisis stage, a soft but penetrating alarm would go off, and doctors and nurses would rush in the room to try to revive the individual. No one knew who the doctors were working with until sometime later, usually when a dead body draped with a white cloth was wheeled from the room. "Who is it?" would pound in the hearts of the waiting loved ones in the next room. "Is it mine? Is it mine?"

This happened several times through the night, and each time was filled with the terror, beyond description, of having lost someone you love. I can't possibly express my feelings through that long and painful night. I found myself pleading before the feet of my Father in Heaven for the life of my dear Marilyn. "Don't take her away, don't take her away," I would say over and over in my prayers. At one moment, I felt falsely impressed that she had just died, and a cry came up from my heart that seemed to say, "How could you let this happen?"

Early in the morning as my emotions seemed to reach a crisis, my heart broke and gave a silent long scream, "Father, where are
you, why have you left me so alone?” At that moment I heard a voice say to me so clearly, “I am with you, my son—I am here with you.” I walked out of the waiting room into the cold morning just as the sunlight began to break over the horizon, and I was given a firm promise that she would live. At that moment, I understood the feelings of Nephi when the Savior spoke to him after his long night of trial and prayer for the survival of his people. He was told, “Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at
hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world” (3 Ne. 1:13).

Only through such experiences do I understand what it is to love life and almost lose it. Only in this way do I understand the passion for life that Strauss describes in his wordless poem. Life is beautiful and something to grasp hold of and cherish and love.

**Death and Transfiguration.** The last third of Strauss’s *Death and Transfiguration* is described in its title. The music once again returns to the silence of death which seems to hang heavily around us. Then, after one final scream of fear, the darkness suddenly disappears and a veil opens, showing a pathway that leads us beyond death. At first we are hesitant to walk forward, but step by step we penetrate this sacred sanctuary. With each moment our confidence gains and our heart swells until we can hold our joy no longer. “Life is eternal,” we sing, “Life is eternal.” We fall on our knees to express our gratitude and feel the warmth of Him who brought us beyond death into life.

A little over ten years ago, my own mother, who was a great musician and example to me, died from cancer. I express to you the great influence this dedicated woman had on my life until her passing and the sincere gift she gave to music in the Church throughout her life. Many of the thoughts in this address are a continuation of her philosophy—love, and dedication to music and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The doctors had given up any hope of her living, and it was just a matter of time before death overtook her. I had the privilege of spending three days with her shortly before her death, and during this time she would pass back and forth between consciousness and unconsciousness many times. During her wakeful moments, she would speak as if she had seen a vision and would try to express her thoughts. I tried to write them down, though it was difficult to do under the emotions I felt. These are three of her last statements to me and to her Creator:

> I know that my Redeemer lives. I know from a lifetime of communication with him. I have heard him in so many ways. Some in manifestations of grandeur and some in sacred silence, but always in reverence and humility. At times I have felt him with such depths that words fail to express the sacredness of the moment. Such moments can only be felt, dear child. They can only be communicated through
the spirit. Listen, do you hear? Can you feel it burn in your soul? I know that my Redeemer liveth because the heavens have been opened to me and I have felt his presence.

Pain, you have been a familiar companion. I have known you well. You have been a constant reminder of the frailty of my body, of mortality in which we live here upon the earth. Through you I have felt the reality of death and have tried to prepare for it. Now that it is close, I wonder if I am ready. But what more can I do, I must have courage.

Dear Lord, in reverence I come before thee. I fall to my knees in silence and present myself to thee. I have felt thy kindness, I know thy love. I beg thy forgiveness and seek thy grace. Thou has created me and sent me forth, now I return to report my mission. I come to thee as one who has been richly blest in mortality. My blessings overwhelm me as I kneel before thee and express appreciation too deep for words. I thank thee for the privilege of knowing the gospel of thy beloved son Jesus Christ. It has guided my life since infancy and has permitted me to feel thy spirit continually. It has given me hope and knowledge so few have been privileged to have. I thank thee that I have been able to serve in this great gospel and express my feelings to others. I have tried to express from the heart and I pray that it is received by those who have listened. My mission on earth is completed. I now present myself for my new calling. I pray that my life has been worthy for that which thou hast promised the righteous. I present myself to thee as thy servant.

Sleep, everything must sleep. Dear body, you too must rest for a time. You have served me well, and I thank you. My spirit aches for the time when you will be called forth again to blossom like new buds in the spring, in beauty and in perfection. I pray that it will not be long, but for now you must rest, dear body. You must sleep.

The experiences I have related to you are some of the most sacred and holy that I have had. I have told them to you to help you see that when we in the orchestra perform this great work, Death and Transfiguration, we see it as more than an aesthetic experience. It is the outpouring of our soul, as we unitedly express our testimony through our individual experiences of eternal life and of the mission of Jesus Christ, our Savior. It will be our “song of the heart” as we seek to communicate the bridge between mortality and immortality. Hopefully, it will not just be well-constructed notes, harmonies, and phrases, but an interpretation of a masterpiece of music by children of God who have been touched by his spirit and who bear testimony of his reality.
Our Birthright and Calling

My mother expressed a thought as she gave her talk in the first Church Music Workshop held at Brigham Young University in 1979. She said:

Our birthright tells us that the “precious and chief things of heaven and earth shall be our inheritance.” Our modern prophets tell us that all that is true, good and beautiful “must be gathered home to Zion.” Isaiah, looking at us in our time, tells us we can do this because of
our faith in God and "stoutness of heart." We will not build our musical architecture of mud bricks that are fallen as the world is now doing, nor of sycamore that quickly becomes worm eaten and are cut down, but we will build with the cedars of Lebanon and of hewn stone. We will go to the mountain of the Lord for our stone, and through inspiration we will shape it with our own hands, and we will build a musical temple which resounds with the songs of eternal fulfillment, making a joyful sound unto the Lord! This the Lord expects us to do, and this we can do.  

I bear you my witness that this challenge is more real today than it was in 1979. We are the builders of beauty in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the champions of sacred expression in music. If we do not strengthen our resolve, the efforts of President Mieka, of my grandmother, of the young clarinetist, and of so many hundreds of others will fade away. I pray that we may preserve the beauties of the past and strengthen our resolve to continue singing new and joyful and righteous songs unto the Lord.

In conclusion, let me read a poem by the Argentine writer José Hernández. It communicates beautifully what I have been trying to say to you today—that music is both of heaven and earth, and that our song, the song of all of you here today and others who are not here, can be both inspired and accepted of the Lord. This is our calling and charge:

Cantando me he de morir,
Cantando me han de enterrar,
y cantando he de llegar
al pie del Eterno Padre;
dende el vientre de mi madre
vine a esta mundo a cantar.\(^5\)

Singing I will have to die,
Singing they will have to bury me,
and singing I will have to arrive
at the feet of the Eternal Father:
from the womb of my mother
I came to this world to sing.\(^4\)

May we all be a part of that great song—the "song of the heart," the song of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

NOTES

2Ruth H. Barrus, "Make a Joyful Sound" (address given at the Church Music Workshop, Brigham Young University, August 13, 1979), 14.
Riddle

The ice has vanished from the smoldering stream, weeping fingers of winter slid from the splintered trees.
The canyon I am learning through my feet is secretive and dull, its bluefire gifting the swelling city and lake. Spring is late here and melancholy . . .
this morning a mountain lion leapt down the narrow road looking for something to kill.

My child is troubled with fears of abandonment. How will you find me if I am lost here, or here? She pushes her face into the wind, perhaps remembering another rush of air, a freefall, an entry of blood, water and loss.

I learned early the limits of love. Children can be given only the residue of a heart struggling to heal itself, the remainder of a spirit seared with passion and ambition.
And does it matter if I croon to this child

I will never leave your bright eyes, your sturdy little body?
She knows a lie. She must turn from the hunter, run home with lilacs in her teeth.

—Nancy Baird
Take, Eat

Tessa Meyer Santiago

She kisses herself in the mirror at Old Navy. Wearing the melon-orange velour V-neck shirt and the carpenter's jeans, she leans forward and kisses herself. Her mind is rife with possibilities: "... and when it's cold on the playground, I can just roll down the sleeves to cover my hands like this; ... or when I am jumping rope, I can just roll them up like this ..." She leans forward, bobs her head so that her blonde ponytail flips to the beat of the imaginary rope, sees her reflection in the mirror once more. She smiles at herself, one front tooth a quarter inch longer than the other still growing in. Another kiss.

I slump on the bench in the fitting room, amused, despite my exhaustion, by the pageant of one. At six years old, my daughter loves herself and her milk-belly body with a passionate, unashamed abandon. But time is precious. Waiting at home for me is my three-week-old third child. He needs the milk I carry. I throw her the turquoise corduroy dress, "All right Julia, enough of the kisses. Try this one on. We've got to get going."

"Ooooh. I'm going to look beautiful in this. It's the color of my eyes."

I was pregnant this past summer—all of every afternoon of May, June, July, and August. So I bought a tangerine maternity suit from Motherhood in the mall and a pool pass from Deseret Towers. With lycra and spandex doing their vain best, I bobbed in the deep end for those months of afternoons. From my vantage point, I watched women: Young mothers, still slim-hipped, who push
their strollers from Wymount Terrace and spend afternoons in the
baby pool; large women, mothers of four, five, and six children:
they wear reinforced suits, cut low over the thighs, and bounce a
toddler on their hip in the shallow end while providing timely
cheers for clumsy dives and handstands. Occasionally grandmoth-
ers, their flesh wobbling, appear with their grandchildren.

Then there are the nondescript women, the neither slim nor
large, the just-there, whose bodies make no statements about
them, their position or age. They wear dark suits with maybe a flo-
ral bodice, modestly cut; their hair is utilitarian; their skin is nei-
ther tanned nor white. These nondescript women, of all ages,
constitute the female majority at Deseret Towers during the sum-
mer. Amongst our sedate, unremarkable mothers’ bodies flit the
blue jays and cardinals—freshman residents of DT. They sprawl in
careful carelessness on the lounge chairs, in a universal pose: head
thrown back, throat exposed to the sun, torso stretched like an
arrow, one leg flat, the other bent at the knee. Jewelry glints from
various body parts: an ankle chain, three golden studs in an ear-
lobe, a toe ring. Worn with the confidence born of innocence. The
turtle doves and the rock pigeons, in their mottled, motherly
apparel, keep a wide berth, knowing they pale by comparison.

Strangely, I feel exempt from the competition this summer.
Somehow, my belly endows me with a physical confidence I
haven’t felt in years. And the larger I get, the more confident I feel.
I almost strut out of the changing room in my eighth month, wear-
ing my girth like a medal of honor. Normally one does not accen-
tuate a large belly with tangerine, but I love my swimsuit. It says, “I
am delightfully, wonderfully, miraculously pregnant. And beautiful
because of it.” I am a peacock in all his finery, a ruby red-emerald
pheasant dragging his tail behind him, I am the act of creation. My
body is engaged in a holy work, the work for which it was
designed. On this divine errand, I fear no earthly standard of
beauty. They don’t apply to me now. Sadly but realistically, I will be
trembling next summer to show my motherly, nonpregnant body
to the world. Next June, I will perch on the edge of the pool with
all the other mottled matrons, like a flock of pigeons on a tele-
phone wire watching the cars go by.
I am struck by the incongruence of what I saw this summer. Why was it that the women who had contributed the most felt the least confident? Why did they cover their bodies as if in shame, plunging themselves to the neckline, barely emerging above their breasts as they stood watching children swim? Why did the girls, who knew nothing of what breasts and hips and wombs are meant to do, rule, queens of the roost? In a better world, in a kinder, more saintly world, a mother's body would be kindly regarded, with respect and honor for what she has given, for what she has done. I am learning; a woman who mothers well gives all she has: body parts, internal organs, limbs. Some parts are temporarily donated, others irreparably affected; most of the effects are permanent. And, if she lets this mothering sink into the marrow of her bones to wrestle with her spirit, a woman's soul is wrought in the image of God.

I sit on the couch reading, watching television—it doesn't really matter what the activity. Christian, my four-year-old son, decides to do a somersault off the arm. His little body flips through the air. As he lands, his feet thud, bony heel first into the soft muscles of my thighs. I yelp my displeasure. His brown eyes open wide in genuine disbelief that his mother would object to him landing on her body. Julia tires in an afternoon sacrament meeting. I am trying to prepare for my Gospel Doctrine lesson the next hour. With absolute confidence and instinctual action, she moves the books from my lap and replaces them with her head. After all, that is what a mother's lap is for. With that same confidence born of innocence, my children use my body for their comfort and convenience. They sprawl across me as I sit; they shake me awake when they are hungry; they grab my face from behind my book so that my eyes can see what needs to be seen. No matter my wishes, they appropriate me. In their innocent invasion, they learn there is one who will always come (sometimes very slowly) in the night to save
them. And I learn through conquering the weakness of my flesh as I allow their plundering without resentment, the beginning of a godly patience and a maternal love that will serve our family well.

I could fight, I suppose, against such an invasion. I know I used to. But my body, I am learning, is a battlefield never meant to be fought on, let alone lost on. Lowell Bennion had an acquaintance who said, “Put on the level of routine everything that belongs there.” He supposes she meant “we should not spend thought and energy deciding if and when we should do the chores that must be done.”1 I would like to think that I am learning that my physical responses to my children’s needs are not optional; I must respond. Not that mothering is a chore, but that their needs are constant. They will not, cannot go away. Children must grow, eat, learn, question, be comforted. That is the nature of childhood.

So when I made the decision to have children, I also (although I didn’t realize it at the time) made the decision to mother them with the fibers of my being. As soon as I gave place in my womb for that zygote, I placed not only my heart, but my feet, legs, knees, hips, stomach, bladder, intestinal tract, breasts, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, teeth, tongue, even the hair on my head at their disposal. All to be used, leant on, sucked, clung to, kicked and prodded, and generally usurped as their very own. Thus my body becomes the site of my ultimate giving, which giving can teach my soul if I choose to learn.

Every hour of the day and night I am faced with choices in how to mother with my body. For instance, I know that my newborn son, Seth, who cannot suckle and so must drink my breast milk in a bottle, feeds best when half-sitting up. He burps more easily, and the position reduces the risk of ear infections in bottle-fed babies. I also happen to know, through sad experience, that the milk goes down just as well when he lies flat on his back. At four in the afternoon, the choice is easy: Seth feeds sitting up. But at four in the morning, when I have slept in ninety-minute stretches, the decision is not so easy. All I crave is sleep, which I can almost do as I feed him lying flat on his back on the bed next to me. What is more important? My sleep or his indigestion? If I master my body, subdue the exhaustion, bring my physical reactions in line with the choice I made ten months ago, Seth feeds sitting up.
He didn't for about four days—until the guilt of my own selfishness caused me to struggle up against the pillows one 3:20 A.M. and do for my son what he couldn't do for himself. Cradled in my arms, his small eyes peering myopically towards my face, Seth drank sitting up. I won't say the feeding was any different from the others. My eyes weren't miraculously clear and the dark circles gone the next morning in return for raising myself eighteen inches. I didn't receive, as a result of my choice, the divine grace of Seth sleeping until nine the next morning. In fact, just two hours later, he snuffled and bleated his hunger. But, in my insignificant bodily suffering, my spirit was tutored somewhat in that messianic characteristic: Love thy neighbor, thy son, the flesh of thy flesh, more than self.

Having a woman's body seems to mean special tutoring in life and death. I have been pregnant four times. Each pregnancy ended in a surgical procedure. Three times, my stomach and uterus have been cut open to retrieve, in all their bloody splendor, Julia, Christian, and Seth. Each time, I have entered the mother's valley of death, bringing my body under the knife, to lie still as someone cut into my flesh to release life from my womb. What should be a joyous moment is full of fear for me. Only two months ago, I lay on the operating table trying so very hard to be brave. But I was petrified, and my body knew it: my pulse raced, I hyperventilated and vomited in an allergic reaction to the epidural. My eyes filled with tears. I really just wanted to run away. Yet I had no other choice if I wanted the life within me to live.

As I lay on the table, my mind filled with the image of Annie Dillard's tomcat, who would jump through her window at night covered with the blood of his kill. When she awoke, she found herself "covered with paw prints in blood; [she] looked as though [she] had been painted with roses." She would ask herself, "What blood [was] this, and what roses? It could have been the rose of union, the blood of murder, or the rose of beauty bare and the blood of some unspeakable sacrifice or birth." She never knew exactly how to read that midnight canvas. And I never know when I am on that table exactly what is happening to me. Am I the site of some unspeakable horror or some unspeakable joy? Paradoxically, I am both: An open womb, a uterus pulled out onto my abdomen;
an immense pressure, an indignant cry, and a wrinkled old man's face that looks at me from beneath the hospital beanie like a Sharpeī puppy. Only after I place my swollen, reluctant body on the table can I hear those first sounds of life. And no, the recovery is not swift in return for my heroism. My stomach is still bisected, the nerve endings are still cut and need to learn to stop screaming. My bowels are still sluggish with epidural, my head still pounds from the allergic reaction I knew was coming.

As I battle these symptoms, my body begins to make milk for the child who needs to be fed. When I am barely coherent, unable to sit up, the nurses bring him to me. "He's hungry," they say. "Put him to the breast." So I struggle upright, ignoring the burning incision, to cradle that little body that was so recently inside me. I turn his mouth to me and do for my son what he cannot do for himself. And I understand a little more now how the Savior would "take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people" (Alma 7:12). The demands and duties of this life, of the soul, take precedence over the travails of the body.

The other pregnancy ended in death. It was a long November Monday morning when I labored for ten hours, knowing that the end would produce only a misshapen fetus, that my body in its wisdom knew to dispel. While my body tried to perform the labor that it knew was necessary, my spirit keened. Medicine calls it a spontaneous abortion, but I called it... Actually, I don't have a name for that desolate feeling that covered my spirit as my body labored. I only knew my baby would not be born the same time my Emperor tulips were scheduled to appear. I knew I could put the baby name books back on the shelf and stop doodling "Nicholas Kevin Santiago" on sacrament meeting programs. I knew my sister-in-law and I would not give my parents their twelfth and thirteenth grandchildren three weeks apart. But most of all, I knew I wanted with all my heart to have another child, and I grieved for what was not to be.

But I did not grieve alone. In that valley of desolation brought on by physical travail, I believe the Savior sent angels to be with me, to succor me in my infirmity: My sister who rubbed my back, changed the bath water, and who, while I was at the hospital, cleaned my house, did my laundry, and fed my children. Nurses
who looked at me with compassion, called me “dear, sweet Tess. . . . How sorry I am you are here.” Women who knew, who had labored in a similar manner in vain, their eyes looked at me with a special sweetness. A doctor who, sensitive to my pain, chose not to make me endure a surgical procedure in the sterility of his office. Rather he gave me anesthetic and a blissful ignorance as he cleaned my womb of what had been the promise of a child. Most of all, God gave me a husband who held my hand and stood by, waiting and watching, feeling helpless to stop my pain, wishing he could endure for me. Who waited for me in surgery, and whom I found sobbing in his office three days later: he too had lost a child. In all my pain, no one had noticed his. We felt the healing arms of the Savior around our hearts that week: our neighbors’ tears, hearts broken for our pain, faint whisperings of another child in time, lessons of peaceful patience from him who would gather us in his arms as a mother hen would gather her chicks.

Could I have had my heart broken to the will of the Lord another way? Would I have come so heavy laden and willingly to the Savior’s yoke? I don’t know. I do know that the death of a small, misshapen body brought light to my soul that perhaps I could not have seen any other way. I cannot help but think, as I remember those births, that this body which makes us human also can make us most divine, that the peculiar pains of a woman’s flesh teach her exquisitely, intimately. What they teach she cannot know beforehand, or even know that she needs to know, but when the pain subsides or is grown accustomed to, she realizes: sometime during the darkest of nights or most mundane of mornings, knowledge has descended like the dews from heaven and enlarged her soul.

Unfortunately, the experience has also probably enlarged her hips and thighs. If she’s anything like me, she bears the physical scars of that battlefield: the burst blood vessel on my left cheek appeared during labor with Julia. It still spreads spidery-red fingers across my face. The root canal brought on by Christian’s pregnancy left me with a porcelain crown. A fresh, seven-inch maroon scar bisects my lower abdomen. Just below it is another, faded to flesh. Stretch marks ornament my breasts and hips like silver ribbons. My hips are two sizes wider, my feet a size bigger than when
I was married—my very bones have expanded in response to my mothering. Some of the effects are temporary: just for the moments of pregnancy. The bleeding gums, the weakened bladder, the hair that falls out in clumps, the intermittent back pain, the aching hips. These pass in their time, but the memory remains.

In that memory lies the glory of this earthly body: though we may be resurrected in a perfect frame, the lessons taught me by my mother-body will rise with me. The sacrifice, the pain, the fear and faith of my mothering will sink into the depths of my soul and remain to be with me in the eternities. My spirit and this woman’s body inseparably connected constitute my fullness of joy. Time writes its messages on all of us. For me, and for the women whom I watched this summer, our very bodies have become our book of life, “an account of our obedience or disobedience written in our bodies.” To what have we been obedient? To the purpose for which we were made: to provide a body and a safe haven for the spirits entrusted to our care. If we mother well, we wear out our lives bringing to pass the lives of others. Of the physical fruits—our wider hips, our sagging breasts, our flatter feet, and rounder buttocks—we need not be so ashamed.

I’m sitting at the computer trying to figure out just exactly what we, technically, have in the checking account. She comes around the corner from the kitchen. She’s been trying on swimming suits like a teenager getting ready for a date. All she’s really going to do is swim in the apartment pool of her youngest child, Alexandra.

“Should I wear this one,” she asks, holding up the black, skirted, 1940s-style option in her left hand, “or this one, with the black bottom and floral top.”

“I don’t know, Mom,” I say. “Try the flowered one.”

She returns a few minutes later, her sixty-five-year-old body clad in lycra and spandex. Her legs are still long but marbled by the varicose veins of seven pregnancies. Her chest is still broad, sprinkled with freckles from decades of summers, but her bosom is
small, suckled dry by our hungry mouths. Her face is lined, from eyelid to mouth corner. She stands at the corner, one leg crossed in front of the other, as if that contortion will make her half the size.

She looks beautiful with her silver-white hair, her green eyes, her long brown legs and arms. I tell her so.

“You look beautiful, Mom. You are beautiful, Mom. I wish I had your legs, even your sixty-five-year-old legs. But, if it’s any consolation, I don’t think anybody is going to be looking at you. You’re not quite part of the desired demographic group.”

She still hides herself as she complains, “Oh, I know. I know. But I hate this aging body of mine. Getting old is so hard for me. I don’t feel as old as this flesh makes me look.” She wobbles her thighs—dotted with age spots—as if to confirm for me that she really is so undesirable.

I think she is beautiful. As beautiful as ever she has been.

Tessa Meyer Santiago is a creative writer and a daughter, a wife, and a mother of three. This essay won first place in the 1997 BYU Studies Personal Essay Contest.

NOTES


In the Rising

When my life runs out
my pores, rises like a field
of corn in summer,
twisting silk, white and blowing,
I will claim pieces of my body—
seed fragments of this flesh
I have grappled with and loved,
fought to save from corruption.
I will not abandon all those
hungry cells to dust.

It has been sweet—the
skin stretched across my ribs,
the feel of hands.
Enough sun engraves a retina,
slowly changes scent of skin.
In all this,
the humiliation of clay has
served, the gift of pain
become a jagged doorway.

These belong to me,
their growing fire embedded
in the flesh, not sieved through
memory but taken in hand,
heavy as shot,

the fistfuls of light and evil
that make a life.

—Nancy Baird
Of Tethering and Flight

Sundy Watanabe

A soft rain comes during the night. I anticipated its coming, but when it didn’t arrive by nightfall, welcomed a reprieve. Now, it taps lightly against the dark windows of our sleep. Wet leaves rustle in the orchards and sift a restlessness into my dreaming, as if a child whispers to me from behind a half-opened door, urging me to wakefulness. I dream of babies shivering and fabric wrinkling under the soothing of my fingertips. In my dream, I think I am young and have forgotten something important. I fly naked, a thin small thing, clutching the strong wing of some night bird. I tuck my head and brace against the chill of a sky full of water. Much later, somehow, I fall into dawn and awaken to the realization of a journey just beginning. We have prepared for this journey, my daughter and I, for the past eighteen years. With fierce determination and exquisite reluctance, we have taken turns struggling toward independence.

"Tell me about when I was little," she says, clinging to the expanse of kitchen countertop with all the strength of her ten fingers. The length of her six-year-old torso flattens against the butcher block, but her legs dangle off the edge. As she teeters there, her earnestness makes me smile: “when I was little.” Even while asking for stories to tether her, she tests the space of the edge with determination, a self-will evident from infancy. This is the daughter who insists on bringing me the baby from his crib even though she has to stand on the side rail to reach him. This is the daughter who manages late night emergency room visits for asthma—cold stethoscopes, IVs, epinephrine shots—without
tears. In those critical hours, I resist the mother-growl that threatens to escape my throat at the intern’s indifference. I long to remove my child from the chatty nurse and her bumbling fingers. I need to fold this daughter safely into my lap, squeezing out my anguish and hers, leaving no space for fear. She needs only a small blanket, a book, and someone to stand by as her pupils dilate and her hands become jittery. So I stand close by and offer a forced reassurance, my grown-up restraint, for comfort.

In this quiet September drizzle, we load boxes of blankets, books, and medications into the back of her small red car. The neighbors call it the Demolition Derby. It has survived dents to all four sides, various scratches up and down its length, brake burnouts, tire blowouts, and a bent axle. We hold our breath and pronounce a confident appraisal; it will survive this trip as well. It will carry its cargo through the maze of freeway construction to the apple orchards of Santaquin. It will course through historic Fillmore and through long stretches of desert until it reaches the summit and breezes into Cedar City. My car will carry pots, pans, and a week’s worth of food to tide my daughter over until she gets settled. Her clothes—including the white “Cinderella” dress and silver platform shoes like the ones I wore in the ’70s—drape over the back seat. Who knows? She might get asked to a dance.

“You should have seen it,” she says with excitement bubbling in her laugh. She is unpacking from her second year as a junior counselor at Camp Snowbird, the local asthma camp for elementary kids.

“We knew we were okay, but water just came pouring into the campground.” At sixteen, she thinks she knows it all. I swallow an instinctual panic; the danger is past. Today she is safe, the July sun is shining, and it’s good to have her home.
“They brought in crews to keep the road from washing out. All the little kids were scared of the lightning, and the other counselors were huddled under plastic garbage sacks. They thought I was crazy, but it was great! I took off my shoes and ran out in the rain. There was mud everywhere—it was so-oo squishy—and I got it in my hair and everything. I was jumping up and down in the water and laughing and dancing. They thought I was crazy. It was a blast! You should have seen it. Do you think I’m crazy?”

__________

We pray that the new windshield wipers on her car will provide clear vision, that the tires will grip even though the tires of other travelers might hydroplane, that the headlights will pierce the low cloud cover now settling over nearby mountain ranges. Just to be safe, though, we decide to travel in tandem. I will lead the way. We go back inside the house to take one last look around.

“You have all your medicine?” I ask. She does. And her new prescriptions, she adds. And her nebulizer. Stop worrying.

Her room stands empty, the closet door slightly ajar, the bed unmade. With the exception of a stray hanger on the floor, it’s as clean as it’s ever been. The light green stains on the carpet under her drafting table are still there. The carpet cleaner just made the forgotten bits of art chalk spread. Her mirror reflects a steel bed frame, no cheesy photographs, no favorite book open across a pillow.

__________

“... she stitched frantically, her needle dipping and surfacing in the nettle flax as the moon rose higher and higher.”

“Mom,” she interrupts, placing a hand over the page. “She can do it, can’t she?”

“Honey, I can’t remember. You have to let me finish.”

“... Her scratched fingers bled tiny droplets onto the shirtfront, but she couldn’t stop. Already, a faint glow covered the sky and she could hear the honking now. All but the last sleeve was finished. One by one the geese descended. She stood, and quickly
threw a perfect shirt about the shoulders of each stately form. As the flaxen shirts fell about them, each goose was transfigured, feather by feather, until six princes stood before her. But the seventh—"

"No, Mom. No. She just couldn’t let him stay that way forever."
"Shh. Let me finish."
"... but the seventh stood waiting, his wings raised against the silver air. He turned slowly and his silky neck brushed against her soft arm. ‘It is the best I can do,’ she said, and draped the last, unfinished shirt around him."

It takes two days to pull everything out of boxes, drawers, shelves, and decide which corsages to keep, which photos to stash, which letters to throw away. We tuck back the yarn hair of her Cabbage Patch dolls before boxing them up. We smooth the acrylic fur of her favorite "stuffed-up" animals. We laugh again over that one. So many allergies for her, the word stuffed was automatically tagged with up. It stuck. Even her brothers and sister say it. Even her dad and I.

Standing together in the doorway, I avoid remembering quarrels about responsibility, trust, curfew. I don’t remind her how hurt I was after finding out that she lied to me about piercing her navel. She did it months ago, and I only find out now, hours before losing her to the future. I’m still not past a welling-up of tears. The whole two days of cleaning out her room, when I most want to draw her again into my lap and smooth back her wild, dark hair and remember, I am stung with her separateness. I try to remind myself that this is normal; this is the goal. I want it too.

In the photograph, she leans against her tall dad, the top of her head not quite reaching his shoulder. Her look tells the camera that she might have just stopped crying. But with the gray sky as a frame in the background, it could just be the effect of rain. In the
next shot, her father and I have exchanged places. My arm hugs her shoulder, and we gaze into the lens. Key chains dangle from our fingers. We smile, but the focus is fuzzy, which makes it even more amazing how aware I am of the sharp outline of the house to the side. And there, right there, so at ease in flight, is a bird soaring past the upper righthand cornice.

The gray asphalt streams ahead like in a chalk drawing. Through the intermittent swish of wipers, the wide earth opens up and a framed landscape presents itself again and again. Each minute of closure before opening makes the rain-painted colors stand out in vivid relief. I notice how dark the green is on the trees, how black the rivulets that streak the bark. Above the horizon, dense bands of charcoal slash horizontal clouds. I glance west. Flying in formation, geese tip their wings and veer briefly toward the mountains before straightening again, making their way south. It's too soon for fall. My brow creases, and I question the sky which looms both higher and lower, heavy with imminent downpour. Behind me a wash of red follows. An hour and a half into the trip, I signal to pull over.

At the next turnout, we exit and pull into a gas station. She doesn't understand why we're stopping and, with a frown, leans to roll down the window. A low rumble of thunder startles us both, and she brushes off the raindrops before they can collect on her white shirtsleeve.

"How fast can your car go?" I ask.

"I can get it up to 75," she says. "At 80 it starts to wobble," and then she grins.

"Well, we'd better fly."

Just before Bryce Canyon, the storm hits. The wind, which has been gradually picking up, now bursts full force against the sides of the car. Rain pounds down double time, and I turn the wipers up as fast as they'll go. Their heavy thump-thump, thump-thump is reassuring. I'm okay, will probably continue just fine. But each time a gust makes my Explorer sway, I worry a little. The red car behind me could soon be in trouble.
A glance in the rearview mirror tells me it’s time to slow down. I’m too far ahead, and I can’t tell how she is managing at that distance. I brake until she’s just a couple of car lengths behind. Even at a lower speed, I watch her through the mirror anxiously. She tries to keep an even course but the road is getting slick, and the car slides a little going around a turn. We’re heading uphill, approaching the summit, the highest elevation of the trip.

“Come on, baby,” I coax under my breath, as if she can hear. “Keep that pedal steady. You can do it. Keep coming. Don’t hesitate now.” I force calm down through my shoulders and to my fingers gripping the wheel.

With my attention riveted on the car behind me, I don’t notice a semitrailer screaming down the slope, approaching us in the opposite direction—until that hollow second just before calm slaps apart. In that instant, I gasp. A water wake, its velocity born of speed and height, slams against the windshield of my car. For a few seconds, I cannot see the road. I cannot see the boundaries of the highway—don’t know where I am—if, or where, the car has drifted. When sight and breath return, and my heartbeat slows to the pounding rhythm of wipers or wings, I blink furiously and find my way to the shoulder of the road. Shaking, I feel the unpredictable nature of journeying deep in my nerves and bones. My arms ache. My forehead is clammy. And I remember my daughter is following.

I turn my head just in time to catch the whoosh of red as her car passes me. Just in time, I see her upraised thumb and brilliant smile as she swoops up the slope ahead. The distance between us widens as I struggle to keep her in sight. Quickly, she crests the summit and then quickly, easily as a bird, disappears over the edge.

Sundy Watanabe has just completed her M.A. in English at Utah State University and is married and has four children. This essay won second place in the 1997 BYU Studies Personal Essay Contest.

NOTE

1Hans Christian Andersen, “The Wild Swans.”
Personal Essay

Santa Maria

Lisa Ann Jackson

For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.
—George Herbert, “Easter Wings”

When I first met Maria, she was in the kitchen in her pajamas making pancakes and eggs. No one had told her a new girl was moving in that day. She looked surprised, even annoyed, at my dad and me bursting through the door without a knock, our arms laden with boxes. We introduced ourselves and asked her where I could put my things. She pointed me back to her room. “You get the top bunk,” she said.

While we were carrying boxes back and forth, Maria finished cooking her breakfast and sat down at the table. I was struck by her black, curly hair and rich brown skin. She was beautiful. I thought she might be Polynesian, but when my dad asked her where she was from, she said she was a freshman from a border town in Texas.

I had just come home from my mission in April. My plans were to work all summer to earn money for school that fall. I spent several days stuffing envelopes—a job secured for me by a temp agency. While I was grabbing, folding, stuffing, grabbing, folding, stuffing, alone in a spare cubicle, I couldn’t help but think that only days before, my every move affected someone else’s life—mortal and eternal. Now my every move only got me in trouble for not sealing envelopes correctly.

