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The Sweetwater River. On November 4, 1856, the Martin Company, assisted by members of the Grant rescue party, forded this river under extreme conditions of cold and wind. The rescuers' names have been immortalized for the heroics performed that day for the company. After crossing the river, the company made its way to a sheltered cove, which became known as Martin's Cove. The cove is a half mile behind the photographer's position here. The photograph looks to the east, with Devil's Gate two miles away and slightly to the left. Courtesy Howard A. Christy.

The Martin Handcart Company at the Sweetwater

Another Look

Chad M. Orton

On November 4, 1856, members of the beleaguered Martin Handcart Company reached the Sweetwater River. More than two weeks earlier, on October 19, the day an early winter storm overtook the company, these same handcart pioneers had forded the Platte River. “Very trying in consequence of its width and the cold weather,” James Bleak wrote of that experience.¹ Now after sixteen days’ exposure to snow and relentless cold, the company faced the challenge of another river crossing. The thought of fording the relatively shallow but freezing-cold river was more than many weak and frozen pioneers could bear.² One member of the company, who was “much worn down,” upon reaching the river

asked in a plaintive tone, “Have we got to go across there?” On being answered yes, he was so much affected that he was completely overcome.

1. James G. Bleak, Journal, October 19, 1856, holograph, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

2. John Jaques, who came to Utah in the Martin Company, left a vivid description of the spot where the company forded the Sweetwater:

The passage of the Sweetwater at this point was a severe operation to many of the company. . . . It was the last ford that the emigrants waded over. The water was not less than two feet deep, perhaps a little more in the deepest parts, but it was intensely cold. The ice was three or four inches thick, and the bottom of the river muddy or sandy. I forget exactly how wide the stream was there, but I think thirty or forty yards. It seemed a good deal wider than that to those who pulled their handcarts through it. (J. J. [John Jaques], “Some Reminiscences,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, December 15, 1878, 1)

The 1856 rescue of the Willie and Martin handcart companies and the Hunt and Hodgetts wagon companies by a virtual army of modern day good Samaritans is one of the great stories of both LDS and Western U.S. history. Because of the quick action of Brigham Young and the willingness of individuals to answer the clarion call of a prophet, the number of deaths in these companies resulting from the early winter storms that trapped them hundreds of miles from their destination was greatly reduced.



Few stories of this massive rescue effort have captured the hearts of Latter-day Saints like the story of rescuers from the Salt Lake Valley carrying members of the Martin Company across the Sweetwater River. The thought of individuals risking their health and possibly their lives by spending an extended period of time in a freezing and ice filled river to assist virtual strangers who had become physically and emotionally drained by what they had endured is both touching and inspiring.

Like so many, I was first introduced to the Sweetwater crossing through the best-known account of these heroics, which is particularly moving because of its powerful simplicity. Over time, I learned of other accounts and documents that also had bearing on this frequently told story. Taken together these sources present a new, more accurate view of this event. Although not the only remarkable story associated with the rescue, the Martin Company's crossing of the Sweetwater serves as a reminder that for an extended period of time countless individuals demonstrated the best of human nature under extremely adverse conditions.



Panorama of the Sweetwater River. The river's meandering course demonstrates why the Martin Handcart Company had already crossed the Sweetwater five times before undertaking a sixth crossing during an early winter storm. Courtesy Howard A. Christy.

That was the last straw. His fortitude and manhood gave way. He exclaimed, "O Dear? I can't go through that," and burst into tears. His wife, who was by his side, had the stouter heart of the two at that juncture, and she said soothingly, "Don't cry, Jimmy. I'll pull the handcart for you."³

This emigrant and his wife, however, were spared the additional trial of having to wade the ice-filled river. Members of a relief party that had

Although the Sweetwater is only thirty to forty feet wide where the Martin Company crossed, they were not able to go directly across as the ford of the river necessitated a diagonal crossing. The company entered at a low spot in the bank, angled across to another low spot, then exited. Jaques noted, "It was easy enough to go into the river, but not so easy to pull across it and get out again. The way of the ford was to go into the river a few yards, then turn to the right down stream a distance, perhaps forty or fifty yards, and then turn to the left and made for the opposite bank." Jaques, "Some Reminiscences," December 15, 1878, 1.

Josiah Rogerson, who was a teenager during the journey, later wrote: "The creek here was at least two rods wide, and from two to three feet deep, with plenty of ice and snow, so as to carve the recollection forever in the minds of all that waded that stream." Josiah Rogerson, "Martin's Handcart Company, 1856," *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, November 24, 1907, magazine section, 8.

3. Jaques, "Some Reminiscences," December 15, 1878, 1.

arrived a few days earlier from the Salt Lake Valley were at the river to assist the Martin Company across.

The best-known account of the crossing of that cold November day was written by Solomon F. Kimball:

After they [Martin Company] had given up in despair, after all hopes had vanished, after every apparent avenue of escape seemed closed, three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue, and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of the illfated handcart company across the snowbound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly, "that act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end."⁴

While Solomon Kimball left a moving description of a truly heroic act, his is not the only account of the rescue. These various accounts, which include both published and unpublished statements, frequently differ regarding specific details. Taken together, however, they present a fairly unified view of the heroics on November 4, 1856.

Because Solomon Kimball did not have access to all the records available today, he did not get every detail exactly right when he told the story. However, because he made the effort, the Sweetwater crossing continues to receive the attention it deserves and continues to be a source of inspiration to those who know about what has been called "a deed of especial valor."⁵

The evidence indicates that more than three rescuers braved the icy water that day. Of those positively identified as being involved in the Sweetwater crossing, none were exactly eighteen. Although these rescuers helped a great many of the handcart pioneers across the river, they carried only a portion of the company across. While some of these rescuers complained of health problems that resulted from the experience, most lived long and active lives that terminated in deaths that cannot be definitively attributed to their exposure to the icy water that day.

4. Solomon F. Kimball, "Belated Emigrants of 1856," *Improvement Era* 17, no. 4 (February 1914): 288. Solomon Kimball, who was nine at the time of the Martin Company, was the younger brother of one of the rescuers, David P. Kimball.

5. "Gen. Kimball Is Called by Death," *Salt Lake Herald*, December 31, 1907, 12.

The underlying meaning of the statement attributed to Brigham Young—publicly promising rescuers eternal life for this one act alone—is not entirely evident. Because there are no contemporary records of this statement, it needs to be examined in terms of both what was being said around the time of the rescue and in terms of gospel principles. Brigham Young did publicly associate exaltation with the effort to rescue the stranded pioneer companies, as did Heber C. Kimball, who publicly praised by name two who helped at the Sweetwater. However, both Young and Kimball taught that the tie between the rescue and the celestial kingdom was conditional in that the individuals involved needed to meet established requirements that all Latter-day Saints must attain of living their religion and enduring to the end. Individuals should not be misled to believe that one heroic act on their part will guarantee exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

In a variant account of the Sweetwater crossing also written by Solomon Kimball, he reported Young's comments differently (discussed below). Rather than stating that Young promised eternal life, Kimball wrote that Young proclaimed that the rescuers would become immortalized for their heroics. This prophecy, written at a time when the Willie and Martin experience was widely seen only as a disaster, is not necessarily inconsistent with what Kimball wrote later and has come true primarily because he was willing to retell the story. As a result, he helped change the perception of Latter-day Saints concerning the handcarts and helped elevate the Willie and Martin story from simply a tragic event to one that demonstrated the triumph of the human spirit under adverse conditions.



C. Allen Huntington

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



George W. Grant

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



David P. Kimball

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

How Many Rescuers Were There?

Although Kimball mentioned three rescuers, it cannot be determined exactly how many men risked their lives and health to help the emigrants across the Sweetwater. Available information suggests there were more than three.

Martin Company member William Binder was imprecise about the number but later recalled that “several of the Valley brethren whose names I did not know laboured dilligently for hours.”⁶ Binder’s recollection of “several” rescuers is similar to that of another company member, John Jaques.

More than twenty years after the events, Jaques wrote the first published history of the Martin Company in a series of letters that appeared in the *Salt Lake Daily Herald* between December 1, 1878, and January 19, 1879. In his letter of December 14, 1878, Jaques discussed the Sweetwater crossing. Like Binder, he did not mention men by name, but he did try to identify two individuals. In addition to these two, Jaques reported that “several others” were involved. “A son of Heber C. Kimball and a son of George D. Grant, and I believe several others of the relief party, waded the river. . . . If I were certain of the names of all those brave waders I would insert them here.”⁷

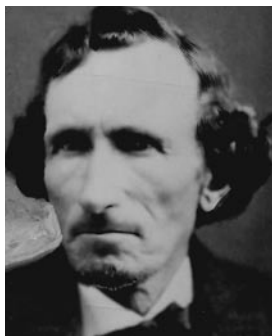
A month later, on January 19, 1879, the *Herald* published Jaques’s final article. “All things earthly have an end. So must these handcart papers, and this is the last of them,” he wrote. Before closing his account, however, he revisited the Sweetwater crossing rescue. This time he provided something he did not have a month earlier—names of rescuers. While Jaques provided names, he noted that he did not know this information himself but was only recounting what he had been told. Rather than three individuals, Jaques mentioned four by name: “I am told that the ‘boys’ who waded the Sweetwater and carried the women and children across were D. P. Kimball, George W. Grant, Stephen W. Taylor, and C. A. Huntington.”⁸

Kimball, Grant, Taylor, and Huntington were not the only members of the relief company with the Martin Company when it crossed the Sweetwater. They were part of a group of twenty-seven rescuers, according to Daniel W. Jones’s published autobiography. “These are all the names that I remember, if there were any more I have been unable to find them,” Jones

6. William Binder, *Reminiscences*, [n.d.], holograph, 4, Church Archives.

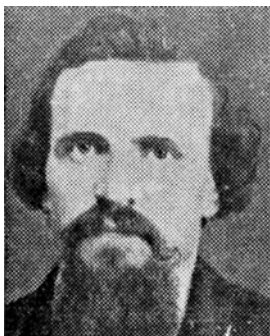
7. Jaques, “Some Reminiscences,” December 15, 1878, 1.

8. J. J. [John Jaques], “Some Reminiscences,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, January 19, 1879, 1.



George D. Grant

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



William Broomhead

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Charles Franklin Decker

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Harvey Harris Cluff

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



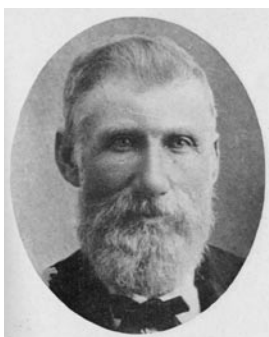
Robert T. Burton

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Stephen W. Taylor

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Ira Nebeker

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Thomas E. Ricks

Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

wrote.⁹ While some members of the relief party remained behind to fulfill specific duties along the trail, Jones noted that “most of the [rescue] company” met the Martin “hand-cart company at Greasewood creek” several days prior to the Sweetwater crossing.¹⁰

Of the rescuers mentioned by Jones, eighteen have been positively identified as assisting the Martin Company on the day they crossed the Sweetwater, November 4, 1856: Thomas Alexander, William Broomhead, Robert Burton, Harvey Cluff, Charles Decker, George D. Grant, George W. Grant, Benjamin Hampton, C. Allen Huntington, Daniel W. Jones, David P. Kimball, Ira Nebeker, Joel Parrish, Edward Peck, Thomas Ricks, Stephen Taylor, Chauncey Webb, and Cyrus Wheelock.¹¹ Of the remaining nine, four are known to have been elsewhere fulfilling other assignments: Joseph A. Young and Abel Garr were heading back to Salt Lake with George D. Grant’s written report to Brigham Young about the situation; William H. Kimball was with the Willie Handcart Company to assist its members; and Reddick Allred had remained at South Pass to guard a wagonload of flour. The whereabouts of the other five—Tom Bankhead, Amos Fairbanks, Charles Grey, Henry Goldsborough, and John R. Murdock—are not known for certain, although it is likely that they were the “few men” that Jones reported to have turned back with William Kimball to assist the Willie Company.¹²

Given the number of rescuers with the Martin Company at the time, it is not surprising that at least one more rescuer has been identified by name as also ferrying people across the river. A brief published biography of Ira Nebeker identifies him as another who helped at the Sweetwater: “In the fall of 1856 . . . he went with George D. Grant’s company to the relief of the belated handcart immigrants . . . many times wading in the icy cold Sweetwater and carrying on his back enfeebled immigrants.”¹³

9. Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians. A True Yet Thrilling Narrative of the Author’s Experiences among the Natives* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1890), 63.

10. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 69.

11. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 63–65; Patience Loader Archer, *Reminiscences* [ca. 1890], Church Archives; William Broadhead, *Diary*, typescript, Church Archives; “Harvey Cluff’s Account of the Rescue,” as included in LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*; Robert Taylor Burtson, *Diaries*, Church Archives.

12. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 63–65; LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856–1860* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1960), 116, 223–24.

13. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of*

How the five rescuers mentioned by name in other sources—and there may have been more—came to be reported as only three in Solomon Kimball's account is an interesting path. When Orson F. Whitney published his *Life of Heber C. Kimball* in 1888, he mentioned only the three: C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball. Four years later, however, when he again addressed the Sweetwater rescue in his *History of Utah*, Whitney also mentioned Stephen Taylor. While it is obvious that Whitney had access to Jacques's newspaper account of the Martin Company when he wrote *History of Utah*—since he quoted extensively from Jacques's December 15, 1878 letter recounting the crossing—the sources Whitney used for *Life of Heber C. Kimball* are less certain, although he acknowledges the help of Solomon Kimball in compiling the volume. If Solomon Kimball did not provide that particular information, Solomon at least appears to have relied upon Whitney's *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, the biography of his father, rather than *History of Utah* when he wrote his account.¹⁴

Latter-day Saints, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901–36), 2:34.

In addition to those known to have been at the Sweetwater, a number of other individuals have been mistakenly associated with the river crossing, including William Kimball, Ephraim Hanks, James Ferguson, and Leonard Rice. William Kimball, Hanks, and Ferguson were mentioned by Jaques's sister-in-law, Patience Loader Archer, in her reminiscences:

William Kimble[,] Ephrem Hanks and I think the other was James Furgeson those poor brethren was in the water nearly all day we wanted to thank them but they would not listen to [us] My dear Mother fealt in her heart to bless them for there Kindnes she said God bless you for taking me over this water and in such an awfull rough way oh D—n that I dont want any of that you are welcome we have come to help you Mother turned to me saying what do [you] think of that man he is arough fellow I told her that is Brother William Kimble I am told thay are all good men but I daresay that thay are all rather rought in there Manners but we found that thay all had kind good hearts. (Patience Loader Archer, *Reminiscences* [ca. 1890], 182–83, Church Archives)

William Kimball, Ephraim Hanks, and James Ferguson were not with the Martin Company on the day it crossed the Sweetwater. At the time of the crossing, Kimball was assisting the Willie Company while Hanks and Ferguson were still en route. Likewise, Leonard G. Rice was elsewhere, despite one account that puts him at the Sweetwater crossing. Leonard Rice and Lucy, in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 11:39.

14. The Orson F. Whitney accounts of the crossing are found in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball, an Apostle: The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), 426; and Orson F. Whitney,

Although the focus of the Sweetwater crossing has long been on rescuers from the Salt Lake Valley carrying members of the company across the river, at least one account tells of a Martin Company member ferrying his fellow pioneers. While William Binder mentioned only members of the relief party carrying emigrants across, Albert Jones, age sixteen at the time, publicly proclaimed that the twenty-four-year-old Binder, whom Jones described as “a man of unbounded charity and a loveable disposition,” returned to the river and carried him across. In a 1906 talk to the Handcart Veterans Association, Jones announced that Binder “carried me across the Sweetwater when it was freezing terribly hard.” But in notes written years later, Jones stated that “[David P.] Kimball carried me over,” and that Binder provided an equally valuable service and helped pull Jones’s handcart through.¹⁵

What Were the Ages of the Rescuers?

While the number of Sweetwater crossing rescuers is uncertain, the ages of those mentioned by name is more certain. C. Allen Huntington, born December 6, 1831, was twenty-four and was the oldest of those named. Stephen Taylor, whose date of birth is December 25, 1835, was twenty. Ira Nebeker and David P. Kimball were both seventeen, their birthdays being June 23 and August 23, 1839, respectively. George W. Grant, the youngest of the group, born December 12, 1839, was only sixteen years old.¹⁶

How Many Emigrants Did the Rescuers Carry Across?

Solomon F. Kimball claimed that the three rescuers “carried nearly every member of the illfated handcart company across the snowbound stream.”¹⁷ At that time the company would have numbered around five hundred.¹⁸ In his *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Orson F. Whitney similarly

History of Utah, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1892–1904), 1:562–63.

15. “Address Read by Albert Jones of Provo to the Hand Cart Veterans Assembled in the Assembly Hall Temple Block Salt Lake City on the Evening of October 4th 1906,” Handcart Veterans Association Scrapbook, Church Archives; Albert Jones, Notes [ca. 1918], Church Archives. Jones’s notes, which are a cryptic outline of his handcart experience, state that at the Sweetwater “W L Binder hauls my hand Cart through . . . Kimball carried me over.”

16. Patriarchal Blessing Index, Church Archives.

17. Kimball, “Belated Emigrants of 1856,” 288.

18. Various accounts place the number of members of the Martin Company that started from Iowa City anywhere between 575 and 625. Around 100 or more of these pioneers had died prior to the company reaching the Sweetwater. In

states, "David P. Kimball, George W. Grant and C. Allen Huntington carried upwards of five hundred of these emigrants on their backs across the Sweetwater, breaking the thin ice of the frozen river before them, as they waded from shore to shore."¹⁹ Exactly how many members of the Martin Company were physically carried across by the relief party is not known, but the evidence suggests that only a portion of the company crossed in that manner.

Several factors argue against the idea that a few rescuers carried all the company over the Sweetwater. First, there likely was not enough time. The company did not reach the river until the afternoon, thus giving them only hours to cross before darkness overtook them. Second, the relief party had access to a number of wagons, which were used to ferry many emigrants across. Third, both rescuers and handcart pioneers recounted that some company members waded through the water themselves.

When John Jaques first wrote about the Sweetwater crossing, he briefly mentioned each of these aspects:

Before the crossing was completed, the shades of evening were closing around, and, as everybody knows, that is the coldest hour of the twenty-four, or at least it seems to be so, in a frosty time, and it seemed so then, for cold enough it was. The teams and wagons and handcarts and some of the men forded the river. . . . [S]everal . . . of the relief party, waded the river, helping the handcarts through and carrying the women and children and some of the weaker of the men over.²⁰

addition to those who died, an unknown number of company members had previously dropped out during the journey.

19. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 426. A brief biographical sketch of David P. Kimball published in the *Deseret Evening News* in 1907 also reports that the rescuers carried every individual across, although it does not give a number:

A signal service to Utah pioneering was performed by Mr. Kimball when the first handcart company was reported in distress at the Platte river. Together with George D. Grant and Lot Huntington he went to the Platte, and found the emigrants in a famished condition. The three men realized at once that they must be taken across the river, and then hurried on towards the settlements, and that for them to wade through the icy waters would be fatal. Therefore, the men turned to the task of carrying the weakened emigrants across the river on their backs, and they did not cease until all were landed in safety without being wet. ("Leaves from Old Albums," *Deseret Evening News*, May 4, 1907, 23)

In addition to having the company wrong, the account also misidentifies the river and the identity of those involved in carrying the emigrants.

20. Jaques, "Some Reminiscences," December 15, 1878, 1.



Camp at Devil's Gate. The Martin Handcart Company and the Hodgetts Wagon Company joined the Grant rescue party here on November 2 and 3, 1856. From the campsite, this photograph looks north along the Sweetwater towards the river's upstream entrance to Devil's Gate. Courtesy Howard A. Christy.

Time Limitations. The weather that day, November 4, was initially unfavorable for travel: for much of the morning a bitter wind howled down upon the pioneers, keeping the wind-chill factor well below zero.²¹ When the wind moderated somewhat in late morning, the rescuers determined to take advantage of this opportunity and move the Martin Company to

21. Daniel W. Jones later wrote that prior to Joseph Young returning to Salt Lake City on November 2 with a letter written by George D. Grant to Brigham Young outlining the desperate situation of the handcart pioneers and requesting more help be sent, Joseph Young had "told the people to gather up and move on at once as the only salvation was to travel a little every day. This was right and no doubt saved many lives for we, among so many . . . could do but little, and there was danger of starvation before help could arrive unless the people made some head-way toward the valley." Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 66–67. In his letter to Young, George D. Grant proclaimed his intention to pursue such a course: "We will move every day toward the valley, if we shovel snow to do it, the Lord helping us." George D. Grant to Brigham Young, November 2, 1856, Brigham Young Collection, Church Archives. This letter was subsequently published in the *Deseret News*, November 19, 1856, 293.

a cove where the relief party had previously camped. Handcart pioneer Josiah Rogerson wrote that the “Martin’s hand[cart] company left the camp at Devil’s Gate some time in the forenoon, making straight west to the Sweetwater.”²² Harvey Cluff, one of the Utah rescuers, noted: “Northern blizzards prevailed, the thermometer showing ten to twenty degrees below zero, making it utterly impossible to proceed homeward; finally a lull in the raging wind from the north enabled the handcart companies to cross the river and go up to the cove.”²³ The company only had to travel two miles to reach the Sweetwater, but given the combination of worn-out emigrants and horrific traveling conditions such as snow reportedly eighteen inches deep, the journey would have taken some time.

William Binder recalled that the several rescuers “laboured dilligently for hours” helping emigrants across the river.²⁴ Patience Loader Archer reported that “Br Kimble staied so long in the water that he had to be taken out and packed to camp and he was a long time before he recovered as he was a child.”²⁵ Josiah Rogerson singled George W. Grant out for praise: “We had one hero on this occasion, whose name deserves to be chiseled on the pedestal of the throne in heaven, and that was Daniel H. [George W.] Grant, the son of General [George] D. Grant.” According to Rogerson, Grant was in the “cold, icy stream” “for nearly two hours,” during which time he carried “fully 150 children, young ladies and the aged of both sexes.”²⁶ Rogerson’s claim that Grant was able to carry seventy-five emigrants an hour seems an exaggeration, given the distance that had to be traveled back and forth across the icy stream (upwards of one hundred yards round trip), coupled with the slippery river banks that had to be negotiated, and the soft, muddy river bottom through which they had to slosh. If members of the relief party carried emigrants across at a more imaginable but still Herculean rate of twenty individuals an hour, it would have taken three rescuers eight hours to get five hundred pioneers across—a time frame that the rescuers did not have to operate in. Since it is unlikely that Grant was able to carry 150 people across by himself in two hours, the figure given by Rogerson may represent the entire number of emigrants

22. Rogerson, “Martin’s Handcart Company, 1856,” 8.

23. “Harvey Cluff’s Account of the Rescue,” as included in Hafen and Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 236.

24. Binder, *Reminiscences*, 4.

25. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 183.

26. Rogerson, “Martin’s Handcart Company, 1856,” 8.

carried by the relief party. If such was indeed the case, that number is still monumental, especially under the circumstances.²⁷

Use of Wagons. Another factor that argues against the rescuers carrying all the members of the handcart company across on their backs was the presence of wagons. The Martin Company, like all handcart companies, traveled with supply wagons that carried tents, extra food, and other provisions. Inasmuch as one wagon was allocated for each one hundred members of a company, six supply wagons started out from Iowa City along with the handcarts. Along with these wagons, there was also an ambulance wagon used to carry those too sick to walk.²⁸ Long before the arrival of winter, at least one supply wagon was used to transport company members in addition to the ambulance wagon. During the journey across Nebraska, William and John Middleton, who drove one of the supply wagons, “would pick up the children that were walking with their mothers and take others from the arms of their parents and put them in their wagon.”²⁹ In addition to these wagons, the relief party that reached the Martin Company prior to the Sweetwater crossing also brought upwards of ten wagons with them.³⁰

27. It is possible that Rogerson may have been low in his totals of both the number of emigrants carried across the river and the actual time George W. Grant spent in the water, although his totals coincide better with the available evidence than the traditional story.

28. Jaques, “Some Reminiscences,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, December 15, 1878, 1; Jaques, “Some Reminiscences,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, December 8, 1878, 1; see also Rogerson, “Martin’s Handcart Company, 1856,” 8.

29. Josiah Rogerson Sr., “Tells Story of Trials of the Handcart Pioneers,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 30, 1913, 11. Rogerson’s entire statement regarding the kindness of the Middletons reads as follows:

The father of Dr. George W. Middleton, the physician and surgeon, now residing in Salt Lake, and his grandfather were in charge of one of the provision wagons of Martin’s handcart company with three yoke of oxen, and from Fort Kearney to Laramie and up to the time this ill-fated company became snowbound at the Devil’s Gate, the father and grandfather of Dr. Middleton would pick up the children that were walking with their mothers and take others from the arms of their parents and put them in their wagon. The fatherly and kindly solicitude characteristic of the grandfather and his son deserves all praise.

30. Although Heber McBride later recalled the rescue party having brought ten wagons with them, members of the company reported they left with fifteen wagons, six of which remained behind with the Willie Company.



Traditional site of Martin's Cove. The Martin Company was forced to move on due to the crowded conditions at the Devil's Gate Stockade; after crossing the Sweetwater River during difficult blizzard conditions, the company arrived here on November 4, 1856. The cove provided some protection from the elements not only by rock walls front, left, and rear, but also by a large, brush-covered hill to the immediate right. Courtesy Howard A. Christy.

