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Elders Neal A. Maxwell, *left*, and Bruce C. Hafen, 2003

The Story of *A Disciple's Life*

Preparing the Biography of Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Bruce C. Hafen

The story behind my work on the biography of Elder Neal A. Maxwell actually began in 1976, when he invited me to take leave from Brigham Young University and work for two years under his daily direction in the new Correlation Department at Church headquarters. In later years, when I was an administrator and a teacher at Ricks College and then at BYU, I saw him often in Church Educational System meetings, where he was a key figure on the Church Board of Education.

In 1996, I was called to the Seventy and assigned to an Area Presidency in Australia, where I would remain until returning to Utah in August 2000. Like so many other Church members, my wife, Marie, and I were stunned by the news of Elder Maxwell's leukemia in late 1996, and we worried and prayed about his health. During October conference 1999, he invited me to come by his office. As we talked, he was quite uncertain about his condition. He was receiving an experimental treatment, but "one of these days," he said, he fully expected the leukemia to return. That was the main reason why he had finally yielded to prodding from others that he allow the writing of his biography. I thought a book on his life story would be wonderful—until he asked if I would write it.

As honored as I felt, I honestly thought my doing this was not a good idea. I believed that he, his family, and the Church deserved thorough research and writing, and the work needed to be done at once to maximize the possibility of being published during his lifetime; he shared those hopes. But given the frightening uncertainty of his health; given that acceptable biographies can take years to document and write; given that he hadn't kept a personal journal, which would necessitate additional months

of original research; and especially given that I was half a world away on a full-time Church assignment, I thought we needed to find someone else who could give this project immediate and full-time attention.

Nonetheless, after more visits with Elder Maxwell and others, within a few days I had accepted the project and agreed to begin working on it as quickly as possible. In the weeks that followed, I still worried about having committed myself to something as unreachable as this task seemed. As I would awaken to hear the colorful birds that rule those fresh Australian mornings, I would sometimes wonder if—indeed, I would hope that—I had agreed to write Elder Maxwell’s biography only in a dream. Then the reality would hit me again. At times I would remember Nephi’s words about the Lord preparing a way for people who have a work to do.

As time went on and as I found able people who were eager to help, my anxiety gradually subsided. I learned about peaceful intensity. Marie and I increasingly sensed that we had been given a rare privilege and that whatever came of this experience would bless us. As we worked, we also prayed often that the Lord would lengthen Elder Maxwell’s life. After such prayers, I would sometimes recall a scriptural phrase I first heard him quote from the book of Daniel: “*But if not . . .*” (Dan. 3:17–18)—meaning, we must do everything we can to make each assignment work, and then if it doesn’t, as Abinadi said, “it matters not” (Mosiah 13:9).

Looking back now, I feel that I—and all of us in the Church—have witnessed firsthand a genuine miracle. Elder Maxwell’s oncologist, a Church member named Clyde Ford, told me that Elder Maxwell had beaten the statistical odds when his leukemia went into its first remission, which lasted fifteen months. When the illness returned in 1998, the odds were much worse. Dr. Ford knew that even if the standard medical treatment brought about a second remission, it would inevitably be shorter than the first remission. So he prayerfully studied the research journals until he discovered some reported success with leukemia patients in Sweden whose doctors were using a new treatment pattern. The sample size wasn’t large enough to justify predictable results, but the Maxwells and Dr. Ford decided to try it.

In April 2003, Elder Maxwell is still taking this same treatment as he goes about his normal duties each day. The preservation of his life was not, and could not have been, anticipated by medical science. Along with its far more substantial blessings, this miracle made it possible to have a biography that draws on lengthy interviews with him and reflects his having reviewed the entire text. Like you, I pray that the miracle will continue.

My work on this project has caused me to ask myself, Why do we read, let alone write, biographies? Since ancient days, we have been taught the gospel by stories. The accounts of the war in heaven, the Garden of Eden, and Cain and Abel are the first stories showing what happens when people try to live or don't live God's teachings. The New Testament is itself a story about Jesus—who he was, what he taught, and what he did. Christ's life is the story of *giving* the Atonement. The story of Adam and Eve is the story of *receiving* the Atonement. As we experience mortality the way our first parents did, struggling with the oppositions between good and evil, we can look at Eve or at Adam and say, "That is the story of *my* life." When we tell our own stories to others, we realize that the cosmic quest to overcome evil and find God is our very personal quest.

Our own testimonies are simply true stories that can capture in vivid detail how the Lord blesses us, protects us, changes us, and helps us to overcome. Nothing brings the Spirit into a conversation or a classroom more than hearing people bear honest testimony by telling the story of their personal experience. The Church membership is itself the aggregation of thousands of personal stories, or testimonies, from people all over the world. Every one of those stories is unique, richly textured, full of meaning, and full of lessons about life. Each story is daily developing its own fresh narrative, against the many oppositions in mortality.

The scriptures, too, are primarily a collection of stories, given to us because God directed prophets to recount their experiences to his people. In his desire to give us guidance about life, God could have given us a large rulebook or a series of grand philosophical essays. But he didn't. He gave us stories—stories about people like ourselves. Again and again, the Book of Mormon writers tell us about some person's experience and then say, "And thus we see . . ."

What *do* we *see* from these stories? We can see, for example, that "by small means the Lord can bring about great things" (1 Ne. 16:29) and that if people keep God's commandments "he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means" for them to keep going (1 Ne. 17:3). These stories teach us that "the devil will not support his children at the last day" (Alma 30:60), that "the children of men [are quick to] forget the Lord. . . . And we also see the great wickedness one very wicked man can cause" (Alma 46:8–9).

J.R.R. Tolkien's understanding of the power of stories played an important part in the conversion of his friend C. S. Lewis to Christianity. Tolkien helped Lewis see that the *story* of Christ's life conveys a fuller meaning to our minds than abstract statements of doctrine and reason can convey. He explained that the abstract "ideas" of Christianity "are too large and too all-

embracing for the finite mind to absorb them. That is why the divine providence revealed himself in a story.” This insight helped Lewis realize why he had *felt* that certain classical stories were “profound and suggestive of meaning beyond [his] grasp even tho’ [he] could not say in cold prose ‘what it meant.’”¹

Elder Maxwell’s biography is the story of one man’s discoveries from applying the story of Jesus to his own life. The *story* of Elder Maxwell does offer more understanding than at least my “cold prose” could offer in an essay about Christian discipleship and “what it means.”

His life story is valuable at two levels: one as a chapter in the history of the Church and the other as an illustration of the process of trying to become a follower of Christ. One of my hopes in telling this story, then, was not only to record the life of a Church leader but also to offer his experience as one model to any individual for whom discipleship is a personal quest. The Latter-day Saint Bible dictionary defines “disciple” as “a pupil or learner; a name used to denote (1) [capital *D*:] the twelve, also called apostles, [and] (2) [lower case *d*:] all followers of Jesus Christ.” I have wanted to speak to both meanings, as suggested by the biography’s opening sentence: “All Apostles are Disciples of Jesus, but not all of Jesus’ disciples are Apostles.”

In fall 2001, Jeff Keith, a BYU geology professor, spoke at a campus devotional. At one point he quoted the last verse in the Gospel of John: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25). Then Brother Keith explained why he believes Christ’s biography is so large that the world itself cannot contain it: because “the most complete biographies of each of our lives . . . are really contained in His biography.”² In other words, because of the Atonement, his life story includes the life story of every one of his disciples, both with a capital *D* and with a small *d*. For the same reason, our life stories can each include his life story. No wonder that in some personal histories and biographies, we find real evidence of the Savior’s influence and tangibly feel his love.

Church history work at Church headquarters is concerned primarily with the history of the institutional Church, which includes the experiences of its leaders. However, the “personal history” accounts of all disciples’ lives—quite apart from any role they may have played in Church institutional affairs—are also a crucial element in the history of the Lord’s people. We Church members typically view these “personal histories” as a part of *family history* more than of *Church history*. Perhaps an examination of that assumption will help us see new value in the recent merger of the departments of Family History and Church History at Church headquarters.

Both parts of the new department, each in its own way, are engaged in “telling the story” of the Lord’s dealings with both his Church collectively and his followers individually.



Regarding the research and writing process, I am now grateful I was forced to conduct the research as I did, because other people did much better work than I ever could have done had I been in Utah trying to do it myself. The day after I agreed to proceed, I had a heaven-sent conversation with my friend Elder Marlin K. Jensen, who had once worked as an adviser to the Church Historical Department. After hearing my worries about doing the needed research from Australia, Elder Jensen suggested I contact Gordon Irving, one of the Church’s primary oral historians.

I called Gordon on the phone but didn’t actually meet him until we had worked together via email for six months. As it turned out, Gordon became my principal collaborator. Using an agenda of research questions that we developed together in our frequent emails, he conducted eighteen interviews with Elder Maxwell, which when transcribed filled 560 pages. In addition to interviews I later did, Gordon also recorded, had transcribed, then edited interviews about Elder Maxwell with each member of the First Presidency, a number of other General Authorities, and several other people. Gordon would email the edited transcripts to me for my research base. His well-schooled and faithful touch made the biography a much better book.

My other indispensable email companion was Elder Maxwell’s son, Cory, who combed, inventoried, copied, and shipped, as weekly care packages across the Pacific, portions of large annual scrapbooks that Elder Maxwell’s secretaries have been compiling since the late 1960s.

As helpful as these materials were, I soon realized why a biography cannot be better than its primary source material. The parts of Elder Maxwell’s story that draw on such contemporaneous documents as letters, journals, and his personal writings are richer than other parts of the story. Always a “clean desk man,” he has not kept a great deal of correspondence and other personal papers. His written personal history is very brief, dealing with only a portion of his ministry. It was written mostly as an annual summary of key events in the 1970s and early ’80s without much commentary. I asked him if he had written letters to his family during his service in World War II and on his mission. He said, “Oh, there might be a few things around, but there is nothing profound in those old letters.” When I finally received copies of those letters and began reading them, that was a turning

point in my feeling for the entire process. Suddenly, I could sense for myself why Churchill's biographer, Martin Gilbert, called such letters "history's gold."³ The issue here is the depth of real evidence. Memories recalled years after an event are helpful, but they are not the same as uninterpreted, contemporaneous evidence that allows readers to draw their own conclusions.

Here is one small example. Neal Maxwell's experience as an eighteen-year-old infantryman on Okinawa was a defining moment for his entire life. He was in a mortar crew during a ferocious battle. One night in May 1945, the shrieking noise of artillery fire caught Neal's attention with a frightening realization. Three shells in a row had exploded in a sequence that sent a dreadful message—the enemy had completely triangulated his position, and the next series of shots would hit home.

Suddenly a shell exploded no more than five feet away from him. Terribly shaken, Neal jumped from his muddy foxhole and moved down a little knoll seeking protection, and then, uncertain what to do, he crawled back to the foxhole. There he knelt, trembling, and spoke the deepest prayer he had ever uttered, pleading for protection and dedicating the rest of his life to the Lord's service. In his pocket, he was carrying a smudged copy of his patriarchal blessing, which gave him a special promise of protection. No more shells exploded near him after that moment. He came to know God that night in a way that changed him and directed his life's course. When the leukemia came, he would often compare that experience with Okinawa, both in its terror and in its deep spiritual impact on him.

I knew this was a significant event, but I knew almost nothing about Okinawa, so I began reading some historical sources about World War II. In addition to learning why the Japanese defense of Okinawa was so fierce, I came across some detailed accounts of the miserable battlefield conditions there. During the time of Neal's key battle, the place was a mess. The intensity of the fighting combined with the deplorable conditions made some people who survived this trauma unable to talk about it for decades. Heavy rains turned the battlefield into such a mud puddle that even "tanks disappeared into the ooze." Disease and dysentery plagued the soldiers. They were so exhausted that what little sleep they got was often while standing up in the mud. Supply trucks couldn't provide consistent food and ammunition, so the troops were always hungry and, especially, thirsty. One account recorded that the soldiers lived with "almost constant thirst," and even when they had water, it was too foul and oily to drink. According to this account, the only thing that saved them from the unrelenting thirst was coffee, which, having been boiled, was at least edible.⁴

Not long after reading these military histories, I came across this brief paragraph in the letters Neal hastily scrawled to his family during the battle for Okinawa:

Had a dream the other night. You folks were holding Carol [his sister] up to a window and I was saying Boo to her, and she laughed just as she does. Boy, if that didn't make me blue. . . . It's rough here. . . . It will be wonderful to bathe again. Still not smoking, drinking tea or coffee, nothing great, but *the coffee is tempting some times*.⁵

When I showed Elder Maxwell this letter, I asked him, "Do you remember why the coffee tempted you?" He couldn't remember. I asked if he remembered how thirsty he was and how hard it was to get water. He did remember that he had to collect rain water in his helmet to provide water for the sacrament he blessed for himself each Sunday. But he didn't remember the thirst, and he didn't remember the connection between the thirst and his comment in the family letter about the coffee.

Well, he never would drink the coffee. The combination of knowing the messy battlefield context and seeing his innocent reference to being tempted but not giving in was for me a moving discovery about the way that battle shaped his character. I believe his determination to avoid the coffee was a very practical, youthful expression of the commitment he made there to serve the Lord. I only dared hint about this in writing the Okinawa chapter, because I wanted to let the reader draw his or her own conclusion. I offer more about my conclusion here because of what this experience showed me about the place of specific details and contemporaneous sources in "telling the story."



Another area that offers rich contemporaneous evidence about Elder Maxwell's personal development is his prolific writing and speaking. Neal Maxwell is a very interesting personality, and his verbal style is so distinctive it can only be called, well . . . Maxwellian. As President Hinckley said, "[Neal] speaks differently from any of the other General Authorities. He just has a unique style all his own. We all admire it."⁶

I'll offer only a brief comment about Elder Maxwell's form and will later illustrate the development of his content. One distinctive aspect of his style is that his handwriting is nearly illegible. When his son, Cory, was in his teens, Elder Maxwell left him a handwritten note before going on a trip. Cory couldn't read the note, so he took it to his mother for help. She told him he was looking at it upside down. But even when they turned it around, they still couldn't read it. President Hinckley said at a recent dinner tribute for Elder Maxwell at the University of Utah, "Surely a man who has so many virtues must have a vice or two. Have you ever seen Neal's handwriting? . . . I don't know how in the world Colleen ever derived any comfort from the letters Neal sent."⁷

The tales about Elder Maxwell's use of language are legendary. A returned missionary who was translating general conference live into Mandarin Chinese a few years ago told me that the translation staff said they had categorized the conference talks according to "four . . . , well, five levels of difficulty for translators. Levels one through four are for everybody else, and level five is for Elder Maxwell."⁸ The translators' challenge is not that he uses big academic words but that his language is so compressed and full of carefully chosen imagery, metaphors, and allusions. "One of his talks is like a bouillon cube," said his daughter-in-law, Karen B. Maxwell, using a pretty good metaphor of her own. Metaphors "are a great way to say a lot in a few words," but the listener must bring something to it before "it can expand for you."⁹ Consider, for example, his general conference comment about religious risk takers who engage in "intellectual bungee jumping." Try translating that into Chinese!



At first I thought the main theme of Elder Maxwell's life might be his memorable contributions to the Church as a role model for educated Latter-day Saints. The evidence from my research, however, revealed a different focus: *discipleship* is without question the central message of his life and of his teachings. His background and contributions as an educator still matter—indeed, they matter even more in light of his life's more fundamental theme of personal discipleship. Consider some autobiographical reflections of my own about those two issues in his life.

In his generally sympathetic 1957 book *The Mormons*, a Catholic sociologist named Thomas O'Dea summarized the major "sources of strain and conflict" he believed the Church would face in the near future. Heading his list was the conflict he saw coming between the Church's emphasis on education and its authoritarian theology. He wrote, "Perhaps Mormonism's greatest and most significant problem is its encounter with modern secular thought." He noted that the Church had long emphasized education, but he observed correctly that higher education tends to reflect the secular culture of our age. O'Dea predicted that Latter-day Saint youth, who he said "usually [come] from a background of rural and quite literal Mormonism," would encounter in their university studies much "doubt and confusion," bringing "religious crisis to [them] and profound danger" to the Church. O'Dea believed this conflict was so significant that "upon its outcome will depend in a deeper sense the future of Mormonism."¹⁰

I encountered this conflict for myself as a university student. When I enrolled at BYU in 1963 after my mission, I seemed to bump against it

everywhere I turned. A friend who was a seminary teacher told me to avoid classes in subjects like history, literature, and philosophy because they would lead me into intellectual apostasy. Yet some of my professors in liberal arts classes told me to beware of anti-intellectual religion teachers who, as one person put it, “expect the Holy Ghost to do their thinking for them.” That year I took a superb religion course from West Belnap called *Your Religious Problems*. Here each student presented to the class the issue that concerned him or her most. I called my topic “Liberalism vs. Conservatism in the Church.” I was looking for a general framework in approaching many specific issues, from evolution and politics to women’s rights and constitutional law.

To one degree or another, I suspect my experience was not unusual. And the potential for the problem O’Dea identified was growing in the Church because the American boom in higher education in the last half of the twentieth century drew an ever higher percentage of young Latter-day Saints to college campuses. The apparent conflict between submissiveness to religious authority and the independence fostered by a liberal education creates a paradox that can seem difficult to resolve, both in general and in the specific issues in one’s field of interest. I suspect many of you have sat through sessions like those I have known where people talk and write at length in efforts to resolve such issues analytically. Those discussions can help, but I have found that the best resolution of this paradox lies not in abstract analysis, but in the lives of real people, whose actual experience demonstrates how a faithful spiritual life and a rigorous education can work together to yield *both* greater spiritual depth and a more abundant intellectual life.

The best way for Latter-day Saint students to grow their way through the natural paradox of freedom versus authority, then, is to have a good teacher—a mentor, whose modeling they can watch and follow. Usually such mentoring occurs in a personal, student-teacher relationship. That is a core part of the educational vision that guides everything that BYU aims to do. During the 1970s, I was blessed to enjoy such mentoring when I was invited into daily working relationships with Dallin Oaks and then with Neal Maxwell—both of them so competent academically and yet so faithful. Because of what these relationships meant to my own resolution of the O’Dea paradox, I was not surprised to discover in my research for the biography this statement from former BYU social sciences dean Martin Hickman regarding Elder Maxwell’s influence as commissioner of education. He said Neal Maxwell had become “a legend in the Church for the depth of his thought, his knowledge of the scriptures, the elegance of his language, . . . and for his compassion for those in and out of the Church who need comfort.”

Martin said that what a good mentoring teacher does for his college students “Neal Maxwell now provides for a generation of young Latter-day Saints, who come not only from the valleys of the Wasatch front but from the continents and isles of the sea” all over the Church.¹¹

When I am on BYU campus, I can still hear the sound of Commissioner Maxwell’s voice from the 1970s echoing off Y Mountain in these quotes and paraphrases: “We cannot let the world condemn our value system by calling attention to our professional mediocrity.”¹² A disciple’s excellent scholarship is a form of consecration.¹³ In a morally deteriorating culture, we must lean “into the fray” like Joseph of Egypt, rather than just being another hungry mouth to feed.¹⁴ Keep your citizenship in Jerusalem, but use your passport to Athens.¹⁵

In this role, Commissioner Maxwell became a principal mentor for three future members of the Twelve whom he helped bring into leadership positions in the Church Educational System in the 1970s: Dallin H. Oaks, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Henry B. Eyring. Neal Maxwell learned the need for and the art of such significant mentoring from his two principal mentors during his own younger years: G. Homer Durham, who was Neal’s college professor at the University of Utah, and Harold B. Lee, whom he came to know through an assignment on the Church leadership committee in the 1960s.

When I learned who Elder Maxwell’s mentors were, I reflected on what I had learned from my earlier reading in the biographies of other Church leaders. I saw a short but potent “chain of title” for Neal’s own tutoring process in a complete vision of Church education. Karl G. Maeser had originally tutored Brigham Young’s children. Then Brigham Young sent him to Provo to start the Brigham Young Academy in 1876. There Karl Maeser let the best of his German intellectual discipline serve the broader aims of his unqualified commitment to Brigham Young’s primary request—not to teach even the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God.

As the first general superintendent of Church schools from 1888 to 1901, Karl Maeser passed the torch of this vision to an entire generation of Latter-day Saint teachers, including young James E. Talmage, who mentored young J. Reuben Clark, who mentored young Harold B. Lee, who mentored young Neal A. Maxwell. And as if that weren’t enough, another young teacher mentored by Karl Maeser was Joseph Tanner, who later mentored young John A. Widtsoe, who later mentored young G. Homer Durham, who later mentored young Neal A. Maxwell.

My work on the biography reminded me, then taught me again with the depth that only experience and detail can provide, about the blessing of being mentored by teachers and leaders for whom Thomas O’Dea’s paradox is ultimately not a conflict but a source of great strength.

Neal Maxwell came from “a background of rural and quite literal Mormonism.” His parents had desired, but never enjoyed, higher education. He then encountered with zest the confusion and doubts of the modern secular world at sophisticated levels, emerging with a spiritual maturity that was enriched rather than undermined by his educational and professional experiences. Then, as a role model, Neal Maxwell taught what he had learned to other educated Latter-day Saints, nurturing and encouraging teachers and leaders whose encounters with O’Dea’s concerns had been as valuable and positive as was his own. I thank the Lord for raising up such teachers, not only in my own life, but in today’s generation of Latter-day Saints.



My final comment is about the doctrinal insight that comes from viewing through Elder Maxwell’s eyes the unfolding meaning of discipleship. His talks and his prolific writing over the years are a veritable library of his “letters to the Saints.” These messages also reveal a great deal about him. As much as any other biographical evidence, the evolving “word-print” of Neal’s writing faithfully tracks and illustrates both his personality and his spiritual growth. He has written autobiographically, even if he has never said so—or thought so—about his life’s journey. The eventual but central theme of his writing has become discipleship, becoming a true follower of Jesus. Discipleship has also been the central preoccupation of his own life, how he has tried to live and what has made him tick. So most of his writing consists of little notes he has left tacked on the trees for those who come afterward on his path of discipleship. “Having found the only passage,” he once wrote, “we should . . . willingly serve as guides for other wanderers.”¹⁶

Consider just a brief summary of the way his understanding of the term *disciple* moved gradually from bud to blossom, as reflected in his writing (his writing also reflected his life experience). In the 1960s when he was a teacher and leader at the University of Utah, Neal Maxwell used the word *disciple* essentially as a synonym for *Church member*. In the early 1970s, when he was commissioner of education for the Church, he saw further that a disciple was a Church member who disengaged from the unclean things of the secular world. A few years later, just after his call as a General Authority, his experience with two young fathers who had terminal cancer expanded his understanding, as he began seeing connections between discipleship and adversity. In a book he dedicated to these young men, he used a phrase that hauntingly anticipated the leukemia that would

strike him nearly two decades later: “The very act of choosing to be a disciple . . . can bring to us a certain special suffering. . . . [A]ll who will can come to know [what Paul called] ‘the fellowship of his suffering.’”¹⁷

About three years after writing these words, Elder Maxwell was called to the Twelve. That call soon focused him intently on discipleship as a personal relationship with Jesus—a master-apprentice tutorial in which the disciple has the duty to become more like the master. Now he began to see discipleship as a personal growth process designed to develop Christ-like attributes. This understanding let him see that suffering, when it is part of a divine tutorial, can be sanctifying in the sense of developing the very virtues a particular disciple needs to learn.

During the late 1980s and into the 1990s, Elder Maxwell built on this foundation to focus both his personal discipline and his writing on such qualities as meekness and submissiveness—not only submitting to the commandments, but accepting whatever the Master may inflict on the apprentice to teach him how he, personally, may become more like the Master. Elder Maxwell then sensed that, in his words, “if we are serious about our discipleship, Jesus will eventually request each of us to do those very things which are most difficult for us to do.”¹⁸

This was what he came to call the “wintry doctrine.” At the funeral of a young father in 1996 he put it this way:

There are in the gospel warm and cuddly doctrines, and then there are some that are just outright *wintry* doctrines. . . . One of them, frankly, is that we cannot approach [real] consecration without passing through appropriate clinical experiences, [because we don’t achieve consecration] in the abstract.

. . . Sometimes [therefore,] the best people . . . have the worst experiences . . . because they are the most ready to learn.¹⁹

Just a few months later, the dark shadows of leukemia entered Neal Maxwell’s life. He immediately saw that his readiness to learn had qualified him for his own clinical experience in what he called the graduate curriculum in the school of discipleship. In his recent season of the wintry doctrine, Elder Maxwell says he has learned much about empathy. Now he is more able to know and feel what others are going through in their own wintry trials. He discovered experientially what he had already sensed and taught about Christ’s empathy for us: Christ understands and succors us in our sicknesses and afflictions because he has tasted such sorrow himself. Elder Maxwell calls this “earned empathy.”²⁰

As I stretched to understand all of this enough to describe it, I realized that I can never really grasp it until I have been down a few more wintry

roads myself. But I did see a fresh doctrinal link. The increased empathy Elder Maxwell had found looked more and more to me like what the scriptures call charity. He was coming to taste more fully the pure love that Christ has for other people. Then came what was for me the most significant doctrinal link—the connection between charity and affliction.

Perhaps those who seek apprenticeship with the Master of mankind must emulate his sacrificial experience to the fullest extent of their personal capacity. Only then can they taste his empathy and his charity. For only then are they like him enough to feel his love for others *the way he feels it*—to love “*as I have loved you*” (John 13:34). That is a deeper, different love from “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 19:19). Perhaps it isn’t possible to have Christ’s charity without submitting to some form of his affliction—not only through physical pain but in many other ways—because they are two sides of the same, single reality.

Christ’s love for all mankind is fully bound up in his exquisite pain—“How sore you know not . . . how hard to bear you know not” (D&C 19:15). Perhaps we cannot know his love without knowing his pain. If so, the personal suffering we confront in the sanctification process, “the fellowship of his suffering,” could move the pure love of Christ from a concept in one’s head to a spirit in one’s heart. And once in the heart, charity will circulate all through the body, because it is being moved by “a new heart” (Ezek. 36:26).

I pray that I, and each of us, may learn from the lives of people such as Neal A. Maxwell how better to prepare ourselves to sacrifice and submit ourselves in whatever will help us to know the Savior and become more like him. May we not be surprised and may we not shrink when we discover, paradoxically, how dear a price we may need to pay to receive what is, finally, a gift from him—charity, the pure love of Christ.

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1. A. N. Wilson, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 126, quoted in Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), xiv.

2. Jeffrey D. Keith, “Feeling the Atonement,” *Brigham Young University 2001–2002 Speeches* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2002), 114.

3. Martin Gilbert, *In Search of Churchill: A Historian's Journey* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1994), 20, quoted in Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, xv.
4. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 107–8, quoting George Feifer, *Tennozan: The Battle of Okinawa and the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1992), 299–307.
5. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 108, quoting Neal A. Maxwell to family, May 13, 1945.
6. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 520, quoting Gordon B. Hinckley, oral history, 1.
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10. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 333, quoting Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 222, 225–27, 235–36, 240.
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12. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 380.
13. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 379–80, quoting Neal A. Maxwell, “The Disciple-Scholar,” in *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar*, ed. Henry B. Eyring (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 7–22.
14. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 380, quoting Neal A. Maxwell, *The Mormon Milieu*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, Provo, Utah, February 23, 1971, 5.
15. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 379.
16. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 520, quoting Neal A. Maxwell, *A Time to Choose* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 19.
17. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 544, quoting Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 30, 32.
18. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 547, quoting Maxwell, *Time to Choose*, 46.
19. Hafen, *Disciple's Life*, 20, quoting Neal A. Maxwell, remarks at Joseph S. Clark funeral, February 23, 1996, in Douglas Parker, oral history, 55–57.
20. See Neal A. Maxwell, “From Whom All Blessings Flow,” *Ensign* 27 (May 1997): 12.

“Nothing Less Than Miraculous”

The First Decade of Mormonism in Mongolia

Steven C. Harper

The Latter-day Saints’ assumption of Christ’s great commission—the command to teach and baptize all nations—can hardly be overstated as a motivational force for sending missionaries to far-away places to testify of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. An 1831 revelation authorized and empowered Joseph Smith to send missionaries “unto the ends of the world” and “to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity” (D&C 1:23, 30). What better manifestation could be found of the power of these words than the events of the first decade of Mormonism in Mongolia, perhaps the most obscure place in which the Church has emerged?

One of the first young Latter-day Saint missionaries to serve in Mongolia, Brad Pierson (served 1993–95), said, “When I was growing up my mother used to threaten to send me to Outer Mongolia if I did not behave. Little did she know this would come true! In fact, she didn’t even know where it was when I told her [I was being reassigned there].”¹ A senior missionary wrote from Mongolia in 1995, “We received one of the two boxes shipped from Salt Lake City. . . . We are lucky we got it at all. It was addressed to Ulaanbaatar 44, *Marshall Islands*. Somebody needs to study their geography.”² Missionaries Alice and DuWayne Schmidt related:

When our stake president called us into his office late in the summer of 1992, he explained that the Lord had a special call for us to serve in Outer Mongolia. “Will you accept the call?” he asked. We replied, “Of course, if the Lord has called us, we will serve. But now tell us, where are we really being called?” He answered solemnly, “I am not kidding you, it is a call to Mongolia.”³

These examples illustrate how far removed Mongolia is from Western consciousness—so far that it serves as convenient shorthand for a place that is absolutely other and elsewhere, like Timbuktu. Mongolist Alan Sanders wrote that major historical developments in Mongolia occur “mostly out of sight of the Western world.”⁴ This essay attempts to demonstrate that such developments are not beyond the scope of the watchful eye of the Author of the great commission.

As the population of Mongolia approaches three million, the number of native Latter-day Saints surpasses four thousand. The Mongolian ambassador to the U.S. recently quipped that Mongolia is “99% Buddhist and 1% Mormon.”⁵ Though his calculation was off by a decimal point (the figure is closer to 0.1%), the comment is telling. Remarkably, the Church is reportedly the largest Christian denomination in Mongolia.⁶ Latter-day Saints are “among the most active” foreign missionaries in Mongolia, noted Associated Press writer Michael Kohn, who quoted one convert, a former Buddhist nun named Ankhtuya, as saying, “Mongolia should become a Mormon country.”⁷ Paul Hyer, professor of Asian Studies at Brigham Young University, in 1998 said, “The development of the Church in Mongolia is nothing less than miraculous.”⁸

“Historical Pain”: Mongolia’s Past

Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, is a busy city, but many Mongolians still live in rural areas (fig. 1). Urbanization and industrialization are recent



FIG. 1. Nomadic riders, near the road from Ulaanbaatar to Darkhan, 2001. This countryside was home to Genghis Khan, who ruled a vast empire covering much of Asia.



Mongolia

developments, mainly caused by Soviet influences. Centuries of nomadic life conditioned Mongolians to be transient, and they still move easily from place to place.

Mongolia's geographical position between China on its south and the Russian frontier on its north is a powerful historical determinant. Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a keen observer of the human condition, sensed what he called "historical pain" in the Mongolian people "because of the location and buffetings of the country."⁹ Mongolians are the forsaken heirs of the largest empire in the history of the world. Chingiz (Genghis) Khan, the mastermind of a materially and psychologically devastating mounted regime, gained control of an immense empire spanning Asia and Europe in the thirteenth century. He and his descendants ruled an empire that was considerably larger than and lasted longer than the USSR.¹⁰ Marco Polo marveled at Mongol military prowess.¹¹ The fact that Mongols ruled China and Russia in earlier centuries is significant because Mongolia's recent past is a humiliating process of buffetings at the hands of those nations.¹² China's Ming dynasty expelled their Mongol rulers in 1368, diminishing the Mongolian empire, and, beginning in 1691, the Manchus controlled Mongolia until their reign collapsed in 1911. When their oppressors fell, Mongolians declared their independence under the leadership of Buddhist lamas. However, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia made Mongolia's feudal aristocrats



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FIG. 2. Gandan Tegchinlen, Ulaanbaatar, 2001. This Buddhist monastery was one of the few in Mongolian cities to escape destruction by Communists. Buddhism is the prevailing religion in Mongolia.

their lives. Buddhist monks were exterminated and monasteries destroyed (fig. 2). An estimated 3 percent of Mongolians, perhaps as many as one hundred thousand, were purged. Mongolian students at Brigham Young University—Hawaii relate how their grandfathers “disappeared” in the 1930s, as communists rid themselves of those not inclined to toe the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party line. The ominous extent of this oppression is only now being realized as Mongolian scholars mine newly accessible records in which they discover the details of ancestors’ disappearances.¹³ Mongolia became increasingly dependent on Soviet industry, infrastructure, and leadership until by the 1940s she was sovereign in name only.

Soviet perestroika (restructuring) in the 1980s spread to Mongolia. By the mid-1980s, many Mongolian officials were convinced that centralized management of the economy underlay persisting stagnation. Led by Jambyn Batmonkh, critics within the Party chided what they regarded as dogmatic socialism and lambasted the bureaucracy as inimical to a healthy socialist state. Cries for reform called for an end to authoritarianism and intellectual indolence by liberalizing the nomination and election of party deputies. The Party Politburo passed a resolution to remove a statue of Josef Stalin from the entrance to the State Library in Ulaanbaatar.

nervous lest a spirit of socialism cross the border. Chinese troops recaptured Mongolia in 1919, while the Russians struggled with a civil war that spilled into Mongolia. Anti-communist (“White”) Russians fleeing Bolsheviks forced the Chinese out of Mongolia in 1921, but a swell of Mongolian nationalism, backed by the Bolsheviks, led to the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party. On November 26, 1924, the Mongolian Party formed the Mongolian People’s Republic, the second communist nation.

Josef Stalin’s oppressive Soviet regime fostered a similarly brutal one in Mongolia, carried out under the direction of the Mongolian dictator Khorloo Choibalsan. Aristocrats lost property and often

Meanwhile, the Soviets withdrew troops, technology, and other resources from Mongolia.¹⁴

By 1990 a host of democratic organizations were calling for more dramatic reform. Measures pushed through the Great Khural, the Party's own legislature, significantly diminished Party power. A law on elections amended the constitution: parties were legalized, the office of president created, and a standing representative legislature, the Little Khural, revitalized. The 1990 election sent sixteen Mongolian Democratic Party delegates, 24 percent of the total, to the Great Khural, and nineteen Democratic delegates to the fifty-member Little Khural. Tsedendambyn Batbayar wrote:

The main achievement of the Little Khural . . . was the drafting of the new Constitution, which . . . went far toward guaranteeing the irreversibility of the democratic changes. Under the new constitution . . . Mongolia is a parliamentary democracy with a presidency with limited powers. The Constitution proclaims the sovereignty of Mongolia and protects the individual rights of its citizens, including their private property. The principle of separation of powers is affirmed, and the familiar three branches of government are provided for. The center of power lies in a unicameral seventy-six seat State Great Khural elected every four year[s].¹⁵

This remarkably peaceful revolution was accompanied by hardships that worsened before they improved. There is no seamless or painless transition from a collective, state-owned-and-operated economic system to a free and open market. As one effect of this market revolution, overall poverty increased even as some people profited handsomely. Enormous sums of money poured into Mongolia, including U.S., Korean, Japanese, French, and German investments, but little of that saw its way to the proletarian, though highly literate, majority. Mongolians had no tradition of free enterprise. Communism conditioned them to perform tasks as dictated and to expect security. They were ill equipped, generally speaking, to make their way in a competitive political economy in which rewards follow independent initiative and risk-taking. "Suddenly you are in front of big choices you can make by yourself," said Anand Sangaa, a Latter-day Saint convert, suggesting that agency increases anxiety even as it liberates.¹⁶ Communism produced a rapid spiritual life of official atheism and secularization, but usually everyone had enough to eat.

Democratization brought dramatic shifts in public opinion, exposed corruption and opportunism, and subjected Mongolians to the vicissitudes of a market economy. Responses included a retreat by many toward the security of communism. Rural voters chose overwhelmingly to reelect Communist officials. Others looked to Mongolia's pre-Communist past,

searching for a sense of heritage and identity from the history and ideology of the Khans or traditional Shamanism or Buddhism. A third response, the one most relevant here, was a willingness to investigate new and foreign ideas, including the restored gospel.

In this context, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was positioned to offer opportunities for both spiritual and temporal security to an anxious population ready to hear something new. As the revelations say and the missionaries testify, “the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 4:4). It remained only for the Church to meet Mongolians on these terms and begin what has been called “the Mongolian miracle.”¹⁷

The First Official Church Contacts

In 1984, Monte J. Brough took two of his sons on a hunting trip in Mongolia. They formed cordial relationships with their Mongolian guides, and Brough “wondered if ever they [the guides] would hear the message of the restoration of the gospel.” He “prayed for the day.” In 1988, Brough was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy, and in 1990 assigned as First Counselor to Elder Merlin Lybbert, President of the Asia Area, headquartered in Hong Kong. Brough observed:

In the course of the next year and a half, or nearly two years, it was our privilege to be involved in opening or reopening six countries. We were involved in reopening Sri Lanka, for example, we went to Pakistan, we were involved with the first baptisms, and established the first branches there. We traveled to Bangladesh, to Hanoi, Vietnam, Mongolia and Nepal. What an exciting time to be in Asia.¹⁸

In November 1990, Professor Paul Hyer, then the chairman of graduate Asian studies in the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University, asked Jon Huntsman Jr., then a U.S. Department of Commerce official assigned to a committee negotiating U.S.-Mongolian trade, to inquire if the recently appointed Mongolian ambassador to the U.S. would welcome an invitation to address the Kennedy Center. Ambassador Gendengiin Nyamdoo accepted a formal invitation, and on March 20, 1991, delivered a lecture in Provo: “Mongolia on the Way to Democracy.” The First Presidency took advantage of the ambassador’s visit to host him at the Church Administration Building on March 19. Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson, together with Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Paul Hyer, and Hyer’s Mongolian colleague Sechin Jagchid, listened as the ambassador assured them that “the new Mongolia is democratic and would welcome representatives of the Church,” including, implicitly, missionaries. Polite diplomacy, Hyer thought, but

Jagchid “was firm in taking the [ambassador’s] report at face value.”¹⁹ Elder Maxwell, whose assignments in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles included oversight of the Asia Area, pressed the issue, too. After the meeting he “contacted the Asia Area Presidency in Hong Kong under President Merlin Lybbert.” The Area Presidency subsequently met with Hyer in Hong Kong on June 27, 1991, as he “was returning from a term at the University of Nanjing in Taiwan.”²⁰ In the ensuing months, plans were laid for Hyer and Jagchid to visit the Mongolian embassy in Washington, D.C., to propose that representatives be invited to Mongolia to make contacts.²¹ On October 25, 1991, the two “had a cordial meeting with Ambassador Dawagiv at the Mongolian Embassy.”²² The Mongolian officials received the proposals positively, and in conversation Hyer brought up the subject of religion. Hyer noted that Latter-day Saints in China are restricted severely. In response, “the ambassador smiled and gave us unequivocal assurance that there is no such situation, no such restrictions in the Mongolian People’s Republic.”²³

Somewhat painstaking negotiation followed, slowed by measured communication between Washington, D.C., and Ulaanbaatar. An invitation came for representatives from BYU—not the Church—to visit Mongolia. That situation was unsatisfactory. “It is important that we enter the country properly,” the Area Presidency clarified, “and not under some guise that may compromise our efforts later.”²⁴ Hyer diplomatically brokered a “redrafting” of the invitation, which was cleared by Mongolia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁵ Finally, on March 14, 1992, Ambassador Dawagiv wrote to President Lybbert:

On behalf of the Ministry for External Affairs of Mongolia I am extending an invitation to representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to visit Mongolia to discuss issues related to registration in Mongolia for humanitarian service by your organization including such activities as educational assistance, scholarships at your university in America, consulting services in business or law and the like.²⁶

The ambassador’s formal invitation opened the way for Elders Lybbert and Brough to obtain travel visas and plan a visit to Ulaanbaatar. Authorized by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, Lybbert and Brough made a diplomatic call on government and education officials in Mongolia in May 1992.²⁷ Brough describes their first contact:

We were met at the airport by a man by the name of Nayanjin . . . a middle level government official. He had been educated in Moscow, Russia and demonstrated all of that Russian training. He was aloof, even suspicious of Americans being in Mongolia. He treated us with disdain, and was somewhat indifferent, but he spoke wonderful English and there was very

Utah Valley State College and Mongolia

Dr. Gendengiin Nyamdoo, Mongolia's first ambassador to the United States after the departure of the Russians from Mongolia in 1990, came to Utah in 1991. As part of that visit, he met with me, as I was then director of the Center for International Studies at Utah Valley State College. During this meeting, I asked Nyamdoo what UVSC and I might do to assist Mongolia in its transition from communism to democracy. Nyamdoo responded, "Please help us educate our young people."

I met with Nyamdoo in Mongolia in 1993 to arrange for the first group of Mongolian students to study at UVSC. Nyamdoo's daughter, Bolormaa, came to Utah with the first group of six students in fall 1993; as of 2003, about three hundred Mongolian young adults have studied at UVSC. These students profit from our higher education system and learn about American life. Many who currently come to study at UVSC are converts to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including returned Mongolian missionaries, and some students join the Church after coming to Utah. As these students return to Mongolia, they not only serve in important positions in government, business, and education but also strengthen the Church.

Since spring 1996, UVSC has brought a total of over 150 Mongolian educators and government leaders for a month of training in democracy, American studies, and higher education. Those trained include a prime minister, a foreign minister, a minister of agriculture, a chairman of parliament, twenty-seven college and university presidents, many members of parliament, other high government officials, university professors, and business leaders. Clearly, UVSC has made an impressive commitment to assisting these leaders in developing methods of bringing Mongolia into the modern, pluralistic world.

Wanting to see Utah's sights and knowing of the Church's assistance in



Courtesy Malan R. Jackson

FIG. 3. Malan Jackson and a Mongolian member in front of the first Church-owned building in Mongolia, probably 1999.



Courtesy Malan R. Jackson

FIG. 4. Missionaries in Mongolia, 2000. Malan Jackson, on a weekend hunting trip with Batayev, the chief of the police academy in Mongolia, saw the two missionaries in a remote area and stopped to say hello. The elders were startled to have a police car stop them. Jackson introduced himself, which calmed the elders. Batayev, who had been to Utah for training, gave the missionaries his card and told them to call on him personally if they ever needed anything. The elders declined to give Jackson their names, fearing that news would get back to their mothers, who would be worried to hear about their sons being in such a far-flung location.

training professionals in Mongolia, these leaders visit Temple Square and tour the BYU campus, and some of them choose to attend Church meetings. Many opt to stay in the homes of Church members during their visit. They return to Mongolia with a copy of the Book of Mormon and a basic understanding of and friendship with the Church. This connection has led to missionaries being invited to teach English classes at most of the universities represented in the training program.