One evening after a particularly frustrating day in that cubicle, I arrived home to find a letter from a mission friend in England. In it was a note which said, in essence, “I don’t know why, but I
feel like you should be in school, and I feel like you need help getting there.” Attached to the note was the means to get me started.

I had struggled with the idea of staying home for the entire summer, but there were no financial resources for me to do otherwise. While I was in England, my father lost his business. My mother's income barely covered basic household expenses. I had felt strongly that I should go back to school as soon as possible, but fall semester—over five months of working away—seemed as soon as possible. So I stuffed envelopes, and no one knew my yearning.

Except my friend in England. That note could have been pinned to Lazarus and I wouldn't have thought it more a miracle. Within three days, I had quit the temp agency and was on my way to BYU. When I got there, I looked up an old friend and bought the last contract at her apartment complex.

That's where I met Maria. We began to warm up to each other over chips and salsa. We soon made it our nightly ritual to discuss the day over mild Pace picante sauce and white restaurant rounds. Maria teased me endlessly because I couldn't eat anything but mild. “It tastes like tomatoes,” she said. “How can you eat that?” She started buying her own jalapenos to heap on each bite. “How can you eat that?” I would tease back.

While we ate, she often told me about who stared at her on campus that day. “It's because you're beautiful,” I said. “No, it's because I'm dark.” People often stopped her and asked her, in Spanish, what part of Mexico she was from. I only saw it happen once. We were in the grocery store, and a zealous returned missionary with a huge grin grabbed her arm and reeled off something in Spanish. She glared back and said in perfect English, “I'm from Brownsville, Texas.” “See, Lisa,” she said to me. “That happens all the time.” “It's just because he went on his mission there and he is excited to see someone he thinks is native,” I told her. “But I'm American,” she said. “You don't understand.”

She was right. I didn't really understand. But I wasn't completely wrong when I said people stared at her because she was beautiful. We saw an ad for people to be extras in upcoming Book of Mormon seminary videos. They were looking for people of Lamanite descent or people with dark hair who could look like they were of Lamanite descent. I had dark hair and Maria was clearly Lamanite, so we decided to sign up.
When we arrived at 6 A.M. the day of filming, they lined us up to make us Lamanites. I went before Maria, and while someone braided my hair, someone else colored my skin. She sponged me with Lamanite-in-a-bottle to make my skin rich brown. When I was finished, they put Maria in the makeup chair. The woman in charge of the Lamanite-in-a-bottle started sponging down Maria when another makeup artist stopped her. “She doesn’t need that,” she said. “Why mess with perfection?” “Did you hear that,” Maria asked me. “Why mess with perfection.” Maria beamed. She was proud of her heritage, and that day she didn’t mind when the camera stared at her dark skin. When we saw the videos months later, Maria made almost every cut.

The thought of the miracle that brought me back to school lingered. My presence in Provo that spring—versus that fall or even that summer—had to have eternal ramifications. Why else would the Lord so blatantly get me back to school? Obviously I had to get back to school to meet the accountant who was graduating in August and wouldn’t be there in the fall. I fully expected a December wedding.

Maria and I had lived together for only a few weeks when Mother’s Day came. Maria hadn’t gotten out of bed yet, so I woke her after I showered. “I don’t go to church on Mother’s Day,” she told me from under her covers. “I don’t have a mother.” I could feel her silent addition, “And it’s God’s fault.” “Maria, you have to go to church. Staying home won’t make it better.” I tried my missionary skills to coax her out of bed: I showed empathy, tried to relate—I had struggles, too. My dad wasn’t working. My mission had been tough at times. But I had not lost my mother, and Maria didn’t go to church that day.

Maria’s father left them when she was six. Her mother became ill, and Maria, only eleven years old, was left to care for her. Four children were still at home, and she was in charge of the two younger ones—a brother with Down’s syndrome and a sister. When her mother died, Maria and the other children were given to an older half-sister who was twenty-four years old and not yet married.

Maria never told me details of being raised by her sister, but I sensed them. Her sister struggled with the responsibilities of raising four children. Most of the household duties fell to Maria, including caring for her little brother. She had other older brothers
and sisters, ten children in total, but they all struggled. One brother joined the army and left. Another brother was in jail. Another sister had her own children and her own worries. At her sister’s, Maria lived on government assistance most of the time. She was at school on grants and a work-study program. “No girl should grow up without a mother,” she once told me. “I needed a mother and she was taken away. Why, Lisa?”

I didn’t know. It strikes me as odd to even tell Maria’s story. It doesn’t seem real, somehow. It seems like a made-for-T.V. movie or an after-school special. But as her trials unfolded over chips and salsa, so did her profound strength. She was at school—the first in her family to go. She had raised her brother and sister, and she worked hard to do what was right. And Maria was right about me. I didn’t know then and I don’t know now what it feels like to lose my mother, be raised by my sister, and be stared at because of my dark skin and hair. At my tannest, I am not as perfect as she is, and at my most pensive, I haven’t felt what she has felt.

I didn’t get married that December. It wasn’t until years later, when I was standing in the temple talking to Maria after escorting her through her first session that I realized that she was the reason I had to be in Provo that spring and summer. The summer was a turning point for both of us. Over chips and salsa, she told me how she would come home each day after school and sit on her mother’s bed. She told me how her mother would read the Book of Mormon to her each night. She showed me pictures of her mother when she was young and healthy. As the summer meandered on, I watched Maria slowly imp her broken wing on the Savior’s, where she found peace about her mother’s death and her upbringing.

Lisa Ann Jackson is interim associate editor at BYU Magazine and an M.A. candidate in English at Brigham Young University. This essay won honorable mention in the 1997 BYU Studies Personal Essay Contest.
“A Memorable Creation”: The Life and Art of Effie Marquess Carmack

A woman who could have surrendered to the barrages of adversity, Carmack challenged the inevitable, just kept going if the inevitable won, and created beauty in the meantime.

Noel A. Carmack

“Not that there has been anything very extraordinary or wonderful in [my life],” wrote Effie Lee Marquess Carmack, “but one thing sure, it is different from that of any other.” Uncommon experiences, Effie’s modesty notwithstanding, breed uncommon people. After a happy childhood in Kentucky and conversion to the LDS Church, Effie endured a life of insecurity and change, illness, maternal anguish, and bitter grief. But aided by uncommon faith and by her art, she triumphed over adversity.

The Childhood of an Artist

Effie Lee Marquess was born on September 26, 1885, in Crofton, Christian County, Kentucky, the sixth child of Boanerges “Bo” Robert Marquess and John Susan Armstrong. The family lived in a log house that “was as crude and primitive as a home could be.” They made a difficult living from a Black Patch tobacco farm near Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Some of their farmland was worn out and some eroded. One season, a flood took “the best part” of their crop and many of their livestock and chickens. Another year, Bo became despondent and ill from worry about meeting the mortgage payments and other needs after a series of crop failures, and even when the cash crops were good, he often received very little for them. But Effie recounted later, “We were used to financial calamities.”

In spite of her humble circumstances, Effie remembered her childhood as one in which “no one . . . could have been happier than we were.” She described the winter evenings as “never dull”:
My father played the fiddle and there was always a guitar or banjo for accompaniment, as most of the family could play either of them. Our father and mother had both been excellent dancers, and dancing in their day was really an art, and they took a delight in teaching it to us. The Lancers, the Minuet, the Virginia Reel, the Mazourka, the Polka, the Schottische, the Waltz, and the intricate changes of the quadrilles.

Often Lelia or Sadie [her sisters] would read a story aloud to an attentive audience, often we would have spelling matches, or have map questions from the geography book. And drawing pictures on a big old double slate was something that never lost its charm.6

The young Effie delighted in what she called her "enchanted woodland,"7 which included a plum thicket and field of wildflowers near a lush forest of dogwoods, white oak, and hickory. The forest floor was carpeted by moss beds and sassafras.8 "Even though we were poor, as far as money was concerned, and lived in a crude log hut," she wrote, "we were rich in a few things, such as a fervent appreciation for the beauties of nature around us. We possessed a stretch of stream that was far more entertaining, as a playground, than the most expensive of parks."9 With imagination, she entertained herself with what was available:

[Our house] abounded in all kinds of interesting things; the quilt piece box, where I could get cloth for doll clothes; the table drawers with pencils, letters and papers; the school books, slates, and pencils; the upstairs where grandmothers old spinning wheel and flax
reel and candle moulds, and many other old things from the generation that had passed on before us were still stored.10

The litter found under an old floor—"marbles of all sizes, buttons, pennies, china doll heads, arms and legs, tiny toy cups and saucers"—so thrilled her that even in her old age she claimed, "I'll never forget how excited I was."11

To the east, between Effie's home and her uncle Elijah Armstrong's dwelling, stood the house of Marion and Ailsee Moore, her nearest neighbors. She seldom entered the Moore home, but for the rest of her life, she remembered a painting she saw there:

One thing that charmed me, above all others (in that house) was a lifesized painting of a young girl, which stood on an easel in one corner of this room. It was the first hand painted portrait I had ever seen. It must have been good work, it certainly charmed me, and when I got a chance I gazed in awe and wonder to think that anyone could make a picture look as much like life as that one did.12

She learned about art informally from her father: "Sometimes father would point out pictures in the cloud formations. A long level cloud, with one upright, made a perfect ship at sea, and, if you were going to paint those thunderheads, over there, you would need to put the halo of white light on the side next to the sun, with a soft gray on the shadow side." Such treasured moments with her father encouraged Effie's interest in art. "Did you ever paint, pappy?" she asked. "(I liked to call him pappy, it seemed like a sort of a pet name.) 'No, but your Uncle Curg has, and we've
talked about it lots of times. I've never had the time. Your mother could paint, if she ever had the time.”13

The youthful artist was never discouraged by the lack of art materials. The unavailability of materials sometimes resulted in clever alternatives to conventional artist supplies. “When I was alone,” she remembered, “and no one to play with me, I would find certain places in the banks where there were great cracks where there was beautiful, moist, bluish white clay that was wonderful for modeling. Many long happy hours I have spent making horses, dogs, heads, pitchers, whole sets of dishes, and hundreds of marbles of all sizes.”14 A roll of toilet paper was also converted into art material: “Aunt Fannie gave me one roll, but it was never used for the purpose for which it was intended. It was used as tracing paper, to put over pretty pictures, and trace them. It was placed on the old wall plate of the attic at home with my other treasured possessions, chalk box and trinkets, and was kept for years, a roll of my favorite pictures traced carefully.”15 If sketch pads and standard painting surfaces were unavailable, she would use whatever materials she could find, including cardboard boxes and the reverse side of wallpaper or wrapping paper. To make brushes, she sometimes frayed the ends of matchsticks by chewing them.16

Conversion and Early Years in the LDS Church

When LDS missionaries entered the Hopkinsville area in 1897, the Marquess family was one of the first to accept their message: “Everything we heard and read fit in perfectly with Christ’s teachings.”17 The family’s conversion to the Church culminated many years of honoring Christian values and yearning for truth. Effie remembered that “although not contented with our homespun religion, we read the Bible and waited for a time when maybe the right religion would come along.”18 During a snowfall in mid-March 1898, a month after the baptism of her parents and older sisters Etta and Lelia, Effie entered the frigid waters of a nearby creek to be baptized. “The Elders brought a new way of life,” she wrote.19 Effie would always welcome Mormon missionaries at her hearth or table since it was they who brought the joy of the gospel message into her life.20
Only a year after their baptism, "changes . . . [came] in quick succession."\textsuperscript{21} Effie's mother died of yellow fever. A month later, Effie's sister Etta succumbed to typhoid fever.\textsuperscript{22} Effie's two older brothers moved away. The family had to sell their farm. Her sister Sadie married, and her father took a new wife, a woman whom Effie addressed as "Miss Serena." Although she grew to love Miss Serena through serving her, the relationship was not an intimate one.\textsuperscript{23} Increasingly, she turned to her married sisters Lelia and Sadie as confidantes and mother figures.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1901, the Marquess family—now reduced to Effie and her father, stepmother, and ten-year-old brother, Autie—moved to Franklin, Arizona, where they lived for a short time on the farm of Joseph Wilkins. Their stay in Arizona was pleasant, but her father's longing for home hastened their return. He died a only a short while after the family had moved back to Kentucky.

In 1903, Effie married Henry Edgar Carmack, a capable, hard-working husband and father. Cecil, her first child, was born prematurely in 1905 after an accidental fall sent Effie into early labor. In the ensuing years, Effie bore seven more children,\textsuperscript{25} each experiencing physical challenges. She prayed for and nursed the children through mishaps, whooping cough, influenza, and a near drowning. Her youngest daughter, Bernice, whose physical and intellectual development was slow, required extra attention.

One incident involving Cecil particularly tested her endurance and faith. At the age of two, Cecil contracted pneumonia when the neighbor's children took him out to play in a cold February rain. By late evening, he was feverish and short of breath. Some days later, after a considerable effort was made to clear his lungs and lower his temperature with medication, Cecil fell into a deep, unresponsive slumber. When the doctor could detect neither breathing nor a heartbeat after twenty minutes of close observation, Cecil was pronounced dead. Effie, however, refused to allow her baby's life to slip away. Through the night and into the morning hours, she massaged her son's cold, lifeless body with hot water and rubbing alcohol. She "longed for someone with the authority to administer to him." Her husband, Edgar, as he was most commonly addressed, was not yet a member of the Church and could not give priesthood blessings. No elders who could administer to the baby were nearby. "Not wanting to leave a thing undone that might help," she
later wrote, "I got a small bottle of olive oil, asked the Lord to bless and purify it, and to recognize a mother's anointing and blessing on her child, and to bring him back to life." In her prayer, she promised to raise her children to the best of her ability and to dedicate her life to teaching the gospel to all who would listen. During the hours she continued to work over her son, her "whole body and soul was a living, working prayer." Just before midnight, a faint heartbeat could be heard, and shortly before dawn, Cecil became conscious and asked for something to eat. The boy regained all of his faculties, and within days, word traveled from the hills east of Crofton that the Carmack boy had risen from the dead. Friends who earlier had not responded to Effie's attempts to teach the gospel became more interested.26

Not long after, on a "momentous day"27 in 1908, Edgar was baptized. In 1911, Edgar and Effie moved their family to the farm of Francis McDonald in Holladay, Utah. While there, Edgar found employment working for Joseph Andrus, putting up hay on Andrus's ranch near Park City. While at home on the McDonald farm, Effie picked currants with McDonald's seventeen-year-old son, Howard, who later became president of Brigham Young University (1945-51). After haying was done, Edgar took work in the canyon, assisting in the excavation of a waterline trench. At the end of September, when the work was finished, Edgar and some of the other men became chilled while returning home in an open truck bed during a cold rainstorm. Within a short time, he began complaining of inflammation and pain in his foot; this problem was followed by a severe case of rheumatic fever. For almost six months, Edgar lay sick and unable to work. One of his few activities during his rehabilitation came when he was sealed to Effie in the Salt Lake Temple with their children, Cecil, Violet, and infant son, Noel. When full recovery appeared less than hopeful, a recommendation that Edgar move to a lower altitude prompted them to move back to Kentucky, where he could resume his farming in a more healthful environment.28

Struggles of a Young Mother

But, as it turned out, conditions did not prove therapeutic. The years following their return from Utah were the darkest for
The young Carmack family. With the first three of their eight children, Effie and Henry Edgar posed for this portrait about 1912, when they lived in Utah. *Clockwise from left:* Effie, Cecil, Henry Edgar, Noel, and Violet.
Effie and her family. While Edgar was suffering from rheumatic heart disease, Effie contracted an unidentified debilitating illness that lingered through three pregnancies. Her symptoms were similar to those of consumption—coughing blood, continuous fatigue, and fever spells, all of which Effie believed were the result of a poor diet. During this time of illness, Effie gave birth to three more children. Two, Grace and Hazel, were born without complications, but the birth of her sixth child, Bernice, was difficult. The three girls were born in close succession, and Effie's sickness inhibited her ability to manage day-to-day responsibilities in the home.

Busy dealing with the demands of tobacco farming and with its fluctuating yields and returns, Edgar was unable to offer additional domestic support. He had entrusted his crop to an association of dark-fired tobacco planters but made little profit. By 1920, Kentucky leaf-crop prices would drop to their lowest point in ten years.

At the doctor's admonition, Edgar did try to alleviate Effie's burdens by doing laundry and light housework. But with his first effort, he found that extra chores were overtaxing and hired a young woman named Lola Jones to take over. The doctor had also recommended that Effie do something enjoyable but not laborious. Edgar said she would enjoy writing or painting if she had time. "Dr. Lovell," Effie remembered, "told him that he had better let me do it, as it would be far better to have a mother doing easy things I enjoyed than not to have any mother at all." Thus about 1915, while Effie had help, she took up painting again. "I had done lots of little things," she wrote. "I knew that I could paint, if only I had [the] time and the material." Her friend and neighbor Bernice Allington had been a helpful art tutor while they lived in Utah, and with some help from her longtime friend Bernice Pollard Walker, she received some additional instruction in watercolor painting. "I was interested in painting, and enjoyed it, and was surprised that it was so easy for me, and I tackled hard subjects." Most of these works consisted of candid watercolor sketches of her children, neighbors, aunts and uncles, one of which was awarded a red ribbon at the 1915 Christian County fair. With her childhood past-time regained, Effie found a sense of healing and peace of mind.
And yet, ill health, Edgar's unpredictable income, and the care of eight children (by this time, David and Harold had been added to the family) weighed heavily upon Effie. Her most painful challenge came so suddenly and so tragically it would outweigh anything she had previously faced. In the spring of 1923, just two days after Easter Sunday, her two eldest sons, Cecil and Noel, were burning saw briers and grass in the fields prior to plowing. In another part of the clearing, near an embankment, her four-year-old son, Harry (Harold), was playing stick horses in the tall sage grass with his brother, David, who was celebrating his sixth birthday. Without warning, a sudden change in wind direction sent the blaze into the grass where the two boys were playing. Before Harry could outrun the flames, they overtook him, burning through his long underwear and thick overalls. By the time Cecil and Noel responded to David's cries for help, the fire had consumed nearly all of Harry's skin. For the next few hours, until he took his final breath, Effie remained near her little boy's blackened body. This time, unlike the night of Cecil's miraculous revival, nothing Effie could do would bring back Harry's life.36

Harry's death was the most traumatic of Effie's confrontations with affliction; she was forever changed by the experience. Although she learned to adapt to the loss, she never fully recovered her emotional and physical well-being. Her intense grief triggered a number of bodily ailments, including severe facial eczema and a pain in her heart that, according to Effie, plagued her "continually."37 Reminded of the sufferings of Job, Effie tried to remain patient, consoling herself with scriptures. "Sometimes," she said, "I felt like I was getting more than my share, but I never felt rebellious nor did I blame the Lord for my affliction."38

In the midst of physical infirmities, Effie's ability to cope was made more difficult by daily reminders of Harry. In addition, like many bereaved parents, Effie and Edgar were unable to communicate their feelings of loss, a lack of sharing that further impaired their capacity to adjust and find comfort.39

Although Effie bore no guilt or feelings of responsibility for Harry's death, losing her role as his mortal mother seemed to haunt her in later years. The intimate relationship between mother and child became a recurring theme in Effie's painted subjects,
often appearing as the Madonna and Christ child or the familiar image of a Navajo mother with a papoose. Her *Madonna* after Roberto Feruzzi’s painting is one example of these gravitations toward images of nurturing. The supplicating expression of Feruzzi’s *Madonna* is a presage of Mary’s lamenting over her son’s death. Effie’s use of the image suggests that her feelings of maternal bereavement were near the surface and that she, like Mary, had felt the sword that would pierce through her soul (Luke 2:35).  

**Turning to Art**

Harry’s death seems to mark pivotal changes in Effie’s life. In February 1924, Effie and Edgar moved their family to Joseph City, a small Mormon settlement on the Little Colorado River in northern Arizona. Their first residence in Joseph City was a house tent that her brother John and son Cecil, who had both been living in the area, prepared for them before they arrived. Effie wasted no time finding her place in front of easel and canvas. Years later, she remembered that it was during this time she received a visit by a most unexpected individual:  

Mother’s Day was coming up, and someone had asked me to paint a picture of a mother for a program. I was working on it when I realized that someone was standing in the tent door [in] back of me and watching me. I looked around, and at first I was sure that I knew the fellow, his face looked so familiar. He had on a khaki suit, and stood there waiting for his companion who had gone for some milk (John had a grocery). He told me that he and I should go into business together, that he could do the writing and I could do the illustrating. Just then his companion came and they left. A few minutes later I remembered who he was, it was Zane Gray [sic]. (I had seen pictures of him). They were camped out by Valley Hills, and he was getting material for a book he was writing (I found out later).

Such approval gave her the self-confidence and optimism to continue producing works of art, unhampered by her transitory living situation. By 1927, Edgar was successfully running a dairy and delivery route between Joseph City and Winslow. Shortly thereafter, they took up permanent residence in Winslow, where Effie cultivated her talent with even greater energy. “After we had been in Arizona a long time, I went back to Kentucky, and I was astonished to see many of the water colors that I had done in the
homes of friends and kinfolks. They were about as good as the oil colors that I did later."44 When she was not teaching lessons in Sunday School, the Mutual Improvement Association, or the Relief Society, Effie was busy teaching art lessons in the evenings to the children at the local elementary school:

I would choose a subject (we took easy landscapes first) and draw it with charcoal on a big sheet of drawing paper fastened on the blackboard with masking tape. First, the horizontal line, then a quick checking: the tallest trees will come to here, our water to here; then put in the sky first, beginning at upper left hand corner; deeper blye [sic] at top, gradually growing dimmer till there was no blue where it joined the land; far off objects dim, closer objects clearer. Near objects bright colors.45

As an integral part of her assignments, she emphasized the importance of drawing from observation: "I had them draw from nature—a small picture of a tree and rocks, or a sunset sky, or whatever they chose to do."46 As the popularity of her art lessons increased, the adult teachers began to receive instruction as well. Although she enjoyed the association with her adult peers, Effie valued even more the children's excitement and joy of learning.47

The events surrounding Effie's artistic reawakening are consistent with those of other folk artists, most typically women, who, according to a recent study, use their art "to help overcome a stressful life experience."48 Illness, trauma, and personal loss are significant motivations for engaging in creative activity.49 Effie's art may have been, in many respects, a cathartic response to tragic events, one of her few consoling outlets for bereavement.50 Perhaps for Effie, art meant a therapeutic assurance that out of ugliness she could express beauty, out of tragedy she could express hope.

Themes, Style, and Exhibitions

Effie's early efforts in painting certainly fall in line with a long tradition of American folk artists. Folk art, often defined analogously with primitive, self-taught, or outsider art, is generally produced by individuals who are untrained and have had little or no familiarity with formal art theory. The most important criterion, however, is that folk art emerges out of the artist's cultural environment. It is created out of distinctive regional, ethnic, and cultural
patterns, which reveal the artist’s sense of place and personal identity.\textsuperscript{51} In the same sense that colloquial communication often emphasizes a distinct geographic relationship between a community and its inhabitants, folk artists are closely tied to the places or subjects represented in their art.\textsuperscript{52}

The underlying themes of folk life, place, and religion in Effie’s art follow those of other self-taught Cumberland artists who created personal visual statements.\textsuperscript{53} Effie’s early drawings and watercolors often portrayed physical surroundings, farm life, and informal impressions of family and neighbors. She illustrated her privately published work of autobiographical poetry, \textit{Backward Glances}, with scenes of Kentucky folk life to illustrate her childhood memories of worming the tobacco,\textsuperscript{54} milking cows, soap-making, carding, and spinning. Otherwise, she wrote, “many things will soon be forgotten if they are not put down by someone that cherishes the memory of them.”\textsuperscript{55} One of these paintings, \textit{Milking Time} (colorplate 1), typifies the simple warmth and beauty of her early primitives. The evening sky, shrouded by clouds, the house with its warmly lit windows, and the mother and child silhouetted by the soft, glowing moonlight—all imbue the painting with the quiet intimacy Effie felt when, as a child, she walked hand in hand with her beloved mother.

An oval-shaped landscape (colorplate 2), probably painted sometime during her early years in Winslow, also exemplifies her art’s close association with the scenes of her Kentucky youth. Here she depicts the old log cabin and farmstead of her childhood home near Hopkinsville. Her arrangement of background foliage and minor figures is reminiscent of English landscapes, imparting not only a feeling of immense space, but also a reverence for the scenes of her early period of development. With a remarkable awareness of atmospheric perspective and native color, this painting leads one to believe that Effie chose to remember her rural Kentucky surroundings as beauty untouched by erosion, infertile ground, or tragedy. The central figure in the foreground, although primitively rendered and undefined, gives the painting a unifying symmetry, as if to focus on the yeoman’s dominion over his earthly inhabitance.
After the move to Arizona, Effie was markedly influenced by the popular images of the desert and Native American peoples found on postcards and in travel magazines such as *Arizona Highways*, *Progressive Arizona*, *Desert Magazine*, and *Westways*. However, Effie’s reliance on commercial photographs helped mature her knowledge of formal principles of composition, and as her interests shifted toward subjects outside her own personal experience, her work took on attributes more consistent with studio traditions than folk genres. It is certainly apparent from her work and her method of teaching that she was keenly aware of established creative devices and techniques. What she had begun as a needed diversion became a life-long endeavor to improve her artistic talent through participation in community art organizations and peer-group discussions.\(^{56}\)

Effie’s interest in New Testament subjects inspired a number of religious paintings. Again, she was influenced by commercially produced images—the Protestant art popular from the 1920s to the 1940s.\(^{57}\) One of her paintings is a version of a widely marketed image of a seated Jesus contemplating the city of Jerusalem, which is bathed in moonlit. Effie’s three extant versions of this painting vary little from the reproduction. Her favorite gospel subjects seem to be Christ at the Sea of Galilee, the nativity, and Christ with his Apostles. Conspicuously few in number are Latter-day Saint subjects—the now-familiar scenes of pioneer subjects, Book of Mormon narratives, and instructional illustrations at that time being virtually unknown, for the Church relied heavily upon stock New Testament prints available from commercial suppliers of Protestant Biblical images. In addition to relying on popular sources of inspiration, Effie may have drawn upon her Protestant upbringing, one common to rural Americans.\(^{58}\)
A high point in Effie's creative experience came during the summer of 1936, when she had the pleasure of accompanying a tour group of artists over the Mormon pioneer trail. Her daughter Hazel, who was at that time a missionary in the East Central States Mission, had read a prospectus of the tour in the Deseret News and, with Noel's assistance, had conspired to send her mother on the trip by providing money for tuition and travel expenses. Headed by Brigham Young University art professor B. F. Larsen and his wife, Geneva, the group of fifteen artists traveled by bus to important pioneer sites and landmarks, documenting the historic route through sketches, paintings, and photographs.59 (For three of Effie's paintings that resulted from this tour, see colorplates 3–5.) The two-week art tour was an emotional peak that Effie would speak of fondly throughout her remaining years. Always grateful to Hazel and Noel for providing the means for her to participate in the tour, she later wrote, "It was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life."60 During the successful traveling exhibition of the group's work, shown throughout Utah and Idaho, Effie wrote to B. F. Larsen, expressing the hope that they could all get together again, "I experience a happy thrill when I think of a reunion of our group."61

Although relatively unpublicized, the reunion took place, and the group, including Effie, would indeed make a tour to New Mexico the following summer. This trip included visits to pueblo sites on the Rio Grande near Albuquerque and Santa Fe, where the group sketched and painted weathering Zuni and Navajo adobes. On the Arizona side of the border, the artists painted scenes at Navajo National Monument, such as the ancient cave dwellings of Betatakin and Keet Seel.62 These two tours under Larsen's supervision were probably the closest Effie came to academic art instruction.

Once introduced to Native American dwellings, Effie frequently returned to the subject, painting Navajo and Hopi sites of the nearby Four Corners region and others in Arizona's Coconino, Navajo, and Apache Counties. Some paintings were of the ruins of Walpi and Wupatki.

But Effie's fascination with communal earthen structures was not confined to the Colorado Plateau. A number of her paintings feature mission architecture and Spanish provincial churches along Sonora's west coast highway and California's Highway 101.63 For
example, the painting *Tzín Tzun Tzan* (colorplate 6) depicts an adobe village built by the Tascaran Indians of Mexico. In this painting, the viewer looks down the length of a paved stone street, bordered by a walled villa on the right and the shaded side of a simple, tile-roofed structure on the left. Aside from the mass of trees in the distance, the viewer’s eye is drawn to the open bell tower raised above the wall and the partially hidden figure standing in the gateway below. In that era, the unpretentious charm of this painting was considered worthy of merit; in 1939, when American self-taught painters and regionalists were gaining national recognition, Effie entered the painting in the New York World’s Fair, hobby division, and won second place.64

Another venue for making her talent known was provided by an engagement to exhibit her work at the Bruchman Curio Store in Winslow. The store’s owner, R. M. Bruchman, had generously provided financial support for one of Edgar’s catastrophic medical expenses, and Effie sold her work there as remuneration.65 After she repaid her debt, she continued to exhibit her work there for a number of years.

Over the next two decades, Effie repeatedly returned to topics inspired by the Arizona landscape. Her works reveal an enthusiasm for such subjects as the towering red-rock buttes of Monument Valley, the rainbow sands of the Painted Desert, and the windswept landscape of the Arizona Strip. Two examples of these works are a scene based on Josef Muench’s photograph of a mule train winding down the Bright Angel Trail in the Grand Canyon66 and an image of Emery Falls, Lake Mead (see front cover). Effie painted the latter scene with the grandiosity of romantic visionaries, much like the work of Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt. The towering rock walls appear to reach heavenward, as if this is a place of worship. Here, Effie departs from photographic realism, dramatizing the cascade with heightened escarpments and the altered placement of rocky crags.67

Effie applied her paint sparingly on prepared canvas board or on the untempered but lightly sanded side of masonite board. If these materials were not readily available, she often used paneling, Celotex, or plywood as a practical painting surface. Ultimately, whatever she found least expensive or close at hand sufficed. To Effie, permanence was not as important as the artistic outcome.
Effie Carmack, ca. 1965. Behind Effie is her painting of a mule train in the Grand Canyon, a scene based on a photograph by Josef Muench. Courtesy Atascadero News.
By the late 1930s, she was familiar with the applied techniques of brushwork and color mixing, her preference being a subdued palette. On one occasion, she commented that she had never used very brilliant colors in her paintings: "I like to reproduce the natural colors as I see them, and I liked [sic] the results."68

Evidently, other observers liked the results as well. About 1942, sometime after she began exhibiting at the curio store, an unidentified man representing the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles examined Effie’s display with considerable interest. Visiting the Carmack home next, he told Effie that surely the institution’s curator would like to exhibit her paintings since they were compatible with the museum’s collection illustrating Native American life. A short time later, Effie received a letter from the museum requesting about twenty-five paintings for a scheduled exhibition. To fill the museum’s order, Effie completed more than two dozen oils depicting all facets of Navajo and Hopi culture. These proved salient to the exhibit’s theme. Reportedly, during the exhibition, curator Mr. Harrington noted that Effie’s paintings were “the best coloring of Indian life he had ever had in his museum.”69

An example from this exhibition, The Evolution of a Navajo Rug (colorplate 7), is presented as a didactic narrative, showing the process of creating a blanket, from wool shearing, dying, carding, and spinning to weaving on the loom. While the oil does not present a story per se, the visual sequence echoes the manner of WPA muralists70 who depicted pioneer narratives. What the painting lacks in anatomical accuracy, it gains in the purposeful poses of the Navajo woman, each pose bespeaking the competence of a culture. The woman’s quiet dignity, her careful grooming, and her concentration reflect the artist’s respect for a fellow artist. The setting is given a spacious beauty, lovingly seen through the woman’s eyes as part of her estate. The homemade loom and sleeping child remind us that this woman makes space and time to create.71

Later Years in California

In the spring of 1946, Effie and Edgar moved to Atascadero, California, so that they could be near their children and Edgar could convalesce in California’s lower altitude and fresh coastal air. Effie felt some grief at leaving her well-established home of more
than twenty years and her longtime friends such as the Bushmans, the Simmonses, the Holts, and the Wakefields. She would also miss the warmth and solitude of her self-built studio, a building she described as a "shanty" with a fireplace.\(^{72}\)

Yet she was as resilient and eager to excel as before. Two months after relocating, she was introduced as "a new artist in Atascadero" at the Music and Arts Fellowship, where she "delighted her audience with an exhibit of some of her historical paintings, including a pony express station and the Pioneer Trail in Wyoming, old Indian ruins in Arizona, with the portrait of an old Indian in northern Arizona, and an ancient church in Old Mexico."\(^{73}\) Four months later, in January 1947, Effie held her first formal exhibition at Atascadero's Carlton Hotel. After this successful public showing, Effie and several other local artists, including Frances Joslin and Al Johnson, sparked the idea of an art club. On April 2, 1948, the Atascadero Art Club was organized with Johnson as president.\(^{74}\) Soon the organization became an important component of Atascadero's community activities, sponsoring monthly workshops and art festivals on the central coast. Effie was always an active supporter of the group in the years that followed. Fellow art club members remembered her as a natural artist and musician, an "outstanding member of the Art Club."\(^{75}\)

By this time, however, the consequences of Edgar's poor health required that she find employment. At the urging of her old friend Bernice Walker, Effie began performing in Knotts Berry Farm stage shows. Clothed in dresses from a bygone era, she played guitar and sang with other former Southerners. As a result of these performances, she not only gained a source of income but also received considerable attention for the repertoire of folk songs she had learned as a child. Impressed by her collection of songs, the popular country-western entertainer Tennessee Ernie Ford—with whom Effie had the occasion to perform—once reportedly asked, "Where in the world did you get them?" even though she had learned them only a "spittin' distance" from where he had lived.\(^{76}\) Fortunately, through the efforts of western folklorists Austin and Alta Fife, many of these important folk songs were recorded for the Library of Congress between 1947 and 1952.\(^{77}\) Later, when Austin Fife was teaching in France, he featured Effie on a *Voice of America* radio broadcast.\(^{78}\)
Despite the encouragement she garnered from these performances, Effie always returned to painting, family, and church service as her primary sources of gratification. After Edgar's death in 1952, she became actively engaged in art club activities and self-motivated missionary work. Seldom did a day pass that she wasn't painting in her studio, attending an art club workshop, or preparing work for the club's annual art show. Never too busy for a visit from the missionaries, she sometimes hosted them to a meal or a cottage meeting in her parlor. On Sunday evenings, she entertained grandchildren and great-grandchildren with songs sung to the strum of her guitar and the sounds of corn popping in the fireplace. As a crowning achievement, she was one of five women nominated as California's Mother of the Year for 1971.79

Effie Carmack, ca. 1968. Seated in her studio, Effie displays the guitar with which she accompanied herself as she sang the folk songs learned in her youth. Courtesy Atascadero News.
The Vision of a Life

Crediting her parents for the high honors she received, Effie was deeply grateful for her inauspicious, but noble, upbringing. Her high regard for ancestors is expressed in the following lines from *Backward Glances*:

And now since I've studied the problem profoundly  
And searched out the sources from which we descend,  
I see many whys and can guess many wherefores,  
To show why our lives take some definite trend.  
Our Marquess forefathers were lovers of music,  
And lovers of beauty, religion and art.  
And though we were raised in a patch of tobacco  
These things in our beings still held a rich part.90

Until encroaching age and then her death in 1974 forced her to surrender her brush, she carried on this heritage.81

Effie's paintings have not been gathered into a single major collection. Family and friends have a few samples of her work. Many pieces are likely still hanging on the walls of aging residents of Winslow and Atascadero. Reportedly, a number of religious works were painted for Latter-day Saint church buildings in the Arizona towns of Globe, Phoenix, St. Johns, Holbrook, Winslow, and Taylor. Others were completed for LDS churches in St. George, Utah; Overton, Nevada; and Hollyfield, North Carolina.82

Like other self-taught or outsider artists, Effie was driven by a compulsion to declare the vision of her life experience. Although her works contain some popular subjects, they also stand as the personal statements of an extraordinary woman—a person who faced trials with fortitude, good humor, and creativity. Effie Carmack was indeed a "memorable creation."83 If not for their artistic merits, her works deserve recognition for their association with the exceptional individual by whom they were created.