The presence of these wagons was vital to the survival of many company members. When the relief party reached the Martin Company at Greasewood Creek, they faced an unimaginable crisis. Reportedly, more than one third of the company was unable to walk, prompting George D. Grant to write to Brigham Young that "our co. is too small to help them much, it is only a drop to a bucket, as it were, in comparison to what is needed."³¹ As a result, the rescuers implemented a plan that would enable them to make the most of their limited resources, particularly wagons. They established a hierarchy of those who had first claim on their services, with priority being given to the infirm, elderly, children, and widows.³² This hierarchy was implemented throughout the journey from Greasewood Creek to the cove, not just at the Sweetwater. As additional rescuers

31. Grant to Young, November 2, 1856.

32. Patience Loader Archer wrote about the extra attention her widowed mother received from one of the relief party: "During the time we was waiting [for supper] a good brother came to our camp fiar. . . . He ask[ed] Mother if she had no husband she told [him] her husband had died two Month ago and he was bured on the plains. He was standing with his hands behind him then he handed us a nice peice of beef to cook for our Supper." Archer, *Reminiscences*, 181.



Martin Company campsite at Greasewood Creek. Here the Grant rescue party first brought supplies to the Martin Company. Courtesy Howard A. Christy.

from the Salt Lake Valley reached the company with more wagons in the days following the crossing, the opportunity to ride was eventually expanded until all company members completed the journey by wagon.

When the Martin Company left Greasewood Creek for Devil's Gate on November 1—the first day they traveled with members of the relief party—the rescuers employed all available wagon space to carry emigrants. George Grant reported that “after Stowing our Wagons full of the sick the Children &c with a good ammount of lugage started homeward about noon.”³³

According to three handcart pioneers, the same pattern was employed during the day's journey that led from Devil's Gate across the Sweetwater and to the cove. Patience Loader Archer recalled:

It was reported around camp that we would not have to pull our hand-carts any further that we would leave them at Devels gate and that we would all be able to ride in the wagons this was dileghtfull news to us to think to think [*sic*] we would not have to pull the cart any more I felt

33. Grant to Young, November 2, 1856. When this letter was published in the November 19, 1856, *Deseret News*, the line was changed to read the “wagons full of the sick, the children and the infirm.” *Deseret News*, November 19, 1856, 293.

that I could still walk if I did not have the cart to pull but oh what a disappointment the next morning we found [found] it was only those could ride that was to sick and weak to pull these carts.³⁴

Josiah Rogerson noted that the “few wagons helped to carry all the children they could, the aged and worn out.”³⁵

Heber McBride wrote that “the 10 wagons relieved us of some of our load by taking the sick into their wagons and a few other things such as tents and cooking things.”³⁶ Apparently Heber’s mother, Margaret (who had become a widow on the journey and was numbered among the sick), and her three youngest children, ages two to eight, were among those who crossed the Sweetwater by wagon. The two remaining McBride children, thirteen-year-old Heber and sixteen-year-old Janetta, had to make the journey on foot. Although Heber did not specifically mention that his mother traveled by wagon, he noted that his mother and younger siblings had gone on ahead to the cove, where he and his sister were reunited with them.³⁷

Given time constraints, the limited number of the relief party, and the insufficient number of wagons, circumstances necessitated that many in the company had to get themselves across by wading the river. The presence of wagons, however, provided benefit to those who still had to travel by foot. The wagons led the way, thus creating a trail through the deep snow for those on foot to follow. At the Sweetwater, they broke a path through the thin layer of ice that covered the river.³⁸ Equally important, the wagons were also used to give hope to those still on foot. Patience Loader Archer noted that the rescuers “tried to encourage us by saying soon we would all be able to ride in wagons.”³⁹

Company Members Crossing Unassisted. As with deciding who would ride in the wagons, the rescuers implemented a priority system at

34. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 181–82.

35. Rogerson, “Martin’s Handcart Company, 1856,” 8.

36. Heber Robert McBride, *Autobiography*, photocopy of typescript, 14, Church Archives.

37. Heber Robert McBride to Elizabeth Ririe, 1923, as published in Lyndia Carter, “Tongue nor Pen Can Never Tell the Sorrow: Heber McBride Describes the 1856 Martin Handcart Disaster,” *Crossroads* [Quarterly newsletter of the Utah Crossroads chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association] 5 (Spring 1994): 4.

38. Although Patience Loader Archer later complained that the wagons prevented the company from crossing on an ice bridge, the thin layer of ice was likely not thick enough to support the weight. Archer’s comments are found in Archer, *Reminiscences*, 182.

39. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 182.

the Sweetwater. While those who had difficulty walking had first claim on the wagons, those who had first claim on being carried by the rescuers at the river were women and children. S. S. Jones wrote: "The brave boys from the valley, under George D. Grant carried the women and children over the Sweet Water river, but the men and able bodied had to wade."⁴⁰ Patience Loader Archer also wrote of rescuers "packing the women and children over on there backs," a recollection likewise shared by William Binder and Janetta McBride.⁴¹ Binder recalled men from the valley "carrying the women and children over the stream," and Janetta McBride confirmed that "the brethren from Utah carried the women and children over the river."⁴² Heber McBride, just thirteen at the time, wrote, "We felt very bad to think we had to ford that stream and I don't think we could have made it in our weekned condition but when we got there we was very much surprised for there were some men there they carried us across."⁴³ When Elizabeth Robinson and her brother Solomon reached the Sweetwater, one of the men offered to carry her across. Fearing that Solomon was too ill to withstand the cold water, Elizabeth offered to wade across if the rescuer would carry her brother instead. She started to wade across but another man came and carried her the remainder of the way.⁴⁴

While John Jaques agreed that the members of the rescue party carried "the women and children," he also recalled that they also transported "some of the weaker of the men over." One of those was the previously mentioned Jimmy, who broke down on the banks of the Sweetwater. According to Jaques, "Jimmy besought one of the 'boys' from 'the valley,' who was in the water, to carry him over. The 'boy' urged that the women and children had the first claim, but finally consented to carry him across."⁴⁵

40. "Utah Heroes Who Pulled Their All across the Plains," *Deseret Evening News*, September 1, 1906, 20.

41. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 182.

42. Binder, *Reminiscences*, 4; "History of Janetta Ann McBride Ferrin," April 15, 1924, photocopy of typescript, 3, in possession of Lyndia Carter, Springville, Utah.

43. McBride to Ririe, 1923.

44. Mary C. Burns, "Solomon Robinson," in *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–51), 2:181; "Elizabeth Robinson Telford," in "Lakeshore Pioneers," Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Spanish Fork, Utah, 3:4. The Lakeshore Pioneers publication is a group of separate articles bound together, some with pagination, some without. The cited information is found on page 4 of the Elizabeth Telford biographical sketch.

45. Jaques, "Some Reminiscences," December 15, 1878, 1.

The rescuers also offered the elderly assistance across the river. Harvey Cluff, one of the Utah relief company, wrote that “men of old age and women were carried across the river on the backs of those sturdy mountain boys.”⁴⁶ Josiah Rogerson noted in his praise of George W. Grant that the latter carried over “children, young ladies and the aged of both sexes.”⁴⁷

In addition to carrying individuals over, the rescuers also helped the emigrants pull handcarts through. While the company abandoned some handcarts at Devil’s Gate, the sturdier handcarts, approximately a quarter of the total, were taken to the cove. Patience Loader Archer reported that since she and her sister were “all pretty well in health we had to start out with our cart again” from Devil’s Gate.⁴⁸ S. S. Jones recalled that upon reaching the Sweetwater, emigrants “had to wade and take the handcarts with them.”⁴⁹

As a result of “Jimmy” being carried over, the man with whom he shared a handcart was left to himself to pull it across. The cart’s wheels “cut into the soft bottom of the river bed, and he soon got stalled. Two of the rescuers in the water went to his help. . . . So hard was the tugging at the cart that it required the utmost combined strength of the three to take the vehicle through safe to dry land.”⁵⁰

A similar drama played itself out in regard to Albert and Samuel Jones. William Binder wrote, “After I had crossed I again went in the stream and assisted Bros. S S and Albert Jones out of the water they being fast in the bed of the River and perfectly discouraged so that they could not pull an ounce.”⁵¹ Albert Jones himself recalled that he was carried over the crossing, and “my brother S. S. pulled our cart through the cold stream.”⁵²

46. “Harvey Cluff’s Account of the Rescue,” as included in Hafen and Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 236.

47. Rogerson, “Martin’s Handcart Company, 1856,” 8.

48. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 182.

49. “Utah Heroes Who Pulled Their All,” 20.

50. Jaques, “Some Reminiscences,” December 15, 1878, 1.

51. Binder, *Reminiscences*, 4.

52. In two separate recollections, Albert Jones gave two different men credit for carrying him over: in 1906 he said William Binder “carried me across the Sweet water when it was freezing terribly hard,” but in later notes he wrote that “W L Binder hauls my hand Cart through[.] The axle broke[.] Kimball carried me over[.] S. S. went on[.] I remain & get another Cart and took on our things.” “Address Read by Albert Jones of Provo to the Hand Cart Veterans”; Albert Jones, Notes [ca. 1918]. Apparently the axle broke because it was unable to take the strain placed upon it during the crossing: “Our hand cart broke down, upon it coming out of the water on the other bank.” “Address Read by Albert Jones of Provo to the Hand Cart Veterans.”

The handcarts that were kept were the covered handcarts, which had been professionally built in St. Louis. In addition to being sturdier than those built at the company's starting point of Iowa City, Iowa, their design allowed individuals to ride inside, somewhat protected from the elements. Rogerson recalled that in addition to children riding in wagons and being carried over by rescuers, "many a child was pulled across in the father's covered cart."⁵³

When Did the Rescuers Die and What Caused Their Deaths?

The first account retelling how the rescue caused the deaths of the rescuers is found in the *Life of Heber C. Kimball*: "The effects of the severe colds then contracted by these brethren, remained with them, and finally conduced to the death of the two former [Kimball and Grant], while the survivor, Brother Huntington, is a sufferer from the same cause to this day."⁵⁴ Later, following the death of C. Allen Huntington, Solomon Kimball reported that "the strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it."⁵⁵

Given the fact that medical science during this time lacked many of the diagnostic capabilities of today and that the cause of death was often a guess, it probably cannot be determined with accuracy the effect that the Sweetwater experience had on the lifelong health of these rescuers. To what extent the great sacrifices of that day may have weakened them, thus making them susceptible to health problems or illnesses that eventually claimed their lives, may never be known. While rescuers and their families reported lingering effects from the events of that cold November day, and while some died prematurely according to today's standards, most lived active and relatively long lives.

George W. Grant. Grant was the first of the five named heroes to die, passing away in August 1872, at age thirty-two and nearly sixteen years after the Sweetwater rescue. According to Josiah Rogerson, Grant did not accompany the pioneers the half mile to the cove but made the longer journey back to Devil's Gate, where his father had remained:

When we were all across, he walked in his suit of ice some two and a half miles to the camp at the Gate [Devil's Gate], where his father did all possible for him that night, but he told me ten or twelve years afterward

53. Rogerson, "Martin's Handcart Company, 1856," 8.

54. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 426.

55. Kimball, "Belated Emigrants of 1856," 288.

in Utah that his services that day in the Sweetwater had made him an invalid for life and a permanent rheumatic, and so far as health and strength, a ruined man.⁵⁶

Grant's reported health problems were not enough, however, to keep him from serving a four-year mission in England beginning in 1861, five years after the rescue.

The cause of Grant's death was listed as consumption (tuberculosis), a common cause of death in the 1800s with an estimated one-quarter of all deaths in the United States in the nineteenth century attributed to it. The *Deseret News* noted that he had suffered with the condition for two years: "Although his sickness (consumption) extended over a period of two years, probably no one thought that his earthly career was so near a close as it appeared to be, for, being a young man of cheerful disposition and indomitable will, he never was, during the whole period, confined to his bed for one day."⁵⁷

David P. Kimball. The next to die was David Kimball, his death occurring on November 22, 1883, at the age of forty-four. In the intervening years he, too, seemed to live an active life. He married Caroline Williams on April 13, 1857 (just a few months after the rescue) following which they honeymooned "on Antelope Island, where a week or more was enjoyed in horseback riding, visiting places of interest, and in having a jolly good time."⁵⁸ After filling a mission to England (1863–66), he helped build the transcontinental railroad through Utah (1868–69). During the 1870s he served as president of the Bear Lake Stake in northern Utah before moving to Arizona in 1877, where he followed the vigorous occupation of a teamster and was serving as first counselor in the St. Joseph Stake presidency at the time of his death.⁵⁹

The story of his death that initially circulated in Salt Lake City is substantially different than that told by family members in Arizona. The *Deseret News* first reported the cause of death as "typhoid pneumonia,"

56. Rogerson, "Martin's Handcart Company, 1856," 8.

57. "Departed This Life," *Deseret News*, August 14, 1872, 416. The paper began its article by noting that "the many friends of Elder George W. Grant would be surprised to learn of his decease."

58. Solomon F. Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball and Other Sketches* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1918), 11, 67.

59. Jenson, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, 4:601; "Leaves from Old Albums," *Deseret Evening News*, May 4, 1907, 23.

a common by-product of typhoid fever.⁶⁰ Concerning his passing, the *Deseret News* initially noted that

in the winter of 1856, the year of the hand-cart company disaster, he with many others went out to meet and rescue the perishing immigrants. It was from wading rivers and working his way through snow banks, carrying the people in his arms, and performing such like offices of kindness, to the exposure of his own person, that he contracted a serious cold from the effects of which he never afterwards entirely recovered.⁶¹

The paper also reported that the end came quickly: “He seemed to have no idea of his approaching end, in fact expressed himself quite to the opposite of such a probability, remarking to his sister, Mrs. Helen M. Whitney, while visiting at her house, ‘You will go, I think, before I do. I am not good enough to die. I shall likely live for many years.’”⁶² The paper further noted:

He was, when he left here for the south, evidently in prime health, and expressed himself as feeling in excellent condition. He stated several times in our hearing that he purposed devoting the remainder of his days—little thinking they were so near a termination—to helping to build up the work of God on the earth, and doubtless this devotional sentiment remained with him to the end.⁶³

Six days later, the *Deseret News*, in an apparent effort to correct misinformation that had appeared in print regarding the death of David P. Kimball, published extracts of a letter Helen M. Whitney received from her son Charles Whitney, who was present when David died at St. David, Arizona, and which provided a slightly different account of his death.⁶⁴ This variant account of his passing was later described in greater detail by Solomon F. Kimball in a biography of David P. Kimball, published in 1918, four years after Solomon’s famous account of the Sweetwater rescue.⁶⁵ Although the *Life of David P. Kimball* reprints the famous quote when the rescue is discussed, later in the volume it describes the unique and inspiring circumstances surrounding David’s death as told in contemporary family letters, including the letter of Charles Whitney to his mother.

60. “Death of David P. Kimball: A Few Facts Relating to the Deceased,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 21, 1883, 3.

61. “Death of David P. Kimball,” 3.

62. “Death of David P. Kimball,” 3.

63. “Demise of Elder D. P. Kimball,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 21, 1883, 2.

64. “Called to Go: Particulars of the Death of Elder David P. Kimball,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 27, 1883, 3.

65. Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball*, 43–69.

In November 1881, David P. Kimball was “freighting goods from the Maricopa railroad station to Prescott” and “was caught in a snowstorm at Prescott, resulting in a severe cold which brought on pneumonia and lung fever.”⁶⁶ In January 1882, David reported to his sister Helen: “I took a very severe cold in a snowstorm . . . being clad in light clothing, which brought on pneumonia or lung fever.”⁶⁷ In spite of his illness, David pushed forward on the return trip. During this sickness, he had many visions, being visited often by his father, Heber C. Kimball. David wrote, “Father finally told me that I could remain two years, and to do all the good I could during that time, after which he would come for me.”⁶⁸ Later, David found himself stranded in the Arizona desert without food or water. As he neared death, his father and mother, Vilate, came to him from beyond the veil. After he had given up hope of living any longer, they gave him a drink and promised him that he would be rescued the next day. After recounting in detail what happened, David told his sister: “I know these things were . . . no dream but a glorious and awful reality.”⁶⁹

In the fall of 1883, nearly two years after the incident in the desert, David left his home in St. David, Arizona, for an extended visit to family and friends in Salt Lake City. Shortly after returning to Arizona, he died.

On the day of his death, Charles Whitney described to his mother what had transpired:

Uncle David died this morning at half-past six, easily, and apparently without a bit of pain. Shortly before he died, he looked up and called, “Father, father!” All night long he had called for Uncle Heber. You remember hearing him tell how grandpa came to him when he was lost on the desert, and how he pleaded for two more years and was given that much longer to stay. Last Saturday, the day he was so bad, was just two years from the day he was lost, and today is just two years from the day his father and mother came to him and gave him a drink of water, and told him that his friends would find him and he should live two years longer. He knew that he was going to die, and bade Aunt Caroline goodby, day before yesterday.⁷⁰

66. Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball*, 43.

67. David P. Kimball to Helen M. Whitney, January 8, 1882, published in Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball*, 43–44.

68. David P. Kimball to Helen M. Whitney, January 8, 1882, 51.

69. Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball*, 55.

70. Letter of Charles S. Whitney, November 22 [sic], 1883, published in Kimball, *Life of David P. Kimball*, 67–69. Extracts of Charles S. Whitney’s letter were also published in “Called to Go. Particulars of the Death of Elder David P. Kimball,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 27, 1883, 3, six days after the paper published its first account of Kimball’s death.

C. Allen Huntington. Huntington, who died on November 16, 1896, a few weeks shy of his sixty-fifth birthday, became the renegade of the group, and in March 1860 he was serving time in the Utah territorial penitentiary.⁷¹ This was not his only run-in with the law.⁷² In 1880 he was living in the southern Utah mining community of Silver Reef. By the 1890s he worked as a hired hand at Lee's Ferry on the Colorado River. He was employed at the ferry when he died in nearby Kanab, Utah. No cause of death was given.⁷³

Ira Nebeker. Nebeker died April 19, 1905, one month short of his sixty-fifth birthday. In 1861, five years after the rescue, he moved to southern Utah, which was still a sparsely settled region of the territory. Eight years later he was one of the original settlers called to the Bear Lake Valley, where he helped found Laketown. Called as the bishop of the Laketown Ward in 1869, he served more than thirty-five years in that capacity until November 1904,⁷⁴ when he was "released on account of ill health."⁷⁵

The cause of Nebeker's death was reported as Bright's Disease,⁷⁶ a form of kidney failure. The *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* noted that "the exposures and hardships" he endured while "many times wading in the icy cold Sweetwater and carrying on his back enfeebled immigrants" had "greatly undermined his otherwise strong constitution." In spite of this, he supported himself through the occupation of "stockman

71. In a March 26, 1860, letter to Nathaniel V. Jones, George A. Smith wrote that "The Probate Court of this county has been overhauling the horse and cattle thieves. Indictments have been found against Martin Wheeler, Moroni Clawson, Isaac Neibaur, Chas. Manhard, C. Allen Huntington, Truelove Manhard, James Covey and W. W. Wheeler and others. M. Wheeler, C. A. Huntington, Moroni Clawson, and Truelove Manhard were sentenced to the penitentiary for various terms." George A. Smith to Nathaniel V. Jones, March 26, 1860, in *Journal History of the Church*, March 26, 1860, Church Archives, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

72. In 1889, Landon Gibson wrote his brother about meeting Huntington: "Al Huntington has a big scar on the back of his head, and this morning I asked him how he came by it. He told me he had an argument with a 'Greaser' and he had cut him. I asked him what he did to him, and he saide he wouldnt tell me, but added, 'Twelve of my Countrymen said I did the right thing.'" Langdon Gibson to Dana Gibson, December 25, 1889, copy included in Otis Marston Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

73. John Hislop to Mr. Stanton, November 30, 1896, copy included in Otis Marston Collection.

74. "Laketown. Mourn the Death of Bishop," *Deseret Evening News*, April 29, 1905, 11.

75. "Utah Pathfinder Goes to His Rest," *Deseret Evening News*, April 26, 1905, 2.

76. "Laketown. Mourn the Death of Bishop," 11.

and farmer.”⁷⁷ The *Deseret News* stated that in addition to the 1856 rescue, Nebeker also served in the “Indian wars” as a “member of Capt. R. T. Burton’s company and performed extensive service in that command. It was due to these early exposures that complaints set in from which Mr. Nebeker never fully recovered.”⁷⁸

Stephen W. Taylor. Taylor, the last of the group to die, was eighty-four years old at the time of his death, which occurred in 1920, six years after Solomon Kimball’s account appeared in print. Within a few months of the 1856 rescue, Taylor was serving as a “messenger in the territorial legislature.” In 1865 he was part of the detachment mustered under the direction of Robert T. Burton during the Black Hawk War. Two years later he was appointed sheriff of Summit County. From 1869 to 1871 he fulfilled a mission to England, then served as a Salt Lake City police officer from 1874 to 1876. He spent the last part of his life as a stockman and farmer.⁷⁹

What Did Brigham Young Promise the Rescuers?

Solomon F. Kimball’s assertion that Brigham Young publicly proclaimed that this one heroic act alone guaranteed “everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom; worlds without end” is the only account of such a statement. What is meant by the statement is not entirely clear. Perhaps Brigham was using hyperbole occasioned by his strong feelings concerning the rescue to drive home a point. Perhaps it was a statement of praise and gratitude. Perhaps it was a conditional promise, such as those found in a patriarchal blessing, rather than an absolute pronouncement of eternal judgment. What seems to be clear, however, is that Young was not proclaiming that Latter-day Saints are saved by one act—although individuals will be rewarded for the good they do—but “by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel” (A of F 3).

Before sending out the rescue company, Brigham did make comments tying together the rescue and exaltation. While calling for individuals on October 5, 1856, to assist the stranded pioneers, he told the congregation assembled in the Bowery:

I will tell you all that your faith, religion, and profession of religion, will never save one soul of you in the celestial kingdom of our God, unless you carry out just such principles as I am now teaching you. Go and bring in those people now on the Plains, and attend strictly to those

77. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:34.

78. “Utah Pathfinder Goes to His Rest,” 2.

79. “Stephen Wells Taylor, Pioneer of 1848, Dies,” *Deseret Evening News*, March 22, 1920, 8.

things which we call temporal, or temporal duties, otherwise your faith will be in vain; the preaching you have heard will be in vain to you, and you will sink to hell, unless you attend to the things we tell you.⁸⁰

On December 4, 1856, only days after the Martin Company reached the Salt Lake Valley, Heber C. Kimball made public comments regarding the rescue company. He mentioned four individuals by name, only two of whom were involved in the Sweetwater Crossing and only one of which was mentioned by Solomon Kimball:

Brother Brigham says that he will have hundreds and thousands of boys right here that will help us with a power greatly increased beyond that of their fathers, and I know that it will be so. When boys go back on the Plains to encounter storms and rescue the suffering, as did David P. Kimball, Stephen Taylor, Joseph A. Young, Ephraim Hanks, and many others, it makes me feel well. . . . Those boys acted valiantly, having been trained up amid the Saints.

Brother Ephraim Hanks has put a feather in his cap, through his noble conduct in aiding our belated immigration, he has unsheathed his sword upon the side of doing good, and I exhort him not to sheath it again.⁸¹

A little more than two weeks later, December 21, 1856, after the last of the stranded emigrants had reached the Salt Lake Valley, Heber C. Kimball again addressed the issue of the rescue: “God bless those men who went to the rescue of our late immigration, and all who have in anywise assisted it; also those who have come in this season, if they live their religion and appreciate their blessings.”⁸² In addition to stressing the responsibility all individuals have in assisting their fellow men in times of crisis, both Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball stressed the need for the Saints to endure to the end. “If the Saints cannot endure, and endure to the end, they have no reason to expect eternal salvation,” Young proclaimed on September 16, 1855, the year prior to the rescue.⁸³ In June 1859 Young stated: “All I ask is for the grace of God to enable us to endure to the end and be saved. . . . Those only have the promise of salvation who endure to the end; and all I ask is that we may have faith to endure.”⁸⁴ The following month he proclaimed: “He that endures to the end the same shall be saved. Not to

80. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 4:113, October 5, 1856.

81. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:137, December 4, 1856. Heber Kimball’s remarks were delivered at the funeral of Jedediah M. Grant, held four days after the Martin Company reached Salt Lake City.

82. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:144, December 21, 1856.

83. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:1, September 16, 1855.

84. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:165–66, June 5, 1859.

run for a season and then turn away; but those who endure to the end will receive a fulness of joy.”⁸⁵

The statements by Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young are consistent with truths taught in scripture concerning the need for individuals to endure to the end. D&C 53:7 reads, “I would that ye should learn that he only is saved who endureth unto the end.” D&C 20:32–34 states, “There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; Therefore, let the Church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also.” The Old Testament prophet David is frequently held up as an example of this doctrine. Although he risked his life as a young man against Goliath to save his people, he later transgressed. The Lord told Joseph Smith that as a result of his later actions, David “hath fallen from his exaltation” (D&C 132:39).⁸⁶

Crozier Kimball, a son of David P. Kimball, provides some valuable insight into Brigham Young’s statement promising exaltation. According to Crozier, Brigham Young called David into his office prior to the start of the rescue and said, “David, I know the blood that runs in your veins. I know that you will not let even death, if it be necessary, stop you from saving these people.”⁸⁷ According to David P. Kimball’s descendents, his actions in aiding the stranded emigrants, including assisting at the Sweetwater, evidenced his determination to follow the prophet even if it cost him his life. They feel that it was David’s effort to follow counsel that led to Brigham Young’s statement, although it cannot be determined whether the statement referred to immortality, eternal life, was an expression of gratitude, or whether Young had something else in mind.

While much of the focus on Brigham Young’s reaction to the rescue has naturally been on the statement promising exaltation, Solomon Kimball reported that it was not the only comment the Mormon prophet made regarding the rescuers at the Sweetwater. In 1908 Solomon Kimball first wrote about the Sweetwater crossing in a little noted article entitled “Our Pioneer Boys.” He described the rescue in much the same terms as he did in 1914 but included a different promise which has come true: “When

85. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:7, July 3, 1859.