I have visited Mongolia many times now and have always been well received (figs. 3, 4). I have retired from UVSC but continue projects in Mongolia with the help of Church members in Utah and Idaho. In 2003, I brought a group of eleven top Mongolian officials to Utah and Idaho to prepare for several projects to be carried out in Bulgan Province. When these officials, including members of parliament and the governor of the province, toured Temple Square, they had a Mongolian sister as their guide. They returned to Mongolia with a deep appreciation of the concern and interest shown by the American people and members of the Church.

—Malan R. Jackson

little English spoken in Mongolia then.²⁸

The demise of the Soviet Union “left Mongolia without many services that the Soviets had previously provided including the knowledge of how to run a higher education system.”²⁹ With Nayanjin interpreting, Lybbert and Brough sought “the opportunity for us to do something in a humanitarian way.” Elder Brough recalled, “We found enormous receptivity.”³⁰ Mongolian officials accepted a tentative offer of material aid and human resources to help fill voids. Lybbert and Brough

returned from Mongolia convinced that we could find five or six couples that would have the kinds of expertise that would be used in Mongolia, that would be of great benefit to the Mongolia[n] people, and we could use that as opening the door to get in there for missionary work. Because the Mongolians needed us, we were able to negotiate the idea that the couples could proselyte, that they could teach the gospel, and actually had in our agreement with them that if a Mongolia[n] wanted to, they could join our church.

Mongolian officials felt this was a small concession compared with the Church’s offering. So Mongolia’s Deputy Minister of Education signed the Church’s agreement, granting remarkable freedom not enjoyed elsewhere in newly opened Asian areas.³¹

Shortly after returning to Hong Kong, the Asia Area Presidency proposed to the First Presidency that five or six carefully selected couples be called to Mongolia. Elder Maxwell presented the proposal, which won quick approval. By June 1992 the Asia Presidency informed contacts in Mongolia that the Church’s tentative offer of aid could be realized. Pressing matters, however, drew the Area Presidency’s attention away from Mongolia momentarily. That was long enough for Mongolians to reelect a Communist majority. When no response came from Mongolia and newspapers reported the election results, the Presidency surmised they had labored for naught. Newly reorganized with Elder Brough as President, the Area Presidency determined—“and maybe the vote was two to one,” Elder Brough quipped—that he should “go back up to Mongolia and confirm our suspicion that we were no longer welcome.”³²

“I was alone,” Brough says tellingly about his arrival in Ulaanbaatar later that summer. No one met him at the airport until a young woman came asking, “Mr. Brogha, Mr. Brogha?” Unable to communicate, Brough heeded her direction to a taxi, then to the same hotel at which he stayed in 1984. At least the hotel was familiar. Brough tried to ask the young woman to contact the party that had sent her, but her English was poor. She left, and “I waited,” Brough says. “That was early afternoon. I waited all

afternoon. I waited into the evening. Nobody called me so I went to bed. I didn't sleep well. I woke up the next morning hoping that someone would call. No one called. Ten o'clock. Eleven o'clock. Twelve o'clock. Nothing at all. There I was stuck in Mongolia." Brough continues:

There was a moment in that hotel room in Ulaanbaatar when I felt beyond anything that I knew and understood. I had a situation that was totally beyond my capacity, my understanding, and my knowledge to solve. Yet I deeply felt that Heavenly Father wanted us to be there, and counted back the feelings I'd had in 1984 and the years before when I'd traveled there with my sons. So in a great moment, a wonderful moment, one we should all have when we're beyond anything we know, I got on my knees and asked God's help. In a wonderful prayer, I just pled with Him for help. I got up from that prayer with the name of Nayanjin on my mind. Now my impression at that time was still this stiff, aloof, suspicious Russian-sort-of-KGB guy. But his name was on my mind. So with a little bit of help at the front desk I was able to locate his name in the directory and get a phone number. I dialed that number. He answered the phone in the Mongolian language, of course. I said, "Mr. Nayanjin?" He went, "Mr. Brough, you in Mongolia? We think you never come." . . .

. . . "You need some help, Mr. Brough?" . . . "I be right over." Ten minutes later he was at my door.³³

Greatly relieved to make contact, Brough learned that none of the messages sent to confirm the tentative relationship between Mongolian officials and the Church had been received. He informed Nayanjin of the Church's commitment to providing human and material resources to Mongolia. Within hours they had appointments with government and university leaders, including the influential Minister of Education. At one meeting a university rector sought clarification: "'You are going to send these couples and they will teach us English. They will teach us business. They will teach us medicine. They will teach us education. They come at their own expense. My question is why do they do that?'" Brough replied, "We all have the same Heavenly Father, . . . we are brothers and sisters, and it's because of our love of Heavenly Father's children, our brothers and sisters, that people are willing to do this." Within days agreements were in place and housing was sought for missionary couples. Apartments are hard to come by in Mongolia. Many Mongolians live in the traditional *ger*, the portable housing of herders. Soviet-built apartment buildings dominate the skyline of Ulaanbaatar, but the highly coveted apartments are awarded for years of service to the government. Before Brough left Mongolia, an agreement that the couples would have apartments was in place.³⁴

On September 17, 1992, Donna and Kenneth Beesley arrived in Mongolia; they held Mongolia's first sacrament meeting three days later. Between October and the following February, four more couples with

My Involvement with the Mongolia Mission

I have been privileged to be present at key developments of the establishment of Church in Asia. I was one of the first few missionaries to begin work among the Japanese in 1946 immediately after the war in the Pacific. Missionaries were not yet permitted in Japan, so our work began among the Japanese in Hawaii—a preparatory work. Near the end of my first mission, in 1948, I trained the first five missionaries assigned to open a mission in Japan. Two of these later became mission presidents. In a number of ways, I have been and still am involved in approaches related to the beginnings of the restored Church in the great realm of China. At this writing, I am serving as first counselor in the China International District, which covers all of China but Hong Kong. We work with four fine branches located around the country and a number of smaller groups, consisting mainly of teachers at Chinese universities. We are working with Chinese officials in charge of religious affairs and beginning to find the Church's lost native Chinese members.

I also had a small part in preparing the way for the opening of Mongolia for missionary work. Planting the Church in Mongolia is an inspiring story, especially so to me because I am familiar with the painful attempts of other Christian churches over the past two hundred years to convert Mongols to Christianity. One missionary labored some twenty years and converted one person. As I think back, I used to believe that the gospel would not be taken to Mongolia until the millennium. But at the time of this writing, the work is progressing rapidly: Mongolian converts not only are coming into the Church but also are accepting mission calls to Russia, the U.S., Korea, and other places. By my last reckoning, 10 percent of the membership have served or are serving missions—a far higher percentage than of Church membership in general.

My interest in Mongolia began in 1951 during graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley. I became acquainted with several Mongols who had been leaders in political movements in Inner Mongolia. By 1953, I completed a master's thesis on Lamaist Buddhism and the Japanese occupation of Mongolia. For almost fifty years, I have continued to research and write about the modern history of Mongolia in connection with my work on modern Chinese history. This has included related work in Japan and Taiwan.



Courtesy Paul Hyer

FIG. 5. Karen and Paul Hyer in Mongolia.

I continue to expand my circle of Mongolian friends and participate in symposia, including periodic meetings in Mongolia. My wife, Karen, and I thoroughly enjoy our visits there (fig. 5). I brought to BYU the preeminent native Mongolian scholar Professor Sechin Jagchid, who has worked with us for over twenty-five years.

Before any missionaries arrived in Mongolia, Karen and I were in Ulaan-

baatar in August 1992 for an academic conference—the World Conference of Mongolists. We met with Elder Monte J. Brough, who was in town surveying the living conditions in preparation for assigning some missionaries there. Earlier in the day Karen and I had met in the American Embassy with a Latter-day Saint man from Ogden, Utah, who had been called out of retirement to assist in the new embassy in Mongolia. We told him that Church leaders were planning on sending missionaries to Mongolia that fall. He said the winters in Mongolia are very cold—it would be better for the missionaries to arrive in the spring. We mentioned this to Elder Brough, who was raised on the frigid plains of Wyoming. He said if the missionaries could not take a winter in Mongolia, they should not bother to come at all.

There is no end to this story. The Church is not only surviving in Mongolia, it is thriving. At this writing, the Church has over four thousand members in twenty-one branches. We have continued to go to Mongolia to academic meetings and particularly in connection with humanitarian related projects with the Mongolian Women's Federation, in which Karen has been involved. The development of the Church in Mongolia is nothing less than miraculous to me and a testimony that indeed the Church is the divinely authorized work of our Father in Heaven on the earth.

—Paul Hyer

varied professional backgrounds arrived—Marjorie and Stanley Smith, Anna and Richard Harper, Jane and Royce Flandro, and Alice and DuWayne Schmidt. Barbara and Gary Carlson arrived in May 1993. Accustomed to the luxuries of American homes, the missionaries learned that Mongolian apartments were spartan by comparison. Even worse, the Beesleys discovered that an apartment reserved for them had been given to others. But Nayanjin again came to the rescue: “Because you are my brother,” he offered them his apartment with food and furniture at untold personal hardship.³⁵

These envoys provided expertise in education, computer science, business, curriculum development, medicine, and English. Kenneth Beesley, a former president of LDS Business College, helped with higher education. Alice Cannon Schmidt, with a Bachelor of Science degree and pedagogical experience, taught English. Her husband, DuWayne, formerly chief of the Pulmonary Division at LDS Hospital and clinical professor at the University of Utah medical school, taught medicine.³⁶ All selected were “able-bodied and expert” pioneers.³⁷ Together they worked under the direction of the Ministry of Science and Education to “consult and teach . . . in various schools, colleges, and high schools” in Ulaanbaatar.³⁸

Winter 1992–93 was hard on Mongolians and the newly arrived missionaries. Mongolian winters are usually severe, and that year food and drinking water were especially limited.³⁹ Electricity and heating were irregular. The Beijing Branch Relief Society personally delivered food and money to the missionaries.

Mongolian higher education was in severe disarray. Buildings were in disrepair, libraries were undeserving of the name, and textbooks, where available, were outdated and avowedly Communist. The Church was perfectly situated and inclined to meet some of these immediate temporal needs of the Mongolian people. Forty tons of Western college texts, medicine, and other supplies were delivered. All of this aid, however, was but an important part of a larger effort to meet eternal needs. Elder Brough clarified from the outset the liberal agreement he reached with the Mongolian government: “They are going as missionaries, and it is understood that they will be teaching others about our faith and holding Church meetings.”⁴⁰

The missionaries were permitted to answer questions and invite the curious to meetings but were restricted from open proselyting. Their peculiar presence insured plenty of curious inquirers, however, and soon they were teaching the gospel when they were not teaching another subject. Lamjav Purevsuren and Tsendkhuu Bat-Ulzii, students in Elder Stanley Smith’s marketing course at Mongolian National University, wondered “why these American professionals would come to Mongolia.” Smith delightedly invited the two men to come and see. They attended Sunday meetings, accepted the gospel as taught by the missionaries, and were bap-

tized—the first Mongolian converts.

Dedicating the Land and Creating a Mission

On April 15, 1993, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “in the power and authority of the Holy Apostleship,” dedicated Mongolia for the teaching of the restored gospel (fig. 6).⁴¹ On a windy hilltop outside Ulaanbaatar, capped by a monument to a Soviet-style state, Elder Maxwell prayed that the winds of freedom would ever blow in Mongolia and that her independence might not be compromised regardless of power struggles elsewhere. Maxwell pled that Mongolia’s leaders would be aided in their efforts to “preserve freedom and to have a more adequate economy.” He prayed that converts would be “strong as they will shape the future of the Church in Mongolia.” He prayed that missionaries would be welcomed, dedicated, and full of love for their hosts. “Heavenly Father,” he said, “may the yesterdays of Mongolia not hold the tomorrows of Mongolia hostage.”⁴² Mongolian Latter-day Saints, missionaries, invited officials, and Elder Maxwell with his wife, Colleen, met in a reception to mark the occasion. Shortly after the dedication of Mongolia, the first Mongolian woman to join the Church, Gendenjamts Davaajargal, was baptized.⁴³

Meanwhile, while studying in Germany, Togtokhin Enkhtuvshin, a Mongolian National University professor of Marxist-Leninist philosophy,

met Latter-day Saint missionaries on a German street. He read the Book of Mormon and joined the Church in mid-1993. He returned home to Mongolia shortly thereafter with mixed emotions. “I was excited because I thought I might be the first Mongolian member,” he said, “but I was concerned about returning home and not having the Church.”⁴⁴ This understated point may be hard for Westerners to grasp. As a Communist party official, Enkhtuvshin consciously traded political, social, and economic status for faith. Indeed he hoped the Church would be there: he



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FIG. 6. Church leaders at the dedication of Mongolia for the teaching of the gospel, April 15, 1993. Elder Neal A. Maxwell is joined by his wife, Colleen, and Elder and Sister Kwok Yuen Tai of the Asia Area Presidency. The site is a monument on a hill overlooking Ulaanbaatar, the capital city.

had sacrificed everything else.

In mid-1993 the first young elders were called to Mongolia. They had reported to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, to prepare to serve in Russia. While at the MTC, they were invited to accept an assignment to Mongolia instead. On August 14, 1993, Elders Blanchard, Birch, Hansen, Mortinson, Meier, and Pierson arrived in Mongolia to fulfill their commission—and Pierson’s mother’s threat to send him to Outer Mongolia. They taught English in various colleges and learned Mongolian from private tutors. Their presence intensified curiosity. Attendance at meetings jumped. A few of the curious became converted. By early 1994, nearly fifty Mongolians had joined the Church. A branch was organized with Enkhtuvshin as president on January 16, 1994.

In February 1994, Charles L. Hardy, formerly a federal judge, replaced Kenneth Beesley as the presiding Church authority in Mongolia, with instructions to obtain official registration for the Church with the Ministries of Culture and Justice. Enkhtuvshin’s contacts, together with Church donations to a library, aided the approvals. The Church was granted official registration in November 1994.⁴⁵ More missionaries followed, including Richard Cook, formerly a comptroller at Ford Motor Company, and his wife, Mary.

Very early one morning in April 1995, the Cooks received a phone call from President Gordon B. Hinckley, who called Elder Cook to preside over the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar Mission. The Cooks returned to Provo for mission president training and reported back to Mongolia for the July 1, 1995, opening of the mission, staffed now by a steady stream of young men and women helped increasingly by Mongolian converts who lined up teaching appointments.

Though diligent, intelligent, and spiritually strong, the elders were challenged, first to learn the language and then to teach a gospel for which no precise native terminology existed. It took several years, in fact, to achieve a satisfactory translation of the Church’s name. Trained to begin the first lesson with the idea that most people believe in a supreme being, even though they may call him by different names, missionaries found that most Mongolians did not share even that starting premise. Nevertheless, the Church continued to grow and eventually was able to purchase a well-known building in Ulaanbaatar (fig. 7).

Dynamics of Conversion

The stories of three converts demonstrate the dilemmas that investigators face.

Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren. An engineering student in Ulaanbaatar, Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren challenged the missionaries. “You must pray to



Courtesy Malan R. Jackson

FIG. 7. The first Church-owned meetinghouse in Ulaanbaatar, probably 1999. This building, a remodeled theater, is well known in Ulaanbaatar, and its acquisition by the Church in 1996 helped establish the Church's identity in Mongolia.

know if God is there," they taught her. "How can I pray if I don't know?" she responded.⁴⁶ She later wrote that she finally

prayed and asked for the answer even though I didn't expect an answer for I didn't think I had the faith. . . . However, the next day, during our appointment, one of the brand new missionaries . . . asked me if we all could kneel down and pray to ask if He [God] loves us and wants us to know the truth. I agreed, thinking that if he prays I wouldn't understand what he is saying and most likely would not receive any earth-shattering revelation. . . . [H]e voiced the most wonderful prayer I have ever heard, with more than simple Mongolian, I was totally in awe . . . [because] he could not have said the prayer without help—help from something beyond human capability. At that time, the feeling I am still not sure how to describe overwhelmed me and I knew this is where I needed to belong and this is where I belonged [a] long time ago. I knew who I was then. I was a daughter of Heavenly Father and I had a purpose in this life.

Oyunchimeg opted for baptism. About her baptism on August 11, 1995, she wrote, "The assurance I felt was extraordinary." She promised God "that I will spread His words to many like myself."⁴⁷ As Oyunchimeg continued her university studies, she noticed differences in her attitudes and perceptions. Tellingly, she wrote, "My identity was being changed."⁴⁸

Oyunchimeg's conversion experience is similar to that of the thousands of converts, yet it is rare among her people. Struggling to find their

way in an unhelpful and insecure world, some Mongolians receive answers from a god they are just learning about from the teachings of missionaries.

Unlike Evangelicals who require that proselytes learn Korean, the Mormon missionaries endeared themselves to Mongolians by struggling to learn their language. Moreover, as Oyunchimeg explained, Americans speaking Mongolian, eating traditional foods, and enjoying local customs “throws away the idea that it’s an American church.” Distinguishing the Church from the United States is important for older Mongolians (such as Oyunchimeg’s parents), a generation of committed Communists raised to be suspicious of anything American. Many young Mongolians fawn over missionaries, but older people scrutinize them carefully and are sometimes offended when the missionaries act carelessly. Still, a number of older Mongolians have followed, and even occasionally led, their children and grandchildren into the Church.⁴⁹

Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren. Oyunchimeg’s sister, Munkhtsetseg (see fig. 8), “believed in God,” whom she thought of as a benevolent, enormous grandfatherly figure beyond the clouds. The Dugarsurens are “book people,” Munkhtsetseg explained—readers and thinkers. In high school she read *Brave Hunters* by Mayne Reid, a novel that painted Mormons as vengeful, secretive, and seductive but said nothing of Latter-day Saints.⁵⁰ On June 11, 1994, Munkhtsetseg’s cousin Urtnasan Soyolmaa said she would not be able to celebrate her birthday that day, for she was going to be baptized. Curious, Munkhtsetseg attended the service and began taking English classes from the missionaries shortly thereafter. They spoke frequently of Latter-day Saints but said nothing of Mormons. Munkhtsetseg sat through a first discussion. “So strange,” she thought. Afterward she went directly to the library to learn everything she could about Latter-day Saints.

When, through the library catalog, she connected Mormons and Latter-day Saints, Munkhtsetseg became impassioned. Five hours later, seething with skepticism, she had composed a long list of questions for Elders Rogers and Blanchard.⁵¹ “Why didn’t you tell me?” she demanded at their next meeting. She pressed them with issues raised by the anti-Mormon brochures she had read at the library and by the prejudices fashioned by her high-school novel reading. Angels? Why Joseph Smith? Where are the plates? What of avenging angels, the stealing of women, and unfulfilled revelations? The flustered elders had no answers. Seeing the elders befuddled (one of them wept) softened Munkhtsetseg’s attack. She agreed to meet for another discussion, to which Elder Luke Neilsen brought photocopies from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* to counter misinformation. Elder Neilsen refused to argue with Munkhtsetseg and never tried to counter the points she raised. Instead, he asked her to study the popular painting of Christ knocking at a door without an outside handle. He

explained that it would be Munkhtsetseg's choice whether to open the door. This approach "was really disarming," she explained. "I was ready to fight. I am a really good fighter," she continued, but Elder Neilsen left her "nothing to fight."⁵²

As she walked home from the meeting, this woman with university degrees in nursing and psychology decided to submit her superior learning to the tutelage of young American missionaries who seemed ignorant of their own faith. Over three months Munkhtsetseg studied. "Everything should be proven," she thought. The elders asked her to read the Book of Mormon in Russian, which she did as she sat with her hospitalized father in August 1994. It was a nice story, a folktale, she thought, akin to the rich Mongolian folktales she knew. Elder Blanchard urged her to read again and focus on Alma 32. She felt nothing perceptible. He urged her to read again. This repeated process finally bore fruit. "I began to feel something," Munkhtsetseg explained. At this point Richard Cook, presiding elder of the Church in Mongolia, put his hand on Munkhtsetseg's shoulder as they met in passing and said to the missionaries, "It's time for you to baptize her. We need her." "I felt so touched," she said. She submitted to baptism on September 10, 1994.⁵³

The conversion accounts of the sisters Oyunchimeg and Munkhtsetseg are in some ways exceptional. Not all converts seem so careful and studious about joining the Church, at least when they tell their conversion stories. When asked why, Oyunchimeg offers three reasons. First, she says, a Mongolian tendency to be reserved about emotion and spirituality, compounded by the limits of translation, renders conversion narratives mechanical rather than introspective. Second, Mongolians are trusting. They rarely subject the gospel to scholastic scrutiny, which is not to say they are unusually gullible. Oyunchimeg emphasizes her initial disbelief of the missionaries' message—an attitude she says is uncharacteristic of her people. Often, she says, a Mongolian invited to join the Church is "just like a little child being asked to do something by their parent." Third, she says that some join pragmatically, without spiritual convictions, but they are sure from their observations that membership in the Church leads to a better life. Oyunchimeg compares these last converts to the youth she worked with on her mission to Idaho, who either gain an abiding conviction or fade from activity in the Church.⁵⁴

Ochirgerel Ochirbat. One woman's conversion narrative raises another issue: language. Ochirgerel Ochirbat, a daughter of Buddhist parents, considered herself a "non-religious person." She had never heard of Jesus Christ. At the invitation of a friend who was himself investigating, she attended a sacrament meeting at which she unexpectedly met another

friend who extended an invitation to hear more. When asked why she listened, Ochirgerel said she was curious to hear Americans “teaching a lesson in Mongolian. . . . I was interested in how they could speak in Mongolian.” Discussing the gospel proved to be a challenge for all involved. “Some of the religious words, I [had] never even heard before,” she said. “It was my own language but it was hard for them to explain it. Now, I know how hard that was. I didn’t have a lot of questions. I think I was [a] really patient listener.” After a month of patient listening and little questioning, Ochirgerel was baptized by Elder Kent Neilsen on May 28, 1994, in a swimming pool. “I am really happy for joining the church,” she said. “It has changed my life since then.”⁵⁵ Indeed, Ochirgerel served a mission on Temple Square, graduated from BYU–Hawaii, and returned to Mongolia equipped to take advantage of a growing tourist market. Her life, like that of her fellow converts, is radically different from what it might have been because of the options available to her and the choices she has made.

Mongolians Engaged in the Marvelous Work

Partly because the Mongolians most exposed to the missionaries are college-age students, an unusually high rate of converts serve missions—around 10 percent, much higher than the Churchwide average. The first two Mongolian missionaries, Sisters Urtnasan Soyolmaa and Magser Batchimeg, served missions—in Provo and Salt Lake City, respectively—beginning in 1995. They were followed shortly by Soyolmaa’s cousin, Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, beginning in 1996, and many others. Anand Sangaa, quoted earlier, served his mission in Russia.⁵⁶

After Munkhtsetseg’s baptism in 1994, Elder and Sister Cook continued to teach her and others. They also hired her to teach the missionaries Mongolian. When Elder Cook became President Cook, Munkhtsetseg became his assistant and chief translator. She submitted her mission papers on April 9, 1996, and met a representative from the Church Translation Department on April 10. As her gift of tongues became evident, Munkhtsetseg received an invitation to help a team translate the Book of Mormon into Mongolian. She resisted for “dozens of reasons,” including a desire to serve a proselyting mission. She sought advice from President and Sister Cook, who gave counsel but left the decision to her. She finally decided to do whatever the Church asked. Four months later, Munkhtsetseg received a call to the Temple Square Mission, where her time would be split between serving as a guide and working on the translation of the Book of Mormon.⁵⁷

Munkhtsetseg’s patriarchal blessing, received just before she reported to the Missionary Training Center in Provo in September 1996, repeatedly

mentioned that she had an important role as a translator. She began translating in February 1997. Diligent part-time effort led to the completion of the translation of 1 and 2 Nephi. An obedient missionary, she retired at 10:30 and arose by 6:30, but she felt free to steal a few hours in between for more translation work. Sister Batchimeg, the first Mongolian missionary, checked the translation. Soyolmaa, Munkhtsetseg's exemplary cousin, then serving in the Utah Provo Mission, reviewed the content. As Munkhtsetseg's mission concluded, pressure mounted to complete the translation and to financially support her family. As her parents' oldest daughter, she felt largely responsible to help her struggling family. "I know [the translation is] the Lord's work and should go forward," she said, informed by her close reading of 2 Nephi, "but there was opposition." Returning from her mission in March 1998, an overwhelming appreciation for her homeland flooded Munkhtsetseg's consciousness as her flight from Beijing to Ulaanbaatar crossed the Great Wall into Mongolia. She reflected on the optimism of her influential grandmother, whose losses under the Communist party gave the grandmother "every reason to hate the country, but she loves Mongolia." Munkhtsetseg went to the mission office to be released and then directly to making preparations for translating. On some of the subsequent days, the translation simply "flowed." At other times, an elusive word frustrated the work. Using an adapted Cyrillic alphabet, Munkhtsetseg and others produced a translation into Kalkh Mongol by July 1, 1999. After extensive checks and approvals, the Mongolian Book of Mormon was officially released on October 18, 2001.⁵⁸ At that time, Munkhtsetseg was working at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, as a translator (fig. 8).

A similarly significant process of getting Mongolians to the temple and the temple to Mongolians is under way. On October 24, 1996, Enkhuvshin and his wife, Dashgerel, were sealed to each other and their five children in the Hong Kong Temple—the first Mongolian family so blessed (fig. 9). Others followed. Dedicated pilgrims undertook fifty-hour train trips to the temple. Enkhmaa and Udambor, sister missionaries returned from Russia and Salt Lake City respectively, longed to return to the temple. They sang and prayed their way from Ulaanbaatar to Beijing and on to Hong Kong and back, "depending on God because we might get lost," they said. For one week in the Hong Kong Temple, they participated in the ordinances intensely, which they heard for the first time in Mongolian.⁵⁹ Munkhtsetseg had returned to Salt Lake City in April 2000 along with eight Mongolian priesthood leaders to record temple ordinances in Mongolian (fig. 10). Now Mongolians worldwide—including members of the Mongolian Club at BYU–Hawaii—are able to actively participate in the temple ordinances in



Courtesy David R. and Anne Wirthlin

FIG. 8. Mongolians at the Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah, October 2001, celebrating the publication of the Book of Mormon in Mongolian. Seated in the center is Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, who helped with the translation. The others are missionaries from Mongolia preparing for their missions around the world.

their native language. In 2002, Paul Hyer sealed a Mongolian couple in the Provo Utah Temple (coincidentally, he had to postpone a meeting on Mongolian Church history planned for the same hour). Given the Church's current commitment to providing temple access, faithful Mongolians anticipate a temple in Ulaanbaatar.⁶⁰

The Church continues to experience growth. The branch in Dar-khan (figs. 11, 12) now enjoys using the first Church-built building in Mongolia (fig. 13).

A Remarkable Ten Years and a Bright Future

As noted earlier, Richard E. Cook served as the first president of the Mongolia Ulaanbaatar Mission (1995–96). Next called were Gary S. Cox (1996–99), Glen Harlan Clark (1999–2002), and Gary R. Gibbons (2002–present). In May 2002, at the end of his term, President Clark wrote this letter to his missionaries, reviewing some progress of the first decade of Mormonism in Mongolia:



FIG. 9. The first Mongolian family to be sealed together. The family of Togtokhin Enkhtuvshin and Doyodiin Dashgerel gathers in front of the Hong Kong Temple in 1996.



FIG. 10. Mongolian priesthood leaders, April 2000, in front of the Provo Utah Temple. These men came from Mongolia to record the temple ceremony in Mongolian. Sister Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren also helped with the recording.



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FIG. 11. Members of the Darkhan Branch celebrating a holiday, late 1990s.



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FIG. 12. Brother Norovsuren Nyamsuren, president of the Darkhan Branch, performing a baptism, late 1990s.



FIG. 13. Church meetinghouse in Darkhan, 2001. This building is the first to be built by the Church in Mongolia.

Our tenure here in Mongolia is about over. We have tried to hold onto the reins while the work of the Lord has continued to grow among this glorious people. We have around 68 missionaries serving in Mongolia, and over 150 missionaries from Mongolia serving throughout the world.

We now have branches in Ulaanbaatar and Darkhan, Choibalsan, Zoon Hara, Muren, Erdenet, Baganuur, Nalaikh, Sukhbaatar, and Khovd.

We own the Central Building, the Darkhan Chapel, and a small structure in Khovd. The rest are rented. However, plans are underway to build chapels this summer in Choibalsan, Erdenet, and maybe other cities. The new church building going up in Ulaanbaatar now has four stories of steel. It will be a 5-story building housing the mission office, mission home, CES offices, and a chapel. It is located near the Wrestling Palace and the Chinggis Khaan Hotel.

The Book of Mormon in Mongolian arrived last November, and members treasure their scriptures and carry them to church. The first approved songbook has just arrived. Translation is in progress for the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

In January the Church allowed the Mongolian sisters currently serving in Mongolia to go to the Hong Kong Temple for their endowments. Two Mongolian missionaries who served in Russia without being able to go to the temple also went. It was a glorious experience for all. They came back glowing with the gospel.⁶¹

In addition to the buildings noted by Clark, the Church has announced plans to construct a building for the Institute of Religion in Ulaanbaatar.⁶²

By the end of 2002, there were 4,356 members in Mongolia, in 21 branches in two districts. With 89 Mongolian elders and 73 Mongolian sisters serving full-time missions around the world, Mongolia is currently sending out more missionaries than it receives (fig. 14).⁶³ The Church is there to stay.⁶⁴

Thus the future of Mongolian Latter-day Saints is as interesting as their past. From one perspective it is a future fraught with challenges. Continued adjustments to a market economy, including widespread poverty, combine with other difficulties to challenge Church growth and influence. Moving from an atheistic, secular culture in which vodka and tea are staples to a pious, time-consuming religious life proves too difficult for many. The spoils of Western culture can also have adverse effects. Some converts privileged to receive education in the United States do not want to return to the comparatively austere lifestyle of their native land. Others, feeling the burden of knowing how much will be expected of them in Church service, become aloof after a

period of study or a mission abroad. As the Church grows rapidly, the close community of the first branch in Ulaanbaatar seems lost in the increasingly organized districts and branches, whose leaders and clerks are frustrated by Mongolians' transient tendencies. Some early, influential converts struggle to endure when significant initial sacrifices prove to be only the beginning of covenanted discipleship.

These challenges may be but birth pangs as Mormonism and Mongolia forge a connection unforeseen a decade ago even by Paul Hyer, the Berkeley-trained scholar of Asian studies who was instrumental in getting Mongolian government approval for a visit by General Authorities. Who would have imagined the growth that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has seen? Or that so many Mongolian converts would serve missions?

Many Mongolian students in the United States are concentrated at BYU campuses and at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah. Generous, personally interested donors finance the studies of some Latter-day Saint students, with the expectation that these students will lead the Church in Mongolia as they contribute to their nation's economic and social stability in years to come. The Cooks suggest "that having the missionaries teach English is an outstanding method of sharing the gospel with the 'best' of Mongolia. The students are intelligent and anxious to learn."⁶⁵ That assess-



FIG. 14. Mongolian missionary in traditional dress, late 1990s. This young elder from Mongolia served his mission in Idaho and here poses in front of the Idaho Falls Temple.

ment accurately describes Mongolian students at BYU–Hawaii, where Anand Sangaa and Namuuna Dashdorj won the campus entrepreneurial competition in 2002 with a plan to bring laundromats to Mongolia. Their cash award and other investments likely to be funneled into Mongolia through Church channels will strengthen the economic stability of a growing number of well-educated, experienced Church leaders, who will undoubtedly be major influences on Mongolia's future. The Church has not only provided education and leadership experience to Mongolians but also introduced Americans with resources to the country. One former missionary returned to consult with the Mongolian government in the computerization of archival records. Another is majoring in Asian studies at BYU, writing an honors thesis on Mongolia. Other returned missionaries

A Lucky Break in Ulaanbaatar: A Page from a Missionary Journal

October 8, 2002: We had just finished a pretty tough day: no meetings, no one home. I was thinking to myself, Man, this is hard. We got out of our cab and there were three men—two in police uniforms and one in a suit and trench coat—who tell me we've been robbed. I asked how they knew, and they said they got a tip from a civilian. One of them asked me at least twenty questions about us and our work. Then a Jeep full of policemen arrived. We all went into the apartment together. Our balcony window was destroyed and our suitcases were strewn about, but nothing was taken out of them and nothing else was out of place. The only things missing were my camera, my Mongol-Aingle dictionary, and my companion's pocketknife. We were pretty lucky.

The police declared the investigation over because nothing of great worth was stolen. Then everyone relaxed and just started looking around our apartment. Imagine the scene: the landlord cleaning up the broken glass, me filling out police forms, a couple of policemen sitting in our study chairs looking through a Book of Mormon, a couple more policemen looking in our fridge to see what kind of food foreigners eat, and the commissioner sitting on our couch reading *Gospel Fundamentals*. We ended up giving the police chief a Book of Mormon and *Gospel Fundamentals*. It was our best proselyting of the whole day.

—Elder Mark Skinner

will become professionals with affection toward Mongolian Latter-day Saints—and resources to help them. The Savior’s great commission, which drove these missionaries and which they seem to have instilled in Mongolian converts, will continue to be a powerful motivator in years to come.

Mongolia is at a crossroads in its history, politically and economically. “It is clear,” writes Mongolian historian Tsedendambyn Batbayar, “that the future of Mongolia now will depend on whether it can fully avail itself of this rare historical opportunity and remain firmly committed to democracy and a market economy.”⁶⁶ Ariunchimeg Tserenjavin, a Mongolian Latter-day Saint woman who studied at BYU–Hawaii, offers this insight:

More and more [Mongolians] are recognizing the goodness of our church . . . because the freedom we declared . . . did not bring only [good] things like the right to choose a religion. It brought sad and undesirable consequences to Mongolia like crimes, drug[s], and immoral things. To Mongolians, these things were as new as Christianity. Unfortunately, they attracted more people than our church could and it is sad. . . . It is the gospel that would save Mongolia and its precious youth who can develop their country for a better place. . . . In today’s difficult life condition, I think the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the best thing that can save Mongolia and [enable us to] receive all the blessings that God has for our land as Elder Maxwell said. It is my hope that after another 10 years, Mongolia has its own Temple.

Who dares to dampen such unbridled hope? Whether Mongolia will continue to experience such steep growth in Church membership remains to be seen. But the record of the last ten years raises the expectation that Mongolian Saints will increase in number, will continue strong in the faith, and will indeed soon have a temple of their own.

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46. Oyunchimeg Dugarusren, conversation with the author, Laie, Hawaii, April 3, 2002.

47. Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, "Once upon a Time and . . . Line upon Line, . . ." personal essay in author's possession, 4.

48. Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, "Once upon a Time," 4.

49. Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, conversation with the author.

50. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview by author, October 1, 2002, Salt Lake City, notes in possession of the author. The book to which she refers may be a translation of Mayne Reid (1818–83), *The Boy Hunters, or, Adventures in Search of a White Buffalo* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1853). I am indebted to David Whittaker for this information.

51. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.

52. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
53. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
54. Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, conversation with the author, Laie, Hawaii, April 3, 2002.
55. Ochirgerl Ochirbat, interview by Oyunchimeg Dugarsuren, October 5, 2001, transcript in author's possession.
56. I became interested in Mongolian Latter-day Saint history when I heard Anand describe his conversion and his missionary experiences, which he related at a Mongolian Club fireside at BYU–Hawaii in November 2001.
57. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002.
58. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, December 6, 2002, Provo, Utah, notes in author's possession.
59. I am indebted to Matthew K. Heiss for this information. He interviewed Enkhmaa and Udambor in 2000 in Mongolia.
60. Munkhtsetseg Dugarsuren, interview, October 1, 2002; Gary Cox, "Historical Highlights of the Mongolia-Ulaanbaatar Mission," photocopy in author's possession.
61. President and Sister Clark to Missionaries Who Have Served in Mongolia, May 2002, <http://www.mission.net/mongolia/ulaanbaatar/messages.php>, accessed March 30, 2003.
62. Sarah Jane Weaver, "Growth of Institute Is Mandating Need for New Buildings," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, March 10, 2001, 4.
63. Information obtained from the Management Information Center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2003.
64. Among Latter-day Saints, one can hardly discuss the topic of Mormonism in Mongolia without learning of connections to this history. While preparing this article, for instance, I learned that the son of a BYU history department faculty member is currently serving in Mongolia, as is the son of my dean. A *BYU Studies* staff member has a brother serving there. My experience as advisor to the BYU–Hawaii Mongolian Club, whose members have wide-ranging missionary ventures of their own, including in my hometown of Blackfoot, Idaho, testify to the marvelous power of the great commission to forge a community of Saints across the world.
65. Richard E. Cook and Mary N. Cook, "The Challenges of Sharing the Gospel in Countries with a Strong Secular Tradition: Mongolia," 6, quoted in Lamb, "Window of Opportunity," 17.
66. Batbayar, *Modern Mongolia*, 104.



Courtesy Scott H. Partridge

FIG. 1. Edward Partridge (1793–1840), engraving, by Charles B. Hall, ca. 1880. Edward Partridge, the son of William Partridge and Jemima Bidwell, was born on August 27, 1793, at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. After an apprenticeship, he opened a hat manufacturing plant and retail store in Painesville, Ohio, where he married Lydia Clisbee in 1819; they were the parents of seven children. Edward Partridge was the first bishop of the Church and had the responsibility of implementing the first Church-wide attempts at consecration. He died in Nauvoo on May 27, 1840.

Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio

Scott H. Partridge

For a short period in the 1830s, the town of Painesville, Ohio, played an important part in the development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The town was a place of success for Mormon missionaries; it was a religious battlefield in which the Campbellites resisted the encroachments of the missionaries; it was the home of the *Painesville Telegraph*, one of the most virulent critics of Mormonism; and, finally, it was the home of Edward Partridge, a man who would play a critical role as the first bishop of the Church (fig. 1).

In 1830, Edward Partridge was a successful, prominent, and relatively wealthy businessman. He owned a hat-making factory and a retail store and a substantial house, and he had a wife and family to whom he was dedicated. In most Church histories, he is portrayed as sacrificing all he had when he joined the Church, reluctantly abandoning his business and family when he accepted the call to serve as bishop and departed for Missouri.¹ These histories also conclude that by joining the Church he suffered great economic loss and that he left Painesville with reluctance.²

New information about Partridge strongly suggests that these conclusions should be revised. As to Partridge's economic losses, a careful search for documentation on the sale of Partridge's holdings does not yield enough evidence to determine the extent of his losses, and opinions from his family disagree. Perhaps more surprisingly, new evidence suggests that he might not have left Painesville reluctantly. In fact, Partridge was apparently not completely satisfied with his circumstances before he accepted Mormonism. It is not generally known, even by his descendants, that Partridge was preparing to make a major change as early as 1828. Recently discovered

real estate documents reveal that he was seeking to sell his factory, home, and property, apparently preparing to move his life in a new direction.

It is my purpose here to suggest that Partridge was prepared to leave Painesville even before he joined the Church, but his hasty departure after he was called as bishop meant that he likely sold his property for less than he might have if he had not left the community or if he had been able to wait for a better market opportunity. However, by the time his house was sold, he had already consecrated all of his property to the Church, so the loss would have been borne by the Church. Edward's consecration of his property might be considered a financial loss but not by those who willingly gave their worldly goods to build the kingdom.

Edward Partridge

Edward Partridge was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on August 27, 1793, to William Partridge and Jemima Bidwell. His early life, so far as the meager record of it informs us, was uneventful.³ At the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed to a hatter named Governor, who operated a hat shop near Pittsfield. At twenty, having completed his apprenticeship, Partridge traveled to New York State and hired on as a journeyman hat maker with one Asa Martin. Shortly thereafter, Partridge and Martin formed a partnership and established a hat-making business in the town of Clinton, near Albany.⁴

Sometime during the next year, Partridge traveled to Ohio on behalf of the firm and was so impressed with the area that he decided to stay, settling in Painesville, where he established a branch of the business. By the time Partridge arrived in Painesville, it had begun to resemble a New England town.

On September 13, 1817, Partridge purchased a large lot on Main Street (now Mentor Avenue) near the public square.⁵ On this property Partridge built his factory as well as his home. Painesville was an ideal location for his new business. It was far enough into the frontier to provide access to the furs he needed to make hats, and yet close enough to the more populated Eastern cities to provide access to their markets. The Partridge home and factory were only two miles from the shore of Lake Erie, which provided the trade connections for both furs and finished products. In a short time, he was doing so well that he bought out Martin's interest and carried on the business himself, employing several hands and operating both a factory and a store.