Noel A. Carmack is a great-grandson of Effie M. Carmack. He holds an MFA degree in drawing from Utah State University and serves as Preservation Librarian at USU's Merrill Library. He wishes to dedicate this essay to Effie, who has, on many occasions, been a silent but motivating presence beside him at his drawing easel. "It was her prolific talent," he recalls, "that many years ago caused a little boy to marvel." He wishes to thank Marian Hart, Susan Beatie, and Olive Doellstedt of the Atascadero Art Association (formerly the Atascadero Art Club) for providing
information about Effie; Olitha Carmack for assistance in providing dates; and Elder John K. Carmack, Hazel Carmack Bushman, and Itha Carmack for providing photographs and clippings.

NOTES

1Effie Marquess Carmack, *Down Memory Lane: The Autobiography of Effie Marquess Carmack* (Atascadero, Calif.: Atascadero News Press, 1973), 1. A new edition of Effie’s autobiography, edited by Karen Lynn Davidson, will be published by Utah State University Press as part of the series on the life writings of frontier women. The author wishes to thank Mrs. Davidson for her invaluable comments and suggestions during the writing of this article.

2Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 1, 2. Vital dates are from copies of family group sheets in my possession.

3Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 13.

4Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 4, 11, 13. Boanerges Marquess (1848–1903) and John Susan Armstrong (1853–1899) had seven children: Martha Etta (1871–1899), Lelia Jane (1872–1970), James Elmo (1874–1958), Margaret Alzada (1877–1971), John Robert (1880–1982), Effie Lee (1885–1974), and Charles Autie (1891–1932). The Black Patch was a tobacco-farming region covering western Kentucky and northwestern Tennessee. The region’s farmers grew a dark, olive-colored variety of tobacco, distinct from the varieties of other areas, that was cured in smoke-filled barns. Hence, the region was called the Black Patch.

5Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 5.

6Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 5.

7Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 3.

8Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 3; see also 4, 15–17.

9Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 15; see also 16.

10Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 8.

11Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 22; underline in original.

12Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 27.

13Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 89–90.


15Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 8.

16“Mrs. Carmack Speaker at Art Club Meeting,” *Atascadero News*, May 16, 1957, 2; Diane Gustafson Goff, “My Most Unforgettable Character” [a personal essay on Effie Carmack’s life], in *Down Memory Lane*, 237.

17Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 185. Evidently, the people of the mission’s Kentucky Conference were softened to hear the elders’ message. In April 1897, the senior elder, Alvin Iepsen, of Bear River City, Utah, reported from Liberty, Kentucky, that twenty-six people had been baptized and that the missionaries were “hospitably received and entertained.” See Andrew Jenson, *Journal
History of the Church, April 22, 1897, 4, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Alvin Ipsen to Editor, "Returned Missionary," Deseret Evening News, December 31, 1898, 15.

18Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 24.
19Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 185.

20For example, see Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 96, 97–98 and 130, where Effie names several missionaries and explains why she treasures their memories.

21Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 96.

22"Death of Sister Marquess," Latter Day Saints Southern Star 1 (February 25, 1899): 99; "Among the Elders," Latter Day Saints Southern Star 1 (March 25, 1899): 136; Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 83–84. As early as February 1897, the region of the Southern States Mission had experienced a horrible outbreak of yellow fever: "Many of the Elders were somewhat hindered in their work by the great amount of sickness existing throughout the mission. In many sections scarcely a family could be found free from sickness. The angel of death seemed extraordinarily busy, still the Elders enjoyed good health." See "History of the Southern States Mission," Latter Day Saints Southern Star 2 (May 19, 1900): 197.

23Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 98.

24Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 92, 94–95, 102, 107–8. The foreword to Backward Glances contains this dedication: "I wrote it to send to my sister, Lelia Marquess Ferrell, For Mother's Day, as she had been like a mother to me after the death of our mother in 1899."


26Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 117–18.

27Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 187.

28Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 187–88.

29Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 125–27.

30Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 125–28.


32These turbulent cycles of depression in the Kentucky tobacco market are discussed in Campbell, The Politics of Despair, 152–54; and William F. Axton, Tobacco and Kentucky (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 82–105. See also John Goodrum Miller, The Black Patch War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936); James O. Nall, The Tobacco Night Riders of

33Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 126.
34Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 126–27, 128.
36This narrative is taken from Effie’s own poignant account in Down Memory Lane, 135–37.
38Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 138.
40Roberto Feruzzi’s painting appeared on the cover of the December 1953 issue of Relief Society Magazine. The location of Effie’s version is presently unknown to the author.
41Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 141, 143, 145, 188; “Joseph City Notes,” Winslow Mail, October 3, 1924, 4.
42Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 140. Zane Grey (1875–1939) wrote adventure tales set in the West. It is not clear that Zane Grey was in the Joseph City area in the spring of 1924. However, Grey had been in the Flagstaff area during the fall of 1923 investigating sites for a film adaptation of his novel Call of the Canyon. “Filming of Famous Grey Novels,” Coconino Sun, September 12, 1923, 1; “Filming of Famous Grey Novels to Carry Fame of Our Scenery over World,” Coconino Sun, September 14, 1923, 1. See also Candace C. Kant, Zane Grey’s Arizona (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northland Press, 1984), 27, 38, 140–41; and Gary Topping, “Zane Grey in Zion: An Examination of His Supposed Anti-Mormonism,” BYU Studies 18 (1978): 483–90; and Graham St. John Stott, “Zane Grey and James Simpson Emmett,” BYU Studies 18 (1978): 491–503.

Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 127.

Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 143.

Carmack, *Down Memory Lane*, 143.


"Characteristics of Folk Art: A Study Presented at the American Psychological Association Conference," *Folk Art Finder* 5 (September 1984): 2, 4. According to Roger Manley, "Outsider artists' life stories frequently reveal traumatic events that threw them onto their own resources and triggered responses that led to art making: the loss of a job through illness, injury, or retirement; the death of a spouse or elderly parent; religious doubt; social ostracism; imprisonment. These events precipitate their transformation from 'ordinary' farmers, loggers, or textile workers into artists as well." Roger Manley, *Signs and Wonders: Outsider Art inside North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Museum of Art, 1989), 9. See also Rosa Esman Gallery, *Outsiders: Art beyond the Norms* (New York: Rosa Esman Gallery, 1986), wherein it refers to these events as times of "intense psychic crisis." *Outsiders*, 1.


See, for example, Barbara Allen, "The Genealogical Landscape and the Southern Sense of Place," in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, ed.


54Effie felt that raising such a harmful crop was "foolish" and resulted in little good for humans. She often recalled vividly the "gruesseing [sic], backbreaking" process of stripping, suckering, worming, and curing the tobacco in preparation for sale. Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 67-68; Carmack, "Tobacco," in Backward Glances, 20-24. The lore of tobacco cultivation is wonderfully treated in Charles S. Guthrie, "Tobacco: Cash Crop of the Cumberland Valley," Kentucky Folklore Record 14 (1968): 38-43; and Suzanne M. Hall, "Working the Black Patch: Tobacco Farming Traditions, 1890-1930," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 89 (summer 1991): 266-86.


57This painting was reproduced on the cover of the April 1958 issue of The Instructor and may have been the source for Effie's versions. The original was probably the work of German-born artist Bernhard Plockhorst (1825-1907). It was one of many Plockhorst and Heinrich Hofmann paintings reproduced and sold by Perry Pictures. See Colleen McDannell, Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 240; and Colleen McDannell, "Marketing Jesus: Warner Press and the Art of Warner Sallman," in Icons of American Protestantism: The Art of Warner Sallman, ed. David Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 114-16, including figure 3.4. Effie's versions are in the possession of Willard Schlink of Mesa, Arizona, and Itha Carmack and Bonnie Porter of Atascadero, California.

58I am indebted to Dr. Colleen McDannell of the University of Utah for this insight.

59"Local Woman with 17 Artists Making University Tours," Winslow Mail, June 12, 1936, 1; "Winslow Woman Is Member of Artist Group Making Tour," Winslow Mail, August 14, 1936, 1. See also H. R. Merrill, "While Yet the Old Trail
Lasts," Deseret News [Church Section], February 22, 1936, 1, 8; and Carlton Culmsec, "Spiritual Significance of an Art Tour," Deseret News [Church Section], August 15, 1936, 1, 8. For more background on the tour, see Noel A. Carmack, "The Yellow Ochre Club": B. F. Larsen and the Pioneer Trail Art Tour, 1936," Utah Historical Quarterly 65 (spring 1997): 134-54. Seventeen of Effie’s art-tour paintings are in the possession of her grandson and LDS Church General Authority John K. Carmack, Salt Lake City.

60Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 161-62.

61Effie M. Carmack to B. F. Larsen, December 29, 1936, B. F. Larsen Collection, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

62“Artist Tells Rotary of New Mexico Tour,” Winslow Mail, August 13, 1937, 8; Goff, “My Most Unforgettable Character,” in Down Memory Lane, 238. A painting of San Ildefonso, New Mexico, is in the possession of John K. Carmack, Salt Lake City; a painting of Betatakin is in the possession of Itha Carmack, Atascadero, California.

63A painting based on a popular image of San Juan Capistrano is in the possession of Marina Weatherhead, Prescott Valley, Arizona.

64Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 156–57. Correspondence in the files of the Department of Contemporary Art, New York World’s Fair, did not, unfortunately, disclose the outcome of Effie’s entry. E. Marquess Carmack to “Mr. Cahill,” New York World’s Fair Commission, ca. May 18, 1938; and (unsigned) Assistant to the Director, Department of Contemporary Art, to E. Marquess Carmack, June 2, 1938, Box #53, New York World’s Fair Collection, 1939-1940, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library; photocopies in my possession. For discussions of the World’s Fair, see Magazine of Art 32 (May 1939); and Art Digest 13 (July 1, 1939): 12–13, 25.

65Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 170.


67The author has been unable to find the source of inspiration for this painting. It can, however, be compared to a black-and-white photograph published in Desert Magazine 3 (December 1939): 24.

68Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 163.

69Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 156. Unfortunately, a thorough search of the official Southwest Museum publication, The Masterkey, did not disclose any references to Effie’s exhibition.

70Artists were paid during the New Deal era with funds from the Work Projects Administration to paint murals for public buildings.

71This painting is now in the possession of her anthropologist grandson, Robert M. Carmack, Albany, New York. A similar version is in the possession of Itha Carmack, Atascadero, California.

72Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 170; see also, Effie M. Carmack, “The Long Road from Winslow, Arizona to Atascadero [a travel diary in rhyme, April 1946]”; copy of typescript in my possession.


Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 175-76; Bill Barton, "The Latchstring Is Always Out to the Fellowmen of Effie Carmack," Deseret News [Church Section], January 15, 1966, 5.

The recordings are dated December 26 and 27, 1948; July 8, 1949; September 5, 1949; and March 26, 1951. Without underestimating the value of their pioneering fieldwork, I feel that the Fifes misclassified Effie’s repertoire, grouping them among those of “Mormon inspiration,” rather than of Kentucky or Scots Highland origins. See Austin E. Fife and Alta S. Fife, “Folk Songs of Mormon Inspiration,” Western Folklore 6 (January 1947): 42-52; and “Collectors and Collections,” Western Folklore 7 (July 1948): 299-301.

Carmack, Down Memory Lane, 88-89; Alta Fife, conversations with author, July 26, 1991, and November 14, 1996. See also “Oxy Educator Collects Mormon Folk Material,” Los Angeles Times [San Gabriel Valley edition], October 9, 1949, 19. Copies of the Fife recordings were sent to the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress for preservation, while subsequent copies of the tapes were sold commercially. The original field recordings are housed in the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. In an uncharacteristically critical review of Austin and Alta Fife’s classification of the Mormon folksong collection, folklorist Thomas E. Cheney wrote:

One singer, Effie Cormack [sic], furnished the Fifes with many significant folk songs. Mrs. Cormack, a resident of California and a Mormon convert, came from the South. The songs she has in her memory all came out of her own South, and, as one would expect, many of them reflect the traditions of that area with its racial, geographical, and local heritage. Mrs. Cormack’s songs have not been sung in Mormon society enough to become Mormon thought or expression. To consider them Mormon folk song would be as ridiculous as calling ‘Yankee Doodle’ a Russian song because it was sung by a former American who became a Communist.


Barre Brashear, “County Art Show Sketches,” (San Luis Obispo, Calif.) *Telegram-Tribune*, February 19, 1952, 1. The largest collection of Effie’s paintings is in the possession of John K. Carmack, Salt Lake City, Utah. Several paintings are among the families of Effie’s daughters: Grace Bushman, Hazel Bushman (formerly Bruchman), and Violet Mattice. Some are owned by families of her deceased sons: Cecil E. Carmack, Noel E. Carmack, and David E. Carmack. Of the many other scattered holdings, a few paintings are reportedly in the Barry Goldwater Collection.

“A memorable creation” is a characterization by Joyce Carol Oates of Harriette Louisa Simpson Arnow’s protagonist in *The Dollmaker*, a fictional novel of a woman from Kentucky. Arnow’s character, Gertie Nevels, is described as “an ‘artist,’ but a primitive, untheorizing, inarticulate artist. . . . She is both an ordinary human being and an extraordinary human being, a memorable creation, so real that one cannot question her existence.” Joyce Carol Oates, “Joyce Carol Oates on Harriette Arnow’s *The Dollmaker,*” in *Rediscoveries*, ed. David Madden (New York: Crown, 1971), 66.
Plate 2. Untitled. Oil on plywood panel, n.d. 17½" x 38¾". Courtesy Noel Carmack.
Plate 5. *First Home of the Prophet in Nauvoo (back view)*. Oil on board, 1936. 23" x 17". Courtesy John K. Carmack.
In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist’s View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi

Geological studies and eyewitness accounts of volcanic activity show the likelihood that the massive destruction reported in 3 Nephi was caused by an explosive volcanic eruption.

Bart J. Kowallis

About three hundred years ago, a cataclysmic volcanic eruption occurred off of the northeastern coast of Papua New Guinea. No written history of this eruption exists, but local legends abound concerning the event. In 1970, Russell Blong began collecting many of these legends and piecing together the effects of the eruption. The native legends refer to this period as the “time of darkness”:

I am going to tell the story of darkness. I am going to tell the story of the great darkness which appeared on this ground/area. I did not see it. People told me and so I know it.

It was while they were asleep, in the night, that it was so dark on this earth, and they slept/lay for about three nights. And when they took flares and went up the hills and made signs, going with flares in the pitch blackness, they said: Can you see my flare? But the flares did not light up the place! So they said: No!

This went on many times. And when they were sleepy and it should have been night they slept. And when it should have been light they woke and got up, and kept looking and looking and lit flares and went up the hills saying: Do you see my flare? And others said: Do you see? And they looked all around. But they didn’t see them.

The legends recount that after the eruption other phenomena occurred along with the darkness, which most of the legends
describe as lasting two to four days. One describes "thunder, lightning, and tremors" as heralds to the darkness. Another reports that "a storm was on its way and there was a rustling and whistling in the air." Others describe winds, earthquakes, floods, loud noises, fumes, and unusual changes in temperature. Many people died from collapsing huts, fumes, sores inflicted by hot falling ash, falling stones, starvation, and other causes. Along the coastal areas, trees and crops were destroyed by floods of water. One account said that "all bad men, trouble makers, people with bad thoughts, thieves, etc." died during the darkness.

The native accounts are amazing, according to Blong, not only because they have survived for three hundred years, but also because, aside from a little exaggeration and embellishment, "the veracity of the stories can be tested against physical reality." None of the accounts gives a complete picture of the event, but taken together they provide a good idea of the conditions that occur during an explosive volcanic eruption. The distribution and thickness of ash from this eruption, the only physical evidence that survives, provide a way to estimate the size of the eruption and the associated effects that presumably would have accompanied it. All of the conclusions based on this physical evidence agree well with the oral traditions.

A second, much older account of a time of darkness is found on the remains of an Egyptian stele that has been connected with a great volcanic eruption (ca. 1500-1450 B.C.) on the island of Santorini (Thera) located about seventy miles north of the island of Crete. The inscription on the stele reads in part:

The gods [caused] the sky to come in a tempest of rain, with darkness in the western region and the sky being / unleashed without cessation, louder than] the cries of the masses, more powerful than [. . .], [while the rain raged (?)] on the mountains louder than the noise of the / cataract which is at Elephantine. Every house, every quarter that they reached [. . .] / floating on the water like skiffs of papyrus opposite the royal residence for a period of [. . .] days, / while a torch could not be lit in the Two Lands.

One other historical account is very similar in detail to the New Guinea legends of the time of darkness and also to the Egyptian
account. This account is almost two thousand years old and is recorded in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon:

And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land. And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder. And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as had never been known in all the land. And the city of Zarahemla did take fire. And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned. And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of the city there became a great mountain. And there was a great and terrible destruction in the land southward. But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the whole earth; And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough.

. . . And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land. And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease—for behold, they did last for about the space of three hours . . . and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness; And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and exceedingly dry wood, so that there could not be any light at all; And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen. . . .

And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared—And they were spared and were not sunk and buried up in the earth; and they were not drowned in the depths of the sea; and they were not burned by fire, neither were they fallen upon and crushed to death; and they were not carried away in the whirlwind; neither were they overpowered by the vapor of smoke and of darkness. (3 Ne. 8:5-13, 18-23; 10:12-13; hereafter quoted without further citation)
Spirit Lake, Washington. The lake is filled with trees stripped from the mountain slopes by the “tempests” generated from the eruption of Mount St. Helens, 1980. The “face of the land”—the once lush, green mountains surrounding Spirit Lake—was completely changed by the eruption. Defoliated remnants of the thick forest float on the surface of the lake. The only visible water appears as dark patches. Photograph by Lyn Topinka. Courtesy USGS/Cascades Volcano Observatory.

This account of destruction in 3 Nephi has always fascinated me, from my first reading of the story as a young boy to the present time. It is an account of what, at first glance, appears to be a complex event or group of events that would be difficult to explain in terms of any single cause. In fact, I have often heard my fellow Latter-day Saints describe how all the physical features of North, Central, and South America that we see today were formed at this time, so great was the destruction. A reshaping of the entire surfaces of these continents, however, goes against all available geologic evidence. I believe that as we look at the 3 Nephi account in detail, we will find that it is describing a more localized event—an event that fits with the restricted geographic views of many Book of Mormon scholars.13

However, the 3 Nephi account cannot be explained solely as a massive earthquake or storm, for neither of these natural disasters can account for all the features described. All of the features of
the account can, however, be explained by a specific type of natural phenomenon occurring only in certain geologic settings—an explosive volcanic eruption, similar to the eruption in Papua New Guinea and to the eruption on Santorini. I am certainly not the first who has recognized this event for what it is, but I hope here to more completely outline the events that occurred and demonstrate that all of these events can be explained in the context of a single explosive volcanic eruption.  

**Events Occurring during the Destruction**

The diversity of phenomena and locales mentioned in the account in 3 Nephi is considerable, indicating that the event probably affected a fairly large area and that the writer must have waited and accumulated information from around the land before making his record; it is unlikely that he witnessed all of the events himself. Some knowledge of the type of destruction that would occur had been preserved in the Nephite record. The prophet Zenos foretold the physical phenomena that would occur at the death of the Savior (1 Nephi 19: 10–13). Written hundreds of years before the events recorded in 3 Nephi, 1 Nephi preserves Zenos's prophecy that “there would be thunders and lightnings, tempests, fire and smoke, a vapor of darkness, the earth opening, mountains being carried up, rocks rending, and the earth groaning,” and three days of darkness. Evidently with this prophecy specifically in mind, the terminology used in 3 Nephi becomes more specific and descriptive, clearly defining the kinds of events that occurred in fulfillment of this prophecy. For example, phrases such as “exceedingly sharp lightnings,” “earth was carried up upon the city,” “rocks . . . found in broken fragments . . . upon all the face of the land,” “thick darkness [that you] could feel,” “not any light seen,” “vapor of darkness,” and “vapor of smoke” are key phrases in interpreting these passages of scripture. The writer wants us to know that the lightning was not the ordinary kind of lightning, but rather extraordinary; that somehow earth was moved uphill (an unusual occurrence); that the rocks were not just broken up along a narrow fault, but were scattered across the land; that the darkness was unusual—a darkness that could be felt and that was so intense, light could not be seen; and that there were vapors of smoke associated with the darkness.
A complete listing of the events recorded in 3 Nephi as having occurred during the destruction includes the following:

1. A great storm (8:5)
2. A strong and terrible tempest (8:6, 12, 17; 10:14)
3. Terrible thunder (8:6, 12, 17)
4. Shaking of the whole earth (8:6, 12, 14, 17, 19; 10:9)
5. Exceedingly sharp lightning (8:7, 12, 17)
7. Sinking of cities into the sea (8:9; 9:4, 7; 10:13)
8. Earth carried up on cities (8:10, 14, 25; 9:5; 10:13)
9. Sinking and burial of cities (9:6, 8; 10:13-14)
10. Changing of whole face of the land (8:12, 17)
11. Whirlwinds (8:12, 16; 10:13-14)
12. Breaking up of highways and earth (8:13)
13. Breaking up of cities, destruction of inhabitants (8:14, 15)
14. Breaking and scattering of rocks (8:18; 10:9)
15. Three-hour duration of initial events (8:19)
16. Three-day duration of thick darkness (8:19, 22, 23; 10:9, 13)
17. Palpable darkness (8:20)
18. No fires or lights (8:21)
19. Very dry wood (8:21)
20. Vapors of smoke (10:13-14)
21. Falling objects crushing people (10:13)

Explosive Volcanism

Each of these events listed above have been documented in historic explosive volcanic eruptions and will be discussed later in detail. First, however, it is important to establish where the type of volcanic eruption required to produce these effects occurs and to determine if these locations are compatible with current ideas about Book of Mormon geography.

Volcanoes are usually found in three very different geologic settings around the world. These are (1) along the margins of two tectonic plates where they are moving apart—geologists call these rifts or spreading boundaries, (2) along the margins of two plates where they are moving together—called subduction zones or collision boundaries, and (3) within tectonic plates at locations called hot spots. Volcanoes that form at spreading boundaries are
usually made up of numerous fluid lava flows that spread out to form a broad, shieldlike shape, which gives these volcanoes their name—shield volcanoes. Their eruptions are rarely violent and are most often gentle enough that a family could gather together, climb a hill to get a good view and avoid the hot, incandescent lava flows, and sit and watch in safety.

The volcanoes that form in subduction zones, however, are quite different. The magma below the surface in these volcanoes is thick and viscous and contains more water and other gases than the quiet flows of the shield volcanoes. This thick, pasty, molten rock is so viscous that when it is forced to the surface it does not flow far but instead builds up conical, steep-sided volcanoes called strato-volcanoes. These volcanoes are often very beautiful and are greatly admired by sightseers. Mountains such as Mount Fuji, Mount Ranier, Lassen Peak, and Mount St. Helens fall into this class of volcanoes.

Steam rising from Augustine Volcano in Alaska, 1982. The lava dome, which formed within the crater after the main eruption, acts as a plug in the volcano's vent, preventing the release of pressure. Photograph by C. Nye. Courtesy USGS.
But even though these mountains are beautiful, they are extremely violent and dangerous. At times the pasty, viscous magma in the volcano plugs up the volcano’s vent, preventing the release of pressure from the underground magma chamber. Over time the pressures exerted by the gases in the subsurface become so great that the mountain collapses or blows its top, just as a pressure cooker will explode if the release valve is clogged and the pressure that builds up as the pot is heated is not allowed to escape. As the pressure is released from the underground chamber, the gases separate out of the liquid magma and swell in volume, causing the volcano to explode in a raging fury. In many cases, the venting of magma occurs so rapidly that the underground chamber cannot support the weight of the overlying rock. This rock collapses into the underground chamber, forcing out more molten rock and creating a depression, termed a caldera, where the volcano once stood. Crater Lake in Oregon is a good example of a caldera left after a mountain has blown its top.

Hot-spot volcanoes may produce either quiet fluid lava eruptions or very violent, explosive eruptions depending on whether the eruption occurs in an ocean basin or on a continent. If the hot spot is in an ocean basin, the eruption is generally quite mild, as in the Hawaiian Islands. But if the hot spot is located under a continent, the eruptions are generally much more violent, similar to those at subduction zones.

It is the violent, explosive eruptions from subduction-related volcanoes or continental hot spots that can explain the events of 3 Nephi. In historic times, several of these explosive eruptions have occurred and have been well documented. The eruptions of Mount St. Helens (1980, Washington State), El Chichón (1982, Mexico), Nevado del Ruiz (1985, Colombia), Mount Pinatubo (1991, Philippines), and other volcanoes of this type during the past several decades have given scientists a chance to document more accurately and completely the phenomena associated with them. All of these recent eruptions have been fairly small, however, when compared to some other historic eruptions. Mount St. Helens, for example, erupted a volume of rock equivalent to a block one mile wide by one mile long by three-quarters of a mile deep. Mount Pinatubo erupted eight to ten times that amount. However, during
A crater lake on Mount Douglas, Alaska, 1982. This lake occupies a caldera, a large depression formed from a violent volcanic eruption. Photograph by C. Nye. Courtesy USGS.

the eruption of Tambora in April 1815 on the island of Sumbawa in Indonesia, a volume one hundred times the size of the 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption was ejected.¹⁶

A bit more should be said here, as a side note, about the eruption of Tambora. In 1815, Joseph Smith’s family had just suffered through a second year of drought in Norwich, Vermont,¹⁷ and were in desperate need of a good crop in 1816. This, however, was not to be. The dust and ash that had been injected into the atmosphere the previous year by the eruption of Tambora cooled the world’s climate and caused the summer of 1816 in New England to be the coldest on record. Snow fell in June, and killing frosts occurred as late as July 12. Then a series of unusually early frosts hit again after August 20.¹⁸ The year 1816 became known as “the year without a summer.”¹⁹ This third successive year of crop failures in New England drove many farmers from the area,²⁰ including the Smith family.²¹ It is interesting that a volcano in a far-off corner of the world could have been instrumental in motivating Joseph’s family to move where they needed to be for the restoration of the gospel to occur.
Now let us go back to the main questions asked at the start of this section. Could these kinds of explosive volcanoes have occurred in the area where the Book of Mormon peoples were living, and could an eruption have occurred at the time of Christ’s death? The answer to both of these questions is yes. If, as most Book of Mormon scholars believe, the people lived in southern Mexico or Central America, then they would have been living in a very active belt of explosive volcanism located where the North American and Cocos tectonic plates are colliding. In fact, based on the volume of eruptive material and the length of the volcanic belt, the Central American volcanic zone is ranked as the most productive volcanic region anywhere on earth. The Book of Mormon people had probably witnessed smaller eruptions throughout their history, but they are not mentioned in the Book of Mormon possibly because they were not damaging or devastating enough to be of concern and because they were not related to a specific prophecy.

That any earlier, smaller eruptions are not mentioned is not really unusual. For example, on the island of Martinique, prior to the devastating eruption of Mount Pelée in 1902, the local newspapers hardly mention the volcano even though it had been gurgling and spewing forth small quantities of ash and steam for days before the main eruption. The papers and the local people were more concerned about the upcoming elections. When the volcano was mentioned, it was to soothe and reason with the populace and convince them that no disaster was imminent. The reason for this disregard of the mountain was simply because the mountain had done this type of thing many times before without any large, devastating eruption. From all around the world, similar stories can be told of people living for centuries around and on the flanks of active volcanoes. They live there without fear because the massive, cataclysmic eruptions are not common. Such was probably the case as well among the Nephites. They lived with the volcanoes, they farmed on their slopes in the rich soil, they witnessed occasional small eruptions, blasts of steam, and small earthquakes, but they had not experienced a large, devastating eruption.

The eruption described in 3 Nephi, however, was apparently a major eruption with such massive devastation that it would be hard to ignore it in a historical record, and the events that
followed—namely, the coming of the Savior—made this a particularly important historic event. My personal opinion is that the Book of Mormon peoples lived in a relatively small area, probably in southern Mexico or Central America as described in John Sorenson's book *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*. This area is located along a subduction zone tectonic boundary with many active volcanoes and a record of volcanic eruptions—for example, the eruptions of El Chichón, Mexico, in 1982; Cerro Negro, Nicaragua, in 1968; and Coseguina, Nicaragua, in 1835. More eruptions, both small and large, are expected here in the future. At the present time, a particular layer of ash or a particular volcano has not been tied to the 3 Nephi disaster, but I believe that it is there, as the following points demonstrate little doubt that this disaster was an explosive volcanic eruption.

**Storm, Tempest, and Whirlwinds**

Large explosive volcanic eruptions are often accompanied by violent winds and whirlwinds. The winds are caused by the movement of clouds of volcanic ash, either hugging the ground as hot, fast-moving, enormously destructive clouds called *nuées ardentes*, or as blast clouds, moving at even higher velocities. For example, during the eruption of Mount St. Helens, the explosion was "almost beyond comprehension, five hundred times greater than the twenty-kiloton atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima" and the blast cloud is estimated to have moved at velocities of over three hundred miles per hour. Three eyewitnesses who viewed the blast reported the following accounts:

I looked east toward Hanaford Lake and Fawn Lake and that area—it looked like that whole mountain range had just exploded. As the blast cloud approached it looked like a boiling mass of rock—and just as high as you could see. Trees were picked up and thrown into the air at the leading edge of the cloud. . . .

The cloud approached with a roaring noise. As it passed overhead, a cedar tree began to fall and within seconds there were no trees left.

A very strong wind, which blew flames from the campfire flat along the ground and held braids of hair out horizontally, preceded the blast cloud by about 10–15 seconds.
Flattened trees. On the slopes of Smith Creek Valley, trees were snapped off by the winds following the eruption of Mount St. Helens, 1980. The direction of the blast is evident from the alignment of the trees. Over four billion board feet of usable timber was damaged or destroyed. Photograph by Lyn Topinka. Courtesy USGS/Cascades Volcano Observatory.

Trees hundreds of years old were snapped off like toothpicks and flattened out, all pointing the same direction, away from the blast. With the wind howling at what these witnesses estimated to be nearly two hundred miles an hour, some "old giants" were torn out by their roots and tossed into the air, as if they were mere trifles, up and over nearby ridges fifteen hundred feet high.\(^{29}\) Here it must be mentioned again that the eruption of Mount St. Helens was a fairly small one by geologic standards.

Even more impressive are the accounts of the destruction wreaked on the city of St. Pierre on the island of Martinique in the Caribbean during the eruption of Mt. Pelée in 1902. St. Pierre was a city of over thirty thousand people. Only two people who were in the city survived the eruption, along with a handful of others in the near vicinity. One of the survivors, a Monsieur Albert, owner of an estate near St. Pierre, recounts in his experience how suddenly and violently the winds caused by the eruption began and the magnitude of their destructive power:

Mont Pelée had given warning of the destruction that was to come, but we who had looked upon the volcano as harmless did not
believe that it would do more than spout fire and steam, as it had
done on other occasions. It was a little before 8 o’clock on the morn-
ing of May 8 that the end came.

I was in one of the fields of my estate when the ground trem-
bled under my feet, not as it does when the earth quakes, but as
though a terrible struggle was going on within the mountain. A ter-
ror came upon me, but I could not explain my fear.

As I stood still, Mont Pelée seemed to shudder and a moaning
sound issued from its crater. It was quite dark, the sun being ob-
escured by ashes and fine volcanic dust. The air was dead about me,
so dead that the floating dust seemingly was not disturbed.

Then there was a rending, crashing, grinding noise, which I
can only describe as sounding as though every bit of machinery in
the world had suddenly broken down. It was deafening, and the flash
of light that accompanied it was blinding, more so than any lightning
I have ever seen.

It was like a terrible hurricane, and where a fraction of a sec-
ond before there had been a perfect calm I felt myself drawn into a
vortex and I had to brace myself firmly. It was like a great express
train rushing by, and I was drawn by its force.