86. Other scriptures discussing the need to endure to the end include Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:13; 1 Ne. 13:37; 2 Ne. 9:24; 2 Ne. 31:18–20; 3 Ne. 15:9; 3 Ne. 27:16–17; D&C 10:67–69; D&C 14:7; D&C 18:22; D&C 20:25, 29; and D&C 50:5.

87. Marva Jeanne Kimball Pedersen, *Crozier Kimball: His Life and Works* (Salt Lake City: Crozier Kimball Family, 1995), 7.

President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and declared that this act alone would immortalize them.”⁸⁸

The Sweetwater Crossing in Perspective

What happened at the Sweetwater was truly inspiring, and the rescuers who braved the frigid water are indeed deserving of praise. But they are not alone in this regard. In truth, the crossing was only one aspect of a massive, heroic rescue effort. For two months the best of human nature was on display as a virtual army of Latter-day Saints from the Salt Lake Valley answered Brigham Young’s call to go to the aid of strangers. The unselfish attitude manifested by the rescuers at the Sweetwater was simply characteristic of the generous and varied assistance given to the Martin Company throughout November 4 and subsequently provided company members until they reached the Salt Lake Valley on November 30. At the same time, similar help was being given to the other emigrant companies stranded on the trail, including the Willie Handcart Company and the Hunt and Hodgetts wagon trains that followed in the wake of the hand-carts, until they reached their Zion.⁸⁹

88. Solomon F. Kimball, “Our Pioneer Boys,” *Improvement Era* 11 (July 1908): 679. The entire section on the rescue (pages 678–79) states:

During the fall and winter of 1856, many of the “Minute Men” passed through hardships that few persons could have endured. This was the hand-cart season, when so many emigrants perished from cold and hunger. The last hand-cart company that season, numbering about six hundred, were rescued by a party of these young heroes on the Sweetwater, near where it flows through Devil’s Gate, Wyoming. Nearly one-third of these pilgrims died before reaching Salt Lake valley. Three of our brave young men, under twenty years of age, carried on their backs upwards of five hundred of these freezing people across the Sweetwater river, breaking the ice before them as they waded from shore to shore. At that time they contracted colds that finally terminated in their deaths. When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and declared that this act alone would immortalize them. Their names are George W. Grant, C. Allen Huntington, and David P. Kimball.

89. Prior to reaching the Martin Company, the rescuers encountered the Willie Company east of Rocky Ridge. Daniel W. Jones noted of that experience: “On arriving we found them in a condition that would stir the feelings of the hardest heart. They were in a poor place, the storm having caught them where fuel was scarce. They were out of provisions and really freezing and starving to death. . . . We did all we could to relieve them. The boys struck out on horseback

Given the extent of the succor provided the snowbound emigrants, it is not surprising that while Patience Loader Archer was grateful for the help she received at the Sweetwater, she chose to direct her praise to all the relief party, not just those at the river: "What brave men they must have been to start out from Salt L City in the middle of winter in search of us poor folks," she wrote, for "when thay left the city thay did not know how far thay would have to travle in the snow before they would find us."⁹⁰

Archer's sentiments were echoed by fellow Martin Company member John Jaques in his final installment article for the *Salt Lake Herald*. In addition to those who traveled out to help the emigrants, he also noted those whose assistance occurred at Salt Lake, either by donating items such as food, clothing, and wagons to supply the relief companies prior to the rescue, or later by opening their homes to the emigrants following it:

A most commendable spirit of liberality was manifested by the residents of this valley, not only in hospitable and kindly attention to the emigrants after their arrival here, but in making donations of provisions and clothing and in sending hundreds of wagons, with horse, mule, and ox teams, to the relief of the snowed-up and winter-bound company.

and dragged up a lot of wood; provisions were distributed and all went to work to cheer the sufferers. Soon there was an improvement in camp." Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 64.

90. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 187. Daniel W. Jones noted that among the rescuers in his group

there was some expectation of meeting the first train, Brother Willie's, on or about Green river. We began to feel great anxiety about the emigrants as the weather was now cold and stormy, and we, strong men with good outfits, found the nights severe. . . . Our hearts began to ache when we reached Green river and yet no word of them. . . .

At the South Pass, we encountered a severe snow-storm. After crossing the divide we turned down into a sheltered place on the Sweetwater. While in camp and during the snow-storm two men were seen on horseback going west. . . . On reaching us they proved to be Brothers Willie and J. B. Elder. They reported their company in a starving condition at their camp then east of Rocky Ridge. . . . We started immediately through the storm to reach Brother Willie's camp. (Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 63–64)

The *New York Herald* later reported that the rescuers who left the valley pushed on, despite the weather, while others turned back: "Gov. Brigham Young . . . dispatched some men and provisions to their relief; but these were met by the mail party returning to the city again, having been turned back by the violence of the storms they encountered." "News from the Plains," *New York Herald*, January 22, 1857, 2.

Too much can hardly be said of the self-denying exposure, privations, and labors of those who went with the teams from this city to help the emigrants along. Everybody who went out to meet the company, or who contributed anything to relieve it, might pardonably wish his or her name inserted herein to that effect. But if so, and if I and you were anxious to accommodate all such, how could I find the time or you the space for this friendly detailed acknowledgment.⁹¹

Even as these handcart pioneers directed their praise towards all those who came to their aid, the other aspects of the rescue began to take a back seat to the river crossing. As the emphasis began to narrowly focus on three men at the Sweetwater, some frustration was manifested by individuals whose contributions were increasingly being overlooked.

Although Daniel W. Jones did not address the issue specifically in his autobiography, he likely was referring to the attention Kimball, Grant, and Huntington were receiving when he wrote: “We did all we possibly could to help and cheer the people. Some writers have endeavored to make individual heroes of some of our company. I have no remembrance of any one shirking his duty. Each and everyone did all they possibly could and justice would give to each his due credit.”⁹²

Members of the Martin Company echoed Jones’s assessment. They reported that the assistance the relief party provided at the Sweetwater was only one aspect of the needed help they received throughout the day on November 4.

Heber McBride recalled that the young men from the valley were “workers”: “As they were hearty and strong they took upon themselves to [do] all the work about Camp.” Regarding the help they provided his widowed mother and his siblings he wrote, “The men came and took the tent down and fixed our load on our cart.” McBride was likewise moved by the fact that as the company undertook the day’s journey, boys from the valley “went ahead and broake the road,” thus making the path easier for the majority of the company that still had to walk.⁹³

The Sweetwater was not the only body of water the emigrants had to cross that day. Shortly after leaving Devil’s Gate and prior to reaching the Sweetwater, the company had to cross a small stream. With the memory of the Platte River crossing fresh in her mind, Patience Loader Archer found it difficult to hold back her emotions and was grateful for the help

91. Jaques, “Some Reminiscences,” *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, January 19, 1879, 1.

92. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians*, 70.

93. McBride to Ririe, 1923.

she received at the stream and for the rescuers' promise of future help at the river:

As we started out from camp there was quite a number of the brethren from the valley standing in readiness to help us across the stream of water with our cart I was feeling somewhat bad that morning and when I saw this Stream of water we had to go through I felt weak and I could not Keep my tears back I felt ashamed to let those brethren see me shedding tears I pulled my old bonnet over my face as they should not See my tears one brother took the cart and another helped us girls over the water and Said we should not wade the cold water any more and tried to encourage us.⁹⁴

Once the handcart pioneers reached the cove where they were to camp for the night, a great amount of work still needed to be done. Wood had to be gathered, fires built, meals provided, and tents pitched. The rescuers took as much of the burden of these vital needs as possible, with much of this responsibility falling upon those who had taken the weaker members of the company in wagons. Heber McBride recalled that at the cove "the men from Salt Lake would clean off the snow and pitch the tents and get wood for all the families that had lost their Father and then they would help the rest what they could."⁹⁵ Concerning the reunion with his mother who had preceded him to the cove, McBride wrote, "We went into a cove in the mountain and got out of the wind and when we got there the tent was up and Mother and Mrs. [Mary Ann] Barton [were] sitting by a good fire." McBride further noted that the rescuers "put the tents up and got wood and took care of Mother [who was very ill] and the 3 little ones."⁹⁶

Harvey Cluff, one of the rescuers with the Martin Company, would later modestly write:

Every possible assistance from the boys from Utah was freely given. And these young hardy men from the Rockies were a mighty force and power in the salvation of that people. . . . In this instance [carrying pioneers across the river], as in many others, the value of the boys from Zion was a great help to the weary Saints. Camp was made, tents set, supper over and the people retired for the night.⁹⁷

94. Archer, *Reminiscences*, 182.

95. Heber Robert McBride, *Autobiography*, photocopy of typescript, 14, Church Archives.

96. McBride to Ririe, 1923. Like Margaret McBride, Mary Ann Barton had also been widowed during the journey.

97. Cluff, "Harvey Cluff's Account of the Rescue," 235–36.

Except for the Sweetwater crossing, the story of the day's travel would be repeated with only slight variation until the company reached Salt Lake City three weeks later. The aid offered took diverse forms and occurred at various places but undoubtedly contributed to the significant decrease in the number of deaths that occurred among members of the handcart company after the rescuers reached them.

In the final analysis, the Sweetwater crossing needs to be understood in perspective. It is not *the* rescue story, but *a* story of the rescue effort. While the story of the rescue extends far beyond the crossing, that aspect has taken on a life of its own in part because of how it has been romanticized and in part because it also fills a human need to attach names and faces to events.

The scores who answered the call to help the emigrants in the Willie, Martin, Hunt and Hodgetts companies all did so at the peril of their lives, not just those who were at the Sweetwater. Prior to the crossing the rescuers were exposed to conditions similar to those that trapped the handcart pioneers. For those rescuers with the Martin Company, there was still more than three weeks' exposure to snow, cold, and wind after the crossing and before they reached the Salt Lake Valley, and for those with the Hunt and Hodgetts companies, the exposure was even longer. The cumulative effect of this prolonged exposure to cold took its toll—even on rescuers who did not ferry people across the icy waters of the Sweetwater. It is not surprising that as the Sweetwater crossing increasingly became *the* rescue story, the history of individuals who suffered ill health as a result of going to the aid of the stranded pioneers became tied to that crossing.⁹⁸

What transpired at the Sweetwater should not be discounted, but neither should the contributions made by all the Latter-day Saints who came to the aid of the stranded pioneer companies be overlooked. Many

98. One such man was Leonard Rice, who died in September 1886 at the age of fifty-seven. Family tradition ties him to the icy waters of the Sweetwater because of later physical problems, although his assistance was rendered to the company to the west of Rocky Ridge. Arrested in 1886 for being a polygamist, he reportedly was taken from his home in Farmington, Utah, to Salt Lake City in an open buggy during a rainstorm. During the journey he caught a severe cold which got worse during his brief confinement in the penitentiary. "Twelve days after his arrest, on September 12, 1886, he died at his home in Farmington." His biographer noted: "By that time the cold had settled in his kidneys which had been left in a weakened condition since the day he had caught cold from wading with the stranded emigrants through the ice and mud of the Sweetwater many years before." "Leonard Rice and Lucy," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 11:39.

pioneers owe their lives to unnumbered acts of kindness shown them by individuals who today remain largely nameless and faceless. Since most of the stories of the rescue will likely never be known, let the story of the Sweetwater crossing symbolize the many selfless sacrifices forged during a trying time. The identified rescuers at the river should serve as the face of the massive undertaking and be symbolic of the other equally needed and equally heroic assistance provided by hundreds of individuals who freely gave of themselves, most of whom remain anonymous and some of whom may have even carried emigrants across the Sweetwater. Such a position was taken by Orson F. Whitney in his *Life of Heber C. Kimball*. After briefly mentioning the river crossing, he turned his focus upon the entire first group of rescuers. His conclusion is as applicable today as when first written nearly 120 years ago: “These brave men by their heroism—for it was at the peril of their own lives that they thus braved the wintry storms on the plains—immortalized themselves, and won the undying gratitude of hundreds who were undoubtedly saved by their timely action from perishing.”⁹⁹

99. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 425–26. Along these same lines, Solomon Kimball wrote:

Probably no greater act of heroism was ever recorded in the annals of history than that performed by the twenty-seven young men who, on the morning of October 7, 1856, went from the city of Great Salt Lake to the relief of the 1,550 belated emigrants, who were caught in the early snows of a severe winter, hundreds of miles from human habitation, without food and without shelter. By their indefatigable labors these brave mountain boys were instruments in the hands of the Lord in saving 1,300 of that number. Had it not been for their heroic efforts, not enough emigrants would have been left to tell the dreadful tale. (Kimball, “Belated Emigrants of 1856,” 299)

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Day Seven

Who wouldn't get tired shoveling mountains into place,
or plowing oceans with the tongue that spoke
and split open the darkness like a coconut?

Come clamshells and salmon eggs, he called, come
anemones and coral, come dolphin's giggle and sheen
of the blue whale's back, the volcano's belch, sandbars
and seaweed, foam singing in the pelicans' wake.

Come thunder-hoofed caribou, come spittle of wolves
and leopards, come iguanas tearing bushes, anacondas
in drenched pits, the rhinoceros' moan, dung beetles
and kola trees. Come man and woman dredged from silt,
stumbling the foothills, bone levers to hoist the beasts
from soil, teeth to chew and swear, hair to clean, to pluck.

Who wouldn't tire of piling igneous shelves or bundling
storms, sowing black rain in onion fields, smell of wet
ground rising in the pheasants' heartbreaking cry?

Come Maker, on this seventh day of your beautiful clutter,
and climb a staircase of stars to your bed. Pull up
the covers: ocean waves, wheatfields, lengthening shadows.

—Michael Hicks

This poem won first place in the BYU Studies 2006 poetry contest.

A Jesuit Interpretation of Mid-Nineteenth-Century America

“Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism”

Mark A. Noll

As historians of Mormonism have long since established, Europeans took note of Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints almost from the beginning. Mormon missionaries, converts, and expatriates, as well as European visitors to the United States, put the church on the European map early on. The result was a great deal of animated European commentary on, interest in, and interaction with Mormonism itself. Such engagement was illustrated in 1854 when, after a decade in the United States, the ecclesiastical polymath Philip Schaff returned to his native German-speaking regions and included—though reluctantly (“I would fain pass over this sect in silence”)—an account of the Mormons in his landmark lectures entitled *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character*. Schaff did so because so many Germans had asked him about the movement.¹ That interest was also evident when Anthony Trollope, on his fourth visit to the United States in 1872, paid an unannounced call on Brigham Young, “the great polygamist,” but came away “properly punished” when Young refused an interview, since Trollope, in his own words, had been “vain enough to conceive that he would have heard my name.”² Only a few years later, a different kind of European attention was paid in the first of Arthur

1. Philip Schaff, *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character*, ed. Perry Miller (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1961), 198.

2. Anthony Trollope, *North America*, ed. Donald Smalley and Bradford Allen Booth (New York: Knopf, 1951), xxvii.

Mark A. Noll

Mark Noll is one of the most respected scholars of American religious history. He was the Carolyn and Fred McManis Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College for thirty-one years before accepting a position at Notre Dame as the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History. While at Wheaton, he cofounded the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals.

Professor Noll has written, edited, or coedited thirty-five books and authored numerous professional articles. This corpus of scholarship has done much to forward the understanding of Evangelical Christianity, the symbiotic relationship of Christianity and American culture, and the role of theology in Civil War rhetoric.

He has also argued that higher biblical criticism and rigorous church history are not incongruous with the Christian life of faith and devotion. His life exemplifies such a model. His *Seasons of Grace*, a collection of his poetry published in 1997, reveals him to be seasoned in the things of the soul as well as those of the academy. Because of the respect held for his scholarship and his faith both inside and outside of Christian circles, *Time* magazine listed him as one of the twenty-five most influential Evangelicals in America in February 2005.



Conan Doyle's book-length mysteries featuring Sherlock Holmes where the Mormons and their Utah habitat factored large in the story.³

European commentary on Mormonism was significant for more than just the Mormons, however, since it regularly broadened out into wider consideration of the larger contexts from which the church had emerged. Mormonism, that is, was read by at least some Europeans as a particularly useful indicator of general American characteristics or, even more broadly, of general trajectories in the whole history of Protestantism. While most

3. Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, ed. Owen Dudley Edwards (1887; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), with much commentary by editor Edwards on Doyle's understanding of Mormonism, 183–200.

Europeans of that period treated Mormonism as a religious and political aberration, not a few also saw the church arising from the labors of Joseph Smith as an exaggerated instance of much larger trends.

A prime example of this larger function was European attention to the American Civil War.⁴ As one instance, the liberal English Protestant Goldwin Smith evoked the Mormons at the beginning of his book-length treatment of American slavery, which was published in 1863. To Smith, much in the United States that Americans defended with moral reasoning could better be explained by material and political interests. He also thought that there were many “strange things” in this new country, including preeminently two phenomena he described as follows: “By the side of the Great Salt Lake is a community basing itself upon Polygamy. In the Southern States is a community basing itself upon Slavery.” Then he asked, “if the Mormonite were equally an object of political interest to a large party,” whether there might not be the same willingness to justify polygamy as there was so much American willingness to justify slavery.⁵ Similarly, an acerbic report on the postbellum United States from a conservative Catholic journal out of Munich referred to the Mormons as one example of American social chaos. To the aristocratic German who filed this story, the United States’ descent into moral anarchy was demonstrated by several realities: the social despotism exercised by northern Congregational and Methodist ministers, the rapid spread of impiety, the mischief (*Unfug*) of camp meeting revivals, and the Mormons: “Only in America, the home of humbug, could such things appear and only here was Mormonism possible, that shameful scandal based on lies, deception, and immorality.”⁶

A few moral judgments worked the other way. In 1863, George Q. Cannon, a Mormon in England, published a lengthy interpretation of the Civil War as occurring because Americans had rejected Joseph Smith when he had offered himself as a candidate for president. To Cannon, Smith’s plans to end slavery through compensated emancipation, cut back

4. General European interest in religious aspects of the war is treated at greater length in Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 95–156, which expands upon some of the material presented in this introduction.

5. Goldwin Smith, *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?* (Oxford and London: J. Henry and J. Parker, 1863), 1.

6. “Nur in Amerika, der Heimath des ‘Humbugs,’ können solche Sachen vorkommen und nur hier war der Mormonismus möglich, dieser schändliche auf Lüge, Betrug und Unsittlichkeit gegründete Skandal.” Kuno Damian Freiherr von Schütz zu Hölzhausen, “Die Krisis in Washington und die Zustände überhaupt,” *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 59 (1867): 136.

the scope of the national government, and promote peace and national prosperity had been God's way of giving the United States a leader "who possessed a sufficient knowledge of the Lord and his purposes to steer the ship of state out of the troubled sea in which she was then sailing, to a haven of peace." But because Americans had rejected and then killed Smith, the result was national bloodshed: "Dearly indeed have the enemies of the truth in the United States purchased their imaginary triumph over the Prophet Joseph and those associated with him."⁷

La Civiltà Cattolica

The most interesting attention to Mormonism during the era of the Civil War—particularly in connection with broad European interpretations of American experience—came from a notable Italian journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*.⁸ The journal was a weighty biweekly that in nearly three thousand pages each year provided extensive social, political, and economic commentary, as well as full treatment of religious subjects. It was founded by Jesuits in 1850 at the request of Pope Pius IX (pontificate, 1846–78), who desired learned support in his struggle against the liberal and progressive forces that the pope viewed as a grave threat to the integrity of the Catholic Church. Early on the journal became a champion of the theology of Thomas Aquinas, which it regarded as an effective counterweight to the modern problems of secularism, liberalism, and progressive Protestantism. *La Civiltà Cattolica* soon emerged as a capable champion of the pope and his vision of the church, especially in opposition to the unification of Italy, a goal of Italian reformers that would necessitate the end of the pope's political rule over the Papal States. The journal has continued to be published to this day and continues to contribute important viewpoints within the Catholic Church.

La Civiltà Cattolica's stance in opposition to liberal Italian politicians helps explain its attitudes toward the American situation, since its editors and authors linked the progressive campaign for Italian unification

7. George Q. Cannon, "Emancipation of the Slaves—the Prophet Joseph's Plan—Results of Its Rejection," *Millennial Star* 25 (February 14, 1863): 97–101.

8. For background on this journal during this period, see Giandomenico Mucci, *Carlo Maria Curci: Il fondatore della "Civiltà Cattolica"* (Rome: Edizioni Studium, 1988), 16–20; Francesco Dante, *Storia della "Civiltà Cattolica" (1850–1891): Il Laboratorio del Papa* (Rome: Edizioni Studium, 1990), 57–77; and several articles in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 15 vols. (Detroit: Thomson/Gale for the Catholic University of America Press, 2003), including J. Thavis, "La Civiltà Cattolica" (3:757–58) and J. A. Weisheipl/Eds., "Contemporary Scholasticism" (12:772–79).

to the liberal, individualistic, and democratic character of American social development.⁹ To demonstrate how the outworking of democracy and individualism was hurting the United States would also be to show how the same forces would hurt Italy. For its reports on America, the team of Jesuits who guided the magazine drew on correspondence from American bishops like John Hughes of New York and Martin Spalding of Louisville.¹⁰ But it was also obvious from the journal's extensive coverage that it enjoyed an unusually broad grasp of American affairs—at least by comparison with other Europeans of the day.

Throughout the 1860s *La Civiltà Cattolica* offered remarkably full treatment of the American sectional conflict and the question of slavery that it, along with almost all other Europeans, regarded as the decisive issue of the conflict. From 1860 to 1866 it published six major articles on these matters as well as numerous news reports. Four of the articles sought to invert the judgments of nineteenth-century liberals, who called Rome despotic, by arguing that the Catholic Church had always worked to soften the dehumanizing features of slavery, while liberal regimes—in particular, the United States—had promoted slavery in its most inhumane form.¹¹



La Civiltà Cattolica. Courtesy Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

9. On the journal's use in or connections to the U.S., with other important background, see especially Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 19–45; and John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 26, 122, and 127.

10. See Anthony B. Lalli and Thomas H. O'Connor, "Roman Views on the American Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review* 57 (April 1971): 21–41. Further research would be required in Italian archives to ascertain the full range of sources used for the journal's article on Mormonism.

11. "Il concetto morale della schiavitù" [The Moral Idea of Slavery], *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 6, vol. 1 (February 18, 1865): 427–45; "La Chiesa tutrice della libertà in America" [The Church as Guardian of Liberty in America], *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 6, vol. 1 (March 18, 1865): 662–80; "Lo schiavo negro nell' America" [The Negro

Another article, published just as hostilities were about to commence, dealt directly with the war itself. It suggested that admirers of the United States should probably now be having second thoughts as violence tore apart the still-young nation. Its conclusion on religious issues was that America had reached the odd situation where “both parties have become theologians . . . the people of the thirty-three United States, who are eminently and essentially political, cannot discuss a political matter without quoting the Old and New Testaments!”¹² The tragedy was that American confidence in the Bible was wasted since “their independence makes it impossible to find a solution to their quarrel, both because they lack a central religious authority and because they lack moral honesty, which is itself a consequence of not having a central religious authority.”¹³

“Il Mormonismo”

But the fullest article in *La Civiltà Cattolica* on American matters—and the one that provided the deep conceptual background for what the journal said about the war itself—was a substantial essay in May 1860 entitled “Il Mormonismo nelle sue attinenze col moderno Protestantismo” [Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism].¹⁴ This historically informative article is here being published for the first time in full English translation, revealing Catholic attitudes toward the Protestant Reformation, religion in America, and how Mormonism was perceived in Europe to relate to both of those subjects at that time.

The article was presented by an aristocratic cardinal archbishop, Karl August von Reisach (1800–1869) to the Pontifical Academy of the Catholic Religion in Rome.¹⁵ Reisach was a veteran of church-state negotiations in his native Bavaria who had exerted himself in several disputes with

Slave in America], *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 6, vol. 7 (August 4, 1866): 296–313; and “L’abolizione della tratta e della schiavitù” [The Abolition of the Slave Trade and of Slavery], *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 6, vol. 8 (October 6, 1866): 15–34.

12. “La disunione negli Stati Uniti” [Disunion in the United States], *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 4, vol. 9 (February 2, 1861): 317.

13. “La disunione negli Stati Uniti,” 318.

14. [Cardinal Karl August von Reisach], “Il Mormonismo nelle sue attinenze col moderno Protestantismo,” *La Civiltà Cattolica* ser. 4, vol. 6 (May 19, 1860): 391–413.

15. See short articles (with bibliographies) on Reisach by K. G. Steck, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3d ed., 7 vols. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1961), 5:950; H. Rall, *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2d ed., 11 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 8:1151–52; and V. Conzemius, “Reisach, Karl August von,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 12:40.

Pope Pius IX. The pontificate of Pius IX—the longest in history—formed the modern papacy, one stripped of temporal dominion but strong in spiritual dominion. Pius was affable and witty and was seen foremost as a pastor. He wielded steely determination in the face of political and theological threats. Pius convened the First Vatican Council (1869–70), which ratified the constitution *Pastor aeternus*, declaring the pope's universal primacy and personal infallibility—doctrines first proposed in *La Civiltà Cattolica* earlier in February 1869. Courtesy University of Notre Dame Archives.