Marriage and Prosperity

Now settled in Painesville and established in business, Partridge met and courted Lydia Clisbee in 1819. She was the daughter of Joseph Clisbee



Courtesy Scott H. Partridge

FIG. 2. Caroline Ely Partridge Lyman, date unknown. Caroline, daughter of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee, was born on January 8, 1827, in Painesville, Ohio. She became the plural wife of Apostle Amasa Lyman on September 6, 1844, at Nauvoo and was the mother of five children. She came west in 1848 and pioneered in California and Utah. She was president of the Relief Society for thirty-two years in Oak City, Utah, where she died on May 5, 1908.

and Miriam Howe of Marlboro, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Born on September 26, 1793, she was one month younger than Partridge, who was now twenty-five years old. Following the death of her mother in 1814, she, her three sisters, and a brother had moved to Ohio to live near their mother's family.⁶

Edward and Lydia were married on August 19, 1819, and made their home in Painesville. During the first decade of their marriage, five daughters were born, as well as one baby boy, Clisbee, who died as an infant. Their living children in 1830 were Eliza Maria, age ten; Harriet Pamela, age eight; Emily Dow, age six; Caroline Ely (fig. 2), age three; and Lydia (fig. 3), age three months. In addition to growth in his family, Partridge also experienced rapid growth in his business and was generally considered "quite well to do."⁷

As evidence of his expanding prosperity during the decade of the 1820s, Geauga County records show that Partridge purchased a number of additional properties.⁸

The Family Home

A description of the Partridge home in Painesville gives some sense of the family's lifestyle and level of affluence.⁹ For its time, the house was comfortable, though not luxurious. It was a wooden frame structure with "large living quarters, food storage rooms, a front yard with green plat, rosebushes, a well with an old oaken bucket, currant bushes, a summer home with grapes, flowers, paths, and many arbor vines."¹⁰

Partridge's daughter Emily remembered the home warmly: "My father was doing a thriving business as a hatter. He had accumulated considerable property, and had provided a very pleasant and comfortable home for his

family. . . . I think my father must have been almost a rich man, when I consider the amount of property he owned.”¹¹ She also wrote, “I remember a very pleasant home, such as I have not had since.”¹²

A Plan to Sell Painesville Properties

In 1828, after a decade in Painesville as a prosperous businessman and family man, Partridge offered all of his property for sale. Although no record exists that explains his reasons for doing so, he apparently wanted to leave Painesville. The following advertisement appeared in the *Painesville Telegraph* on January 18, 1828:

Valuable Property For Sale. Lot No. 2, in the village of Painesville, with a House, Hatters Shop and Barn erected thereon, with a well of good water, and a fine garden, containing a selection of choice fruit. [Also offered for sale were lots 1 and 22, out Lot 5 containing about 19 acres, and a farm of 100 acres in the township of Harpersfield, Ashtabula County].¹³

The ad evidently brought no acceptable offers, because the following appeared eighteen months after his first advertisement:

Valuable Stand For A Hatter For Sale. Wishing to quit the Hatting business and leave Painesville, I now offer my stand for sale, together with an assortment of Stock, Trimings and Tools. My shop is large and commodious, and is pleasantly situated on Main-street near the Public square, and is the only Hat Shop in town. On the lot with the shop, is a convenient dwelling house, barn and an excellent well of water. Attached to the premises is part of Lots No. 1 and 22.¹⁴

However, Partridge was unable to sell his property and realize his wish to leave Painesville. Thus, as of 1830, Partridge was the owner of the following real estate (note that Partridge owned all or parts of lots 1, 2, and 22): a



Courtesy Scott H. Partridge

FIG. 3. Lydia Partridge Lyman, date unknown. Lydia, daughter of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee, was born on May 8, 1830, in Painesville, Ohio. She married Apostle Amasa Lyman on February 7, 1853 (as his eighth wife), and was the mother of four children. Since her husband was gone much of the time, she supported herself as a seamstress. When their husband left the Church, Lydia, Eliza, and Caroline left him. Lydia died at age 44 on January 16, 1875, in Oak City, Utah.

house, a hat factory, a hat shop, a barn, two lots next to the public square, a twenty-acre wood lot, a one-hundred-acre farm in Ashtabula County, and a house in Kirtland.¹⁵

While we can only speculate as to Partridge's reasons for "wishing to quit the Hatting business and leave Painesville," his repeated effort to sell all of his property in Painesville seems to indicate that he was dissatisfied with his life in some way. Not long after he placed this second advertisement, a life-changing opportunity presented itself when he encountered a new faith.

Edward Partridge's Ideas on Religion

Not only was Edward Partridge prepared to sell his properties in Painesville at the time he joined the Church, he was also spiritually prepared for this new faith by his earlier experiences with religion.

In his youth, Partridge was much more interested in establishing himself in a profession than in a religion. While his family was strongly entrenched in mainline Protestantism, with one of his sisters serving as a missionary in the Sandwich Islands, he seems to have gone his own way. His family most likely regarded him as a kind of "religious maverick."¹⁶

When he was twenty, had finished with his apprenticeship, and was ready to establish himself in business and society, Partridge took stock of the churches with which he was familiar and later wrote that he "'had become disgusted with the religious world,' and 'saw no beauty, comeliness or loveliness, in the character of God that was preached up by the sects.'"¹⁷ Still, he did not completely fall away from religious faith. In later years, Joseph Smith recalled that in Partridge's youth "the Spirit of the Lord strove with him a number of times, insomuch that his heart was made tender and he went and wept. Sometimes he went silently and poured the effusions of his soul to God in prayers."¹⁸

Partridge's rejection of all organized religion ended when he heard a sermon by a Universal Restorationer on the love of God. He joined himself to that religion, which taught that "all men will ultimately become holy and happy; that God created only to bless."¹⁹ He remained with them until 1828, when he joined with the followers of Alexander Campbell and attended Sidney Rigdon's branch of that church.²⁰ Their theology was based on what they believed was a restoration of the basic tenets of New Testament Christianity summarized in five points: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life.²¹

But Partridge was still not completely satisfied and concluded within another year or two that it was “‘absolutely necessary’ for God to ‘again reveal himself to man and confer authority upon some one, or more, before his church could be built up in the last days.’” His conclusion was that all men with whom he was acquainted “‘were without authority from God.’”²² In spite of this lack of confidence in the Campbellites, he continued as an active member of Rigdon’s group until fall 1830.

Latter-day Saint Missionaries

On November 14, 1830, Sidney Rigdon was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the first things Rigdon did after his baptism was to visit his friend and parishioner Edward Partridge to tell him of his conversion.²³ Shortly after Rigdon’s visit, writes Lydia Partridge, “Four men called at my husband’s shop and brought the Book of Mormon & offered it to him.”²⁴ The message brought by the missionaries was straightforward: Christ’s early church had been restored, and a prophet of the Lord was once again on the earth. This message fit nicely into Partridge’s beliefs regarding the necessity for new revelation and authority.

However, in spite of the mesh of his convictions and the message of the missionaries, Partridge’s first expressed reaction was disbelief. He told them that he thought they were imposters. “Oliver Cowdery replied that he was thankful there was a God in Heaven who knew the hearts of all men,”²⁵ implying that Partridge was an honest man who would eventually accept the truth. The elders went on their way, but Partridge, apparently touched by their message in spite of his comment, sent one of his employees to obtain a copy of the Book of Mormon.²⁶

The missionaries preached to Rigdon’s congregation, and it is likely that they preached to the Partridges when they did so. But Partridge remained cautious and finally announced that he would not be baptized until he had had a face-to-face meeting with Joseph Smith, the man who claimed to be a prophet.²⁷

Accordingly, Partridge, accompanied by Sidney Rigdon, decided to make the journey, in a particularly hard winter, from Ohio to New York State to talk with the Prophet. Philo Dibble, another new convert, noted that Partridge not only made the trip to investigate for himself but also to represent others in Painesville who were inquiring about the new church.²⁸ One source claims that interested Ohio citizens held a meeting on the subject, choosing Partridge to go because “he is a man who would not lie [to save] his right arm,” and they even paid part of his expenses.²⁹

A Trip to the East

After a difficult trip on rough roads in cold weather, Partridge and Rigdon eventually arrived at the town of Kingdon, New York, where they took lodgings at a small inn. The main subject for conversation there was the jailing of Joseph Smith Sr. and Hyrum Smith, the Prophet's brother, for nonpayment of debts. Partridge asked a few questions, and the answers he got led him to conclude that the unpaid debts were being used as an excuse to keep the senior Smith in jail until "he speaks up and says the whole thing [is] a fraud."³⁰

Later that same day, Partridge and Rigdon went to the home of the Prophet's parents. Lucy Mack Smith's record of the meeting tells of Partridge's conversion:

In December of the same year, Joseph appointed a meeting at our house. While he was preaching, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge came in and seated themselves in the congregation. When Joseph had finished his discourse, he gave all who had any remarks to make, the privilege of speaking. Upon this, Mr. Partridge arose, and stated that he had been to Manchester, with the view of obtaining further information respecting the doctrine which we preached; but not finding us, he had made some inquiry of our neighbors concerning our characters, which they stated had been unimpeachable, until Joseph deceived us [them] relative to the Book of Mormon. He also said that he had walked over our farm, and observed the good order and industry which it exhibited; and, having seen what we had sacrificed for the sake of our faith, and having heard that our veracity was not questioned upon any other point than that of our religion, he believed our testimony, and was ready to be baptized, "if," said he, "Brother Joseph will baptize me."

"You are now," replied Joseph, "much fatigued, brother Partridge, and you had better rest to-day, and be baptized tomorrow."

"Just as Brother Joseph thinks best," replied Mr. Partridge. "I am ready at any time."³¹

In spite of the winter weather, Partridge was baptized by the Prophet the next day, December 11, 1830, in the Seneca River.³² Four days later, Partridge was given the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordained an elder under the hands of Sidney Rigdon.³³

First Missionary Efforts

Not long after Partridge's baptism and ordination, Joseph Smith called him to go on a mission to preach the restored gospel. In response to Partridge's protest that he was no preacher, the Prophet told him to simply tell of his conversion and give his personal testimony of the truth of the Church.³⁴

Partridge decided that he must first return to his parents and siblings in Massachusetts to give them the news of his conversion and to introduce them to the restored gospel. Somewhat to his surprise, he was not just rejected, but rejected with anger and contempt. One of his sisters ordered him from her house and told him that she never wanted to see him again. His parents actually thought him to be deranged; when, after a few days of strained conversation, Partridge decided to leave, they sent his brother James along to make sure he arrived safely at his destination. He would never again be on good terms with most of his family members.³⁵

The Church's Move to Ohio

In contrast to Partridge's failure to convert his family, other missionaries were meeting with great success, particularly in Ohio. Growth in Ohio had reached the point by late 1830 that it was necessary for the Prophet to send John Whitmer to preside over the branch at Kirtland. Whitmer wrote back in mid-December that the number of converts in northeastern Ohio was several times the number residing in New York and growing, and he asked Joseph Smith for immediate help. In apparent response, at a general conference of the Church held in Fayette, New York, on January 2, 1831, the Prophet announced a revelation directing the entire Church to move to Ohio, where, he said, the Saints would be given the Lord's law and be "endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:31–32).³⁶

At the time, the Church was only about nine months old, had a total membership of approximately two hundred eighty,³⁷ and had four branches. The Prophet advised those members living in New York and Pennsylvania to sell their properties as soon as feasible, even at a loss, and move west, and he began immediately to make his own preparations for departure.³⁸

Toward the end of January, Joseph and Emma, along with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, started on the journey to Kirtland. They traveled in a sleigh and arrived safely in Kirtland early in February. There Newel K. Whitney, a young merchant and convert to the Church, welcomed the Prophet and Emma into his home, "where they remained several weeks and received 'every kindness and attention . . . that could be expected.'"³⁹

A Report to the Neighbors

Upon his return home from New York, Partridge, now a Mormon elder himself, was surprised to find that Lydia had been baptized in his absence by Parley P. Pratt. Lydia had accepted the gospel almost immediately. She recounted her conversion in simple terms: "I was induced to

believe for the reason that I saw the Gospel in its plainness as it was in the New Testament, and I also knew that none of the sects of the day taught these things.”⁴⁰

One of the first things Partridge did on arriving in Painesville was to meet with those who had sent him on his fact-finding trip to visit the Prophet. Partridge reported to them that he had made extensive inquiries among Joseph Smith’s neighbors and had found—to his own satisfaction, at least—that the antagonisms against the Smith family had arisen after Joseph had claimed divine powers, not before. Therefore, the animosity was against his beliefs and not his person. Partridge concluded by stating that Joseph Smith was either the greatest rogue alive or a prophet of God. His personal conclusion was that Joseph was a prophet.⁴¹

Partridge’s report hit like a bombshell among those who had fully expected him to deliver a negative opinion of Joseph Smith and led to contumelious behavior among many: “His old, and most intimate friends, who had been most anxious for him to go and find out the truth of the reports about ‘mormonism’ because of their confidence in his honesty, and superior judgment, pronounced him crazy.”⁴²

The Call to Be Bishop

Partridge did not have much time to worry about the growth of anti-Mormon sentiment or the loss of old friends. On February 4, 1831, three days after the Smith party arrived in Ohio, the Prophet announced the following revelation calling Partridge to the office of bishop:

And again, I have called my servant Edward Partridge; and I give a commandment, that he should be appointed by the voice of the church, and ordained a bishop unto the church, to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church; To see to all things as it shall be appointed unto him in my laws in the day that I shall give them. And this because his heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile. These words are given unto you, and they are pure before me; wherefore, beware now you hold them, for they are to be answered upon your souls in the Day of Judgment. Even so. Amen. (D&C 41:9–12)

This calling seems to have been an unexpected development both for Partridge and for the Church. B. H. Roberts wrote, “This appointment of Edward Partridge to be a bishop is called an unlooked for development in organization, because there was nothing in preceding revelations that intimated that bishops would constitute any part of the church organization and government.”⁴³ In addition, the duties and obligations of the office of

bishop were not known. Partridge would find out later that “the bishop’s principal duty was to look after the poor.”⁴⁴

Cooperative Arrangements

The revelation given on February 4, 1831, in addition to calling Edward Partridge to be the first bishop in the Church, instructed the elders of the Church to assemble in Kirtland to receive the law under which the temporal affairs of the Church should be governed (D&C 41:2–3). Five days later, on February 9, 1831, twelve elders (one of whom was probably Partridge) came to the Prophet and asked if the time had come to reveal the law that had been spoken of in the New York revelation. In the presence of these elders, Joseph prayed for divine guidance and recorded what is now section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

The law as it appears in section 42 can be outlined as follows:

1. Members are to transfer ownership of all their property to the Lord through the bishop.
2. Once he had received the property, the bishop was to appoint every man a steward over either
 - a. his own property or
 - b. that which he had received from the bishop “sufficient for himself and his family.”
3. The surplus created by economic activity was to be kept in the bishop’s storehouse
 - a. to help the poor and needy,
 - b. to purchase land, and
 - c. to build up the New Jerusalem. (D&C 42:31, 32–35)

Although this revelation provided a basic outline of the law of consecration and stewardship, it failed to provide many of the details of how it was to operate. Consequently, as the members began to attempt to live this law, additional information was asked for and received, and Church leaders continually instructed the members in how the law should be administered.

Consecration, as it was called originally, or the united order, as many called it later,⁴⁵ was the law under which Zion was to be established and was based most fundamentally upon the acknowledgment that the Lord was the owner of everything on earth and that man was only a temporary steward. Possibly the most succinct description of the law of consecration and stewardship was stated by Arrington, Fox, and May in *Building the City of God*:

Briefly, the law was a prescription for transforming the highly individualistic economic order of Jacksonian America into a system characterized

by economic equality, socialization of surplus incomes, freedom of enterprise, and group economic self-sufficiency. Upon the basic principle that the earth and everything on it belongs to the Lord, every person who was a member of the church at the time the system was introduced or became a member thereafter was asked to “consecrate” or deed all his property, both real and personal, to the bishop of the church.⁴⁶

A final point should be stressed. This law was not presented to the members of the Church as some kind of investment scheme in which they could participate or not participate as they chose. This temporal commitment was considered as sacred and binding as any of the religious rites of the Church. One could be “cut off” for opposing or not participating in the plan.⁴⁷

It is not known what Partridge thought of the new plan. As the first bishop in the Church, his responsibility was to apply the general statements of the revelation in specific real-world situations. At first there was likely confusion regarding the exact meaning of terms such as “surplus,” “steward,” and “poor and needy.” Any hesitancy on his part, however, should have caused him to note the sharp warning in the revelation: “And again, I say unto you, that my servant Edward Partridge shall stand in the office whereunto I have appointed him. And it shall come to pass, that if he transgresses another shall be appointed in his stead” (D&C 42:10).

Bishop Partridge had been a member of the Church for less than two months when he was asked to sacrifice everything he had worked for in his life and devote his time completely to his new Church. Further, as administrator of the new economic order, he would have to set the right example by donating all his real properties to the Church as well as whatever personal possessions of his family he felt he should consecrate. Partridge readily gave the Church whatever was asked of him, beginning with hospitality for traveling Saints.

Assisting the Saints Gathering in Ohio

In spring 1831, in response to the Prophet’s urging, the Saints began to gather to northern Ohio from all parts of the country where Mormon missionaries had been doing their work. Only three miles from the boat landing and nine miles from Kirtland,⁴⁸ the Partridge home made a convenient stopping place for those traveling from the East to Kirtland, and Emily recorded that “we had more or less of them stopping there from that time on, while we remained in Ohio.”⁴⁹ Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet’s mother, noted in her biography of her son that when she arrived in Ohio with the rest of the Smith family, Joseph took them to the Partridge home where they “found a fine supper prepared for the whole company.”⁵⁰

This steady stream of converts through their home was not without cost to the Partridge family. Besides the obvious expense of providing meals and provisions, the family also found itself the recipient of whatever diseases their visitors might be carrying with them—at a time when almost any disease could be life threatening. The children suffered through an epidemic of measles, a very serious affliction in the nineteenth century; much of spring and summer 1831 was spent nursing them back to health. The oldest girl, Eliza, was seriously ill with what they called “lung fever” and was not given much hope of recovering⁵¹ (fig. 4). These problems do not seem to have affected the hospitality the Partridges showed toward their visitors.⁵²

As the steady gathering of Church converts continued in northern Ohio, it became evident that putting the new law of consecration and stewardship into place would be difficult. Not only were many of the Saints scattered across the northern part of the state and thus physically isolated, but in general they lacked knowledge regarding the doctrines and practices of the Church; in particular, they had only vague notions regarding the new economic system.

To help rectify this problem, elders were sent forth to proclaim repentance and to instruct the members in the new law. The elders’ main impact, however, was not to educate current members but to bring more new converts into the Church, which only further aggravated implementation problems. Partridge visited several branches of the Church to explain the law of consecration but found that some of the members would not accept it.⁵³ The situation at the time was summed up by Church historian John Whitmer, who recorded that “the time has not yet come that the law can be fully established, for the disciples live scattered abroad and are not yet organized; our numbers are small and the disciples untaught, consequently they understand not the things of the kingdom.”⁵⁴ Whitmer further noted that part of the problem was that “some of the disciples who were flattered into this Church . . . thought



Courtesy Scott H. Partridge

FIG. 4. Eliza Maria Partridge Smith Lyman, date unknown. Eliza, daughter of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee, was born on April 20, 1820, in Painesville, Ohio. She had “lung fever” when her father left for Missouri. She became a plural wife of Joseph Smith in April 1843; after his death, she became the plural wife of Apostle Amasa Lyman on September 8, 1844. She was the mother of five children. She died March 2, 1886, in Oak City, Utah.

that all things were to be in common, therefore they thought to glut themselves upon the labors of the others.”⁵⁵

As additional Saints continued to arrive to settle in Ohio, it became apparent that there was not enough money or land to care for their needs. Disturbed by the lack of preparation to receive the newcomers from the East, Bishop Partridge went to the Prophet seeking advice as to where he should settle them.⁵⁶ He also wanted to know if Ohio was “the place of gathering, even the place of the New Jerusalem spoken of in the Book of Mormon,” as some of the Eastern converts had been preaching. In response, the Prophet recorded what became section 48 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The essence of the revelation was that the place of the New Jerusalem had not been revealed; that the Saints in Ohio were to share their surplus property with the new arrivals; and that if more land was needed, the newcomers were to purchase additional property.⁵⁷

Travel to Independence, Missouri

Many converts living in northern Ohio in 1831 moved to Jackson County, Missouri. At a general conference of the Church held in Kirtland on June 4, 1831, Partridge, one of twenty-three brethren who were ordained to the office of high priest, was also called to join a group of Church leaders and missionaries and journey to the new Zion in Missouri.

In obedience to the call, Edward Partridge said goodbye to his family on June 19, 1831, and set out for the “promised land.”⁵⁸ It was difficult for him to leave at this time. Not only was he exhausted to the point that he suffered a fall from his horse⁵⁹—luckily without injury—but his family was still recovering from the measles epidemic contracted from their visitors, and his daughter Eliza was still seriously afflicted with lung fever. Eliza recorded in her journal, “After a time [my father] was called to leave his business . . . and go to Missouri to attend to the business of the Church. He went and left his family to get along as best they could, I was at that time very sick and he had no expectation of seeing me again, but the Lord called and he must obey.”⁶⁰

Lydia Partridge also wrote of how difficult it was for her when Edward left: “The unbelievers thought he must be crazy or he would not go. And I thought myself that I had reason to think my trials had commenced and so they had, but this trial like all others was followed by blessings for our daughter recovered.”⁶¹

In addition to the exodus of groups of members and of those called to serve as missionaries on their way to Missouri, the Prophet himself made his own pilgrimage in search of Zion, accompanied by Edward Partridge,

Sidney Rigdon, and five other Saints. Their destination was generally described as Jackson County, on the western border of the state of Missouri, nearly one thousand miles away.⁶²

After difficult travel in hot weather over rough roads or no roads at all, the Prophet's party arrived at Independence about the middle of July.⁶³ Over the next few weeks, Joseph Smith officially designated the land of Missouri for the gathering of the Saints (D&C 57:1–2), located the temple lot (D&C 57:3), and set up the organization to handle an influx of members when they should begin arriving from the East. Specific instructions to Bishop Partridge were also given:

And let my servant Edward Partridge stand in the office to which I have appointed him, and divide unto the Saints their inheritance, even as I have commanded; and also those whom he has appointed to assist him. . . . And now concerning the gathering—Let the bishop and the agent make preparations for those families which have been commanded to come to this land, as soon as possible, and plant them in their inheritance. (D&C 57:7, 15)

On Thursday, August 4, 1831, a special conference was held in Kaw Township in Jackson County. Thirty-one members were present.⁶⁴ At the conclusion of the conference, most of the leaders with whom Partridge had traveled west were instructed to return to Ohio, leaving him almost alone. Some insight into his feelings can be gained from a letter he wrote to Lydia on the day after the conference, August 5, 1831. He began by saying that he needed to stay in Missouri “for the present, contrary to [his] expectations,” and he preferred that she stay in Painesville until spring because she would be more comfortable there. Then he told her of his feelings:

When I left Painesville, I told people I was coming back and bade none a farewell but for a short time, consequently I feel a great desire to return once more, and bid your connexion [*sic*] and my friends and acquaintances an eternal farewell, unless they should be willing to forsake all for the sake of Christ, and be gathered with the saints of the most high God.

We have to suffer and shall for some time, many privations here which you and I have not been much used to for years. . . . I have a strong desire to return to Painesville this fall but must not. You know I stand in an important station, and as I am occasionally chastened I sometimes fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father. I hope you and I may conduct ourselves as at last to land our souls in the heaven of eternal rest. Pray that I may not fall; I might write more but must not, Farewell for the present.⁶⁵

After explaining that he had been called to “plant” himself in Jackson County and expressing regret that he would be unable to return to Ohio,

Partridge left with Lydia the decision of how and when the rest of the family would get to Missouri. His concern for his family was described by Emily Partridge:

It seemed, to him, a very great undertaking for mother to break up her home and prepare for such a journey, with a family of little children, without her husband to advice [*sic*], and make arrangements for her. She was then quite young, and inexperienced in such things. But if my father could have looked forward into the future and beheld what his family would have to go through I think he would have felt still more anxious.⁶⁶

Although Lydia Partridge had heard how difficult the trip was, she left Painesville with her family late that same year with Isaac Morley's family and others. In addition to moving all their clothing and possessions, she had to care for and protect five little girls accustomed to a sheltered environment and unprepared for the rough characters and conditions they might meet on their journey to the frontier. When the family left Ohio, the girls ranged from Eliza, who was only eleven, down to Lydia, who was a babe in arms of seventeen months.

After a sometimes difficult trip by lake steamer, canal boat, river boat, and barge, they were within one hundred miles of their destination when ice coming down the Missouri River made it impossible to proceed. At the time, the family was on a slow-moving barge with a captain who had taken an unwanted interest in Lydia. Tired of the conditions on the barge and of the attentions of its captain, she took her children and landed at a place called Arrow Rock. At that spot, on the bank of the river, there was a log cabin occupied by a family of African Americans. Lydia asked for shelter and was given a back room for her family.⁶⁷

There was no window in their small back room, their only light coming from the door opening into the front part of the cabin. They did have a fireplace and plenty of wood, so they were able to keep warm in spite of the very cold weather. They remained there for over two weeks and during that time had a terrifying experience when a very large rattlesnake was discovered in their woodpile. The owner of the cabin, apparently accustomed to rattlesnakes, turned his largest hog into the room. While it crunched on the snake, the girls huddled on the bed, screaming.⁶⁸

After ten days, Lydia was reduced to feeding the family lumpy, grey cornmeal mush and fat pork. But soon, with Sister Morley's help, Lydia was able to procure a wagon, load their possessions on it, and start again for Independence. It was still almost too cold to travel, so they stopped for a day to build fires and rest. That day Partridge and Isaac Morley came into their camp and escorted them the rest of the way.⁶⁹

Winding Up Affairs in Painesville

When the trunks belonging to Lydia and the girls arrived in Independence from Painesville, Partridge promptly took them to the bishop's storehouse as surplus, along with most of their contents. This action brought protests from his family, who complained that they were dressing like beggars while other members were going around town wearing what used to be their best clothing.⁷⁰ Still, consecrating clothing and personal belongings was much easier than disposing of Partridge's real estate holdings in Painesville. With just a few days between his call to Missouri and his departure, he had to trust someone else to act as an agent for him in selling his property.⁷¹ Judging from his earlier failed attempts to sell his properties, it would not be easy to sell a retail business, a factory, and considerable real estate. Nor would it be easy to get a fair price from potential buyers who must have recognized that they were in a buyer's market. However, Partridge might not have been overwhelmingly interested in the final sales prices because he had already consecrated his property to the Church and had his hands full attempting to fill his assignment in Missouri.⁷²

It is impossible to determine exactly how much Partridge (and thus the Church) received for his Painesville properties, although most who comment on this issue indicate that he sustained huge losses. His daughter Emily (fig. 5) later wrote, "Father's business was left in the hands of his agent, and his property, what was sold at all, was sold at a very great sacrifice,"⁷³ and "My father realized but little from his property in Ohio. One farm was sold for a horse, saddle and bridle, and the rest, what was sold at all, was after the same style."⁷⁴

One of Partridge's brothers also gives evidence that Edward sold his property cheaply: "You say,



Courtesy Scott H. Partridge

FIG. 5. Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young, date unknown. Emily, daughter of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee, was born February 28, 1824, in Painesville, Ohio. She became a plural wife of Joseph Smith on March 4, 1843. In September 1844, after the Prophet's death, Emily was sealed for time to Brigham Young. She and President Young had seven children. She died on December 8, 1899, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

the world, with all its pomp and show, looks very small in your eyes; I have evry [*sic*] reason to believe this, from the manner of disposing of your property, particularly your farm, which I learn you have received a fifteen year old horse for.”⁷⁵ Lucretia Lyman Ranney, the Lyman family genealogist, put it in these words: “Edward put his property into the hands of a man, he thought to be a friend with instructions to sell it but the man was not faithful to the trust and Edward and his family received very little from the property.”⁷⁶

On the other hand, Ruth Louise Partridge, Partridge’s great-granddaughter, implies that Partridge realized a substantial profit from his Painesville holdings: “Selling a factory, a retail business and considerable real estate is not something that can be done with profit in such haste. Yet Edward was able to lay ten thousand dollars in gold on the alter [*sic*] of his faith.”⁷⁷ Perhaps Ruth writes metaphorically.

The above individuals do not provide any sources for their opinions on how successful Partridge was in disposing of his Painesville property. Since all of them are related to the bishop, it could be surmised that this is the kind of information that works its way down the generations within families and somehow gets distorted over the years. Partridge was, of course, in Missouri all during this time, and there is no evidence that he corresponded with his agent regarding prices or terms of sale.

What we do know is that the disposition of the Partridge property in Painesville was completed before a year had passed since Edward’s departure for Missouri. Geauga County records show that one transaction was completed on March 6, 1832, and the remainder on May 2 of the same year. No amounts are given except for the hat shop and dwelling portions of lots one and two, which sold for \$1,100.⁷⁸ As to the total price he received for his holdings, the truth most likely will never be known. We also know that Partridge consecrated the proceeds of all his property sales to the Church. In retrospect, it is not as important to know what his property was sold for as it is to recognize that he so freely gave it to the Church.

The End of a Faithful Life

As did so many early converts to the Church, Edward Partridge suffered more than financial losses for his faith. On November 6, 1838, Partridge, along with fifty-five other Mormon leaders, was arrested at Far West, Missouri, and incarcerated to wait trial. Of this time he wrote, “We were confined to a large open room, where the cold northern blast penetrated freely. Our fires were small and our allowance for wood and food was scanty; they gave us not even a blanket to lie upon; our beds were the cold floor. . . . The vilest of the vile did guard us and treat us like dogs.”⁷⁹ He

lived under these conditions until November 28, when he was found innocent of any wrongdoing and released.⁸⁰

Never a very strong person physically, Partridge does not seem to have ever completely recovered from the three weeks of imprisonment under such difficult circumstances. On June 13, 1839, he wrote, "I have not at this time two dollars in this world . . . What is best for me to do, I hardly know. Hard labor I cannot perform; light labor I can; but I know of no chance to earn anything, at anything I can stand to do."⁸¹ He was appointed bishop of the upper ward in Nauvoo, but his service was brief. Shortly after their arrival in Nauvoo, his daughter Harriet unexpectedly died. Consumed with guilt and attributing her death to poor living conditions for which he was responsible, he attempted to convert an old stable into a home for his family and was in the process of moving furniture when he collapsed from exhaustion and took to his bed. He died on May 27, 1840, ten days after his daughter, at age forty-six.

His funeral in Nauvoo was marked by a revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 124:19 in which the Lord stated that he had received Edward Partridge "unto [him]self." There were many tributes written about him; one of the kindest and most insightful, attributed to his long-time friend W. W. Phelps, was published in the *Times and Seasons*:

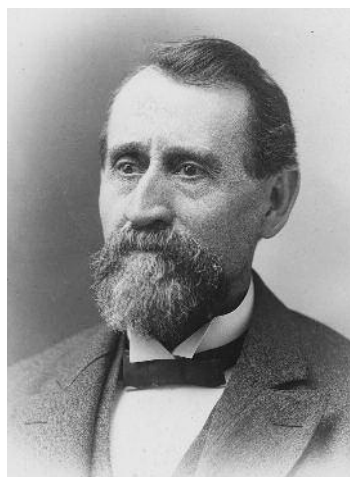
[Edward Partridge] proved himself a faithful friend. His private and official duties were performed with an eye single to the glory of God. He was a faithful steward and the church had unlimited confidence in his integrity. He lived godly in Christ Jesus, and suffered persecution. As a Bishop he was one of the Lords great men, and few will be able to wear his mantle with such simple dignity. He was an honest man, and I loved him.⁸²

Conclusion

As a result of recently discovered documents, we now know that Edward Partridge attempted to sell his business in 1828 with the announced intention of leaving Painesville if the sale had been completed. What we don't know is why he wanted to sell it, where he intended to go, and what he intended to do. And, while the majority of sources indicate that Partridge accepted far less for his Painesville properties than he might have realized had he sold them under other circumstances, the exact amount of his losses is unknown. Regardless of these unknowns, the central fact is that of his wholehearted conversion to the Church and his complete dedication to it.

After carefully and thoughtfully examining the claims of the missionaries, studying the Book of Mormon, and meeting the Prophet, Edward

FIG. 6. Edward Partridge Jr., date unknown. Edward, son of Edward Partridge and Lydia Clisbee, was born on June 20, 1833, in Independence, Missouri. He married Sarah Lucretia Clayton, with whom he had eight children, and Elizabeth Buxton, with whom he had nine. He served two missions to the Sandwich Islands, during the second as mission president. Later, he pioneered in Utah County. In 1895 he was called to serve as president of the Utah Stake. Edward was known, like his father, for his steadfast devotion to the Church. He died on November 17, 1900, at Provo, Utah.



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Partridge accepted the restored gospel and devoted the rest of his life to serving the Church. When others fell away under the pressures of persecution and economic loss, he never wavered. He was also fortunate to have a companion whose faith matched his own and who did what she had to do to support her husband. An additional tribute to his life is the fact that all of his children also remained faithful even though they lived through difficult days in Missouri and Illinois. His daughters married Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Amasa Lyman. His son, Edward Jr., the last of his seven children, was president of the Hawaiian Mission and of the Utah Stake, and, like his father, was faithful to the end (fig. 6).

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1. D. Brent Collette believes that Edward Partridge did indeed suffer a great economic loss because his business was “very prosperous and allowed him to accumulate a handsome property.” He also states that, as a refugee from Missouri mobs, Partridge had only “one dollar and forty-five cents” and that he “ultimately sacrificed his every earthly possession” (123). D. Brent Collette, “In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed through the Life of Edward Partridge” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977), 7, 32.

Hartt Wixom also claims that Edward Partridge suffered a great economic loss when he embraced Mormonism: “The Partridges had acquired many material

goods prior to joining the Restored Church. . . . They were to give it all up for the gospel.” Hartt Wixom, *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 1998), 6.

The daughters of Edward Partridge were of the same opinion. Eliza Partridge Lyman wrote in the introduction to her journal, “He never went back to sell his place or to settle up his affairs but left it for others to do, which was done at a great sacrifice. He had accumulated a handsome property, which went for very little.” Microfilm copy in possession of author, courtesy of Church Archives.

None of these histories to date give any specifics as to what property, if any, was sold, who bought it, and what was paid for it.

2. Wixom, *Edward Partridge*, does not indicate any particular reluctance on the part of Edward Partridge when he was called upon to leave his profession, his business, and his family and move to Missouri. He does state that “after joining the Mormons, Edward seemed to transform much of his business acumen and energies into the Restored Church” (7) and indicates that “it is not a trifling thing to give up all for Christ’s sake” (14). Still, no reluctance on Edward’s part is emphasized, which seems to fit the fact that he had expressed a desire to sell his business and leave Painesville prior to his introduction to Mormonism—even though no details are given in this regard.

On the other hand, Brent Collette, in the thesis referred to above, does make the point that Edward was “a bit hesitant in embracing the call” to be bishop (31) because “it meant the abandonment of everything he had achieved in Painesville as a successful businessman in exchange for a life which at best promised several years of intense sacrifice and hardship” (39). There is no hint that he was unhappy or dissatisfied with his life in Painesville or that he was in any way interested in leaving or doing anything else with his life. No mention is made of any attempt on Edward’s part to sell his property and leave prior to the visit of the four Mormon missionaries in 1830.

3. Edward Partridge Jr., *Biography and Family Genealogy*, 1878, 2, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

4. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 6.

5. The following deed is listed in the records of Geauga County, Ohio, with Edward Partridge as grantee: William Kerr, Cole and Company to Edward Partridge, Lot 2, 72/160 Acre, September 13, 1817, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 6, p. 237. Letter from Carl Thomas Engel, Painesville Librarian, to author, August 10, 1998.

6. Lucretia Lyman Ranney, *My Children’s American Ancestry* (n.p., 1959), 6.

7. Lucretia Lyman Ranney, *Our Priceless Heritage*, 3 vols. (Delta, Utah: M. A. Lyman, ca. 1980), 7.

8. Milton Armstrong to Edward Partridge, Lot 22 A, January 4, 1820, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 7, p. 373; William Kerr, Cole and Company, by Sheriff to Edward Partridge, Lot 1, Sheriff’s Deed, January 12, 1824, Painesville Town Plat Additions, vol. 9, p. 407; ; William Kerr, Cole and Company, by Sheriff, to Edward Partridge, Lot 1, Release of Power, March 26, 1824, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 9, p. 410; Lewis Clisbee to Edward Partridge, Lot 2, 48/160 A, Quit Claim Deed, February 5, 1825, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 10, p. 114.

Even while Edward was acquiring properties, he was willing to part with some of them; in 1825, Edward sold (or donated) part of his prime town property to the Painesville Presbyterian Church for a nominal sum. Edward Partridge to Storm

Rosa et al, Trustees Painesville Presbyterian Church [now First Church Congregational], Lot 1, 33:160 A, Consideration \$100, July 5, 1825, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 10, p. 249.

9. Collette, "In Search of Zion," 147.
10. Lucretia L. Ranney, *Edward Partridge Family Bulletin*, August 1957, 1, quoted in Wixom, *Edward Partridge*, 6. See also Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums* (Provo, Utah: n.p. 1974), 1. This book, while not a scholarly history, provides interesting comments and stories that were passed down as family tradition.
11. Albert R. Lyman, "Edward Partridge Family," 2, Church Archives.
12. Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent* 13 (December 15, 1884): 1.
13. "Valuable Property for Sale," *Painesville Telegraph*, January 18, 1828, 3.
14. "Valuable Stand for a Hatter for Sale," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 1, 1829, 3.
15. Most of the items in the list are from Emily Dow Partridge Young, "What I Remember," June 27, 1897, 1-3, typescript, Emily Dow Partridge Young Papers, Church Archives. See also Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Midvale, Utah: Signature, 1977), 137. The two lots and the wood lot are mentioned in Lucretia Lyman Ranney, "Edward Partridge Family," n.p., 2. The farm in Ashtabula County was advertised for sale in the *Painesville Telegraph*, January 18, 1828, 3.
16. Collette, "In Search of Zion," 17.
17. Orson F. Whitney, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Contributor* 6 (October 1884): 4.
18. Golden A. Buchmiller, "First Bishop Steadfast Despite Trials," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, January 31, 1981, 10.
19. *Book of Religions*, Hayward, 1842, pp. 91-95, quoted in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 1:237 (hereafter cited as *Comprehensive History of the Church*).
20. Whitney, "The Aaronic Priesthood," 4.
21. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 450.
22. Milton V. Backman, "The Quest for a Restoration: The Birth of Mormonism in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (1972): 364, quoting Edward Partridge, Papers, May 26, 1839, Church Historian's Office, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
23. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 9.
24. "Extracts from the Writings of Lydia Partridge," in Edward Partridge Jr., *Biography and Family Genealogy*, 5.
25. Hill, *Joseph Smith*, 124.
26. Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent* 13 (December 25, 1884): 1.
27. Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Young Girl," 1, Church Archives.
28. Ranney, *Edward Partridge Family Bulletin*, August 1957, 1; Collette, "In Search of Zion," Appendix C; Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 7.
29. Philo Dibble, "Early Scenes in Church History," *Faith-Promoting Series* 8 (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1892), 77.

30. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 21.
31. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 191–92.
32. Andrew Jensen, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History, 1901–36): 1:219.
33. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 53; Jensen, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:219.
34. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 29.
35. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 20–21.
36. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 22.
37. 1989–90 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1988), 203.
38. *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:242.
39. *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:242.
40. “Extracts from the Writings of Lydia Partridge,” 2.
41. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 47.
42. Young, “Incidents,” 3, 5.
43. *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:244.
44. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 207.
45. Ivan J. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration: A History of the Church to 1846* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 168.
46. Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 15.
47. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, 235; Collette, *In Search of Zion*, 30.
48. Young, “Incidents,” 2; Collette, *In Search of Zion*, 23.
49. Young, “Incidents,” 2.
50. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 207.
51. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 23.
52. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 23; Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 54; Young, “Incidents,” 2–3.
53. William E. Berrett and Alma P. Burton, *Readings in L.D.S. Church History from Original Manuscripts*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), 1:114.
54. Berrett and Burton, *Readings*, 1:114.
55. Berrett and Burton, *Readings*, 1:114.
56. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *The Doctrine and Covenants, Studies in Scripture*, vol. 1 (Sandy, Utah: Randall Book, 1984), 175.
57. Millet and Jackson, *Doctrine and Covenants*, 175.
58. *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:188.
59. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 54–55.
60. Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, *Journal*, 8, Church Archives.
61. “Extracts from the Writings of Lydia Partridge,” 5.
62. Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, 180.
63. Cook, *Revelations*, 91.
64. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 9–10.
65. Collette, “In Search of Zion,” Appendix D.

66. Young, "Incidents," 9–10.

67. Young, "Incidents," 4–5; Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 104–9.

68. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 108.

69. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 110.

70. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 118.

71. There is, however, some confusion as to the person who acted as his agent. Although Lydia Partridge names Harvey Redfield (unpublished manuscript, 3), Partridge appears to have chosen another friend, Titus Billings, to serve as his agent. He gave Billings a power of attorney, which was recorded in county records. Edward Partridge of Painesville Township, Geauga County, State of Ohio, to Titus Billings, of Kirtland Township, Geauga County, State of Ohio, Powers of Attorney, June 16, 1831, Geauga County, Ohio, Deeds, vol. 14, p. 427.

72. One observer even suggests that Partridge's failure to dispose of his business properties with dispatch was one of the causes of the feelings that developed between Partridge and Sidney Rigdon. Collette, *In Search of Zion*, 52.

73. Young, "Autobiography," December 15, 1884, 2.

74. Young, "Incidents," 11–12.

75. Young, "Incidents," 13.

76. Ranney, *Our Priceless Heritage*, 2:8.

77. Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums*, 54.

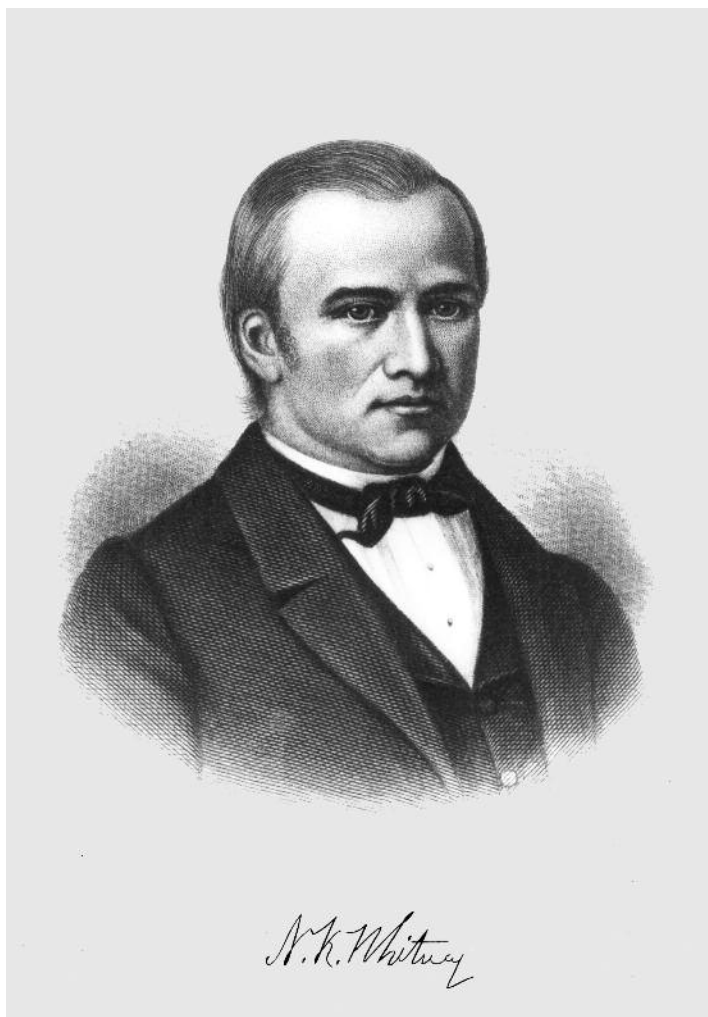
78. Edward Partridge to George Williams, Painesville Out Lot 5. 18 89/100A, March 6, Geauga County, Ohio, Deeds, 1832, vol. 15, p. 331; Edward Partridge to George Williams, Painesville Out Lot 5.18 89/100A, May 2, 1832, vol. 16, p. 15; Edward Partridge to Jonathan Brainard, Lot 1 and 2, May 2, 1832, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 16, p. 249. This deed conveyed the hat shop and dwelling on portions of Lots 1 and 2 from "Edward Partridge & Lydia Partridge his wife, both Of Independence, County of Jackson, State of Missouri" to "Jonathan Brainard of the Township of DeRuyter, County of Madison, State of New York" for consideration of \$1,100. Edward Partridge to David Hull, Lot 1, May 2, 1832, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 16, p. 321; Edward Partridge to Ketchel A. E. Bell, Lot 22, May 2, 1832, Painesville Town Plat Addition, vol. 16, p. 351.