The mysterious force leveled a row of strong trees, tearing
them up by the roots and leaving bare a space of ground fifteen yards
wide and more than one hundred yards long.

Transfixed I stood, not knowing in what direction to flee.
I looked toward Mont Pelée, and above its apex formed a great black
cloud which reached high in the air. It literally fell upon the city of
St. Pierre. It moved with a rapidity that made it impossible for any-
ting to escape it.

From the cloud came explosions that sounded as though all of
the navies of the world were in titanic combat. Lightning played in
and out in broad forks, the result being that intense darkness was
followed by light that seemed to be of magnifying power.\textsuperscript{30}

The “great black cloud” seen by Monsieur Albert was a blast
of superheated steam filled with even hotter ash particles. This
cloud, it is estimated, traveled with a velocity of at least one hun-
dred miles per hour. This speed was possible because the ash par-
ticles gave the cloud a greater density than normal atmospheric
gases, causing the cloud to flow low along the ground. As it
moved, the cloud was buoyed up enough by the hot, compressed
gases at the base of the flowing mass that it traveled in a near fric-
tionless state down the mountain and into St. Pierre. The great
density, velocity, and ground-hugging nature of the cloud increased
Augustine Volcano. 1986. An enormously destructive cloud of rapidly moving volcanic ash, called a *nuée ardente*, rolls down the north side of the volcano. Photograph by M. E. Yount. Courtesy USGS.
its destructiveness, which was much greater than that of a hurricane of the same wind velocity.\textsuperscript{31} Fred Bullard, in his book \textit{Volcanoes of the Earth}, describes the power of this rush of ash and volcanic gas on and over the city of St. Pierre:

All the houses in St. Pierre were unroofed and otherwise demolished either in part or totally. The trees were stripped of leaves and branches down to the bare trunks. The force of the blast is shown by the fact that walls of cement and stone, three feet in thickness, were torn to pieces as though made of cardboard, six-inch cannon on the Morne d'Orange Battery were sheared from their mountings, century-old trees were uprooted, and a statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing at least three tons, was carried 50 feet from its base.\textsuperscript{32}

During the eruption of Krakatoa, an island volcano off the coast of Java, in 1883, high velocity winds, again arising quite suddenly to hurricane levels (as at St. Pierre), were reported by several ships sailing near the island. The first officer aboard the ship \textit{W. H. Besse} describes the winds as they impacted his ship:

At 6 a.m. . . . got under weigh, having a fair wind, was in hopes to get out clear of the straits before night; at 10 a.m. were within 6 miles of St. Nicholas Point, when we heard some terrific reports also observed a heavy black bank rising up from the direction of Krakatoa Island, the barometer fell an inch at one jump, suddenly rising and falling an inch at a time, called all hands, furled all sails securely, which was scarcely done before the squall struck the ship with terrific force; let go port anchor and all the chain in the locker, wind increasing to a hurricane.\textsuperscript{33}

Whirlwinds, or tornados, appear to be a fairly common feature of many explosive volcanic eruptions. The hot ash erupted into the air is a concentrated source of heat that causes severe updrafts, providing ideal conditions for the formation of whirlwinds. Only a few accounts, however, actually report whirlwinds, perhaps because they often cannot be seen due to the incredible darkness that usually accompanies eruptions. Nonetheless, whirlwinds were an important feature of several eruptions, such as the 1815 eruption of Tambora when "violent whirlwinds carried up men, horses, cattle, and whatever else came within their influence, into the air, tore up the largest trees by the roots, and covered the whole sea with floating timber."\textsuperscript{34} Lieutenant Owen Phillips reported that the town of Saugar, located about twenty-five miles
from Tambora, was devastated by a violent whirlwind that blew down nearly every house.\textsuperscript{35}

After a preliminary eruption of Krakatoa in May 1883 (prior to the main eruption in August), a group of dignitaries and scientists visited the island out of curiosity and a desire to assess the damage. They report that

some trees showed through the ash as bare stumps several meters high, and from which the branches seemed to have been torn off by force. The wood was dry, without signs of burning or charring; no leaf or branch could be found in the ash, and it is therefore likely that the deforestation must be attributed to a whirlwind, as it often develops in turbulent air during volcanic eruptions as a result of local heating of the atmosphere.\textsuperscript{36}

When the Mayon volcano in the Philippines erupted in 1766, it was accompanied by “tornadoes, called baguios in that country.”\textsuperscript{37} Whirlwinds have also been reported from the 1947 eruption of Hekla, the 1963 eruption of Surtsey, and the 1973 Eldfell eruption, all in Iceland.\textsuperscript{38} From these accounts, it is apparent that strong winds and whirlwinds are common features of explosive volcanic eruptions and that there is no need to call upon other types of storm activity, such as hurricanes or cyclones, to explain these events.

One more piece of evidence is important here as well. The Book of Mormon mentions that their wood was “exceedingly dry.” It is not likely that their wood would be exceedingly dry if they had just experienced a hurricane or some other type of large tropical storm. But the winds and storms associated with volcanic eruptions, although they may be accompanied by rain, are often dry. The above account of the excursion to Krakatoa after one of its eruptions describes the trees and wood as dry. Another account from Mount St. Helens indicates that no rain accompanied that eruption:

The lightning-streaked cloud rolling northeast from Mount St. Helens at nearly 60 miles an hour looked exactly like a towering thunderhead—but it was bigger and blacker than any in memory. Most people in its path, as yet unaware of the volcano’s eruption, braced for a storm. But no rain fell. Instead, the cloud descended like a shroud, cloaking the landscape in a blackness of volcanic ash that even automobile headlights could not penetrate.\textsuperscript{39}

The “exceedingly dry wood” described in the Book of Mormon indicates a dry storm with violent winds and whirlwinds—all

of which are consistent with a large volcanic eruption. Certainly violent winds and whirlwinds can occur without rain in other circumstances and under other conditions, but few other settings would be as spectacularly violent as a large volcanic eruption. Even a major hurricane could not produce the kind of destructive wind, for example, that destroyed the city of St. Pierre in 1902.

**Terrible Thunder and Sharp Lightning**

Most of our experience with thunder and lightning comes from the thunderstorms that are quite common throughout the world. Occasionally these may be extremely violent storms with spectacular displays of lightning and blasts of thunder. Nephi's description of the thunder and lightning that occurred was not of this ordinary kind, however, for he describes them as "such as never had been known in all the land." The thunder was also unusual in that it is correlated with the shaking of the "whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder," implying that earthquakes were occurring along with the lightning and thunder. Lightning displays and associated thunder, along with other noises caused by explosions near a volcano, can be of this extraordinary kind
described by Nephi. The lightning is caused by the friction between the exploding ash and the air. This friction generates enormous quantities of static electricity that is then discharged as lightning. The thunder from the lightning is supplemented by the explosions from the volcano and the earthquakes that occur almost continuously during some eruptions. One of the earliest accounts of these types of volcanic lightning displays comes from Pliny the Younger, who observed the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Pliny writes:

A fearful black cloud was rent by forked and quivering bursts of flame, and parted to reveal great tongues of fire, like flashes of lightning magnified in size.  

Peter Francis interprets Pliny’s description of magnified lightning as the discharge of “static electricity accumulating in the ash cloud.”

The air at times during a volcanic eruption is so charged with static electricity that unusual things may happen. For example, during an eruption in Kamchatka in eastern Russia, the electrical activity played tricks with modern electric appliances:

Together with the cloud came also and was growing a rumble of loud thunder accompanying incessantly flashing lightnings. . . . People returning from work were wandering about the village in search of their homes. Peals of thunder were crashing with deafening loudness without any interruption. The air was saturated with electricity, telephones were ringing spontaneously, loudspeakers of the radionet were burning out.

The thunderous noises produced by an eruption may carry for distances of several hundred miles. The 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora demonstrates how far-reaching these effects can be:

In April, 1815, one of the most frightful eruptions recorded in history occurred in the mountain Tambora, in the island of Sumbawa. It began on the 5th of April, and was most violent on the 11th and 12th, and did not entirely cease till July. The sound of the explosions was heard in Sumatra, at the distance of nine hundred and seventy geographical miles in a direct line, and at Ternate in an opposite direction, at the distance of seven hundred and twenty miles. . . . The area over which tremulous noises and other volcanic effects extended, was one thousand English miles in circumference, including the whole of the Molucca islands, Java, a considerable portion of Celebes, Sumatra, and Borneo.
From Captain Logan's account of the eruption of Krakatoa, which he witnessed from on board the ship Berbice in the Sunda Straits, we see again the spectacular nature of the displays of electrical activity occurring during an eruption. The ship's log at midnight begins:

The ash shower is becoming heavier, and is intermixed with fragments of pumice stone. The lightning and thunder became worse and worse; the lightning flashes shot past and around the ship; fire-balls continually fell on the deck, and burst into sparks. We saw flashes of lightning falling quite close to us on the ship; heard fearful rumblings and explosions, sometimes upon the deck and sometimes among the rigging. The man at the wheel felt strong electric shocks on one arm. The copper sheathing of the rudder became glowing from the electric discharges. Fiery phenomena on board the ship manifested themselves at every moment. Now and then, when any sailor complained that he had been struck, I did my best to set his mind at ease, and endeavoured to talk the idea out of his head, until I myself, holding fast at the time to some part of the rigging with one hand, and bending my head out of reach of the blinding ash shower which swept past my face, had to let go my hold, owing to a severe electric shock in the arm.\(^44\)

During the eruption of Mount St. Helens, lightning and other electrical phenomena associated with the eruption were so spectacular that many witnesses mentioned them. . . . Some observers witnessed unusual forms of lightning. Some of the lightning appeared red. It wasn't normal lightning—"first a white dot appeared in the cloud, and then a bolt would shoot out from it." The lightning was in ball form "streaking toward the ground, connected neither with the cloud nor with the ground. . . ." After the cloud passed overhead, lots of lightning started 600-800 ft in the air and formed "big balls, big as a pickup and just started rolling across the ground and bouncing."\(^45\)

Photos of volcanic lightning displays have been published in several places. For example, Simkin and Fiske have a photo of lightning around Anak Krakatoa (the new island that emerged in place of Krakatoa) taken during an eruption in 1933;\(^46\) Decker and Decker show a five-minute time-lapse photo of lightning over an erupting volcano in Nicaragua;\(^47\) Lambert has a picture of lightning in the skies over Surtsey during an eruption;\(^48\) Nuhfer and others have a photograph of lightning over the Galunggung volcano in Indonesia;\(^49\) and Discover magazine published a spectacular
Mount Vesuvius, 1944. Static electricity crackles over the volcano during an eruption. Courtesy Corbis-Bettmann.

seven-minute time-lapse photo of lightning over the Sakurajima volcano in Japan.\textsuperscript{50}

The descriptions of thunder and photos of lightning around explosive volcanic eruptions show that these phenomena often occur without rainfall, so that the wood for fires could still be "exceedingly dry," ready for the unsuccessful attempts to build fires. These historic descriptions also record the unusual nature of the lightning—that it comes, not only as bolts, but as balls of lightning and that the electricity may permeate the air, creating other
interesting effects. The lightning displays associated with volcanic eruptions are certainly of the unusual and extraordinary type and fit very well with Nephi's description of "exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land." The thunder, earthquakes, and other sounds associated with an explosive volcanic eruption also concur with Nephi's terminology of "terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder." These features of the destruction in 3 Nephi do not alone define the event as a volcanic eruption; just as with the winds described in the previous section, spectacular lightning and thunder can be produced in other ways, but an explosive volcanic eruption is certainly the simplest explanation that satisfies all of the criteria.

**Shaking and Quaking**

Large tectonic earthquakes (those with Richter magnitudes greater than about seven) do not occur frequently around the world—perhaps ten to twenty every year, mostly in unpopulated areas. They do occur frequently enough, however, for scientists to have a very good idea of their characteristics. The energy released during large earthquakes comes from two blocks of earth moving rapidly past each other while years of accumulated strain is released. At most, the shaking of the earth during these massive earthquakes may last for a few minutes. For example, during the Alaskan earthquake of 1964, one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded (Richter magnitude between 8.3 and 8.6), the shaking lasted for three to four minutes, an extraordinarily long period of time.\(^{51}\) The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 lasted only about forty seconds.\(^{52}\)

These short periods of shaking, however, give plenty of time to accomplish the destruction that large earthquakes produce, but they are far short of the three hours of continuous or near continuous shaking described in 3 Nephi. The destruction produced during an earthquake is also fairly localized, along the line of slippage (called the fault line) and in regions quite close to this line. Other phenomena associated with large earthquakes are aftershocks that come intermittently for several days after the main quake, landslides or rock falls off of steep slopes, liquefaction of sandy soils
causing the collapse of buildings, tidal waves or tsunamis in coastal areas, rare displays of lightning or other electrical phenomena, thunderlike noises, and the spread of fires through cities or towns with concentrated housing made of wood.53

Although these phenomena are similar to some of those mentioned in 3 Nephi, some glaring differences are apparent. I have already mentioned one, namely, that, in the 3 Nephi account, the shaking lasted for about three hours—too long a time period for the shock from a single large earthquake and too short for the period during which aftershocks following a major earthquake usually take place. However, it is a very reasonable amount of time for the initial stages of a volcanic eruption. We might call this the "throat-clearing stage" of the eruption, which occurs as the mounting pressure cleans the volcano's vent of the rock and debris that have plugged it up. During this time, frequent explosions and earthquakes occur. Once the vent is cleared, the volcano may continue to erupt for several hours or days without additional significant earthquakes.

Other problems with ascribing the destruction described in 3 Nephi to a major tectonic earthquake include (1) the three days of darkness—this phenomenon has never been reported in association with a large earthquake; (2) the winds and tempests—although it may be windy during an earthquake, just as it may be windy at any other time, no correlation between wind and earthquakes has been demonstrated, even though one of the old, now-abandoned theories of earthquake production was the idea that wind was trapped in the earth and released during an earthquake;54 (3) whirlwinds—I know of no report of a whirlwind or tornado caused by an earthquake; and (4) the inability to light a fire—which, again, has never been reported as an effect of a major earthquake. Nephi's description of the whole face of the land being changed is also not typical of an earthquake. Although the devastation can be enormous during an earthquake, most landmarks survive and are recognizable. On the other hand, a major volcanic eruption often produces scenes so strange and unnatural that it seems as if the landscape has been remade.

The kinds of quaking and shaking described in 3 Nephi are typical, however, of the descriptions from historical accounts of
explosive volcanic eruptions.\textsuperscript{55} During the eruption of Krakatoa, the shaking of the earth lasted throughout the night of August 26, 1883, and on into the next morning.\textsuperscript{56} Earthquake vibrations rose to thirty to forty times the normal background level during the eruption of a volcano on Raoul Island, northeast of New Zealand in 1964, continuing throughout the eruption.\textsuperscript{57} Reports from the 1902 eruption of the Santa Maria volcano in Guatemala tell of earthquake activity that lasted for several hours, rising to several peaks of shaking during the climax of the eruption. The eruption of ash and debris continued on for another day or two without any significant earthquake activity.\textsuperscript{58}

When the Coseguina volcano in Nicaragua erupted in 1835, it was reported that the sounds accompanying the shaking were alarming and heard up to four hundred miles away and that “the roar was practically continuous for seven hours.”\textsuperscript{59} Even though most of the noise and shaking caused by the eruption of Coseguina ceased after a few hours, the eruption itself and the darkness caused by the ashfall continued on for three to four days.\textsuperscript{60} All of these accounts are quite similar to the 3 Nephi account in which the initial part of the eruption lasted for three hours with violent shaking and thunder, followed by quiet and darkness for three days.

**Cities Burned, Drowned, and Buried**

The destruction of people and buildings may occur in a variety of different ways during an explosive volcanic eruption, and the devastation may be widespread, reaching up to a few hundred miles from the erupting volcano. The destruction in the Book of Mormon account appears to have been quite widespread, for, in addition to the cities mentioned in the passage above, the cities of Jacobugath, Laman, Josh, Gad, and Kishkumen and their inhabitants were burned; the cities of Onihah, Mocum, and Jerusalem were covered by water; and the cities of Gilgal, Gadiandi, Gadiomnah, Jacob, and Gimgimno were sunk and buried in the earth.

**Fire.** The cities mentioned in the 3 Nephi account were all destroyed in ways understandable in terms of a massive volcanic eruption. The fires that started in Zarahemla and other cities could easily have been ignited by hot ash falling onto wooden and thatch
structures that probably made up most of the buildings in the cities (Hel. 3:10-11), by a fast-moving, hot cloud of ash traveling along the ground, or by the unusually violent lightning accompanying the eruption. Accounts of similar occurrences can be found in historical records. For example, many fires were started in the city of Stabiae by the fall of hot rocks and ash from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. A firestorm swept through the city of St. Pierre during the 1902 eruption of Mt. Pelée. Many of the houses in tropical St. Pierre were wooden structures with no windowpanes, only shutters, so that the highly heated gas and ash from the eruption easily penetrated into every part of the buildings. The city was almost instantly and completely engulfed in flames. A ship from Fort de France tried to approach the burning city three and one-half hours after the eruption but had to turn away because the heat was still so intense. An assistant purser by the name of Thompson on board the ship Roraima, which was just approaching the St. Pierre harbor at the time of the eruption of Mt. Pelée, gives the following description:

I saw St. Pierre destroyed. It was blotted out by one great flash of fire. Nearly 40,000 people were killed at once. Of eighteen vessels lying in the Roads, only one, the British steamship Roddam escaped and she, I hear, lost more than half on board. It was a dying crew that took her out. Our boat, the Roraima, arrived at St. Pierre early Thursday morning. For hours before we entered the roadstead, we could see flames and smoke rising from Mt. Pelée. No one on board had any idea of danger. Capt. G. T. Muggah was on bridge and all hands got on deck to see the show. The spectacle was magnificent. As we approached St. Pierre, we could distinguish the rolling and leaping red flames that belched from the mountain in huge volumes and gushed high into the sky. Enormous clouds of black smoke hung over the volcano. The flames were then spurtling straight up in the air, now and then waving to one side or the other a moment, and again leaping suddenly higher up. There was a constant muffled roar. It was like the biggest oil refinery in the world burning up on the mountain top. There was a tremendous explosion about 7:45 soon after we got in. The mountain was blown to pieces. There was no warning. The side of the volcano was ripped out, and there hurled straight towards us a solid wall of flame. It sounded like a thousand cannon.

The wave of fire was on us and over us like a lightning flash. It was like a hurricane of fire. I saw it strike the cable steamship Grappler broadside on, and capsize her. From end to end she burst into flames and then sank. The fire rolled in mass straight down on St. Pierre and the shipping. The town vanished before our eyes.
The air grew stifling hot and we were in the thick of it. Wherever the mass of fire struck the sea, the water boiled and sent up great clouds of steam. The sea was torn into huge whirlpools that careened toward the open sea. One of these horrible, hot whirlpools swung under the Roraima and pulled her down on her beam end with the suction. She careened way over to port, and then the fire hurricane from the volcano smashed her, and over she went on the opposite side. The fire wave swept off the masts and smokestacks as if they were cut by a knife.

I saved my life by running to my stateroom and burying myself in the bedding. The blast of fire from the volcano lasted only for a few minutes. It shriveled and set fire to everything it touched. Thousands of casks of rum were stored in St. Pierre, and these were exploded by the terrific heat. Burning rum ran in streams down every street and out into the sea.

Before the volcano burst, the landings at St. Pierre were crowded with people. After the explosion, not one living being was seen on land. Only twenty-five of those on board [out of sixty-eight] were left after the first blast.63

Another cause of fires in a volcanic disaster can be related more to the effects of the earthquakes accompanying an eruption than to the eruption itself. Lamps, torches, cooking fires, and other open flames disturbed by the shaking may ignite fires. In the confusion and darkness, these fires may burn out of control and create havoc in populated areas.

Flood. The flooding of cities and villages is also a common occurrence during large, explosive volcanic eruptions. Explosions, earthquakes, and massive landslides around a volcano, particularly if the volcano is near the ocean, create huge waves of water that travel outward from the source until they collapse on coastal communities. These waves, called tidal waves or more properly tsunami, are one of the major causes of death in some volcanic eruptions. During the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa, 165 villages were completely destroyed and 132 partly destroyed by tsunami, killing approximately thirty-three thousand people. Waves crashing on the shores near Krakatoa reached heights of over 130 feet.64

Several eyewitnesses recorded accounts of the Krakatoa tsunami and their destructive power. An elderly Dutchman reported:

I have lived in Anjer [Java] all my life, and little thought the old town would have been destroyed in the way it has. I am getting on in years, and quite expected to have laid my bones in the little cemetery
St. Pierre, Martinique, prior to the eruption of Mount Pelée, ca. 1902. St. Pierre was a prosperous seaport with a population of almost 40,000. Courtesy Bart J. Kowallis.

The remains of St. Pierre, 1902. Following the eruption of Mount Pelée, a firestorm swept through the city. Only the foundations of the buildings survived the devastation. Courtesy Bart J. Kowallis.
near the shore, but not even that has escaped, and some of the bodies have actually been washed out of the graves and carried out to sea. The whole town has been swept away, and I have lost everything except my life. The wonder is that I escaped at all. I can never be too thankful for such a miraculous escape as I had.

The eruption began on the Sunday afternoon. We did not take much notice at first, until the reports grew very loud. Then we noticed that Krakatoa was completely enveloped in smoke. Afterwards came on the thick darkness, so black and intense that I could not see my hand before my eyes. It was about this time that a message came from Batavia inquiring as to the explosive shocks, and the last telegram sent off from us was telling you about the darkness and smoke. Towards night everything became worse. The reports became deafening, the natives cowered down panic-stricken, and a red fiery glare was visible in the sky above the mountain. Although Krakatoa was twenty-five miles away, the concussion and vibration from the constantly repeated shocks was most terrifying. Many of the houses shook so much that we feared every minute would bring them down. There was little sleep for any of us that dreadful night. Before daybreak on Monday, on going out of doors, I found the shower of ashes had commenced, and this gradually increased in force until at length large pieces of pumice-stone kept falling around. About six A.M. I was walking along the beach. There was no sign of the sun, as usual, and the sky had a dull, depressing look. Some of the darkness of the previous day had cleared off, but it was not very light even then. Looking out to sea I noticed a dark black object through the gloom, traveling towards the shore.

At first sight it seemed like a low range of hills rising out of the water, but I knew there was nothing of the kind in that part of the Soenda Strait. A second glance—and a very hurried one it was—convinced me that it was a lofty ridge of water many feet high, and worse still, that it would soon break upon the coast near the town, there was no time to give any warning, and so I turned and ran for my life. My running days have long gone by, but you may be sure that I did my best. In a few minutes I heard the water with a loud roar break upon the shore. Everything was engulfed. Another glance around showed the houses being swept away and the trees thrown down on every side. Breathless and exhausted I still pressed on. As I heard the rushing waters behind me, I knew that it was a race for life. Struggling on, a few yards more brought me to some rising ground, and here the torrent of water overtook me. I gave up all for lost, as I saw with dismay how high the wave still was. I was soon taken off my feet and borne inland by the force of the resistless mass. I remember nothing more until a violent blow aroused me. Some hard firm substance seemed within my reach, and clutching it I found I had gained a place of safety. The waters swept past, and I found myself clinging to a cocoanut palm-tree. Most of the trees near the town were uprooted and thrown down for miles, but this one fortunately had escaped and myself with it.
The huge wave rolled on, gradually decreasing in height and strength until the mountain slopes at the back of Anjer were reached, and then, its fury spent, the waters gradually receded and flowed back into the sea. The sight of those receding waters haunts me still. As I clung to the palm-tree, wet and exhausted, there floated past the dead bodies of many a friend and neighbor. Only a mere handful of the population escaped. Houses and streets were completely destroyed, and scarcely a trace remains of where the once busy, thriving town originally stood.65

Another report describes the devastation following the tsunami:

As far as the eye can reach, the only thing that remains standing is a solitary tree, a gigantic durian, maimed, branchless and leafless. It forms the gravemark of a heap of corpses and carcasses lying under roofs, houses, and trunks of trees. Hundreds of such graves, though of smaller dimensions, may be seen over and over again on the plain. The turned-up earth often merely covers a corpse, alongside which a cocoanut branch or bamboo is stuck upright for the guidance of the authorities. Thousands of corpses of human beings and also carcasses of animals still await burial, and make their presence apparent by an indescribable stench. They lie in knots and entangled masses impossible to unravel.66

Even for communities located along the shores of lakes, the flooding hazards are significant during a volcanic eruption. A child generates waves in the bathtub by sliding to one end of the tub, taking the water with him, then sliding back along with the water to the other end until eventually the water waves in the tub begin to slop over the sides. In the same way, large water waves can be generated in lakes by the wave energy produced by earthquakes moving back and forth through the water. The waves created by this movement are called seiche waves and, although not usually as large as tsunami, they can cause severe damage and death. Water levels in lakes can also change dramatically during an eruption due to landslides collapsing into the lake or blocking a lake’s outlet. Spirit Lake at the foot of Mount St. Helens was two hundred feet higher in elevation after the eruption in 1980.67 Lodges, cabins—everything near the previous lakeshore—were buried deeply under water, mud, and debris.

The kinds of flooding and burial by water that is associated with explosive volcanic eruptions could certainly fit the descriptions in 3 Nephi when the Lord, referring to the cities of Jerusalem,
Onihah, and Mocum, says, “The waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof,” or when Nephi describes the city of Moroni sinking “into the depths of the sea.” Moroni is described in the Book of Mormon as being “near the east sea” (Alma 50:13), while Sorenson has suggested that Jerusalem was perhaps located on the shores of a lake.68 These locations are both ideal for the types of destruction by water that occur during an eruption.

**Burial.** The Book of Mormon also describes the destruction of several cities by either being buried in the earth or, as in the case of the city of Moronihah, having the earth carried up upon the city. Burial in the earth is a common occurrence in explosive volcanic eruptions. The large quantities of ash and pumice that are produced blanket the landscape for many miles around the volcano. A heavy fall of ash and pumice destroyed the town of Pompeii during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The accumulation of ash and pumice averaged a depth of about twenty feet69 and left

![Building buried by lahars (volcanic mudflows), 1990. This structure, located near the mouth of the Drift River in Alaska, is twenty-two miles from Redoubt Volcano, the source of the eruption. Photograph by C. Gardner. Courtesy USGS.](image-url)
only the tops of the taller buildings protruding above it. Because the town was completely abandoned after the eruption and the building tops that remained above the ash eventually weathered away, Pompeii was for a time completely lost. Modern excavations have uncovered the town and, by pouring plaster into molds left in the solidified ash, have shown the tragic final moments of some of the inhabitants who were trapped in the ashfall.

Cities or towns are also buried when the ash from an eruption combines with rain or with rapidly melting snow to form a thick slurry of hot mud that flows rapidly downslope. These volcanic mudflows are called *lahars*. The town of Herculaneum escaped the heavy fall of ash that destroyed Pompeii, but as the ash and pumice continued to accumulate on the higher slopes of the volcano and were then saturated by rain, a wet slurry of mud formed, became fluid, and quite suddenly swept down the sides of the volcano. One or more of these lahars flowed through Herculaneum and completely engulfed it. Buildings were smothered, crushed, and buried sixty to seventy feet deep in the mud. The burial was complete enough that a new town, Resina, was constructed on top of buried Herculaneum.

Another example of burial by mud, but with a slightly different twist, occurred in 1886 when the Tarawera volcano on the North Island of New Zealand erupted. Many towns and villages around the volcano were buried by falling mud produced when part of the eruption blew out through the bottom of Lake Rotomahana, located adjacent to the volcano. The mixture of volcanic ash, water, and mud that had accumulated on the bottom of the lake for centuries fell from the sky. The village of Wairoa was buried in seven feet of this mixture, and the villages of Moura and Te Ariki disappeared, along with all of their inhabitants, under seventy-five feet of mud.

A recent example of a city being buried by a volcanic mudflow occurred in Colombia in 1985. On November 13 of that year, a relatively small eruption occurred from the Nevado del Ruiz volcano. The ash, however, was hot enough to melt part of the snow and ice cap at the top of the volcano. The water from the melted snow mixed with ash at the top of the volcano and picked up other debris as it flowed swiftly down the mountain and into the river valleys. At about 11 p.m., the mudflows swept over the
defenseless city of Armero, killing about twenty-five thousand people. Asleep in their beds, most of the inhabitants had no warning and were buried alive. It was all over in just a few minutes.\textsuperscript{74}

In addition to burial by falling ash and burial by lahars, a third method of burial is also possible around an erupting volcano. This phenomenon was not well understood until the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980. This eruption was triggered when the swollen north side of the volcano collapsed. The ensuing landslide, or debris avalanche, traveled out across the valley at the base of the mountain, burying Spirit Lake, then flowed up and over an intervening ridge more than three hundred feet high, down across the next valley, and then halfway up the next mountain, leaving deposits as much as six hundred feet thick.\textsuperscript{75} This debris avalanche traveled as far as twenty-five miles from the volcano at speeds in excess of 150 miles per hour.\textsuperscript{76} Since 1980, geologists have learned that occurrences of massive landslides such as this are actually quite commonly associated with explosive eruptions.\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{Lahars accumulated in the Drift River Valley}. Large lahars from the eruptions of Redoubt Volcano in 1989 and 1990 covered the entire Drift River Valley floor and extended twenty-two miles to the Cook Inlet. Photograph by T. Miller. Courtesy USGS.
Returning once more to the words in 3 Nephi, we read that “the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of the city there became a great mountain.” From this description, it seems possible that Moronihah might have been buried by a debris avalanche similar to the one that occurred at Mount St. Helens—an effective way to carry earth up upon a city. In any case, Moronihah and the other cities buried in the earth (or the ash) would have to have been quite close to the eruption (probably within fifty miles and perhaps much closer). Avalanches such as these do indeed dramatically alter the local topography so that it is not unreasonable to believe that where there had been a city nestled in a valley, there was, after the eruption, a hill or mountain formed by the avalanche deposits. It is hard to imagine “a great mountain” being formed by these avalanche processes, but it may be that the author is using a bit of hyperbole here, as is not uncommon in accounts of any disaster. It is also true that the term “great mountain” may be relative—what people in one area refer to as a mountain may to others be simply a hill. An alternative hypothesis, however, is that the city was very close to the volcano and was initially buried by an avalanche deposit, then later it became a great mountain as the volcano rebuilt itself over the buried city.

Whole Face of Land Changed

This description from 3 Nephi almost sounds as if, after the destruction, no mountains or valleys or other topographic features were recognizable—as if the face of the entire earth had been changed. And yet a careful reading makes it obvious that the basic geography of the Book of Mormon land was not changed after the destruction and that there were cities, especially around the land of Bountiful, that were probably not severely damaged. 78

One of the keys to understanding these passages of scripture is to understand the meaning of “whole face of the land” or “face of the whole earth.” What did Nephi mean? Certainly, he did not mean literally the whole earth, for we know from historical records that no massive destruction occurred at this time in the Mediterranean region, nor in Asia, Europe, or the Middle East. So if we cannot interpret “the whole earth” as being literally the whole earth, what did the writer mean? I think it is obvious that he meant
his whole earth, or the whole land that was known and inhabited by the Book of Mormon peoples. Here again one must not get carried away into thinking that all of North and South America were deformed, because, as has been shown by other authors, the area over which the Book of Mormon peoples roamed was most likely only a few hundred miles long and wide. It is only in this context that the great destruction makes sense and can be supported by scientific reasoning and, hopefully at some point in the future, some concrete evidence of the disaster. If we insist on holding to the claim that all of the topographic features of two great continents were formed at this time, we cannot count on any support from geology, and we will probably alienate anyone with even a rudimentary understanding of the subject.

How do people who have witnessed one of these eruptions or who have visited the area after an eruption describe what they see? This comparison, I believe, is a good measure of how Nephi would react to the same event. Pliny the Younger describes his reaction upon seeing the landscape after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius:
At last the darkness thinned and dispersed into smoke or cloud; then there was genuine daylight, and the sun actually shone out, but yellowish as it is during an eclipse. We were terrified to see everything changed, buried deep in ashes like snowdrifts.\textsuperscript{81}

From accounts of the eruption of Mount St. Helens come the following descriptions of the devastated landscape after the eruption:

Within minutes . . . the upper Toutle River Valley below St. Helens was a barren landscape of total desolation. A 156-square-mile swath extending northwest from the volcano lay devastated. A billion board feet of timber were blown down; animals were buried in ash or roasted by gases; and scores of persons were dead or missing. . . . Harry Truman, his lodge and all of Spirit Lake disappeared in a cataclysmic cauldron. The once-rounded mountain top was shorter by 1,300 feet, and a mile-deep horseshoe of hell was gouged out of the north side.\textsuperscript{82}

They call the land an alien moonscape, a blighted badlands. President Carter flew over it in late May and called it “indescribable.” Dirty rivulets seem to flow uphill as they wind through the bizarre terrain. . . . At ground zero in the hellish landscape is what is left of Mount St. Helens. It sits like a resting monster.\textsuperscript{83}

After a violent eruption, the volcano and the area surrounding it often appear completely foreign. The volcano itself may have changed from a towering, symmetrical peak to a blackened stump, stripped of foliage and unrecognizable as the mountain it used to be. Local officials who went to investigate the eruption of Tambora found that the thirteen-thousand-foot mountain was now flattened into a broad plateau and surrounded by a scene of utter devastation.\textsuperscript{84} About ninety thousand people died from the eruption and the famine and disease that followed.