German monarchs to secure greater freedom for the Catholic Church. Later he would aid Pope Pius IX in preparing for the First Vatican Council. Reisach's assessment of Mormonism is striking in itself, but also for how he read Mormonism as exemplifying a last stage in the logic of Protestant and American development. Friends of Mormonism, of Protestantism, and of America could not possibly agree with Reisach's historical interpretations and evaluative judgments. But they, and all other readers, could have no doubts about what he wanted to say:

If one carefully considers the origin and the development of the doctrine of this psuedo-church and the society of the Mormons, one must recognize that their entire social and religious system is a natural consequence of North American Protestantism, since Mormonism is a reaction against the fundamental errors of the Reformation. Therefore, by considering Mormonism under this point of view and apart from the foolish, exceedingly false and particular doctrines . . . , this very odd system carries a bright testimony to the truth of the principles of the Catholic Church.¹⁶

What Reisach did not say explicitly, nonetheless was probably uppermost in his mind and in the minds of his original auditors. In the contemporary Italian context, Pius IX had emerged as the defender of traditional

16. Reisach, "Il Mormonismo," 392–93.

autocracy against liberal individualism, of the Papal States against the drive for a new Italy, and of conservatism in general against modern innovation in general. For a high-ranking cardinal to pay such extensive attention to a then-obscure American sect was not, therefore, capricious. In his mind, Protestantism, liberalism, and the American experiment were all of a piece. His not-so-subtle message was to suggest that if Italians followed the path of liberalism at home, they would end up with the problems of the United States (widely recognized as the most liberal as well as the most Protestant country in the world); and if they wanted to understand why American liberalism-cum-Protestantism was such a problem, they should consider “il Mormonismo.”

How and why Reisach supports these contentions are revealed clearly in his essay and do not require elaborate summary here. The crux of his argument amounts to a double-barreled blast: first, that the claim by Joseph Smith to be a divine prophet responds to the chaos of biblical interpretation which is the natural outgrowth of the grounding principles of Protestantism; and, second, that the theocracy of Mormonism in Utah represents an extension of the American propensity for substituting crass materialism for genuine spirituality. Along the way Reisach offers backhanded praise to the Mormons for responding to the debilities created by Protestant individualism and American liberal materialism. But that “praise” is only a way station to Reisach’s own commendation of the Roman Catholic Church for its proper structures of religious authority and its proper balance between material and spiritual interests. As demonstration of his case he provides a highly charged reading of American history, especially its early Puritan phase and the later constitutional separation of church and state.

The article is divided into two main parts: a general consideration of Protestant and American history followed by specific attention to Mormonism. Reisach ends his discussion of Mormonism with the assertion that its history, as the culmination of Protestant errors, amounts to a compelling demonstration of the probity, faithfulness, and integrity of Roman Catholicism:

The principles of the Reformation in their fullest development have produced a society that is unreligious, egotistic, materialistic and in every way about to slip into anarchy. But even more frightening is what we see in Mormonism from the misapplication of Catholic principles. It is clear that neither Protestantism, nor the attempts that have been made in its wake to remedy the destructive consequences of its reformatory principles have been able to resolve the great social questions that agitate the

world. From all of this, one must deduce that such a privilege is reserved solely for the Catholic Church.¹⁷

Whatever Reisach's contemporary readers, or observers in the early twenty-first century, make of such judgments, they should recognize that Reisach's 1860 presentation provided an unusually serious treatment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—but also, through the Latter-day Saints, of Protestant history, the general development of the United States, and the specific political fracture that was leading to the Civil War.

Cardinal Reisach's Sources

Reisach's knowledge of religion in the United States seems to have been drawn largely from the writing of Joseph Edmund Jörg (1819–1901), an accomplished author from the strongly Catholic region of Bavaria. In 1858 Jörg published the two-volume *The History of Protestantism in Its Most Recent Development*.¹⁸ This history was a denunciation of both Protestantism and the United States. Jörg was also the editor of the *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland*, which is cited above for its dyspeptic view of the United States after the war. The journal had been founded in 1838 by advocates of a European political Catholicism, who regarded political and social liberalism, state-dominated churches, and progressive Protestantism as their greatest foes. Jörg was himself an archivist who later took a seat in both the Bavarian and Bismark's national parliaments. During the Civil War he published six long articles on the American situation, which, to him, represented a full-scale demonstration of the perils of modern liberalism. His specific views on Mormonism were consonant with these general views on the United States.¹⁹ Besides Jörg's work, Reisach also drew information from reports to the Vatican from American bishops such as Martin Spalding of Louisville and John Hughes of New York.²⁰ Reisach's knowledge was partial, but—again, by

17. Reisach, "Il Mormonismo," 412.

18. Joseph Edmund Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in seiner neuesten Entwicklung*, 2 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1858).

19. For Jörg's writing on America during the Civil War, see Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 140–45; and for background on Jörg himself, see Dieter Albrecht and Bernhard Weber, eds., *Die Mitarbeiter der Historisch-politischen Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1990); and Dieter Albrecht, "Introduction," *Joseph Edmund Jörg: Briefwechsel, 1846–1901* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1988), xxiv–xxxviii.

20. For an excerpt from such a report, see Martin Spalding, "Dissertation on the American Civil War," in *American Catholics and Slavery, 1789–1866: An Anthology of Primary Documents*, ed. Kenneth J. Zanca (Lanham, Md.: University

comparison with other European contemporaries who had not traveled in North America—unusually extensive.

Finally, it is pertinent to ask how a European observer like Cardinal Reisach might have obtained access to information on the Mormons.²¹ Germany was far from the Mormon settlements in the American Intermountain West. But the intellectual center of Mormonism was in England and, therefore, much closer to Germany. The majority of Mormon missionary tracts, periodicals, and books were published not in Salt Lake City but in Liverpool. These publications were picked up by English and Scottish writers, whose articles German scholars read and heavily incorporated into their analyses. In Jörg's history, for example, British periodicals such as the *English Review*, the *Westminster Review*, and the *Edinburgh Review* were used as much or more than German sources.

The Mormon presence in Germany was all but nonexistent at the time that Cardinal Reisach took up his pen to address the topic. Nevertheless, German readers were not ignorant of the new faith. A handful of German articles and books had mentioned Mormonism. And German newspapers delivered news of Mormon happenings. Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde, for example, recalled reading in a German newspaper of the imprisonment of Joseph Smith in 1842.²² As would be expected, not everything printed in the German literature was as fair-minded as missionaries like Orson Hyde



Eine Stimme der Warnung und Belehrung für alle Völker (Hamburg: Nestler und Melle, 1853). Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

Press of America, 1994), 209–13. A full account of American reports sent back to the Vatican, especially from Spalding, is provided in Lalli and O'Connor, "Roman Views on the American Civil War."

21. I thank Josh Probert for the following three paragraphs, which answer this question, and also for valuable help in annotating the document.

22. Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem or a Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde* (Liverpool: James and Woodburn for Parley P. Pratt, 1842), 23.

would have hoped.²³ Either way, the conversion rates among Germans never came close to those in Scandinavia and the British Isles.

Nevertheless, some Mormon texts did appear in German—publications that influenced the view of the Mormons by Jörg, Reisach, and others. Orson Hyde published *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste* [A Voice Crying in the Wilderness]²⁴ in Frankfurt in 1842 on his way back to the United States from Jerusalem. A decade later, Hyde's fellow apostle John Taylor spent time proselytizing in Germany and published four editions of the periodical *Zions Panier* [Zion's Banner]²⁵ during the winter of 1851–52 as well as a German translation of the Book of Mormon in 1852.²⁶ Most important for “Il Mormonismo” was the publication of a German translation of Parley P. Pratt's *A Voice of Warning* in Hamburg in 1853 by Daniel Card, a German-speaking Mormon sent from Nauvoo, Illinois, to direct missionary work in Germany.²⁷

23. For a bibliography of German publications regarding Mormonism, see D. L. Ashliman, “Mormonism and the Germans: An Annotated Bibliography, 1848–1966,” *BYU Studies* 8, no. 1 (1967): 73–94.

24. Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste, eine Stimme aus dem Schoose der Erde. Kurzer Ueberblick des Ursprungs und der Lehre der Kirche “Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” in Amerika, gekannt von Manchen unter der Benennung: “Die Mormonen.”* Von Orson Hyde, Priester dieser Kirche (Frankfurt: Selbstverlage des Verfassers for Orson Hyde, 1842). See Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1997, 2005), 1:205–7.

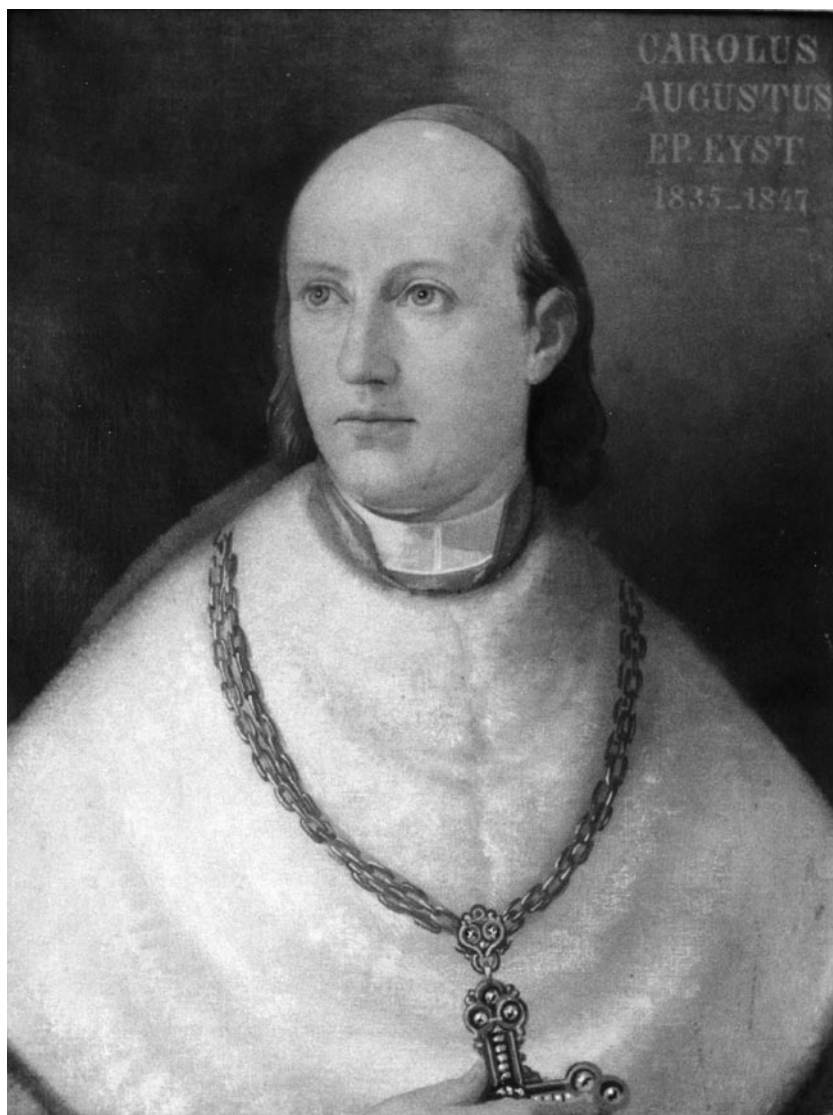
25. *Zions Panier der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der letzten Tage* (Hamburg: November 1, 1851–February 1[?], 1852). See Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography*, 2:265–68.

26. *Das Buch Mormon* (Hamburg: Nestler and Melle for John Taylor, 1852). See Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography*, 2:322–24.

27. Parley P. Pratt, *Eine Stimme der Warnung und Belehrung für alle Völker: oder eine Einleitung zu dem Glauben und den Lehren der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der letzten Tage* (Hamburg: Nestler and Melle for Parley P. Pratt and Daniel Carn, 1853).

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Karl August von Reisach (1800–1869). Courtesy of Bistumshaus Schloß Hirschberg, Diocese of Eichstätt.

Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism*

[Karl August von Reisach, translation by Elizabeth Cramer]

The perfect and exact understanding of errors in matters of religion: their origins, their development, the continual changes that they undergo, the theoretical and practical consequences that flow from them, as well as the influence that they exert on public and political society, provide the Catholic theologian an opportune and profitable means to shed additional light on and to develop the doctrines of our holy faith, and to test them and to defend them against the heresies which bear testimony directly or indirectly against Catholic truths. Therefore, having accepted an invitation to open your scholarly dissertations of this year, in which (through the relevant questions that you treat), you set out to examine and to fight against the erroneous doctrines of a modern author, I consider it proper to choose a theme in which the development of the truth of the Catholic principles will shine forth against the exposition of a heretical system. For this purpose, I would ask you to follow me with your thoughts to a corner of North America, hidden in high mountains that separate California from the other United States, where the Latter-day Saints (as they call themselves) fled to establish and to strengthen their persecuted church, and to prepare themselves for the great mission that they claim to have received from the Holy Spirit: that of escaping to Utah Valley led by their prophet under the ensign to all nations to fight against and to destroy the ranks of Gog and Magog gathered under the teachings of the Pope of Rome. Then the Lord will destroy the rest of the Christians who are immersed in paganism with hailstones of fire, with pestilence and with famine, and the Latter-day Saints can triumphantly usher in a new chapter in world history when all the people of the earth will form a great family of holy brothers, and the earth itself will be changed into heaven by this new church. You understand already that I intend to speak to you of the extremely strange sect of the Mormons, who profess their pretended divine mission with phrases such as these. Perhaps you are wondering how it is that I intend to explain and support the truth of the Catholic Church by choosing to discuss the religious and socio-political system of these fanatics, those who with gross and shameful lies have invented a doctrine that together

*Rather than restrict to a few excerpts as we are accustomed to doing for the dissertations read in the Academy of the Catholic Religion, we have preferred to print extensively this dissertation from which His Eminence Cardinal Reisach inaugurated the meetings of that erudite assembly [footnote in original].

with the most grotesque and disgusting errors of heretical sects (including those of polytheism and pantheism), does not maintain anything of the Christian faith. They are turned completely against Christianity and are immersed in the most vile materialism and sensualism, which means that its members are more of a political sect of communists and socialists than a religious society of believers.

Nevertheless, if one carefully considers the origin and the development of the doctrine of this pseudo-church and the society of the Mormons, one must recognize that their entire social and religious system is a natural consequence of North American Protestantism, since Mormonism is a reaction against the fundamental errors of the Reformation. Therefore, by considering Mormonism under this point of view and apart from the foolish, exceedingly false and particular doctrines (with which Mormonism tries to validate and to make acceptable its fundamental principles), this very odd system carries a bright testimony of the truth of the principles of the Catholic Church, which are fought against and rejected by all of the Protestant sects. In all religious matters, these sects have placed the individual man in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (or with God) to the point of excluding every other real and objective mediation. This destroys the Catholic doctrine that the nature and authority of the church is a divine institution, established by God for the benefit of men. For this reason, the sects are also not able to admit or recognize an invisible church that has no real existence on this earth. Without any authority over individuals, they deprive both the church and religion of its regulating and refining influence on society. This influence conforms to the doctrine, law, and mission of Christ (not to mention the kingdom of God established on the earth), has been exercised for centuries by the church, serves to create a Christian society, and provides for the true temporal and eternal well-being of all nations.

Mormonism sought to find a solution to two fundamental defects that are inherent to all of the sects of the Reformation by establishing an authoritative and visible church as a mediator between God and the individual man, and by giving the church a more inclusive influence on its members and the direction of the members' political society. But in order to better understand the nature of this new pseudo-church, its relationship with political society, and to interpret how such an institution could have begun and made such rapid and great progress, it will be necessary to give a few brief explanations about the state of Protestantism in North America and about the influence that it has on society. I will therefore divide my remarks into two parts: the first will expound upon the above-mentioned facts. In the second part, I will try to explain the system of the Mormons

to the extent that it allows the previously mentioned truth of the Catholic Church to shine forth. I cannot hide that what I am about to tell you is basically a succinct analysis of what you will find about this topic in a work recently published in Germany (which deals with the development of Protestantism in recent years and the reactions to its own principles, which things destroy all faith and all true congregations).^{*1}

In North America, the Reformation occurred in a virgin land; when the first Protestant colonists arrived, there were no religious or secular establishments. Because everything had to be created from scratch, there were no impediments to the growth of the Reformation. There were no deep-rooted religious or social traditions, nor was there legislation from a preexisting political system that could oppose the Reformation from spreading all of its force and energies in order to form a truly religious and Christian society.

And in truth, the English and Dutch Puritans in North America tried to establish a new socio-political life on the basis of their religious doctrines. As the Baptist minister Doctor Baird² has aptly said, “By focusing more on the political system of the ancient Jews than the Kingdom established by Jesus Christ, they completely unified the state and the church, and fused these two equal institutions, similar to the sociopolitical state of the people of God. The consequence of this was the intolerance that condemned Roger Williams to fire, as well as three or four Quakers.”³

**Geschichte des Protestantismus in seiner neuesten Entwicklung* von Joseph Edmund Jörg, two volumes, Freiburg, 1855 [footnote in original].

1. Reisach is writing in reference to Joseph Edmund Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in seiner neuesten Entwicklung, Zweiter Band* [The History of Protestantism in its Most Recent Development] (Freiburg, Ger.: Herder, 1855). Reisach is quite correct when he writes that “Il Mormonismo” is “a succinct analysis” of Jörg’s *Geschichte*. Many of the major topics and quotes in “Il Mormonismo” are drawn from it.

2. Robert Baird was a Presbyterian, not a Baptist. He attended the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in Princeton, New Jersey, and was ordained to the ministry on April 22, 1828. See Henry M. Baird, *The Life of the Rev. Robert Baird, D.D.* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1866), 30, 48.

3. Reisach is summarizing a four-page summary of the relationship between church and state in colonial New England in Baird’s 736-page survey *Religion in the United States of America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845). Baird wrote, “There was much, however, in the Hebrew commonwealth and laws that seemed adapted to the circumstances of men who had just exchanged what they considered worse than Egyptian bondage, for a Canaan inhabited by the ‘heathens,’ whom they were soon to be compelled ‘to drive out.’ The two cases were more

According to Doctor Schaff, this society (which began in New England and then later spread to the other states that were beginning to form), is best considered a theocratic state, or better yet, a bibliocratic state based on the rigid beliefs of Calvinism.⁴ Its very existence caused the persecution of anyone who opposed its doctrines, and created a tyranny over the entire community in the name of religion. This eventually resulted in full despotism over the most minute and ridiculous things. Despite the fact that the laws of this society were based solely on the Bible, it was unable to moderate or constrain the full liberty and independence of individuals as it is explained in that same Bible. Therefore, the fundamental principles of the Reformation gave rise naturally and unavoidably to the ruin of this entire theocratic system and caused the birth of new sects and religious societies. Then came the independence of the American colonies, and therewith the sanctioned separation of the church and the state and the absolute principle of religious liberty. According to this principle, the state has nothing to do with the church or for the church. The state does not recognize any one set of religious beliefs, it does not regulate religion according to one set of guidelines, and the schools do not teach any Christian religion. For the state, there are neither churches, nor confessions, nor dissenters: the

alike than at first strikes a superficial observer” (182). Baird concluded this section by writing,

Such was the state of things throughout the whole colonial age, and to this day, in no other country is the legitimate influence of the clergy in public affairs—an influence derived from their intelligence, united with religion, virtue, and public spirit, more manifest, or more salutary, than in New England. If these colonies might be compared, in their earlier periods, to the Hebrew commonwealth, it is certain, that wherever there was a Moses, there was also an Aaron; and the influence of Winthrop, and Haynes, and Bradford, and Eaton, was not greater or happier than that of their compeers and coadjutors, the Rev. Messrs. Cotton, and Hooker, and Brewster, and Davenport. (188)

Baird never wrote that Roger Williams was condemned “to fire.” He wrote, “In the end, Roger Williams was banished from the colony, and having retired to Narragansett Bay, there he became a Baptist, and founded what is now the State called Rhode island” (199).

4. After discussing the arrival of the Puritans “on the lonely rock of Plymouth” in his history *America* Schaff wrote, “Soon reinforced by larger emigrations of their brethren in faith, especially in 1630, they founded in Massachusetts, according to the principles of the strictest Calvinism, a theocratic state, and became the fathers of a republic, of whose power and importance they did not dream;—a striking proof, that the greatest results may flow from small beginnings.” Phillip Schaff, *America*, 89.

state is essentially indifferent to all religious sects and denominations. Churches are useless to the state, and it has no reason to mix itself with them. However, the state does grant equal rights to all of these different religious factions. In these circumstances surrounding the independence of the American colonies, religious belief (in whatever manner it was professed) was banished from the political arena, and therefore from every private, public and legal influence on social life as well. The individual was declared completely free and independent to profess whatsoever religion he wanted, to arbitrarily form new sects and to change his religious beliefs every single day, if he felt so inclined.

The fundamental principle of the Reformation (that is, religious individualism) was therefore able to take root because there were no hindrances or external political pressures. As a result, Protestants in the United States scattered into various religious sects and denominations. These grew to the point that individuals were able to discover the defects, gaps, contradictions, and consequences of the erroneous doctrines of the Reformers. It would be too long and boring, and even useless for my purposes for me to try to enumerate and to describe each and every one of the many sects in America, even if I wanted to just mention the principal doctrines that they profess, or to explain their origins and developments. Instead, I will talk about these sects in general, and will describe their principal tendencies, which in America (as well as in other Protestant countries) were a result of the principles of the Reformation. As I have already mentioned above, these principles exclude any mediation of the church between man and God, which forces religion and our salvation to depend on an intimate personal relationship in which man is in direct subjectivity to the Redeemer and with God. Having set forth this principle (together with the sovereignty of the individual), the obvious outcome would be a sense of indifference toward any sort of defined and determined formula of belief, even in the sects which admit that there must be some kind of visible or invisible church, but we have seen that the sects have consistently shown a tendency to liberate themselves from such ideas. Even though these sects recognize the Bible to be the rule of the faith and a few of them adhere strictly to the letter of the holy scriptures, the revealed truths and dogmas are less and less apparent in their common beliefs. Instead, everyone expounds the holy text according to his own will and under the influence of rationalized philosophy. There are, in fact, many Methodist sects throughout America, which have set themselves completely apart from any defined doctrine or church in such a way that everyone can personally be assured of the benevolence of God. This is obtained through strange and impetuous practices that make strong impressions on the soul in such a way that those who

believe in them also vainly believe and feel that in an instant they are filled with the grace of the Lord. The adherents who experience these extraordinary and surprising external manifestations feel internally enlightened, converted, justified, and assured without a doubt of their salvation. It is no wonder then, that we have on one hand the danger of losing every revealed Christian truth, and on the other the extinction of every true feeling and the very concept of a religious life in connection with an establishment. As a wise Protestant writer observed about the Methodist system, *religion does not begin with faith, but rather with frenzy, with hypocrisy and with intellectual satisfaction*. Therefore, it is no wonder that this danger inspired many who had felt the need for a positive and supernatural religion, but did not see it as a danger that originated from the consequences of the development of the principles and the doctrines of Protestantism, opposing its development and trying to erect barriers to it, without, however, entirely rejecting these same principles.

Those who profess only the principle of justification through faith and the invisible church believed that these barriers could be overcome by clinging to the ancient symbols of the Reformers, by uniting the various schisms through new interpretations of these symbols, and then by making them obligatory to everyone and thereby giving their fragile and frail religious communities a set of stable and firm procedures that are more in line with the modern spirit. Through this external bond, they believed that any group could be united in a secure, tangible ecclesiastical unity in order to form the true, invisible church.

On the contrary, others soon realized that obligatory creeds about belief that are prescribed by those without divine authority are in opposition to individual liberty. Obligatory creeds caused truths to be lost (which until that point had been recognized as revelations) and the unity of doctrine was disrupted. They felt the need for authority more than ever, and had to recognize that an invisible church composed merely from a few elect was completely a spiritual entity and therefore not capable of meeting the religious needs of the believers, nor the needs of the exterior order of their community. In order to make this church tangible, the only alternative left was the explanation given by the Baptist and pietistic sects (rather than the doctrine of the Reformers of the church), which is that church exists through the community of the believers and the justified. This is done by proclaiming that those who make up this said community were they themselves saints and justified people. In other words, this entirely abandons the concept of the church which was put forth by the Reformers and admits that the church should not be formed by those that individually and spontaneously unite themselves with Christ, but should be a

concrete divine institution, which exists in order to bring men unto this union. While they realized that these pietistic or strange sects (whether they be ancient or modern) were able to stop the progressive destruction of revealed truths and to establish an external congregational structure, they also had to pay careful attention that none of the existing Protestant communities could legitimately prove the divine origins of its institution. Therefore, they were left without any legitimacy whatsoever to claim the real and existing character of the church, which was already said to exist in Protestantism. Based on these considerations, many were led to believe that the church that they desired did not exist and that it would have to be reestablished by God. Because of this, many new sects were created, among which, for example, are the Irvingites,⁵ who resorted to a new pouring out of the Holy Spirit on their founders and apostles in order to legitimize their divine origins. Others explain the prophecies of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation by reading them completely literally and in a Hebrew manner. The Millennialists, for example, are waiting for the formation of the true church and the second coming of Christ, and are preparing by gathering into their midst those who are destined to be the true people of God and preparing them for that end.

Amid these innumerable schisms, a group of spiritualists has recently arisen, who declare that they are in close contact with angelic spirits and the souls of the dead through their sorceries, speaking tablets, and prophesying mediums. They receive new doctrines and saving doctrines through these means and thereby resolve the defects and inherent aberrations of

5. "Irvingites" is used in reference to the members of the Catholic Apostolic Church, a charismatic Millennialist sect founded in London during 1832. Edward Irving (1792–1834) was a minister in the Church of Scotland who was trained in Edinburgh University and thereafter led congregations in London. His congregations became centers of charismatic worship where speaking in tongues, prophesying, and other spiritual phenomena were popularly exercised. Irving was removed from his post at the Caledonian Chapel over his endorsement of the Pentecostal gifts. Not long thereafter, a group of believers from various Christian backgrounds, who were sympathetic to the gifts of the Spirit and with whom Irving was associated, founded the Catholic Apostolic Church. Irving was ordained as the prophetic "Angel" of the church—a leadership position that nonetheless left him subject to the authority of the church's apostles. Irving died soon thereafter, and the movement's members were later referred to as "Irvingites." See Columba Graham Flegg, *Gathered under Apostles: A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 1, 46–62; see also Sheridan Gilley, "Edward Irving: Prophet of the Millennium," in *Revival and Religion since 1700: Essays for John Walsh*, ed. Jane Farnett and Colin Matthew (London: Hambledon, 1993), 95–110.

the dualism of the Protestant sects (which support the notion of an intimate relationship between man and God in matters of religion).