79. Edward Partridge Jr., Biography and Family Genealogy, 52, quoted in Susan Easton Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 215.

80. Black, *Who's Who*, 215.

81. Journal History of the Church, June 13, 1839, Church Archives, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

82. Extract of a letter from W. W. Phelps, *Times and Seasons* 1 (October 1840): 190.



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FIG. 1. Newel K. (N. K.) Whitney, engraving, originally published in a Church magazine in January 1885 (almost thirty-five years after Whitney's death). The magazine editor explained that this engraving was "as good a likeness . . . as was possible." The only "authentic portrait" available was a painting by William Major, which the magazine editor considered a poor likeness. To create this engraving, the artist drew from the memories of some of Whitney's close friends and relatives. The editor admitted some discrepancies between the subject and this engraving but thought it a "fair portrayal" nonetheless. Junius F. Wells, "Our Engravings," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 154.

“Thou Art the Man”

Newel K. Whitney in Ohio

Mark L. Staker

In the early 1820s, Newel K. Whitney set up his first store in Kirtland, Ohio, in a little log cabin¹ (fig. 1). From such humble beginnings he created a thriving business that would later become central to the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, over time the holdings and contributions of the Whitney family in Kirtland were largely forgotten. It was in Kirtland where Joseph Smith arrived and reportedly said to Whitney, whom the Prophet had never met before, “Thou art the man.”²

The fortunes of the Whitneys were intertwined for a time with those of Sidney Gilbert, Whitney’s partner for several years in a firm called N. K. Whitney and Company. Whitney rose above many hardships during the Church’s turbulent early years. This article chronicles Newel K. Whitney’s activities leading up to and connected with the firm of N. K. Whitney and Company, as well as the company’s impact on the Church in Ohio.

N. K. WHITNEY’S LIFE AND BUSINESS BEFORE KIRTLAND

Born in Marlborough, Vermont, in 1795, Whitney was the second child and eldest son in a family of about nine children. Samuel Whitney and Susanna Kimball christened him Newel Kimball Whitney. Always pleased that he bore his mother’s maiden name, he insisted that his family honor the Kimball name throughout his life.³ Perhaps it was because of his emphasis on both given names that at some point Newel Kimball became known to his family and friends simply by the initials “N. K.” Before the harvest season in 1803, the Whitney family left the hard scrabble of Windham County, Vermont, and moved to Fairfield, Herkimer County, New

York, located at the heart of New York's rural farming lands.⁴ Samuel and Susanna did not stay long in Fairfield; they moved around the state a few times and eventually drifted back to Vermont. The Whitneys never owned property in those early years, and it is not clear how the family earned a living.⁵

N. K. as an Army Sutler

When N. K. Whitney turned nineteen, it was 1814, and the United States was at war with Britain. The people of upper New York had already experienced a few skirmishes. Much of New England was not supportive of the war, and fewer soldiers enlisted than politicians expected. This lack of support was partly due to the trade embargos, shipping disruptions, and other business problems the war brought to the port cities. Despite the hardships of a wartime economy, Whitney found a way to use the war itself as an opportunity for merchandising: he started as an army sutler, selling the American soldiers alcohol, food, military supplies, and a variety of everyday articles as he traveled with the camp along Lake Champlain in New York.⁶ For a young man without family responsibilities, this was the ideal way to start selling, since he had a captive market, so to speak, not far from commercial centers. All N. K. needed was a wagon and a little money to get started.

The final showdown with the British, the battle of Plattsburgh Bay, took place on Lake Champlain. N. K.'s ten-year-old brother, Samuel, was apparently helping him with the selling and recalled watching ten thousand British soldiers move south from Montreal, presumably planning to restore northern New York and New England to the British empire. In this last battle, the heavily outnumbered Americans defeated the British. Somehow during that intense battle, Whitney lost all of his property "by the war."⁷ The ordeal was pivotal in his life as he sought to recoup his losses elsewhere.

N. K. tried to make a new start of suttling by following American troops across Lake Erie, where the army officially mustered out of service a large detachment in what would become Monroe, Michigan—a new little village formed after the war on the western edge of the lake. At that time, Michigan primarily had Native American settlements. After there were no more soldiers to buy his wares, N. K. Whitney pushed further west up Lake Huron, where he traded with the Native American communities along Lake Michigan in Green Bay and Milwaukee. Whitney traveled along the Great Lakes, transporting furs bought on the westernmost edge of the lakes east to Buffalo, New York. The ideal stopping point midway between Green



Locations Associated with N. K. Whitney's Travels and Homes, 1814–1838

Bay and Buffalo was Monroe. Whitney's time in Monroe would prove to be a turning point in his life due to his association with a Monroe merchant named Sidney Gilbert, a man who would become Whitney's business partner and friend.

Sidney Gilbert. Shortly after the war, Algernon Sidney Gilbert made his way west to Monroe and set up a small store catering to settlers there.⁸ Sidney, as he was known to his friends, hailed originally from Connecticut, where his prominent extended family in New Haven included several well-to-do merchants. Gilbert's Monroe store was situated on the edge of town, just a few dozen feet from the harbor and easily accessible to merchants going and coming along Lake Erie.⁹ He apparently lived in part of his store while he traded out of another part with Indians, veterans of the recent war, and young settlers. Both Gilbert and Whitney needed to travel to New York on business trips, and Sidney Gilbert may have accompanied Whitney from time to time, thus beginning a lifelong friendship.

Ann Smith. A second turning point was Whitney's meeting Elizabeth Ann Smith, an eighteen-year-old who had settled in remote Kirtland, Ohio, only a few months before N. K. met her (fig. 2). Ann described their meeting and courtship:

In his travels to and from New York he passed through the country where we resided, and "we met by chance." became attached to each other, and my aunt granting her full approval, we were married after a courtship of reasonable length, as in those days girls were not allowed to marry without the lover paying court for a certain length of time.¹⁰

Ann's family was from Connecticut, and Ann was the oldest child.¹¹ After encountering undisclosed problems with her mother, she left home and traveled to Ohio with her father's sister Sarah Smith, who was determined



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FIG. 2. Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney, ca. 1876, detail of photograph taken by Charles R. Savage about six years before Ann's death. Although she gave more attention to household and family concerns than to their store, Ann was influential in the Latter-day Saint community in her own right. As a counselor to Emma Smith in the Nauvoo Female Relief Society organization and in other ways in Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Utah, she contributed to the Restoration.

to make her own way on the frontier. These two single women with a strong sense of self-reliance traveled to Ohio alone. Aunt Sarah purchased land in the Connecticut Western Reserve, a large strip of land in north-eastern Ohio of which Kirtland was part of. “It was then a new country, comparatively, and to undertake so long a journey was almost as remarkable then as to go round the world would be now [in 1878],” Ann recalled.¹² Shortly after their journey, Ann’s uncle Elijah Smith traveled with his family to join them in Kirtland. Although her father had written that he hoped to come, Ann’s mother would never consent to move.¹³ (Years later, her father traveled alone to Kirtland for baptism as a Latter-day Saint.)

Ann “received in early life the most judicious training and was carefully educated,” which may have contributed to her strong spirit.¹⁴ A young woman able to make her own way on the frontier was the perfect marriage partner for an ambitious young man such as N. K. Whitney. Ann and N. K.’s “courtship of reasonable length,” as she called it, lasted three years, enough time for the couple to get to know each other quite well. Part of the three years of courting included Whitney’s moving to Ohio in fall 1819, apparently convincing his friend Gilbert to come along, too.¹⁵

Saved by a Young Girl

Although N. K. moved to Ohio in order to court Ann, the Whitney family also believed he left the fringes of the frontier because of its rough nature. Part of the job of an army sutler was to sell alcohol to soldiers, and Whitney continued this practice by selling alcohol, along with the other things he traded, to Native Americans. One of his customers was addicted to alcohol, and Whitney, placing the interests of his customer above his own financial interests, refused to sell him any more. The angry man threatened Whitney’s life; N. K. was saved by a young Native American girl who grabbed onto the attacker and held him until Whitney escaped. He and Ann later named one of their daughters Moudalina after that girl.

Information taken from Orson F. Whitney, “Newel Kimball Whitney,” in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, comp. Andrew Jensen, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History, 1901–36), 1:222.

Sidney Gilbert's Store in Mentor, Ohio

In September 1819—a month before Whitney first showed up in Ohio and a year before Gilbert bought his Mentor property—when Sidney Gilbert convinced New York financiers William L. Vandervoort and John S. Van Winkle to lend him \$1,091.49, almost three year's wages for a typical laborer. Gilbert created a promissory note on September 17, agreeing to repay the loan with interest in six months. Since N. K. Whitney first appeared in the Painesville, Ohio, records right after Gilbert took out the loan, and Gilbert and Whitney moved together to Ohio, Gilbert probably used the money in some way connected to their move. When his loan fell due on March 17, 1820, Gilbert still owed more than a thousand dollars on the note.¹⁶

On June 10, 1820, Gilbert sold his property in Monroe, Michigan, for \$765 to Lewis Downs.¹⁷ Although Gilbert's sale of his Michigan property in the face of an unpaid loan seems reasonable from a business perspective, he did not immediately receive money for it, nor did he transfer title to his property over to his creditors. Instead, he continued to try to earn his way out of debt.

On October 28, 1820, a year after moving to Ohio, Sidney Gilbert purchased property in Mentor, on the edge of Painesville and just a few miles north of Ann Smith's Kirtland home.¹⁸ James Olds charged him eighty dollars for that acre situated on Ridge Road just a few rods from Olds's tavern.¹⁹ The property was in a good location. Olds's tavern was worth \$1,000, the most expensive building in the county.²⁰ A young, ambitious merchant could easily make big plans living by a big neighbor.

Gilbert immediately contracted to build a five-hundred-dollar store—a store that was worth three to four times the typical operation in the state. Five hundred dollars would typically buy close to 2,500 square feet of floor space. That much space would have made it a massive frontier store. Whitney worked in the store with him.²¹ Whitney family tradition recalls that while Gilbert ran his operation, he took Whitney “into his store as clerk and gave him some knowledge of book-keeping.”²² Evidently that was a skill Whitney had not properly learned while working with the army and on the frontier. Later documents confirm that Gilbert had superior penmanship and spelling abilities.²³ Sidney Gilbert, however, ran into a succession of bad luck with the store.

On November 15, 1820, a few weeks after the land was purchased and the store was already under construction, Lewis Downs defaulted on Gilbert's property in Michigan and gave him a letter providing Gilbert with power of attorney over the land.²⁴ Certainly Sidney Gilbert had not

planned on Downs defaulting and therefore had not provided adequately for the possibility. When the New York mortgage company caught up with him and pressed for payment, Gilbert had no way of paying the debt.

On April 2, 1821, Sidney Gilbert was forced to deed his Mentor property over to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage in lieu of debt payment. He transferred the property for \$1,000 in debt—far above the \$19 valuation for the acre of land and \$500 tax valuation for the store. No mention was made of merchandise in the property transaction, and the mortgage company apparently never entirely recouped its losses. The lenders, more interested in their money than in the Mentor property, offered Gilbert an extension. They stipulated: “A. S. Gilbert, his heirs executors or administrators shall well and truly pay the aforesaid note with the interest thereon, one half in four months and the remainder in one year from this date.”²⁵ This mortgage default gave Gilbert until August 1821 to come up with \$500 and until April 1822 to have the whole \$1,000; if Gilbert met this requirement, then the property would be returned to him. He likely felt it was a hopeless cause from the start because he never bothered paying taxes on the property.²⁶

N. K. Whitney signed the mortgage default as a witness, but the document did not directly involve him in the land transaction. Whitney was probably not interested in using his resources to redeem \$519 worth of property for \$1,000. The property records for the Mentor store mention only Gilbert’s name.²⁷ Whitney may have owned some of the merchandise in the store, but Gilbert was able to transfer title to the entire store as sole owner to his creditors for unpaid debts. Gilbert was also embroiled in other money disputes, and he likely felt he would never recover. Whitney was separate enough financially from Gilbert that he was not listed in lawsuits when angry neighbors sued Gilbert in 1821 for a small debt and when still others sued the next spring for several hundred dollars. Lawsuits continued mounting as Gilbert spent the next several years in appeals while his numerous creditors sought their money.²⁸ Whitney separated himself from Gilbert and moved to Kirtland.

Even after calling in Gilbert’s loan in 1821, the former creditors continued to rent the Mentor property out to him until 1825. On September 29, 1823, Sidney Gilbert married Elizabeth van Benthuyzen, a New York-born woman living in the neighboring town of Chagrin.²⁹ They lived in the Mentor store (many store owners of the time lived in their stores); later advertisements described it as a “dwelling house.”³⁰ Gilbert had not been able to repay his loan by the deadline stipulated in the 1821 mortgage default. However, he was finally able to straighten out his business dealings with the legal transfer, on January 29, 1824, of his store and property to Van-

dervoort and Van Winkle. By the time of the transfer, Gilbert was in debt to the lenders for about \$293.51 in interest on top of the \$1,091.49 principle, a total of \$1,385. Since the mortgagers took property valued a little over \$500 in exchange for the debt, they lost money on the deal.³¹

In April 1825, Gilbert was still at the Mentor store when the mortgage company decided to end their relationship. The New York mortgagers ran an advertisement through Samuel Cowls, their agent in Cleveland, offering to either sell or rent the property.³² But the mortgage company could not sell the property, and Vandervoort and Van Winkle continued to pay taxes on the store for several years. However, they must have found another renter.

Lewis Downs's default on the Monroe, Michigan, property may have contributed to Gilbert's financial problems because it tied up his flow of money, but Gilbert did not attempt to resolve the issue until after the New York mortgagers and other debtors were no longer interested in him. This delay was probably because there was not enough value in the Michigan property to cover all his debts. On May 6, 1824, an advertisement appeared in the *Painesville Telegraph* in which Gilbert sought to exchange his Monroe, Michigan, store and property "for property in this state."³³ But he did not find any suitable offers for Ohio property through the paper. For some reason, Gilbert was not interested in returning to Michigan. He stayed in Ohio.

In May 1825, Gilbert finally made arrangements to sell his Monroe store and received a \$225 initial payment from George Alford on the day of the sale. This money would have kept Gilbert and his wife going for a while, as well as discouraging Alford from defaulting on the agreement. On January 20, 1826, Gilbert completed the sale of land and received an additional \$400.³⁴ Despite the sale, at the close of 1826, when the Gilberts moved from Mentor, Ohio, to Kirtland, they had only a single steer listed in the property tax records.³⁵ However, Gilbert was finally free of his debts and legal entanglements and could join his friend N. K. Whitney in a new effort at partnership.

N. K. WHITNEY'S BUSINESS VENTURES IN KIRTLAND, OHIO

Whitney did not have the same financial troubles as did his friend Gilbert. Ann Whitney later commented that among their friends "it came to be remarked that nothing of my husband's ever got lost on the lake, and no product of his exportation was ever low in the market, always ready sales and fair prices."³⁶ Whitney did lose products on the lake at least once, but his business experiences in Kirtland were markedly different from those of his friend in Mentor.

After Whitney separated from Gilbert in Mentor in 1821, N. K. moved to Kirtland to more effectively court Ann Smith. In 1821 or 1822, N. K. Whitney set up his first Kirtland store in a little log cabin on the property of Elijah Smith, Ann's uncle, on the north end of Kirtland Flats (the name used for the area of land situated in a low, swampy area where the east branch of the Chagrin River made a wide, horseshoe bend on the north end of Kirtland township).³⁷ Whitney operated a successful business. Ann recalled of these early years, "He accumulated property faster than most of his companions and associates. Indeed, he became proverbial as being lucky in all his undertakings."³⁸

Whitney had not only luck but also a great deal of skill. He was bright and was able to quickly perceive traffic patterns in town. He knew that as more people passed his store or had business near his store he was likely to

The Perils of Traveling in Early Kirtland

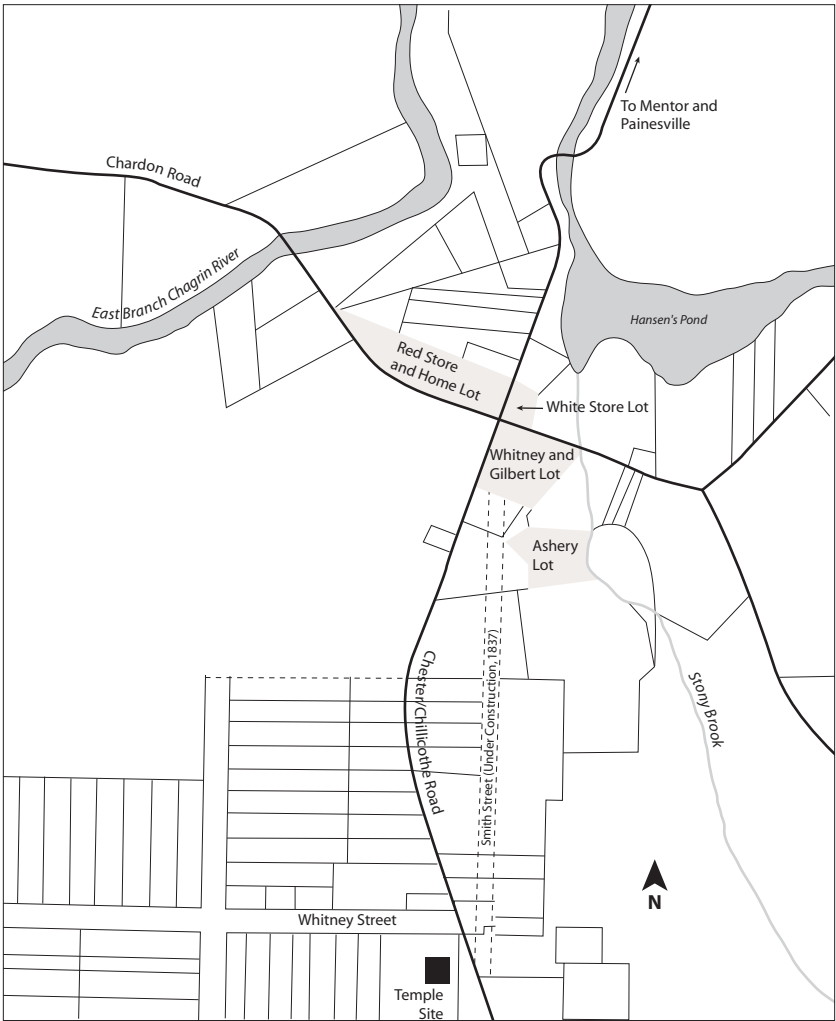
North of the Whitney home, the Chester Road ascended in a steep incline toward the town of Mentor. An unidentified resident of Kirtland described an incident on that stretch of road:

That hill with its sharp angle about one-third of the way down it, was a terror to all travelers. A well loaded wagon could not be got safely up or down it. . . . A Mr. Buell, . . . in going down it was unable to make the sharp turn and he, his horse, sleigh and load went to the bottom of the gully, and strange to say neither man nor beast was killed. ("Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections of His First Fourth of July," *Willoughby Independent*, 1902, in *Haden Scrapbook*, n.d., 13, Lake County Historical Society, Mentor, Ohio)

James A Rollins, Sidney Gilbert's nephew, recalled another incident on the steep hill, this one taking place when Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland:

As early as February, 1831, I first met Joseph Smith in my Uncle Sidney Gilbert's house. This was the first day he arrived in Kirtland, and while he was in the house conversing with my uncle and aunt, I being at the front gate, saw a wagon turn over as it was coming down the slippery hill, and heard a woman and 2 or 3 children screaming. This was Joseph's family. I ran in and told Joseph and Uncle about it, and Joseph ran to assist them without his hat . . . none of them were hurt. (James H. Rollins, *A Life Sketch of James Henry Rollins*, 1898, 2, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City)

do more business. One of the busiest spots in all of northeastern Ohio (known also as the Western Reserve) was at the crossroads of Chardon and Chester Roads. The major road was Chester. This road went to the nearby town of Chester (just south of Kirtland) but continued all the way to Chillicothe in western Ohio, the location of the state capitol at that time. Over time this thoroughfare became known as Chillicothe Road, the most-used road for immigrant traffic and the second oldest road in the region.



N. K. Whitney's and N. K. Whitney and Company's Properties
in Kirtland, Ohio

Chardon Road, the oldest road in the region, was also a major funnel for traffic. The road ended in Cleveland, but its major side road continued on to Chardon, passing through the Kirtland Flats, where it intersected with Chillicothe Road. This intersection of roads meant that everyone—every local Indian, immigrant, settler, drifter, frontiersman, educator, former soldier, itinerant preacher, state politician, runaway slave, judge, and peddler—traveling through northern Ohio went through the Kirtland Flats.

That busiest of intersections was owned entirely by Peter French, a man who helped survey the region and was the earliest settler in the area.³⁹ On the northwest corner, French had a huge apple orchard that “covered about all the land he owned on that corner.”⁴⁰ Whitney saw the business potential for this intersection and the marketing prospects for his wares to both travelers and locals, and on June 1, 1822, Whitney purchased Peter French’s large apple orchard.⁴¹

N. K. Whitney’s Red Store

On this lot purchased from French, N. K. built what his family called their “Red Store”—possibly as early as 1822 when he bought the land, but clearly by 1824. There was probably a small residential area in the store where the Whitneys lived. This would explain why a home was not taxed on the property then.⁴² The small twenty-by-forty-foot store was a story and a half of sawn lumber with a central chimney.⁴³ There were two rooms upstairs, but the store portion was likely the eight hundred square feet on the main level. A comparison between Whitney’s Red Store and Gilbert’s Mentor store highlights a pattern that remained consistent through the years: N. K. Whitney built small while his friend Sidney Gilbert built large.

N. K. Whitney left most of the apple trees on the lot. He maintained the orchard and planted red currant bushes from which he and Ann later made wine for their family and for Latter-day Saint worship services.⁴⁴ He also built a barn on the acre, perhaps to store feed or other farm products customers used as payment.

N. K. Whitney’s Ashery Business

On September 5, 1822, Whitney purchased another section of land from Peter French a few hundred yards southeast of his first piece of property. This new purchase was a small lot (just over a half acre) nestled against Stony Brook, the little waterway that emptied into the east branch of the Chagrin River.⁴⁵ He purchased this lot to begin an ashery. Frontier settlers could bring wood to an ashery such as N. K.’s and receive money or credit. N. K. would burn the wood and run water through the ashes, creating

A Kirtland Fourth of July

Sometime after Whitney purchased Peter French's apple orchard lot (where N. K. would build his Red Store), the citizens of Kirtland, Ohio, decided to celebrate July 4 in fitting fashion. Townsfolk set up a stand on the Whitney lot in the shade of the apple trees. They primarily honored the older Revolutionary War soldiers, but certainly some comments were made about participants in the recent war with Britain. A fife and two drums provided music for the procession, after which the town held a prayer, and someone read the Declaration of Independence. Much oration followed, and Kirtland's citizens finished up with a dinner. "Good whisky was plenty and cheap. Everybody then drank a little, but few to excess."

This information comes from Christopher Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* (Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing, 1893), 13, 28. Crary recalled that the oration took place in Peter French's new barn. The unidentified author of an undated early newspaper article ("Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections," 13) remembered that the July 4th celebration took place "about the year 1825" but wasn't certain of the exact year. The writer recalled that if N. K. Whitney "was not then on the north-west corner of the flats he moved there shortly afterwards." This description connects the celebration to the approximate time of Whitney's move to the intersection and fits with Crary's recollection of 1821 or 1822 being the year. N. K. Whitney would either purchase this lot the following year or had purchased it the month before this celebration took place.

potash, which was used in making glass, cleaning wool, and other industrial processes. Settlers could also trade ashes from their household stoves or from the burned vegetation of cleared fields. Whitney could sell his potash to local companies and to industries in the East and in Great Britain—a venture made easier when the Erie Canal was completed in 1825.

For this operation, Whitney needed a ready supply of water. When he purchased the land, Whitney also bought rights to a spring up on the hill south of his property and "the privilege of conveying said water on a direct line to any part of the lot of ground."⁴⁶ French was using some of the water for his distillery, but the remaining water was sold to Whitney. French used "pump logs" to bring water down the hill to his distillery, and Whitney could have taken water from the same system if he chose to do so.⁴⁷ Pump logs today would be recognized as wooden piping or troughs. Remnants of

pipings uncovered at the entrance of the Whitney spring were open sawn timbers with a U-groove cut in the top, suggesting a trough-like system to bring water down from the hill. Ashery manuals from the time suggested that river and rain water were preferable to well or spring water because the authors believed river and rain water contained fewer minerals. But Whitney's spring had good pure water, and getting the water easily to the ashery was an important consideration.

Although water was the essential element in an ashery operation, other facilities played a role, too. "How to" manuals of the day and archeology of New England operations suggest that large frame buildings were frequently used as part of American ashery operations long before the 1820s, but N. K. started out with a central structure of rough-hewn logs or poles.⁴⁸

During these early years, Whitney played an important role in a cash-scarce economy. His ashery was essential to the entire community's well-being, as individuals worked through him to turn their resources into something useful. Christopher Crary, who lived several miles away in the south end of Kirtland Township, recalled how he worked out one of those early exchanges:

Took an old axe pole to Chatfield's blacksmith shop and had it jumped. The charge was only 75 cents, as I found the steel. I paid him at N. K. Whitney's store, and paid Whitney with wood at his ashery. It took two of us a day to grind the axe, and when finished it had cost me about seven days' work.⁴⁹

The combination of ashery operation and merchandising was successful enough that N. K. Whitney did well, and his account book suggests that New York financiers paid him high prices for his products.⁵⁰ He also had local demand for the potash if he chose not to travel. Kirtland's carding operation used potash for processing wool, and in Painesville felt makers such as the hatter Edward Partridge paid 37.5¢ a pound per two-hundred-pound bundle of clean wool.⁵¹

The citizens of South Kirtland had put up their own ashery a few years before at Peck's Corners, several miles south of Whitney's operation. Mr. Latimer, who operated the ashery, paid four cents a bushel for field ashes and seven cents a bushel for hearth ashes, which was a penny less for each than the going rate in nearby towns.⁵² Peck's Corners did not have the heavy traffic flow that Kirtland Flats did, and citizens in South Kirtland, such as Christopher Crary, found themselves doing business with the ashery up north because they wanted goods from Whitney's store. The ashery down south apparently went out of business soon after Whitney began his operation, and Whitney quickly looked at expansion.

N. K. Whitney purchased fifteen hundredths of an acre just south of his ashery in June 1824, increasing the land to eighty hundredths of an acre, suggesting that his ashery business was doing well enough to expand. The 1826 tax records for Kirtland indicate that his firm had \$2,500 worth of merchandise on hand.⁵³ Although the largest store in the county was in nearby Painesville with \$4,500 worth of merchandise, Whitney's was still a substantial operation and one of a small group of good-sized stores in the region.

N. K.'s Family Life in Kirtland

Within two months of purchasing the ashery lot, N. K. Whitney married Ann Smith. On November 6, 1822, the *Painesville Telegraph* announced the marriage of "Newal [sic] K. Whitney and Ann Smith" in one of the paper's rare uses of Whitney's first name.⁵⁴ N. K. and Ann Whitney quietly continued to operate out of their Red Store and to run a small ashery operation. Directly across the street from the Red Store, travelers lodged at French's log cabin inn and would have frequently bought goods at the N. K. Whitney store before they continued on their journey.

Locals could sell goods—ashes, as mentioned above, or wheat, rye, and other items—to Whitney for cash or store credit. By June 1825, he was advertising that he "earnestly" urged those who owed him debts to pay. Whitney concluded these notices with the signature "N. K. Whitney," not mentioning at that time a "company" or any other individual, indicating, as later records confirm, that at this early date he was operating as an independent businessman. The notice also announced that Whitney was purchasing salts of lye, confirming that his ashery operation was fully functional.⁵⁵

Around the time Whitney bought additional property for his ashery, the Whitneys also built a modest home just west of and behind the Red Store (fig. 3). This new house likely expanded merchandising space in the Red Store, as space formerly used for living quarters could now be used for saleable goods. The Whitney home was 28½' x 25½' with a 20' x 12' summer kitchen attached on the back. It had a single bedroom on the main floor, where Ann's Aunt Sarah frequently stayed, and an open half story upstairs, where N. K. and Ann slept with their children.⁵⁶ They painted their small frame house and placed a well-made fence around each of their properties.

N. K. Whitney and Company

In fall 1825, just weeks before the opening of the Erie Canal, Newel K. Whitney traveled to New York on a buying trip. Whitney completed his



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FIG. 3. The restored Whitney home, 2002. After careful research, a team of historians, architects, archaeologists, and curators restored the N. K. Whitney and Ann Whitney home to appear as it did when it was first built around 1824. When the family entertained guests in their home, guests slept in a small bedroom on the main level while the entire family slept upstairs in the single room.

buying two days before the canal opened and returned home on one of America's most significant transportation systems.⁵⁷ The opening of the Erie Canal marked the start of a major expansion of Whitney's economic activities in Kirtland. The canal transformed the transportation of goods from the East Coast to Ohio and had a major impact on the prices Whitney would pay and could charge. The local paper observed:

In 1819 the transportation of goods from the city of New-York to this place, was *four dollars twenty five* cents per hundred: now we pay *one dollar and thirty seven* cents per hundred—a distance of six hundred miles. In 1820 we paid \$3 per hundred from this place to Pittsburgh—now eighty cents.⁵⁸

As he would do often, rather than keep an opportunity to himself, N. K. shared his good fortune with others. He invited Sidney Gilbert to help him capitalize on this new opportunity, and, in the last weeks of 1826, N. K. Whitney and Company was born.

N. K. Whitney's White Store. In April 1826, six months after Whitney's trip on the Erie Canal and almost nine months before N. K. Whitney and Company was organized, Whitney paid \$100 for Peter French's quarter-acre

N. K. Whitney's 1825 Purchasing Trip to New York

N. K. Whitney could have made the nine and a half miles from his house to the stagecoach landing in Painesville, Ohio, in less than two hours on September 20, 1825. Early that Tuesday morning, he closed up his small, red, frame store and parted from Ann, his wife of almost three years, their two-year-old son Horace, and their six-month-old baby, Sarah Ann. To get to Painesville from his home, Whitney would first head up Chester Road's steep incline out of Kirtland's flatlands. The road passed the Morley farm near the site of his earlier log store, and he could not go by the homes of his wife's family and their friends without hallooing a greeting on the way. As Whitney passed by the farm, the road led him into Ohio's hills to Ridge Road on his way northeast. On Ridge Road, inside Mentor Township boundaries, Whitney would have passed by Gilbert's store, which Gilbert was still renting from his creditors.

Painesville was not the young merchant's final destination—his destination was east. At 1:00 P.M., travelers, luggage, and stage bounced out of town heading east for Buffalo, New York, through the thick forests of a sparsely settled region. The travelers made fast progress on roads that had been significantly improved since N. K.'s first trips to Buffalo. By nightfall, Whitney was in Pennsylvania; Thursday morning he pulled into Buffalo. The trip, including incidentals along the road, cost Whitney \$3.25, as he traveled comfortably to a place he had been many times before. He paid an additional \$5.88 to stay ten days at a landing house in Buffalo.

When Whitney arrived in Buffalo, the last locks of the Erie Canal looked almost finished. N. K. had been to this town many times before when he worked as an Army sutler and fur trader. During these visits, the town was home to fewer than fifteen hundred people, but now there were several thousand people in Buffalo, and entrepreneurs were flocking to the young city in droves. The city smelled of fish and cattle as goods went through on their way to Eastern markets. Soot from the constant arrival of steamboats combined with the product of local chimneys settled over buildings packed in narrow streets.

Two days after he arrived, Whitney visited R. W. Haskins's bookstore in the heart of Buffalo and paid thirty cents for a small ledger to write down all the details and expenses of his trip. He wrote boldly in

the front cover, "N. K. Whitney Book Sept 25, 1825." After a few days in Buffalo, Whitney took another stage heading east. His route went along the canal toward Rochester, where he could inspect the canal more closely. The stage route curved down the Seneca Turnpike, heading south and just missing Palmyra and Manchester on his way south toward Auburn. After spending time in Auburn, he moved on to "York," where he finished up his business.

Although in some ways this was a routine trip much like businessmen from Ohio frequently took, this time there was a significant difference. The trip was essential preparation for a new, larger store he would build in the spring. Along with selling 94 barrels of "ash" (potash from his ashery) for well over a thousand dollars, Whitney sold other goods, more than covering all the expenses and purchases of his trip. Whitney also purchased supplies from a number of firms to ship back to Ohio. Among his listed expenses, he included some items purchased for his friend Sidney Gilbert. He also made a vague reference to the payment of some of the last of Gilbert's debt obligations: "To cash, paid for A. S. Gilbert \$400 of my own money . . . to consil [cancel] his note for Boon + Brickery."

Whitney moved on to New York City, where his last dated entry was for October 23, 1825, two days before the Erie Canal officially opened. The canal was clearly at the heart of all Whitney's new business plans. He had every opportunity to check out its system of locks and barges and talk with those intimately involved with its operation. With the canal nearing completion, Whitney now had water access through New York State, across Lake Erie, and all the way to Fairport Harbor, immediately north of Painesville. He made careful preparations, purchasing merchandise shortly before the big opening. Arriving back in Ohio just in time to miss the Great Lakes' destructive gales of November, N. K. Whitney was probably one of the first to ship goods along the newly completed canal.

Information taken from Whitney's ledger, catalogued as Account Book in the Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.



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FIG. 4. N. K. Whitney & Co. Store, ca. 1910, photographer unknown. Built by N. K. Whitney shortly before Sidney Gilbert came to Kirtland to work as his partner, this store was the site of many significant events in early Church history. The front porch was added after the Whitney family sold the property; archaeology confirms that the original stoop was on the left side of the front of the building.

lot of land at the northeast corner of the intersection across the street from Whitney's home.⁵⁹ This land was also at the intersection between the major roads in town and contained a "double log cabin" where Peter French and his family had lived and operated their first hotel.⁶⁰ Within a year, the lot jumped in value to \$338, as Whitney quickly removed the cabin and built a \$300 store on the site.⁶¹ This building, a little over 1,500 square feet and significantly smaller than Gilbert's Mentor store, would become known by the Whitney family as the "White Store"⁶² (fig. 4).

Samuel Whitney, N. K.'s brother, recalled going to Kirtland in 1826.⁶³ Since he frequently helped N. K. maintain his properties over the years, Samuel may have come to Kirtland to help build the store and at the very least probably hoped to be involved in the expansion of his brother's enterprise.

N. K. had a brief setback caused by the famed November gales on Lake Erie. On November 17, 1826, "a blow" on Lake Erie "probably cleared every floating thing from its surface," including the *Morning Star*, a ship with a large cargo of merchandise forced to return to Buffalo harbor after losing her main mast. The *Morning Star* also lost a small boat from her deck and

a cask of goods belonging to “Mr. N. K. Whitney, of Kirtland.”⁶⁴ A few months later, right after construction was completed on the White Store, Sidney Gilbert first appeared in Kirtland records and the name N. K. Whitney and Company first appeared in the tax records.⁶⁵

Whitney and Gilbert’s Partnership. In the last weeks of 1826 or the first weeks of 1827, Sidney Gilbert arrived in Kirtland to work in partnership with N. K. Whitney. On December 15, 1826, N. K. again published a request that all debts be paid to him by January 1.⁶⁶ N. K. apparently targeted that date for the beginning of a new enterprise with Sidney Gilbert. In anticipation of this new beginning, the firm published a request on December 29 that payments be made to store clerk Orson Hyde at “N. K. Whitney & Co.”⁶⁷ The use of that name was the first reference to the joint business efforts of the new enterprise in Kirtland. In surviving business papers from the company, a “List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W. and Co.” begins with a note dated February 8, 1827—suggesting that the two had begun their partnership by the first week in February.⁶⁸

However, the property remained in N. K. Whitney’s name, and even after the firm changed names, when land records mention the store in boundary descriptions or in other contexts, it was still consistently described as the “Whitney store”⁶⁹—suggesting that the “and Company” existed on paper but did not play a significant role in the minds of Kirtland’s residents, who were already accustomed to thinking of the store as Whitney’s. Yet a merger had clearly occurred because the \$2,500 in merchandise that had appeared the year before under the name of N. K. Whitney was now listed as company property in tax records, along with a single horse. This relationship continued for several years—Whitney was taxed on land, buildings, and personal property; Gilbert was never taxed on land apart from the company land but was occasionally taxed on personal property.⁷⁰

When the Gilbert family arrived in Kirtland, just as the White Store went into operation, they probably moved directly into the Red Store, which became a residence.⁷¹ Gilbert’s home was on the Whitney property facing east, suggesting that he and his family lived in the Red Store on the corner.⁷² The Gilberts remained in the Red Store until they moved to Missouri in fall 1831, after which the Red Store became a residence for others.⁷³ It lost its identity as a store after it became a residence, and when it was returned to Whitney by commandment, it was included with “the houses and lot where he now resides” (D&C 104:39).

In 1828 the Gilberts brought Elizabeth’s widowed sister and her three children to Kirtland. Their husband and father, John Rollins, had drowned seven years before; the delay in the arrival of this family suggests that the

Gilbert couple was finally becoming somewhat comfortable financially after years of struggle and could now help the Rollins children. James, Mary Elizabeth, and Caroline Rollins all worked hard for their new family. James recalled doing chores for both his uncle and N. K. Whitney, and, when he was “old enough,” he began working in the store as a clerk.⁷⁴

However, the hoped-for expanded success of the new partnership did not immediately materialize. The store could not provide income to support everyone, which increased dependence on the ashery. Orson Hyde, a store clerk who had previously worked in the Red Store “for a year or two,” returned to the business right at the expansion “under moderate wages.” Hyde was one of those moved to the ashery: “In 1827, business being rather slack in the store, I went to work for the same parties, making pot and pearl ashes.”⁷⁵

Ashery Expansion. The increased number of people depending on N. K. Whitney for support combined with the sluggish expansion of the store business put heavy pressure on the ashery to help take up the slack. In 1828, Whitney and Gilbert expanded the ashery. Although Whitney retained ownership of the ashery property and apparently provided capital for the endeavor, Gilbert evidently had a project management or book-keeping role, since he oversaw the purchase of materials. On May 14, Gilbert hired John Burk (who operated the local sawmill) to saw “2747 feet of w[hite] w[alnut]” and “1188 feet of oak 4-4.”⁷⁶ Apparently, this lumber was used to expand the housing for the ashery. Along with Burk, Reynolds Cahoon was hired to place twenty cords of stone for a foundation wall approximately two and a half feet wide and more than six feet high.⁷⁷ The ashery property jumped in valuation from \$10 to \$310 from 1828 to 1829, confirming the ashery operation was greatly expanded in summer 1828.⁷⁸

Building the new ashery took a massive investment. The frame building was sixty feet long and approximately twenty feet wide.⁷⁹ The construction included a small office addition on the west side of the main ashery building. To lay in the building would have required extensive excavation. Not only did Reynolds Cahoon dig foundation trenches, but, immediately south of the ashery, workers dug a large pit area about thirty feet in diameter and more than five feet deep in the center. Perhaps this ash pit stored leached ashes until farmers could pick them up for broadcasting on their fields. Immediately south of the pit was a large area of paved brick where workers could conveniently walk without worrying about water and mud. This brick may have served as a burn area both before and after the operation of the larger ashery. Instruction manuals of the time suggest that wood left to dry for a year was “to be burned on an area formed of bricks.”⁸⁰ This area may also have been used for a time as a lumber kiln when the sawmill was constructed a dozen feet away.

The Whitney and Gilbert Lot. On March 5, 1829, “N. K. Whitney and Sidney Gilbert + Co.” purchased from Peter French the southeast corner lot at the intersection of Chillicothe and Chardon Roads across the street and directly south of the White Store.⁸¹ French had run a livery operation on this lot and built a barn on it as well. This was the only land the two men owned together. When Whitney later purchased one half of the lot from Gilbert’s widow, the record of sale indicated that Whitney and Gilbert were equal partners in this land.⁸² Although there is no concrete evidence how the land was used, it certainly was not left vacant. All the other Whitney properties were crowded with buildings, and N. K. Whitney and Company would not have invested scarce resources in an acre and then leave it fallow.

The Whitneys’ Religious and Community Involvement in Kirtland

The Gilberts’ move to Kirtland coincided with the beginning of important religious events that would change the futures of the Whitney and Gilbert families, as well as Kirtland itself. Sometime during 1827, “there was a Methodist camp meeting about six miles distant from Kirtland,” and a number of individuals joined the Methodists. What began at the camp meeting “spread much in Kirtland.”⁸³

The Campbellite Movement. In the Whitney family, Ann influenced her husband’s choice of religious denomination. Her own education while growing up downplayed the importance of religion, but she recalled, “I was naturally religious, and I expressed to my husband a wish that we should unite ourselves with one of the churches, after examining into their principles and deciding for ourselves.”⁸⁴ Sidney Rigdon, a local Reformed Baptist minister (or “Bishop”) in neighboring Mentor, began baptizing a number of Kirtland’s residents into this reformation movement, which sought to restore primitive Christianity. (Followers of this movement became popularly known as Campbellites. In later years, they called themselves Disciples of Christ.) These baptisms started in 1827 and peaked in the first half of 1828 when a number of Kirtland’s citizens joined the movement. By July 1828, the Campbellites’ religious publication noted, “Bishops Scott, Rigdon, and Bentley, in Ohio, within the last six months have immersed about eight hundred persons.”⁸⁵ “Sometime after their marriage,” N. K. and Ann Whitney joined with the Campbellite movement because its “principles seemed most in accordance with the Scriptures.”⁸⁶

The Whitneys were fervent in their attempt to live the principles of their newfound faith. One issue, however, continued to nag at them. The Campbellites baptized for the remission of sins and believed in the laying on of hands for the gifts of the Spirit but did not claim authority to confer

the Holy Ghost. Ann Whitney viewed the influence of the Holy Ghost as important, and the Campbellites' lack of authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost concerned her.⁸⁷ The importance of the Holy Ghost in Ann's life increased when, later in life, the gift of tongues and other gifts of the Spirit would play a central role in her experience as a Latter-day Saint.