Volcanic landslides and mudflows may also significantly alter the terrain, creating hills and ridges where valleys and lowlands had previously existed. The account in 3 Nephi describes four cities as having sunk and “made hills and valleys in the places thereof” (3 Ne. 9:8). Tsunamis along the coast may obliterate not only towns and villages but other familiar landmarks. After a night of terror during the eruption of Krakatoa and the tsunamis that followed the eruption, one resident described the scene: “At last morning came. In front of us was what was once a town, but there was no destruction. There was simply . . . nothing.”\textsuperscript{85}
Perhaps the most significant change is due to the gray blanket of ash covering everything, casting a ghostly pall over the entire scene, killing most of the vegetation, and creating the feeling of a new and alien landscape. In 1991, Mount Pinatubo erupted in the Philippines. The amount of ash erupted was about the same as during the Krakatoa eruption. The ash buried Clark Airbase, fifteen miles from the volcano, so deeply that the United States government later abandoned it. It also destroyed, at least temporarily, over two hundred thousand acres of farmland and two dozen towns and displaced 1.2 million Filipinos from their homes. It truly changed the whole face of the land.

**Broken and Scattered Rocks**

Nephi’s description of the effects the cataclysm had on the rocks might at first glance be ascribed to a great earthquake. Certainly during a great quake the earth is rent and broken, and rocks may afterward be found in “seams and cracks” and in “broken fragments.” However, Nephi states that the rocks were found in this manner scattered over the whole face of the land. This is not typical of earthquakes, where the zone of actual breakage of rock is usually fairly narrow and confined, even in the greatest earthquakes. On the other hand, an explosive volcanic eruption commonly produces large quantities of broken and shattered rocks that are frequently scattered over a very wide area. Geologists call...
deposits of these broken, fragmented rocks *pyroclastic* rocks. *Pyro* is derived from Greek and means fire, while *clastic* means broken or fragmented.

The size of the fragments of rock produced by a volcanic eruption ranges from small sand-sized fragments of ash and dust, to larger lumps of pumice and other rock, and even to very large house-sized blocks. The largest fragments of rock generally fall back to the earth near the eruptive source, but fairly large fragments may still be found some distance from the volcano. During the violent 1669 eruption of Italy’s Mount Etna, “huge boulders, some weighing as much as three hundred pounds, were shot several miles through the air.” Volcanic bombs over three feet in diameter were thrown over three miles during the 1938 eruption of Asama in central Japan. In Tambora’s 1815 eruption, fist-sized stones fell up to twenty-five miles away from the eruption. In

**Impact craters from volcanic bombs, 1992.** The craters, formed from large rocks ejected during a volcanic eruption, dot the surface of avalanches of volcanic debris that blanket the slopes of Crater Peak on the Mount Spurr volcano in Alaska. Photograph by C. Neal. Courtesy USGS.
describing two phases of the eruption of the Taal volcano in 1754 in the Philippines, one eyewitness describes the scattering of rocks and boulders, along with some of the other volcanic phenomena we have already discussed:

On November 15, it [Taal volcano] vomited enormous boulders. More intense earthquakes than had been experienced before tottered those houses which still stood. Immense waves of water in the lake threatened the low-lying villages along its shores.

At 7 in the morning of November 28 occurred a new paroxysm, during which the volcano vomited forth such masses of fire and ejecta that in my opinion, all the material ejected during so many months, if taken together, would not equal the quantity which issued at that time. The columns of fire and smoke ascended higher than ever before, increasing every moment in volume, and setting fire to the whole island, there not being the smallest portion of the latter which was not covered by smoke and glowing rocks and ashes. All this was accompanied by terrific lightning and thunder above, and violent shocks of earthquakes underneath.90

The reports of the distribution of rock fragments from the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa are probably typical for a moderately large eruption. Aboard the ship Sir Robert Sale, located approximately forty miles from the main blast, it was recorded that lumps of pumice the size of pumpkins fell onto the deck.91 Captain Watson, on board the Charles Bal ten miles from the volcano, gives this account:

At 2:30 P.M. we noticed some agitation about the point of Krakatoa, clouds or something being propelled from the N.E. point with great velocity. At 3:30 we heard above us and about the island a strange sound, as of a mighty crackling fire, or the discharge of heavy artillery at one or two seconds’ interval. At 4:15 . . . we observed a repetition of the noise noted at 3:30, only much more furious and alarming; the matter, whatever it was, being propelled with amazing velocity to the N.E. . . . At five the roaring noise continued and was increasing; darkness spread over the sky, and a hail of pumicestone fell on us, of which many pieces were of considerable size and quite warm. . . . About six the fall of larger stones ceased, but there continued a steady downpour of a smaller kind, most blinding to the eyes, and covering the deck to a depth of three to four inches very speedily. While an intense blackness covered the sky and land and sea, we sailed on our course.92
A large fragment of the lava dome from Augustine Volcano, 1986. This rock fragment was carried about three miles in a thick, fast-moving wall of volcanic ash (nuée ardente) during the eruption of Augustine Volcano. Photograph by M. E. Yount. Courtesy USGS.

The fall of stones during an eruption is one of the more selective ways in which people are injured or killed. Two people may be standing together and one will be hit and killed while the other may be spared. In 1779, the volcano Sakurajima erupted in southern Japan. One woman caught in the eruption describes her experience trying to escape the island:

I, myself, held a four year old child in my arms and led another of seven, and, so impeded, was forsaken by the boats. As I groped through the night, a stone, large as a hand-ball, struck the baby in the neck and killed her. She gave one cry and lay quite still, and all my efforts to revive her were in vain. I prayed she might live a thousand generations, but all prayers failed, and the body became colder and colder. So I covered her face with a cloth, and wept over my dead. Just then a weary old man came creeping near and told of other people killed by falling stones, others dragging themselves along with broken legs, and some buried alive under sand drifts.93
Volcanic eruptions are, as can be seen from the above accounts, very efficient at scattering broken rock fragments over a wide area and in causing great destruction and death due to this ejected material. This scattering of ejected rock could easily explain the broken rock fragments found over the whole land after the disaster in 3 Nephi.

**Thick Darkness**

One of the common themes that can be found in almost all accounts of explosive volcanic eruptions is the darkness created by the fall of ash. This darkness may last for a few hours or a few days, and the historical descriptions mimic the terminology used in the Book of Mormon. In the following accounts, the darkness is referred to as “thick,” “impenetrable,” “profound,” and “total.” It is also described as a “darkness that might almost be felt.” Some accounts even record that fires cannot be lit or can only be started with great difficulty. The following are a representative cross section of the numerous records that describe the darkness associated with explosive volcanic eruptions.

Pliny the Younger had the opportunity to witness and describe in vivid detail the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. His uncle, Pliny the Elder, was a naturalist and wanted a closer view of the eruption. He was prepared to sail across the Bay of Naples to better see the eruption when he received word of the devastation that was occurring at the mountain’s base. The elder Pliny decided to still travel across the bay but to try to rescue people rather than investigate the volcano, although he was probably still hoping for a better view. During the rescue attempt, Pliny the Elder was either overcome with fumes or died of a heart attack. Others with him returned to his nephew, reported what had happened, and described the eruption. Pliny the Younger later recorded his impressions in two letters to the historian Tacitus:

> Elsewhere there was daylight by this time, but they [the elder Pliny and his companion] were still in darkness, blacker and denser than any night that ever was.  

> Ashes were already falling, not as yet very thickly. I looked round: a dense black cloud was coming up behind us, spreading over
Eruption cloud rising over the summit of Augustine Volcano, 1986. The cloud, with tendrils of ash extending downward, darkens the daytime sky. Courtesy USGS.

the earth like a flood. . . . We had scarcely sat down to rest when darkness fell, not the dark of a moonless or cloudy night, but as if the lamp had been put out in a closed room.95

During the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens, Sgt. Larry Gamache of the Yakima County Sheriff’s office reported that it was “just like midnight” in the middle of the afternoon. “All the street lights and neon signs have turned on.”96 The darkness during the eruption of Bezymianny Volcano in eastern Russia is described as “so impenetrably dark that one could not see his own hand, even if brought up to the very face,” and the cloud of darkness described as “very thick and almost tangibly heavy.”97 Mount Tambora was reduced in height by over four thousand feet when it erupted in 1815, and “the darkness occasioned in the daytime by the ashes in Java was so profound, that nothing equal to it was ever wit-nessed in the darkest night,”98 making it “impossible to see your hand when held up close to the eye.”99 “There was total darkness by day for three days within 200 miles of the volcano.”100
The most detailed eyewitness accounts come from the eruption of Krakatoa. The first officer on board the ship W. H. Besse recorded these impressions:

Sunday, August 26, 1883.—The day commenced with strong breezes and thick cloudy weather; at 4 A.M. hove short; at 6 A.M. got under weigh, wind SW; at 4 P.M. wind hauling ahead, came to anchor; the sky at this time having a threatening appearance; atmosphere very close and smoky, at 5 P.M. heard a quick succession of heavy reports sounding like the broadside of a man-of-war only far louder and heavier; heard these reports at intervals throughout the night; the sky was intensely dark, the wind having a dull moaning; through the rigging also noticed a light fall of ashes. The sun when it rose next morning . . . had the appearance of a ball of fire, the air so smoky, could see but a short distance; at 6 A.M. thinking the worst of the eruption was over as the reports were not so frequent or heavy as during the night, got under weigh, having a fair wind, was in hopes to get out clear of the straits before night . . . let go starboard anchor, it had gradually been growing dark since 9 A.M. and by the time the squall struck us, it was darker than any night I ever saw; this was midnight at noon, a heavy shower of ashes came with the squall, the air being so thick it was difficult to breathe, also noticed a strong smell of sulphur, all hands expecting to be suffocated; the terrible noises from the volcano, the sky filled with forked lightning, running in all directions and making the darkness more intense than ever; the howling of the wind through the rigging formed one of the wildest and most awful scenes imaginable, one that will never be forgotten by anyone on board, all expecting that the last days of the earth had come.\textsuperscript{101}

Another witness to the Krakatoa eruption recounted that they were “inclosed in a darkness that might almost be felt,” and that “at noon the darkness was so intense that we had to grope our way about the decks [of the ship].”\textsuperscript{102}

One of the interesting features of the “thick darkness” described in 3 Nephi was the difficulty, at least in some locations, of starting fires even with their fine, dry wood. This was obviously not a general feature of the destructive event, because several cities were burned—so some fire was possible. Although I have not found many accounts of this phenomenon in historical records of volcanic eruptions, it has been reported as something that does occasionally occur. For example, dozens of fires kindled by the fall of hot ash around Mount St. Helens were quickly extinguished by
the heavy fall of ash. Rapidly falling ash can accumulate to several inches thick in a few minutes, even at considerable distances from the erupting volcano. The ash even finds its way into buildings and homes in tropical areas where windowpanes are normally absent. When Krakatoa erupted, the Beyerinck family was living in a village about fifteen miles from the island. Their home was the only one still standing after the eruption. Mrs. Beyerinck describes their difficulty starting a fire:

Someone burst in shouting 'shut the doors, shut the doors.' Suddenly it was pitch dark. The last thing I saw was the ash being pushed up through the cracks in the floorboards, like a fountain. . . .

There was still deep darkness. We couldn't light a fire, as matches went out immediately. At last the head boy, the only remaining male servant, managed to start a small fire.104

In the case of the Nephites, we do not know how they started fires during normal times; presumably it required some skill and patience. One can only imagine the difficulty in trying to start a fire during a heavy fall of ash.

Not only will the ashfall extinguish fires, but the gases erupted from a volcano can have the same effect. These gases are usually heavier than normal atmospheric gases, are very poor in oxygen, and commonly create acids in the atmosphere. These gases would also prevent the lighting of fires, but seldom is anyone alive to make the attempt, as the gases tend to quickly suffocate or poison those who are unfortunate enough to be caught under the blanket. In 1986 an unusual release of CO₂ from a volcanic lake, Lake Nyos in Cameroon, created a dense near-surface cloud that flowed down and over several villages, asphyxiating 1,746 people and eighty-three hundred livestock. In the village of Nyos, less than 1 percent of the villagers survived. Asphyxiation was also a common cause of death during the 1911 eruption of the Taal volcano in the Philippines. One of the two survivors found in the city of St. Pierre after its destruction by the eruption of Mount Pelée records the suffocation of several people around him:

On the 8th of May at about eight o'clock of the morning, I was seated on the door-step of my house, which was in the southeastern part of the city. . . . All of a sudden I felt a terrible wind blowing, the
earth began to tremble, and the sky suddenly became dark. I turned to go into the house, made with great difficulty the three or four steps that separated me from my room, and felt my arms and legs burning, also my body. I dropped upon a table. At this moment four others sought refuge in my room, crying and writhing with pain, although their garments showed no sign of having been touched by flame. At the end of ten minutes one of these, the young Delavaud girl, aged about ten years, fell dead; the others left. I then got up and went into another room, where I found the father Delavaud, still clothed and lying on the bed, dead. He was purple and inflated, but the clothing was intact. I went out and found in the court two corpses interlocked: they were the bodies of the two young men who had . . . been in the garden when I returned to my house at the beginning of the catastrophe. Crazed and almost overcome, I threw myself upon a bed, inert and awaiting death. My senses returned to me in perhaps an hour.108

Reactions of Terrified People

After the destruction and death described in 3 Nephi, the people “cry and mourn, saying: O that we had repented before this great and terrible day, and had not killed and stoned the prophets, and cast them out” (3 Ne. 8:25). These Book of Mormon people, having been warned by the prophets, were perhaps more justified but not unique in their reaction. The violence of explosive eruptions with their accompanying shaking, ashfall, darkness, and other phenomena often seem to bring those trapped within the zone of these terrifying effects to a state of humility and repentance, a contemplation of death, and sometimes a belief that the end of the world has arrived. Pliny reports, “People bewailed their own fate or that of their relatives, and there were some who prayed for death in their terror of dying. Many besought the aid of the gods, but still more imagined there were no gods left and that the universe was plunged into eternal darkness for evermore.”109

Ivan Orloff, an Alaskan Eskimo, wrote to his wife the following during the 1912 eruption of Katmai:

We are awaiting death at any moment. A mountain has burst near here. We are covered with ash, in some places ten feet and six feet deep. All this began on June sixth. Night and day we light lanterns. We cannot see daylight. We have no water, the rivers are just ashes mixed with water. Here are darkness and hell, thunder and noise. I do not know whether it is day or night. The earth is trembling, it lightens every minute. It is terrible. We are praying.110
During the eruption of Coseguina in 1835, the terror of the inhabitants of Alancho, Nicaragua, was so great that anticipating the final judgment was upon them, "three hundred of those living out of wedlock were married at once."\(^{111}\) Deathbed repentance, however, is not always effective. In Sicily in A.D. 1169, Mount Etna had one of its most lethal eruptions, killing fifteen thousand people. A large group had crowded into Catania's cathedral "to pray for divine intercession when the earth heaved and the building collapsed," killing them all.\(^{112}\)

**A True Record**

A question that might be asked by those who doubt the truth of the Book of Mormon account is, "What is so remarkable about the account of a volcanic eruption?" "No doubt," they would say, "Joseph Smith had read an account of a volcanic eruption and thought it would make a nice backdrop for the destruction he envisioned occurring at Christ's death." I would answer that the account is remarkable for its detail and accuracy and that such an account would have been impossible for an uneducated young man to have published in 1830. Volcanoes were neither well understood nor well documented in the early 1800s. Geology was a science still in its infancy. The first real textbook of geology was published the same year as the Book of Mormon, 1830, by Charles Lyell in Great Britain.\(^{113}\) But his descriptions of volcanic eruptions, as well as the few other accounts available in Joseph Smith's day, are incomplete and do not include all the features found in the Book of Mormon account, features that are now known to occur with large explosive eruptions.

The eruption of Tambora in 1815 was probably the most spectacular eruption in historic times, and it occurred when Joseph Smith was about ten years old. "Surely," Book of Mormon detractors would say, "Joseph must have read or heard about this eruption? He could easily have modeled his 3 Nephi account after Tambora." Although it is possible that Joseph read an account of the Tambora eruption somewhere, it is much more probable that Joseph never knew about the eruption of Mount Tambora. The eruption was almost completely unreported at the time it occurred, and
detailed available accounts of the eruption are still rare. The only substantial accounts that survived from this time were assembled by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, British lieutenant governor of Java, and published in 1817. Raffles's History of Java does include a few pages describing the eruption, and some of the features of the description are similar to the Book of Mormon account (as are the accounts of all volcanic eruptions of this type), but again the account does not mention some of the features of the Book of Mormon account. For example, no mention is made of lightning of any kind, nor of the inability to light fires. Nor does Raffles mention all the types of destruction found in the Book of Mormon account. It was not until 1847 that a scientific expedition penetrated to the crater and scientists were able to gain some understanding of what had occurred. Even then, the information gathered was not widely distributed.

Although our testimonies of the Book of Mormon do not or should not depend upon physical evidences, such evidences can add greater depth, understanding, and faith as we read and study. The gospel of Jesus Christ asks us all to "study and learn" (D&C 90:15) and teaches us that it is "impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6). The events in the Book of Mormon are more personally meaningful and I feel a greater compassion and kinship for the people of the Book of Mormon as I gain a greater understanding of their way of life, their problems, and their environment.

Bart J. Kowallis is Chair of the Department of Geology at Brigham Young University.

NOTES

2Blong, Time of Darkness, 70.
3Blong, Time of Darkness, 104.
4Blong, Time of Darkness, 5.
5Blong, Time of Darkness, 4.
6Blong, Time of Darkness, 103.
7Blong, Time of Darkness, 116.
8Blong, Time of Darkness, 151.
9Blong, Time of Darkness, 116.

John Gee, "Another Note on the Three Days of Darkness," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 2. Some people have argued that this eruption corresponds with the plagues and darkness in Egypt described in Exodus.


See, for example, John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1985), 415. This book, in my view, is the best analysis of Book of Mormon geography available and provides us with a very plausible setting.

Other works suggesting a volcanic eruption as a possible cause of the destruction in 3 Nephi include the following:

James L. Baer, "The Third Nephi Disaster: A Geological View," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (spring 1986): 129-32. The author mentions the possibility of volcanic eruptions as the cause of the destruction, but focuses mostly on the event being caused by one or more large earthquakes. Earthquakes certainly do accompany large volcanic eruptions, sometimes occurring in swarms of quakes as the eruption proceeds. The reverse, however, is not true: volcanic eruptions do not usually occur with large earthquakes, and large earthquakes of even the largest magnitudes do not last for more than a few minutes and certainly not for the three hours described in 3 Nephi.


E. L. Peay, *Nephi's Promised Land in Central America*, vol. 2 of *The Lands of Zarabemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary* (Provo, Utah: By the author, 1994), 168-69. Peay suggests that a combination of hurricane, volcano, and great earthquake could account for the destruction, although he focuses on the volcanic eruption to explain most of the features.

Marlon A. Nance, "Can the 'Days of Darkness' Be Documented?" FARMS Seminar, October 26, 1996. Nance has taken the study one step further. He is trying to identify ash layers in oceanic sediments near Mesoamerica to try to identify the eruption responsible for the 3 Nephi destruction.

Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 231-38. Nibley first tries to explain everything in terms of events that occur during a great earthquake, but as he proceeds also includes the idea that a volcanic eruption may have been involved. He cites several examples of the different phenomena from historic accounts of large earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In general Nibley's analysis is quite good and fairly close to my own, although I would argue that no large earthquakes, outside of those naturally occurring with an explosive volcanic eruption, are needed to explain the text in 3 Nephi.

David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah, New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1981), 38-41. Palmer does a very nice job of outlining the basic evidences for a volcanic eruption at the time of the great destruction. However, I would disagree with him on the following
points. First, he states that "it appears that there was eruption of at least one and probably several volcanoes" (39). I see no need for the eruption of more than one volcano, an event that would be highly unlikely in most natural settings for the time frame given in the Book of Mormon. Secondly, he states that "there was obviously a devastating earthquake, and its aftershocks lasted for three days" (39). The Book of Mormon account indicates that after three hours the shaking ceased, not three days. Lastly, Palmer says, "The description given in the Book of Mormon suggests an abnormally large shift in the plates at the time of the Crucifixion. That would have caused earthquakes and simultaneously sent magma to the surface in several places, unleashing terrible destruction" (40). However, according to geologic understanding, it is not likely that an unusually large shift in the plates would send magma to the surface. Only if the magma were already near the surface, primed for an eruption, could a large earthquake trigger a volcanic eruption. Again, however, no large movement along the plate boundary is necessary to explain the events of 3 Nephi.

Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 318–23. My only comments on his analysis are that he calls on hurricanes or tropical storms as the likely cause of the flooding of cities near the sea, while I would suggest that it is far more likely that this flooding was caused by tsunami. He also states that nothing is surprising about the phenomena associated with the destruction except that the scale or magnitude was unprecedented (323). I would agree that this is probably true among the Book of Mormon peoples, but the magnitude of this destruction, I would suggest, is not unique in historical times (certainly the eruptions of Krakatoa and Tambora are possibly of the same scale), and this event would have been dwarfed by some of the eruptions we observe to have occurred in the geologic record, such as the last three eruptions out of the Yellowstone area, which were hundreds of times bigger than Krakatoa and Tambora. See Robert B. Smith and Lawrence W. Braile, "Topographic Signature, Space-Time Evolution, and Physical Properties of the Yellowstone-Snake River Plain Volcanic System: The Yellowstone Hotspot," in *Geology of Wyoming*, ed. Arthur W. Snode, James R. Steidtmann, and Sheila M. Roberts, Geological Survey of Wyoming Memoir no. 5 (Laramie, Wyo.: Pioneer Printing and Stationery, 1993), 718, figure 14. This article mainly discusses the pre-historic eruptions around the Yellowstone hotspot, which were bigger than any historic eruptions. The authors estimate that the largest of the Yellowstone eruptions was perhaps two thousand times as large as the Mount St. Helens eruption.

John A. Tvedtines, "Historical Parallels to the Destruction at the Time of the Crucifixion," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3, no. 1 (1994): 170–86. Tvedtines points out that natural phenomena correlate well with the 3 Nephi events, but he also tries to relate this to movement of the tectonic plates and perhaps a major earthquake as well as volcanic eruption. I do not believe that any major plate movement or earthquake was necessary to produce the 3 Nephi events other than the earthquakes that normally occur during a volcanic eruption.


20Ward, “The Year without a Summer,” 111.


24Bullard, *Volcanoes of the Earth*, 93–96. Bullard indicates that the Central American volcanoes are so explosive that liquid lava is rarely erupted. Instead, almost all (99 percent) of the magma erupted out of Central American volcanoes is in the form of ash and pumice. This would perhaps explain why there is no mention in the 3 Nephi account of anything that sounds like lava flows.


30William A. Garesché, *Complete Story of the Martinique and St. Vincent Horrors* (New York: L. G. Stahl, 1902), 50–51. Garesché had been the American consul to Martinique for several years prior to the eruption and was well acquainted with many of the victims of the disaster.

31Bullard, *Volcanoes of the Earth*, 125.

32Bullard, *Volcanoes of the Earth*, 125.


35Daniels, *Volcano*, 58.

36Simkin and Fiske, *Krakatau 1883*, 64.


46Simkin and Fiske, *Krakatau 1883*, 104.
50Mark Kemp, “Power Surge,” *Discover* 9 (April 1988): 40–41. This photo was taken by Tsuyoshi Nishinoue on November 17, 1987. It has since been used on postcards, one of which I purchased on a visit to Japan.
54The idea of “earthquake weather” was probably first proposed by Aristotle. He put forth the theory that earthquakes were caused by winds trapped in large subterranean caverns. This idea was still being taught as late as 1755, when John Winthrop lectured at Harvard on the strengths of Aristotle’s thesis. Winthrop proposed that the weather prior to an earthquake needed to be hot and windless because large quantities of air needed to be trapped underground. During an earthquake, this air would be released in a fury of wind. G. Lennis Berlin, *Earthquakes and the Urban Environment*, vol. 1 (Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC, 1980), 13. Even Shakespeare borrowed the idea: “Dissolved nature oftentimes breaks forth in strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth is with a kind of colic pinch’d and vex’d by the imprisoning of unruly wind within her womb; which for enlargement striving, shakes the old beldame earth, and topples down steeples and moss-grown towers.” William Shakespeare, *Henry the Fourth, Part I*, quoted in Berlin, *Earthquakes and the Urban Environment*, 13.
Bullard, Volcanoes of the Earth, 95.

Bullard, Volcanoes of the Earth, 95-96.

Francis, Volcanoes: A Planetary Perspective, 68.

Bullard, Volcanoes of the Earth, 125.

Lewis D. Leet, Causes of Catastrophe (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), 8; Satis N. Coleman, Volcanoes New and Old (New York: John Day, 1946), 80-81. Both Leet and Coleman use this same account given by Assistant Purser Thompson, but there are some minor differences between the two. I have combined parts of the accounts from both sources here.

Simkin and Fiske, Krakatau 1883, 15.

Simkin and Fiske, Krakatau 1883, 73.

Simkin and Fiske, Krakatau 1883, 117.

Tom Koenninger, ed., Vancouver! Vancouver! This Is It! (Lubbock, Tex.: C. F. Boone, 1980), 36.

Sorenson, Ancient American Setting, 222-23. Sorenson places Jerusalem on Lake Atitlan in Guatemala. It may be that the other cities mentioned with Jerusalem, Onihah and Mocum, were also on this lake. These three cities would have probably been quite distant from the main volcanic eruption because they are located far into the land southward, and the Book of Mormon makes it clear that the most wicked people and the greatest destruction were in the land northward. Lake Atitlan, however, is surrounded by high volcanoes over twelve thousand feet high, and steep mountain slopes continue down to the lake shore (see photos in Sorenson, Ancient American Setting, 177). Such slopes are often unstable, and earthquake activity, induced by even a distant volcanic eruption, could certainly be sufficient to trigger landslides down into the lake, causing the lake level to rise and cover cities or towns near the shore.

Decker and Decker, Mountains of Fire, 104.

Francis, Volcanoes: A Planetary Perspective, 63. During an excavation in 1812, several bodies were uncovered only a few inches below the upper surface of the ash layer. One of them was holding a decomposed bag that had held 360 silver coins, 42 bronze pieces, and 8 imperial gold medallions. Egon C. C. Corti, The Destruction and Resurrection of Pompeii and Herculaneum, trans. K. and R. Gregor Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), 171.

Lambert, Volcanoes, 47.

Francis, Volcanoes: A Planetary Perspective, 68.

Jaggard, Volcanoes Declare War, 32.


Daniels, Volcano, 154.

Francis, Volcanoes: A Planetary Perspective, 93.

Decker and Decker, Mountains of Fire, 112.

See Sorenson, Ancient American Setting, 318-23. Sorenson interprets the phrase "face of the land" to mean that the changes to the land were mostly cosmetic surface changes, and that the basic geography was unchanged. I would agree in general with this statement, although near the eruption site the changes may have been very dramatic and not necessarily simple cosmetic ones. See also Nibley, Since Cumorah, 232.
The sixteen destroyed cities mentioned by name in 3 Nephi were in lands away from Bountiful. For example, Gid and Mulek (mentioned in Helaman 5:15, sixty years prior to the destruction), located near the city of Bountiful, are not mentioned in the lists of cities that were destroyed. Other cities “remained,” even though “the damage thereof was exceedingly great” (3 Ne. 8:15). Some time after the three days of darkness, “there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful” (3 Ne. 11:1).


If a large explosive volcanic eruption did occur in Mesoamerica at the time of Christ’s death, then the ash may still be present and might be found in some places. A significant ash layer of approximately the right age (ca. A.D. 100–200) has been described in Payson D. Sheets, “An Ancient Natural Disaster,” Expedition 14, no. 1 (1971): 24–31; and in Payson D. Sheets, “Environmental and Cultural Effects of the Ilopango Eruption in Central America,” in Volcanic Activity and Human Ecology, ed. Payson D. Sheets and Donald K. Grayson (New York: Academic, 1979), 525–64. Sheets describes how the eruption of Ilopango Volcano in El Salvador essentially destroyed the cultures in this region, and they did not recover for almost two hundred years. However, if we accept the Book of Mormon geography as interpreted by Sorenson, then this eruption may be too far south to have caused much destruction around Zarahemla, although it is still close enough to have caused the darkness. It certainly is too far south to have caused much destruction in the land northward, where the Book of Mormon describes the destruction as being the worst.

Palmer, In Search of Cumorah, 102, points out that an ash layer possibly dating to about the time of Christ’s death was also found at Tres Zapotes, an important archaeological site north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Tres Zapotes is near to several active volcanoes. El Chichon, a volcano located about seventy-five miles north of Sorenson’s Zarahemla in southern Mexico, erupted violently in 1982. It had previously erupted around A.D. 800 according to Chester, Volcanoes and Society, 277–78, and undoubtedly had earlier violent eruptions.

The problem is that there are so many active volcanoes in Mexico and Central America and there have been many eruptions in the last few thousand years. Wenkam wandered through many prominent archaeological sites in Central America and Mexico and claimed to find volcanic ash almost everywhere. He puts forward the hypothesis that volcanic eruptions may have been a common cause of destruction in this region. Robert Wenkam, The Edge of Fire (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1987), 29–43.

For our purposes in understanding this Book of Mormon event, and using Sorenson’s geography as a guide, I would suspect the eruptive center to have been north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (in the land northward where destruction was greatest) and probably along the coast where the eruption could generate a tidal wave. However, more geologic and geochronologic information is needed before any further speculations can be made. Marlon Nance, in a talk presented at a FARMS seminar on October 25, 1996, proposed the most comprehensive plan for locating an ash bed associated with this eruption. He proposed to chemically fingerprint and date ash beds found in deep-sea cores taken from areas
near to Mesoamerica. This would be a fascinating project, and one I hope he is able to carry out.

83Staffs, *Volcano*, 52.
84Daniels, *Volcano*, 58.
85Simkin and Fiske, *Krakatau 1883*, 89.
89Daniels, *Volcano*, 58.
91Francis, *Volcanoes: A Planetary Perspective*, 80.
96Koenninger, “Vancouver!” 25.
100Stommel and Stommel, *Volcano Weather*, 12.
102Sturdy, “Volcanic Eruption of Krakatau,” 387–89.
104Simkin and Fiske, *Krakatau 1883*, 84–85. The Beyerinck family later had to put out their fire because it began to attract many natives who were crazed with thirst and quite desperate.
113Lyell, *Principles of Geology*.
Golden Memories: Remembering Life in a Mormon Village

Personal accounts from early Saints give a colorful glimpse into everyday home and community life in frontier Mormon settlements.

Ronald W. Walker

For the past fifty years, scholars have written about the “Mormon village”—the archetypical Mormon pioneer frontier community. As a result, we know about its ideals (unity, cooperation, equality, and religious striving). We know about its physical layout (rectangular streets often laid off at the cardinal points of the compass) and its pattern of settlement (homes and gardens on village lots with agricultural fields and livestock nurtured several miles away). We even know that the Mormon village left a distinctive mark on the landscape (unkept outbuildings, pervasive water ditches, and poplar trees providing shade and a sense of order). But what was daily life in the Mormon village like?

Fortunately, we can begin to answer that question, too. During the 1930s, the Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) collected autobiographies, sketches, and questionnaire responses from Utah’s surviving pioneers. Later, the state-controlled Utah Writers’ Project continued the process. Because of these two successively running government projects, from 1935 to 1943 over nine hundred pioneers left personal accounts of life in a Mormon village. Through them much can be learned of village life.

Most respondents were Mormons. Forty percent were women, an unusually high proportion for a nineteenth-century data cohort (population group). The majority had been children during the pioneer era: about 30 percent were born before 1850, another 30 percent in the 1850s, and still another 30 percent in the 1860s. Still
more important, most WPA respondents were drawn from the rank and file and lived their lives in Utah's new or outlying pioneer settlements. Their stories describe the fabric of everyday frontier life.

Like many old-timers before and since, the respondents had firm opinions. Syria Allen, a long-time citizen of Huntington, Emery County, thought that "the old days was pretty hard picken."6 Circleville's Thadius Fullmer agreed. Utah was "a hell of a country," he said. It was a "dry and arid" place "fit [only] for the Indians."7 James Ivie, descended from a family of Indian fighters, was equally terse about the early days: "Can't forget them—wouldn't like to relive [them]."8

Yet, despite fully acknowledging the difficulties of pioneering, the WPA respondents were remarkably upbeat about their past. Ellen Lee Woodard, an Iron County resident, remembered "happy days,"9 and Elvira Lance, comparing pioneer conditions with succeeding times, believed that frontier life was "happier and more contended."10 Julia Hills Johnson concurred: "There is more conveniences to day," she acknowledged, "but the olden days were by far the best."11

Were these appraisals simply "golden memories"—a case of passing years and nostalgia softening reality—or had pioneer life offered something special? When explaining themselves, many of the pioneers spoke of human relationships. "Early days were hard to get along but pleasant to live because all were so kind and friendly to one another," said Manti resident Dorothea Jorgensen.12 Amy Carline Phillips also spoke of congeniality: in early days people "helped one and another" and lived like "one happy family."13 In turn, James Munroe Redd believed that the old-timers were "really more happy and contented" because they were "more social and co-operatively inclined."14

This refrain appears in anecdote after anecdote as the old pioneers mentioned the sharing, neighborliness, and cooperation that once bound them together.