But what influence has this kind of religious doctrine had on society? How has this affected the social and political life of Northern Protestant America?

Those who are wise and attentive observers of all things American (including the heretics, many of whom are natives of the place) agree that the Protestant groups of the United States possess and manifest a certain character all of its own. They demonstrate not only the evils prevalent in our times, such as moral corruption (that is, rampant materialism), but also the principles that distinguish those groups from the old Christian ones. They have changed and distorted the natural and Christian conscience in such a way that they seem to have completely reverted back to the decadence and perversion of ancient societies (from which only the coming of the Redeemer could save the world).

Because no religious or ecclesiastical doctrine was enforced under the law without influencing societal or private life, religious individualism was produced and nourished by the spirit of the sects. Moreover, as the reformers removed any intermediary between the individual and God (the Savior in religion), the same principles destroyed the true church, as there was not the intermediary which assured the influence of religion on society. By separating church and state, the spiritual and eternal pursuits are separated in principle from those in society that are temporal and earthy. If man is declared independent and given the right to choose how and in what manner he wishes to create and maintain an individual relationship with his God, then is it any wonder that in his social and private life, he will also separate in the same way his individual interests in order to determine according to his pleasure if and when these will influence his social and private relationships? The sectarian attitude with this dualism has allowed for an immense rise in materialism in the United States of America. Similarly, religious individualism has produced the widespread egoism that characterizes American society and openly testifies that the people there lack all social traditions and have not been reared in a religious community that was willed and established by God. In fact, as a German Protestant observer wrote, "They have turned their backs on the ancient doctrine of sacrificing oneself for others and for the community and the worst egoism reigns, the natural consequence of which is that each individual tries in every way to get rich as soon as possible, even at the expense of others." "Help yourself," they say as a matter of principle to the poor who ask for relief. "Time is money" has become a proverb. The goal of man, therefore, is to make money: not making money is a waste of time and everything else.

I do not suppose that such sentiments are professed by all American Protestants, but it is certain that they demonstrate and express the spirit that generally reigns in that society which came into being under the domination of heretical sects. From this, it is easy to explain how it happens that those who govern the society can be publicly accused of corruption without creating a scandal, and how (according to the statement of a German writer) even the smallest children speak of business affairs using commercial terms unique to the trade, and how, by using those terms, they become greedy for money, and how the entire population is anxiously immersed in business and commerce, and how everything is measured and valued according to its usefulness and earning potential.

The religious principle of the sects exalts the individual in every way; there is no respect for authority. In fact, the tendency to free oneself from all forms of authority is instilled and encouraged from the religion itself. In America, this tendency penetrates to all religious, social, and political relations. This influences the raising of children within a family and in schools, as well as domestic relations, and public and private morality. I leave it to you to imagine the outcome, since it is already too terrible and delicate of a topic if I had to enter into a detailed exposition of this subject with facts and evidence.

In order to not dwell too long on these issues (which I mention only to lay the groundwork for my principal argument), I will just mention the observations of an American author, Dr. Nevin⁶ (a professor of theology at the reformed seminary of Mercersburg in Pennsylvania, a place that suffers greatly because they do not have the true church) who describes in such great detail the sectarian spirit and all of its consequences that his description alone is enough to acquaint us with the religious and social condition of the Protestant society in which he lived.

“The church,” he says, “in the deep sense of the apostolic symbol, is an object of faith. It cannot be just a concept or an abstraction. The disgrace of our times is that this faith has been abandoned in such a way that a few

6. John Williamson Nevin (1803–86) was a Presbyterian minister and academic in southern Pennsylvania who converted to the German Reformed Church. The “reformed seminary” that Reisach mentions is the seminary associated with the German Reformed Church at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Nevin taught theology both there and at the Church’s Marshall College, where he would later be president. Along with Phillip Schaff (1819–93), Nevin was central in forming and forwarding the Mercersburg theology—a reaction against American revivalism and individualism toward a more unified, catholic view of the church and salvation rooted largely in the Apostle’s Creed. See Richard E. Wentz, *John Williamson Nevin: American Theologian* (New York: Oxford, 1997).

believe that it is anti-Christian to confess the ancient church by repeating the saying, 'I believe in the one holy Catholic Church.' They deny this article and explain it in a gnostic sense as a sign of the anti-Christ. Our entire religion suffers because of this defect and the church is deprived of its own true force. One finds everywhere that the all of the sects recognize Christ, but that he does not have a true identity. As a natural result, one cannot attribute a substantive reality to the church either. Without this, there is a lack of faith in the church as a real institution that supernaturally and permanently exists in this world. The sects recognize that there is a church, but the church that they recognize cannot exist in the world in the true sense of a living organism living and growing from its ancient origins. For them, the Christian society is an aggregate of living atoms from which every person feels drawn by themselves and for themselves toward Christ. They suppose that Christ does not have an actual church in the world, rather an invisible or spiritual Christianity. Men can then access any form of this Christianity that pleases them through the Bible. The spirit of the sects does not believe in a universal church, but believes that this is simply a papist expression devoid of reality because it cannot be applied to his fake church that exists in the clouds (or at the very most in the Bible). From this it follows that the holy ministry is not held in very high regard, nor the sacraments, or worship in general. The anti-Christian spirit is displayed in the disrespect for tradition and any kind of authority. It is impossible to believe in a tangible church if at the same time one does not also recognize that the divine life of God incarnate continues in the church and that the church is not a monotone and sterile tradition, but a vital organism of everlasting life for all ages. Faith in a living Christ makes it impossible for any Christian to disregard the church of times past or the one of the present time because He acts through the church and is continually present in it. It is fundamental to the sects to disrespect any ecclesiastical authority from the early church. They don't want to hear the church say that in the Bible you hear the voice of men. They believe that it is God himself who speaks in the Bible and who speaks directly and personally and to each person individually. Because of this, they believe in the Bible and not in the church, and they reduce the Christian religion to a subjective communication about the supernatural life. Everything is reduced to an unparalleled dualism: on one hand there is man, and on the other, God, and the two are in abstract opposition. The communication between God and man is magical and fantastical rather than concrete and historical. The church is nothing more than an idea, the sacraments are empty symbols, the Bible is a meteorite that fell out of the sky, and the process of the redemption of mankind is reduced to nothing more than

a magic trick whereby God brings about the conversion of man by some kind of invisible force. The piety that follows that kind of conversion is limited to a certain time and place and can never bring harmony into a person's life. Religion that today seems to have the power to move heaven and earth won't have the power or the will to sanctify even the warehouse or the bureau tomorrow. For the sects, science, art, and social interaction are more or less profane. Their restlessness, impatience, impetuosity, eccentricity, and tendencies toward the extreme and fanaticism are also manifested under the form of calmest bigotry."⁷ This is how a Protestant theologian speaks about the American sects. It is no wonder that the spirit that is demonstrated in these sects has provoked numerous reactions, one of which is Mormonism, which I will now begin to explain to you.

It has not been my intention to explain the particular dogmas and doctrines professed by the Mormons, in which one will see a meaningless hodgepodge of the strangest opinions, and a certain eclecticism (which could be termed utilitarian because it has been created to get closer to and to accommodate the circumstances created by the doctrines which are in force in the Protestant world). Neither can it be said that they have a repository of faith or a complete doctrine for every point, since their principle of continual inspiration to their prophet excludes any stability in their teachings and allows for variation in the doctrine. Therefore, there is not even faith in particular points of belief. Instead, their source of pride is that in their system, faith ceases in order to give place to a perfect science that comes to them by the means of the above mentioned continuous inspiration. The most important thing for them is to have a church (that is, an institution) that is designed to remove the dualism between man and God, or between religion and public life. At this point, I will narrow my argument in which I will attempt to explain how Mormonism originated from the Protestant sects. I know that you will find in it a confirmation of the fundamental principles of the Catholic Church and convincing proof that only she is able to satisfy all of the religious and social needs of man and of society.

7. Jörg's history included several excerpts from Nevin's writings. It is difficult to find a direct quote from a Nevin source, but Jörg got Nevin's thought from the German periodical *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*. As he does with other authors, Reisach is paraphrasing Nevin's thought more than directly quoting from it. The subject matter can be found in an 1846 sermon entitled "The Church" and an 1848 sermon that was later published as "Anti-Christ, or the Spirit of Sect and Schism." Similar themes are elucidated in *Catholic Unity* (1844). For a collection of these and other of Nevin's writings, see James Hastings Nichols, ed., *The Mercersburg Theology* (New York: Oxford, 1966).

In opposition to all of the naturalistic systems, the Mormons admit the need for divine revelation in order for man to know with certainty the way to eternal salvation. They admit that such revelations are found in the Bible, which they believe is inspired. They agree with the Catholic Church on these two points. But they also add their Book of Mormon to the Bible. In fact, they prefer it, considering it to be a pure and perfect revelation. On the other hand, according to them, the sacred scripture has been altered and corrupted, so there was a need for a new compilation, which they have prepared but not yet printed. However, they do not consider revelation to be finished and complete or to be confined to these books of theirs, but believe that revelation continues through their prophet. Therefore, not even the inspired doctrines of the founder and first prophet of the sect (which are collected and expounded in their *Doctrines* [sic] and *Covenants*) can close the canon of their revealed doctrine. They are continually adding new revelation through the mouth of successive prophets *according to the needs of the people and the church*. According to the Mormons, this continuation of revelation is the reason why their knowledge of spiritual and heavenly things supersedes that of all the other Christians. The prophet is not even bound by tradition, and therefore, with time, he might produce doctrine inspired by his predecessors or by himself. His authority is living and his inspiration is a constant gift; at every moment he has the ability to proclaim the current will of God with complete independence from the past. The prophet is given the right to receive these obligatory revelations for everyone: this monopoly on revelation is the fundamental principle of their doctrine, even their chief cornerstone, on which rests the entire social, religious and political basis of Mormonism.

If we were to ask how in the world such a false theory was able to grow out of the American Protestant sects, Parley Pratt (the foremost theologian of Mormonism)⁸ would defend this principle of continuous revelation against the other Protestant sects by responding, “Why do the existing churches follow such different paths and have such different doctrines? Why do they need entire libraries of sermons, of treatises, of books full of controversy, of proofs, of opinions, which is just the reasoning of man? There are two reasons for this blindness: the first is the belief of man that

8. Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) was a Reformed Baptist preacher who converted to Mormonism in 1830 and became a member of the leading Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Among the most active of missionaries, Pratt was a pioneer in using newspapers, tracts, and books for Mormon evangelization. See Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874); and Peter Crawley, “Parley P. Pratt: The Father of Mormon Pamphleteering,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Autumn 1982): 13–26.

personal, divine revelation from the Holy Spirit is not necessary except in the very early days of the church. Therefore, they have tried to understand the doctrine of the holy scriptures with their own knowledge, which one can never understand except through the spirit of truth. The second reason is that having lost the spirit of divine inspiration, they began to offer and establish their own opinions and explanations of the word of God instead of believing the things that are written. By distancing themselves from the literal meaning of the scriptures, anyone's interpretation is as good as the next person's. In order to understand something from the holy scriptures, there must first be a clear and infallible method for interpretation, without which one is lost in a spirit of uncertainty and doubt; ever learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. By neglecting this rule, men found themselves in a state of great ignorance and perturbation despite their research in the libraries. In fact, there will always be uncertainty when man is left to change the word of God or to explain it in a spiritual way, with uncertainty and arbitrarily. The Bible, therefore, would be of all books the one whose value is the least certain. It would have been better for man if God had not revealed anything than a book that left them uncertain and doubtful and which obligated him to continually dispute about its contents."⁹ This is how, with perfect reasoning, this Mormon professor refutes Protestantism.

9. The quote is from Pratt's *A Voice of Warning*, which Reisach copied from pages 506–7 of Jörg's history. Concerning the book, Peter Crawley has written,

Voice of Warning was not quite the first Mormon missionary tract or the first outline of the tenets of the Latter-day Saints, but it was the first to emphasize the differences between Mormonism and orthodox Christianity. It established a formula for describing the church's basic doctrines, and it included biblical proof-texts, arguments, and examples which would be used by Mormon pamphleteers for a hundred years. (Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church, Volume One, 1830–1847* [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997], 71)

Reisach is lifting the quote from Jörg, who had obtained a German translation of *A Voice of Warning* that was published in Hamburg by the German-speaking Mormon Daniel Carn (1802–72), who was then serving as president of the German Mission. Therefore, it is possible that Reisach's quote may be corrupted by the multiple translations it went through. See Parley P. Pratt, *Eine Stimme der Warnung und Belehrung für alle Völker* (Hamburg: Nestler und Melle, 1853); David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1982; BYU Studies, 2003), 18; and Crawley, "Father of Mormon Pamphleteering," 13–26. The text that Jörg is paraphrasing is as follows in the original English edition:

Mormonism was forced to resort to continuous revelation through their infallible, inspired prophet because of the state in which Protestantism in America had been changed from the natural development of its principles. The prophet's authority had to exclude the Protestant religious individualism that had divided the society into innumerable sects (which are limited to a few revealed truths, have substituted a positive and revealed religion with pure naturalism and philosophy, and will never be able to create or conserve a true religious society).

During the Reformation, there was no attempt to restrict the authority to a certain number of people who were trained teachers to the rest of the members of the religious community. In fact, the Irvingites of England entirely rejected the churches of the Reformation because they were not able to find true authority in any of the existing sects, and founded their own new church based on their Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. No one

“Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our profit and learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” Now, suppose a friend from a distance should write us a letter, making certain promises to us on certain conditions, which if obtained, would be greatly to our profit and advantage, of course it might be said the letter was written for our profit and learning that through patience and comfort of the letter we might have hope to obtain the things promised. Now, if we clearly understood the letter, and knew what to expect, then it would afford us comfort and hope, whereas, if there was any doubt or uncertainty on our minds in the understanding of the same, then could we derive no certain comfort or hope from the things written, not knowing what to hope for; consequently the letter would not profit us at all. And so it is with the Scriptures. No prophecy or promise will profit the reader, or produce patience, comfort or hope in his mind, until clearly understood, that he may know precisely what to hope for. Now the predictions of the Prophets can be clearly understood, as much so as the almanac, when it foretells an eclipse, or else in the Bible of all books is of most doubtful usefulness. Far better would it have been for mankind if the great Author of our existence had revealed nothing to His fallen creatures, than to have revealed a book which would leave them in doubt and uncertainty, to contend with one another, from age to age, respecting the meaning of its contents. That such uncertainty and contention have existed for ages, none will deny. The wise and learned have differed and do still widely differ, from each other, in the understanding of prophecy. Whence then this difference? Either Revelation itself is deficient, or else the fault is in mankind. But to say Revelation is deficient would be to charge God foolishly; God forbid, the fault must be in man. There are two great causes for this blindness, which I will now show. (Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning* [New York: W. Sandford, 1837], 11–15)

can deny that in this attempt, as with that of the Mormons, that there is testimony borne of the truth of Catholic principles. And how much more valuable is this testimony when borne by these sects (which consider the Catholic Church to be the church of the anti-Christ) when they embrace the very principles of the Catholic Church, confessing that these same principles are naturally the only ones on which one can establish a church which is in accordance to the purposes of God and to the needs of men. In fact, recognizing a living, authoritative, infallible leader entrusted to guide men, recognizing him as necessary in order to receive divine revelation so that all men can be united in a spiritual society with similar thoughts and desires—this is the same as recognizing Catholic beliefs. The Mormons rely on continuous and *new* communicated revelation according to the present needs, which comes *directly* to their prophet. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, has a human leader who is able to maintain, explain, apply and disseminate the revelation of God (through the continual assistance of the Holy Spirit, which was promised to the church until the end of time) without having to receive continuous, new revelation. The revelations from God were given to the world as a precious gift, complete and perfect, and are made eternal and available to men through the ecclesiastic ministry of the church *loquens patribus in prophetis novissime diebus istis loquutus est nobis in Filio*.¹⁰ Mormonism recognizes that it is necessary to have a leader who has evident authority from God and who teaches the will of God to men without error. In fact, by restricting and by *monopolizing* (if I may call it that) the role of the infallible leader to the prophet only, they recognize the need to have one person who holds the privilege of infallibility in order to maintain unity and to prevent schisms.

But how is it that the Mormons prove and legitimize the divine origin of their scriptures, the divine authority of their prophet, and the continuous revelation that comes from him?

Certainly answering such a question is not a simple task, but it was necessary for the Mormons to do if they wanted to declare themselves as the one and only true church of God. It was difficult for this pseudo-church to legitimize itself because it had to assert that it was an entirely new institution, since the Mormons consider that all other churches (both ancient and modern) are corrupt and full of paganism, and would be better described as churches of the anti-Christ rather than of Christ. Other pious and fanatic sects in America and Europe profess the same belief, because, as I already noted, they could not bring themselves to accept the invisible church of

10. "Who . . . spake . . . unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son"—an excerpt from Hebrews 1:1–2.

the Reformers, nor could they be persuaded that the church could become visible with the addition of saints and the justification of all individuals, which requires an external existing religious society. Therefore, these sects resorted to a new effusion of the Holy Spirit, which they believed had come to their founders and to successive ministers until all of the faithful had received these gifts of the spirit. They believe that this is the same spirit that was given to the Apostles in the primitive Christian church and then was subsequently lost because of sin and a defection from the true faith. Even the first prophet, Joe Smith, and his colleagues were forced to resort to this method of legitimization, but in America this did not seem strange or unusual. For example, in the Methodist meetings it is believed that the Holy Spirit descended and manifested its arrival with visible effects, which are frequently compared to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In that manner, when a large assembly of Mormons was convened for the solemn creation of their church, they behaved as the Methodist congregations do (in which everyone is filled with frenzies) and the supposed descent of the Holy Spirit was displayed in the most unusual and clamorous manner. The Mormons believed that through this, the presence and restoration of the ancient gifts of the Holy Spirit had come through their new church. The prophet knew how to take advantage of this situation by professing that he had seen a vision in which Satan had mixed his inspirations with those of the Holy Ghost. Because of this, Mr. Joseph Smith, Junior, alone claimed to have the privilege to communicate with angels. Everyone else, under threat of divine retribution, is obligated to obey him as they would the voice of the Most High every time that he shall communicate his instructions with the words "Thus saith the Lord."

I do not wish to bore you too long with a description of the frenzies and deceptions of this sect and its leaders. But I cannot help but point out how the Mormons go to great lengths using every kind of fraud and great cleverness in order to conform themselves to the opinions and fables dispersed in America through its sacred history by fabricating a history of ancient America. They use this book in order to show how their sect is consistent with the numerous eras of divine revelation, and in this way, they explain their origins. It seems to me that even this undertaking was led by a hidden (and possibly involuntary) sentiment that is based on a Catholic principle.

There are no written historical documents as a record of America, but seeing as how the Americans would like to be able to glory in an ancient history of their own, American archeologists are in the business of fabricating hypotheses about the numerous monuments and antiquities preserved in Central America. In fact, they use these to prove that

the indigenous American people at one time had an extremely advanced culture, from which they decayed and were eventually reduced to the savage state in which they find themselves today. It is the general and public opinion among Americans that these indigenous people are of Eastern descent and originate specifically from Palestine and are of the Jewish origin. Others wish to prove that the monuments originated from the ancient Egyptians. Others date the origins of the first inhabitants to the Flood, if not to the Creation of the world. As early as 1812, a man named Spaulding, a merchant and preacher in various sects, wrote a historical novel titled *Manuscript Found*, in which he recounts in a biblical style how he came to be acquainted with the traditions of the ancient American people.¹¹ This book remained unpublished, but fell into the hands of a certain man named Rigdon,¹² son of a printer and then later a colleague of the first prophet of the Mormons, Joe Smith. The latter then professed to have found the Book of Mormon in a hill, written in Egyptian characters on golden plates. Mormon was the father of Moroni, the last prophet of these ancient indigenous people, who, before the final catastrophe that his people suffered, gathered together the writings of their prophets. As you can imagine, this book is the aforementioned historical novel by Spaulding with various additions and scriptural texts inserted by Smith and Rigdon, who invented the most foolish stories in order to hide this obvious fraud.¹³

11. Reisach is referring to “Manuscript Found,” an 1812 unpublished work by Solomon Spaulding (1761–1816). The narrative is a fictional story that includes fourth-century Romans traveling to precontact America. Being informed by the disaffected Philastus Hurlbut, Mormon antagonist and newspaper editor Eber D. Howe referenced “Manuscript Found” in his *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834) with the intention of disproving Joseph Smith’s account of the Book of Mormon’s origins by arguing that the Book of Mormon was a literary pastiche of Spaulding’s narrative. The manuscript was rediscovered in 1884 and is now housed in the Oberlin College Library. For a complete transcription of the text and the history surrounding its history in anti-Mormon literature, see Solomon Spaulding, *Manuscript Found: The Complete Original “Spaulding Manuscript,”* ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1996).

12. Sidney Rigdon (1793–1876) was a prominent Reformed Baptist (Campbellite) minister who converted to Mormonism in 1830 and became a major figure of early Mormonism. His father, William Rigdon (1761–1810), was not a printer but a farmer in northeastern Maryland and later in southwestern Pennsylvania. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1994), 3–6.

13. Drawn from the following excerpt:

Unter dem Titel „Gefundenes Manuscript“ hatte ein gewisser S. Spaulding, der sich bald als Sekten-Prediger, bald als Handelsmann

This is the very Bible of the Mormons, which tells of the destiny of the Jewish inhabitants of America. It also affords the West the privilege of having seen the promised Messiah, none other than Christ, who, after completing his work in Jerusalem in Palestine, came to America in order to fulfill his mission to the scattered Jews (who had progressed much further than those in the eastern part of the ancient world). Because of the visit of the resurrected Redeemer, a flourishing and grandiose Christian kingdom was formed there. But gradual apostasy destroyed the entire foundation created by Christ. All that remains of the ancient inhabitants is the Indians, who are completely uncivilized and live submersed in the darkest paganism. With this history in hand (if such a fable merits such a title), the Mormons feel a connection with the elect people of God and with Jesus Christ. In order to further legitimize their mission (already evidenced by the copious display of spiritual gifts manifest at the establishment of their church) and in order to justify formal succession, the Mormon theologians point to the doctrine of *living witnesses*. As the *Doctrines* [sic] and *Covenants* (the official book of Mormon doctrine) attests, the spirits of *Moses and Elias* were present at Smith's second baptism as witnesses, and are representatives of Judaism, as well as the Apostles Peter, James, and John, who represent the governing body of the first Christian church. The latter were not just spirits, but alive in their bodies because according to their doctrine, they never died. These men were the founding fathers of the new church. There are also three additional living witnesses from the church established by Christ in America who travel together with John to all the nations of the world and visit the saints among the Mormons. The more faithful and perfect the obedience of the people, the sooner these four witnesses will appear publicly to announce that victory over the pagans is near. In fact, they maintain that there is a connection and a succession

herumtrieb, in der an indianischen Antiquitäten, Höhlen und Gräften reichen Stadt Salem die historischen Sagen Amerika's zu einem dicken Buche in alttestamentlicher Sprache und biblischer Form verarbeitet (um 1812), ohne jedoch dasselbe zum Drucke bringen zu können. Für den jetzigen Eigner des Werkes, Rigdon, konnte nichts gelegener kommen, als Smith's Fund, d. i. der schwärmerisch abergläubliche Nimbus für die literarische Publikation, welche er projektirt hatte. . . . Dort saß der Prophet mit den Platten und dem wunderbaren Urim and Thumim, durch das er die neuägyptische Inschrift lesen und übersetzen konnte; das heißt, er diktierte Spaulding's Roman mit eingewebten eigenen Zusätzen, Bibelstellen, Auszügen und Paraphrasen, und so entstand das „Buch Mormon“. (Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus*, 528)

from the ancient Christian churches of the East to the church in the West with the Mormons.¹⁴

Perhaps you will laugh and scoff when you hear these impudent fables. They seem to have been invented mainly to stimulate the pride and interest that Americans have in antiquity, as well as to provide this new sect with historical precedence. These stories have not failed to make an impression on a few ignorant souls, who, in the sectarian dualism are deprived of any nourishment to the mind or heart. But the Mormon founders and theologians sense quite well that a true church, as they understand it, needs to have a historical basis. To be Christian, it would also need to have a connection to Christ and to the people elected by God who preserved the revelations of the primitive church and its prophetic testimonies, in which the Messiah promised them that the kingdom of God would be established in the world. It seems to me, therefore, that the greatest error in this Mormon roguery is their attempt to cloak real truths (which carry significant power), because by admitting that one point is true, one is naturally forced to admit that another point related to the first is also true. In the Catholic Church, there is a priesthood and a royal empire that is alive, authoritative, and visible through its leaders in the Bishopric and the infallible Head. These things were received by the Apostles from God and continue

14. Here, Reisach is largely lifting from Jörg, who writes,

Sie stellten zum Zwecke lebendiger historischen Succession die Lehre von den „alten Zeugen“ auf. Schon bei der zweiten Taufe Smiths, des Propheten, am 15. Mai 1829, erschienen, laut der officiellen Mormonen-Dogmatik „Doctrines and Covenants“, als Taufzeugen die Geister von Moses und Elias, in der Eigenschaft von Repräsentanten des Judenthums, dann die Apostel Petrus, Jakobus und Johannes, welche „die Regierung der ersten christlichen Kirche“ vertraten, und zwar die letztern nicht als Geister, sondern leibhaft, denn sie sind nach der Mormonenlehre niemals gestorben. Sie standen bei der neuen oder zweiten Kirche zu Gevatter; dabei hatte es aber noch nicht sein Bewenden. Auch von der durch Christus in Amerika gegründeten Kirche blieben drei Zeugen des Todes überhoben; mit dem Evangelisten Johannes vereinigt durchwandern die Vier in leibhafter Menschengestalt, unter den Kleidertrachten und mit den Sprachen der verschiedenen Völker, alle Länder der Erde; bei einzelnen Heiligen der Mormonen haben sie schon persönlich Besuch gemacht, und je treuer der Gehorsam ist, mit dem die neue Kirche ihrem Ziele entgegengeführt wird, desto bälde werden die vier Zeugen vor allem Volk auf der Kanzel auftreten und ihm den großen Triumph über die „Heiden“ ansagen. Inzwischen ist durch sie die Verbindung und Succession mit der weiland ostchristlichen und der weiland westchristlichen Kirche hergestellt und unterhalten. (Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus*, 518–19)

in an uninterrupted succession, which is irrefutably testified by reliable evidence of every kind throughout the history of the entire Christian era. This historical testimony of the true succession is an essential characteristic of the Catholic Church, because from it there is an intimate connection with the Apostles, which has existed in all ages, and is manifested as Apostolic and United, even throughout all time. In this manner, its actual and current existence represents and proves its continual existence for all of the previous centuries until the coming of Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Testament, who fulfilled the prophecies given to the elect Jewish people.