N. K.'s Community Involvement. Gilbert's arrival in Kirtland seemed to free up more time for N. K. to become involved in community affairs. Although Gilbert's only involvement in local affairs was his appointment as an elector on October 9, 1827, Whitney became deeply involved. He served as an elector several times, was placed on the committee to reelect John Quincy Adams, and served in a variety of other local government functions as well, including inspector of fences for many years and a member of a committee that promoted "*Internal Improvements, and the protection of Home Manufactures*" in the region.⁸⁸ He also became heavily involved in the Grand River Bible Society, an auxiliary to the Connecticut Western Reserve Bible Society. He was responsible, with the Reverend Burbank and Deacon Holbrook, for the Kirtland District, where he was to determine "the number of families that have Bibles and Testaments, and also the number of families that are destitute."⁸⁹ It is not clear how or to what extent Whitney was involved in helping the destitute meet their needs, but he quickly rose to be one of many vice presidents of the Tract Society, organized from those involved in the Bible Society.⁹⁰ Sidney Rigdon was also part of this Bible Society.

The "Golden Bible" in Kirtland. Mary Rollins, Gilbert's niece, recalled that the townsfolk in Kirtland heard about a new religious book in New York. On September 22, 1829, exactly two years to the day after Joseph Smith received the golden plates, the *Painesville Telegraph* published an article under the heading "Golden Bible," announcing that someone in New York claimed to have seen the "spirit of the Almighty."⁹¹ It was sometime during this same period that Ann and N. K. had a singular experience while searching out the things of the Spirit with Sidney Rigdon's group, seeking for greater influence by the Holy Ghost in their lives. Ann recalled:

It was midnight—as my husband and I, in our house at Kirtland, were praying to the Father to be shown the way, the Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. It was as though we were out of doors. The house passed away from our vision. We were not conscious of anything but the presence of the Spirit and the cloud that was over us. We were wrapped in the cloud. A solemn awe pervaded us. We saw the cloud and felt the Spirit of the Lord. Then we heard a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming.' At this we marveled greatly, but from that moment we knew that the word of the Lord was coming to Kirtland.⁹²

Through this experience, the Whitneys understood that what they were learning from Sidney Rigdon was not all they were searching for and that there was additional information to come. However, there was no intimation that the Whitneys knew where to look for the “word of the Lord,” and they “continued in [the Campbellite] church, which was to us the nearest pattern to our Savior’s teachings.”⁹³

At the end of October 1830, just over a year after the “Golden Bible” article appeared in the local paper, Kirtland’s citizens were again confronted with news of the “golden bible” when four Latter-day Saint missionaries passed through Painesville on their way to Mentor. They brought additional information about that strange book. These missionaries stopped primarily to visit Sidney Rigdon, the spiritual mentor of one of their number, Parley P. Pratt. Pratt recalled, “We tarried in this region for some time, and devoted our time to the ministry, and visiting from house to house.”⁹⁴ The missionaries preached a sermon in nearby Euclid. Sidney Rigdon took the group around to his various congregations, which was probably how they were first introduced in Kirtland. Their teaching had a dramatic impact on the entire village. Pratt wrote that “meetings were convened in different neighborhoods, and multitudes came together soliciting our attendance; while thousands flocked about us daily.”⁹⁵

Isaac Morley was the first person in the area to embrace the doctrines that the missionaries preached. His example encouraged others to follow, including Diantha Morley Billings, the first woman to join the Church in Kirtland.⁹⁶ The missionaries slept at night at the Morley farm and preached in the surrounding area during the day, including reading sections from the Book of Mormon at the Methodist chapel on the hill by the cemetery south of the Whitney home. The Whitneys were apparently not among the first to hear from the missionaries but seemed to have heard news indirectly through their friends. Ann later wrote:

When I heard that these Elders were preaching without money, or remuneration of any kind, and more especially when I knew Bro. Morley had received them into his house and had united himself to their faith, and that they were opposed to all priestcraft, I felt an earnest desire to hear their principles proclaimed, and to judge for myself.⁹⁷

Ann believed that what she heard was true. She shared it with her husband, telling him she planned on being baptized into the new faith. N. K. asked her to wait until he had a chance to feel the same conviction, but Ann could not wait and was baptized a few days before her husband in November 1830.⁹⁸

The Gilbert family was also drawn into the Church at this time. Mary Rollins and her mother, Keziah, were among those baptized in October, while Sidney and Elizabeth Gilbert waited until spring 1831.

THE WHITNEYS AND THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

When the Whitney family joined their new faith on or near November 15, 1830,⁹⁹ they were among a large group of converts in the area; between November 15 and November 30, local Church membership grew from twenty or thirty members to about one hundred.¹⁰⁰ Apparently the Whitneys joined the Church without having read even part of the Book of Mormon. Although the missionaries arrived in Ohio “well supplied with the new bibles,”¹⁰¹ there clearly were not enough to go around for the thousands who were interested in their message. The *Painesville Telegraph* gave a very brief summary of the work because few had a copy available to read.¹⁰²

When the missionaries arrived that fall, cold weather was already on its way. This meant that Squire Sawyers’s orchard, where summer meetings were generally held, was no longer a suitable place to preach. In the winter, the congregation met “in school-houses and at residences”—including on the Whitney and Morley properties. Some of the first meetings of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio were held at the home of Selah Griffin on Chardon Road, a little east of the Whitney home. At least one of those earliest congregational meetings in Kirtland took place at the Whitney home.¹⁰³ The Whitneys also provided wine for the first sacrament and for many subsequent observances of that ordinance in Kirtland.¹⁰⁴

While the members were meeting in Kirtland, Joseph was preparing to join them there, following the commandment to gather to Ohio. He left with Emma for Ohio, but Joseph and the four men traveling with him stopped to preach along the way,¹⁰⁵ getting to Kirtland early in February. John Whitmer arrived in Kirtland about two weeks earlier, and the local newspaper announced then that Joseph was on his way, so the Whitneys were expecting him.¹⁰⁶

The Whitneys had been members for only a few months when they met the Prophet. Ann Whitney later recorded this important event:

Joseph Smith, with his wife, Emma, and a servant girl, came to Kirtland in a sleigh; they drove up in front of my husband’s store; Joseph jumped out and went in; he reached his hand across the counter to my husband, and called him by name. My husband, not thinking it was any one in whom he was interested, spoke, saying: “I could not call you by name as you have me.” He answered, “I am Joseph the Prophet; you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?” My husband brought them directly to our own house; we were more than glad to welcome them and share with them all the comforts and blessings we enjoyed.¹⁰⁷

Although the Whitneys were expecting the Prophet, they perhaps were not expecting his manner of presentation. Whitney's grandson later recalled that not only did the Prophet call him by name (something not entirely unexpected because Whitney's name was likely on a large sign out front), but he also followed it with the unusual phrase "thou art the man."¹⁰⁸ The only other record of Joseph's using this phrase was when he cited scripture. It was the same phrase Amulek used in the Book of Mormon when he met Alma, agreeing that he was "a holy prophet of God" and continuing, "Thou art the man whom an angel said in a vision: Thou shalt receive. Therefore, go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food . . . And it came to pass that the man received him into his house . . . and he brought forth bread and meat and set before Alma" (Alma 8: 20–21). Similarly, N. K. Whitney provided a home and food for Joseph and his family.¹⁰⁹

It is unclear exactly how many people Whitney took under his roof at this time; there may have been two servants with Emma and her children. Years later, Whitney family members recalled a young boy with a servant girl when the Smiths arrived in Kirtland.¹¹⁰ Since Emma had been very ill and had lain in bed for an entire month just before leaving for Ohio, some assistance from servant children was entirely warranted.

The Smiths stayed at the Whitney home for some weeks.¹¹¹ Ann "had then a babe in arms and two older children living."¹¹² The Whitney family of five did not leave much space in their small home for the Smiths. Little Orson Whitney was just under a year old when the Smiths arrived, while Sarah Ann Whitney was five, and Horace Whitney was seven. Aunt Sarah might also have been living in the home but was more likely living on her brother's property at the north end of Kirtland Flats at this time.¹¹³ Their Red Store was occupied by another family, and the White Store did not have the necessary modifications at the time to accommodate the group.

Joseph and Emma were put into the Whitneys' east room on the main level of the home, a nine-by-twelve-foot room just off the front entrance.¹¹⁴ At this time, Emma was between six and seven months pregnant with twins and would have been feeling awkward and exhausted, having just traveled about two hundred and thirty miles with all her worldly belongings. Since she had been in bed for a month before they left New York for Ohio, even the small Whitney room would have been a comforting respite. Gathering to Ohio was as inconvenient for those who arrived as for those who accommodated them.

Joseph and Emma Smith at the Whitney Home

The Smiths arrived in Kirtland on Friday, February 4,¹¹⁵ and must have taken at least a few days to get minimally unpacked and situated.

Since a wagon followed their sleigh, they might have brought some furniture as well as clothing and sacred papers, but there was no room in the Whitney home to store their things. Despite the inconvenience and crowded conditions, the Whitneys did all they could to make the Smiths comfortable during their stay. Joseph Smith reminisced that, while under the care of the Whitneys, his family “received every kindness and attention which could be expected, and especially from Sister Whitney.”¹¹⁶ Ann agreed: “Joseph and Emma were very dear to me, and with my own hands I ministered to them, feeling it a privilege and an honor to do so.”¹¹⁷

However, Joseph did not even have time to settle into the Whitney home before he began filling his role as leader of the new faith. On the day he arrived, Joseph met with the elders of the Church. He observed that “strange notions and false spirits” had crept in among the Lord’s people in Kirtland, a fact that prompted him to receive the first of many revelations in Ohio (introduction to section 41). The three critical issues presented in that revelation would have long-term ramifications for the Kirtland Saints. They were told that the elders of the Church should meet together “to agree upon my word” and “receive my law” (D&C 41:2, 3). The members were also commanded that their prophet, Joseph, “should have a house built, in which to live and translate” (D&C 41:7). The third important issue was the calling of Edward Partridge to be “ordained a bishop unto the church” (D&C 41:9). Although no one knew then how a bishop should fulfill his calling, the use of the word “bishop” would have suggested to Kirtland’s new Saints something similar to the Campbellite ministerial office they were familiar with.

By the next Wednesday, twelve elders met together, and portions of “the law” of the Church were revealed to the group as a whole as they discussed doctrine (D&C 42). Although it is generally believed that these early revelations were received at the Whitney home, the home was small, and there may have been more convenient places to meet with a group of men. However, at least some people came to meet with the Prophet in the Whitney home¹¹⁸ (fig. 5).

Experiences with Gifts of the Spirit

In late March or early April 1831, Elsa Johnson arrived in Kirtland. She came with a group of eight people from Portage County to ask the Prophet to heal her afflicted arm. Joseph invited the entourage or parts of it to stay overnight and meet him the next morning in the Whitney parlor, where he healed Elsa’s arm.¹¹⁹

Ann had a particular gift of speaking in tongues. Ann recalled that the Prophet promised her she would never lose the gift if she remained wise in

using it. According to a local minister, she used seer stones, also known as “peep stones”: “Mormon elders and women often searched the bed of the river for stones with holes caused by the sand washing out, to peep into. N. K. Whitney’s wife had one.”¹²⁰

After “several weeks” with the Whitneys, the Smiths moved onto the property of Isaac Morley.¹²¹ In obedience to commandment (D&C 41:7), a home was quickly built on the Morley property; the Smiths were living there by April 30 when Emma delivered her twins.¹²²

N. K. Whitney and Company and Whitney’s Role as Bishop

Edward Partridge was called as the first bishop in the restored Church. He served the Saints in Missouri with N. K. Whitney serving as his “agent” for Kirtland and for the congregations in the eastern part of the United States. On December 4, 1831, the Lord called Whitney to be bishop in Kirtland: “It is expedient in me for a Bishop to be appointed unto you, or of



FIG. 5. The Whitney home, Kirtland, Ohio, 1907, photographed by George Edward Anderson. The Whitney family always lived in a modest home while in Kirtland. This picture shows the home after the upper floor was raised from its original half story and the old Red Store was attached to the rear of the home in place of the smaller summer kitchen. The small room on the main level in the corner facing the viewer was where Joseph and Emma Smith stayed when they first arrived in Kirtland.

you, unto the Church in this part of the Lord's vineyard" (D&C 72:2). Whitney's grandson Orson F. Whitney later recalled:

The thought of assuming this important responsibility was almost more than he could bear. . . . [He] distrusted his ability, and deemed himself incapable of discharging the high and holy trust. In his perplexity he appealed to the Prophet:

"I cannot see a Bishop in myself, Brother Joseph; but if you say it's the Lord's will, I'll try."

"You need not take my word alone;" answered the Prophet, kindly, "Go and ask Father for yourself."¹²³

Whitney prayed in his bedroom for confirmation and "heard a voice from heaven: 'Thy strength is in me.'"¹²⁴ He then went to the Prophet and said he would accept the office. Ann Whitney recalled that Bishop Whitney "felt that it would require a vast amount of patience, of perseverance and of wisdom to magnify his calling."¹²⁵

Before Whitney's call, the office of bishop was largely undefined in revelation. Bishop Partridge had been working as a hatter and general entrepreneur in Painesville when he was asked "to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church" (D&C 41:9). In a subsequent revelation, members were instructed to impart of their "substance unto the poor" by laying it before the bishop and his counselors. Everyone would receive a stewardship by consecration, and the excess would be kept in a "storehouse" to administer to the poor and needy. Under Bishop Partridge's direction, the law of consecration and stewardship developed in Missouri.¹²⁶

Bishop Partridge's experiences could easily have established the pattern for subsequent bishops, but Whitney seemed unsure of the direction he should follow. Did the command for Partridge to "leave his merchandise" apply to all bishops, or was it specific instruction just for Partridge? When Whitney was ordained a bishop "he did not know at the time nor Joseph either what the position of a bishop was."¹²⁷ The Lord gave only this instruction when Whitney was called: "The duty of the bishop shall be made known by the commandments which have been given, and the voice of the conference" (D&C 72:7). This left how Bishop Whitney fulfilled his calling open to personal inspiration.

Whitney did receive specific direction on a few matters, particularly that he was to keep the Lord's storehouse in Kirtland and to administer to the wants of Church elders, "who shall pay for that which they receive, inasmuch as they have wherewith to pay" (D&C 72:11). Unlike Partridge, who had been commanded to leave his merchandise, Whitney understood

this instruction to mean that he would continue operating his store and charge for his merchandise where it seemed sensible. This situation set him up for problems with customers, such as the unsatisfied member who “said that Bro. Whitney was not fit for a Bishop and that he treated the Brethren who came into the Store with disrespect that he was overbearing and fain would walk on the necks of the Brethren &c.”¹²⁸ Another brother accused him of the same things. Although Bishop Whitney was exonerated, such accusations would naturally hamper his ability to operate his store while serving in a leadership position. Complicating matters further, the N. K. Whitney and Company store also began to operate as a “bishop’s store-house” where the poor could occasionally come for assistance, although there is no evidence such aid was given on more than a limited basis.¹²⁹

Sidney Gilbert and the Store in Missouri

After the Whitneys joined the Church, they remained fervent in living up to their beliefs. They were perhaps the most financially successful family in the entire town and had resources to continue fostering their nascent religious community. Since Whitney’s friend Sidney Gilbert was also part of the firm, Gilbert was also in a position to promote using the firm to help the Saints. He was not in a position to help directly, however. Judging from tax records, from 1830 on, Sidney Gilbert never had personal property in Kirtland. The amount of personal property Whitney owned, on the other hand, continued to increase.¹³⁰

The brief business relationship between Whitney and Gilbert in Kirtland changed dramatically with the arrival of Joseph Smith and the gathering of the Latter-day Saints to Kirtland. Gilbert left for Missouri in June 1831, after being commanded by the Lord to travel there with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon (D&C 53:5). Shortly after arriving there, he was instructed to “establish a store” primarily to “sell goods without fraud, that he may obtain money to buy lands for the good of the saints, and that he may obtain whatsoever things the disciples may need to plant them in their inheritance” (D&C 57:8). Thus it was clear that the merchants would play an important role in helping the Church. The significance of this Missouri store was reinforced in revelation when Gilbert returned briefly to Kirtland in the fall to pick up his family:¹³¹ “And now, verily I say that it is expedient in me that my servant Sidney Gilbert, after a few weeks, shall return upon his business, and to his agency in the land of Zion” (D&C 64:18). Obediently, Gilbert returned to Missouri quickly with his family.

While Whitney and Company operated in Kirtland, Gilbert, Whitney and Company purchased a store on a lot right at the prime intersection in

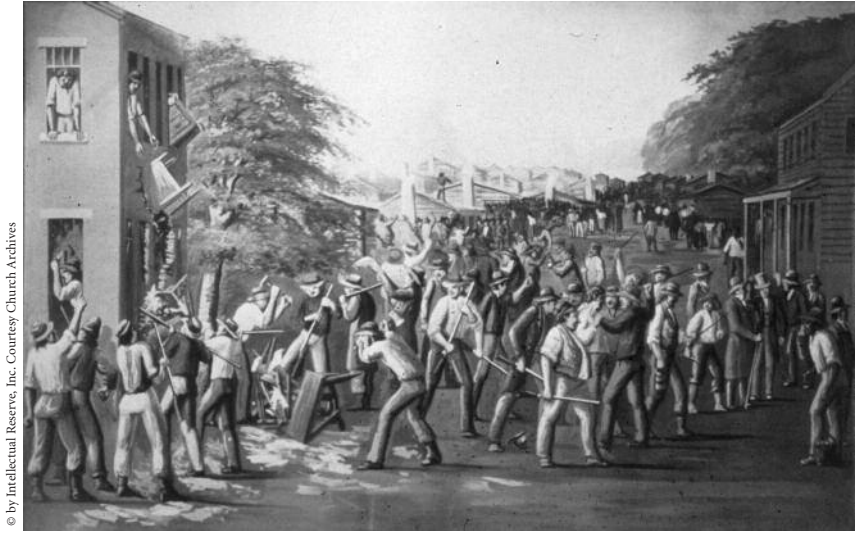
Independence, Missouri. This arrangement allowed Gilbert to move his family into a substantial home near his newly purchased brick store where he could operate the Gilbert and Whitney Missouri business interests. Gilbert's arm of the firm apparently relied heavily on the Kirtland enterprise.¹³²

N. K. Whitney had not gone to Missouri with Gilbert, so he would naturally have wondered what his role would be in the new store when the Prophet returned to Kirtland in August. The subsequent revelation on the subject was apparently the first hint that his store and the things in it were not entirely his own but to be shared freely under his own discretion with the Church. "Let my servant Newel K. Whitney retain *his* store, or in other words, *the* store, yet for a little season. Nevertheless, let him impart all the money which he can impart, to be sent up unto the land of Zion" (D&C 63:42–43, italics added).

By spring 1832, the value of the merchandise of N. K. Whitney and Company had dropped from \$2,500 to \$2,000—the first drop in value since Whitney started his operation in Kirtland¹³³—which seems to indicate that Whitney was sending support to Missouri. In 1832, Church members were also asked to contribute money to the Missouri store. Philo Dibble later recalled that he "was then called on for money to be placed in the hands of Brothers Whitney and Gilbert, who were going to New York to purchase goods to take up to Jackson County, and gave them three hundred dollars."¹³⁴

Despite the contributions of Whitney and others, however, the Missouri store continued to struggle. On December 10, 1832, about a year after the Missouri store was established, Gilbert wrote a letter to Church headquarters condemning some Church leaders. In response, they acknowledged that Sidney Gilbert "is doing much, and has a multitude of business on hand . . . let him do just as the Lord has commanded him, and then the Lord will open His coffers, and his wants will be liberally supplied. But if this uneasy, covetous disposition be cherished by him, the Lord will bring him to poverty, shame, and disgrace."¹³⁵

It is hard now to say which of the promised alternatives Gilbert acted on; however, the following July, unrest developed in Jackson County, during which the Missouri store encountered heavy opposition. Sidney Gilbert was among the leading elders in Independence, Missouri, when the mob came into town and started destroying things in July 1833 (fig. 6). He joined Bishop Partridge, Isaac Morley, and others in offering themselves on behalf of the Church, but their offer was rejected. Gilbert was allowed to sell his remaining goods before he left.¹³⁶



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FIG. 6. *Mobbers Raiding Printing Property and Store at Independence, Missouri, July 20, 1833.* In this photograph of a now-lost painting by C. C. A. Christensen, the mob clamors in the distance to destroy a building identified by a large white sign as “Gilbert’s Store.” N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland contributed significant resources to help establish the firm in Missouri and foster the gathering of Latter-day Saints there.

The Smiths and Church Headquarters at the Whitney Store

One of the most significant roles N. K. Whitney and his family played in Kirtland’s history was through providing living space for the Prophet’s family and space for Joseph to carry out the Lord’s work. In February 1831, when the Prophet first arrived in Kirtland, the Whitneys had shared their home with the Smiths, and in spring 1832 the Smiths again needed lodging in Kirtland.

A Home for Emma in Kirtland. That spring, Joseph was going to Missouri with N. K. Whitney due to the financial struggles of the Missouri store. As they were leaving, Whitney suggested that Emma move temporarily from Hiram and stay with his wife in Kirtland.¹³⁷ Emma followed the request to stay in the Whitney home. At first Aunt Sarah turned Emma away, saying that there was not enough room.¹³⁸ Since the modest Whitney home had only a nine-by-twelve-foot bedroom on the main level and a single, open half-story sleeping area on the second level for the entire Whitney family (including four or five young children and Ann, who was sick), Aunt Sarah’s perception that there was not room in the home for her and Emma

would have been reasonable. If Emma were to stay at the home, she would have shared a bed with Aunt Sarah or slept in the summer kitchen in the rear of the home. Emma apparently expected to sleep in the summer kitchen, but the weather was getting warmer, and Aunt Sarah refused to let Emma stay in the summer kitchen.

Whitney's properties and those of N. K. Whitney and Company were apparently the only properties owned by Latter-day Saints in the Flats then. Gilbert's family had moved out of the Red Store, but it was apparently not available for Emma; N. K. Whitney's father and mother moved into the Red Store about this time.¹³⁹ That left the White Store as the only place available for a temporary residence, but Sidney Rigdon and his family were already living there.¹⁴⁰ These unfortunate circumstances explain how Emma, who had just lost one child, had a year-old little girl, and was about three months pregnant, found herself living at the homes of Reynolds Cahoon, Frederick G. Williams, and her in-laws while waiting for her husband to return from Missouri. N. K. Whitney and Joseph Smith returned from Missouri on July 5, 1832.¹⁴¹ Joseph then returned with Emma and Julia Murdock Smith to Hiram, where they continued living.

By September, Whitney was able to make space available on his property for the Smiths. Sidney Rigdon had been unwell and confined to his bed in the White Store for six or seven weeks, until the end of August 1832.¹⁴² When Rigdon had recovered, Whitney allowed the Rigdon family to move into a log home on another property he owned.¹⁴³ This freed up space in the White Store, allowing Joseph Smith to move out of the Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, on September 12, 1832, and settle in Kirtland, where Church activity began converging.

When the Smith family moved into the White Store, Emma was pregnant, as was Ann Whitney. As the Smiths moved in, Ann went into labor and delivered a son the following day. Clearly, she was not able to attend as dutifully to the Smiths' needs for a short time after they moved in as she had done earlier. Six weeks later Emma gave birth to a baby boy.¹⁴⁴

The School of the Prophets and the Word of Wisdom. The Smiths lived in the "dwelling portion" of the White Store.¹⁴⁵ The Church conducted business in other upstairs rooms. Brigham Young later described these early meetings:

The first school of the prophets was held in a small room . . . in which the Prophet received revelations and in which he instructed his brethren. The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen.¹⁴⁶

Many sacred meetings were held in that small room, and a number of significant events took place there. The Word of Wisdom was first given there:

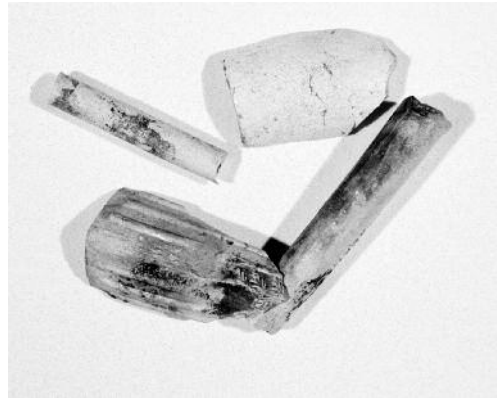
When the Word of Wisdom was first presented by the Prophet Joseph (as he came out of the translating room) and was read to the School, there were twenty out of the twenty-one who used tobacco and they all immediately threw their tobacco and pipes into the fire. There were members as follows: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William Smith, Fredrick G. Williams, Orson Hyde (who had the charge of the school), Zebedee Coltrin, Sylvester Smith, Joseph Smith Sen., Levi Hancock, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, Newell K. Whitney, Samuel H. Smith, John Murdock, Lyman Johnson and Ezra Thayer.¹⁴⁷ (fig. 7)

During early meetings at the store, many of the plans for Kirtland were developed and refined. It was in the White Store that many of the discussions were held about building the temple. Joseph and his family moved out of the White Store into their own home up near the temple, probably in 1836.¹⁴⁸ However, the store continued to serve as a meeting place from time to time.¹⁴⁹

The United Firm of Newel K. Whitney and Company

In spring 1832, while Emma tried to find a place in Kirtland for her family, N. K. Whitney traveled with Joseph Smith to Jackson County, Missouri. In Missouri, Joseph and N. K. met with other leading brethren to

FIG. 7. Pipe fragments uncovered by the author in the ash pit archaeological dig just south of the Whitney ashery, September 2000. These pipe fragments may be a remnant of those thrown into the Whitney fireplace when Joseph received the Word of Wisdom. Although we have a clear date of 1842 in layers well above the pipe-fragment level in the dig, it is hard to date each layer of earth precisely. Since Orson Hyde smoked



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Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

and worked at the ashery, some of his pipes may have broken and ended up in the ashes on site. However, Whitney bought ashes from other people's kitchens to run through his ashery, and he probably took his own ashes to the ashery. There is a very good chance that at least some, if not all, of the pipe fragments uncovered came from the Whitney fireplace. The name "Johnson" is stamped on the side of one of the pipe stems. Lyman Johnson was present when the revelation was given; however, there were many Johnsons in the area (or the name may be a manufacturer's mark), and positive identification is impossible.

find a solution to the financial troubles of the Missouri Saints. During these meetings, Joseph received a revelation that brought N. K. further into Church financial operations:

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that it is expedient for my servants Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney, A. Sidney Gilbert and Sidney Rigdon, and my servant Joseph Smith, and John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps and Martin Harris to be bound together by a bond and covenant. . . .

To manage the affairs of the poor, and all things pertaining to the bishopric both in the land of Zion and in the land of Kirtland . . .

And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships. (D&C 82:11–12, 15, 17)

Although all nine of these men were particularly qualified to help “manage the affairs of the poor,” only N. K. Whitney was financially successful enough to use his own resources to help significantly. Although Martin Harris and Edward Partridge had been prosperous, they had given all they had to the Church before this time. Whitney was already helping Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and, indirectly, Sidney Gilbert. Oliver Cowdery would also soon owe Whitney a little money.¹⁵⁰ Although “equal claims on the properties” seems ambiguous today, apparently in the minds of those present it was clear that the properties under discussion were the Whitney mercantile interests: the next day, April 27, 1832, another gathering of priesthood holders resolved that “the name of the Firm mentioned in the Commandments yesterday be Gilbert, Whitney & Company in Zion. And Newel K. Whitney & Company in Kirtland Geauga Co. Ohio.”¹⁵¹ By April 30, the combined Missouri and Ohio companies had come to be known as the United Firm.¹⁵²

Sidney Gilbert and N. K. Whitney were appointed agents to act in the name of the United Firm. The first item of business assigned to the new organization was to secure a loan for fifteen thousand dollars for five years or longer at 6 percent interest. Apparently this loan was meant, as the Prophet stated, “for supplying the saints with stores in Missouri and Ohio.”¹⁵³ N. K. Whitney and Company was assigned to negotiate the loan on behalf of the Church. During the return trip to Kirtland, Whitney broke his leg in several places,¹⁵⁴ which delayed attempting to negotiate loans; but in fall 1832 he left with Joseph Smith for New York and Massachusetts, even though his leg was not fully healed. The two preached along the way, but loans were not acquired at that time for reasons unknown.¹⁵⁵

After the United Firm was formed, Whitney served as a manager of financial operations for Church affairs, even acting as a financial attorney

for some members. On June 18, 1833, his former neighbors Selah and Polly Griffin gave him power of attorney to represent them in a land transfer. Their land in Kirtland, Ohio, was sold to Seth Johnson “by their Attorney N. K. Whitney.” The Griffins were given land in Missouri, apparently in exchange for consecrating their acre and a half in Kirtland to the Church.¹⁵⁶ Whitney was likely acting in his role as bishop as the Griffins’ “attorney.” Joseph Coe, who had purchased the Peter French farm for \$5,000 as agent for the Church, transferred ownership of the farm to N. K. Whitney and Company at the same time.¹⁵⁷ During this time, the United Firm became responsible for more than one hundred acres of Church property scattered in Kirtland; as the Church’s financial officer, N. K. Whitney paid taxes on this property.¹⁵⁸

Whitney’s role in the United Firm meant he was involved financially with all of the leading brethren in the Church. He was also given special responsibility over the French farm property. As United Firm members discussed the disposition of the farm they had purchased, “the council [*sic*] could not agree who should take the charge of it but all agreed to enquire of the Lord.”¹⁵⁹ The revelation Joseph subsequently received on June 4, 1833, in response to the request of the council directed them to place Whitney in charge of the French property and to divide the land into lots “for the benefit of those who seek inheritances” in Kirtland (D&C 96:3).¹⁶⁰ Whitney remained responsible for the French property while the United Firm was still together. He even paid taxes on the Peter French Inn for four years.¹⁶¹

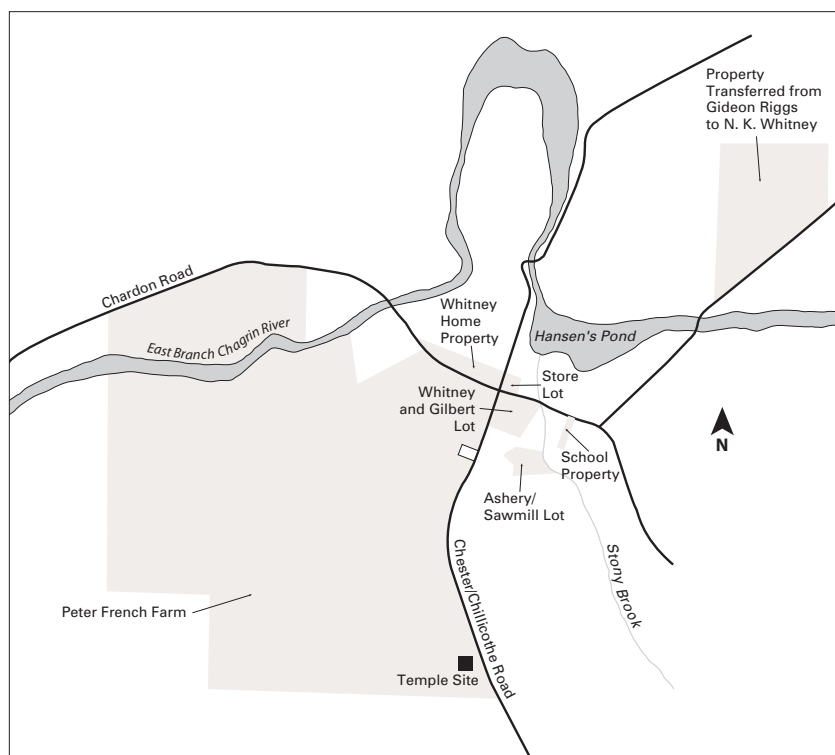
Although title to the Kirtland ashery remained in N. K. Whitney’s name, given subsequent use of the property for temple construction, he likely perceived it as a Church entity, or at least he believed that the Church had rights to what it produced as long as the United Firm was operative.¹⁶²

N. K. Whitney’s relationship to these properties is not wholly clear. This may be due in part to the secrecy surrounding the operations of the United Firm. When the revelations dealing with the United Firm were published, pseudonyms were used for the organization and those involved with it. This reinforced a lack of understanding of the organization and its members by outsiders and most Latter-day Saints. Even Orson Hyde, who worked in the Whitney enterprise for a time and served as an Apostle, did not understand early Church economic organization in Kirtland. When the Church was headquartered in Nauvoo, Hyde was one of a number of people responsible for “the story abroad that we held property common among the Heads or principle [*sic*] men in the Church” in Kirtland. Whitney strongly denied this rumor. He insisted, “We never held any property in common” when he served in the Church leadership in Kirtland.¹⁶³ However, even after the United Firm was dissolved, most Church members

continued to misunderstand the economic activities of Church leaders. Because N. K. Whitney and Edward Partridge both served as bishops for the Church, it was easy to assume that their approach to their callings and solutions to challenges were the same. This was not entirely the case.

Threatened Expulsion from Kirtland under the Poor Laws

In 1833, Whitney's role in assisting the poor became centrally important to furthering the work of the Church when those opposed to the Latter-day Saints in Kirtland used the poor laws as a means of fighting the Church. After the first season of temple construction, R. D. Cotterell and John Parks, the elected "Overseers of the Poor" in Kirtland, submitted a list of persons for the town constable Stephen Sherman to warn about possible expulsion.¹⁶⁴ This action wasn't entirely unusual. In many towns, the Overseers of the Poor were elected officials responsible to make sure that those



Properties Controlled by N. K. Whitney and Company
under the United Firm

not willing to support themselves did not become dependent on the community. Anyone considered destitute or without visible means of support who came in from outside the community and was duly warned could not ask the town for assistance without being expelled from the community. Whitney's early work with the Bible Tract Society helping the destitute would naturally have placed him at odds with this practice years before the Overseers of the Poor set themselves against the Church.

Although town records indicate that the Overseers of the Poor warned a few families from time to time in Kirtland, in winter 1833–34—for the first time in the town's history—the warning included a long list of names. The first warning listed twenty-two heads of household and their families, and the second listed twenty-seven heads of household and their families. The threatened expulsion was no small event for the 150 members of the Church then in Kirtland; several of those warned were working on the temple. Among those warned of expulsion were three men assigned in revelation to assist the poor of the Church: Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon, and Martin Harris. The constable served papers on those on the first list in December, and the second list of additional targets was prepared in January by the Overseers to the Poor.¹⁶⁵

Whitney's resources were already stretched thin. The merchandise in his store had already dropped to \$1,500 in 1833, the lowest point ever in his operation.¹⁶⁶ The Church also had significant needs brought about by temple construction in Kirtland and property acquisition in Missouri. Although antagonism was clearly at the root of the slated expulsions of the poor, there was likely some truth to the accusation that Church members on the warning lists were unemployed. The lists were drawn up when temple construction was inhibited because of weather conditions. During the winter, the water froze, so access to the sandstone quarries was virtually impossible, and the sawmill could not operate. Those assisting in temple construction had little other work available during this downtime. In addition, not as many missionaries were returning from the field with gifts and donations from members during the winter months as they had in the fall.

The United Firm's Dissolution

By early 1834, Kirtland seemed stretched to its financial limits. Although Whitney's merchandise bounced back from an all-time low of \$1,500 in 1833 to its normal \$2,500 levels in 1834,¹⁶⁷ several members of the United Firm were heavily in debt to the United Firm. The United Firm was not a common stock enterprise; each member of the organization was responsible for reimbursing the United Firm for resources they used.

Whitney would later point out that even among the leading brethren who were members of the United Firm, “we never held any property in common.”¹⁶⁸

In February and March, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders traveled through Ohio and New York to gather resources and people for Zion’s Camp, an organized effort to reinstate Gilbert in his Missouri store and others to their property after they had been driven out the previous July. As part of these redemptive efforts, the Prophet preached “for the Church to gather up their riches.” But this gathering of riches was not only to assist in Missouri. The Saints were “to devise means, or obtain money for the relief of the brethren in Kirtland, say two thousand dollars, which sum would deliver the Church in Kirtland from debt.” Joseph gave three of the brethren the specific assignment to obtain the two thousand dollars, which they thought they could do by the first of April.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, the trip east to gather money for Zion’s Camp and to redeem Kirtland’s debts did not obtain enough money to help the United Firm. Hoping for another solution, on April 7, Joseph met with Whitney and other leading brethren in the White Store. They prayed that God “would furnish the means to deliver the United Firm from debt, that they might be set at liberty.”¹⁷⁰ They also prayed that Joseph would prevail in a lawsuit, which he did on April 9. The next day, Church leaders agreed to dissolve the United Firm “and each one have his stewardship set off to him.”¹⁷¹ When the organization was dissolved, the Lord instructed that “every one of what was then called the United Firm [was] to give up all notes & demands that they had against each other and all be equal.”¹⁷² Whitney had the financial means to cover the “notes and demands” of the members. Thus the answer to the organization’s debt problems: the debts individual Firm members owed would be cancelled, and Whitney would cover the costs. The former members of the United Firm would now “all be equal” because they could all draw on Whitney’s resources.

Although the decision to dissolve the United Firm was made on April 9, the actual dissolution occurred on April 23, 1834. Speaking to those in Kirtland, the Lord told the group they were no longer to be bound together in a united order of priesthood leadership with those living in Missouri. Instead, he told them that they should do business individually, “in [their] own names” (D&C 104:49–50). On the same day, in a separate revelation, those who had accounts against the United Firm had them balanced “without any value recd.” The United Firm then wrote off \$3,635.35 in debt.¹⁷³

The Lord reemphasized in an unpublished revelation five days later that the Firm of Zion and the Firm of Kirtland were to be separated from each other. At the same time, he recognized the financial support N. K. Whitney and Company had provided by specifying that they were to

reserve three thousand dollars “for the right and claim of the Firm in Kirtland for inheritances in due time.”¹⁷⁴ Although the resources of the United Firm went to individuals and obligations in Kirtland, the firm in Kirtland would still be allowed to loan the Missouri firm money (D&C 104:53).

The Creation of New Stores in Kirtland

After the United Firm was disbanded, Whitney demonstrated his love for the leaders of the Church by helping them establish their own store in Chardon. Whitney also helped Joseph establish a store in Kirtland that operated in direct competition to his own establishment.

When the Lord dissolved the United Firm in April 1834, the distribution of resources contributed in part to helping meet the needs of poor, faithful members of the United Firm. For example, Sidney Rigdon was “appointed” by revelation “the place where he now resides, and the lot of the tannery for his stewardship” (D&C 104:20). The property he was living on belonged to N. K. Whitney.¹⁷⁵

Despite some assistance given to poorer members of the United Firm, they were still not entirely able to take care of their own needs. In addition, the Church needed to pay off debts incurred during temple construction. The pressures on the poor Saints in Kirtland and the financial needs of the Church appear to be the impetus for the expansion of merchandising efforts in Geauga County.

On Wednesday, October 7, 1835, Bishop Whitney and Hyrum Smith “started by stage to Buffalo, New York” (where Whitney had already developed contacts, a good reputation, and solid credit) to purchase goods for the various stores. Joseph Smith received a blessing “through the Urim and Thummim” for Bishop Whitney before he left.¹⁷⁶ In that blessing Bishop Whitney received specific instruction related to the poor. He was promised “the time cometh that he shall overcome all the narrow-mindedness of his heart, and all his covetous desires that so easily beset him; and he shall deal with a liberal hand to the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, the widow and the fatherless.” Bishop Whitney was the one chosen by the Lord and “anointed to exalt the poor, and to humble the rich.”¹⁷⁷

In Buffalo, New York, Whitney used his business connections to get credit and letters of recommendation to creditors in New York City. Whitney and Hyrum Smith then returned to Kirtland with massive amounts of goods. These goods were probably not all intended for Joseph’s Kirtland store as some later accounts imply.¹⁷⁸

In 1836, N. K. Whitney used his own business connections and resources to help establish several stores for Church leaders. At least three

stores grew out of those efforts: Rigdon, Smith and Cowdery in Chardon; the Joseph Smith Variety Store and R. Cahoon, J. Carter and Co. in Kirtland. Two of these stores were intended to help pay debts of temple construction.¹⁷⁹ The firm Pratt and Goodson, run by the editors of the Kirtland edition Book of Mormon, Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson, may also have received Whitney's assistance.

Joseph himself learned how hard it was to operate a store and "exalt the poor." When he ran operations in his store, he sometimes gave away some of his store's merchandise to needy members.¹⁸⁰ He probably did not give away much, however, because Ira Ames, an experienced businessman, was involved in most of the day-to-day operations of the store. Still, for some reason, the Kirtland store did not operate for long. Perhaps Joseph learned he could not keep in business with the poor pressing him so heavily to have their needs met. Most likely there were just too many stores to turn much of a profit. With all these Church-owned stores as well as stores owned by others competing directly against N. K. Whitney and Company, the increased effort was not bringing increased funds into the Church. Joseph's Kirtland store was closed down about a year after it started. Joseph traded most of his store goods away for property for the Church.¹⁸¹ Therefore, although Joseph did trade his goods away, they were not given to the poor individually but given to help the Church as a whole.

Feasts for the Poor

The bulk of responsibility for helping the poor remained with Whitney, who met with the needy in the Kirtland Temple. He distributed butter, bread, or other foods contributed by members who held fast meetings for this purpose. Shortly after his call as bishop, Whitney received divine instruction giving further insight. He was commanded to "travel round about and among all the churches, searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and the proud" (D&C 84:112). During that time, a practice developed of holding patriarchal blessing meetings in which a large dinner was served "for the poor."