**Helping Newcomers**

When the Saints arrived in Utah, friends, relatives, or even self-appointed greeters might meet them at Emigration Square (or later
at a local railroad depot.\textsuperscript{12} Mary Ann Richards remembered her father frequently welcomed emigrants and invited them to his home for dinner.\textsuperscript{13} Eliza Burgess Briggs recalled such kindness first-hand. When she and her mother arrived in Ogden, they received a basket of food and an invitation to stay in the home of a couple they had met earlier while traveling to Utah. To ease what must have been a crowded condition, Eliza and her mother soon found other accommodations by trading domestic work for housing and food.\textsuperscript{14}

Other immigrants told of receiving produce, large cans of milk, or even sections of beef on arriving in Utah.\textsuperscript{15} The Swiss immigrants of 1861 were given more extended aid. Counseled to settle in southern Utah but without the means to do so, the Swiss were transported in relay fashion by each community on the road.\textsuperscript{16} Adelaide Jackson Slack told another story. After her father baptized relatives in England and convinced them to emigrate, he welcomed them into his Toquerville home. “We had twenty two at the table all one winter,” said Adelaide, counting family members and recently arrived converts. “We were glad to have them.”\textsuperscript{17}

Charles Twelves and his family—survivors of the ill-fated Martin handcart party of 1856—were first lodged at the Salt Lake City tithing office. Then local settlers escorted the family to Provo, where they were given a small log house. The next spring Twelves’s father, hoping to improve the family’s circumstance, built an eight-by-ten-foot dugout that burrowed four feet in the ground. The dwelling was “comfortable,” Twelves reported, although sleep was at first difficult because of disturbing night visits by wolves.\textsuperscript{18}

Townspeople tried to see after the newcomers’ needs. The people at Kanab welcomed new settlers with a party.\textsuperscript{19} If the new arrivals came too late in the season to grow their own crops, the established pioneers shared their own harvest.\textsuperscript{20} The Biblical precedent of “gleaning the fields” was sometimes followed. Or the immigrant poor might be aided by giving them the less-desirable parts of a slaughtered animal—the paunch, head, feet, or liver.\textsuperscript{21}

William John Hill appreciated the help of Ogden leader James Brown (“a kind neighbor and friend”), who brought the Hill family food and wood after they arrived in Utah in the early 1850s.\textsuperscript{22} In another example of assistance in Ogden, Joseph Perry lodged the nine-member Hadley family in a surplus adobe house. Unfortunately, the
Hadleys did not stay put. They moved into a cabin owned by Pat Jackson, promising Jackson one of their sons would do live-in work to help with the rent. But Jackson reportedly fed the boy “soap grease scraps” and eventually forced the Hadleys to leave.23 If the Hadleys’ version of events is accurate, not all established settlers were “Saints.”

Many newcomers were greenhorns who needed help with basic frontier routines. After settling in Panguitch, stonemason and English convert Henry Excell had one misadventure after another. During his first attempt to handle a team of oxen, he drove too close to a kiln, dislodged several bricks, and spooked his oxen into running home. “This was my first and last experience driving an ox team,” he recalled. Henry’s subsequent attempt as a fieldhand initially went no better. He was unable to channel irrigation water until a local settler showed him how.24

Sometimes Church leaders would ask a local family to help feed a recently arrived widow and her children. It was an assignment that could severely tax resources. “My heart swells with pride,” Martha Cragun Cox wrote of her mother’s treatment of one widow family, “when I remember that the wheat cake[s] for the Atkin’s children was just as large as ours, and the half pint of milk each morning and evening was never stinted in favor of her own little ones.”25 One time the Cragun and Atkins’ flour supply was reduced to one small baking. James Cragun left for the fields without breakfast, and his wife, Eleanor, went to gather “greens”—the wild bulbs and grasses that many pioneers used when no other alternative seemed possible. Still the Cragun family shared with the Atkins. Soon, however, the family flour sack was mysteriously replenished. Apparently, becoming aware of the situation, neighbors anonymously contributed in the families’ behalf.

Sharing Supplies

The Cragun experience was not unusual. According to Ernest Munk, a central Utah settler, “People were liberal [with their means] and would divide what they had.”26 Further, the practice of dividing out commodities made economic sense. Without stores to sell goods or much money to buy what might be available, this practice was a means of market distribution, especially if something
Wagon camp, ca. 1870. In this scene, men camping in Salt Lake Valley prepare to share a meal. Sharing was a way of life rather than a mere polite gesture; at times a pioneer's survival might depend on it. Charles R. Savage, photographer. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

"extra good or unusual" were available. The custom equalized society: "In sharing with each other every one was the same," remembered Henry O. Jensen of Scipio.

Whatever the reasons, sharing was so common that it became a routine of life. Sometimes the articles traded were as simple as a start of yeast or coals taken from one hearth to another. Or they might be planting seed, farm equipment, or edibles like milk, butter, and cheese. Meat was a commonly shared commodity, perhaps because there was no alternative. Without refrigeration a recently slaughtered animal could spoil before it was eaten.
Besides, the people may have been further motivated by knowing that any item given would likely bring something in return.

Sometimes the shared item was so unusual that pioneers remembered it years later. When Owen Clark found a bear lodged in the cliffs near Cannonville, he killed it and offered the meat to all comers.\(^{32}\) Elizabeth Yates of Scipio secured an extravagantly expensive pound of sugar from St. Louis—a rare pioneer delicacy—and doled it out for six months: “If there was anyone sick in town she made it a point to send a taste of sugar.”\(^{33}\) After Apostle George Q. Cannon sent a box of apples to the mother of Ann Elizabeth Melville in Fillmore, each of the Melville’s neighbors received one. Ann Elizabeth kept her apple on the mantle shelf, taking only an occasional bite.\(^{34}\)

The pioneers sometimes spoke of sharing items that the current Latter-day Saint interpretation of the Word of Wisdom prohibits. To get a fresh supply of tobacco, Rensselaer Kirk traveled one hundred miles to Cortez, Colorado, only to learn that the store had just a dollar’s worth in its inventory. Worse, as Kirk returned home, many of his friends on the trail wanted a share. Upon completing his 200-mile journey, Kirk had no more tobacco than when he began.\(^{35}\)

Another incident involved tea. After Mrs. Henderson of Cannonville provided milk to visiting miners, the men appreciatively gave her a half a package of tea. Rather than hoarding the difficult-to-obtain commodity, Henderson divided it with the other five families in the village, reserving an equal portion for herself. Her sacrifice, she said, gave her “as much pleasure” as “anything [she] had ever done.”\(^{36}\)

During the hard times of 1854–55, when the territory seemed close to famine, the Colvin farm of Payson was one of the few not ravaged by grasshoppers. The Colvins were therefore in a position to give their neighbors a daily ration of cornmeal.\(^{37}\) At Wellsville another grasshopper infestation (they were common in pioneer times) prompted similar charity. The Leatham family, remembering that they “nearly starved” during the natural disaster that had once afflicted them, for many years maintained a large bin of flour with an open invitation to any needy family.\(^{38}\)
In St. George, Church leader David Cannon regularly traded food to needy men in exchange for their work, even when his family could do the tasks themselves. Mr. Greenwell of West Weber had the reputation of never turning away a request for meat, and at Christmas he traditionally slaughtered three or four “good beef cattle” and then asked the local LDS bishops to make a distribution to the needy regardless of their religion or race. In southern Utah, a settler approached Mr. Shumway, a local rancher, with a confession. He had been hungry and had killed one of Shumway’s range cattle. “If you get hungry again, kill another cow,” said Shumway.

Sarah Chaffin told a story of her family’s charity while her father served a Church mission. Before leaving Utah, her father gave a neighbor five dollars, with the instruction to use it to help the Chaffin family through any hard times. When those times arrived, the neighbor arranged for the Chaffins to pick up twenty-five pounds of flour, and the Chaffin boy was dispatched to get it. As he made his way home, hard-pressed neighbors asked for a share, and the boy complied. An old man even followed him to the door. “If I had a pint of gold, I would give it to you for a pint of flour,” he pleaded. Again, the request was met, which brought criticism from the local “block teachers.” If the family went hungry, they thought, it would be their own fault. In fact, the Chaffins were forced to pick serviceberries to get through the season.

The pioneers’ generosity, usually personal and spontaneous, was reinforced by the teachings and practices of the LDS Church. Provo settler George Thomas Peay remembered that Church leaders made sharing a standing “order.” Another pioneer recalled that during worship services, members of the congregation regularly discussed community needs and acted on them. One local Mormon leader regularized charity by passing a “community basket” through his ward; members of his congregation either placed commodities in the basket or removed them, whatever their circumstance. A more common practice was for a bishop to receive in-kind tithes and “fast-offerings” and then dispense these commodities to the poor. And in times of special need, some local bishops levied quotas on surplus grain, which then was distributed to those in want.
Nursing Each Other

Illness and disease required a special kind of giving. Because most frontier communities had neither doctors nor hospitals, women provided the nurturing—and some had remarkable records of service. The southern Utah village Tonaquint depended on Sophronia Carter, who on one occasion visited the cabin of a bedridden woman. Sophronia found the nearby Santa Clara River was rapidly rising. In order to save her friend's life, Sophronia carried the woman through waist-deep, raging water. During her career as a pioneer nurse, Sophronia helped "hundreds of needy people in sickness and suffering."47

When typhoid fever struck a family near Sarah Joy Surrage's home in Weber County, she worked tirelessly. First the neighbor's seven-year-old boy died, and Sarah prepared the body for burial. Then the disease claimed the life of the mother. When Sarah's own family became infected, she struggled to save both families but lost one of her daughters. "I went without sleep so long that I finally got so I hardly needed sleep," she remembered. After the epidemic ran its course, Sarah was asked to raise her neighbor's family and did so.48

These nurturing women were remarkable. The Sanpete nurse-midwife Artemesia Draper Anderson reported that in one eight-month period, she traveled 1,033 miles by horse and another 347 miles by "other conveyances." During her career, Artemesia delivered more than two thousand babies—her last being twins, whom she midwifed when eighty years old.49 Annie Hermin Cardon Shaw, yet another nurse-midwife, practiced in Weber County. Once while traveling to deliver a child, Annie fell and injured her head. She nevertheless bound up her injury, delivered the baby, and returned home; later a silver plate was placed in her skull to fuse the bones. On another occasion, Annie was summoned to deliver a child shortly after having given birth herself. Friends put Annie on a featherbed and took her by covered wagon to fill the appointment.50

Working Together

Another measure of the pioneers' group spirit was their work and social routines. These were topics that the WPA old-timers spoke about repeatedly and with great enthusiasm, because to
them, pioneering meant working and playing together. Livy Olsen remembered that when the people settled Spring City they joined to root out brush and to plant crops—everyone did the tasks for which they were “best adapted.” The cleared land was then divided into five- to ten-acre parcels and given to individual families. The method allowed the land to be settled quickly “for the common good.”51

A Fairview settler told of a community work project that became a part of local lore, perhaps because it so aptly characterized the people and their times. Every able-bodied man and boy agreed to work on the “City Ditch” canal “till it would carry water.” Spring crops apparently could not be planted until a reliable water source was established. However, as the men dug their ditch, they encountered an unyielding hardpan. Orville Cox, who from the outset of the project had been more of an observer than a worker, finally walked away from the work gang. His apparent desertion made the men furious. “We didn’t swear,” remembered one of the crew, only “because the bishop was there.”52

The next morning, however, Cox was back on the job with several teams of oxen and a strange-looking contraption that was part plow and part battering ram. Working through the night, he had taken a fourteen-foot log and attached a thumblike appendage that carried a crowbar. Next, along its sides, he inserted oak sticks designed for holding and positioning. With the oxen pulling the device and the men steering it, Cox’s machine easily carved through the hardpan: four passes and the hardpan was gone. Later Cox explained why he had left the crew without giving an explanation. He was not the bishop, he said, and besides, the men would only have laughed at his idea. His way was best. “Just shut up and do, and when a bunch of men see a thing working they’ll believe.”53

Mads Anderson Jr., an early Mt. Pleasant citizen, remembered the community work that he and his father completed as part of the prevailing social contract. Father and son worked on roads connecting the various Sanpete County communities and still other roads extending into the canyons. Although not owning any livestock and therefore not gaining any direct advantage, the Anderson family also built fences, including the five-mile Lane Fence, which was designed to contain the community’s cow herd. These projects were done “without compensation” and “for public benefit.”54
Another joint project was the construction of a community fort, often the first structure of a new village. These multiuse buildings protected the new settlers from Native Americans while at the same time providing a temporary school, meetinghouse, and home. Fort living could be difficult. Quarters were cramped and infested with mice, bedbugs, and the neighbors’ dogs. Yet settlers found compensation for these trials. “While living in the fort we were just one large family,” Mary Henrie Cooper recalled. Mary liked the sense of equality such a life brought.55

During the second stage of village pioneering, settlers moved from the fort to village lots. This was the time for cabin building and for the construction of a community center that would serve as a church and school. At Circleville, the community center began with each family delivering three hewed logs to the building site and then working to raise the building. To furnish the interior and hire a teacher, the Circleville citizens levied a 2 percent property tax, which according to the chairman of the building committee brought no outward complaint. “The settlers were a common class of people, and it was easy to get their cooperation in anything for the betterment of the community,” he reported.56

Pioneering also meant other kinds of cooperation. To provide livestock with winter feed, the boys and men of the village joined to clear snow from the range. In summertime they helped each other in their respective fields. And there were cabin and barn raisings. These festive occasions, which drew neighborhoods and perhaps the entire village together, typically began in the late afternoon and continued until the work was done. “What if there were a few of the gossipy items of the day considered,” said one of the old-timers defensively. “No harm was intended. [Besides,] a wonderful lot of work [was] done.” An evening dinner and dance generally concluded these labors.57

Another joint activity was militia duty. Every man fourteen years or older was formally enrolled, but women were also involved. In 1866, the villagers of Virgin reacted quickly when Navajo raiders took more than fifty head of cattle. Old men and boys shelled corn for horse feed; the young men corralled horses, prepared saddles, and cleaned guns; and women and girls prepared provisions. By midnight the militiamen left the town and,
joining the "minute men" of another community, reclaimed some of their stock. Usually, the clever Navajo marauders were not so easily thwarted.58

Age often determined the kind of militia duty that was performed. Boys carried dispatches, performed guard duty, and patrolled streets and corrals; elderly men maintained outposts and scouted; and older teens and young men fought.59 Whatever their roles, militiamen were made to understand that militia duty was an important civic responsibility. When Thomas Hull of Franklin, Idaho, refused a militia call in order to remain with his wife, who had recently delivered a child, Church leaders found Hull's behavior unacceptable. Ensuing angry words led to his excommunication.60

Militia drills sometimes combined pleasure with duty when wives and children camped near the drilling grounds. After the men completed their military work, the citizens might dance, enjoy

![Image](image_url)

Early LDS Church meetinghouse in Provo. In early Utah communities, meetinghouses often served as general purpose buildings, becoming a focal point for social activities. Courtesy BYU Archives.
Haying on the Blue Creek ranch, ca. 1900. Although some of these men may be hired hands, harvesting was often a communal affair. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.
horse races and footraces, and hold other sporting activities. One “Military Day” in Provo lasted three days. At Kanarra a militia drill continued for a week. Still another at Harmony drew three thousand people, who enjoyed a “big parade,” band music, horse racing, and a speech delivered by Elder Lorenzo Snow, who was dressed in military regalia.

The village women also worked together—and enjoyed themselves in the process. Catherine Larsen remembered picking wild currants on the upper Sevier River with some of her neighbors. A noon picnic briefly relieved the tedium of work, but the most happy part of the day was the wagon ride home when the berry pickers’ “merry songs filled the clear evening air.” Such singing made “life worth while” and turned something that was “a necessity” into “leisure time fun.”

Women’s work often meant making cloth. Hannah McFarland Bingham remembered picking wool from her neighborhood’s wire fences and washing it. Hannah then invited friends to her home to card the fabric. The evening concluded with refreshments—Johnny cake or a molasses cookie served with milk or water. These occasions were “very happy time[s].”

Next the wool had to be spun. This task called for another round of parties, restricted in size because few homes could hold more than five spinning wheels. If a larger group was desired, the local schoolhouse or the hostess’s yard might be used. Wherever the location, games, songs, and, most importantly, friendly competition lightened the activity: Who could spin the most skeins? At noon the women stopped for “dinner” and in the evening for “supper,” when the men arrived. A dance normally ended the day. “Those were sure good times,” Danish convert Eliza Othilda Christensen Jorgensen recalled.

If the ladies were not carding and spinning together, they were weaving, sewing, grating vegetables, braiding rugs, or quilting together—the latter being a pioneer favorite pastime. The eight women who gathered in Pernilla Anderson’s single-room dugout in Santaquin finished a quilt in a day. At Nephi some of the women periodically quilted together for several weeks. Then, the “great number” of completed quilts were distributed on the basis of productivity with the fastest worker receiving the
most.\textsuperscript{70} One youngster never forgot the expectation of a coming work party. “We will have a real good dinner today with cookies and cake, too,” she remembered telling her younger brother.\textsuperscript{71}

The young men and women did the harder work, like husking corn.\textsuperscript{72} Husking parties often began at twilight, when six or eight lanterns were hung around the large piles of accumulated corn.\textsuperscript{73} “Then the crowd would gather and begin the work, or fun, for it was fun,” insisted one participant.\textsuperscript{74} A competition might be held to determine who could do the most work.\textsuperscript{75} Or perhaps the color of the corn might be made into a game. If a girl found a rare red ear, it was evidence that she would be the first of the girls to marry. If a boy found one, it meant he was about to lose his girlfriend.\textsuperscript{76} There were variations. Occasionally the special red ear gave a boy the right to kiss a girl—a “simple past time [that] afforded a great deal of pleasure for the hard working people.”\textsuperscript{77}

Another popular work-pastime was fruit drying. Rachel Brown’s father purchased apples and then required Rachel and her friends to peel and cut them for drying.\textsuperscript{78} Eliza Burdett Horsepool remembered that participants at her parties processed more than a dozen bushels of peaches in a single evening. While the girls cut the fruit, the boys managed the pans and placed the sliced peaches on roof sheds to dry.\textsuperscript{79} Again, a hint of romance was often in the air. Some parties allowed a boy and a girl to leave the well-lit cabin to spread the fruit in the dark. This was a “real treat,” remembered one pioneer, because it gave a couple a rare chance at privacy. On such nocturnal adventures, “lots of sparking [romantic flirting] was done by all.”\textsuperscript{80}

Sometimes a single incident united villagers and encouraged them to work together. Rebecca Wilson told of a young man who was suddenly called on a preaching mission but had no suit to wear. “That [became] a busy week,” she recalled. “One Sunday the wool was on the sheep’s back. By the next Sunday it had been clipped, cleansed, corded, spun, woven, and made into a splendid suit and was on the back of the missionary as he delivered his farewell address in the little church house, [and] then [he] left on his religious pilgrimage to the ‘nations of the earth’ to carry the Gospel Light to those who sat in darkness.”\textsuperscript{81}
The settlers at Mayfield, Sanpete County joined to defeat an incursion of cattlemen. Although the local Anderson family had already “taken up” the strategic land at the mouth of a local canyon, they had not “proved” their homestead rights by building a cabin on the site and living there. Hoping to exploit this oversight, the cattlemen began to construct a cabin and warned the villagers that the uplands were no longer available for use. Within a day, the local settlers began and finished a cabin, and a Mormon family slept in it that night. The Andersons retained the land because the “town gave their support.”

Courting and Visiting

Even courting was done in groups. Young men and women “didn’t go in couples but everybody went together, and they had lots of fun, singing and laughing,” remembered Martha Horspool Hellewell. The important thing was to be a part of a crowd—a group of like-minded friends who readily associated with each other.

Laura Smith Hadfield recalled her crowd’s activity in the small southern Idaho town of Elba. The young people assembled at a moment’s notice.

We would go outside and look over the country and see whose house had a light in it (we burned coal oil lamps in those days), and then we would ride over there and spend the evening. If the house was dark we knew the folks were not home. . . . It was nothing for nearly all of us to arrive at the same place in an evening without any previous arrangements. It took nearly the whole community to make a good crowd. Sometimes we would have to stay all night on account of the blizzards. I have known them to stay for two or three days.

Social visiting was a part of the pioneer way. On Sundays and during the winter season when fieldwork eased, parents might load their families into a wagon, drive to a neighbor’s home, and spend the day. During such visits, the women “brought their knitting,” for outfitting a family with clothes required constant effort.

“Visiting” also allowed neighbors to catch up on the news, which sometimes meant group reading of national newspapers and magazines. Henrietta Wilson recalled the big brush fires built near her home that furnished reading light during the Civil War. In fact, some neighborhoods organized reading clubs that shared
the cost of Pony Express “war extras.” While she was reading to such a group, Martha Cragun Cox remembered that neighbor John Dalton questioned her pronunciation of the word “Chicago.” “That word is ‘She-car-ger,’ little girl,” Dalton said, tapping his cane on the floor. But Martha, unable to see Dalton’s pronunciation in the word, continued with her own way.⁹⁰

**Celebrating Together**

The celebrations of the pioneers also manifested a community spirit. Even a person’s birthday might be observed “like one big family,” said Olive Cheney Aldous. Olive’s mother shaped molasses dough into figurines, fried them in lard, and apparently distributed them to villagers.⁹¹ One birthday that was widely observed was Brigham Young’s. This celebration was remembered as “very important” and “commonly” commemorated, perhaps with an extended family picnic to a local canyon.⁹²

President Young’s scheduled tours of the territory were another cause for community celebration. “Everyone looked forward” to them, insisted several of the pioneers, with “long hours” spent in preparation.⁹³ In southern Utah, the women wove material for new dresses and then searched the countryside for roots from which to extract suitable dyes. Their “desire had been fulfilled” if they marched in their new clothes, perhaps shoeless, in a local parade honoring the visiting Church dignitary.⁹⁴

An impressive ten buggies might constitute President Young’s entourage, the Church leader himself riding in a “white top” drawn by a span of splendid horses. As the procession entered a village, children sometimes scattered welcoming flowers. Handshakes followed. “I will never forget how soft and nice his hand was,” said Diantha Olsen Newton, obviously expecting a palm hardened by pioneer toil.⁹⁵ And during his tours, Brigham Young offered advice down to the slightest detail. In Sanpete County, the President told settlers not to root out the sagebrush that lined the road: apparently he believed that these plants possessed some kind of salubrious quality.⁹⁶ At Huntsville he encouraged the Saints by promising their crops and fruit would prosper despite a short growing season.⁹⁷ The tours usually included community singing, speeches, and hearty meals.
Some pioneers celebrated May Day by erecting a traditional maypole and decorating it with red, blue, and white stripes made from discarded garments.\textsuperscript{98} As the pioneering era drew to a close, Thanksgiving was also observed.\textsuperscript{99} However, pioneer holidays were generally restricted to four: Christmas, New Year’s Day, Independence Day, and Pioneer Day.

The pioneers infrequently spoke of Christmas trees and Christmas caroling. Rather, they recalled putting up stockings, exchanging a simple gift, or eating an apple, a molasses cookie, or a plain-tasting cake.\textsuperscript{100} Many Christmas customs involved neighbors. A serenading fife-and-drum band might tour the neighborhood in an ox-drawn wagon.\textsuperscript{101} Or village children might pass from house to house chanting “Christmas gift, Christmas gift”—usually enough to win them a small reward. On one such occasion, a woman dispensed a yard of calico, which an enterprising girl could make into an apron.\textsuperscript{102}

The most important social Christmas activity was an evening dance. Sometimes these parties continued without interruption until dawn. Sometimes they recessed for several hours in the late evening so that supper parties could be held in nearby homes. One woman served as many as fifty couples during one of these intermissions.\textsuperscript{103} Whatever the arrangement, the Christmas evening dance began the winter social season, which then continued at least until New Year, when another major dance was held. During these final days of December, there might be a flurry of dancing, candy pulls, singing, and amateur dramatics.\textsuperscript{104}

The Mormons’ two summer holidays, Independence Day (July 4) and the much more actively celebrated Pioneer Day (July 24), were closely bunched together and therefore observed in much the same manner. For many women and children, July was a time for new clothes. Pernilla Anderson received a new summer dress each year.\textsuperscript{105} Jane Sprunt Warner Garner sewed special suits for her three boys and then colored them with a “greenish-yellow” dye extracted from rabbit brush.\textsuperscript{106} Diantha Olsen Newton’s mother prepared calico dresses for her girls, with straw hats and blue-ribbon streamers serving as assessories.\textsuperscript{107}

Preparations might also include a new speakers’ platform for the meetinghouse or new log benches. Martha Canfield remembered
Twenty-fourth of July celebrants. Town festivities improved quality of life and enhanced community cooperation. For the two July celebrations, pioneers usually dressed in their best. Date unknown. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.
the scrubbing: "Everything was made clean and tidy." For the upcoming events, some villages erected outdoor "boweries," shaded areas made by placing cottonwood branches, with their green leaves still intact, over a raised network of poles. Other holiday preparations included the selection of men to serve on the planning committee and, most importantly, a community "marshal." An Independence Day or Pioneer Day marshall was a man of local distinction, often voluble and good-humored, who directed the hour-by-hour program of events.

The holiday was often announced by the local fife-and-drum band, which began its serenading at daybreak and continued until midmorning. A pioneer band was important to villagers—"the life of all entertainments"—explained one pioneer, attracting people from miles around to hear them play. But if a band were unavailable, the day might be heralded by gunfire, which continued during the summer holidays until dusk. There were other expedients. In 1852, after some of the Provo boys bragged about having the honor of waking the populace, a rival group hid the cannon and woke the village by banging on an anvil.

Following the early morning noise, communities celebrated Independence Day with a flag raising around a liberty pole, followed by patriotic speeches. Pioneer Day had its own speeches. But instead of extolling national values, Pioneer Day orators praised the Mormon pioneers, who were also commemorated with parading wagons, handcarts, and sometimes mounted Native Americans. The children of the village usually joined the march, which generated among them great excitement. Olive Cheney Aldous, a native of Uintah in Weber Country, remembered her anticipation:

My sister and I were to march in the parade and we went barefooted because we didn't have shoes. Mother had made me a sunbonnet out of an old summer coat of father's and it was all starched so nice. I felt so dressed up. [As we traveled to the village], I said, "Now Pa, make the oxen trot like horses." He replied, "Oxen were not made to trot like horses but just to draw." I was so afraid that we would be late for the parade. The martial band led and we marched all around town.

In addition to speeches and parades, the WPA old-timers remembered footraces, horse races, greased pig chases, greased pole climbing, baseball, skits, and parodies. Several decades after
the event, Hannah Hanson Huntsman still recalled Charles Lambert's satire of the song "Love among the Roses," which Lambert renamed "Love among Big Noses." Said Huntsman's interviewer, "Judging from the excessive laughter which she indulged in while telling it," the parody "must have been an extravaganza of an outstanding nature."113

Another frequent activity was a sham battle between the pioneers and Native Americans, which generally concluded on a happy note when the two groups of actors made peace. (In reality, the original settlers and natives fought few pitched battles and still fewer that deserved commemoration.) One such pioneer-and-native pageant proved tragic. Rehearsing an Independence Day program in Provo in 1879, Albert Park was killed when a fellow actor shot him with a supposedly harmless wad of tissue.114

A Pioneer Day celebration in Ogden narrowly avoided a much greater tragedy. Organizers invited two thousand children to watch a cannon firing and, hoping for the loudest possible noise, put wet grass and sand into the gun's barrel instead of the usual blank charge. When the cannon exploded, it showered debris over the area, including a twenty-five-pound piece that crashed through the roof of a nearby tailor's shop. But neither there nor among the densely packed children were there injuries. "It was sure a miracle but not one of those children were hurt," said a local citizen.115

Independence Day and Pioneer Day celebrations also featured afternoon dinners, sometimes served on long tables under the temporary boweries.116 During the later pioneer period, a favorite menu was barbecued lamb followed by molasses cake. Sometimes a jug of beer or a barrel of wine was present "for those who cared to indulge."117 Intoxicants may have been responsible for the killing of a Native American during a celebration staged by the Panguitch citizens. Purportedly wishing to "scare" the Indian by shooting through the Indian's hat, a settler fired "too low." The man was sent to prison for the shooting.118

Dancing

Independence Day and Pioneer Day usually ended with a dance—no doubt the single most important social activity of the
pioneers. Perhaps the reason that they so universally enjoyed dancing was because it reflected their ideals. "There was no class distinction," recalled one pioneer. "Everyone had an equal good time and part." Indeed, dancing allowed all members of the society to join together, whatever their status or age. Most communities even accepted infants at their dances, and by the time children reached the age of four or five, they were seasoned performers.

In the winter season, dances might start after a lecture or dramatic production at the local schoolhouse, which perhaps led some settlers to give dancing the unusual name of "spelling school." On the other hand, large summer dances were usually held outside on a piece of flat ground, perhaps under a bowery. To prepare for a dance, the soil was packed and then swept. Smaller dances, summer or winter, were held in any home large enough to accommodate a single quadrille of four dancers.

In most rural areas, admission to a dance was paid with commodities. Wheat, corn, squash, potatoes, or even chickens might do. Nancy Higgins, a southern Utah settler, remembered that a barefoot suitor called at her home with a pumpkin under one arm ("he looked quite differently from what the young men of today do"). The lack of shoes added to the rustic atmosphere; at some rural dances, nine out of ten dancers went barefoot.

The dances included reels, quadrilles, schottisches, polkas, mazurkas, and an occasional waltz. Other dances were identified as the "Trolli-Hopsie" and the "Danish Slide-off." Round dances in which couples paired off were restricted, especially in Utah's early times. For music, most communities depended on either the fiddle or accordion, but variations included the guitar, flute, and small organ, any of which might be played with an accompanying fiddle. Some communities boasted a small orchestra, like Sanpete County's "Westenshow Orchestra," which had two violins, two bass fiddles, and a second bass. However, smaller dancing parties were sometimes required to "make do." On these occasions, settlers used a comb covered with paper or they whistled, sang, or clapped. Sometimes they provided rhythm with a device called the "bones"—a percussion instrument formed from pairs of thin strips of bone or wood held between the fingers. Musicians and the "floorwalker" (also known as the "caller" or "prompter")
were paid from the commodities gathered at the door or perhaps with a load of wood.

Clearly, dancing was an important activity that the pioneers took seriously. Many community dances gave prizes to the best dancers on the floor, and despite pioneer scarcity, some settlers used their hard-earned means to attend a dancing school. “Every one wanted to be a good dancer,” explained Edwin R. Lamb. And later, when the old-timers looked back on their early days, dancing brought pleasant memories. “In the candle light we would dance and swing, making the light flicker in the breeze caused from the swishing of our skirts,” reminisced one former enthusiast. Indeed, dancing was one of the reasons that the pioneers, without the “means of [modern] luxuries,” nevertheless had “a good time and enjoyed [them]selves more than most folks seem to do today.” That, at least, was the judgment of Weber County resident Mary Ann Geertsen.

Conclusion

How unique were the Mormon social and group values? Many of the activities the Mormons relished—their charities, work and party bees, neighborly visits, community holidays, and their unrelenting round of dances—had counterparts throughout America, especially in rural and frontier areas. Perhaps the characteristics that set Mormon communities apart were the degree to which these acts were practiced and the religious content that filled the Mormons’ daily frontier life. The Mormon village system was designed to facilitate group life, while Mormonism itself, as a new religious movement, infused its converts with a sense of mission that made pioneering virtually a sacrament. These two factors made what happened in the LDS Intermountain West unusual, if not unique.

We should not be surprised, therefore, if the old-timers looked back on their experiences with satisfaction. Pioneering had been a struggle, but Mormon group life gave their lives meaning and warmth. This is doubtless the reason why so many of the pioneers were emphatic about having had good times despite hard times. They believed that they had helped each other, borne each other's burdens, and lived a life that was broader than individual
wants and material accumulation. Indeed, their recollections speak of a society full of social bonds that our own troubled generation can look back on with gratitude and envy.

Ronald W. Walker is Senior Research Historian at the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and Professor of History, Brigham Young University. He is indebted to his research assistant, Joseph Richardson, who completed preliminary research and prepared an early draft. This article also appears in *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers* (Provo, Utah: KeyLinks, forthcoming).

**NOTES**


2For background on the WPA project, see Larry Malmgren, "A History of the WPA in Utah" (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1965).
Syria Allen [b. 1863], Personal History, 3:3, Pioneer Biographies. About half of the WPA pioneer materials were autobiographies and sketches; the rest were responses to the WPA questionnaire. The WPA materials are found in several repositories, including the collection entitled “WPA Biographical Sketches” at the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Biographical Sketches). A microfilm collection of this material is available under the title of “Utah Pioneer Biographies” (hereafter cited as Pioneer Biographies) at the Family History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Since these collections have overlapping, but different, content, I have used both while researching and writing this paper. Citations from the Biographical Sketches include page numbers whereas the Pioneer Biographies collection citations provide microfilm reel and page number. When quoting responses to the WPA questionnaire (available in both collections), I listed the appropriate question number, as in question 74. Finally, in order to give a rough idea of the chronological experience of the pioneers, I have provided birth dates in brackets. Birth dates are taken mainly from the WPA registers and are unverified.