The Mormon Church considers the prophet the supreme authority regarding doctrine and that his authority is from God. Because of this, everyone must believe and obey him without examining the revelations given by the mouth of this prophet. Therefore, it is only natural that they also attribute to him the high priesthood and supreme authority over the religious society that is formed on principles of authority and obedience. In this way, Mormonism is essentially different from the societies created on the principles of the Reformation, as it rejects the idea of the universal priesthood. Instead, the priesthood is not just an ambiguous surface organization, but is an essential and constructive part of the organization, and one that is dictated entirely according to the divine revelations of the supreme ruler. Mormonism has a great hierarchy divided into numerous orders and gradations, all of which are centered on the prophet (everyone who is chosen to participate in the priesthood hierarchy receives his authority through the prophet—either directly or indirectly—and exercises this power by virtue of his holy ministry). In all of this, Mormonism closely resembles the Catholic Church and therefore bears clear testimony that these principles, according to which God has established his true church, are fully conformed to the nature of a true and genuine religious organization.

I will now turn to my final point, as I realize that I have already worn out your patience and gracious attention. How has this aforementioned religious and ecclesiastical system affected the societal and political lives of Mormons? I must respond to this question in order to demonstrate how this sect has tried to compensate for the terrible consequences of the Reformation in regards to American society and to show how this reaffirms the truth of Catholicism.

In Europe as well as in America, there are common complaints among Protestants that their church exercises little or no influence on their lives: while the church may be concerned with the spirit world, the temporal and earthly things are left by the wayside, as if they did not even exist.

Mr. Christopher Hoffmann,¹⁵ a Protestant and founder of a new Hebraized sect in Württemberg, said, "It cannot be the true church if it does not provide for the happiness of the congregation. It is a contradiction for Christianity to assure eternal happiness but then not be able to satisfy the temporal needs of men." One of the main objectives of Mormonism is to regulate its society to in order to benefit everyone. At the same time, it also attributes societal evils to all of the Christian churches, or even to the general spirit of Christianity. Mormons consider civil society to belong to the essence of the church so that it is neither separate nor distinct from the religious society, and the religious authority of the prophet is the same as his supreme authority over their public affairs. He regulates and directs the private, social, and political life of the Mormons with the same independence and universality with which his authority embraces their religious affairs. Furthermore, all of the laws and regulations that direct the actions of the men are aimed at the communal end of the public life

15. Christopher Hoffman (1815–85) was the organizer of a radical pietistic conventicle called, first, the "Congregation of God's People in Jerusalem," and then the "Temple Fellowship." A millenarian sect, the Templars were driven out of the Lutheran Church in 1859 and later emigrated to Palestine, where they established settlements near Jerusalem in preparation for the millennial *Parousia*. While the Temple Societies were first founded in the United States, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, and France, the first actual temple colonies were built later in 1869 in Jaffa, then later in other Palestinian locations. Concerning the origins of his ambitious project, Hoffman wrote the following:

The turmoil strengthened me in my belief that the work of Christ and the Apostles while on the earth had been built on faith in the Prophecies of the Old Testament Prophets of Israel. These prophecies concerned mainly the founding of the Kingdom of God on earth. I became convinced that a revived religion and a new social order would have to be built, one goal, one aim for the Christian.

Then from several directions, mostly non-church groups, the question came: Where should this center be located? Since that had seemed unimportant to me, and irrelevant until then, I made a special study, to discover if a center were named in the prophecies. I found that some Prophets declared Jerusalem to be the center. Others mentioned Israel, that is, Palestine, to be the external manifestation of the Kingdom of God on this earth. . . . Henceforth, I would work for the gathering of the Children of God in Jerusalem. The sentinel should carry my message, my call to all people who willed to hear. (Christopher Hoffman, *Jerusalem Journey: The Autobiography of Christopher Hoffman 1815–1885*, trans. and abr. Gertrud Paulusreno, 94–95)

See Alex Carmel, "Christoph Hoffman," *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 3:1819–20.

and are ultimately based on the divine revelations received by the prophet. All actions in the society are therefore considered religious, and the Mormon community a perfect theocracy. It is evident that in such a society, there are no individual liberties in either the public or private sphere. In truth, the prophet even assigns wives to their husbands. This is no longer a religion that merely influences social relations and the state. No, the state and the church are all one, and the fulfillment of social obligations constitutes the practice of the religion.

For the Mormons, the sociopolitical sector of society and the entire social and private life in a civil community (which is directed at the common temporal and earthly happiness) is not just something that can be adapted, sanctified and encouraged by the religious spirit. No, their entire earthly community has the same objective of the church and the state: their system promises to establish heaven on earth. Their church (as opposed to the sectarian churches who are only concerned about the future life in the eternities) is a church that is only concerned about the things of this world. They know of no happiness apart from the present. This is the pure religion of materialism.¹⁶ The Mormon system exercises absolute control over, conquers, and even excludes the egotistical individualism that drives the Protestant sects of American society. But the principle of materialism, which is equally important in America, is maintained by the Mormons. The only difference is that among the other sects, the individual benefits from it, while among the Mormons, the entire socialist community benefits from it.¹⁷ A fundamental principle of the political society of the United States is to entirely separate the church from the state, or the natural order from the supernatural one. Contrary to this, Mormonism mixes and unifies the church with the state, imbues the natural with the supernatural order, as well as the supernatural with the natural order, transforming both into pure and simple materialism.¹⁸

16. Reisach is directly quoting Jörg on this point: "Die Mormonenkirche ist im schnurgeraden Gegensatz zu den Kirchen, die sich nur mit dem Jenseits abgeben, die Kirche, welche sich nur mit dem Dießseits abgibt; sie kennt gar keine jenseitige, von der dießseitigen unabhängige Glückseligkeit, mit andern Worten: sie ist pure die Religion des Materialismus." Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus*, 521.

17. "Letzterer ist hier niedergearbeitet, das Prinzip des Materialismus aber ist geblieben, nur mit dem Unterschied, daß dasselbe jetzt Allen in Gemeinschaft zu gute kommen soll." Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus*, 523.

18. "Sie hat nicht die natürliche Ordnung in die übernatürliche hineingezwungen, sondern umgekehrt die übernatürliche Ordnung in die natürliche. Nicht so fast die natürliche Ordnung ist hier um ihre Freiheit gekommen und zur Unnatur verkehrt wie bei andern Schwärmerkirchen, sondern umgekehrt ist es die übernatürliche Ordnung, welche in den Staub gezogen und zur Unnatur des

One might wonder how it is possible to find a confirmation of the truth of Catholicism in this horrendous and wicked religious, social, and political system. Without a doubt, there is both a direct and an indirect confirmation.

It is not Catholic doctrine that the church must be separated from the state. Instead, the two must converge in accordance with human society so that the social and public sectors of society are based upon the law of God, which the church promulgates, applies, and endorses through its canonized regulations. Because society is based on this foundation, it acquires the energy, force and consistency that only religion is able to provide to it. Without this, how can society assure its citizens the peace of mind that they seek on earth *ut quietam at tranquillam vitam habeant*.¹⁹

These principles are recognized by the Mormons and are applied in order to oppose the erroneous principles of other Protestant sects and to avoid their sad consequences. However, there is no doubt that they are poorly applied and that the perverse and erroneous application of these principles has produced a monstrous socialist theocracy characterized by the most shameful materialism.

The principles of the Reformation in their fullest development have produced a society that is unreligious, egotistic, materialistic and in every way about to slip into anarchy. But even more frightening is what we see in Mormonism from the misapplication of Catholic principles. It is clear that neither Protestantism, nor the attempts that have been made in its wake to remedy the destructive consequences of its reformatory principles have been able to resolve the great social questions that agitate the world. From all of this, one must deduce that such a privilege is reserved solely for the Catholic Church.

By distinguishing (but not completely separating nor entirely mixing) the church and the state, by directing (but not taking over nor destroying) the legitimate temporal power in its proper sphere, and by defending and preserving the liberty and independence of the divine power of the leader, priesthood, and empire in order to lead the faithful in the way toward eternal salvation, the Catholic Church has destroyed slavery and tyranny, has protected the true liberty of the people and of the

Materialismus verkehrt ist. . . . Daher ist auch ein Unterschied von kirchlich und staatlich nicht mehr möglich, sondern Kirche und Staat sind völlig Eins." Jörg, *Geschichte des Protestantismus*, 522–23.

19. "That [they] may lead a quiet and a peaceable life"—a phrase from 1 Timothy 2:2, wherein the author enjoins his reader to pray for those in earthly authority.

individual, and has sanctified and civilized human society. It also does not hesitate to continue to carry out this divine mission in the midst of the cruelest persecutions and the most powerful attacks.

We as Catholics are also spectators of these persecutions and attacks. Mormonism actively fights against our principles (all the more so in Europe) and thereby advances the war on the Catholic Church. Religious individualism attacks the divine authority of the church. Religious indifference and the idea of freedom of conscience in religion are prevalent. People want to separate the church from the state, which deprives the state of the beneficial influence of the church. They try to bind the church and take it into slavery, justifying the entire action with the chains of the omnipotent power of the independent state. In order to destroy the divine edifice, they concentrate all of their blows on bringing down the cornerstone. And because God wanted him who brought the keys of the kingdom of heaven also to be earthly King, thus in his kingdom, he and his church are made completely free and independent. The social and political order founded on the basis of the gospel would be preserved for all nations and a society which is truly Christian. One needs to raise the royal crown to him in order to be able to secularize his state and all of the human societies.

These are all vain attempts! Because it is the work of man, Mormonism will fail: if not because of American influence, then by internal schisms. It will be dissolved by its own iniquity and the monstrosity of its doctrines. The Catholic Church and His Holiness the Pope will conquer and remain unchanged, sustained as the work of God through his infallible truth and omnipotent arm. The Lord God has already given to the great and most merciful Successor to Peter divine wisdom to shine in the darkness of deceptions, hypocrisy, and in the frightening disturbances of the mind, solemn stability, and fearless courage that imposes itself on the strong ones of the earth and transforms defenseless supports into bulwarks of justice. Under the guidance of their pastors, millions of faithful around the world raise their voices to protest against the wicked robbery of their estate, and to gather unanimously together around the same Father for comfort and against abuse and calamities. This proves very convincingly that charity and divine authority come only from one faith whereby society is able to conserve within itself the principles and energy necessary to maintaining and reestablishing a social and political order that is truly Christian. *Portae inferi non praevalerunt*.²⁰

20. "The gates of hell shall not prevail." Matthew 16:18.

Reliquary

Moving day approaches
The accumulated things of the garage,
 the closets, the basement, under the bed
 even the back of my bottom drawer
Begin to clutter my thoughts too

And moving should be a cleansing ritual
A time to contemplate household objects,
 to purge those not worthy of boxes or bubble wrap,
Making of them an offering to the thrift store
 perhaps or the landfill

But some things I just can't throw away
 gaudy tole-painted Halloween decorations,
 old quilts too shabby it seems even for dogs,
Considering this trash, I entertain the thought
 that some dead ancestor has intervened

Someone who had a body and wants it back;
 perhaps only this kitsch remains from
A houseful of matter organized in the form of
porcelain saucers and cable-knit sweaters and
 a kitchen table of quarter-sawn oak

Someone animated by post-mortal information
A secret about what it means to
 put on this flesh, to exercise dominion
 over even the most inconsequential clod of dirt
A nothing that exerts its own gravitational pull

Or maybe the knowledge that her spirit
 also gave *this* matter life
Painted it by hand; displayed it every October for years
 this configuration not eligible for resurrection
Making me remember the incorruption to come

—Shawn P. Bailey

This poem won second place in the BYU Studies 2006 poetry contest.

Prayer

It was picture day. Me: a first grader. I was all ready.
Hair combed. Shirt tucked in tight. Tie clipped on.
Mom's orders were clear:

No getting dirty or messing up my hair
No riding my bike. No playing in the sandpile.
No playing outside at all.

Those were all the things, especially being forbidden,
I needed to do that day. I had already learned about
The spirit of the law; how it lets us forget the inconvenient parts
and mostly obey.
So I went to the playhouse, a shed in the backyard,
furnished with a child-sized pantry, table, chair.

It began to rain consequences:
The things you don't plan for, but choose.
Afraid, hair and clothes already soaked in my mind,
I said a prayer.
Not a rain prayer I had heard before, not the asking or
thanking of desert people for moisture.

It was the prayer now most familiar to me:
Let me not bear the bad thing I deserve.

The rain stopped. It stopped abruptly.
The thought "coincidence" might have occurred to an adult,
logical, sterile-minded.
That adult might have offered tepid thanks:
"if You did that for me, I am grateful,"
as a scientific explanation fretted in the mind's back room.

Not me. I knew I had seen the finger of the Lord.
Despite all those farmers' pleas—for me—He stopped that deluge.
I walked across the backyard and inside,
My eyes, like small stones, burned by that revelation.

—Shawn P. Bailey

This poem won third place in BYU Studies 2006 poetry contest.

Copyright Laws and the 1830 Book of Mormon

Nathaniel Hinckley Wadsworth

In the summer of 1829, Joseph Smith completed his translation of the Book of Mormon.¹ One year removed from the harrowing loss of the initial 116 pages of the translation in the summer of 1828,² he was determined to not lose this work again, in any sense. On June 11, 1829, Joseph deposited, with the clerk of the Northern District Court of New York, a single printed page that resembled what would become the title page of the 1830 Book of Mormon, in order to secure a copyright in the work.³ The court clerk, Richard Ray Lansing, generated the official executed copyright form, which he retained; Lansing's record book was eventually deposited in the Library of Congress. In December 2004, this official form and the accompanying title page were photographed by the Library of Congress⁴ (see pages 97–99 in this issue), prompting a reevaluation of the law and the events surrounding the original copyright of the Book of Mormon.

A copyright—the legal property right in a creative work—would ensure that Joseph alone had the authority to publish the Book of Mormon. Obtaining the copyright was seen as a validation of the reality of his work. In October 1829, Joseph wrote from Pennsylvania to Oliver Cowdery concerning the Book of Mormon: “There begins to be a great call for our books in this country. The minds of the people are very much excited when they find that there is a copyright obtained and that there is really a book about to be produced.”⁵

Joseph may have also seen the copyright as a help in recouping the considerable costs of producing the book. Another publisher could have cut into sales, but a copyright would prevent such competition. This financial factor is evidenced by the Prophet's sending Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery to Canada in 1830 to license the copyright in that country. Page

Nathaniel Hinckley Wadsworth

As a student, Nathaniel Wadsworth worked for several years on the Joseph Smith Papers project and performed legal and historical research for other projects related to LDS Church history. This paper began as directed research credit and continued as a class project for John W. Welch at the J. Reuben Clark Law School.



Wadsworth's devoted interest in Church history began upon his return from service as a missionary when his father gave him the *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*. "Since reading that book," Wadsworth says, "I have had an insatiable desire to learn more about the people and events of the Restoration. I am glad to be able to make even a minor contribution to the study of Joseph Smith and his work."

later said that Joseph saw this as an opportunity to raise a substantial amount of money, although the endeavor was ultimately unsuccessful.⁶

Whatever the specific reasons for Joseph's seeking a copyright in the Book of Mormon, he genuinely wanted to acquire that legal protection. Therefore, he made diligent efforts to do what the law required in order to secure that right.

Most historians have treated Joseph's June 11 filing as the sole event necessary to vest in him all legal rights to the Book of Mormon.⁷ Joseph's efforts to secure the copyright seem to have paid off in early 1830, when he successfully defended his rights against Abner Cole, an opportunistic editor who pirated selections from the Book of Mormon and printed them in his newspaper.⁸ It is logical to assume that Joseph was successful because he had filed for the copyright several months prior to the altercation with Cole. But his efforts to secure a federal copyright are probably not why Joseph succeeded against Cole. Indeed, the young prophet probably did not meet all five of the federal law's requirements for a valid copyright. Joseph's legal victory over Cole was more likely premised on common law rights that Joseph held in the *unpublished* manuscript simply by virtue of having created the work.

Copyright Laws in Nineteenth-Century America

Before turning to Joseph Smith's clash with Abner Cole, one needs a general understanding of the copyright laws in the United States in the early nineteenth century. That understanding requires one to know the difference between statutory law and common law.

Statutory law is defined as "the body of law derived from statutes rather than from constitutions or judicial decisions."⁹ It consists of all the written laws created by the legislative bodies of governments. *Common law* is "the body of law derived from judicial decisions, rather than from statutes or constitutions."¹⁰ Historically, common law was considered inarticulate until put into words by a judge. Where statutory law did not answer the question in a particular case, a judge might turn to common law and would decide the issue "in accordance with morality and custom," and later judges would regard this decision as precedent.¹¹ In 1829, both statutory law and common law provided copyright protections to an author's work: statutory law applied to both published and unpublished works, and common law applied only to unpublished works.

As with most areas of American law, the antecedents of these copyright laws can be traced back to England. The first copyright act, passed in England in 1709, was the Statute of Anne. Prior to the Statute of Anne, the Stationers' Company, a guild of printers, held perpetual copyrights in the works it published.¹² The new act reversed that and vested the copyright in the authors of the works. But rather than preserve the perpetual nature of copyrights, the Statute of Anne granted authors the sole right to print and sell their works, subject to certain conditions, for a period of only fourteen years.¹³ Many authors and publishers took the position that this statute was merely an appendage to a common law right that gave authors lifetime ownership in their creative works. In 1774, however, the House of Lords ruled against this argument in the case *Donaldson v. Beckett*, declaring that no common law right of copyright existed.¹⁴ The statute alone granted authors rights in their works. A similar statutory scheme was later adopted in America.

In 1783, the Continental Congress, lacking the authority to make a federal copyright law, recommended that each state establish its own copyright law. Following the pattern set forth in the Statute of Anne, the Congress recommended that authors be given rights to their works for at least fourteen years.¹⁵ Most states complied with the request of Congress, including New York in 1786.¹⁶ Trouble soon arose, however, because copyright protection in one state could not guarantee an author's protection in another state. Moreover, inconsistencies from one state to another

demonstrated that the states could not “separately make effectual provision for [copyrights].”¹⁷ Solving this problem was important enough that copyright law was covered in the United States Constitution, ratified in 1789.

Under the Constitution, the states ceded to the federal government the power “to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.”¹⁸ Under this authority, Congress enacted the first federal copyright statute in 1790.¹⁹ The Copyright Act of 1790 granted to “the author and authors of any map, chart, book or books . . . the sole right and liberty of printing, reprinting, publishing and vending such map, chart, book or books, for the . . . term of fourteen years from the time of recording the title thereof in the [district court] clerk’s office.”²⁰ The copyright was renewable for an additional fourteen years, provided the author met certain conditions. The disparate state copyright statutes were preempted as the federal government exercised full authority to create statutory copyright law.²¹

The protections afforded by this federal statute went further than some state protections.²² Under the new law, after an author or proprietor (a person who had acquired the rights from the author) had secured the copyright to a book, any other person who printed or published the work without consent of the author or proprietor, or who knowingly sold unauthorized copies, was required to forfeit all such copies to the author or proprietor.²³ The offender was also required to “pay the sum of fifty cents for every sheet which shall be found in his or their possession,” with one half of the payment going to the copyright holder and the other to the federal government.²⁴ If an author failed to do all that was necessary to secure a copyright in a book, he or she could still print and sell it, but the statute would not preclude others from likewise printing and selling the book.

Some lawyers argued that this federal statute functioned concurrently with the common law in protecting an author’s rights in his or her creative works. But, as had occurred earlier in England, the United States Supreme Court eventually rejected that argument in 1834 in the case *Wheaton v. Peters*, holding that no common law copyright existed in *published* works.²⁵ But at the same time the Supreme Court accepted the commonly held position that common law copyright protection existed for as yet *unpublished* works:

That an author, at common law, has a property in his manuscript, and may obtain redress against any one who deprives him of it, or by improperly obtaining a copy endeavors to realise a profit by its publication, cannot be doubted; but this is a very different right from that which

asserts a perpetual and exclusive property in the future publication of the work, after the author shall have published it to the world.²⁶

Thus, in affirming an author's property interest in his unpublished manuscript, the *Wheaton* decision established a principle of copyright law under the common law, according to which Joseph Smith could have successfully asserted copyright protection regarding the Book of Mormon before, but not after, the book's publication. At that point, he would have to rely on compliance with the federal statute.

Obtaining a Federal Statutory Copyright

In order to secure the copyright granted by the federal statute, Joseph Smith would have to meet all the law's requirements. The 1790 copyright law, as amended in 1802, granted an author the copyright in a work, commencing at the time the title was filed in the clerk's office, but more than that initial step was required. No person was "entitled to the benefit of this act" unless that person satisfied the following five requirements:²⁷

1. Give notice to the clerk: "Deposit a printed copy of the title of such map, chart, book or books, in the clerk's office of the district court where the author or proprietor shall reside."²⁸
2. Pay the clerk: "Sixty cents" for the clerk's preparing of the copyright certificate and "sixty cents for every copy under seal actually given to such author or proprietor."²⁹
3. Give full notice in the book: "Give information by causing the copy of the record [the clerk's certificate] . . . to be inserted at full length in the title-page or in the page immediately following the title of every such book or books."³⁰
4. Give notice to the public: "Within two months from the date [of the certificate], cause a copy of the said record to be published in one or more of the newspapers printed in the United States for the space of four weeks."³¹
5. Provide a public copy of the book: "Within six months after the publishing [of the book], deliver, or cause to be delivered to the Secretary of State a copy of the same, to be preserved in his office."³²

Evidence Relevant to Joseph Smith's Compliance with the Statutory Requirements

Joseph Smith clearly satisfied the first and third requirements, and presumably the second, but, as explained below, he may well have fallen short regarding the fourth and fifth requirements.

Requirement 1. Richard Ray Lansing, clerk of the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, processed Joseph's filing for the Book of Mormon copyright in June 1829. He gave to Joseph a signed office copy of the copyright application, which has been held for many years in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City and published on occasion.³³ As noted above, the official court-executed copy of the copyright form and the accompanying "title" page were recently located in the Library of Congress.³⁴ Requirement 1 was fully met.

It would be interesting to know more about how and where the filing with Lansing was accomplished. Joseph Smith's history simply states that "our translation drawing to a close, we went to Palmyra, Wayne county, New York, secured the copyright, and agreed with Mr. Egbert B. Grandin to print five thousand copies for the sum of three thousand dollars."³⁵ This statement does not necessarily mean that the copyright form was filed in Palmyra, and such a scenario is unlikely. Federal law required the applicant to file in the clerk's office of the federal district court where he resided. Both Manchester-Palmyra, where the Joseph Smith Sr. family lived, and Fayette, where Joseph took up residence at the Peter Whitmer home a week before June 11, 1829, belonged to the Northern District of New York, with the court clerk's office located in Utica. Normally, then, such copyright applications would have been made in Utica.

Still, a filing in or near Palmyra is not out of the question: The district court may have been holding a term or function of court in or around Palmyra in June of 1829, enabling Joseph to file the title page close to home.³⁶ In 1830, the district court for the Northern District of New York was required to hold three terms of court: twice in Albany, on the third Tuesday of January³⁷ and second Tuesday of May³⁸; and once in Utica, on the last Tuesday of August.³⁹ Additionally, the district judge was authorized "to appoint and hold a court or courts at any other time or place . . . within and for the said northern district, as the business therein may require."⁴⁰ Because Congress had earlier required terms of court to be held at Canandaigua,⁴¹ just fifteen miles from Palmyra, it is conceivable a term of court was being held there in June 1829 under the district judge's discretion. The clerk of the court, appointed by the district judge, was to attend the various terms of court "and do all the duties of said office of clerk, which may accrue at or from the sessions of the court at said places, both in and out of court."⁴²

Had Lansing been in or near Palmyra in June of 1829, Joseph could have gone to him to file for copyright of the Book of Mormon. But little concrete evidence is available to support this theory. Issues of the *Wayne Sentinel*, a Palmyra newspaper, for May and June 1829, while reporting

proceedings of local courts in Palmyra and Canandaigua, contain no mention of a term of the federal district court. Furthermore, the printed certificate signed by Lansing states that the title of the Book of Mormon was deposited for copyright purposes “in this Office,” presumably in Utica. Although these words were preprinted on the form, no notation indicates that the filing took place elsewhere. The evidence, while not conclusive, suggests that Lansing received the title page of the Book of Mormon in Utica. Also unknown is how the title page was delivered to Richard Lansing. Church historian Larry C. Porter writes, “It is not certain whether Joseph Smith simply submitted his title entry by mail to Lansing at Utica, New York, or whether it was delivered by hand.”⁴³

Joseph may have made the trip to Utica, about one hundred miles each way from Fayette, but with so many other concerns and activities in Palmyra and Fayette at this time, such a trip seems difficult, if not unlikely.⁴⁴ It would have taken the better part of a week to make the round trip journey. Another person may have gone in Joseph’s behalf, carrying the signed forms. In a letter to Hyrum Smith from St. Lawrence County, New York, dated June 17, 1829, Jesse Smith, Hyrum’s uncle, refers to a visitor he received, a “fool” who “believes all [about the golden plates] to be a fact.”⁴⁵ Richard Lloyd Anderson suggests that the man referred to in Jesse’s letter was Martin Harris, who, on his way to St. Lawrence County, could have stopped in Utica to deposit the title page of the Book of Mormon in the district court.⁴⁶

Regardless of where or by whom the form was submitted, Lansing signed the copyright certificate, which identified Joseph Smith as “author and proprietor” of the work, and the first step to securing the copyright was complete. Although Joseph did not “author” the Book of Mormon, he identified himself as the book’s author to comply with the wording of the federal statute, which made copyrights available to authors or proprietors of books and other works.⁴⁷ In calling himself the “author and proprietor,” Joseph adopted the language used in the statute. Furthermore, as John W. Welch has pointed out, “A *translator* was qualified, for copyright purposes, as the author of a book he had translated.”⁴⁸

Requirement 2. Together with this filing, Joseph must have paid the requisite fee, or he would not have received the certificate in return. The fees probably totaled \$1.20: sixty cents for recording the official copy and another sixty cents for giving a copy of the certificate to Joseph.⁴⁹

Requirement 3. Joseph also met the third requirement by having the full wording of the certificate received from Lansing printed on the back of the title page of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon.