Bishop Whitney and his wife regularly attended these meetings, and the Whitneys decided that they too would follow this practice to honor N. K.'s parents, who had both come to Kirtland to live and had joined the Church. N. K.'s parents were both to receive their patriarchal blessings, along with some other individuals. The Whitneys made that meeting a special event, three days of celebration the like of which had never been seen in Kirtland. Ann recalled that event: "This feast lasted three days, during which time all in the vicinity of Kirtland who would come were invited . . . To me it was 'a feast of fat things' indeed; a season of rejoicing never to be forgotten."¹⁸²

Joseph wrote of his attendance at the opening of the feast, commenting that “this feast was after the order of the Son of God the lame the halt and blind were invited according to the instruction of the Saviour. . . . we then received a bountiful refreshment, furnished by the liberality of the Bishop.” The Whitney home was small, but many attended, so they likely attended the feast in shifts. Joseph attended the first day and then went to Hebrew school on the second day. On the third day, Joseph was again at the Hebrew school when he received a note inviting him to come back to the Whitney home at noon so “the poor & lame will rejoice at his presence & also think themselves honored.” Joseph immediately cancelled school and returned to the feast, where “a large congregation assembled,” and they were all filled physically and spiritually.¹⁸³

When Bishop Whitney received his own patriarchal blessing in 1834, he was reminded, “Thou art a strange man, and thy ways have been unlike the ways of other men; nevertheless, thou hast sought to be a man of God, and to do away all thy unbelief and doubts, and in this the Lord has given thee strength.” Whitney was declared in the blessing to be “a descendant of Melchisedek,” and as such he exercised priesthood authority on behalf of the local membership and would fulfill many of the ancient roles of Melchizedek in his own life.¹⁸⁴ Bishop Whitney recommended which faithful brethren would be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Winter 1836 seemed to be a transforming time in the life of Bishop Whitney. He increased his emphasis on reaching out to the poor and providing for their basic needs. When he was out of town, his two counselors, Hyrum Smith and Reynolds Cahoon, also provided assistance.¹⁸⁵

The Death of Sidney Gilbert: The End of N. K. Whitney and Company

Shortly after the United Firm was dissolved in spring 1834, mobs drove Sidney Gilbert and the other Saints from their homes again. His brother came from New York to visit and died of cholera while in Missouri. Although the disease has a short incubation period, he may have been the one who brought death to Sidney.¹⁸⁶ Zion’s Camp arrived at the Gilbert home just as the disease broke out, and they too may have been carriers of cholera. Sidney Gilbert quickly became painfully ill in an attack that sufferers described as influencing their intestinal systems “like the talons of a hawk.”¹⁸⁷ As severe dehydration set in, Gilbert was “among the first to die” of the painful illness.¹⁸⁸ Gilbert was one of more than seventy people who became ill and one of more than fourteen who died of cholera at the time.

After Gilbert died on June 29, 1834, it took several years to sort out all the legal issues associated with his business interests. Frederick G. Williams was appointed administrator of his estate by Elizabeth Gilbert in July 1838.

Samuel F. Whitney “Knows Not the Lord”

When Bishop Whitney received his patriarchal blessing in 1834, he had concerns about his family in relation to the gospel of Christ. Those concerns were addressed in his blessing: “Thy father will yet come into the Church, and his heart shall rejoice in his old age.” He was also concerned about his brother Samuel F. Whitney who liked to refer to himself as the “Reverend Whitney,” a long time Methodist with no formal religious training. N. K.’s blessing commented on those concerns:

Thou hast an ungodly brother who knows not the Lord, neither does he understand His ways; though he supposes he is a minister of the Gospel, and makes his boasts that his feet are upon the Rock that cannot be moved. (Orson F. Whitney, “Newell Kimball Whitney,” *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 128)

The blessing also acknowledged that N. K. had “besought the Lord many times for [Samuel] and greatly desired his salvation.”

N. K. Whitney’s concern for his brother Samuel became more acute after Father and Mother Whitney joined the Saints. The stubborn son continued to resist. Samuel recalled that one day an Elder Gould was brought to the house to talk with him:

I was painting my brother’s house. He first read a chapter or two from the Bible in the unknown tongue . . . [and then set out to convert Samuel]. My brother’s wife said I had better spend time to have him do it. It would be of infinite value to me. I objected to neglecting my work. My brother said he would give me the time. I told Gould I had not a mind susceptible of the force of his arguments. . . . He retorted, I see the devil in your eye. . . . I laid down my paint pot and brush and started for him. He fled. (Mrs. H. W. Wilson, “Statement,” in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, ed. Arthur B. Deming [Oakland, Calif.: Deming, 1888], 3)

Samuel continued to challenge the faithful. During Philastus Hurlbut’s trial in 1834, Samuel testified against Joseph Smith’s veracity. After the trial, Joseph and Samuel and others had a confrontation at the Whitney store. As recorded in 1885 by Samuel, Joseph asked Samuel why he had testified as he did. A discussion began in which the two men questioned each other’s veracity. Samuel recalled:

The conversation began in the morning and lasted two hours. Jo shook his fist in my face, raved around violently, and threatened to whip me. My brother ordered us to stop talking, that he would

not have such conversation in his store. Jo said he must free his mind. I told him to go ahead, I would take care of N. K. Jo's language was out of character. Rigdon began talking; I told him he ought to have better manners than to speak when his master was speaking. Two weeks previous Jo laid his hands on me and called me his spiritual brother. . . . I said I should not reject a spiritual brother because he swore to a lie. The store was full of Mormons and I the only Gentile, but I was not afraid of them. (Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney on Mormonism," in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, 3)

Samuel remained in Kirtland and died March 22, 1886, never having joined the Church. ("Died in Kirtland," *Deseret News*, May 26, 1886, 292)

The last bill sent for collection by N. K. Whitney and Company was dated August 4, 1838, which dates the end of the entity as a corporation.¹⁸⁹

Previously, with the dissolution of the United Firm, the Lord gave Whitney the entire lot he had owned jointly with Gilbert (D&C 104:39). However, the property records were never changed to reflect this. Elizabeth Gilbert had the land put up at public auction when she later settled her husband's estate.¹⁹⁰ N. K. Whitney was living in Illinois at the time and had his brother Samuel purchase Gilbert's half of the property at auction.¹⁹¹ He never insisted that he had a right to the property because it had been given to him by revelation.¹⁹² This suggests that Whitney was more interested in helping Gilbert's widow when he purchased the property from her than he was in making a profit.

Whitney's Financial Sacrifices for the Church

After the United Firm was dissolved and Whitney was given back all his property by commandment, his merchandise value rose again to the consistent \$2,500 where it stayed for the rest of the time the Whitneys remained in Kirtland.¹⁹³ By his own estimation, Whitney had \$7,761 in net worth when he left Kirtland, including the \$2,046 still owed him. Although prices were still high in town, this was substantially less than Whitney started out with when first called to be a bishop, if his brother Samuel gave an accurate assessment. Samuel said his brother N. K. "was a thorough and successful business man, worth, when he became a Mormon, from twenty to thirty thousand dollars."¹⁹⁴ Although the huge difference between twenty and thirty thousand dollars suggests that Samuel was only guessing,

Whitney had clearly sacrificed financially for the Church. Even after writing off some debts by commandment and contributing to a variety of Church and member needs, “the Company” still owed him \$946.¹⁹⁵

Troubles in Kirtland

Although N. K. Whitney was able to keep his store profitable during all the early financial struggles the Church encountered, he could not keep entirely free from the problems others faced. Because the Church relied so heavily on his financial strength, when Whitney encountered problems, the entire Church felt it. Something referred to only as “embarrassed circumstances” happened in fall 1834 that impacted Whitney’s fortunes: “The counsellors decided that brother Newel K. Whitney be privileged to make such arrangements with his store, as he shall deem most advisable considering his present embarrassed circumstances.”¹⁹⁶ Although the nature of the problems that arose is unclear, by the next spring the value of Whitney’s ashery dropped from \$310 to \$77.¹⁹⁷ A major destruction of the building and later reworking of the remains is confirmed by recent archaeology.¹⁹⁸ Although it’s impossible to date such an event precisely by archaeological methods, the destruction could have occurred in fall 1834. Whitney was able to list only the “entrails to the ashery” as an asset by 1837.¹⁹⁹

The most likely cause of the ashery’s destruction was fire. Fire was not unusual in Kirtland. Earlier, a fire had broken out in Orson Johnson’s shoe shop, located about twenty feet north of the Whitney home. Lumber cut at the sawmill on the Whitney ashery property caught on fire no less than six separate times while drying in the kiln.²⁰⁰ Thus the lack of contemporary accounts of the ashery fire is unusual, but, given the frequent fires in the area, it is not unexpected. However, the financial loss due to the destruction of Whitney’s massive potash factory must have been significant and unexpected. Whitney sold his ashery property in February 1837 to Jacob Bump (who sold the property to Jonathon Holmes in April 1837).²⁰¹ Eventually the brick flooring was reworked into an outside ashery operation, and a smaller building was erected on a portion of the foundation as a tannery, but the Church lost the ashery as a major source of income.

As problems increased, dissension within the Church rose along with antagonism toward members by outsiders (fig. 8). However, even given the difficulties in Kirtland, the Whitneys remained there long after others left and only moved west when they were finally asked to do so.

The Loss of the N. K. Whitney and Company Property in Kirtland

In fall 1838, the Whitney family left Kirtland for Far West, Missouri, where N. K. Whitney had been called to serve as bishop of the newly

N. K. Whitney Properties

As part of the estate proceedings, N. K. Whitney disclosed in 1837 his property interests, including interest on Gilbert's business dealings. Whitney made a list of these separate interests while he still lived in Kirtland:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| one acre of Land with all appurtenances on which he now lives | \$2500 |
| The White store + Lot on the north east corner | 1500 |
| Two city lots Bot. of Joseph Smith Jun or Saml Whitney Sen. | 500 |
| Half of the south east corner (our own) | 500 |
| A lease of the springs on the Hill save enough to carry a distillery | 500 |
| A quit claim deed of school house lot on the flats (cost 20\$) | 20 |
| 8 Burying ground Lots <+ some of Cahoon> in grave yard on the Hill Bot. of Temple | 40 |
| Half of Hay scale on the flats with Jno Johnson 50\$ | 50 |
| Part of a Lot (on which is the cold spring) on the hill bot. of Cahoon or Redfield | 100 |
| One Bark Store on M. C. Davis Lot (Gift of S. Shannon) | <u>5</u> |
| | \$5715 |
| The entrails of ashery lot 400\$ note v.s. Turner | 400 |
| do vs—di | 75 |
| notes vs. Kimball | 290 |
| note vs Joseph Young | 300 |
| note vs C.S. Whitney | 35 |
| notes vs the Company | <u>946</u> |
| | \$2046 |
| X note vs. Spary + Son | 100 settled |
| note vs. A. S. G. Estate | |
| 14 March 1837 P + Interest | \$394.86 |

"List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney, Aug. 1837," Whitney Collection.



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FIG. 8. N. K. Whitney's military issue pistol and accoutrements. As troubles increased in Kirtland, confrontations occurred between Latter-day Saints and Kirtland residents. Although the mild-natured Whitney was an army sutler during the War of 1812, he apparently did not have a weapon to defend his family and the Prophet living on his property. This U.S. Army pistol was made about 1819 and could shoot a half-ounce ball, serving as formidable protection. The pistol was about fifteen years old when Whitney bought it as army surplus in the 1830s. He made the accoutrements himself sometime that same decade. Whitney carried his pistol during the troubles in Far West and Nauvoo and as the leader of a company of pioneers traveling to the Great Salt Lake Valley.

formed stake at Adam-Ondi-Ahman. In Missouri, the Whitneys and other Saints encountered heavy persecution and were driven into Illinois, where they lived in difficult circumstances.²⁰² Joseph Smith invited the Whitneys to live in a small cottage in his yard, employing N. K. in his Nauvoo store. Ann wrote that this was a fulfillment of prophecy:

One day while coming out of the house into the yard the remembrance of a prophecy Joseph Smith had made to me, while living in our house in Kirtland, flashed through my mind like an electric shock; it was this: that even as we had done by him, in opening our doors to him and his family when he was without a home; even so should we in the future be received by him into his house.²⁰³

The Whitneys must have believed that they would return to Kirtland some day; N. K.'s father held out some hope that his grandchildren, at least,

A Disturbance while Crossing the Plains

While crossing the plains to Utah, N. K. was the object of some good-natured ribbing. Horace Eldridge, a member of the camp that N. K. was crossing with, recorded:

About 11 o'clock in the Evening the curiosity of the Guard was excited by some unusual noise supposed [*sic*] to be a mule choked. I was caled [*sic*] up by O. P. Rockwell and Luke Johnson, and up on examination we found it to be bishop Whitney a snoring somewhat to the annoyance of some of the camp. No harm done but ended in a little sport. (Horace Sunderlin Eldredge, Journal, March 10, 1847, Church Archives, source courtesy Jenny Lund)

would be reunited with him in Kirtland. At the end of a visit to Nauvoo, N. K.'s father told his granddaughter Helen Mar, "I shall try and secure the old homestead, in Kirtland, for you and Horace. I want you to come and live there by us."²⁰⁴ Sadly, that reunion never took place; N. K.'s father died shortly after his visit to Nauvoo. However, something else N. K.'s father said at his last meeting with his son did come true. Before leaving Nauvoo for Kirtland, N. K.'s father told Ann, "I can only see N. K. till he gets to the mountains, but you, Ann, will live a great many years."²⁰⁵

N. K. Whitney migrated to Utah in 1848.²⁰⁶ In September 1850, he complained of a severe pain in his side and became bedridden. His ailment was pronounced "bilious pleurisy," and he grew rapidly worse. On September 24, 1850, after thirty-six hours in bed, he died.²⁰⁷ After N. K.'s death, his brother Samuel took the Kirtland property through probate, describing himself to the courts as "a creditor . . . and also the nearest of kin within this State." Because of this, he was placed as administrator of the Whitney estate on May 2, 1857. He had the property appraised by two other long-time Kirtland residents, who concluded that the "value of personal estate + effects of said decedent [N. K. Whitney] does not exceed the sum of one hundred dollars."²⁰⁸ Samuel told the court that his brother was in debt to him for a sum exceeding one thousand dollars. Thus, the title to all of N. K. Whitney's remaining Kirtland property was transferred to Samuel, who sold it off piece by piece. Soon there was nothing left of the original holdings of N. K. Whitney and N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland, Ohio. Over time, the importance of N. K. Whitney and Company to the financial survival of the early Latter-day Saints has been largely forgotten.

Changes to the Whitney Properties in Kirtland, 1870

In 1870, N. K. and Ann's oldest son, Horace, stopped in Kirtland while serving a mission for the Church. He wrote to his widowed mother describing the changes he saw in what had been the Whitney properties:

While I was in Kirtland I visited . . . the old homestead; but many things are quite changed & gave me very lonely feelings; for instance, your kitchen has been taken away & attached to the barn; & the red store where grandfather W. lived has been put in the place of it. Many of the old apple trees, tho' showing signs of great age, yet remain; others have been hewn down, & many other depredations have been committed by unprincipled men & boys which contribute to make the place look desolate. Your old "East Room,"—where Joseph & Emma lived on their first arrival from York State in December 1831,—looks quite natural; as also the [illegible] rooms up stairs & down stairs of the main building;—the white store has been enlarged & considerably changed. (H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection)

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1. "Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections of His First Fourth of July," *Willoughby Independent*, 1902, in *Hadden Scrapbook*, n.d., 13, Lake County Historical Society, Mentor, Ohio. Compare *History of Geauga and Lake Counties, Ohio* (Philadelphia: Williams Brothers, 1878), 247.

2. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 125.

3. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (February 17, 1881): 138.

4. Samuel F. Whitney, N. K.'s younger brother, was born in Fairfield, New York, March 17, 1804. "Died in Kirtland," *Deseret Weekly*, May 26, 1886, 297.

5. Whitney family information comes from birth records listed in Family Files in the Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. These records indicate the locations where the Whitney children were born.

6. Orson F. Whitney, "Newell Kimball Whitney," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, comp. Andrew Jensen, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History, 1901–36), 1:222.

7. Orson F. Whitney, "Newell Kimball Whitney," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:222.

8. Gilbert purchased a town lot from Samuel Egnew for \$150. Samuel Egnew to Algernon S. Gilbert, Land Deed, September 10, 1818, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, Bk. D, p. 98, Monroe County Courthouse, Monroe, Michigan, microfilm, Family History Library.

9. The store occupied a corner lot with 68 feet of frontage on Monroe Street and 110 feet of frontage on First Street.

10. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "A Leaf from an Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent* 7 (August 15, 1878): 41.

11. "Death of Mother Whitney," *Deseret News*, February 16, 1882, 3. Ann was the daughter of Gibson and Polly Bradley Smith. She was born December 26, 1800, in Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut. Ann would later become a leader in the Relief Society, the second woman to receive her endowment in Nauvoo, and a leader in the move to live plural marriage. Compare "Funeral Services of Sister Elizabeth A. Whitney," *Deseret News*, February 17, 1882, 3; "Death of a Pioneer," *Deseret News*, August 1, 1884, 3.

12. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 41.

13. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 41.

14. "Death of Mother Whitney," 3.

15. N. K. Whitney first appears in the Painesville pollbook in October 1819 but becomes active in the Mentor business in 1820. Poll Book, Lake County Historical Society; Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: n.p., 1877), 34.

16. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, Mortgage Deed, April 2, 1821, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, p. 138–39, Geauga County Archives and Records Center, Chardon, Ohio, microfilm, Family History Library.

17. A. S. Gilbert to Lewis Downs, Property Deed, June 10, 1820, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, Bk. D, p. 462. Although their new store would be in Mentor, Ohio, Whitney and Gilbert indicated on the transaction that they were from Painesville, Ohio, suggesting that even before the Mentor store was built, they did business with residents of Painesville and identified with the town. Whitney signed as a witness to the Gilbert transaction with Downs. (There is no evidence that Whitney was more than just a witness to this transaction, however.)

18. When Whitney and Gilbert moved to Ohio in 1819, there were 1,299 heads of household in Geauga County with only twenty-eight employed in commerce. Twenty-four of those employed in commerce lived in Painesville, which had

already become the clear center for commercial activity in the county. 1820 U.S. Census, Geauga County, Ohio. N. K. Whitney's interest in Ann Smith, who was living in Kirtland, may have been the reason Whitney and Gilbert settled in Mentor, between the two towns.

19. James Olds to Algernon S. Gilbert, Deed of Land Sale, October 28, 1820, Geauga County Property Deeds, vol. 7, p. 478–79, Geauga County Archives and Records Center. Today this is Johnnycake Ridge Road and is a major thoroughfare just on the north edge of Kirtland, Ohio. The eighty-dollar purchase price was about sixty dollars more than an empty lot cost—roughly the value of a modest two-story building twenty-five by thirty feet—suggesting that there was an existing building on the property.

20. List of Houses Which Appraised in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

21. Orson F. Whitney, a grandson of N. K. Whitney, later believed that N. K. Whitney had worked in the firm "Gilbert and Whitney" before the firm N. K. Whitney and Company was established in Kirtland. He wrote that "the firm of Gilbert & Whitney had been dissolved, as to Kirtland, the business which they formerly carried on being superseded by that of N. K. Whitney & Co." Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124, 128. Although he may have been confused with the later "Gilbert, Whitney, and Co." established in Missouri, Orson Whitney believed that the "Gilbert and Whitney" firm with N. K. Whitney as junior partner was located in Kirtland as early as 1817, and that later N. K. Whitney and Company was established in the same town. If Orson Whitney was correct on the date and sequence of store operation, then Gilbert's store in Monroe, Michigan, was the first "Gilbert and Whitney" firm. Legal records and other primary sources are clear that Whitney operated for his entire time in Kirtland either as "N. K. Whitney" or "N. K. Whitney & Co." There never was a "Gilbert and Whitney" in Kirtland.

22. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124.

23. See, for example, Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Notebook, ca. 1831–1834, Church Archives; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, [Book of Commandments] Book B, [ca. 1833], Church Archives.

24. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39.

25. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39. The Vandervoort and Van Winkle mortgage company began paying taxes on the building and rented out the property.

26. Geauga County Tax Records, 1819–26, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

27. In 1827, a sheriff sale was held to dispose of some other defaulted property. The property being sold at auction lay just west of the land "deeded by J. Olds to A. S. Gilbert and H. Damon." Although the advertisement lumped Gilbert's and Damon's names together, the two most likely owned separate properties, both of which lay adjacent to the property up for sale. Uri Seely, "Sheriff Sales," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 21, 1827, 3. See also James Olds to Algernon S. Gilbert, October 28, 1820.

28. See *Aurora McKinney v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal, Book F, 226, Geauga County Archives and Records Center, Final F, Court of Common Pleas, 431–34 (April 2, 1821); *John Lay Jr. v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 201–3

(March 26, 1822); *Henry Phelps Admr of the Estate of Seymour Austin Deceased v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61–62, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 203–6 (March 26, 1822); *Mager King v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 159, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 433–35 (March 18, 1823); *Eli Bond v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal H, 70, Final Record H, 195 (June 7, 1824). Gilbert was also the Plaintiff in one suit against the Henry Phelps estate. See Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61–62, Final Record G, Court of Common Pleas, 203 (March 24, 1822).

29. Mary Elizabeth Rollings Lightner, “Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926): 193. Methodist minister and later ardent anti-Mormon Ira Eddy married them. Sidney Gilbert and Elizabeth van Benthuyssen’s marriage announcement appeared in *Painesville Telegraph*, October 1, 1823, 3.

30. Samuel Cows, “For Sale or Rent,” *Painesville Telegraph*, April 2, 1825, through April 30, 1825.

31. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39.

32. Cows, “For Sale or Rent.”

33. A. S. Gilbert, “House & Lot,” *Painesville Telegraph*, May 6, 1824, 3; Gilbert was probably renting the Monroe store out as was commonly done in that day. We know he was receiving mail from a distance during that time because the postmaster was forced to advertise on March 31, 1824, that Sidney Gilbert and N. K. Whitney had letters waiting for them to pick up. J. H. Hills, “A List of Letters,” *Painesville Telegraph*, April 1, 1824, 3.

34. Alford to Gilbert, Mortgage Deed, May 19, 1825, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, vol. E, p. 98; Gilbert to Alford, Deed, January 20, 1826, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, vol. E, pp. 240–42.

35. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 21, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

36. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7 (September 1, 1878): 51.

37. “Kirtland, a Boy’s Recollections,” 13. Compare *History of Geauga and Lake Counties*, 247. Although the construction of the log store is dated to 1823 in the Williams Brothers’ volume, the location of the store is incorrectly placed at the Kirtland Safety Society Bank location on F. G. Williams’s property instead of on Elijah Smith’s property. Since locations are much easier to remember fifty years later than are dates, this makes the date uncertain—especially since property deeds clearly indicate the corner lot where the Red Store was erected was purchased in 1822. This suggests that the log store was most likely in operation as early as 1821 or 1822, while the Red Store was under construction. It would not make sense for Whitney to purchase an ideal store lot in one location only to build a temporary store in a less-than-ideal location later.

38. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography,” 41.

39. Christopher Crary sixty years later would claim the designation of first permanent settler for his own family (Christopher Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* [Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing, 1893], 6), but a number of primary sources confirm Peter French was in the region before the Crary family arrived. French came along the Chagrin River on March 22, 1798, and won a prize for building the first mill in the Western Reserve (in what is now Willoughby

Township, right next to Kirtland). French then cleared land about thirty-five miles south of this in Mantua, where he grew wheat, but he sold the land in 1799 and moved back north. Although French was married in Painesville in 1804, it is unclear where he lived or what he did from then until he later appears in the 1819 and 1820 Kirtland City records, which list his livestock markings. In 1819 he had four cattle and one house. Location of information courtesy Rebecca Sorenson. However, dendrochronology on an early structure on French property in the Kirtland Flats dates the building to 1802 and confirms that Peter French was building in the Flats before other settlers arrived. See Orrin Harmon, *Historical Facts Appertaining to the Township of Mantua, A. D. 1866*, unpublished manuscript, 63, 65, 70–71, Case Western Reserve Historical Society; Jean McNamara, Letter, Lake County Historical Society; Marriage License for Peter French and Sally Russel, July 15, 1804, original on file at the Morley Public Library, Painesville, Ohio; *Kirtland Township Minutes, 1817–1846*, 17, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library; Henri D. Grissino-Mayer, *Dendrochronology Study*, Valdosta State University, 1999, copy on file at the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.

40. “Kirtland, a Boy’s Recollections,” 13.

41. Peter French to Newel K. Whitney, Property Land Deed, June 1, 1822, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, p. 426.

42. Log buildings were not taxed, and if the Whitneys lived in a log home, it would not appear in the records.

43. The Red Store was attached to the Whitney home sometime in the 1860s, and portions of it survived until recently. Compare H. K. Whitney to Mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; V. Garth Norman, “Newel K. Whitney Home, Summer Kitchen: Kirtland Restoration Project Archaeological Investigation,” April 16–27, 2001, Preliminary Report, May 2001, unpublished ms. in author’s possession; Elwin Robison, “Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney Home: Historic Structures Report,” Elwin C. Robison and Associates and Chambers, Murphy, and Burge, Restoration Architects, June 27, 2001, unpublished ms. in author’s possession.

44. Bishop N. K. Whitney later “made and provided” the wine for the solemn assembly meeting at the Kirtland Temple. This suggests he had substantial amounts of wine at his disposal. Helen Mar Whitney, “Life Incidents,” 130.

45. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, Property Deed, September 5, 1822, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, pp. 427–28.

46. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, pp. 427–28.

47. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, p. 426.

48. Frame, brick, and stone buildings were all listed and taxed in early records. N. K. Whitney was first taxed on his ashery property in 1826 for \$10. He continued to pay a \$10 tax on the property through 1828. This represented the value of the land without a taxable building. However, he advertised for salts of lye during this period, confirming that he did have an ashery in operation. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, p. 18; 1827, p. 19; 1828, p. 19. For advertisement for salts, see *Painesville Telegraph*, January 15, 1824, 3. See also “Business Papers from Ohio, Illinois, & Utah Periods,” 5–12, Whitney Collection.

49. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences*, 49.

50. N. K. Whitney, Account Book, September 25, 1825, Whitney Collection.
51. Advertisement, *Painesville Telegraph*, July 2, 1823, 3.
52. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences*, 12; compare “Ashes! Ashes!” advertisement, *Painesville Telegraph*, July 16, 1825, 4.
53. Geauga County Tax Records, 1826, p. 22.
54. *Painesville Telegraph*, November 6, 1822, 3. The paper announced that the two were married by Nathaniel Wheeler, a local farmer and sometimes minister who was heavily active in local politics over the next decade. A month later, the newspaper corrected its story, announcing that N. K. Whitney and Miss Smith were married in Kirtland by the Reverend J. Badger. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 4, 1822, 3. This correction places their marriage before the first article was published. Somehow the wrong information on who performed the ceremony was inserted, and N. K. Whitney sought to get the correct information in the paper. Ann Whitney’s obituary said she was married by the Reverend Badges [sic] on October 20, 1822. “Death of Mother Whitney,” 3.
55. *Painesville Telegraph*, January 5, 1824, 3.
56. Norman, “Newel K. Whitney Home, Summer Kitchen,” 5; Robison, “Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney Home.”
57. N. K. Whitney, Account Book, September 25, 1825.
58. *Painesville Telegraph*, July 28, 1826, 3, italics in original.
59. Peter French to Newell K. Whitney, Property/Land Deed, April 13, 1826, Geauga County Property Deeds, vol. 14, p. 385–86.
60. “Kirtland, A Boy’s Recollections,” 13. French was in the process of moving into his new brick home that same year and apparently saw no need to maintain the cabin as additional sleeping quarters for weary travelers once he finished the brick structure. (Innkeepers of the day often built a large home where their family slept and had their children move out of beds or rooms depending on the number and type of travelers that came by.)
61. List of Houses Which Appraised in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828.
62. A front porch was added to the store long after the Whitneys moved on to Utah. Archaeology uncovered the original stoop underneath the current porch. The original entrance stood where visitors are currently brought into the building on the far left side of the porch. T. Mike Smith, personal communication with author, 2002. Horace Whitney likely was referring to this porch addition when he mentioned in his 1870 letter that the store had been significantly enlarged.
63. Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney on Mormonism,” in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, ed. Arthur B. Deming (Oakland, Calif.: Deming, 1888), 3.
64. *Painesville Telegraph*, November 24, 1826, 3, italics in original.
65. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827.
66. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 15, 1826, 3.
67. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 29, 1826, 3.
68. “List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W. and Co.,” 1, Whitney Collection.
69. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1838.
70. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 21; 1828, p. 21. Although merchandise was taxed under the company, the land for both the ashery and the White Store continued appearing in the tax records under N. K. Whitney, consistent with the original land titles. Gilbert was not taxed on land.

71. In 1827 the buildings on the northwest corner lot were taxed for the first time. Because store goods were taxed but not store buildings, the taxation of buildings located on the northwest corner suggests that they were no longer used as stores. The known buildings on that lot included the Whitney Red Store, the Whitney's small frame home, and various barns or other outbuildings. The three hundred dollars worth of buildings in the tax record for the northwest corner lot were clearly frame structures and not barns or outbuildings. It is not clear if the frame structures were both the Red Store and the home, or just one or the other. Since the home was worth only about sixty dollars, it is probable that both buildings were first taxed this same year (suggesting that the Whitneys built their home as part of the expansion of their business). The White Store did not clearly appear in the records as such until 1841. That store may have been one of the two buildings taxed from 1835 to 1840. The Red Store was never specifically mentioned in the tax records. Although the tax records do not clearly distinguish the Whitney home from other structures on the property until 1841, the records do suggest that the home was built in late 1826 or early 1827, when there was a dramatic shift in the value of the home property. Whitney was paying taxes on merchandise from very early on, but he apparently paid taxes only on the store buildings when someone was actually living in them as a residence. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, p. 22; 1827, p. 23; 1828, p. 23.

72. James Henry Rollins says in his narrative that the Gilbert home was facing east with a view north up the road as it descended down into the East Chagrin River. See James Henry Rollins, *Reminiscences*, 1898, 2, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. In addition, Gilbert's residence was placed in a different road district from the Whitney home. "Road Districts," *Kirtland Town Records*, September 1830, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library; Bureau of the Census, "Kirtland, Ohio," 1830 *General Population Census* (Columbus: Ohio Library Foundation, 1964), 271.

73. The Gilberts moved out of their home and left for Missouri in fall 1831. Horace Whitney later mentioned that his grandparents Susanna and Samuel Whitney lived in the Red Store for a time in the mid-1830s until they were able to move up by the temple. H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection. Some later reminiscences recalled Black Pete, a local member living with the Whitneys. He apparently moved into the Red Store and lived there for a time, but if he did so, it is not clear whether he lived there before the Gilberts arrived in Kirtland or after they left for Missouri. He had apparently moved out by fall 1832. Mrs. H. W. Wilson, "Statement," in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, 3. There is a remote possibility that Joseph and Emma then moved into the Red Store for a time. Lucy Mack Smith said, "After the return of her husband a comfortable house was provided for Emma and her adopted daughter and this house belonged to Brothers Whitney and Gilbert being previously occupied for a store[.] [S]oon after She moved into this house." Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 566–67. Anderson argues, perhaps rightly, that Lucy was incorrect here and the Smiths were taken immediately into the Whitney store still functioning as a store, where they lived for some time. However, if Mother Smith was correct, then Joseph and Emma lived in the Red Store for a time. Until further information is uncovered, we cannot be sure whether the Smiths lived in the Red Store. For many years individuals have thought of only one store every time the

"Whitney store" was mentioned, and it may take some time to sort out exactly how the Red Store was used by the Whitney family.

74. James Henry Rollins, *Reminiscences*, 1898, 2, Church Archives. Since he arrived in Kirtland when he was twelve and left when he was fifteen, James would have been clerking in the Whitney store while in his early teens.

75. Orson Hyde, "History of Orson Hyde," *Millennial Star* 26 (November 19, 1864): 743. Hyde is vague with his dating of most events involved with the store: "I next went into the store of Gilbert and Whitney in Kirtland to serve as clerk, where I continued for a year or two" (743). He also shifts on his description of the store name, mixing the names of the Missouri store where he later lived and the Kirtland store where he first worked as though they were interchangeable names: the firm of Gilbert and Whitney, the old store of Whitney and Gilbert (743, 761). In this one instance, he is specific on his date, suggesting that the date is accurate, but it should be accepted with caution, especially when trying to place his statement in the context that business was slack in the store when he went back to work there at the end of a major expansion.

76. "1828 A. S. Gilbert," Jameson Family Collection, 1825–1938, Church Archives.

77. N K W to "Brother Saml," September 9, [1843], Whitney Collection. The foundation for the ashery was made up of stone quarried nearby. Most of the rocks were fairly small, but some may have been about 2.5 feet square. They were stacked in such a way that the foundation wall for the building was 2.5 feet wide. The wall was six feet high; the high foundation helped raise the wood portion of the building a little higher from the ground.

78. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 19; 1828, p. 19; 1829, p. 19.

79. T. Michael Smith, "Preliminary Report of the Excavations Conducted at the Ashery Building, Kirtland, Ohio," unpublished ms., 2001, 11, copy in possession of author. Because the brook adjacent to the ashery eventually destroyed the north wall of the building, its exact dimensions from north to south are only approximated based on known probabilities.

80. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, *The Art of Manufacturing Alkaline Salts and Potashes*, trans. Charles Williamos, Esq. (n.p.: Royal Academy of Sciences, n.d.), 6.

81. Wallace Whelpley and Wife to Hiram A. Holmes, Lake County Deeds, vol. W, pp. 393–94, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.

82. Sidney Gilbert never owned any property by himself in Kirtland. When the tax records for 1829 were compiled, the tax assessor wrote down Gilbert's name and then crossed it out, not finding any property of Gilbert's to tax. This notation was followed by property taxed in the name of N. K. Whitney and N. K. Whitney and Company. Because Gilbert's name was the only one ever written and then crossed out in the county tax records, this suggests that his lack of property was not readily visible to the tax collector. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1829, pp. 19, 24.

83. Hyde, "History of Orson Hyde," 743–44.

84. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51. The fact that the couple had chosen a Presbyterian minister to marry them in 1822 may indicate that they had some inclination toward the Presbyterian faith.

85. "Extracts of Letters, Received by the Last Mail," *Christian Baptist* 5 (June 2, 1828): 98, reprinted in Alexander Campbell, ed., *The Christian Baptist: Seven Volumes in One* (Cincinnati: D. S. Burnet, 1835), 452.

86. "Death of Mother Whitney," 3; Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

87. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

88. "To the Citizens of Geauga County," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 19, 1828, 3, italics in original. Whitney would later become involved in promoting "home manufacture" in the West, as well.

89. S. Rosa, *Painesville Telegraph*, January 11, 1828, 3.

90. "Tract Society," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 1, 1828, 3.

91. "Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 22, 1829, 3.

92. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

93. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

94. Parley P. Pratt, ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 9th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 47.

95. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 48.

96. Diantha Morley Billings was Isaac Morley's sister and wife of Titus Billings. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 51, 91.

97. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

98. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

99. Ann Whitney did not give the date of her baptism. However, she implies in her reminiscences that she was baptized on the same day as Sidney Rigdon. Ann also states that her husband was baptized "within a few days" after her. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 51.

Sidney Rigdon was baptized on November 15, 1830. B. H. Roberts accepted the recollection of Harriet Wight made years later that her family and Sidney Rigdon were baptized on the same day. Lyman Wight had written years after the event that his family was baptized on November 14, 1830. *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1967, 1:153–54. Although this date has been commonly cited, November 14 was a Sunday, and sources are clear that Rigdon preached at the Methodist chapel in Kirtland on Sunday, November 14, and was baptized the next day. Just a few months after Rigdon's baptism, a letter to the local newspaper related his baptism on the Monday following the sermon. M. S. C., "Mormonism," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831, 1. Josiah Jones repeated a few months later that Rigdon was "rebaptized" on Monday, the day after the sermon. "History of the Mormonites," *Evangelist*, June 1, 1831, 132. See also P. P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled* (New York: Joseph W. Harrison, 1842), 41–42; and *Times and Seasons*, August 15, 1843, 290.

100. The November 16, 1830, *Painesville Telegraph* mentions that "twenty or thirty have been immersed into the new order," while the November 30, 1830, edition notes that "there are rising of 100" who had been baptized, including many who were "respectable for intelligence and piety." "The Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph*, November 16, 1830, 3; "The Book of Mormon," *Painesville Telegraph*, November 30, 1830, 3.

101. Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: [sic] or, a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 102.

102. The paper's printing of the title page suggests that the editor had a copy available. "The Book of Mormon," 3. Mary Rollins described years later, drawn from her memories as a young child living in Kirtland, the arrival of John Whitmer

to Kirtland with copies of the book. Whitmer apparently brought only one extra copy of the book, with other copies coming on the Prophet's wagons. Young Mary borrowed the book and took it home to the Gilbert family. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 193–95.

103. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

104. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 71.

105. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 506.

106. *Painesville Telegraph*, January 18, 1831.

107. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

This account of the Prophet's entering her husband's store and introducing himself has sometimes incorrectly been interpreted to imply that the Whitneys did not know Joseph was coming to Kirtland. The version cited in 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), 1:146 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*), comes from a later rephrasing of Ann Whitney's account by her grandson Orson F. Whitney. Orson had no firsthand knowledge of the event and makes a number of factual mistakes in his account. He clearly got his information on this event from his grandmother's account, and her account should be given priority for historical accuracy.

108. See Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125, for the phrase "Thou Art the Man"; compare Orson F. Whitney, in *Eighty-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), 50.

109. The same phrase was also used in the Bible by the prophet Nathan following a parable describing David's greed in taking what did not belong to him (2 Sam. 12:7). Although the biblical use of the phrase is not appropriate to Joseph's meeting with N. K. Whitney, several years later the Prophet specifically mentioned to Sidney Gilbert Nathan's exchange with David when he told Gilbert, "Thou art the man!" in an effort to encourage him to talk plainly while condemning him for his greed and ambition. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 1:317.

110. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel Kimball Whitney," *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 223.

111. Joseph dictated to his scribe:

The latter part of January, in company <with> Brother Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, I started with my wife for Kirtland, Ohio, where we arrived about the first of February, and were kindly received and welcomed into the house of brother N. K. Whitney. I and my wife lived in the family of Brother Whitney several weeks. (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92], 1:346–347)

112. The Whitneys had lost two children between Sarah Ann and Orson. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

113. The 1830 census lists five Whitneys in their household and six Gilberts in their household. Census Office, *1830 General Population Census*, "Kirtland, Ohio" (Columbus: Ohio Library Foundation, 1964), 271.

114. Horace Whitney wrote his mother during a visit to Kirtland on February 16, 1870, "Your old 'East Room,'—where Joseph & Emma lived on their first arrival from York State in December 1831,—looks quite natural; as also the [illegible] rooms up stairs & down stairs of the main building." H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection. Horace, like his mother, dates the Smith arrival to their home to December (although he places it a year later). He probably got that date from his mother.

115. Although Ann remembered that they joined their new faith in November 1830 and that Joseph came to their home in December 1830, other sources agree that he arrived in Kirtland in February 1831. For example, eight years later, Joseph recalled arriving in Kirtland "*about* the first of February" (italics added), while a contemporary newspaper story and E. D. Howe's 1834 account drawing from some contemporary letters both stated that Rigdon arrived at Kirtland on November 30, 1830, and after a brief sermon returned to his home in Mentor on February 1, followed by Joseph's arrival in Kirtland on February 4. M. S. C., "Mormonism," 1–2; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 112–13. See also Daniel J. Ryan, *A History of Ohio with Biographical Sketches of Her Governors and the Ordinance of 1787* (Columbus: A. H. Smythe, 1888), 114.

116. *History of the Church*, 1:146.

117. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

118. Samuel F. Whitney recalled, "Jo Smith stopped with my brother, N. K. Whitney, some weeks, when he moved his family to Kirtland, where I became acquainted with him." Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

119. For details on this, see Mark Staker, "It Came from God: The Johnsons, Joseph Smith, and Their Neighbors in Hiram, Ohio," unpublished manuscript.

120. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

121. *History of the Church*, 1:146.

122. Samuel F. Whitney gives evidence that the birth took place on Morley's property, although he mistakenly states that this was the delivery of Joseph Smith III, confusing his birth with the earlier birth of the twins:

I was informed that Jo Smith, son of the Mormon prophet . . . was born in the dwelling part of Whitney's store; he was born in a house put up for his father on Isaac Morley's farm. (Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3)

123. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 126.

124. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 126.

125. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 71.

126. See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 15–40.

127. Edward Hunter, "Aaronic Priesthood Minutes, Miscellaneous Minutes, 1855–1972," March 3, 1877, Presiding Bishopric Collection, Church Archives, cited in Dale Beecher, "The Office of Bishop," *Dialogue* 15 (winter 1982): 103.

128. Council Minutes, December 26, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, December 1832–November 1837, p. 25, *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), vol. 1, DVD 19.

129. See Dale Beecher, "The Office of Bishop: Its Development through History," manuscript, 1975, 16–17, 103–15, in author's possession.

130. Whitney also paid taxes on the land he had purchased before Gilbert's arrival as well as on the \$2,500 in merchandise owned by N. K. Whitney and Company. The company, on the other hand, paid taxes on a one-acre lot of property purchased by Whitney and Gilbert together at the southeast corner of Chardon and Chillicothe Roads. "Business Papers from Ohio, Illinois, & Utah Periods," 5–12, Whitney Collection.

131. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 11; Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 195.

132. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48.

133. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1832.

134. Philo Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," in *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 81.

135. *History of the Church*, 1:319. Unfortunately, no copy exists now of the letter Gilbert sent, so we do not know why he condemned the Church leaders.

136. *History of the Church*, 1:412.

137. Joseph and Emma received a small house on the Morley property in spring 1831. That fall Isaac Morley sold his property and left for Missouri. Joseph and Emma went to live with John and Elsa Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, in September and were still living there when Joseph was mobbed and left briefly for Missouri. After Joseph returned, he and Emma continued to live in Hiram until September 1832.

138. Ann Whitney later explained her aunt's actions:

Aunt Sarah, who had always lived with me, and felt a sort of supervision of everything pertaining to my welfare and happiness, and who had been a true and faithful friend to us, under all circumstances, was very much disconcerted and . . . acting upon her own theory and responsibility, when my husband was absent with the Prophet Joseph upon business, and I was in delicate health, and unable to attend to any domestic duties, she took the opportunity to rid herself and us of the family, considering it not only an incumbrance, but an entirely unnecessary inconvenience. I would have shared the last morsel with either of them [both Sarah and Emma], and was grieved beyond comparison when I found what she [Aunt Sarah] had done; but she had a good motive in it, and really thought she was consulting the best interests of those who were far dearer to her than her own life. (Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51)

139. H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870.

140. Lucy Mack Smith wrote that the store had been remodeled into a home and implied that Joseph and Emma actually stayed in the Red Store. See Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 566–67. Although there is no data to directly contradict her statement, the White Store actually seems to fit subsequent events better. The Red Store had only two rooms upstairs. See "Agreement with Wm Dimaline for Shop Rent, July 1838," Whitney Collection.