Thadius Fullmer [b. 1853], Questionnaire, question 74.
James T. Ivie [b. 1850], Personal History, 3, Biographical Sketches.
Ellen Lee Woodard [b. 1867], Questionnaire, question 74.
Elvira M. Wing Lance [b. 1865], Questionnaire, question 74.
Julia Hills Eager Johnson [b. 1855], Questionnaire, question 67.
Dorothea Jorgensen [b. 1856], Personal History, 16:4, Pioneer Biographies.
Amy Carline Davis Phillips [b. 1851], Personal History, 23:3, Pioneer Biographies.
James Munroe Redd [b. 1863], Personal History, 4, Biographical Sketches.
Nancy Elizabeth Bethers Smith [b. 1837], Personal History, 2, Biographical Sketches.
Mary Ann Parker Richards [b. 1839], Personal History, 4, Biographical Sketches.
Eliza Burgess Briggs [b. 1859], Personal History, 6:1, Pioneer Biographies.
Rose Berry West [b. 1862], Personal History, 1-2, Biographical Sketches; Rose Berry West [b. 1862], Personal History, 29:1, Pioneer Biographies.
Adelaide Jackson Slack [b. 1868], Personal History, 25:4, Pioneer Biographies.
Charles Twelves [no b. date], Personal History, 1-2, Biographical Sketches.
Arze Adams [b. 1865], Questionnaire, question 53.
Hilda Miller Olsen [b. 1875], Questionnaire, question 24; Hilda Miller Olsen [b. 1875], Personal History, 1-2, Biographical Sketches.
Mons Peterson [b. 1861], Questionnaire, question 20.
William John Hill [1838], Personal History, 4, Biographical Sketches.
Lorenzo Hadley [b. 1851], Personal History, 12:7-8, Pioneer Biographies.
Henry Excell [b. 1858], Questionnaire, question 34.
Martha Cragun Cox [1852], Personal History, 15-16, Biographical Sketches.
Ernest Munk [b. 1858], Personal History, 20:2, Pioneer Biographies.
Ephraim Young Moore [b. 1879], Questionnaire, question 24.
Henry O. Jensen [b. 1871], Personal History, 15:1, Pioneer Biographies.
29Polly Ann Eliner Taylor [b. 1856], Questionnaire, question 24.
30Seed: Jordan H. Brady [b. 1863], Questionnaire, question 24; farm equipment: Pernilla Anderson [b. 1850], Questionnaire, questions 26–27; and dairy products: Isaac H. Grace [b. 1857], Questionnaire, question 24.
31Malona May Moore [b. 1875], Questionnaire, question 24; Jerusha Baxter Maughan [b. 1859], Questionnaire, question 18; Charles South [b. 1835], Questionnaire, question 24.
32Owen W. Clark [b. 1860], Personal History, 7:1, Pioneer Biographies.
33Willis Eugene Robison [b. 1854], Questionnaire, question 20.
34Ann Elizabeth Melville Bishop [b. 1856], Questionnaire, question 67.
35Rensselaer Lee Kirk [b. 1859], Questionnaire, question 34.
36William Jasper Henderson [b. 1863], Questionnaire, question 24.
37Lydia Ann Colvin Taylor [b. 1851], Questionnaire, questions 15, 24, and 74.
38Mary Evans Williams Leatham [b. 1851], Personal History, 18:4, Pioneer Biographies.
41Richard Franklin Shumway [b. 1868], Personal History, 25:2, Pioneer Biographies.
42Sarah M. Chaffin [b. 1815], Personal History, 3, Biographical Sketches.
43George Thomas Peay [b. 1861], Questionnaire, question 24.
44Peter Peterson [b. 1860] and Celestia M. Terry Peterson [b. 1860], Personal History, 23:3, Pioneer Biographies.
45August Sorenson Mackelprang [b. 1851], Questionnaire, question 24. Fast offerings required village members to fast the first Thursday of each month and donate the uneaten food to the local storehouse.
46William Olson [b. 1853], Questionnaire, question 24; Livy Olsen [b. 1856], Personal History, 22:6, Pioneer Biographies; Soren Peter Sorensen [b. 1854], Questionnaire, question 24.
47Sophronia Carter [b. 1841], Personal History, 2, Biographical Sketches.
48Sarah Joy Bennington Surriage [b. 1854], Personal History, 27:2, Pioneer Biographies.
50Annie Hermin Cardon Shaw [b. 1861] related these incidents about her mother in Personal History, 4–5, Biographical Sketches.
54Mads Anderson Jr. [b. 1863], Personal History, 3:2–3, Pioneer Biographies.
55Mary Henrie Cooper [b. 1866], Questionnaire, question 74.
56Fullmer, Questionnaire, question 34.
57Ezra Johnson [no b. date] and Julia Hills [no b. date], Personal History, 31, Biographical Sketches. The document is actually a series of “Ancestral Sketches and Memoirs” written by Mary Julia Johnson Wilson, who was born in Johnson’s Fort (Enoch), Utah, November 13, 1862.
58James Jepson Jr. [b. 1854], Personal History, 15:3–5, Pioneer Biographies.
59James H. Jennings [b. 1853], Personal History, 15:6, Pioneer Biographies.
60Thomas Hull III [b. 1837], Personal History, 1, Biographical Sketches.
61Moses Leon Burdick [b. 1861], Questionnaire, question 53.
62Cannon, Questionnaire, question 53.
63Moroni Spillsbury [no b. date], Personal History, 27:2, Pioneer Biographies.
64Catherine C. Larsen [b. 1856], Personal History, 18:3, Pioneer Biographies.
65Hannah McFarland Bingham [b. 1863], Questionnaire, question 34B.
66Diantha Olsen Newton [b. 1869], Personal History, 3, Biographical Sketches.
67Martha Canfield [no b. date], Personal History, 3, Biographical Sketches.
68Eliza Othilda Christensen Jorgensen [b. 1858], Personal History, 16:2, Pioneer Biographies. The judgment was shared by many pioneer women. “We enjoyed being together,” said Alvaretta Faroquine Robinson. “We would spin . . . just for the fun of it.” Alvaretta Faroquine Robinson [b. 1854], Questionnaire, question 34.
69Pernilla Anderson [b. 1850], Questionnaire, question 34.
70Grace, Questionnaire, question 34.
71Naomi Read [Reed?] Cowan [b. 1857], Personal History, 4, Biographical Sketches.
72Thomas C. Groneman [b. 1860], Questionnaire, question 34.
73Hanah Johnson [b. 1870], Personal History, 16:2, Pioneer Biographies;
Annie Peterson Jensen [b. 1875], Personal History, 15:2, Pioneer Biographies.
74Jensen, Personal History, 15:2.
75Bingham, Questionnaire, question 34B.
76Annie Peterson Jensen [b. 1875], Questionnaire, question 34.
77Grace, Questionnaire, question 34.
78Rachel A. Brown [b. 1876], Personal History, 6:2, Pioneer Biographies.
79Eliza Burdett Horsepool [b. 1857], Personal History, 4–5, Biographical Sketches.
80Hannah Hanson Huntsman [b. 1865], Questionnaire, question 34.
81Mary Julia Johnson Wilson [b. 1862], Personal History, 32, Biographical Sketches.
83Martha Horsepool Hellewell [b. 1860], Personal History, question 34.
84Laura Smith Hadfield [b. 1858], Personal History, 6, Biographical Sketches.
85Olive Cheney Aldous [b. 1851], Personal History, 5, Biographical Sketches;
A. Y. Duke [b. 1860], Questionnaire, question 22.
86Moore, Questionnaire, question 34; see also Duke, Questionnaire, question 22.
87Annie George Miles [b. 1859], Questionnaire, question 34.
88Fanny Young Clyde Wall [b. 1860], Questionnaire, question 44.
89Henrietta Wilson [b. 1851], Personal History, 30:1, Pioneer Biographies;
see also Lydia Ann Taylor, Questionnaire, question 44.
90Cox, Personal History, 17–18.
91Aldous, Personal History, 5–6.
92Lucinda Alvira Pace Redd [b. 1864], Questionnaire, question 53; Nancy Elizabeth Darrow Higgins [b. 1865], Questionnaire, question 53.
93Israel Nielson [b. 1848], Personal History, 21:7, Pioneer Biographies; Olsen, Personal History, 11–12. Also see Ann Eliza Pehrson [b. 1853], Questionnaire, question 53; and Andrew Oman [b. 1866], Questionnaire, question 53. For background of Young's tours, see Gordon Irving, "Encouraging the Saints: Brigham Young's Annual Tours of the Mormon Settlements," Utah Historical Quarterly 45 (summer 1977): 233–51.
94Maggie Cragun [no b. date], Personal History, 7:3, Pioneer Biographies.
95Newton, Personal History, 3–4.
96Newton, Personal History, 3–4.
97Matilda Olson Sprague [b. 1854], Personal History, 5, Biographical Sketches.
98John Henry Ward Lister [b. 1861], Questionnaire, question 74. See also Malinda Rhoads Morgan [b. 1863], Questionnaire, question 53; and Isaiah Cox [b. 1859], Questionnaire, question 53.
99Alice Ann Langston Dalton [b. 1865], Personal History, 3, Biographical Sketches; Chrystine Carlile Giles [b. 1848], Questionnaire, question 53; Julia Ann Wright Petty [b. 1847], Personal History, 23:3, Pioneer Biographies; Joseph E. Taylor [b. 1860], Personal History, 28:5, Pioneer Biographies.
101Aldous, Personal History, 6.
102Shaw, Personal History, 5–6.
104Phillips, Personal History, 23:3.
105Anderson, Questionnaire, question 53.
106Jane Sprunt Warner Garner [b. 1863], Personal History, 5, Biographical Sketches.
107Newton, Personal History, 2–3.
108Canfield, Personal History, 2.
109Marinda Allen Ingles [b. 1857], Personal History, 5, Biographical Sketches; Robert Nelson Watts [b. 1849], Questionnaire, question 53; Madora Browning Weaver [b. 1856], Questionnaire, question 53.
110Jennings, Personal History, 15:5.
111Cyrus Sanford [b. 1813], Personal History, 25:3, Pioneer Biographies.
112Aldous, Personal History, 6.
113Huntsman, Questionnaire, question 53.
114Groneman, Questionnaire, question 34; Joseph Park [b. 1852], Questionnaire, question 34; Mary Ann Bolitho [b. 1856], Personal History, 5:2, Pioneer Biographies. Some sources place the incident several years earlier.
116Weaver, Questionnaire, question 53.
117Canfield, Personal History, 2; James Herman Tegan [b. 1858], Questionnaire, question 53.
118David James Shakespear [b. 1861], Questionnaire, question 34.
119Edwin R. Lamb [b. 1831], Personal History, 2, Biographical Sketches.
120Anderson, Questionnaire, question 22.
Hadfield, Personal History, 6.
Jennings, Personal History, 15:2.
Garner, Personal History, 4.
Polly Berthena Huntington [b. 1849], Questionnaire, question 22.
Garner, Personal History, 4.
Higgins, Questionnaire, question 22.
Henderson, Questionnaire, question 22.
Lamb, Personal History, 2; Henderson, Questionnaire, question 22; Peterson and Peterson, Personal History, 23:2; Taylor, Questionnaire, question 74.
Nielson, Personal History, 21:4; Peterson and Peterson, Personal History, 23:2; Elisha Wilbur [b. 1847], Questionnaire, question 4; Taylor, Questionnaire, question 74.
Mary Louise Wintch [b. 1858], Personal History, 30:2, Pioneer Biographies.
Henderson, Questionnaire, question 22; Surrage, Personal History, 27:3; Alma Lutz [b. 1841], Personal History, 18:5, Pioneer Biographies; Hadley, Personal History, 12:12.
Lamb, Personal History, 2; Robert Green [b. 1860], Questionnaire, question 22.
Garner, Personal History, 4.
Mary Ann Geertsen [b. 1854], Questionnaire, question 22.
Short Study

Without (the) Law

_Doctrine and Covenants_ 76:72 and 137:7 become clearer with an understanding of two New Testament Greek expressions that differentiate between “not having the covenant law” and “lawless.”

Paul Y. Hoskisson

Most LDS commentaries on “Behold, these are they who died without law” (D&C 76:72) assume the verse refers to those who died without having the chance to hear the law. Understood thus, this verse in the context of Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80 would seem to say that the people who never had the chance in mortality to hear the gospel will inherit the terrestrial kingdom. This reading would seem to contradict Doctrine and Covenants 137:7, which explicitly states that “all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God.”¹ Doctrine and Covenants commentaries must then explain why 76:72 cannot be understood to mean that those who die “without law” receive the terrestrial kingdom.² Perhaps a different understanding of “without law” in that verse would remove the seeming inconsistency between Doctrine and Covenants 76:72 and 137:7. The following brief study will demonstrate this point.

In addition to Doctrine and Covenants 76:72, “law” is the object of “without” in six other passages in Latter-day Saint scriptures. Four of these passages occur in the New Testament. (These four will prove pivotal in the discussion.) The fifth passage, Moroni 8:22, will prove to conform to New Testament usage. The sixth passage, 2 Chronicles 15:3, will not factor into the discussion because the content and the unusual construction in Hebrew do not contribute to the present investigation.

The four passages that occur in the New Testament can be
divided into two categories, according to whether the phrase in the King James Version is “without law” (Romans 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 9:21), or “without the law” (Romans 7:8-9 and 3:21, italics added). In English the difference between “without law” and “without the law” is not readily apparent, which is one reason why Doctrine and Covenants 76:72 can easily be misunderstood. On the other hand, these two phrases in the King James Version are translations from the Greek text; and in the Greek text these two phrases cannot be confused. “Without law” in Romans 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 9:21 is translated from a single Greek word, ἀνόμος, and means “without law, lawless, impious;”4 that is, “outside law.” “Without the law” in Romans 7:8-9 (and the similar phrase in Romans 3:21) is translated from the Greek words, χωρίς νόμον, χωρίς meaning “separately, asunder, apart by oneself;”5 and νόμος meaning (among other things) “law, ordinance;”6 “especially of the Mosaic law,” and “can almost come to mean (Jewish) religion.”7 Together, χωρίς νόμον means not having received or been subject to the law or rule of religion, including principles and ordinances.

When these Greek distinctions are read into the English text, it becomes readily apparent that the phrases express different theological concepts. For example, Romans 2:12 would read, “For as many as have sinned without law [ἀνόμος, that is, having placed themselves outside of law] shall also perish without law [outside of law]: and as many as have sinned [with]in the law shall be judged by the law.” In like manner, 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 would state,

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law [outside of law], as without law [outside of law], (being not without law [not outside of law] to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law [outside of law].8

On the other hand, Romans 7:7-9 would read, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law [χωρίς νόμον, in other words, because I did
not have the law], sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once [For I was alive before the law was given to me]: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Similarly, Romans 3:21 would read, "But now the righteousness of God without the law [i.e., when the law had not yet been given] is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."9

These four New Testament examples strongly suggest that the very similar King James Version phrases "without law" and "without the law" express very different theological concepts. "[Those] without law" seems to denote those who have chosen to reject law and live outside of it. The phrase "without the law" would appear to refer to those who do not have a law or ordinance given to them.

The only passage in the Book of Mormon where "law" is the object of "without," Moroni 8:22, also seems to conform to the usage just demonstrated for the King James Version. There the phrase "they that are without the law" is defined within the verse itself as meaning those "that have no law." Thus, while this verse was not translated from a Greek original, it clearly appears to be consistent in both meaning and form with the English usage established in the King James Version of the New Testament.

With this understanding of the difference between "without law" and "without the law," a fresh look at Doctrine and Covenants 76:72 is in order. "Behold, these are they who died without law," then, would not appear to refer to those who died not knowing the law. Rather, the verse probably refers to those who died outside law, that is, died having rejected the law of the gospel with its various rules and covenants. This reading, contrary to the understanding most commentaries give to the passage, does not create a conflict with Doctrine and Covenants 137:7. Within the context of Doctrine and Covenants 76:71-80, verse 72 would then refer to the good and honorable people of this earth who live lives free of gross sin, but who in this life reject the gospel of Jesus Christ and choose to live outside the laws and ordinances thereof.10

Paul Y. Hoskisson is Associate Dean of Religious Education and Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University.
NOTES

1 See Mosiah 3:11 for this same doctrine. John W. Welch of the BYU Law School was kind enough to draw my attention to this Book of Mormon reference.

2 For example, "It seems clear that these categories are not absolutely definitive. For instance, all those who die without law will not end up in the terrestrial kingdom—those who would have received the gospel had they heard it are heirs of the celestial kingdom." Larry E. Dahl, "The Vision of the Glories (D&C 76)," in The Doctrine and Covenants, vol. 1, Studies in Scripture, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Sandy, Utah: Randall Book, 1984), 290. See also Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, eds., The Doctrine and Covenants, revised edition (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 461; Roy W. Doxey, selector and arranger, The Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 488; and Sidney B. Sperry, Doctrine and Covenants Compendium (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 351-52.

In addition to verse 21, the concept of "without the law" is discussed throughout Romans 3:19-31. See particularly verse 28.

4 A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarandon, 1963), 65. Romans 2:12 uses the adverbial form ἄνομος, while 1 Corinthians 9:21 uses the adjectival form ἄνομος.

5 A Lexicon Abridged, 794.

6 A Lexicon Abridged, 467.


8 The New English Bible with considerable liberty translates, "To Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; as they are subject to the Law of Moses, I put myself under that law to win them, although I am not myself subject to it. To win Gentiles, who are outside the Law, I made myself like one of them, although I am not in truth outside God's law, being under the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:20-21). The New English Bible (Oxford and Cambridge: Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1970), 217.

9 In verse 28 the same concept is expressed, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without [separately from] the deeds of the law."

10 In the context of Doctrine and Covenants 76:72, the word "law" does not mean any law. Just as the Greek for law, νόμος, can mean the Mosaic law and "can almost come to mean (Jewish) religion" (see footnote 8), so likewise law in this verse means the law of the gospel, or more simply, the gospel.
The “Prognostication” of Asa Wild

*Upstate New York newspapers in October 1823 carried a statement by a visionary soul who believed that God would soon open the way for a restoration of primitive Christianity.*

Elden J. Watson

Asa Wild was almost a dozen years older than Joseph Smith, and it is probable the two never met. Like Joseph, Wild was born in Vermont—in 1794 at West Fairlee, about twenty miles northeast of Joseph’s birthplace of Sharon. Most of what we know about Asa Wild comes from a pamphlet he published in 1824, entitled *A Short Sketch of the Religious Experience and Spiritual Travels of Asa Wild, of Amsterdam, N. Y.*

Wild recalls in the pamphlet that as a child his parents taught him basic tenets of Calvinism common in early-nineteenth-century upper New England. Among these tenets was the “dreadful doctrine” that the prayers and tears of the penitent sinner “would not render it any more probable that God would convert his soul.” For many years, he resisted the faith of his parents, practicing “almost every species of vice,” until at age twenty-two he experienced a desire for forgiveness of his sins and looked back to Calvinism to satisfy his religious yearnings. He affiliated with the Calvinists and became “more and more assimilated” to their “theorists” before discovering that he was “surrounded with professors of religion who were only wolves in sheep’s clothing, having a form of godli-ness, but denying the power thereof.”

The power denied by the “professors of religion,” however, came more easily to Wild. “Sometimes I... felt such a degree of the presence and power of God,” he recounted, that it “caused me involuntarily to break forth in exclamations of praise, thanksgiving, and exhortation.” Charismatic expressions of this kind were dismissed by the Calvinists as “the height of enthusiasm, false zeal,
even phrenzy, insanity, and madness itself; at best the delusions, temptations, and machinations of satan,” and they culminated in Wild’s expulsion from the church.\textsuperscript{6} Of this time, he sadly recalled that “those who were formerly my best friends, took the most active part, and became my warmest opposers.”\textsuperscript{7}

Parting from the Calvinists, Wild joined with the Methodist Episcopalists, whom he found had “much clearer and more scriptural views” than some in his former faith. But, in the end, Wild was not completely satisfied with the Methodists either. They, too, “limit[ed] the operations of the Spirit, and the attainments of the christian, in such an unreasonable and unscriptural manner,” that Wild “was led from a sense of duty, and the love of the truth, to protest, in these respects, against them.”\textsuperscript{8} Skirting along the margins of Methodism and longing for pure religion, Wild wandered for “two or three years” in a “dreary maze of unbelief, anxiety and painful disquietude of mind.”\textsuperscript{9}

Wild’s discomfort remained until March 1823, when “the Lord was pleased to reveal himself to me as he never had before.” In his 1824 pamphlet, Wild describes the revelation as one where “I saw all my former mistakes, my false conclusions, and fatal miscarriages” and learned that one principal reason for this evil was the “‘commandments and doctrines of men.’”\textsuperscript{10} In 1823, Wild submitted a detailed account of his experience to a local newspaper, the \textit{Mohawk Herald}, published in Amsterdam, New York, about 150 miles east of Palmyra. “The Lord in his boundless goodness[es] was pleased to communicate the following Revelation,” the story begins, “having in the first place presented me with a very glorious Vision.” The account then rehearses what Wild heard the “Great Jehovah” reveal.

Wild’s timing was remarkable. His account published in the \textit{Herald} was dated October 1, 1823—just ten days after the appearance of the angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith.\textsuperscript{11} Within three weeks, the account found its way to Palmyra and was inserted on page four of the October 22, 1823, edition of the \textit{Wayne Sentinel}, under the title of “Prognostication!!” E. B. Grandin and Pomeroy Tucker published the \textit{Sentinel} every Wednesday at a printing office located on the corner of Main and Church Streets in Palmyra, a half mile west and two miles south of the Smith family
farm. According to a local contemporary, Orasmus Turner, "once a week he [Joseph Smith Jr.] would stroll into the office of the old Palmyra Register for his father's paper," but how early Joseph Jr. began this practice or how long it continued is not known. The Register was first printed in 1817 and, after several name changes, was bought in 1823 by Grandin and Tucker, who ran the paper under the name Wayne Sentinel.

We will probably never know whether Joseph himself read the account of Wild's vision in the Sentinel. A local clergyman had persecuted Joseph for proclaiming his first vision, but it is not clear whether his reputation as a visionary had spread to members of the general public who, in 1823, might have drawn his attention to the Wild account. If Joseph was aware of the account, coming so soon after his own visions, Wild's experience might well have made a serious impression on his young mind. Just days before, Moroni had spoken of young visionary men, repeatedly quoting to Joseph the prophecy of Joel:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

From Moroni, Joseph learned that Joel's prophecy "was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be." Assuming that Joseph, at age 17, became aware of Wild's vision soon after Moroni's appearance, the account could have been to him a confirmation that he should trust the divine messenger. Joseph could take heart that he was not alone in his visionary experiences, as it appeared that the Lord was pouring out his spirit "upon all flesh." This perception might have encouraged him to assert that he had seen a vision—in spite of his initial apprehensions about sharing his experiences and the persecution that he had reason to believe would follow.

Reprinted below is Asa Wild's prognostication as published in the Wayne Sentinel. The document reflects subjects of concern that were familiar to people of that day, including those early converts to the Church who had experienced the fervor of the Second Great Awakening. These topics of common concern included a belief in the widespread apostasy of organized Christianity; a longing
for spiritual gifts and a restoration of primitive Christianity in its fullness; an expectation that the Lord’s second coming was imminent, bringing with it the destruction of the wicked and the commencement of the Millennium; and an understanding that Revelation 14:6 was soon to be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{18}

Visionaries like Asa Wild and many early Latter-day Saints belonged to a class of people who found their spiritual needs largely unfulfilled by contemporary formal religion. As Richard Bushman has argued, “One can imagine a warm reception for the Mormon message among people who believed that the heavens were not sealed.”\textsuperscript{19} Although nothing more is known about Asa Wild, visionaries such as Solomon Chamberlin, who believed that God led him to the Church, found institutional completion to spiritual longings and recognized Joseph Smith as the prophet called by God to usher in his church in the dispensation of the fullness of times.\textsuperscript{20}

Elden J. Watson is a microelectronics engineer with L-3 Communications in Salt Lake City.

\textbf{NOTES}

\textsuperscript{1}Asa Wild, \textit{A Short Sketch of the Religious Experience and Spiritual Travels of Asa Wild, of Amsterdam, N. Y. Written by himself by Divine Command, and the Most Infallible Inspiration} (D. Wells: Amsterdam, New York, 1824).


\textsuperscript{5}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 18.

\textsuperscript{6}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 2, 18.

\textsuperscript{7}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 18.

\textsuperscript{8}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 44. According to Wild, though the Methodists “understand tolerably well” the first principles of the gospel, they are “not experienced, and therefore, cannot be correct and successful teachers of Christianity.” Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 44; italics in original.

\textsuperscript{9}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 43.

\textsuperscript{10}Wild, \textit{Short Sketch of the Religious Experience}, 43.
The “Prognostication” of Asa Wild

11 The first of the angel Moroni’s four sequential visits to the Prophet Joseph Smith began after Joseph retired for bed on the evening of September 21, 1823, and continued until the morning of the following day. Joseph Smith—History 1:29, 47.


15 Joel 2:28–32. For instances where Moroni quoted Joel, see Joseph Smith—History 1:41, 45–46, 49.

16 Joseph Smith—History 1:41.


PROGNOSTICATION!!

[From the Mohawk Herald]

We publish the following in compliance with the solicitation of the author. He is a respectable inhabitant of this town. The constant exercise of his mind on religious topics, has, it is thought by many of his friends, affected the sanity of his mind; on every other subject, he appears entirely rational.—Ed. Herald.

Remarkable VISION and REVELATION: as seen and received by Asa Wild, of Amsterdam, (N. Y)

Having a number of months enjoyed an unusual degree of the light of God's countenance, and having been much favored of the Lord in many respects: and after having enjoyed the sweetest, and most soul ravishing communions with Him; the Lord in his boundless goodness[s] was pleased to communicate the following Revelation, having in the first place presented me with a very glorious Vision, in which I saw the same things:

In the first place I observe that my mind had been brought into the most profound stillness, silence, and awe; realizing in a remarkable manner the majesty, presence and glory, of that Being before whom all nations are as the drop of the bucket. It seemed as if my mind, though active in its very nature, had lost all its activity, and was struck motionless, as well as into nothing, before the awful and glorious majesty of the Great Jehovah. He then spake to the following purport; and in such a manner as I could not describe if I should attempt.—He told me that the Millen[n]ium state of the world is about to take place; that in seven years literally, there would scarce a sinner be found on earth: that the earth itself, as well as the souls and bodies of its inhabitants, should be redeemed, as before the fall, and become as the garden of Eden. He told me that all the most dreadful and terrible judgments spoken of in the blessed scriptures, were to be executed within that time; that more than two thirds of the inhabitants of the world would be destroyed by these judgments: some of which are the following — wars; massacres; famine; pestilence; earthquakes; civil, politic[al], and ecclesiastical commotions; and above all, various and dreadful judgments executed immediately by God, through the instrumentality of the Ministers of the Millen[n]ial dispensation;
which is to exceed in glory every other dispensation; a short de-
scription of which may be seen in the last chapter of Isaiah, and in
other places. He also told me, that every denomination of profess-
ing christians had become extremely corrupt; many of which had
never had any true faith at all; but are guided only by depraved rea-
son, refusing the teaching of that Spirit which indited the scrip-
tures, and which alone can teach us the true meaning of the same;
even as the diamond alone can cut its fellow. He told me further,
that he had raised up, and was now raising up, that class of per-
sons signified by the Angel mentioned by the Revelator, xiv. 6, 7,
which flew in the midst of heaven; having the everlasting gospel to
preach: that these persons are of an inferior class, and small learn-
ing: that they will be rejected by every denomination as a body;
but soon, God will open their way, by miracles, judgments, &c.: that
they will have higher authority, greater power, superior inspi-
ration, and a greater degree of holiness, than was ever experienced
before: inasmuch as this is [by] far the most glorious dispensation
of divine grace and glory. Furthermore he said that all the different
denominations of professing christians, constituted the New Testa-
ment Babylon; and that he should deal with them according to
what is written of IT, in the book of Revelation: that he is about
to call out all his sincere children, who are mourning in Zion, from
the oppression and tyranny of this mother of harlots; and that the
severest judgments will be inflicted on the false and fallen profes-
sors of religion; which will immediately commence in Amsterdam,
and has already commenced in different parts of the world, and
even in this country. And though their operations at first are grad-
ual, and under cover, yet it will soon be generally seen that it is the
immediate execution of divine vengeance upon an ungodly world.

Much more the Lord revealed, but forbids my relating it in this
way. But this, I have written and published, by the express and
immediate command of God: the truth and reality of which, I know
with the most absolute certainty.—Though I have ever been the most
backward to believe things of this nature; having been brought up
in the Calvinistic system, and having had a thorough understanding
of the same, and was fully established in the belief of it for several
years after I experienced the love of God in my heart: but finding
the Calvinists did not understand the glorious depths of holiness,
and conformity to the divine character in heart and practice, which I saw was our privilege and duty, I joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, which I found had much clearer and more scriptural views on these and some other points than the Calvinists; though I soon saw that they as a body, were very corrupt, having departed much from their primitive purity and holiness. I also saw that their first founders did not travel into all that was their privilege; and that vastly greater depths of holiness might have been experienced, even by them. Yet I thank God for what light I have received through their instrumentality, but know that much greater and more glorious light is about to burst upon the world.

Amsterdam, October, 1823.

N. B. Printers of newspapers and periodical publications are requested to insert the above.

I further observe that I shall soon publish, in a cheap pamphlet, my religious experience and travel in the divine life, with a more full account of the truths above written, and many other things connected with them.

ASA WILD.

Amsterdam, October 1.
Book Reviews


Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander, Lemuel Hardison Redd Jr. Professor of Western American History at Brigham Young University.

In any collection of essays, many readers will undoubtedly find some more useful than others. In determining the usefulness of most essays, I generally ask myself what new interpretive insights they offer. Ordinarily, I am less interested in essays that review or add detail to well-known topics or interpretations than in those that offer new insights, especially new interpretive insights. Moreover, I find particularly useful those that provide a corrective to the conventional wisdom.

Using that criteria, I found four essays in this collection most worthwhile: Jill Mulvay Derr's "Brigham Young and the Awakening of Mormon Women in the 1870s" (312–37); William G. Hartley's "Brigham Young and Priesthood Work at the General and Local Levels" (338–70); David J. Whittaker's "Brigham Young and the Missionary Enterprise" (85–106); and Gail Geo. Holmes's "A Prophet Who Followed, Fulfilled, and Magnified: Brigham Young in Iowa and Nebraska" (128–53).

Although Derr's essay appeared in an earlier version in BYU Studies in 1978, it is significant because it challenges the conventional wisdom on the role of women in nineteenth-century Mormon society. The essay reconciles the apparent contradictions between the nineteenth-century system of relegating women to second-class status, American society's tendency to view Mormon polygamy as degrading to women, and Brigham Young's encouragement of women to acquire marketable skills. In the essay, Derr
argues, rightly I believe, that although Brigham Young was no modern feminist, he had considerable respect for women and their intellect and skills. Unlike many nineteenth-century men, he refused to relegate them solely to the roles of running households, caring for husbands, and nurturing children.

Hartley’s essay builds on his previous work, particularly his essay on the 1877 priesthood reorganization. This essay covers the full range of organizational activities at the general church, stake, and ward levels during Brigham Young’s presidency. It offers a needed corrective to the lens of pervasive presentism through which many members tend to view earlier Church organization and practice. He shows, for instance, that the seeds of currently accepted stake and ward organization and functions date from relatively late in President Young’s administration; the general practice of ordaining young men to successive offices in the Aaronic Priesthood did not begin until after Brigham’s death; men were frequently called to move from one settlement to another to serve as bishops or stake presidents; and during the early years of President Young’s administration half of the Apostles lived outside Salt Lake City and many served as stake presidents.

Whittaker explores the ten missions that Brigham served prior to the death of Joseph Smith in June 1844 and then examines missionary work during his service as Church president. Brigham viewed missionary work as a tool to facilitate the gathering of the Saints to the Great Basin. Most significantly, the missionary force during Brigham Young’s presidency was very small, averaging fewer than 80 missionaries in the field per year. Even in the peak year of 1869, only 222 missionaries served. Although missionaries served then for much longer than the present eighteen months to two years, an average of approximately 0.1 percent of the Church membership served on missions at any one time. Currently nearly 0.6 percent of Church members are serving in the mission field.

Whittaker considers the significance of missionary labor as an aspect of the gathering and of the larger pattern of emigration to and colonization of the American West. He does not, however, consider the significance of missionary work for our understanding of the role of women in Utah society. As most readers know, the conventional wisdom has it that because of the large number
of men serving on missions, women had to take a more active role in supporting families than is now necessary. Since, however, an average of only about eighty men served at any time in the mission field, the emphasis, noted by Derr, on educating women for professions takes on a decidedly different meaning. Instead of stemming from the necessity of work to support families in the absence of missionary husbands, Brigham Young’s admonitions for women to train for and participate in the marketplace derived from his perception of their role in building the kingdom.

Holmes’s essay ought to dispel the widespread impression that still persists (but ought to have been laid to rest in 1987 with the publication of Richard Bennett’s *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852*) that Mormon pioneers concentrated only at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs (Kanesville), Iowa. Holmes offers a short but valuable discussion of the geographic range of Mormon settlements on both sides of the Missouri, together with the location of various other Native American and Euro-American communities and business enterprises.

Because many of the readers of *BYU Studies* may not be as familiar with the literature as many scholars, most will find the other essays in this volume useful and informative as well. To help such readers, the following survey comments on the remaining essays.

Larry C. Porter’s “Whittingham, Vermont: Birthplace of Brigham Young—Prophet, Colonizer, Statesman” (1–19) is most valuable in adding detail to our information on the family of John Young, Brigham Young’s father. The essay outlines the various residences of the family and locates the probable sites of family homes in Whittingham through the use of local records and histories, oral history interviews, and other documents.

Ronald K. Esplin’s “Conversion and Transformation: Brigham Young’s New York Roots and the Search for Bible Religion” (20–53) considers Brigham Young’s early life and upbringing, the family’s religious environment, his local reputation and professions, his conversion to Mormonism, and his early missionary and other Church activities until the death of his first wife, Miriam Works, in 1832. The essay’s most important contribution is to relate Brigham’s early life and conversion to the biblical culture of New England and New York.
Esplin’s “Brigham Young and the Transformation of the ‘First’ Quorum of the Twelve” (54-84) discusses the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve, Thomas Marsh’s presidency and disaffection, Brigham Young’s call as President of the Quorum, and the central role of the mission to Great Britain in the emergence of the Twelve as a leading quorum in the Church. Drawing on his wide-ranging research on Brigham Young, Esplin helps us understand the important role that Brigham played in transforming the Twelve from a local council to one of the leading quorums of the Church.

Milton V. Backman Jr.’s “‘The Keys are Right Here’: Succession in the Presidency” (107-27) retells the story of the early role of the Twelve, their succession to the Church leadership after the death of Joseph Smith, and the eventual reorganization of the First Presidency in 1847. The essay provides an excellent overview of the role of the Twelve in responding to the vicissitudes of Church leadership following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith.

Susan Easton Black’s “The Mormon Battalion: Religious Authority Clashed with Military Leadership” (154-71) offers additional insight into the conflicts between the Mormons and some of the army officers. Drawing on her larger and extremely valuable biographical studies, Black presents additional biographical information on the various characters in the conflict. The essay also emphasizes Brigham Young’s role as religious leader behind the Mormon Battalion.