Requirement 4. Less certain is whether Joseph completely satisfied the statutory requirement of publishing the court's certificate in a local newspaper for four weeks within the two months after filing the book's title. On June 26, 1829, Egbert B. Grandin, with whom Joseph later contracted to print the Book of Mormon, published the text of the book's title page in his Palmyra newspaper, the *Wayne Sentinel*. This text was again published in August by two other local papers: in the *Palmyra Freeman*, on August 11, and in the *Niagara Courier*, on August 27. The articles in the *Freeman* and the *Courier* spoke derogatorily of the "Golden Bible," and probably copied the title page from the *Wayne Sentinel*.

Joseph Smith attempted to follow the law by having Grandin publish the text of the title page, but the law required the publication of the entire copyright certificate. Furthermore, the title page did not appear in a newspaper "for four weeks" before August 11, the date by which the publishing requirement was to be met.

On March 26, 1830, Grandin again published the title page of the Book of Mormon in the *Wayne Sentinel* and announced that the book was available for purchase. This was followed by publication of the book's title page in the *Wayne Sentinel* on April 2, 9, and 16, and May 7. These consecutive notices may have been a second attempt on the part of Grandin and Joseph Smith to satisfy the legal requirements for copyright. Richard Lloyd Anderson notes that Joseph and his associates "may have thought they were complying with the intent of the law by printing just what they had originally submitted to the clerk of the court—the title page."⁵⁰ While the notices in Grandin's newspaper could have merely been advertisements for the sale of the book, the fact that there were four of them in consecutive weeks, as required by the statute, might indicate otherwise. Still, these notices, coming almost a full year following Joseph's original filing with R. R. Lansing would not appear to satisfy the law's two-month requirement.

Requirement 5. Given the evidences of Joseph's efforts to comply with the foregoing statutory requirements, it is quite possible that he or Grandin sent a copy of the published Book of Mormon to the U.S. Secretary of State, who at the time was Martin Van Buren. However, no record has survived indicating that a copy was submitted to Van Buren, as required, within six months of the book's publication, which was in March 1830.⁵¹

Based on all available evidence, Joseph Smith did not satisfy the federal law requirements to secure a copyright in the Book of Mormon. But he was not alone in his shortcomings. An extensive examination of several New York and Pennsylvania newspapers printed in the 1820s revealed very few occasions on which an author published the full copyright certificate from any federal district court.⁵² At the same time, advertisements for the

sale of newly published books are numerous. Moreover, several books published in the early nineteenth century claimed to be copyrighted but did not include a copy of the court's certificate printed in the book.⁵³ Though some authors no doubt complied with every aspect of the federal copyright statute, it may still be true that Joseph Smith did more than most.

Legal Consequences of Failing to Meet All of the Statute's Requirements

In light of these shortcomings, one wonders: would these defects have compromised Joseph's full copyright protection of the Book of Mormon? Court opinions from the time indicate that Joseph's actions would have been insufficient to uphold in court any statutory copyright protection, despite his good-faith efforts and partial compliance.

In 1808, a Connecticut state court ruled that the provisions of the federal copyright law requiring the publication of the copyright notice in a newspaper and the delivery of a copy of the work to the secretary of state were "merely directory, and constitute no part of the essential requisites for securing the copyright."⁵⁴ The state court explained:

The publication in the newspaper is intended as legal notice of the rights secured to the author, but cannot be necessary, where actual notice is brought home to the party. . . . The copy to be delivered to the secretary of state, appears to be designed for public purposes, and has no connection with the copyright.⁵⁵

While this opinion seems favorable to Joseph Smith's case, the facts of the 1808 case involved a claim to a copyright secured before the 1802 federal amendment. Under the prior 1790 federal law alone, the court found essentially that an author only had to file for copyright in the district court.

Sixteen years later, in 1824, Judge Bushrod Washington of the United States Supreme Court, sitting on the Circuit Court in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, ruled that an author must comply strictly with all the provisions of the copyright act in order to receive its benefits.⁵⁶ Like the Connecticut judge, the federal judge stated that if it were not for the 1802 amendment, "I should be of opinion that [securing the copyright] would be complete, provided he [the author] had deposited a printed copy of the title of the book in the clerk's office."⁵⁷ But, in light of the language in the 1802 amendment, Judge Washington held that a person seeking copyright protection must perform all of the acts prescribed by the copyright law "before he shall be entitled to the benefit of the act."⁵⁸ Under this analysis, Joseph Smith would not have been entitled to copyright protection

for the Book of Mormon. A different federal judge in New York would not necessarily have been required to follow Washington's reasoning, and Joseph Smith could have asserted that his acts were sufficient, but in all likelihood this argument would have failed. The United States Supreme Court ruled on the issue four years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, when, in *Wheaton v. Peters*, it agreed with Judge Washington, declaring that compliance with all of the provisions of the copyright act was necessary to secure the statutory rights.⁵⁹

Unless some evidence of newspaper publication is forthcoming, based on the relevant federal statutes and court opinions applicable in 1830, Joseph's copyright was deficient. Accordingly, after the Book of Mormon was published in March 1830, another person probably could have reprinted and sold the book without Joseph's permission and without legal restraints. But, as noted above, common law would have prevented others from publishing the Book of Mormon before the book's public release, and this is the strongest legal explanation for Joseph's success against Abner Cole in January 1830.

Abner Cole's Infringement

Well before the publication of the Book of Mormon, the youthful Joseph Smith had already acquired familiarity with the workings of the law. As early as 1819, he was called and qualified as a credible witness in a case involving a promissory note signed by his father and brother Alvin. Six years later, in 1825, the Smiths were sued by Russell Stoddard for payment earned while working on the family's house.⁶⁰ That same year, Joseph observed the legal taking of his family's farm when an agent sold the deed to another.⁶¹ In 1826, Joseph was the defendant in a case, answering the charge of being a disorderly person.⁶² So he was not unfamiliar with the legal process when he found himself involved in legal matters connected with the publication of the Book of Mormon, specifically with preventing Abner Cole from publishing portions of the book.

Joseph did not leave a record of his encounter with Cole. The only account of the dispute comes from Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, who recorded the incident several years after its occurrence. The problem arose while Joseph was spending most of the winter of 1829–30 in Harmony, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Emma, during which time Hyrum Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris oversaw the printing of the Book of Mormon in Palmyra.⁶³ Egbert B. Grandin handled the publishing of the book at his print shop and gave Hyrum and Oliver access to the shop every day except for Sunday.⁶⁴ Lucy reports that one Sunday, probably

in December,⁶⁵ “Hyrum became very uneasy” and felt “something was <going> wrong at the printing Office.”⁶⁶ Oliver at first resisted Hyrum’s suggestion to go to Grandin’s shop on Sunday, but soon the two men were on their way to the office.⁶⁷ There they found Abner Cole, busily printing a newspaper.⁶⁸

Hyrum asked Cole why he was working on Sunday. Cole responded by saying that evenings and Sundays were the only times when he was able to use the printing press.⁶⁹ Hyrum and Oliver soon discovered that Cole was violating more than the religious law of the Sabbath—Cole was copying passages from the Book of Mormon to include in his newspaper, the *Reflector*.⁷⁰

In fact, Cole had begun writing about Joseph Smith and his work in the first issue of the *Reflector* on September 2, 1829: “The Gold Bible, by Joseph Smith Junior, author and proprietor, is now in press and will shortly appear. Priestcraft is short lived!”⁷¹ Three months later, on December 9, Cole, who wrote under the pseudonym of Obadiah Dogberry, announced in his paper that he would soon begin to provide his readers with selections from the Book of Mormon.⁷² Cole likely had no difficulty in procuring printed sheets of the Book of Mormon, discarded or otherwise, conveniently located at Grandin’s shop. The first selection, 1 Nephi 1:1–2:3 in the current edition of the Book of Mormon, appeared in the January 2, 1830, issue of the *Reflector*.⁷³ It was probably while preparing this January 2 issue that Cole was confronted by Hyrum and Oliver.

Hyrum informed Cole that a copyright had been secured for the book, but Cole indignantly refused to stop his work. After a lengthy debate, Hyrum and Oliver were still unable to dissuade Cole from his course and left the print shop.⁷⁴

Impressed with the seriousness of the circumstances, Hyrum and Oliver determined that Joseph must be notified of Cole’s actions. Accordingly, Joseph Smith Sr. went to Harmony and returned with Joseph on the following Sunday.⁷⁵ That night, probably January 3, 1830,⁷⁶ Joseph Smith went to Grandin’s shop, where he found Cole and examined his paper. Joseph asserted his ownership of the book and the right to publish it and demanded that Cole cease his “meddling.” Instead of refuting Joseph’s publishing right, Cole sought a fight, but Joseph refused. In Lucy’s reconstruction of the events, Joseph declared, “I know my rights and shall maintain them.” Then, “in a low significant tone,” Joseph stated, “there is Law—and you will find that out if you did not know it before.”⁷⁷ This bold statement by Joseph is all the more remarkable considering that Cole was nearly twice as old as Joseph and was probably much more familiar with the law, having worked as a lawyer and justice of the peace.⁷⁸ Perhaps

recognizing the inferiority of his position, Cole ultimately assented to an arbitration to determine Joseph's rights to the Book of Mormon. The arbitration was settled in Joseph's favor, and Cole agreed to stop printing the Book of Mormon passages. After settling the affair with Cole, Joseph returned home to Pennsylvania.⁷⁹

Arbitration in New York in 1830

Though nothing more is known about the arbitration agreed to by Cole, an examination of general arbitration rules and procedures from the time sheds light on what may have occurred.

Prior to Smith and Cole's arbitration, the legislature in New York had passed two acts relating specifically to arbitration. First, in 1791, the legislature passed "An act for determining differences by arbitration."⁸⁰ Second, an amendment to this act was added in April 1816.⁸¹

The three-paragraph 1791 act had the stated purpose of "promoting trade, and rendering the awards of arbitrators the more effectual in all cases."⁸² To these ends, the act made it lawful for parties to an arbitration to agree that the outcome of their controversy "be made a rule of any court of record in this State."⁸³ If a party thereafter refused to abide by the ruling of the arbitrator or umpire, the person would be subject to all penalties that would apply if the person had resisted the order of a court. However, the person could escape penalty if he could show, by oath, "that the arbitrators or umpire misbehaved themselves, and that such award, arbitration or umpirage, was procured by corruption, or other undue means."⁸⁴ Any arbitration found to be "procured by corruption or undue means" would be "void and of none effect."⁸⁵ In summary, then, an arbitration would be treated as binding as a ruling of the court if the parties so agreed.

The amendment to this law, passed in 1816, allowed "any justice of the peace, residing in any city or county in this state, in which any dispute, controversy or difference whatsoever, may have been submitted to arbitration . . . to swear or affirm the several witnesses required to give testimony before said arbitrator or arbitrators."⁸⁶ The law also made witnesses in an arbitration proceeding subject to the perjury laws of the state.⁸⁷

Besides the two statutes in place, several contemporary New York cases commented on the nature of arbitrations. Arbitration, as defined by a New York court in 1830, was "a submission by parties of matters in controversy to the judgment of two or more individuals." Those who decided the dispute, the arbitrators, were chosen by the parties.⁸⁸ Apparently a common practice was for each party to choose his own arbitrator and have those two arbitrators select a third arbitrator, or umpire, for the case.⁸⁹

The arbitrators were to act as “jurors to determine facts, [and as] judges to adjudicate as to the law; and their award when fairly and legally made, is a judgment conclusive between the parties, from which there is no appeal.”⁹⁰ As demonstrated by the statutes, arbitrations could be treated as a rule of a court and were binding on the parties. One judge even stated that an arbitration “ought to be of a more binding force between the parties” than a jury verdict.⁹¹

A person’s choice to submit to arbitration rather than litigate a case in a courtroom was often money-driven. Arbitration offered an end to dispute “with very little expense to the parties.”⁹² Still, arbitration did not offer the same prospects for justice as an official courthouse. Arbitrators, though chosen for their impartiality, would “frequently mingle in their decisions their own knowledge of the matters in dispute.”⁹³ “Their ends are mainly honest,” but their decisions, “though intelligible, are not drawn up with technical accuracy.”⁹⁴

If an arbitrator’s decision was not consistent with the law, it would still be binding on the parties.⁹⁵ Consistent with the statutes, an arbitration decision could not be appealed to a court except in the case of an arbitrator’s misconduct.⁹⁶ And while an arbitrator’s decision would be binding on the parties involved, the decision would not be binding on third parties.⁹⁷ Similar to official judicial proceedings, arbitrations were not allowed to be performed on Sundays.⁹⁸

The Smith-Cole Arbitration

With all of these legal norms in place, we can imagine what might have occurred between Joseph and Abner Cole. The basic structure of the event can be hypothesized. The date of their arbitration is unknown, but it did not occur on the Sunday of Joseph’s visit, for that would have violated the law, and the two men also needed time to procure witnesses and arbitrators. Further extracts of the Book of Mormon appeared in the *Reflector* on January 13 and 22, suggesting the arbitration might have concluded several days after Joseph arrived in Palmyra.⁹⁹

Regardless of the date on which the arbitration occurred, given Cole’s legal experience, the two parties probably first would have agreed on the question to be arbitrated, namely whether Joseph’s claim to property rights or copyright in the book were sufficient to prohibit Cole’s publishing of the text. Joseph may have also wanted to recover monetary damages or to confiscate Cole’s printed pages as granted under the federal copyright statute.

Next, the two would have agreed on arbitrators. Possibly each chose a man to act as an arbitrator and those two men then chose a third. In accordance with the statute, the local justice of the peace may have sworn in any witnesses who would testify before the arbitrators.

The arbitrators ruled against Cole. Their decision, whether legally sound or not, was binding on Cole, and no known claim was ever made that the arbitrators' decision was corrupt and therefore void. Lucy Mack Smith did not specify the premise of Joseph's defense—whether he relied on the statutory copyright law or on the common law. If the arbitrators based their decision on the federal statutory copyright law, they must have concluded that Joseph's actions had been sufficient to acquire that protection. After all, Joseph could not have been expected to have complied yet with the statutory requirement of delivering a copy of the book to the secretary of state, since copies were still not available. But his failure to give public notice of his copyright within two months of receiving his certificate is more problematic. Thus, what is more likely and also more consistent with the law is that the arbitrators' decision in Joseph's favor was based on the common law protection of authors' rights in unpublished manuscripts, not on his unperfected copyright filing.

For legal purposes, one would need to ask: Was the Book of Mormon published or unpublished in January 1830? When Cole was copying portions of the Book of Mormon, many of the work's pages had been printed. But printing alone did not constitute publishing, for the copyright statute distinguished the two, granting authors the right of "printing, reprinting, publishing and vending" a book covered by the statute.¹⁰⁰ Simply because portions of the Book of Mormon had been printed under Joseph's authorization does not mean they had been published.

The 1828 *Webster's Dictionary* defines "publish" as meaning "to send a book into the world; or to sell or offer for sale a book, map or print."¹⁰¹ As is well known, the Book of Mormon was not available for purchase until March 26, 1830,¹⁰² but at least portions of it had been distributed before then. In 1829, Thomas B. Marsh obtained the proof sheet of the first sixteen pages of the book and used it to teach others about the book. Solomon Chamberlain also obtained sixty-four pages of the unbound book from Hyrum Smith and used them in his preaching. Oliver Cowdery gave his brother Warren some pages of the book, which Warren showed to others. Even Joseph Smith apparently used proof sheets to promulgate the work.¹⁰³

If Cole had been aware of those events, he might have argued that the Book of Mormon (or at least portions of it) had indeed been published, or sent forth to the world. Still, Joseph could have answered that the

distributions of a few proof sheets were limited and private in nature. If the arbitrators based their decision on the common law, they believed the Book of Mormon had not been published. This result is consistent with Joseph's words to Cole where he asserted his ownership of the book and his right to publish it.

Whatever Abner Cole's and Joseph Smith's arguments may have been, and whatever the basis was for the arbitrators' decision, that decision was as binding upon the parties as a judgment in court. Joseph apparently received no damages, and Cole apparently never contested the judgment. Joseph Smith was never again involved in any other legal disputes regarding the copyright to the Book of Mormon.

Conclusion

The episode with Abner Cole is perhaps the first instance where Joseph Smith asserted legal rights that had a direct impact on the religious work to which he devoted his life. Convinced of the justice of his cause, the twenty-four-year-old prophet confidently told Cole that he knew the law and that it would protect him; he did not hesitate to dispute the older and more experienced editor. Even though Joseph may have been somewhat overconfident of his statutory copyrights, he correctly realized the protection of the law. Possibly because of his efforts to secure a copyright for the Book of Mormon, or more likely even without the need to invoke those efforts, Joseph was successful in his first legal defense of the work God had called him to do.

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1. David Whitmer stated that the translation was completed on July 1, 1829. *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881, cited in Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1971; BYU Studies, 2000), 96.

2. Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 408–19.

3. Copyright Records, June 11, 1829, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York 1826–1831, volume 116, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress. Although the law required only that a printed title of the book be deposited with the court, Joseph Smith included the entirety of what would be the title page of the Book of Mormon.

4. In the past, the printer's proof sheet of the title page was catalogued separately and encased in a protective covering. James Hutson located the official copyright application on a request initiated by Kristi Bell of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. Photos of the copyright application and title page proof sheet, first published in "The Worlds of Joseph Smith Gallery Display," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2006), 136–37, appear here for the first time in color.

5. Joseph Smith Jr. to Oliver Cowdery, October 22, 1829, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, cited in Larry C. Porter, "'The Field Is White Already to Harvest': Earliest Missionary Labors and the Book of Mormon," in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 83.

6. Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, February 2, 1848, typescript, Accretion Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri, in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. and comp. Dan Vogel, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003), 5:258; see also Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 20; 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), 1:162–63.

7. See, for example, Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 80; Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 50.

8. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 470–75.

9. *Black's Law Dictionary*, 8th ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: Thomson/West, 2004), 1452, s.v. "statutory law."

10. *Black's Law Dictionary*, 293, s.v. "common law."

11. Patrick Devlin, *The Judge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 177, as cited in *Black's Law Dictionary*, 293.

12. John Tehranian, "Et Tu, Fair Use? The Triumph of Natural-Law Copyright," *University of California at Davis Law Review* 38 (February 2005): 465, 467–68.

13. An Act for the Encouragement of Learning by Vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of such Copies during the Times Therein Mentioned, 1709, 8 Ann., c. 21 (Eng.).

14. Tehranian, "Et Tu, Fair Use," 469–70. For a brief discussion of this case, see Craig Joyce, "'A Curious Chapter in the History of Judicature': *Wheaton v. Peters* and the Rest of the Story (of Copyright in the New Republic)," *Houston Law Review* 42 (Summer 2005): 325, 331 n. 14.

15. Resolution of the Continental Congress Respecting Copyright (1783), *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, ed. Gaillard Hunt, 34 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922, reprint 1968), 24:326.

16. An Act to Promote Literature (April 29, 1786), sess. 9, ch. 54. *Laws of New York*, 298.

17. James Madison, No. 43, in Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist*, ed. George W. Carey and James McClellan, Gideon edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 222.

18. U.S. Constitution, art. 1, sec. 8, par. 8.

19. An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by Securing the Copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of Such Copies, during the Times Therein Mentioned (May 31, 1790), 1st Cong., 2d sess., ch. 15, 17 vols., *Statutes at Large of USA*, 1:124 (hereafter cited as 1790 Act).

20. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 1, *Stat.*, 1:124.

21. For a more thorough look at the early history of copyright law in America, see Joyce, “Curious Chapter.”

22. The New York law, for example, would permit another to publish an author’s work if the author refused to publish a sufficient number of copies or charged an unreasonably high price for his books. An Act to Promote Literature (April 29, 1786), sess. 9, ch. 54. *Laws of New York*, 299.

23. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 2, *Stat.*, 1:124–25.

24. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 2, *Stat.*, 1:125.

25. *Wheaton v. Peters*, 33 U.S. 591 (Supreme Court of the United States 1834).

26. *Wheaton v. Peters*, 657.

27. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 3, *Stat.*, 1:125.

28. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 3, *Stat.*, 1:125.

29. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 3, *Stat.*, 1:125.

30. An Act Supplementary to an Act, Intituled “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by Securing the Copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of Such Copies during the Time Therein Mentioned,” and Extending the Benefits Thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving, and Etching Historical and Other Prints (April 29, 1802), 7th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 36, sec. 1, 17 vols., *Statutes at Large of USA*, 2:171 (hereafter cited as 1802 Act).

31. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 3, *Stat.*, 1:125.

32. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 4, *Stat.*, 1:125.

33. For example, in “Joseph Smith: ‘Author and Proprietor,’” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 157.

34. See notes 3 and 4 above.

35. 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), 1:71.

36. This possibility was suggested by John W. Welch in reviewing an earlier draft of this paper.

37. An Act for Altering the Time of Holding the District Court in the Northern District of New York (February 1, 1826), 19th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 3., *Statutes at Large of USA*, 4:138.

38. An Act Respecting the Courts of the United States within the State of New York (April 3, 1818), 15th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 32, sec. 2., *Statutes at Large of USA*, 3:413, 414 (hereafter cited as 1818 Act).

39. An Act to Alter the Times of Holding the District Court in the Northern District of New York (March 2, 1821), 16th Cong., 2d sess., ch. 32, sec. 1., *Statutes at Large of USA*, 3:623.

40. 1818 Act, ch. 32, sec. 2, *Stat.*, 414.

41. An Act for the Better Organization of the Courts of the United States within the State of New York (April 9, 1814), 13th Cong., 2d sess., ch. 49, sec. 1, *Statutes at Large of USA*, 3:120. The application might have been filed in other federal offices in Canandaigua.

42. An Act Authorizing the Appointment of an Additional Judge of the District Court, for the District of New York (April 29, 1812), 12th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 71, sec. 3, *Statutes at Large of USA*, 2:719, 720.

43. Larry C. Porter, "Egbert Bratt Grandin," in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 308.

44. "The month of June 1829 was filled with activities pertinent to the Restoration. The main work of translation was complete, and the copyright application filed with R. R. Lansing, clerk of the Northern District; the Three Witnesses were shown the plates by Moroni in Fayette; the Eight Witnesses 'handled with their hands' and 'hefted' the gold plates at Manchester; and many individuals were taught from the scriptures as they inquired after these 'strange matters.'" Porter, "Field Is White," 78.

45. Jesse Smith to Hyrum Smith, June 17, 1829, Joseph Smith Letterbook (1837-43), 2:59-61, Joseph Smith Papers, Church Archives, published in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:553.

46. Richard Lloyd Anderson, interview by author, March 2005, Provo, Utah.

47. 1790 Act, ch. 15, *Stat.*, 1:124-126.

48. "Author and Proprietor," in Welch, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 156 (emphasis in original), citing an 1814 English case and an 1859 case from another federal district court in New York.

49. The sum of \$1.20 would equal about \$60 in today's dollars.

50. Richard L. Anderson, interview, quoted in Porter, "Egbert Bratt Grandin," 308.

51. A search of the records in the Library of Congress containing the lists of books submitted to Martin Van Buren as Secretary of State by the district courts for copyright yields no entry showing that a copy of the Book of Mormon ever made its way to Washington following its publication in March 1830. The author thanks James H. Hutson and Barbara Cramer for checking volumes 342, 343, and an unnumbered volume, catalogued as Copyright Records, Department of State, covering submissions from September 24, 1827, through January 7, 1832.

52. After thoroughly searching several contemporary newspapers, Don Enders and research assistants for John W. Welch have concluded that authors generally did not publish their copyright certificates in newspapers. One exception is E. B. Grandin himself, who received a court certificate to his work titled *Notes on Title IV. Chapter II. of part III. of the Revised Statutes of the State of New York*, and printed the certificate five times in the *Wayne Sentinel* in May and June 1830.

53. For example, Washington Irving's *A History of New York*, published in New York in 1809, contains only the words "Copy-right secured according to Law."

54. *Nichols v. Ruggles*, 3 Day 145, 158 (Conn. Supreme Court of Errors, 1808).

55. *Nichols v. Ruggles*, 158.

56. *Ewer v. Cox*, 8 Federal Cases 917, 919–920 (Circuit Court, Eastern District Pennsylvania, 1824). For more information on the history and jurisdiction of the circuit courts on which Supreme Court justices were required to sit, see Bernard Schwartz, *A History of the Supreme Court* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18–19; Hannis Taylor, *Jurisdiction and Procedure of the Supreme Court of the United States* (Rochester, N.Y.: Lawyers' Co-operative, 1905), 22, 28–29, 109–10, 114–15.