141. Reynolds Cahoon, Diaries, 1831–1832, July 5, 1832, Church Archives.

142. Rigdon preached at a meeting and declared to the Church, "The keys of the kingdom are taken from you, and you never will have them again until you build me a new house." This rash statement naturally concerned Church members, and Joseph was brought up to settle the issue. The Prophet told Rigdon he was left to the "buffetings of Satan."

Sidney was lying on his bed alone. An unseen power lifted him from his bed, threw him across the room, and tossed him from one side of the room to the other. The noise being heard in the adjoining room, his family went in to see what was the matter and found him going from one side of the room to the other, from the effects of which Sidney was laid up for five or six weeks. Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," 80.

143. Mark Staker, "Kirtland's Mormon Tannery," unpublished manuscript.

144. Joseph Smith III, "Recollections," *Saints' Herald* (November 6, 1934): 1413.

145. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

146. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 12:158, February 8, 1868.

147. Merle H. Grattam, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets: Minute Book 1883* (Palm Desert, Calif.: ULC, 1981), 37.

148. I could find no record that mentions exactly when Joseph moved out of the White Store. Since Joseph bought windows for his home using Bank of Monroe scrip and Oliver Cowdery became an official in the Monroe bank in 1836, there is a strong probability that Joseph moved into his home some time in 1836.

149. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 136–37, 280.

150. Joseph Smith owed Whitney \$1151.31; Sidney Rigdon owed him \$777.98; Oliver Cowdery, \$68.57. "Amt of Balances Due," April 23, 1834, Whitney Collection. He had helped Gilbert earlier by paying his debts and establishing the store in Missouri.

151. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45.

152. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47.

153. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:382.

154. *History of the Church*, 1:271.

155. By the time Whitney finally worked out a variety of loan arrangements with various business contacts in Buffalo, New York, the United Firm had already been disbanded; Whitney believed he acted on Joseph's behalf rather than as an agent for the United Firm in acquiring the loans. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?], Whitney Collection.

156. Selah J. Griffin to Newell K. Whitney, Land Deed, June 18, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 357–58; Selah J. Griffin to Seth Johnson, Land Deed, September 14, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 358–59.

157. Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Co., Land Deed, June 17, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 360–61; Peter French to Joseph Coe, Land Deed, April 10, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 359–60.

158. Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Co., p. 360–61; "Whitney N. K. + Co.," Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1834, p. 27.

159. Council Minutes, June 4, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, p. 13, *Selected Collections*, vol. 1, DVD 19.

160. Council Minutes, June 4, 1833, *Selected Collections*.

161. Franklin D. Richards, Journal, June 8, 1844, Church Archives.

162. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1833–1836. See also Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Company, p. 360.

163. In 1836, two years after the United Firm was dissolved, Whitney helped establish a store in Kirtland for Joseph Smith and other former members of the United Firm, who contracted debts with one of Whitney's business contacts in Buffalo, New York. A representative of the New York debtor later traveled to Kirtland, trying to find some resolution for their debt, and met with Orson Hyde, who apparently told them that Whitney had been a business partner of those who had contracted the loan. Whitney heard a little about the meeting and wrote his brother, expressing frustration that some individuals were trying to lay the unpaid debts of Church leaders at the doorstep of his firm. Rather than emphasize that the United Firm was dissolved long before the loan was contracted, however, he wrote to dispel the widespread rumor that the principals of the United Firm had held all things in common. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?].

164. Kirtland Township Trustees' Minutes and Pollbook, 1817–1838, October 21, 1833, p. 114, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.

165. The lists included Jared Carter and Hyrum Smith, two of the three members of the temple building committee; Jacob Bump, overseer of construction on the temple; Thomas Hancock, recently involved in operating the brick kiln for making temple bricks; Joel Johnson, who just finished building a sawmill to cut temple lumber; John Reed, John Johnson, M. C. Davis, and Isaac Bishop, workers in temple construction; and Ira Ames, a guard protecting the exposed temple walls. Missionaries, such as David Patten, Luke Johnson, and Lyman Johnson, were also threatened with expulsion. Since most of the missionaries were out of town and did not leave families behind, work on the temple was threatened more than missionary work. Kirtland Township Trustees' Minutes and Pollbook, 1817–1838, January 31, 1834, pp. 114–16.

166. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, 1827, 1828.

167. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, 1827, 1828.

168. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, 1842, Whitney Collection.

169. *History of the Church*, 2:44.

170. *History of the Church*, 2:47.

171. *History of the Church*, 2:49.

172. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

173. Some of the debt may have been due to living expenses, such as a portion of the \$1,151.31 that Joseph Smith Jr. owed the United Firm. But much of the debt was likely due to Church operations, such as the \$584.14 that F. G. Williams and Company owed the United Firm. Williams was overseeing publication efforts, and N. K. Whitney and Company apparently had covered some of the costs of printing.

174. Kirtland Revelation Book, April 28, 1834, 111, Church Archives.

175. N. K. Whitney from Jemima Doane, Land Deed, February 25, 1832, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 15, p. 322. See also Newel K. Whitney to Sidney Rigdon, April 30, 1834, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 18, p. 488.

176. Introduction to Newel K. Whitney Blessing, October 7, 1835, manuscript, Church Archives.

177. *History of the Church*, 2:288–89.

178. Some accounts say \$20,000 worth and others \$40,000, but they don't distinguish whether they are giving wholesale values or retail values. Brigham Young

said it was \$20,000 worth of goods. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:215–16, October 9, 1852. Ira Ames said it was \$40,000 worth of goods. Ira Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 1858, 15, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Brigham Young is one of the later accounts (1852) that implies all the goods went to Joseph's Kirtland store.

179. See *Hezekiah Kelly (of the Bank of Buffalo) v. The Firm of Rigdon, Smith and Cowdery*, Court Records of Geauga County, Book U, pp. 97–99 (June 5, 1837), microfilm, Family History Library. There were evidently more members of the Building Committee than these three individuals. Ira Ames recalled “an organization was entered into by Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Reginold Cahoon, Jared Carter and William Smith called the ‘Building Commitee.’” Ira Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 15.

180. Brigham Young describes Joseph's experience as a store manager in a manner that suggests he was unable to keep anything in the store without giving it away. President Young used hyperbole to make a point. He also added in reference to Kirtland and the early Church, “If any brethren came into the midst of them as merchants, I never knew one of them go into their stores and go out again satisfied.” Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:215–16. However, Whitney was clearly able to continue doing business. Although Brigham Young hints that Joseph gave the entire \$20,000 worth of goods away to the poor, almost all of the goods were traded to Jacob Bump for property. The gifts to the poor were more than likely the exception rather than the rule.

181. Out of the original merchandise acquired on credit in New York, \$10,000 was used as a down payment to buy David Holbrook's farm at \$400 an acre. Alfred Holbrook, *Reminiscences of the Happy Life of a Teacher* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing, 1885), 224. More than \$7,000 in merchandise was given to Jacob Bump as a down payment for more than one thousand acres of his Kirtland property. Most of the goods may have gone to Bump, in fact. Jacob Bump to Joseph Smith Jr., December 5, 1836, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 22, p. 568; “Jacob Bump Merchant Capital,” Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1837. The land purchase was never completed due in part to lawsuits primarily by the owners of the Geauga Bank (with Grandison Newell and other opponents on its Board of Directors). The land reverted back to Bump, who kept his payment as well as his property. Ira Ames recalled the trade a little differently. He was clerking when “these goods were all sold to Jacob Bump for \$2,500. One thousand in cash and fifteen hundred to be paid in store pay. This I received.” Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 16. But he is not clear on what “store pay” might be, and other data suggests not all the goods went to Bump.

182. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:130–31; Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” 83.

183. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:130–31.

184. N. K. would later name one of his sons Newel Melchizedek, reflecting his belief in a connection to that ancient patriarch. N. K. Whitney's patriarchal blessing is published in Orson F. Whitney, “Newel K. Whitney,” *Contributor*, 128–29.

185. In addition to reaching out to the poor, Bishop Whitney also made his home available for *ad hoc* meetings. For example, on a Sunday in January 1837, the Latter-day Saints held a worship meeting in the temple. That evening Wilford Woodruff and a Priest, Brother Turpin, went to the Whitney home, where they had a “happy time in speaking singing hearing & interpreting tongues & in prayer with the family.” Wilford Woodruff, *Journal*, January 1837, Church Archives.

186. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 197.
187. *History of the Church*, 2:114.
188. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 197.
189. "List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W and Co."
190. "To All Whom It May Concern," *Proclamation by Samuel F. Whitney*, September 10, 1839, Whitney Collection; Newel K. Whitney from Elizabeth Gilbert, Heir and Widow of Algernon, June 2, 1838, Geauga County Property Records, vol. A, p. 574; compare property transfer February 22, 1839.
191. Whitney paid \$140 for Gilbert's half of the lot, nearly three times its value in the tax records; half the lot would have been worth only \$38.50, since tax records consistently valued the entire lot at \$77. Elizabeth Gilbert to N. K. Whitney, June 2, 1838, Lake County Deeds, vol. A, p. 574.
192. The Gilbert estate was \$244.09 short of settling Whitney's claims on the property they had owned jointly, even if Whitney had not paid \$140 for Gilbert's share of the southeast lot. However, on a list of his debts owed him, Whitney wrote down the \$394.86 Gilbert owed him separate from his other debts, perhaps because he never intended to collect it. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney, Aug. 1837," Whitney Collection; Estate Papers of Algernon Sidney Gilbert, 1838–39, Church Archives.
193. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1836–1837.
194. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.
195. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney."
196. Council Minutes, September 24, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, p. 76, *Selected Collections*, vol. 1, DVD 19.
197. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1834.
198. The author participated in three digs of the ashery site and assisted with work on the Mormon sawmill and Whitney home sites while also serving as project historian. Archaeological excavations were done on the main ashery building under the direction of Principal Investigator T. Mike Smith in June, September 2000, April 2001, and July 2001 (Benjamin Pykles served as Crew Chief during the June session). Aerial and ground reconnaissance was done in April 2000, and GPR work was done by Tom Smith in June 2000. Other archaeological work done near the ashery included work at the sawmill, tannery, Johnson Inn, store/school building, Martindale home, Old School House, and the Whitney home. V. Garth Norman of ARCON assisted the project by digging several of these sites. Don Enders, Historic Sites Curator for the Museum of Church History and Art, also gave valuable assistance. Preliminary reports have been completed on most of the investigations, and final reports are in preparation.
199. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney."
200. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 130, 199.
201. Newel K. Whitney to Jacob Bump, Land Deed, February 11, 1837, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 23, p. 446; Jacob Bump to Jonathon Holmes, Land Deed, April 1, 1837, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 25, p. 4.
202. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 91.
203. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 91.

204. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," 82.
205. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," 82.
206. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:227.
207. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124, 128.
208. See "Newell K. Whitney Estate," Final Record B, Lake County Probate Court, 1857, 93, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.

“Save the Emigrants”

Joseph Clewes on the Mountain Meadows Massacre

Ronald W. Walker

Occasionally a major, previously published document such as this one falls between the historical cracks and becomes virtually forgotten. Although Joseph Clewes’s statement on the Mountain Meadows Massacre was published in 1877 and was widely discussed at the time, current scholars have made little or no use of it. Their omission is unfortunate.

Clewes’s statement has its limitations. It was written twenty years after the massacre and was therefore subject to the vagaries of memory. Also, like many of the several dozen affidavits made by people who participated in the massacre, it is self-serving in its attempt to minimize or avoid personal responsibility. Still, it is a pivotal piece of evidence. Most importantly, it contains details of the massacre not found elsewhere, including information that helps us construct a sequence for the five-day-long event. Clewes’s statement also allows scholars to evaluate the conflicting claims of other eyewitnesses, in part because Clewes seems so credible: his details fit a logical pattern, and they are convincingly told. Apparently no longer associated with the Church at the time of the statement, Clewes made no effort to justify his former neighbors or the institution of Mormonism. Rather, his narrative is straightforward and neutral in tone.

Clewes’s contributions to historical knowledge include the following:

- (1) His statement confirms that John D. Lee was present at the initial Indian attack on Monday morning and played a leading role on Friday as the events of the massacre unfolded. Lee later denied or minimized these roles.
- (2) Clewes affirms that Isaac C. Haight, who shared command of the Iron County militiamen at Mountain Meadows and whose role as stake president gave him ecclesiastical responsibility for the men, apparently

oscillated between a policy of attack and peace. Throughout the episode, Haight, who apparently remained about forty miles to the east in Cedar City, was probably in contact with his men at the Meadows. (3) Clewes makes it clear that Native Americans were a factor in the massacre. According to Clewes, Native Americans appear to have become restive after suffering serious casualties in the initial attack on Monday. Clewes also says that a new group of them arrived on Thursday. He suggests that, under the direction of Lee and others, they took part in the final killing. (Because Clewes was not present at this event, he can relate only what was planned.) (4) Nothing in Clewes's account suggests that Brigham Young planned the massacre. Instead, Clewes describes the ebb and flow of local decision making. Even on the day of the initial attack, Haight is reported to have sent "an order to save the emigrants and render all the assistance that could be given." Further, after learning that the disaster had probably taken place, Haight and his military superior, William H. Dame, who had just arrived in Cedar City from Parowan, "were angry at each other," perhaps quarreling over the role each of them had played in the event. The two men's argument is evidence that they and the others were not simply obeying orders from Salt Lake City. And Haight's last-minute message to "use your best endeavors" to protect the emigrants shows that he was not operating under higher directives to eliminate them.

Biographical Sketch of Joseph Thomas Clewes

Joseph Thomas Clewes was born October 12, 1831, at Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England, the son of Andrew and Mary Ann Thomas Clewes. At the age of sixteen, he was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1849, while en route to Utah, his parents and younger brother died in St. Louis, apparently of a local cholera epidemic that took more than 4,500 lives that year.¹ Joseph and his sister Emma Jane paid their way to Utah by promoting Emma's skills with a horse pistol.² Once the twenty-year-old Joseph was in Zion, he settled in Cedar City and became a

1. Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District Public Communications, "1849 St. Louis Cholera Epidemic Helps Initiate Sewer Construction," *Pipeline*, issue 2 (September/October 2000), www.msd.st-louis.mo.us/PublicComm/Pipeline/2-2000/S3.htm, cited February 7, 2003.

2. "Biographical Sketch of the Militia at Mountain Meadows," unpublished manuscript, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

member of the Iron Mission.³ He worked as a stonemason, helping to build the Iron County ovens. He also briefly held stock in the Deseret Iron Company. During this time, he and his wife, Mary Ann Balden Clewes, also a British immigrant, began a family of a dozen children.⁴

In 1854, Clewes became embroiled in a small controversy when he was among a dozen young men charged with “Dancing and merriment Contrary to Council given and Covenants entered into on Sunday Jan’y 4th 1854.” The Iron County Saints were not opposed to dancing but were trying to abide counsel, for “Council had being given by the president to have no Dancing until the fort was enclosed.” Clewes acknowledged “he had manifested a bad spirit” and obtained the forgiveness of local authorities.⁵

While Joseph Clewes was active in the Sixty-Third Quorum of Seventy in the weeks prior to the tragedy at Mountain Meadows, he later fell out of favor with his brethren. On October 7, 1857, he asked the quorum’s forgiveness for undisclosed errors and assured them he had the support of Isaac Haight, the stake president. At the quorum meeting on October 21, Clewes testified, “I am desirous to do right and be one with you. I have not been received into good fellowship yet by the quorum,” though, he argued, the Church considered him to be in good standing. Haight himself stood then and rebuked the quorum, “Bro Clewes is a member of this quorum and you cannot help yourselves.” Whether some connection exists between what took place at the Meadow and his standing in the quorum remains unclear.

By 1858, Clewes had again assumed an active role in quorum life. Throughout 1858 the quorum charged him with building projects and

3. See Morris A. Shirts and Kathryn H. Shirts, *A Trial Furnace: Southern Utah’s Iron Mission* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001).

4. Contemporaneous documents sometimes spell the surname “Clewes.” On his birth, see “International Genealogical Index—British Isles,” Family History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. On the baptism and death of family members, see “Ancestral Files—Andrew Clews Family Group Sheet,” Family History Library. For his activity in Iron County, see Shirts and Shirts, *A Trial Furnace*, 213, 270, 349, 462. He is called an “eccentric genius” in Joseph Clewes, “Mountain Meadows Massacre: Joe Clewes’ Statement Concerning It,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, April 5, 1877, 4; and a Seventy in Spencer W. Wiltbank, “Report of the Fifth Quorum,” *Deseret News*, August 22, 1855, 192. See also “Covered Wagon Families: Clewes Family among Early Settlers of Base Line Area,” December 18, 1938, unidentified newspaper clipping, author’s possession.

5. Cedar City Ward Bishop’s Court Minutes, 1853–1856, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

music instruction, and he apparently performed satisfactorily in these roles. By late 1859, however, Clewes was listed among those who “but very seldom attend; and their Standing is quite suspectable.” Quorum members were sent to reclaim Clewes if possible. They reported at a November 30, 1859, quorum meeting, “We visited Joseph Cluse, he felt bad, found fault with the Authorities of the church, thought he had a perfect right to go where he pleased, to attend meetings when he pleased and that no one had a right to cut him from the church.” A deliberative council followed in which quorum members unanimously determined that “Joseph Cluse be cut off from this Quorum.”⁶

In 1858 the Iron Mission was in its final throes, and many settlers, including Joseph Clewes, left the area.⁷ Along with a number of other Utah immigrants and sixteen wagons, the Clewes family arrived in San Bernardino, California, on December 24, 1859.⁸ While San Bernardino was once a Mormon-dominated area, many Saints had left for Utah during the Utah War. Perhaps with the less-fervent remnant that remained, Joseph Clewes found congeniality. Instead of involving himself with Church activity, he farmed, mined, and worked as a mason. His latter work provided the foundation for such buildings as the first San Bernardino courthouse, the town’s opera house, and an early high school.⁹ When he died in 1894 of an illness incident to diabetes, he was remembered by the *San Bernardino Sun* as a well-educated man who was a pioneer and the father of a large family.¹⁰

Context of Clewes’s Statement

When his name surfaced in the second John D. Lee trial in 1877, Clewes started out for the courthouse in Beaver, Utah, to clear his name. While on

6. Sixty-Third Quorum of Seventy [Cedar City, Utah], Minutes, 1856–1863, Seventies Quorum Records, Church Archives.

7. *Shirts and Shirts, A Trial Furnace*, 396–97.

8. Clewes thereby became one of the first settlers on the Base Line Road near Waterman, later resettling near Tippecanoe, also on the Base Line. Helen Loehr, comp., “Clewes,” in “Pioneers: San Bernardino County Historical Society,” 19 (1949), microfiche copy, Family History Library. The “Base Line” received its name from a land survey post erected on Mount San Bernardino, about twenty miles from the original Mormon settlement. See *Guideposts to History: People and Places of Historical Significance in Early San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*, 2d ed. (San Bernardino, Calif.: Santa Fe Federal Savings and Loan Association, 1977), 8.

9. Loehr, “Clewes;” Virginia R. Harshman, *The Story of Lytle Creek Canyon* (Lytle Creek, Calif.: Guthrie Publications, 1992), 110.

10. “Index to Deaths, 1892–1903,” vol. 2, 47, San Bernardino County, Family History Library; *San Bernardino Sun*, September 1, 1894.

the road east, however, he decided to avoid the public controversy and turned back. As a substitute for his testimony, he issued a statement that was published in the *San Bernardino Times*, which cannot be located because only partial runs of the newspaper now exist. Fortunately, Clewes's statement was soon republished both by the *Salt Lake Daily Herald* and, in abbreviated form, by such national newspapers as the *New York Herald*.¹¹ Its circulation must have had a public impact, for Clewes was reportedly soon sought by authorities for additional information. Once more, to avoid involvement Clewes fled "to the mountains."¹²

The *Salt Lake Daily Herald* version, reproduced below, is the most complete text of the Joseph Clewes statement now available. This same version is included in *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* under April 5, 1877, the date of its Utah publication.¹³ The papers of Seymour B. Young housed at the Utah Historical Society in Salt Lake City, Utah, include a Clewes statement. It differs from the *Herald* account only in inconsequential details and is apparently a variant. Caroline Parry Woolley, a granddaughter of Isaac Haight, copied Young's version of the Clewes statement for use in chronicling Haight's life.¹⁴

Unfortunately, more Clewes material is unavailable. As will be seen in his statement below, Clewes reported that two days before the massacre he and John D. Lee "sat down and talked awhile." While Clewes promised to provide a record of this important conversation at a later time, diligent effort to find it has been unsuccessful. So full of enigmatic promise for revealing still more mysteries of the massacre, that record, too, at least for the

11. Clewes, "Joe Clewes' Statement concerning It," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 5, 1877, 6; also in *New York Herald*, March 31, 1877.

12. "Joe Clewes Fled," *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, April 7, 1877, 3.

13. Joseph Clewes, "Mountain Meadows Massacre: Joseph Clewes' Statement concerning It," *Journal History of the Church*, vol. 116, April 5, 1877, pp. 6–7, *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), vol. 2: DVD 7.

14. Seymour B. Young Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah. The Young account spells Isaac Haight's surname "Hait" and includes other minor differences from the *Herald* account. For example, the *Herald* has Clewes saying, "I lived in the new city, as it was called, probably about a mile from the old town of Cedar." The Young account has Clewes saying, "I lived in the city as it was called —3 mile from the old town of Cedar." Where the *Herald* has no date for the Monday of the massacre, the Young account adds parenthetically "September 7th 1857." See also "Joe Clewes Statements concerning the Mountain Meadows (told to

moment, has seemingly fallen by the historical wayside. Nevertheless, the following statement of Joseph Clewes sheds considerable light on events that much of the historical record seems to cloud.

Dr. Seymour B. Young),” in “Notes from the Journal of Seymour B. Young,” Caroline Parry Woolley Papers, Special Collections, Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

Statement of Joseph Clewes

On Monday before the massacre¹⁵ (I forget dates) Bishop Philip Klingensmith¹⁶ came to me about 10 o'clock and said Isaac C. Haight¹⁷ wanted him to find him a good rider and he (Smith) thought I was just the boy¹⁸ for a quick trip. I must have expressed something in my countenance for he said, "Do not be afraid, it is a good cause you are going to ride in," or words to that effect.¹⁹ He told me where to get a horse and be ready about noon; I would find Haight at the iron works store in the old town.²⁰ I lived in the new city, as it was called, probably about a mile from the old town of Cedar. This conversation was in the new city, close to Smith's house. About 12 o'clock I was mounted and armed with an old rusty horse pistol, I

15. Monday before the massacre was September 7, 1857.

16. Of Pennsylvania German derivation, the name appears as "Klingensmith" and "Klingen Smith" in early usage. Philip Klingensmith (1815–about 1881) served as a bishop in Cedar City and by his own account opposed taking anti-emigrant action. More likely, like that of many of his neighbors, Klingensmith's attitude and behavior shifted back and forth during the ten days preceding the massacre. See affidavit of Philip Klingensmith, sworn before P. B. Miller, clerk of Lincoln County, Nevada, April 10, 1871, and printed under "Mountain Meadow Massacre," *Corinne Daily Reporter*, September 20, 1872. Klingensmith's statement was reprinted in the *Pioche Daily Record*, September 27, 1872.

17. In addition to his roles as stake president and major of the second battalion in the Iron County military district of the territorial militia, Isaac Chauncey Haight (1813–1886) served as mayor and head of the iron works. These responsibilities made Haight Cedar City's most prominent settler. James H. Martineau to Adjutant General James Ferguson in Hamilton Gardner, "The Utah Territorial Militia," 1929, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

18. Clewes was twenty-five at the time.

19. Clewes suggests that he was aware of the anti-emigrant sentiment in the village but did not wish to become a part of it.

20. Like many Latter-day Saint settlements, Cedar City grew in two stages: (1) the construction of an early fort-settlement and (2) the establishment of a nearby permanent village. In the case of Cedar City, the establishment of the second stage was especially important because the fort lay on what was considered to be a potentially dangerous flood plain. The new village—the site of the present town—was established southeast of the fort. At the time of the massacre, settlers occupied both locations. *Shirts and Shirts, A Trial Furnace*, 372–73.

borrowed from Tom Gower²¹ I think, that had the appearance of not having been used for twenty years at least. After waiting some time James Haslam²² came up on a fine horse to the store; meeting me he asked, "Where are you going?" I answered, 'I don't know; where are you going?' He said he was waiting for orders. In a little while he received his documents, put spurs to his horse and started north, I learned afterward that he went to Brigham Young.²³ I then received a letter from Haight with

21. Thomas Gower (1816–77), born May 23, 1816, at Stourbridge, England, was "an iron foundry man by trade, having been employed as an overseer of a large force of men in an iron foundry in Stratsford, England." Thomas Amos Lunt, "Thomas Amos Lunt Journal," cited in Evelyn K. Jones, *Henry Lunt: Biography and History of the Development of Southern Utah and Settling of Colonia Pacheco, Mexico* (Cedar City, Utah: By the author, 1996), 247. Gower was enrolled in the Iron County militia, but none of his neighbors reported him present at the massacre. He was a member of the Third Platoon, Company No. 7. See "Organization of the Iron Military District," June 6, 1857, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

22. Like Clewes, James Holt Haslam (1825–1913) was chosen to carry an express from the Iron County headquarters. Haslam's mission was to ride to Salt Lake City to seek Brigham Young's direction regarding the emigrants; therefore, he had a much longer ride before him than Clewes did—an epic journey of 500 miles, which Haslam completed in six days. By his own account, Haslam was in the saddle within ten or fifteen minutes after being summoned by Haight and rode "a spanish horse" as his first mount, which he exchanged for fresh animals as he went north. "Testimony of James Holt Haslam," *Supplement to the Lecture on the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1885), 84–89. Haslam returned to Cedar City two days after the killing had taken place, carrying a letter from Young to let the emigrants pass. Haslam, a native of Boulton, Lancashire, England, had been in the territory since 1851. He later settled at Wellsville, Cache County, Utah, where he worked as a blacksmith, led the brass band, and directed the ward choir. He also served as a policeman, city councilman, and member of the local militia. Haslam Family Group Sheet, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; "Haslam, James Holt," in Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing Company, 1913), 923; "Testimony of James Holt Haslam," published in *Supplement to the Lecture on the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1885); *Windows of Wellsville, 1856–1984* (Wellsville, Utah: Wellsville History Committee, 1985), 527; "Made Gallant Ride to Prevent Massacre," *Deseret Evening News*, March 15, 1913. This last source is his obituary and is copied into the Journal History dated March 13, 1913, p. 2.

23. Cedar City tradition suggests that on the same day Haight dispatched other messengers besides Haslam and Clewes with the purpose of stopping anti-emigrant action until word could be received from Brigham Young. On the previous day,

instructions to carry it to Amos Thornton at Pinto Creek²⁴ and get there as quick as I could. It was now near two o'clock.²⁵ I put out as fast as I could go. After crossing the valley and near the mouth of the cañon I met two men going in towards Cedar, Mormons of course. One asked me where I was going and I replied that I was going to Pinto Creek with a letter for Amos Thornton. He said, "O, come and go back with us, your letter is of no use; Lee with the Indians jumped on the emigrant camp this morning and got a lot of Indians wounded, but—" considering a moment—"no, go on, I cannot interfere with his orders," meaning Haight; "here, give me that old pistol and take these," handing me a pair of flint-lock horse-pistols.²⁶ On I went as fast as I could. I found Thornton there and delivered my letter. I was anxious to know its contents. He opened it and read it aloud in my presence. I looked over his shoulder and saw that he read it aright. It read thus, as near as I can recollect:

"Bro. Amos Thornton—Take this dispatch to John D. Lee as quick as you can get it to him."

Sunday, September 6, a rancorous Church council suspended discussion of a Mormon-led attack pending receipt of word from Salt Lake City. See testimony of Laban Morrill during the second trial of John D. Lee in "Transcripts and Notes of John D. Lee Trials, 1875–1885," 29, Church Archives; and Elias Morris statement, February 2, 1892, Andrew Jenson, Mountain Meadows Massacre field notes, Church Archives.

24. Amos Griswold Thornton (1832–1902) was one of the Mormon "Indian missionaries" living at the newly established settlement of Pinto, about twenty miles west of Cedar City. The settlement lay between Mountain Meadows and Cedar City.

25. Four hours passed between the time of Clewes's summoning and his departure for Pinto, which is perhaps partly explained by the priority of the Salt Lake City message carried by Haslam. It had to be written and dispatched before the message Clewes carried was written.

26. Clewes fails to identify the two express riders, perhaps because of their possible involvement in the first attack and because it is likely that at least one of them returned to the siege and became involved in the massacre (Clewes reveals in a subsequent passage that prior to the massacre he no longer had the loaned weapon; he apparently had returned it to its owner at the Meadows). When reconstructing the detail and timing of events, the Monday afternoon express from the Meadows is important. It confirms that the initial attack took place on Monday morning (not on Tuesday as Lee asserted). It also suggests that news of the first attack may not have reached Cedar City before Haslam left for Salt Lake City, which, if true, means that President Young did not know of the initial fighting when writing his reply to Haight. The precise content of the no-longer-extant message carried by Haslam from Cedar City to Salt Lake City remains one of the most

The tenor of the dispatch on the same sheet to Lee was about as follows, to the best of my recollection:

“Major John D. Lee:

“You will use your best endeavors to keep the Indians off the emigrants and protect them from harm until further orders.”²⁷

(Signed)

“I. C. HAIGHT”

I felt relieved to know that such was the case, for I always understood that he [Lee] was a sort of chief among the Indians and they would do his bidding and there would be no more of it.²⁸ I saw no more of Thornton. I then met Wilson at Pinto²⁹ and he proposed to me to go over the ridge to Hamlin’s.³⁰ Mr. Hamlin was up at Salt Lake city at the time and Mrs. Hamlin

difficult issues surrounding the affair, with sources—Mormon and non-Mormon—often in disagreement. For Young’s message instructing that the emigrants be given safe passage, see Brigham Young to Isaac Haight, September 10, 1857, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. See also “Testimony of James Holt Haslam,” 85–87.

27. A separate report confirms this message. Richard L. Robinson, who served as the president of the Pinto community, later told Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson that he, too, had read Haight’s message to Lee and that its purport was to “draw the Indians off and satisfy them with [emigrant] beef if necessary but not [to] kill the emigrants.” Jenson, Mountain Meadows Massacre field notes. This information is important, for it suggests a central role of the Native Americans during the initial attack.

28. John D. Lee’s (1812–1877) commission as “Indian Farmer” gave him the responsibility for feeding and “civilizing” the southern Paiutes and resulted in considerable influence over them. Lee also served as a major in the Washington County militia and had local jurisdictional command of the men at the Meadows. As the only man convicted of the crime, he was executed at the site in 1877. Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1992).

29. The identity of “Wilson” is uncertain. The possibilities include (1) Elliott Wilson, a courier at the time of the massacre (see “Testimony of David Wilson Tullis,” in Jenson, Mountain Meadows field notes); (2) David Wilson Tullis, who worked at the Meadows at the time of the massacre and who may have been commonly known by his middle name; and (3) if a transcript error occurred in the printing of the *Herald* account, Elliot Willden, a southern Utah settler, later indicted but not prosecuted for his role in the massacre (see “Pioneer Musician Is Laid to Final Rest,” *Deseret News*, October 9, 1920, page ix; Morris A. Shirts and Kathryn H. Shirts, *A Trial Furnace: Southern Utah’s Iron Mission* [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998]).

30. Jacob Hamblin (1819–1886) had recently received the appointment to head the Southern Indian Mission. Normally headquartered on the Santa Clara River farther south, Hamblin received a territorial grant to graze cattle at the Meadows and, at the time of the massacre, had begun to establish a temporary home at its

was at home alone with the family. He said she needed protection, the Indians being mad, no telling what they might do. I went there with him and guarded the house all night. Next morning (Tuesday) I started home and when I got well through the cañon I met John M. Higbee with a posse of men.³¹ He told me to come along with them, he should want me. I had to obey, there was no other alternative.³² We then moved on to Hamlin's house, at the north end of the meadows about six miles from the emigrant camp, which was at the south end of the meadows. If I remember aright, we stayed the remainder of the day at Hamlin's. Wednesday morning Higbee sent me and Wilson to the Indian camp, which was on the east side of the meadows, to find out how the Indians were acting and how many there were. About two and a half miles from the Indian camp, between two low ridges, there lay a number of Indians mortally wounded and a number of Indians lying around on every side. When the Indians saw us they came around pretty thick. We could not see the camp of emigrants from this position. They wanted to show us where the camp was and pulled and pushed us to go with them. Finally we agreed to go with them. About half a mile from the Indian camp we were hailed from the ridge on our left; we looked around and there stood John D. Lee. He came to us and showed us

north end. Several weeks before the Arkansas emigrants arrived in southern Utah, Hamblin traveled to Salt Lake City to conduct Indian business and to take a plural wife. *Jacob Hamblin: A Narrative of His Personal Experience* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881); and Juanita Brooks, *Jacob Hamblin: Mormon Apostle to the Indians* (Salt Lake City: Westminster Press, 1980).

31. Most Iron County settlers viewed young John Mount Higbee (1827–1904) as a man of talent and promise. As town marshal, he had reportedly attempted the arrest of some members of the Arkansas company for disorderly behavior (one rumor had it that Higbee's wife was verbally abused by one of them). When Clewes met Higbee on the Cedar City road, the latter was serving in the capacity as a major in the militia and was likely conducting a surveillance to determine conditions following the initial Monday morning assault. Although he subsequently and briefly returned to Cedar City, he was at the Meadows when the killing took place. Several participants claimed that Higbee gave the verbal order to commence the killing. See, for example, B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 4:174, 5:605; Joseph F. Smith Jr., "Events of the Month," *Improvement Era* (February 1905), 8:4; John M. Higbee, *Autobiography* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society); Clinton D. Higby, *Historical Sketches of Our Higbee and Clark Progenitors* (Erie, Penn.: By the author, 1927).

32. As a private, First Platoon, Company No. 6, Iron County Militia, Clewes was subject to military order. "Organization of the Iron Military District."

how his shirt and other clothes had been cut with bullets on Monday morning, but his “garments” had not been touched. These garments pertained to the endowment some way and have curious cuts in them about the breast, bowels and knees and are considered proof against all harm or evil.³³

He told the Indians to go back to camp, and we sat down and talked awhile. Some of the conversation I recollect well, and will give it at some other time. He then went over the ridge, and in the evening Higbee came over from Hamlin’s with his men. Thursday I was sent back to Hamlin’s to kill a beef; in the evening I returned with it. During the day more men came from Cedar city. When I got to camp with the beef I found some strange faces. They were some men from St. George, or about there; I did not know them.³⁴ The Indians had been largely reinforced during the day.³⁵ Friday morning came that fatal day.³⁶ The old men and leaders were to themselves, sitting in something of a circle I know. I was warned not to go near them, as it was something sacred they were going through.³⁷ When that was through with, it was made known by Higbee that the emigrants were to be wiped out. Lee made quite a speech,³⁸ and also spoke through an interpreter to the Indians, instructing them what part to take. When everything

33. There is no record of Joseph Clewes receiving temple ordinances, which may account for his unfamiliarity with the nature and purpose of the Latter-day Saint temple or endowment garment. Lee’s statement confirms his role in the first attacks on the emigrants.

34. These men were “strange” in the sense that they were unfamiliar to Clewes. They were members of another militia contingent that had arrived on the scene largely from the village of Washington in Washington County. At the time of the massacre, St. George, Utah, had not been established. Its settlement took place almost four years later.

35. While some Indians left the area and abandoned the attack early in the week, Clewes provides the important information that others had newly arrived and therefore constituted “reinforcements.” Most of the Indians involved in the massacre were southern or western Paiutes from present-day southern Utah and southern Nevada.

36. The massacre took place on Friday, September 11, 1857.

37. This wording suggests that Clewes lacked familiarity with a Latter-day Saint prayer council, though it confirms the accounts of other witnesses who recalled this council. Clewes provides the important information that the council was reserved to leaders and not open to the rank and file.

38. Several of the men who were present recalled Lee’s strongly stated words, which urged the men to go forward with the killing. For example, see the Klingensmith affidavit in “Mountain Meadow Massacre,” *Corrine Daily Reporter*, September 20, 1872.

was ready, they moved off toward the emigrant camp. I kind of hesitated about moving; I had no arms;³⁹ I felt as though riveted to the ground. I was perfectly dumb with I know not what—terror it must have been; I have a very sympathetic nature; I was almost frantic. I was awakened from my momentarily semi-conscious state by Higbee's voice (he was standing on the right hand of the men as they moved out): "Clewes, we have no further use for you here; get on that mule and ride back to Haight, and tell him how things are up to this time; and," shaking his finger at me, "remember, not a word of this (meaning, of course, their acts there) to any one."⁴⁰ My heart beat light at this order. I got on that mule, and you may rely on it, reader, I made him travel out of that. I now call on the witnesses, both for prosecution and defence,⁴¹ to bear me out in this truth: I left the place before that massacre occurred. For the love of mercy and my children, clear me at once by a statement, any or all of you! When I got about half-way home to Cedar, I met Elias Morris and Christopher Arthur, going towards the Meadows. They stopped me and asked me how things were. I was afraid to to say much, but Morris hurriedly told me they were going out with an order to save the emigrants and render them all the assistance that could be given.⁴² I exclaimed, "Go! go! as fast as your horses can take you.

39. Clewes no longer had the firearms earlier given to him.

40. Higbee's demand for confidentiality presumably did not include information to be given to Haight, his commanding officer.

41. Clewes refers to the witnesses at Lee's second trial held at Beaver, Utah, and hopes that they will validate his testimony that he was not present at the time of the killing.

42. Arthur and Morris both confirmed Clewes's general outline of events. The former recalled meeting Clewes "some distance west of Leach's Springs" on the Cedar City road, but said, wrongly, that he and his companion were carrying a message prompted by Haslam's return from Salt Lake City. Haslam did not arrive in Cedar City until Sunday, September 13, 1857, two days after the crime. Morris also recalled bringing a message of peace, but described it as a verbal and general expression from Haight. According to the Morris statement, he and Arthur had heard "so many conflicting and terrible reports about what was going on at the Meadows, they agreed with each other that they would go out and see for themselves; but when they were about ready to start, Isaac C. Haight spoke to Morris and asked him to use his influence in the interest of peace, and do everything possible to avert the shedding of blood." Arthur and Morris statements, in Jenson, Mountain Meadows Massacre field notes. Finally, for additional evidence of the meeting of Clewes with Arthur and Morris as well as for the message of conciliation that the latter two men carried, see the commentary of John Wesley Williamson, in oral interview by Williamson of Corray D. Clark and Connie Clark Theodore, July 5, 1950, Salt Lake City, Utah, typescript, in author's possession.

You may be in time to save them.” They put spurs to their horses and rode as fast as they could while in my sight. I waved my hand after them and bid them God speed, but my heart sank within me a moment afterwards for I could not see how they could be in time. I arrived at Cedar about three o’clock and met Col. Dame from Parowan and others, likewise Haight. I was with them privately and told them the latest news. They were angry at each other but said nothing much in my presence but I could see it in them.⁴³ I went home again, but oh! what a horrible remembrance of those five days! They have been the bane of my existence, have kept me in the back ground and in the shade, have kept me out of society and away from people I should like to have associated with. Such has been my lot or strange fatality.

I will continue this statement further at my earliest opportunity and show how things went on up to my arrival in San Bernardino, eighteen years ago. I forward this by Col. Paris⁴⁴ for publication.

Joseph Clewes

43. Others recalled that a Dame-Haight altercation continued after the tragedy. For instance, see Abraham Cannon, *Diary*, 95, June 11, 1895, Perry Special Collections.

44. This courier was likely San Bernardino resident Frederick T. Perris. Perris was a former Salt Lake City merchant, who later allied himself with the spiritualistic reform movement of William S. Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison. See Ronald W. Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 101, 200.

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Will Bagley. *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Lawrence Coates

Although Frank James Singer, a successful California businessman, hired Will Bagley to rewrite the story of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, Bagley says Singer did not influence his interpretation (xxiv). Drawing upon his literary skills as editor of several volumes in Western history and as a columnist for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Bagley presents his story by dramatically weaving the massacre into such themes as blood atonement, vengeance for the blood of the prophets, the second coming of Christ, absolute obedience to priesthood authority, deception, abuse of power, conspiracy, cover-up, and rebellion against the United States. “For Brigham Young and his religion,” Bagley charges, “the haunting consequences of mass murder at Mountain Meadows are undeniable” (380). Bagley accuses Young of destroying incriminating evidence and soliciting testimonies that he had nothing to do with it; despite these efforts, Bagley claims, Young “could not change the past. He knew the full truth of his complicity in the crime. The Mormon prophet . . . initiated the sequence of events that led to the betrayal and murder of one hundred twenty men, women, and children” (380).

Bagley sees nineteenth-century Mormons as zealots who embraced millennialism, polygamy, and communalism with “total submission to a leader they considered ordained by God” (9). When government officials, immigrants, and news editors challenged Mormon theocracy, the American ideals of individual freedom and thought clashed with the Utopian dreams of Church leaders and created “a cycle of escalating violence” (9). Bagley asserts that persecution produced a spirit of revenge, which became an overriding Mormon trait. Sermons declaring “a war of *extermination*”

became the pattern (9). In Illinois, Joseph Smith laid the foundation for “his theocratic state [that] would govern both spiritual and temporal affairs” (15). Striking at freedom of speech, Bagley alleges, Smith destroyed the press and burned the *Expositor*, which had condemned him for advocating polygamy, seducing women, counterfeiting money, and forming a theocracy.

After Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered, Bagley says, the Mormons enshrined them. “Their *innocent blood*” became the Saints’ rallying cry; scriptures promised that these blood stains would “cry unto the Lord of Hosts till he avenges that blood on earth. Amen” (17). Then, Bagley goes on, Brigham Young pushed aside other claims to leadership, seized control of the hierarchy, finished the Nauvoo Temple, and conducted temple adoption ceremonies that sealed thirty-eight men “to him as sons, the second being John D. Lee” (19). Tying Lee and Young together in the massacre at the Meadows, Bagley interprets the Mormon temple ceremony as a binding obligation “to avenge the blood of the Prophet, whenever the opportunity offered, and to teach their children to do the same” (21).

According to Bagley, Brigham Young migrated west with these ideas, created a theocracy extending over the entire Great Basin to the Pacific Ocean, and intimidated government officials, non-Mormons, and emigrants. Even though Bagley acknowledges that relations with the Indians ranged between war and peace, he argues that the Saints regarded the Indians as “the battle ax of the Lord,” “Angel[s] of Vengeance,” and weapons “God had placed in their hands” (37). Consequently, Bagley concludes, when the Arkansas travelers stopped at Mountain Meadows, Young had already set the stage for violence by sending George A. Smith to this region with a message to defend Zion against the United States Army at all cost. Reports of Parley P. Pratt’s assassination escalated the desire for revenge. Eleven days before the massacre, Bagley charges, Young made final arrangements for the death of 120 people when he formed an alliance with Indian leaders from the Meadows and gave them all the emigrants’ cattle.