Dale F. Beecher’s “Colonizer of the West” (172-208) provides an outline of the settlement process used by the Latter-day Saints. One of Beecher’s most valuable contributions is a twenty-eight-page listing of colonies founded by Latter-day Saints between 1846 and 1930. Beecher, however, undoubtedly claims too much influence for the Mormons. Contrary to his assertions, Congress did not ratify the Mormon land system—rather, Mormons had to purchase or homestead land under federal laws just as other settlers; moreover, there is little evidence that the Mormons actually influenced the development of the national forest system. In addition, as Walter Prescott Webb, Robert Dunbar, Donald Pisani and others have shown, irrigation institutions similar to those in Utah also developed in other western territories and states.

Richard L. Jensen’s “Brigham Young and the Gathering to Zion” (209-26) offers an overview of the migration of Latter-day
Saints as they sought to build Zion. It is especially valuable as a discussion of the role of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund.

Richard O. Cowan's "Brigham Young: Builder of Temples" (227–43) discusses Young's work in constructing and operating temples. Beginning with the Kirtland Temple, Brigham Young had some association with all the temples constructed in the nineteenth century. Although the Manti and Logan Temples were not completed until after his death, he even worked on the initial planning of the two edifices.

Paul H. Peterson's "Brigham Young and the Mormon Reformation" (244–61) builds on his doctoral dissertation and on research by Gustive Larson, Howard Searle, Michael Orme, Gene Sessions, and this reviewer to provide a concise overview of the Reformation of 1856–57. The Reformation was undoubtedly one of the most significant events of the 1850s. Peterson points out that, although Jedediah Grant is generally credited with starting the Reformation, Brigham Young actually envisioned the movement.

John J Stewart's "The Railroad Builder" (262–90) reviews Brigham Young's role in the planning and construction of railroads. Contrary to the arguments of a number of anti-Mormons, Brigham favored the construction of the transcontinental railroad. He also promoted and facilitated the building of branch lines throughout northern and central Utah.

Leonard J. Arrington's "Brigham Young and the Great Basin Economy" (291–311) draws on a lifetime of research and writing to provide a concise overview of the Mormon role in building an economic system in the Intermountain West. Young expected to refashion the earth "to make it like the Garden of Eden" (291). Arrington's essay recounts the methods used in an attempt to achieve that objective.

John W. Welch and John Wm. Maddox's "Reflections on the Teachings of Brigham Young" (371–441) offers a valuable and comprehensive fifty-three-page index to 734 Brigham Young sermons. The authors adopt a view that contrasts with those of John A. Widtsoe, Eugene E. Campbell, and Hugh W. Nibley on the central themes of Brigham Young's discourses. They recognize that Widtsoe, Nibley, and Campbell offer idiosyncratic readings of Brigham's talks. Moreover, "aware of the limitation" of any effort of selection, they have, in an effort "to identify the strongest reflexes in his
typical teaching" (383), attempted to classify the main themes in each speech. Twenty-eight topics, such as God (42), Joseph Smith (32), knowledge (31), plural marriage (21), and Adam and Eve (16), appear in fifteen or more speeches; twenty-seven further topics, such as prayer (13), women (12), resurrection (12), and freedom (9), appear between nine and thirteen times; with another forty-three between five and eight times.

The pitfalls in the path of any such effort become evident, however, when we review some of their selections. The category "His other common themes (5 to 8 entries)" excludes Brigham Young's Adam-God theory (385). Nevertheless, the "Subject Index of Discourses of Brigham Young" under Adam lists at least eight examples (390) that fit in that category, though the list minimizes this number by subdividing the entries. What this seems to mean is that Brigham spoke more frequently on Adam-God than he did on several subjects including the Bible (5), death (5), and family (5), none of which are subdivided in the list (385). In this connection, the authors seem a bit too hard on Gene Campbell when they argue that his selection consists of "obscure points that receive little or no emphasis today or details that tend to be more sensational than substantial" (378). From my admittedly biased point of view, it seems obvious that if we are to understand people in times past, however difficult it may be, we ought to try to avoid the imposition of a presentist ("emphasis today," 378) interpretation on their works. Latter-day Saints reject the Adam-God theory today as heresy, but as Campbell understood, Brigham Young considered it significant.

In summary, I would recommend this collection especially for the essays by Derr, Hartley, Whittaker, and Holmes. The other essays are interesting and informative, and many readers will undoubtedly find them useful as well.

NOTE


Reviewed by Dow R. Wilson, General Manager of General Electric Plastics' Structured Products Division in Bergen-op-Zoom, The Netherlands.

Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited is a sequel to Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins, published in 1982 by BYU's Religious Studies Center and also edited by Noel Reynolds. In light of the growing body of significant insights into the antiquity of the Book of Mormon, this volume refreshes, updates, and extends the discussion begun sixteen years ago. Contributors present sixteen essays from a broad range of perspectives to address directly those questions that relate to Book of Mormon origins and authorship. In the contributors' view, one cannot prove scientifically that ancient prophets wrote the Book of Mormon. One can, however, definitively refute false claims as well as give evidence in support of the divine theory. Revisited does an outstanding job of presenting insightful and interesting evidence to support the Book of Mormon as an ancient text. The analysis below will highlight some of the noteworthy points in the four sections of the anthology.

Part one, "The Nineteenth-Century Origin of the Book of Mormon," focuses on the historical background, the witnesses, and the translation process. The underlying theme is that, in their haste to show that the Book of Mormon is a product of early-nineteenth-century culture, critics gloss over the historical details. The issue is "matching": do purported theories about the origin of the book match the nineteenth-century historical evidence? Richard Bushman uses primary sources to lay out the historical context that any theory on Book of Mormon origins must address. His essay points out the matter-of-factness of the translation process and the consistency of the source material to the details. Royal Skousen's analysis of the original manuscript strengthens Bushman's evidence. Skousen shows how the original manuscript indicates that the work was written from a translation and dictation process. These essays, along with Richard Anderson's update of
the accounts of the eyewitnesses to the golden plates, form a solid case that the scenario that best matches the historical details is the explanation given by Joseph Smith.

The articles in part two, "The Logical Structure of the Authorship Debate," discuss the nature of the authorship debate and address the most fundamental assumptions and arguments of critics from the time of the appearance of the Book of Mormon to the present day. Louis Midgley's "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?" is one of the best researched and certainly the most passionate (without being defensive) work in the entire collection. He traces the evolution of alternative explanations to the authorship question, connecting early alternatives posed by Alexander Campbell, Philastus Hurlbut, and E. D. Howe with the more recent theories of Fawn Brodie, David Wright, and Anthony Hutchinson. Midgley's analysis suggests that there has been a gradual shift over time in the critical response regarding Book of Mormon authorship. While his claim that this shift resulted from well-researched, data-driven works produced by faithful Latter-day Saints is not necessarily established by the evidence he gives for the history of the debate, there is not a better analysis in or out of the Church.

Part three, "Letting the Text Speak for Itself," is the "beef" of the book. It includes works on wordprinting (statistical analysis of texts designed to contrast authorship), chiasmus, demographics, and textual content. Up to this point, Revisited focuses on answering the critics in a stroke-for-stroke battle. Here, the level of the debate is seriously augmented as the contributors switch from defense to offense. If, for example, the critics are going to claim that the Book of Mormon is a product of a dissociative or manic-depressive Joseph Smith, they are going to have to bring statistical control studies to the party as has John Hilton in his wordprint analysis of Book of Mormon authors. Can a manic depressive effect a wordprint different from his own? Can a religious genius differentiate his wordprint consistently across different authors and various forms of writing in his text? While Hilton's essay does not contain some of the results of his more recent studies, it nevertheless remains unanswered by any reasonable scholastic effort.

Also in this section, John Welch extends his impressive string of successes on the contribution of chiasmus to the Book of Mormon.
Welch steps back to evaluate the "so what" of the occurrence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon. This is a brilliant essay that goes beyond the analysis of form and function he has entertained so well in previous publications. Welch shows that form not only adds to the meaning of a text, but that it serves many purposes, such as in comparing different authors, reflecting different cultural and societal influences, indicating Israelite characteristics present, and scrutinizing the nature of translation. Welch demonstrates the far-ranging impact that the evidence of chiasmus should have in defining the nature of the text. Perhaps, in the view of some critics, the mere presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon might be a fluke of some psychological anomaly, but, as Welch shows, the evidence of chiasmus goes far beyond a discussion of form, for the usage of this structural tool in the Book of Mormon brings to light many fascinating across-author analyses that are consistent with what the book says about itself. Certainly the frequent presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon creates a problem for critics. Rather than dismissing chiasmus out of hand (already very difficult) or simply attributing it to the genius of Joseph Smith, critics will now have to generate a case demonstrating how Joseph could have created such high quality chiasmus that preserve across-author cultural and poetical differences as well as poignant historical consistencies. Welch’s contribution strengthens significantly the already strong evidence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon.

Part four, "Locating the Book of Mormon Geographically and Culturally," concludes the book with three essays addressing the geographical and cultural location of the Book of Mormon. In my view, the most interesting of these is by Book of Mormon geography expert John Sorenson. In the longest and most difficult article in the book, Sorenson explores the Book of Mormon as an ancient Mesoamerican text. While difficult, this article is perhaps also the most rewarding. Sorenson explores sixty different ways in which the Book of Mormon corresponds with life and culture in Mesoamerica. Any one of these points on its own may seem insignificant—"proof-texting" in reverse—but together they make a resoundingly complete database—a sort of yellow pages of evidence for the Mesoamerican antiquity of the Book of Mormon. The reader who has the patience to plow through these passages will be well rewarded.
Who is the reader for this anthology? As a collection of the arguments relative to the origins of the Book of Mormon, this is an outstanding resource for those who have been observing or participating in the battle—academic or amateur. For these, the book will serve as a superb study tool, a fascinating straight-through read, or outstanding material for desultory essay-at-a-time reading that is more and more common in our time-constrained world. As a weakness, Revisited perhaps assumes a level of familiarity with the critical arguments on Book of Mormon authorship that may be frustrating to newcomers.

For those who have read the earlier work, Revisited is an excellent complement. The contributions concerning the recovery of the Book of Mormon (Bushman), the original manuscript (Skousen), the critical theories on who wrote the Book of Mormon (Midgley), direct responses to typical Book of Mormon authorship issues (Daniel Peterson), Nephite demographics (James Smith), and the comparative study of the Zosimus text and accounts from the tree of life vision by Lehi and Nephi (John Welch) are significant and worth the purchase price by themselves. Other articles are significantly updated from the 1982 book or earlier publications elsewhere. Usually they do not replace what was written previously but expand it meaningfully.

The most impressive achievement of Revisited is how well it works as a collection. As an armchair historian, I am frequently dismayed at the narrowness of some critical approaches to the Book of Mormon or Mormon history. It is disappointing when a critic takes a particular, limited approach (be it textual, critical, historical, psychological, or otherwise) to Book of Mormon origins and makes sweeping, all-encompassing conclusions as a result. Such critics fall far short of what Samuel Johnson, a great English critic, said was essential for the critical eye—that the critic must be able to focus on the whole as well as on the parts.1

The accomplishment of Revisited is that it addresses the parts and the whole extremely well. The contributions are well researched in primary-source data, using scholarly critical tools. These studies have been peer reviewed, in several cases by scholars outside the Mormon community. Perhaps most satisfying is the intellectual honesty in all the essays that recognizes the limitations
Review of *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited* 241

do the various approaches. As such, the contributors address the
part and generalize to the whole only so far as appropriate. Given
this rigor, the collection puts forth a critical defense as well as a
documented offense for the divine, ancient origins of the Book of
Mormon. These tight presentations create a view of the whole that
critics must deal with part by part and in totality from now on.

**NOTE**

1See Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, quoted
in Walter Jackson Bate, ed., *Criticism: The Major Texts*, enl. ed. (New York: Har-
Literary Criticism*, Regents Critics Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska

Reviewed by David P. Crandall, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Brigham Young University.

*Mormon Culture* is an assortment of essays on institutionalized and processual features of “Deseret Mormon” life. Topics range from the interplay of “Mormon folk” and “Mormon elite” to dissent, disagreement, and error in Mormon thought and from Mormons as cultural Americans to a beginning study of Mormon personality. The essays are written for lay audiences and are commendably clear and straightforward. In many ways, this is a book of hors d’oeuvres, analytical teasers—each essay introducing a topic and direction of analysis but never fully completing its program. Many of the essays are deliberately advocacy in tone, demonstrating the usefulness of anthropological analysis. While the described processes and quandaries of Deseret Mormon life are not unique to cultural Mormonism—but part and parcel of the difficulties of social and personal life everywhere in the world—it seems that some of these problems may be exacerbated in the modern Rocky Mountain West. In reviewing this book, I will look at the essays I found most thought provoking rather than attempting a critical summary of each one.

In “Mormon Folk and Mormon Elite,” Sorenson explores “two strands of Mormon culture” by juxtaposing Mormon elite (the ethos of the financially secure and the somewhat isolated hierarchy of Church leadership) with Mormon folk (the average, faithful Latter-day Saints who live in varying economic circumstances, endure sporadic uncertainty, and move in a world far less insulated than the world of the elites). By citing conflicting attitudes toward the repeal of prohibition, the fine arts versus blue collar entertainments, birth control, working mothers, and polygamy, Sorenson demonstrates the existence of two slightly different world views largely emanating from the material conditions of life—world views that create a certain amount of drift between leaders and followers. Such drifts have little or nothing to do with the core tenets
Review of *Mormon Culture*

of Latter-day Saint faith but instead with issues of practicality and American political and social life. Those moving in "higher circles" are portrayed as detached from some of the instabilities of life and therefore better able to pursue the "ideal," while most of the "folk" believe in the ideal yet must confront it from very "real," often insecure, circumstances. The result is that elite and folk views influence each other through an uneasy process of accommodation. And more often than not, it is the hardline, ideal, elite positions of Mormon orthopraxy that soften over time.

In "Consider Their Origin," an essay on family history, Sorenson delves into a pervasive dishonesty in Mormon, indeed American, culture: the difficulty of being candid about ourselves and our ancestors in writing personal and family histories. Sorenson decries the approach to history typified in mass-produced Christmas letters and instead advocates personal and family histories that are honest and forthright—histories that avoid selective memory or the construction of "historical" persons simply too good to have ever existed.

Two central questions issue from this discussion: Why are we dishonest in the first place? and What is the value of a candid family history? The first question is answered in part by received and shared attitudes of the "ideal" that govern our conceptions of what a proper family history ought to be: We best venerate the deceased by removing the blemishes from their lives. And by so doing, we avoid potential embarrassment in the unfortunate practice of comparison, a competition of sorts in which we vie for the most faithful and exemplary ancestors.

In contrast, Sorenson believes the true value of family history lies in portraying ourselves and our ancestors candidly, giving them "flesh and blood" reality as people enduring the same kinds of trials and temptations we all face. In this way, parallel worlds are created, worlds that though different in time and space still share much of the common experience of human beings. One could ask whether the stories of Alma the Younger or Saul of Tarsus would be as powerful if the unflattering details of their lives had been deleted. Perhaps, beyond the call for greater candor in the writing of family histories, this essay demonstrates how powerful a force
intellectual dishonesty sometimes is in our own thinking and re-
creation of the past.

"Being Wrong in Mormon Thought" is a discussion of degrees of error based on a sliding definition of wrong. Wrong means any-
thing from innocently forwarded errant opinions rooted in igno-
rance to genuine misunderstanding and from honest differences of opinion to willful rebellion against established orthodoxy. This essay is mistitled, as Sorenson seeks to define wrong by the conse-
quences of "being wrong" in relation to Church discipline and cor-
rection rather than the process of determining intellectual error within lay discussions of Latter-day Saint doctrine. Though he hints about the difficulty of knowing for certain—beyond the obvious set of core doctrinal beliefs—precisely what Latter-day Saint doctrine is, Sorenson avoids exploring this very important issue. Perhaps he is justifiably prudent in doing so, but being "wrong" intellectually ought to be defined against being intellectually "right."

The social processes of establishing accepted orthodoxy cer-
tainly occur on an ongoing basis within the Church because of the belief and practice of continuing revelation. Equally obvious is that these processes sometimes occur at the expense of a history of op-
posing views (witness: Sorenson's opening paragraph about Elder McConkie's dismissal of his former statements on the exclusion of certain groups of men from the priesthood). This example alone illustrates how a peripheral belief can be turned on its head. But what is the process that allows people to part with a sometimes cherished belief (truth?) and accept a new one, especially if the old belief was justified by statements of General Authorities? And, beyond the consistent, central doctrines of the restored gospel, how is rightness or wrongness determined in peripheral areas, especially when First Presidency statements and scripture seem to offer no obvious, specific answers? Such difficulties arise in any institution in which human beings participate, and accusations of "being wrong" are often hurled during a confrontation of oppos-
ing views on a subject that allows for multiple interpretations. These issues are raised by the article's content, though unfortu-
nately they are not directly addressed. Yet, for all that is jettisoned and all that remains silent, this piece draws attention to important features of truth and belief.
In his two final essays on Mormon personality, Sorenson presses home the difficulties of being Mormon and "living in the world," of submission to the will of God in contrast to American-style rugged individualism, of the interplay between the institutional and the personal, the social environment and the self. While he proposes no fresh insights into the predicament he describes, simply by noting this view of "the way things are" he demonstrates the extreme complexity of the human condition, and, in the Deseret Mormon context, a predicament that, he feels, leads to superficiality, conformity, divided lives, and syncretism.

As the titles of these two essays suggest, Sorenson is seeking to elucidate common features of Deseret Mormon personalities and their putative origins. But these essays hint at much deeper issues of how world views are formed and perpetuated; the various sources of their genesis; the way human beings cobble together their religion, their political views, their aesthetics, and so on, into one totalizing conceptual schema of the world; and finally, what effect this process has on the formation of personality and personal identity. There is no answer here, only a recognition that matters are not as simple as they may first appear.

Sorenson's essays thus constitute a mere introduction of how Deseret Mormonism might be explored anthropologically. His work duly recognizes that the cultural and social processes of Deseret Mormonism are hardly unique, but rather a variant of general human social processes. And though I find his essays incomplete as they stand, they are nonetheless useful in what they do provide: the beginnings of an anthropology of Mormonism.

Reviewed by Eric A. Eliason, Assistant Professor of English at Brigham Young University.

In Smith’s debut novel, his pretty-boy, park ranger protagonist, Tartan Jones, flees the double trouble of pressure to wed and rumors that his unattached state reflects an interest in an “alternate lifestyle.” To escape his lifelong Utah home, Tartan accepts an obscure assignment elsewhere in the Southwest. With wry humor and empathetic condescension toward the local yokels, our hero chronicles his struggles in love and culture shock in the twisted little town of Longfellow. This community’s most volatile problem is sectarian strife between Mormons and Baptists, who vie for demographic dominance while rejoicing in each scale-tipping arrival or departure that benefits their camp. However, the novel’s Mormons also spend plenty of time squabbling among themselves. The Baptists presumably do as well, but we see little of them, despite the book’s title.

This novel is very funny. This reader sustained a smirk throughout most of the book, chuckled about every three pages, and out-and-out busted up every twenty pages or so. Smith’s style is engaging and clear. A sample of his prose explains why two of the book’s characters do not get along:

It all stemmed from the time Orvil had appeared on *Wheel of Fortune.* Orvil got on the show but didn’t win a single dollar. He kept spinning bankrupt, and when he finally got a chance to win some money he mistakenly guessed . . .

“Funger sandwich . . .” instead of Finger sandwich. It was a dumb mistake, especially considering that every letter had been up on the board except the two I’s. But Orvil had never heard of a finger sandwich and thought the concept to be quite disgusting when the puzzle was finally solved by the next contestant. Bruce made a big deal about Orvil’s stupid guess.

“Funger sandwich? What the heck is a funger sandwich?”

Orvil made up some lie about the Native Americans having a ceremonial treat called the funger, but admitted the truth after Bruce began searching through books at the library. Orvil did end up with
a box of Tyson potpies and a really nice hairbrush as consolation prizes, but it just wasn't the same as, say—ten thousand dollars.

Ever since then, however, Orvil and Bruce had been bitter enemies. (78–79)

This story is typical of hundreds in the book. *BBBQ* does have a sustained plot, but it is often, if only momentarily, lost behind a plethora of unrelated anecdotal sequins. Smith fashions character personalities and plot lines to service this wonderful anecdotal humor. This strategy makes the humorous asides the level on which the novel is most successful. One way to read this book is as a collection of short short stories.

While this book’s primary objective is light humor, Smith tackles some fairly high literary fare. Toward the end of the book, he unravels a disturbingly dark, ironic situation in which a pretty despicable antagonist performs a grizzly and unwittingly atoning work that brings about a *Bells of Saint Mary*'s-style faux-miraculous community healing event. (Sorry to be so cryptic, but I don't want to be a plot spoiler.)

This probing of the deep, dark places of the human condition seems joltingly incongruous with the lightness of the book’s earlier untroubled comedic depiction of violence and dysfunctional relationships. In fact, some readers may be disturbed by the surprising amount of death and violence in this work of faithful Mormon fiction, especially since it is depicted, and then laughed off, in such a cartoonish manner. Other readers, because it is cartoonish, might not even notice it.

*BBBQ* also buzzes with amorous energy as Tartan and his new girlfriend, Charity, fall in love. With a brilliance unprecedented in Mormon fiction and without even alluding to a single anatomical feature below the chin, Smith captures the body-wrenching, God-given attraction—from a male point of view anyway—that draws couples into eternal-family-producing temple marriages. In the LDS world view, this power is distinguishable from the sinful lasciviousness which leads people to sexual relationships without commitment and offspring without supportive two-parent families.
This distinction, difficult for outsiders to see and thus good grist for the mill of LDS fictive treatments, has yet to be fully explored, though Smith makes some good first steps. Blurring this distinction is common in work such as that of Levi S. Peterson, whose wigged-out rural Mormons seem to have influenced some characterizations in *BBBQ*. One of Peterson's characters, the monumentally ill-tempered, socially inept, and physically misshapen Rendella Kranpitz from the short story “The Christianizing of Coburn Heights,”¹ is reincarnated in *BBBQ* as the troublesome Mary Longfellow. Smith is no Levi Peterson clone, however. While Peterson explores deep sexual and theological dysfunction among people on the fringes of Mormon religion and culture, Smith examines dysfunction mostly in interpersonal skills among committed Latter-day Saints.

A major deficiency in *BBBQ* is the lightness with which the book treats the kind of nuts-and-bolts contextualization required to make a story read like it is taking place in believable people's lives. For example, the main character is a forest ranger, yet his creator does not make the world of this occupation particularly relevant to the story or compelling to the reader. Perhaps Smith can be allowed this liberty, since the book is not about rangering. However, while the title clearly promises meaningful treatment of the very important issue of LDS/Evangelical relations, this book offers no theological or cultural information about Baptists other than the fact they have pastors instead of bishops.

Smith's evasion of theological and cultural content detracts from his book's power to be the cautionary tale about the evils of prejudice that it strives to be. Despite these criticisms, Smith's debut novel succeeds on the strength of its humor. As Joseph Fielding McConkie says on the dust jacket, "The kid has talent." With *BBBQ*, Smith has established himself among the best Mormon humorists writing today.

**NOTE**

Brief Notices


For almost a century, critics of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon have claimed that *View of the Hebrews*, first published by Ethan Smith in 1823 (2d. ed., 1825), served as inspiration for scripture. Ethan Smith, pastor of the Congregational Church in Poultney, Vermont, argued that the Native Americans were scattered Israelites who would soon be restored into the gospel fold. Charles Tate has introduced and edited the entire text of the 1825 edition in an effort to "invite our readers to decide for themselves" (xix) concerning the alleged connection between Smith’s treatise and the Book of Mormon.

*View of the Hebrews* reads very much like a gospel tract. Smith quotes dozens of scriptures in an attempt to show that in the latter days Israel would be restored in fulfillment of God’s covenant promises and sets out to prove that Native Americans are these covenant people. "I shall attempt to embody the evidence obtained," says Smith, "to show that the natives of America are the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel" (58). Smith quotes liberally from authors who had drawn this conclusion before him and makes no claim to be writing scripture.

Lay readers who wish to investigate repeated claims that the Book of Mormon borrows from *View of the Hebrews* will find this volume valuable. For those unfamiliar with the ongoing dialogue, a cursory introduction reviews literature that compares *View of the Hebrews* to or distinguishes it from the Book of Mormon. Other readers will want an analysis of the text itself, which is not offered here. Serious scholars will probably continue to refer to Smith’s original editions, since the 1996 volume does not include original pagination and does not provide discussion of the differences between the 1823 and 1825 editions.

—Jed L. Woodworth

*The Ten Commandments for Today*, edited by John G. Scott (Bookcraft, 1997)

Seeing the Ten Commandments as eternal principles that have never been annulled, this collection focuses primarily on recent statements by Church leaders relevant or adaptable to these ten topics. Of course, these Judeo-Christian fundamentals, about which thousands of books have
been written over the centuries, can be taken to mean or include many other points or precepts.

Here these "institutes" (5) are applied to such important and diverse subjects as revelation, false materialism, jewelry, automobiles, self-esteem, vain repetitions, filing tax returns, prayer, profanity, eternal families, war, anger, hunting, abortion, euthanasia, honesty, pride, and neighborly love. Moses would probably be pleasantly surprised to see how far removed from Sinai modern circumstances have become and yet how relevant his ancient words can still be made.

—John W. Welch

The Exodus Story: Ancient and Modern Parallels, by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Bookcraft, 1997)

This short book finds, in the New Testament, the Doctrine and Covenants, and personal experience, parallels to the Old Testament Exodus story in the Hexateuch. This effort, aimed at the lay LDS reader, is more an attempt to "liken all scriptures unto us" (1 Ne. 19:23) than a scholarly exegesis written for university colleagues (4). Holzapfel thus acknowledges the work of other LDS scholars who have written on Exodus patterns, but makes no overt attempt to dialogue with them.

Instead, Holzapfel brings considerable expertise to his writing by utilizing historical, cultural, and geographical details not generally known. Many readers will enjoy the prodigious array of scriptural quotations drawn here from all four standard works, particularly from the Old Testament; others will wish for more analysis of what the quoted scriptures might mean and how the Exodus theme surfaces repeatedly in salvation history.

—Jed L. Woodworth


The Primitive Church in the Modern World is a welcome companion volume to The American Quest for the Primitive Church, an important anthology published by Richard T. Hughes in 1988. The first volume brought together fifteen remarkable essays on a theme that had too often been neglected by scholars of American religion: the search within American Prerestantism for a restoration of the ancient gospel. While not necessarily agreeing on what the restoration might consist of, the various Protestant movements were nearly all characterized by elements of restorationism, or primitivism. For LDS readers, the 1988 volume provided a valuable historical setting for the emergence of their own religion, which emphasizes the restoration of ancient truths and authority.

This new anthology explores the subject of how primitivism applies in modern times. It contains ten noteworthy essays by distinguished scholars of American religion, as well as an important introduction by Hughes. As Hughes explains, restorationist believers
tend "to define their most fundamental values and commitments by the ancient norms of the Christian faith, however perceived, and only then—if at all—by the norms of modernity or modernization. In other words, genuine primitivists judge the modern world by the standards of the ancient faith, not the other way around" (xiii).

Some of the essays raise interesting questions about whether churches that began as restorationist movements have moved away from that tradition because of the various influences of modernism. To what degree did, or does, accommodation to modernity undermine basic primitivism? This dilemma, however, is largely circumvented in LDS theology, which understands that continuing revelation originally stood at the core of true, primitive Christianity, which was founded on prophetic, apostolic leadership.

LDS readers will want to take note of the essay by Thomas G. Alexander, "Mormon Primitivism and Modernization" (167–96). Drawing from his extensive study of late-nineteenth-century Mormonism, particularly the administration of President Wilford Woodruff, Alexander focuses on the changing relationship between the temporal and spiritual spheres during that period. In his view, the temporal and the spiritual were fused so intimately in the early days of the LDS Church that there was no incongruity between them. Thus various economic programs, seemingly temporal in nature, were seen as merely one aspect of an all-encompassing faith. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the temporal and the spiritual had become separate, largely because of the pressures brought against the Church by the political campaigns against plural marriage and Utah's quest for statehood.

Alexander discusses the gradual modification of various beliefs and practices that resulted in the fact that directions from Church leaders on temporal affairs no longer carried the same spiritual connotations as in earlier years. Nevertheless, he shows that the Church was still able "to perceive itself as the restoration of ancient Christianity. Modernization had not changed that" (187). Though Alexander does not specifically comment on the principle of continuing revelation, LDS readers will understand that this is the process that has always led, and still leads, to needful adaptation in the rapidly changing modern world.

—James B. Allen


Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney (1828–96) witnessed early Mormon history from its center. She was a daughter of Heber C. and Vilate Kimball, and she became a plural wife of Joseph Smith. After the Prophet's death, she married Horace K. Whitney, with whom she raised a large family in Utah.
Near the end of her life, Helen wrote her reminiscences of life among the early Latter-day Saints. She relayed her experiences of the momentous: the Missouri persecutions, the very beginnings of polygamy, the exodus from Nauvoo, and the sojourn at Winter Quarters. She also wrote much of daily living: family life, friendships, dancing, and Sabbath-day observance. Her narrative provides a woman's view of the ordinary and the extraordinary in early Mormon history.

Reminiscing from the distance of four decades makes for memory problems, but Helen Mar Whitney's narrative benefits from her us of letters and diaries of her father and others. Also, the retrospective position from which she wrote allowed for mature reflection and enabled her to see life lessons in her past experiences. For example, she wrote, "The experience had at Winter Quarters taught me that it was only through obedience and great humiliation, more especially through fasting and prayer, that we could obtain any great manifestations from on high, or the power to enable us to overcome the adversary" (462–63).

Helen's reminiscences were published serially in the Woman's Exponent from 1880 to 1886. The Holzapfels provide us the service of pulling together into one book all the scattered installments from this practically inaccessible periodical. In appendixes the editors also provide Whitney's autobiography and her obituary written by her friend Emmeline B. Wells. An introductory essay, accompanied by a number of photographs, invites the reader into the book.

—Mark Ashurst-McGee


This book, written by a BYU law professor, is sure to command the attention of those with an interest in First Amendment religious issues, legal history, or legal and political philosophy, especially regarding church and state.

The author sees a major crisis in religion clause jurisprudence: the Supreme Court's doctrine of church and state is grounded in two distinct and conflicting discourses. The first is religious communitarianism, which dominated Supreme Court decisions until the middle of the twentieth century. Communitarianism is generally respectful, accommodating, and supportive of traditional Judeo-Christian values. The second discourse is secular individualism, which developed in the 1950s. Now the prevailing doctrine of the Court, secular individualism takes a more critical stance toward religion, relegating it to the role of a purely private institution toward which government is to remain strictly neutral.

Gedicks argues that the Court's shift from the principles of religious communitarianism to those of secular individualism is problematic because it has been partial and incomplete: "While the Court
is committed to principles of secular individualism, it has repeatedly endorsed government actions that violate those principles—actions that would be far more justifiable under the discourse of religious communitarianism" (back cover). Because communitarianism and secular individualism are fundamentally irreconcilable, the Court has forced itself to diminish the religious characteristics of practices it actually sanctions. For this reason, the Supreme Court’s religion clause doctrine has become inconsistent, convoluted, ineffective, and, as a result, disrespected.

The solution does not lie in attempting to fix what is broken. The current Court doctrine lacks both popular support and internal consistency and is therefore beyond repair. The answer that Gedicks proposes is to develop an entirely new discourse that would first "attract popular support" and second protect "a meaningful measure of religious freedom" (back cover). Gedicks does not articulate precisely what this new discourse should be—that would require another book.

This work succeeds brilliantly in doing what it set out to accomplish. The reader is left fully aware of how the Supreme Court got itself into its current predicament regarding church and state.

—Matthew R. Connelly
Side Canyons

Cold winds drive late September
down gutters of lower 26th,
across her busy intersections
and over trash of this littered park
where I watch flocks of pigeons feed.
They drop in pairs and threes
from high cornice ledges
of tired office buildings
that line this urban gorge,
disputing with starlings and
sparrows the meager repast left
by last night’s bag ladies, sorting
out supermarket loot, retrieved
from dumpster’s questioned cornucopia.

And now, this gust, sudden
among limbs and lobes of ancient alders
overhead, loosens a flutter of rust
across the fracus, a tilt
of other seasons that leaves me
sensing, amid this tawdry mix
of wings, a quiet stir
as fall’s other birds return.
Magpies and Stellar's jays, raucous against impending chill
that drives them in from piñon flats
and drying creekbeds;
raptors riding migratory thermal drafts
down the length of mountain ranges,
circling momentarily above our lives
as if they catch some stench of death;
crows, that with cold claim town again, refugees from smog-laced streets
in search of skies more open, of sun
still fluid through bitter air.

A distant call of killdeer, down
naked edges of the world, and sheer brick walls of J. C. Penney's
begin to dream redrock cliffs
and canyon parapets. Sidewalks stream
with golden cottonwood and quail
that scramble over wash-smoothed stone
and out among sage to hide.

—E. Leon Chidester

Note: This poem was winner of the College of Humanities 1998 Eisteddfod Poetry Crown Competition. The theme was "City Canyons."
To see Minerva Teichert's art is to want to know her better. How could Minerva paint hundreds of canvases and still raise five children? Wash all the glass bottles for the family's dairy, raise chickens and a large garden, can and sew, and still serve her community? A letter in this volume hints at the answer: "Hurry," she writes. "That's my second name. I hardly go by any other."

In other letters in this collection, Minerva shares a wealth of wisdom about combining family responsibilities, personal dreams, and life in a rural community. While she chats about the week's news with her daughter, we gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the woman who was driven to paint the Mormon story.

What were her opinions about her art? Written primarily from 1942 to 1969, these letters tell us. About her Manti Temple murals, for example, Minerva wrote, "There is just this, I may die if I do it but—as dad says—I'd have died if I hadn't." Like her paintings, her letters are bold and powerful, leaving a legacy of historical information and inspiration.