Rejecting the stories about the emigrants harassing the Mormons and Indians along the trail, Bagley claims that William Dame, commander of the Nauvoo Legion in southern Utah; Isaac Haight, president of the Cedar City Stake and a major in the Legion; and another man arranged for John D. Lee to lead the Indians in an unprovoked attack on the emigrants. In Cedar City, the war hysteria, the fires of the Mormon Reformation, and religious fanaticism became driving forces in the decision to kill the emigrants, Bagley asserts. Laban Morrill, a member of the stake high council, objected to this decision and forced a reluctant Haight to send a messenger to ask Brigham Young for advice. Although Young’s response was to leave the

Arkansas emigrants alone, Bagley argues that his “shrewd reply seems calculated to correct a policy gone wrong if it arrived in time and to cover his tracks if received too late. Whatever the letter’s intent, it carried a hidden but clear message for Isaac Haight: make sure the Mormons could blame whatever happened on the Paiutes” (137).

In detailing the gruesome events of the weeklong siege, Bagley pens a dramatic story from many conflicting accounts—affidavits of the participants, trial testimonies, newspaper reports, *Mormonism Unveiled*, Major Carleton’s *Special Report*, John D. Lee’s last confessions, and the recollections of the surviving children. For the gory details, for example, Bagley draws primarily upon the memories of Rebecca Dunlap, Elizabeth Baker, Nancy Huff, and Sarah Baker, who ranged in age from six to three years at the time of the massacre. From these sources, some of which are clearly biased or unreliable, Bagley pieces together his version of the massacre: before dawn on September 11, 1857, Mormon leaders plotted the mass murder of the emigrants and charged John D. Lee with the task of decoying them from their barricades. After disarming them, the Mormons separated them into groups. The young children and wounded rode in wagons, while the women and older children walked some distance behind, and the men brought up the rear. On command from Major John Higbee, the militia escorts turned and murdered the men, while Nephi Johnson ordered some Paiutes and Mormons disguised as Indians to massacre the women and older children.

In addition to blaming the Mormons for taking temple vows to avenge the blood of the prophets and practicing blood atonement, Bagley charges the Mormons with several other crimes—shifting the blame to the emigrants and the Indians, enforcing a vow of silence, looting the emigrants’ property, lying to government officials, failing to honestly investigate the massacre, placing the sole blame on John D. Lee, tampering with juries, destroying and hiding evidence, and making deals with prosecuting officials to protect Brigham Young from liability. With the passion of an investigating journalist, Bagley details these claims in 175 pages and concludes:

The faith must accept its role, open all of its records on the subject, acknowledge its accountability, and repent—or learn to live with the guilt. Church leaders might wish until the end of time that the matter could be forgotten, but history bears witness that only the truth will lay to rest the ghosts of Mountain Meadows. (382)

The major strength of this book is Bagley’s compelling writing style, which rivets the reader’s attention quickly on the main issues surrounding the massacre. Bagley also quotes extensively from the primary and

secondary sources, which gives the book the ring of authenticity. Furthermore, he identifies some new sources in various archives.

Serious errors in historical scholarship, however, severely undermine the fundamental arguments in his book. First, there are several important primary sources that he did not use accurately. Historians must verify the facts they use and avoid misusing information to support their interpretations. Bagley fails on both counts, because he seems to be driven by his passion to blame Brigham Young for this tragic event. For example, Bagley sees Young's offer to give the Piedes, a band of the Paiutes, "all the cattle that had gone to Cal[ifornia] the south rout" as the formation of an alliance (114). To make this point, Bagley quotes D. B. Huntington, Brigham Young's interpreter, as saying that the Piedes were "afraid to fight the Americans & so would raise [allies]" (114). Instead, Huntington's journal for September 1, 1857, says the Piedes "would raise grain"¹ (fig. 1). Replacing the word *grain* with *allies* substantially changes the meaning, but most readers will not be aware of Bagley's changing these words.

An equally serious fallacy occurs when Bagley fails to include all pertinent facts in his narrative. For example, he leads readers to believe that there was a direct link between Brigham Young and the Indians involved in the massacre. After meeting with Brigham Young on September 1, Bagley claims, Tutsegabit and Youngwuds returned to Mountain Meadows, participated in the massacre, and then came back to Salt Lake City and reported this news to Young. According to Bagley, Young apparently rewarded the Piede chief, Tutsegabit, for participating in the massacre by ordaining him to "Mormonism's higher priesthood" (170). Huntington, on the other hand, says Young commissioned this Native American to "preach the gospel & baptize among the House of Isreal[sic]."

Careful examination of contemporary documents that mention this ordination reveals problems with Bagley's link between the ordination and the massacre. D. B. Huntington recorded September 10 as the day Brigham Young "ordained Tutsegabbeds an elder" in Salt Lake City. If this date is accepted, then it would have been impossible for Tutsegabit to have been at the massacre the following day. Other observers, however, recorded different dates for Tutsegabit's ordination. On September 13, George A. Smith wrote to William Dame about it, and Wilford Woodruff noted it in his journal on September 16. Even if this last date is accepted for the ordination, Tutsegabit would have had to travel an impossible eighty-eight miles per day to cover roughly 350 miles in four days, since the massacre occurred just before dark on September 11.

Bagley has also not mentioned the evidence that Brigham Young had no knowledge of the massacre until well after it occurred. Huntington says the first news about the massacre at Mountain Meadows reached Salt Lake

[147]

soldiers. Tutsey-
-grib bit a Piede Ch
-ie over 6 Pieles Bands
Youngmuls another
Pieole Chief & I gave
them all the cattle
that had gone to Cul
the sontha rant it
made them open their
eyes they saged that
you have told us not
to steal so I have but
now they have come
to fight us & you
for when they kill
us then they will
kill you they saged
he was afraid to
fight the American
& so would raise grain
in one night fight

FIG. 1. D. B. Huntington's journal entry written September 1, 1857. Note the second and third lines from the bottom: "they was afraid to fight the American[s] & so would raise grain." Bagley substitutes *allies* for the word *grain* in this entry, which changes the meaning substantially. In the context of the rest of the entry, *grain* makes sense: the Piedes would raise grain rather than take the cattle.

City on September 20, when Arapene, a Native American, told Brigham Young that “the Píedes had killed the whole of a Emigration Company & took all their stock” (170). In nearly every chapter, Bagley speculates about the events without providing concrete factual evidence.

Furthermore, Bagley errs when he states that theological concepts were a direct motivation for killing the emigrants at Mountain Meadows. He gives literal meaning to Young’s sermons and statements about blood atonement, avenging the blood of the prophets, and using the Indians as battle axes of the Lord and rules out any possibility that Young or his listeners viewed these statements as symbolic, figurative, theological, or hyperbolic in meaning. Bagley fails to provide any empirical evidence to show a direct link between Brigham Young’s rhetoric and the massacre. Similar faulty arguments have been used to connect the oratory over slavery with the primary cause of the Civil War.

Attempting to write a gripping story, Bagley exaggerates and sensationalizes the details beyond their actual significance. Throughout the entire book, facts associated with the massacre become crucial when tied to prophecy, omens, signs, oaths, patriarchal blessings, or temple rituals. Facts become extremely important if they are dark and dirty, have hidden meaning, or hint at some insidious secret, plot, or conspiracy. In addition, Bagley creates a melodrama characterizing the Mormons as sinister, evil, deceptive people, while the governor and Indian agents who cooperate with the Saints are weak, spineless dupes. The judges, military officers, and officials who challenge the Mormon theocracy he views as honorable, upright, respectable, courageous men.

Among the many volumes on this topic that bash Brigham Young and the Mormons, Bagley’s *Blood of the Prophets* stands alongside William Wise’s *Mountain Meadows Massacre: An American Legend and a Monumental Crime*. At the other pole, there are books that blame the Indians and the Arkansas emigrants for this terrible disaster. In between these two extremes, Juanita Brooks’s *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* stands as one of the most balanced books on the subject, even though it has some serious limitations. This topic, consequently, needs an honest scholarly version to correct the false impressions that so often distort the tragic event that occurred on September 11, 1857.

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1. Dimick Baker *Huntington Journal* 1808–1879, September 1, 1857, 14, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

Will Bagley. *Blood of the Prophets:
Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows.*

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Paul H. Peterson

No other circumstance in the history of the Latter-day Saints in Utah has undermined their Christian self-esteem with such force as the Mountain Meadows massacre,” wrote prominent Mormon writer Levi Peterson in 1988.¹ And so it is. Even today, informed Church members wonder how a generation claiming to be a restoration of New Testament Christianity could participate in an event so utterly ghastly as the killing of over one hundred Arkansas emigrants in fall 1857, emigrants who were passing through Utah Territory on their way to California to establish new homes.

Just over half a century ago, famed Utah historian Juanita Brooks attempted to unravel the mystery of how a good people could commit such a crime. Her book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* has long been regarded by knowledgeable historians as the definitive treatment of and perhaps even the final word on this terrible event. But according to historian and columnist Will Bagley, the availability of a plethora of documents unavailable to Brooks justifies a fresh interpretation of the event. An indefatigable researcher who has immersed himself in nineteenth-century western and Mormon history and a talented and colorful writer, Bagley has spent years combing archives to produce what in many respects is the most comprehensive and complete examination of the massacre. Certainly, at the very least, Bagley has significantly increased our knowledge of the three principal groups involved: the Mormons, the emigrants, and the Native Americans. He has also provided a good deal of information about what might be called a fourth group: Mormon dissenters who by both spoken word and written text were openly critical of Church involvement in the massacre. And finally, Bagley has summarized recent events surrounding Mountain Meadows—the attempts to bring about some degree of reconciliation and the efforts to place a fitting monument on the site. All of this

new information is couched in an attractive volume with maps and photographs, some of which are original.

Bagley readily admits that his book will arouse controversy but hopes that in the ensuing years, ostensibly when frayed emotions give way to reasoned thinking, it “will emulate the fate of Juanita Brooks’s *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* and that the book will come to be appreciated as a service to my people [presumably Mormons] and to history” (xix). Given the fact that, for the most part, Bagley depicts the Latter-day Saints and especially their leaders as a single-minded people with a proclivity for fanaticism and violence, this may not happen.

Indeed, Bagley makes it clear that “believers looking for an inspirational recounting of LDS history will need to look elsewhere” (xv). Bagley’s version is a story of power gone awry. The massacre, he tells us, was the logical climax of a twisted theology that required expiation and atonement for past depredations, crimes, and sins, perceived or real, committed against Latter-day Saints. More to the point, Bagley notes that Church leaders taught (and lay Church members believed) that the persecutions of Mormons in Missouri and Nauvoo—and especially the murders of Church leaders Joseph and Hyrum Smith and the murder of Apostle Parley P. Pratt earlier that year in Arkansas—cried out for vengeance. “Early Mormonism’s peculiar obsession with blood and vengeance,” Bagley notes in his concluding chapter, “created the society that made the massacre possible if not inevitable” (379).

Bagley’s boldest and most controversial conclusion is his assertion that Brigham Young orchestrated the event. Bagley bases this assertion on what he claims is a large body of circumstantial evidence and especially on one revealing (and, for Bagley, clinching) entry in the journal of Mormon Indian interpreter Dimick Huntington. Huntington wrote of a meeting between Brigham Young and Indian leaders on September 1, 1857, at which Brigham supposedly gave permission and even encouragement to Paiutes to steal emigrant cattle. As recorded by Bagley, the entry reads:

I gave them all the cattle that had gone to Cal the south rout it made them open their eyes they sayed that you have told us not to steal so I have but now they have come to fight us & you for when they kill us they will kill you they sayd the[y] was afraid to fight the americans & so would raise [allies] and we might fight. (114)

Careful readers will likely point out that much about this loosely worded entry is unclear or even debatable. In terms of Bagley’s argument, there are glaring omissions. Among other things, there is no specific instruction to the Indians to massacre the emigrants, and there is no indication of premeditated Mormon complicity. But Bagley claims there was a

tacit understanding (seemingly, almost a winking of the eyes) between Brigham Young and Indian leaders as to the real stakes at hand. When encouraging tribal leaders to steal the cattle of the emigrants, Bagley maintains, Brigham Young “was fully aware that Indians would kill innocent people” (380). Furthermore, Bagley insists, Brigham would have been satisfied with the terrible results (at least until his plans went awry) because he was acting “with the certainty that he was the instrument of God’s will” (380).

Bagley maintains that his book is merely an extension rather than a revision of Brooks’s volume, and he strongly implies that were Brooks alive today (and therefore privy to the new evidence, including the Huntington journal entry), she would likely agree with his conclusions. These are bold claims, and I question whether Bagley’s evidence supports such temerity. Let us examine each claim.

Brooks concluded that the motivations of the participants were rooted in past persecutions in Missouri and Illinois, incendiary Reformation preaching (including firebrand sermons from Brigham Young and George A. Smith), war hysteria, and the sometimes abusive behavior of Arkansas emigrants. Brooks said that Native Americans were involved, and in her 1970 edition of *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, she claimed that Indians were more prominent than she had earlier assumed. Despite some involvement on the part of emigrants and Native Americans, however, Brooks made it clear that “the final responsibility must rest squarely upon the Mormons, William H. Dame as commander, and those under him who helped to form the policy and to carry out the orders.”² For Brooks the paramount cause was war hysteria. “This tragedy,” she wrote, “could only have happened in the emotional climate of war.”³ She claimed that John D. Lee was involved, but less so than others, and was therefore unfairly scapegoated. She also claimed that while Brigham Young “did not order the massacre, and would have prevented it if he could, [he] was accessory after the fact, in that he knew what had happened, and how and why it happened.”⁴ Brooks further charged Brigham Young with stonewalling the investigation and allowing Lee to shoulder the entire burden.

Bagley does not concur with many of these conclusions. While both Brooks and Bagley agree that the massacre was brought on by a combination of political and religious beliefs, the authors are poles apart in the importance they attach to each cause. I have already noted fundamental differences in how Brooks and Bagley deal with root causes and the extent of Brigham Young’s involvement, but Bagley notes additional points of departure in chapter nineteen. Bagley faults Brooks for her overly sympathetic treatment of Lee (most historians would agree that Brooks’s corrective

was in order), her shallow treatment of the background of the emigrants, and her acceptance of some of the slanderous tales implicating both the emigrants and the Paiutes. In Bagley's view, the emigrants caused nary a problem, and the Paiutes were largely and unjustly duped by Mormons to help carry out their nefarious plot of avenging the blood of their prophets.⁵ In short, it seems to me that these differences are substantial enough that one could easily argue Bagley's volume is a significant revision—not just an extension—of Brooks's important work.

Bagley's second claim—that Brooks would likely agree with his conclusions and that indeed, years before her death, she actually concluded that Brigham was responsible—is even more tenuous. After making the questionable (and puzzling) claim that “a historian's professional and personal conclusions often differ” (363), Bagley notes that, in a private letter written in 1970, Brooks expressed the view that Brigham Young was directly responsible for the tragedy. Brooks's biographer, Levi Peterson, dealt with this letter and Brooks's comment in his award-winning biography of Brooks written in 1988. Significantly, Peterson noted Brooks's observation about Brigham Young's involvement without further commentary. When I first read Peterson's account of this incident over a decade ago, I assumed it meant that, after some years, Brooks was simply reaffirming with additional emphasis her belief that Brigham Young could not escape responsibility for his role in the massacre, namely that he was an accessory after the fact (as she indicated in her book) and that as governor of Utah Territory he bore responsibility to protect the emigrants.⁶ I suspect that most readers, including Peterson, interpreted Brooks's comment in her letter as I did. It is difficult to believe that the candid Brooks would not have accused Brigham Young of instigating the event had she actually believed that he had done so.

At least some of the differences between Brooks and Bagley, I would judge, have to do with the inherent attitudes and biases of each; historians are people, and all people have biases. Oftentimes, working from the same sources as Brooks, Bagley is inclined to believe the worst about the Latter-day Saints. For example, regarding the accusations that Mormons participated in rape at the massacre site, Brooks dismissed such notions, noting “how repeated suggestion and whisperings may grow into more and more impossible tales, which are then passed on as fact.”⁷ Bagley, on the other hand, after affirming that Brooks may be right on this point, concludes that “the persistence of the tales suggests they cannot be discounted entirely” (151).

Another example of Bagley's upping the ante when it comes to Latter-day Saint misdeeds can be seen in his treatment of the Mormon Reformation. Like Brooks, Bagley notes the excesses and some of the unfortunate

results of overzealous Reformation preaching. But if blood occasionally drips through the pages of Brooks's discussion of the Reformation, it drenches the pages of Bagley's one-dimensional account (see 49–53).

In particular, Bagley, more than Brooks, views pioneer Saints as a people who, with relatively little compunction, could carry out acts of violence in the name of their religion. While Brooks was critical of the blood atonement sermons, the vengeance mentalities, and the sometimes distressing results of each, she did not regard them as the dominant religious motifs of the Latter-day Saints.

Since this penchant for violence among Mormons is central to Bagley's thesis, it invites further comment. In his preface, Bagley states that Latter-day Saints have not given adequate attention to early Mormon religious violence. He is probably right on this point. Consistent with their Old Testament orientation of viewing themselves as a restoration of Israel, many Latter-day Saints seemed to envision a theocratic future when retributive punishment, including death, would be carried out for certain grievous sins or crimes. Sermons from Church leaders on blood atonement are a matter of record, as are remarks justifying the use of violence in dealing with apostates and antagonists of various kinds. In large part because they were the most persecuted and hounded religious group in nineteenth-century America, some pioneer Saints and their leaders also talked of avenging or righting the wrongs perpetrated upon them. While many Saints understood vengeance as a matter best left in God's hand, some probably took matters into their own hands. As historian Thomas Alexander observed in his excellent centennial history of Utah, the Potter-Parrish murders in Springville in 1857 are likely examples of such retribution.⁸ That any such events occurred is, of course, tragic.

Regarding these sermons advocating physical violence, I have always believed that some of the rhetoric (but not all) could be attributed to Brigham Young's occasional tendency to engage in hyperbole as a means of frightening the Saints into conformity. Bagley dismisses such a notion out of hand. "Like the faithful who sat through his fire-and-brimstone sermons," Bagley writes, "I believe Brigham Young meant exactly what he said"⁹ (xv).

But aside from the hyperbole issue, I think Bagley gives readers the impression that "holy murder" was almost commonplace in Utah Territory. That impression is false. Certainly people were killed in Utah, and some of the killings were undoubtedly motivated by religious beliefs. But people were killed in Utah Territory (and elsewhere) for a variety of reasons. There was a good deal of violence in the nineteenth century, especially in the American West. Frontier justice and mountain common law were axioms that were sometimes acted upon in Western communities. Our limited

studies seem to indicate that there was no more—and perhaps even less—violence in pioneer Utah than in other Western regions.¹⁰ In view of such evidence, admittedly preliminary, this question arises: If Mormons were inclined to acts of mayhem or murder on a whim, and since Church members felt they were surrounded by so many scoundrels, why weren't more people killed?

For me, undeniably a believing and practicing Latter-day Saint, the answer is that for Brigham Young and the overwhelming majority of Latter-day Saints, blood atonement and other related notions or doctrines were more often theoretical constructs than religious duties that were acted upon. As one (among many) who has spent some time reading the papers and correspondence Brigham Young wrote in the 1850s, I think it is a considerable stretch to suggest that avenging the blood of Mormon martyrs was a controlling religious conviction. In truth, the conclusion I have formed after reading Brigham Young's papers is that he believed strongly in Christian civility and human decency.

A close reading of the Brigham Young papers could also persuade some readers that the Mormon President believed strongly in divine providence and, more particularly, that God would take care of his people (and by implication, deal with their enemies) if the Saints were steadfast and obedient. This theme appears over and over again in his sermons. If the Saints followed the promptings of the Spirit, Brigham Young observed in 1863, "the enemies of this kingdom [may] do what they please for . . . God will overrule all things for the special benefit of his people."¹¹

In summation, despite the extensive new information about the massacre that Bagley provides in this volume, he has gone beyond his evidence in concluding that Brigham Young instigated this horrendous event. Brooks's arguments regarding Brigham's involvement remain the most historically responsible. I also continue to believe, as Brooks did, that the massacre cannot be completely understood unless viewed in the context of wartime conditions. I believe that, from the moment the emigrants entered Utah Territory, they entered a war zone and that both emigrants and Mormons talked and acted differently because of it. While allowing for a multiplicity of causative factors, if any sense can be made of this tragedy, understanding the massacre as the terrible result of war hysteria seems to make the most sense.

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1. Levi S. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 3.
2. Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 95, 144, 218–20. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 205–7, contains an excellent summary of Brooks's conclusions. See also Jan Shipps, "Foreword," in Brooks, *Massacre*, x; and Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 238.
3. Brooks, *Massacre*, xvii. See also 218.
4. Brooks, *Massacre*, 219.
5. Bagley maintains that the only real controversy between the emigrants and the Mormons had to do with grazing rights but noted that such disputes were common to all emigrants trekking westward and that therefore nothing should be made of it. Given the realities that drought-like conditions had existed in Utah since 1855 and that grass was scarce, one wonders if dialogues over grazing rights became more than just spirited exchanges.
6. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 338. See also Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets*, 363.
7. Brooks, *Massacre*, 105–6.
8. Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1995), 125.
9. I have argued elsewhere that Brigham Young's motive in preaching blood atonement sermons during the Reformation (or even before the Reformation commenced) was more practical and calculated than some have maintained and that he "was not above using hyperbole or incendiary talk to bring about desired results." See "The Mormon Reformation of 1856–1857: The Rhetoric and the Reality," *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 66–67. In "Wilford Woodruff and the Mormon Reformation of 1855–57," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (summer 1992): 27, Thomas G. Alexander also observed that Brigham's references to blood atonement were "probably hyperbole." Of Brigham Young's general propensity to engage in calculated rhetorical excess, there is little doubt among historians who know him best. See Ronald W. Walker and Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Himself: An Autobiographical Recollection," *Journal of Mormon History* 4 (1977): 26–28; and Ronald W. Walker, "Raining Pitchforks: Brigham Young as Preacher," *Sunstone* 8 (May–June 1983): 5–9. While seemingly agreeing that Brigham Young did occasionally exaggerate, D. Michael Quinn concluded that Brigham was serious when he sermonized on blood atonement and that pioneer Saints recognized this. See *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 246–47, 249, 533.
10. Historian Newell G. Bringhurst noted that Brigham Young did give sermons on blood atonement but that he also taught it could be averted through repentance. Bringhurst contended that "there was no rash of killings in Utah despite the forebodings of certain anti-Mormon detractors" and that overall "the level of violence in Mormonism's frontier sanctuary was much lower than in other western regions." See *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier* (Boston: Little Brown, 1986), 130. Lawyer Kenneth L. Cannon concluded that extralegal violence was common in the nineteenth century, that it was supported by many Americans, including prominent ones, and that "it is from this perspective that the relatively few instances of extralegal violence in early Utah must be viewed." See Kenneth L. Cannon II, "'Mountain Common Law': The Extralegal Punishment of Seducers in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (fall 1983): 327.

In *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 260–61, D. Michael Quinn allowed for more widespread Mormon violence than either Bringhurst or Cannon. Quinn claimed that Mormon theocracy spawned violence but that it is “impossible to determine how many violent deaths occurred for theocratic reasons and how many merely reflected the American West’s pattern of violence.” Quinn also concluded that “the historical evidence indicates that most early Mormons avoided violence and were saddened by the news of such incidents.” My own subjective assessment is that Bagley has gone beyond Quinn in his characterization of pioneer Latter-day Saints as a violence-prone people.

11. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 10:256, October 6, 1863. See also Hugh Nibley, “Brigham Young and the Enemy,” in *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 187–246. In noting Brigham Young’s overriding confidence that God would, in due time, deal with the enemies of the kingdom, I am not denying that he sometimes engaged in rough-and-tumble rhetoric. Clearly, he was a multifaceted person.

Will Bagley. *Blood of the Prophets:
Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows.*

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander

The massacre at Mountain Meadows remains one of the most heinous and least understood crimes in the history of the American West. How a militia unit of “God-fearing Christians” could have murdered more than 120 people in cold blood seems beyond comprehension. In a previous book, I attempted to understand the massacre by comparing it to “the massacres of Christian Armenians by Moslem Turks, of Jews by Christian Germans, and of Moslem Bosnians by Christian Serbs.”¹ I did not say, as Bagley flippantly claims I did, “the Indians made them do it” (367). On reflection, the massacre should reveal to each of us our vulnerability and our potential—however well hidden—for acts of unspeakable atrocity.

Thanks to the work of Juanita Brooks, we have known both the context and the story of the Mountain Meadows Massacre for more than fifty years.² The context includes the abuse and murder of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the American Midwest and South; the establishment of towns, farms, and churches by Mormon settlers in Utah; the Mormon Reformation of 1856–57; charges of murder, illegal acts under color of law, malicious mischief, and treason leveled against the citizens of Utah by federal appointees; the murder of Parley P. Pratt in Arkansas; the removal of Brigham Young as Utah territorial governor by President James Buchanan; the appointment of a new governor and judges; the march toward Utah of an army of about 2,500 men; the passage through the territory of a party of Arkansas emigrants; and the lives and activities of southern Paiutes.

Beyond the context, the story of the massacre is composed of other elements: the functioning of the Church; the operation of the territorial government; the relationship of the people in the Arkansas party to one another; the preparations by the Utahns for a possible conflict or siege by the army; the efforts of the Utahns to recruit the Paiutes, Goshutes, Utes, and Shoshones as allies against the invading army; the relationship of the

Arkansans to the Utah settlers; the events and deliberations in Cedar City; the dispatch of a messenger to ask the advice of Brigham Young; the mustering of the Iron County militia; the attacks on the emigrants; the murder of the Arkansans; the sparing and disposition of young children; the treatment of the corpses; the disposal of the Arkansans' property; the spreading of the story of the massacre; the efforts to suppress the information; the investigations of the massacre; the attempts to arrest the perpetrators; and the capture, trials, and execution of John D. Lee.

Just as significant to our understanding have been the subsequent treatments of the massacre. The various articles and books about the massacre (some well intentioned, others less so) have struggled to assign responsibility. Some have used information about the massacre for anti-Mormon propaganda. Many have raised questions about the involvement of Brigham Young and the Apostles.

Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets* is the most recent book-length study that tries to cover the ground and provide an interpretation of the context, the story, and the events following the massacre. The major virtue of Bagley's book is that he has done more research on the topic than anyone else to date.

My understanding of the story and its relationship to the context as a historian who has worked in Utah, considered the story, and written about territorial events for more than forty years is as follows: After Young learned of the advance of the army toward Utah, he took steps to protect the people. The Mormons had experienced the wrath of state militia units and the unwillingness of the state and federal governments to protect them in Missouri and Illinois. Mindful of their previous experiences and fearful of the possible consequences of an invasion of Utah, Young prepared for war. Declaring martial law, he instructed Daniel H. Wells, commanding general of the Nauvoo Legion (the legal name of the Utah Territorial Militia) to mobilize the troops throughout the territory. Wells sent militia units to harass the troops by burning their supply trains and by fortifying Echo Canyon. Wells and Young sent George A. Smith, an officer in the legion and member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles who had supervised the early settlement of southern Utah, to urge the people of southern Utah to prepare for possible conflict. Young also instructed the people to abandon Salt Lake City and relocate to Provo and points south. Young deputized Dimick Huntington, an Indian agent, to negotiate with Shoshones and Goshutes to the north and west of Salt Lake City. Huntington sought their support by authorizing them to steal cattle from emigrant parties on the northern overland trail and store these to prepare for a siege. He had Jacob Hamblin, also an Indian agent, bring southern Paiute and northern Ute leaders to

Salt Lake City, where Huntington authorized them to steal cattle on the southern overland route.

Unfortunately, the first emigrant party to pass along the southern route after the declaration of martial law ran into difficulty. Passing through Salt Lake City and leaving the city on about August 5, 1857, the party of emigrants from Arkansas was led by Alexander Fancher and John T. "Jack" Baker and consisted of about 140 women, children, and men. They also drove a herd of cattle estimated at "more than" 400 head (171).

Conflicting accounts of the discord between Utah settlers and the Fancher-Baker party make the story of their passage almost impenetrably murky. We can, however, with some authority affirm that the settlers declined to help resupply the emigrants and struggled to keep the large herd of Arkansans' cattle from the public grazing areas. Juanita Brooks raises a number of questions but believes that there may be some substance to stories of the conflicts between the Fancher-Baker party and settlers from at least Holden (about ten miles north of Fillmore) south and that there is a possibility the Arkansans may have poisoned cattle or a spring.³ Bagley disputes the stories, calling the accounts of the poisoning, which were alleged to have killed some of the Utes or Paiutes, "fabricated propaganda" (380). Bagley concedes, however, that conflicts developed over the grazing of cattle. Donald Moorman argues that other conflicts occurred, including some rather violent confrontations in Cedar City,⁴ but Bagley dismisses these accounts as post hoc rationalizations (380).

Winnowed to its kernel, Bagley's argument rests on the proposition that Mormon Utah was a society of officially sanctioned and publicly practiced violence. He sifts out this argument from a full bag of rhetoric published by such leaders as Brigham Young, Jedediah M. Grant, and George A. Smith and by citing examples of violence. Bagley devotes three pages (50–52) to setting the stage for the massacre by arguing that the Mormons believed in and practiced blood atonement, which he argues consisted in taking the life of anyone who had committed "an unpardonable sin" (51). Even assuming that Bagley is right and that Brigham Young and others believed in blood atonement as something more than a rhetorical device, the doctrine would have called for the death of only those very few individuals whose calling and election had been made sure by being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise and who afterward committed murder. This meaning is clear in the scripture that Bagley cites, Doctrine and Covenants 132:26–27, which itself never mentions atonement. Ignoring his source, however, in a rhetorical flourish he argues, "Whatever the doctrine's precise practice, the sermons of Brigham Young and Jedediah Grant helped to inspire their followers to acts of irrational violence" (52).

In fact, however, if we go beyond Young's and even Bagley's rhetoric, we find the actual situation to have been quite different. Statistics of murders for the nineteenth century are difficult to come by, as I learned with the help of Kathryn Daynes and Craig Foster. The available evidence shows, however, that beyond a few well-publicized murders, we have every right to believe that compared with surrounding territories, Utah was a relatively murder- and violence-free community. Historians regularly cite such murders as the Potter-Parrish homicides of 1857 and the killing of J. King Robinson and S. Newton Brassfield in 1866 as evidence of Utah's violent character. Instead of making generalizations from juicy anecdotes, historians ought to use statistical and comparative methodology to interpret these events.

Although we do not have good statistics on murders for the nineteenth century, we do have statistics on lynchings. Unfortunately, the series begins in 1882 rather than in 1847. Lynching is defined as the taking of life by mob action without legal sanction. It does not include such things as murders committed in robberies or other such violent acts, but it would include murders perpetrated for such reasons as blood atonement. These statistics reveal that during the late nineteenth century Utah was one of the least violent of the American West's nineteen states and territories. With 7 lynchings—one of an African American—between 1882 and 1903, Utah had a better record than all the other jurisdictions except Minnesota (6) and Nevada (5). Montana (85), Colorado (65), New Mexico (34), Arizona (28), and even Iowa (16) exhibited a great deal more violence.⁵

Moreover, Bagley attempts to show that Utah was an essentially violent society by misusing and ignoring evidence from Mormon sources. He calls Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine*, which affirms the belief in blood atonement, an "official LDS commentary" (397 n. 63). Although many people rely on McConkie's work for their understanding of the doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the book represents his own views and is by no means "official." It does not carry the Church's imprimatur.

In 1889, however, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles did issue an official statement that repudiated the doctrine of blood atonement. They wrote:

That this Church views the shedding of human blood with the utmost abhorrence. That we regard the killing of a human being, except in conformity with the civil law, as a capital crime which should be punished by shedding the blood of the criminal, after a public trial before a legally constituted court of the land.

Notwithstanding all the stories told about the killing of apostates, no case of this kind has ever occurred, and of course has never been established against the Church we represent. . . .

We denounce as entirely untrue the allegation which has been made, that our Church favors or believes in the killing of persons who leave the Church or apostatize from its doctrines.

The statement further insists that “offenders against life and property shall be delivered up to and tried by the laws of the land.”⁶ Some may question the statement’s apparent support for capital punishment, but any fair-minded reader must note that the statement requires that such punishments be carried out under the provisions of law, which leaves open the possibility that the people may decide to abolish such a penalty.

Although we lack a thorough comparative study of murders in Utah and other western areas, the available statistical information contradicts Bagley’s impression of Utah society. The best evidence we have at this time is that Bagley is wrong when he insists that “what made Utah’s violence unique in the West was that it occurred in a settled, well-organized community whose leaders publicly sanctioned doctrines of vengeance and ritual murder” (42). In fact, barring further evidence to the contrary, the best evidence we have at this point is that Utah was one of the least violent jurisdictions in the western United States.

Since Bagley’s case rests on the assumption that the Mormon leaders and people were essentially violent people, we do well to examine his use of evidence on this problem. Here his research proves deficient. For instance, he cites Howard A. Christy’s 1978 article on Mormon-Indian relations, which properly makes the case for anti-Indian violence during the earliest years of Utah settlement.⁷ Bagley ignores, however, Christy’s 1979 article on the Walker War and its aftermath, which shows that by 1853 Brigham Young and the Nauvoo Legion leadership favored defense and conciliation rather than violence.⁸

Young actually removed Col. Peter Conover from command in central Utah because Conover refused to follow the conciliatory strategy that the governor dictated.⁹ Moreover, Young appointed in Conover’s stead Col. George A. Smith, who promoted defense and conciliation. We have ample evidence that Smith followed Young’s conciliatory policy. In Bagley’s treatment, however, Smith becomes—without direct evidence—Brigham Young’s agent, “to arrange their [the Fancher-Baker party’s] destruction at a remote and lonely spot” (381).

Conover’s actions show that Utahns did not (contrary to general belief) comply with all directives given by Brigham Young and other

Church leaders in the 1850s. Such evidences are not hard to find: for example, most Saints did not send cattle to Salt Lake City during the 1853–54 Walker War as they were instructed, and settlers in some places never built the forts Brigham ordered.

Bagley tries to support his fictional tale of a violent society by crediting the report of Judge William W. Drummond on murders committed by the Mormons. In a report that Norman Furniss and other authorities believe probably tipped the balance in favor of sending the army to Utah, Drummond charged that the Mormons engineered the murders of territorial delegate Almon Babbitt, Capt. John Gunnison, and Judge Leonidas Shaver.¹⁰ In spite of its flaws and prejudice, Bagley cites Drummond's report approvingly (77). In fact, Cheyennes killed Babbitt on the high plains, Gunnison died at the hands of Pahvant Utes, and Shaver died a natural death.

After arguing for the idea of Utah as an institutionally violent society, in what seems a non sequitur, Bagley refuses to believe that any of the stories of conflicts between the Mormon settlers and the Fancher-Baker migrants, except those over herd grounds, have any value. He acknowledges that both Alexander Fancher, who served as a private in a "borderland vendetta" (58) and John "Jack" Baker who "apparently did kill a few of his neighbors" (63) had violent backgrounds. Nevertheless, he whitewashes those admissions with the rhetorical device of inserting a chapter of idyllic prose on the families of the Arkansas emigrants. He provides no similar idyllic treatment of Mormon family life.

Most significantly, he declines to credit Mormon accounts, especially reminiscent accounts. In fact, he frequently denigrates accounts because they come from Mormon sources. The major exception is John D. Lee's *Mormonism Unveiled*, which he cites approvingly in a number of places.¹¹ Historians understand that Lee's reminiscences must be used with care because the original manuscript for the book does not exist, and it was edited by his attorney W. W. Bishop after Lee's death and before its publication.

On the other hand, Bagley shows no similar reservation about citing reminiscent accounts by those critical of the Mormons. Most significantly, he fails to identify the religious persuasion of other writers, apparently believing that such information is irrelevant. This is a serious mistake. Recent studies, specifically the work of Sarah Barringer Gordon, show that other Americans, especially Evangelical Protestants and their political supporters, carried on a sustained and deceitful anti-Mormon campaign throughout the nineteenth century.¹²

Bagley should at least have gotten a clue to this pervasive anti-Mormonism from the comments of Maj. James H. Carlton, whom he cites

approvingly. In addition to focusing on the perpetrators of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in words reminiscent of Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs's extermination order, Carlton urged the banishment or execution of all Mormons, not just the perpetrators of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Carlton writes, "Give them one year, no more; and if after that they pollute our soil by their presence, make literally Children of the Mist of them" (230).

Instead, Bagley makes heroes of the anti-Mormons and denigrates the work of those who attempted to promote peaceful relations between Utahns and others. Bagley's treatment, then, of Gov. Alfred Cumming, Col. Thomas L. Kane, Kanosh, and with some exceptions Indian Superintendent Jacob Forney is generally negative. His heroes are Carlton, Judge John Cradlebaugh, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, and Marshal Peter Dotson.

Significantly, in contrast to his denigration of the work of other Mormon historians, Bagley is extremely deferential in writing about Juanita Brooks. Brooks, who remained a faithful Latter-day Saint her entire life, deserves our respect. She was, after all, the first to break through the myths of Mountain Meadows and lay the blame where it ought to have been laid—with the leaders and people of southern Utah. Nevertheless, Bagley's evenhandedness with Brooks seems exceedingly ironic since Brooks believes that conflicts between the Mormons and the Arkansans probably occurred, and she disagrees with the essence of Bagley's interpretation that Brigham Young planned the massacre, George A. Smith ordered it, and the southern Utah militiamen followed those orders.

One area in which Bagley has difficulty reconciling his interpretation with the evidence is in the letter Young sent with James Haslam telling the people of southern Utah to leave the emigrants alone. Since he believes that Young had already ordered the massacre, he must invent a change of policy or a secret code to fit the best direct evidence that Young opposed, rather than ordered, the massacre. In what seems clearly flawed logic, Bagley argues: "Whatever the letter's intent, it carried a hidden but clear message for Isaac Haight: make sure the Mormons could blame whatever happened on the Paiutes" (137).

The evidence that Bagley has assembled makes it clear that we need a thoroughly new study of the Mountain Meadows massacre. That study, however, should not allow speculation, rhetoric, and flawed logic to replace clear evidence. While Bagley does present new evidence, his interpretation is essentially the same as the nineteenth-century anti-Mormon argument. In this sense his study does not provide anything new.

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1. Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah, the Right Place: The Official Centennial History* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1995), 132.

2. Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1950).

3. Brooks, *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, 46–52.

4. Donald R. Moorman and Gene A. Sessions, *Camp Floyd and the Mormons: The Utah War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 129–31.

5. James Elbert Cutler, *Lynch-Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 180. On the lynching of an African-American, see Craig L. Foster, “Myth vs. Reality in the Burt Murder and Harvey Lynching,” manuscript furnished by the author. I am indebted to Foster for sharing other material on lynching as well.

6. “Official Declaration,” *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833–1964*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 3:184–85.

7. Howard A. Christy, “Open Hand and Mailed Fist: Mormon-Indian Relations in Utah, 1847–52,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (summer 1978): 216–35.

8. Howard A. Christy, “The Walker War: Defense and Conciliation as Strategy,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (fall 1979): 395–420.

9. Christy, “The Walker War,” 404–5.

10. Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict, 1850–1858* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960), 18, 54–57.

11. John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; Including the Remarkable Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee; and Complete Life of Brigham Young*, ed. W. W. Bishop (1877; reprint Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Fierro Blanca, 2001).

12. Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). See also Terryl Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Readers may note that Gordon is an Episcopalian.

Avenues toward Christianity: Mormonism in Comparative Church History, by Christian Gellinek and Hans-Wilhelm Kelling (Global Publications, 2001)

This is not a book to be read in one session. Its title is well chosen because of the richness in diversity and tradition that is reflected in this work. The book does not address a narrow issue, but, as the word *avenues* indicates, takes a broader perspective on the Restoration, Mormon history, and doctrines. The authors, with their heritage in Germany, provide appropriate insights into Mormonism for German readers. At the same time, any reader unfamiliar with Latter-day Saint history in Germany will find that this work provides valuable information, especially about the early days of the Church in Germany and Denmark. The book also covers much of the historical development of Mormonism in the United States, and selective issues and key Mormon doctrines are thoughtfully discussed. Such discussions include perspectives on the Book of Mormon as an extension of the canon of scripture testifying of Christ.

Because they have intimate familiarity with the doctrines of the Reformation, the authors provide the reader with solid arguments about the historical context of Mormonism. Gellinek's previous research of Hugo Grotius demonstrates similarities between the thinking of pre-Renaissance European scholars and doctrines associated with the Restoration. The comparison between Reformed Christianity and Mormon Christianity gives context to views about the purpose of life in both Calvinism and Mormonism.

This is a book that deserves more than one reading. Many of the issues discussed have to be studied and con-

templated; one sitting will not do justice to the intended reach of this scholarly work.

—Jacques du Plessis

In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture, by Alister McGrath (Anchor Books, 2001)

This thoroughly informative and completely enjoyable volume really tells a story. And what a story it is! The triumphant tale of the King James Bible is complete with political twists, religious controversies, national pride, royal machinations, scholarly posturing, economic opportunism, technological inventions, vested interests, profound compromises, and, ultimately, phenomenal success. The author, who is Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford University and Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, knows this rich story inside and out, and he elucidates every stage and detail with captivating clarity.

Major players in this intriguing story include such notables as Johannes Gutenberg, John Wycliffe, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther, Henry VIII, William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, Richard Grafton, John Calvin, William Whittingham, Queen Elizabeth I, James I, John Reynolds, Richard Bancroft, six companies of translators (two each from Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford), Charles I, Archbishop William Laud, Oliver Cromwell, and Charles II. How can you lose with a cast like that?

The plot thickens time after time as Bibles battle Bibles, as religious crises hinge on the meanings of single words and phrases, and as fortunes and reputations are made or lost over one fortuitous

or fateful decision after another. As tensions mount, comic relief gratefully arrives as surprising ironies, humorous errors, and remarkable coincidences all line up to yield the King James Bible.


The authorized version of the Bible not only changed the English nation, enthroned the English language, and shaped the English culture; it also was the product of English honor, piety, and stubborn determination. Anyone interested in knowing how the KJV came to be will have a hard time putting this readable book down. And a harder time not picking it up again.


—John W. Welch

THE KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF *BYU STUDIES*


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