57. *Ewer v. Cox*, 919.

58. *Ewer v. Cox*, 919.

59. *Wheaton v. Peters*, 591; see also Joyce, "Curious Chapter."

60. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 47.

61. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 36–37.

62. Gordon A. Madsen, "Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial: The Legal Setting," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 2 (1990): 91–108.

63. See John W. Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 98–99; Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 108–9.

64. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 470.

65. Lucy did not provide the date of this event, but based on extant sources, Andrew H. Hedges has concluded that the date was probably December 27, 1829. Andrew H. Hedges, "The Refractory Abner Cole," in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 460–63.

66. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 470.

67. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 470–71.

68. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 471.

69. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 471.

70. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 471; Porter, "Study of the Origins," 32.

71. Porter, "Field Is White," 84.

72. Hedges, "Refractory Abner Cole," 461.

73. Hedges, "Refractory Abner Cole," 461.

74. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 472.

75. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 473–74.

76. Hedges, "Refractory Abner Cole," 463.

77. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 474–75.

78. Hedges, "Refractory Abner Cole," 450–51. Cole was born between June 2, 1780, and August 6, 1784.

79. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 475.

80. An Act for Determining Differences by Arbitration (February 28, 1791), 14th sess., ch. 20, *Laws of New York*, 219–20 (hereafter cited as 1791 Act).

81. An Act to Amend the Act, Entitled 'An Act for Determining Differences by Arbitration,' and for Other Purposes (April 17, 1816), 39th sess., ch. 210, *Laws of New York*, 242 (hereafter cited as 1816 Amendment).

82. 1791 Act, ch. 20, *Laws of New York*, 219.

83. 1791 Act, ch. 20, *Laws of New York*, 219.

84. 1791 Act, ch. 20, *Laws of New York*, 219.

85. 1791 Act, ch. 20, *Laws of New York*, 220.

86. 1816 Amendment, ch. 210, *Laws of New York*, 242–43.

87. 1816 Amendment, ch. 210, *Laws of New York*, 243.

88. *Elmendorf v. Harris*, 5 Wend. 516, 522 n. 1 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York 1830).

89. Christian Technologies, *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*, s.v. "arbitration," available online at http://65.66.134.201/cgi-bin/webster/webster.exe?search_for_texts_web1828=arbitration.

90. *Story v. Elliot*, 8 Cow. 27, 31 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York 1827) (citations omitted).

91. *Story v. Elliot*, 31.

92. *Jackson v. Ambler*, 14 Johns. 96, 103 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York, 1817).

93. *Jackson v. Ambler*, 103.

94. *Jackson v. Ambler*, 103.

95. *Mitchell v. Bush*, 7 Cow. 185, 187 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York, 1827).

96. *Cranston, et al. v. The Executors of Kenny*, 9 Johns. 212, 213 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York, 1812) (citations omitted).

97. *Vosburgh v. Bame*, 14 Johns. 302, 304 (Supreme Court of Judicature of New York, 1817).

98. *Story v. Elliot*, 31.

99. Hedges, "Refractory Abner Cole," 463. For an alternate suggestion of the dating and order of events with Cole, see Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:407–8.

100. 1790 Act, ch. 15, sec. 1, *Stat.*, 1:124.

101. Christian Technologies, *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*, s.v. "publish," available online at http://65.66.134.201/cgi-bin/webster/webster.exe?search_for_texts_web1828=publish.

102. In the May 26, 1830, issue of the *Wayne Sentinel*, notice was given that the Book of Mormon had been published.

103. Porter, "Field Is White," 79–83.

Northern District
of New-York,

} Do wit:

104
Be it remembered, That on the eleventh
day of June — in the fifty third year of
the Independence of the United States of America, A. D.
1829 Joseph Smith Senior
of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the
title of a Book the right whereof he claims
as Author in the words following, to wit: The

Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates
taken from the plates of Nephi; Wherein it is an abridgment of the records of the people
of Nephi and also of the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel
and also to Jew & Gentile written by way of commandment and also by the spirit
of prophecy & of revelation, written which I did not until the Lord, that they
might not be destroyed, to come forth by the gift & power of God unto the inter-
pretation thereof — sealed up by the hand of Mormon & hid up unto the Lord, to come
forth a new law by the way of Gentile, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God, as abridg-
ment taken from the book of Ether: Also, which is a record of the people of Judah which
were scattered at the time the Lord commanded the Congress of all people, when they were holding
a house to get to heaven; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great
things the Lord hath done for their fathers; & that they may know the covenants of the Lord
that they are not cut off forever; and also, to the learning of the Jew & Gentile that
Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now if there
be fault, it be the fault of man; therefore I declare not the things of God, that
ye may be found faulty, as the ancient sect of Christ. By Joseph Smith Senior, au-
thor & proprietor.

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act
for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts,
and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein
mentioned;" and also, to the act entitled "An act supplementary to an act enti-
tled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of
Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during
the times therein mentioned;' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of De-
signing, Engraving, and Etching historical and other prints."

A. R. Lansing Clerk of the Dist.
Court of the United States for the Northern
District of New-York

Copyright Application for the Book of Mormon, filed with the clerk of the court of the Northern District of New York on June 11, 1829. The printed text on this form reflects federal law, which allowed "authors and proprietors" to secure a copyright on maps, charts, and books. Courtesy Rare Book and Special Collections, Library of Congress.

THE
BOOK OF MORMON,

AN ACCOUNT

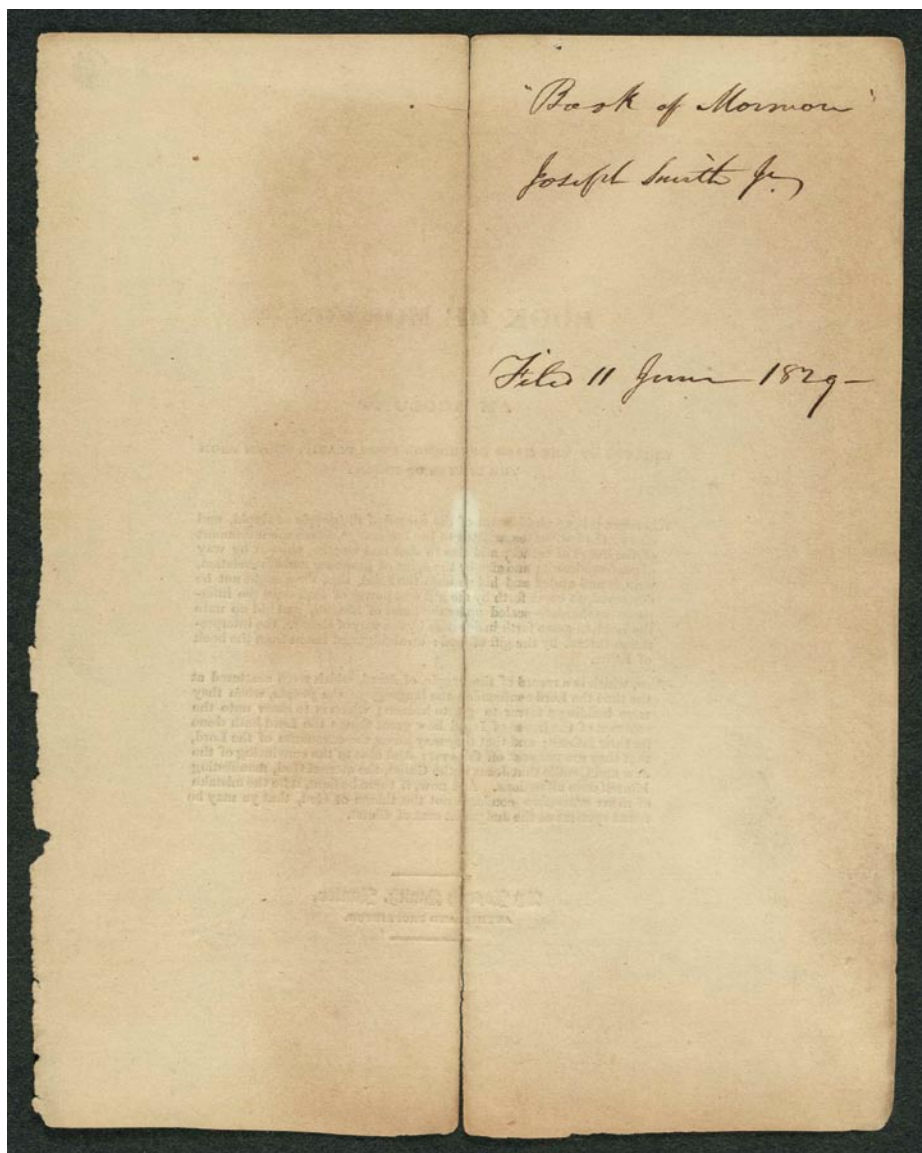
WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM
THE PLATES OF NEPHI:

Wherefore it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile, written by way of commandment; and also by the spirit of prophesy and of revelation, written and sealed and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed, to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—sealed up by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God: an abridgment taken from the book of Ether.

Also, which is a record of the people of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever: And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now, if there be fault, it be the mistake of men: wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the Judgment seat of Christ.

By Joseph Smith, Junior,
AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Proof sheet of the Book of Mormon title page, front. This single printed sheet was attached to the Book of Mormon copyright application filed on June 11, 1829. It had been typeset as a first proof of the title page of the Book of Mormon. With text and layout similar to the title page eventually used in the first edition of the Book of Mormon in 1830, this proof sheet is the earliest printed Mormon page. Courtesy Rare Book and Special Collections, Library of Congress.



Proof sheet of the Book of Mormon title page, reverse. This side of the proof sheet, showing bleed-through from the front, features Joseph Smith's name and the filing date. The writing is probably that of clerk R. R. Lansing. The date on this sheet establishes that the sheet was filed along with Joseph's copyright application. Courtesy Rare Book and Special Collections, Library of Congress.

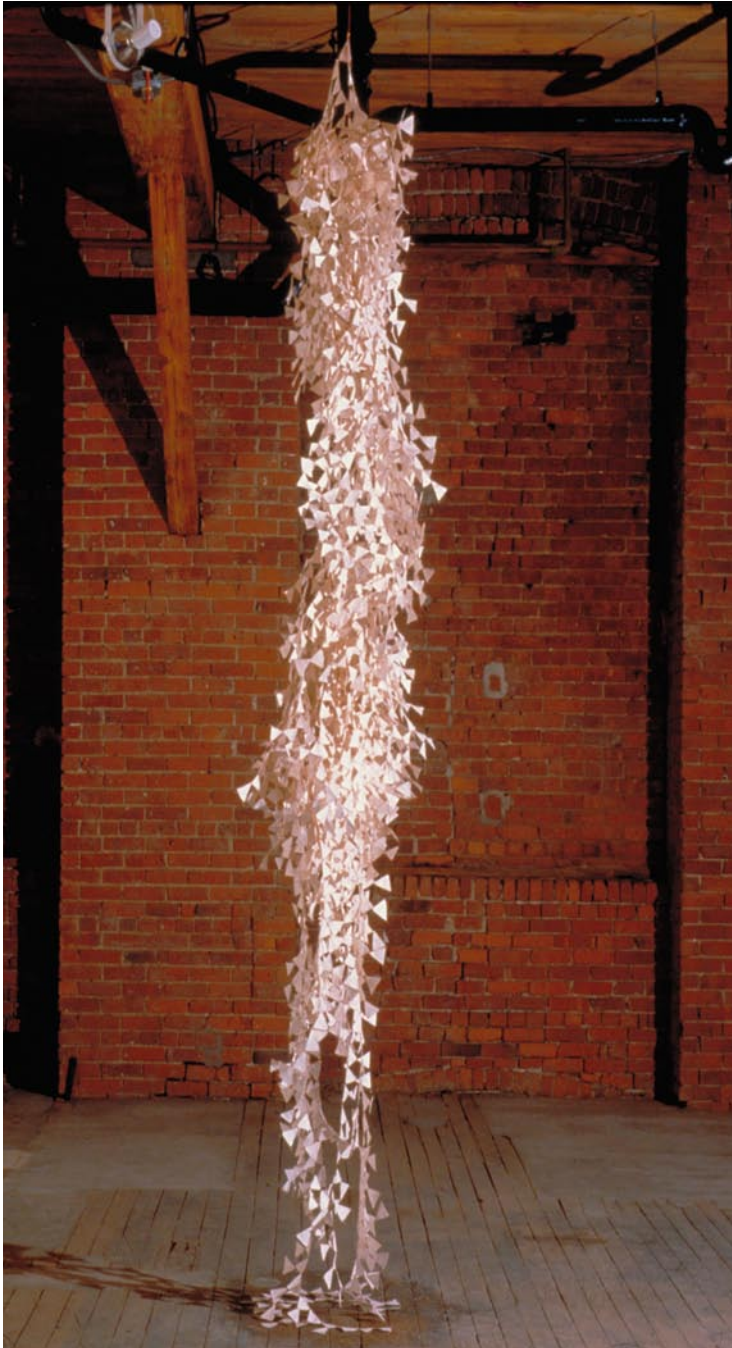


FIG. 1. *Hanging Family History*, D.U.M.B.O. Arts Center, New York City, 2000, copper wire, rice paper, ink, 13' x 2' x 2'. For a detail of this work, see the back cover of this issue. All photographs of art, unless noted otherwise, are by Jean Vong and are used courtesy of Valerie Atkisson.

The Family History Artworks of Valerie Atkisson

Josh E. Probert

Valerie Atkisson, an artist who lives in the Bronx, New York, exemplifies a generation of Mormon artists who are at home navigating the world of Contemporary art while maintaining their personal and spiritual identity. Family history, transgenerational inquiry, and relatedness have been the majority subjects of Atkisson's work thus far. "What began as an interest in my ancestors has turned into an insatiable desire to know as much about them as possible," she says.¹ "[My work] is a continuation of them, not just that my flesh and blood are a part of them, but the remembrance is also an extension of their life."² Although a broad demographic of gallery visitors have received Atkisson's work, it has the potential to resonate with Latter-day Saint audiences in a unique way because it intersects with and animates Mormon thought—thought that places relationships not just in the realm of sociology but also in theology. In capturing the essence of her work, Atkisson wrote the following for a gallery guide:

I stand peering into the past
An overload of names, dates, and places faces me crying
for closer inspection.
Stories, lives, uprootings, and landscapes tighten the blur surrounding
each ancestor.
By focusing on an individual of whom I am a fraction,
I better understand what I am made of physically, mentally,
and spiritually.³

As Atkisson currently sees herself moving to topics other than family history in her art, this essay seeks to look back on this period of her work and understand it through contextualizing it in Contemporary art and Mormon thought.

Background

Although she was born in 1971 in Seattle, Atkisson frequently moved during her growing-up years due to her father's occupation. This itinerant pattern of migration would later influence her art. She has written, "I didn't feel like I had one place that I was from. There was not a house or place that I could [call home]. But I knew a lot about *whom* I was from, and I had been to the places that they were from. This became a new subject matter for my work."⁴

Atkisson studied ceramics and painting at Brigham Young University from 1989 to 1996. After serving a mission to Poland and graduating from BYU, she attended the School of Visual Arts in New York. There she continued to study painting and other studio arts, graduating with an MFA in 1998. After graduate school, Atkisson continued to live and work in New York City, where her art has been displayed in many galleries and museums, including the Queens Museum of Art, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and the D.U.M.B.O. Arts Center.⁵ She has also had several shows outside of New York. During 1999 and 2000, Atkisson worked as an assistant to Petah Coyne, a well-known Contemporary artist, and traveled with

Coyne to Ireland to help construct a show there.⁶ Atkisson is also a founding member of the Mormon Artists Group—a consortium of artists, architects, writers, choreographers, and musicians who collaborate on artistic projects, the proceeds from which commonly go to charities.

In addition to working as an artist, Atkisson has taught painting and ceramics at Grace Church School in New York and has been an active leader of the young women in the Bronx Olmstead Second Ward. The ward's demographic presented particular obstacles: only one of Atkisson's young women, for example, had a father in her home. "I felt that the way I could most help



FIG. 2. Valerie Atkisson with Jennifer Ortiz and Hannah Villarosa, 2006. As their Young Women leader, Atkisson mentored these and other girls from the Bronx, New York, helping them prepare for and attend college. Shown here in the Spencer W. Kimball Student and Administration building at BYU-Idaho, Atkisson accompanied Ortiz and Villarosa to Rexburg, Idaho, to help them get settled in.

FIGS. 3 and 4. Family History Wall, details (right and below). Artists Space, SoHo, New York City, 1999, ink on wall, 14' x 72'. This work contains all the names of Atkisson's known ancestors, numbering in the thousands. The work encompassed 72 generations and correspondingly took up 72 feet of wall. The work spanned two rooms and five walls. About the 1300s, she encountered a lot of interfamilial marrying, which she noted by drawing lines between names. The show was a five-week work-in-progress show; Atkisson was on site throughout the five weeks writing the names.

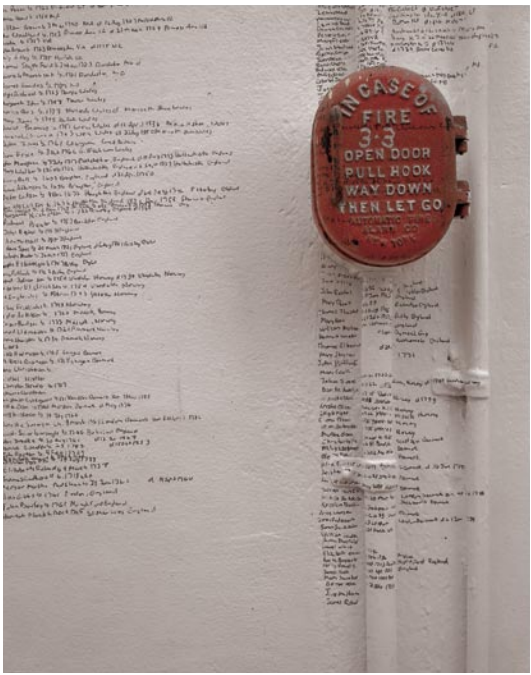




FIG. 5. *Tanner Spiral*, BYU Museum of Art, 2002, gouache, ink on parchment, 8' x 10'. Seven goatskin parchments are arranged in a nautilus-like spiral, each of them bearing the history of Henry S. Tanner's immediate family. Photograph by David Hawkinson.



FIG. 6. *Tanner Spiral*, detail. A portrait of Henry S. Tanner dominates this work. The spiral beginning in the center of this piece of parchment echoes the spiral form of the entire work. An image of Henry as a young child is in the center, and unwinding from there are depicted his school in Payson set against the Wasatch Mountains, gravestones of lost family members, his mother, his father with wives, and the army outpost at Fort Duchesne. Photograph by David Hawkinson.



FIG. 7. *Family in Norway*, detail (*top*). The viewer of this work proceeded from right to left, beginning in Denmark, the ancestral home of Petra Hermine Johnson (1854–1942). From Denmark (painted in orange), the viewer moves with the Øman family to Skjervøy, an off-shore island in northern Norway that is represented by the nearby Lyngen Alps—snow-capped mountains whose steep slopes descend directly into the Lyngensfjord.



FIG. 8. *Family in Norway*, detail. Ragna Johnson at age five or six, held by her father, Peter.

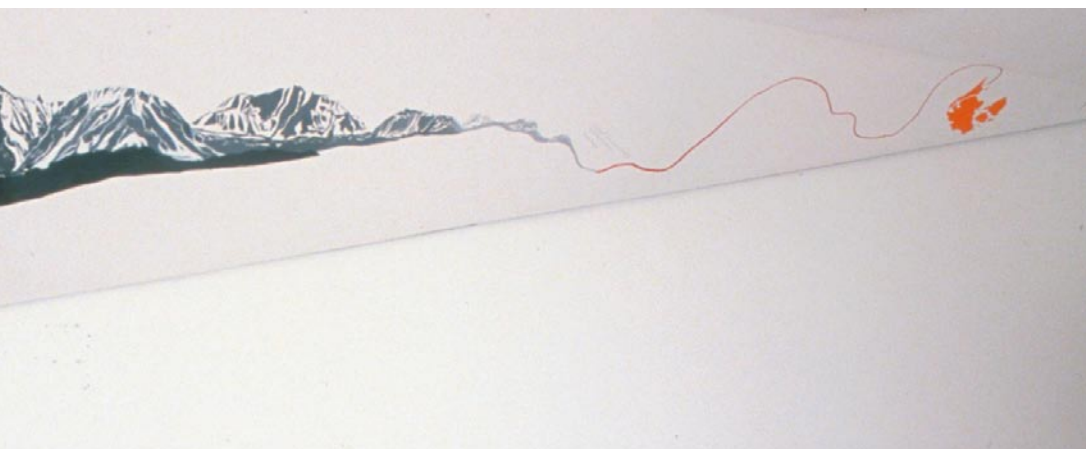


FIG. 9. *Family in Norway*, Queens Museum of Art, 2000, acrylic on wall, 30' x 80'. Atkisson explored the ancestry of her Norwegian great-grandmother, Ragna Johnson, who immigrated to Logan, Utah, via New York City as a small child with her Mormon family. The piece was painted on an eighty-foot triangular wall between two sections of a ramp in the foyer of the Queens Museum of Art. The triangular shape of the wall became part of the form and accentuated, in Atkisson's words, the "linear story" of that family line.



FIG. 10. *Alta, Norway*, 2001, watercolor on paper, 10" x 18". Located in the northernmost county of Norway, Alta is in the Kåfjord and is where Atkisson's great-grandmother Ragna Jemaima Johnson (1875–1964) was born. Ragna's father, Peter Johnson (1852–1924), and his brothers worked for their uncle on a trading ship that delivered dried cod there.



FIG. 11. *Johnson Home, Trondheim, Norway*, watercolor on paper, 2001, 12" x 20". This home originally stood on the family farm called Buen on Ytterøy Island but was disassembled and moved when the family was pressured to either leave the fjord or leave the Church. Atkisson found the home intact, although modified, during her research in Norway.



FIG. 12. *Patriarchal Line*, D.U.M.B.O. Arts Center, 2000, acrylic and colored pencil on wall, 13½' x 10'. A tiny figure of Atkisson herself is seen at the bottom right of the work looking up on the seven generations she has reconstructed. The piece begins with her father at the bottom left. A beach turns into a skyline and then back into a beach, representing her grandfather's move from Florida to New York City and his subsequent retirement to California. The cannon represents the artist's great-great-grandfather taking his son to a Civil War battlefield shortly after the fighting ceased to teach his son about the realities of war. The horse jumping over a picnic table represents the disruption caused by a disgruntled young man denied the hand of Jane Atkisson in marriage by her father.

them was to help them get ready for college,” she says. “We worked on applications and scholarships together. We talked about bank accounts, credit cards, and budgeting. They all wanted to go to BYU–Idaho, which is about as different from Bronx, New York, as you can get. One young woman who received a Heber J. Grant Scholarship to BYU–Idaho is the first person in her family to ever go to college”⁷ (fig. 2).

***Hanging Family History* (2000)**

The most striking of Atkisson’s genealogy artworks, *Hanging Family History* (fig. 1), helps one gain a glimpse of the expansiveness of her project to know as much about her ancestors as possible. The work is unique in that it captures the nature of connectedness in a three-dimensional, visual form. The chandelier-like tree is an assembly of approximately 4,000 triangles made by wrapping rice paper around a copper-wire frame, leaving the copper wire exposed on all three corners. Written on each triangle in black ink is a name, beginning with hers and continuing through all of her known progenitors, and the dates and locations of birth and death. The top triangle reads, “Valerie Atkisson, b. Seattle, Washington, 1971.” This triangle is connected to those of her parents and on down through thousands of others, ending with a triangle on which is written, “Claudius, King of the Franks 9 AD.” The result is an organic, three-dimensional image of Atkisson’s family, which leaves an impression different from that of a two-dimensional family group sheets. “There are things you can express visually that you cannot express in words,” she says.⁸ As artist Peter Everett points out, the piece is able to transcend the motivation of its creation. It shows that genealogy can become an aesthetic object.⁹

***Tanner Spiral* (2002)**

Tanner Spiral (fig. 5) explores a branch of these triangles—the Henry S. Tanner family. Henry S. Tanner (1869–1935) was the grandson of John Tanner (1778–1850), a prominent Mormon convert from Bolton, New York. In exploring the life of Henry Tanner, Atkisson arranged seven pieces of goatskin parchment in a nautilus-like spiral. She devoted one parchment to each of Tanner’s wives, and the names of each wife’s descendents were written in the middle of her parchment.¹⁰ The parchment of one wife, Louetta Brown, is void of names, as her only pregnancy was terminated by her fall down a flight of stairs. In an accompanying piece, *Tanner Descendents* (2002), a bundle of paper clips hung delicately in the air represented each wife and her descendents (fig. 13).

Images of people, places, and things, combined with black-ink text, are inscribed upon each piece of parchment in *Tanner Spiral*, beginning with an image of the face of Henry as a baby in the center of the spiral (fig. 6). Unfolding from here, the spiral displays Henry's boyhood school in Payson, Utah, and several tombstones representing the deaths of some of his siblings and of his mother. His father is connected to his wives by addition signs. Henry was outraged at his father's decision to take plural wives and eventually left home in a state of personal confusion. Soon thereafter, he had an awakening experience in which he heard the voice of his deceased mother telling him to be a "good boy" while he was visiting an army camp at Fort Duchesne, an episode depicted in the spiral.¹¹

Landscapes are painted around the edge of each parchment beginning with a mountain range above Payson, where Henry was born. Portraits, objects, and places are all inserted along the landscapes. They function both as timeline and setting. In an interesting variation on her search into the past, Atkisson is here looking to places as well as people. The landscapes are more than background to the illustrated narratives. Because her family moved a lot when she was growing up, Atkisson says, "I became really conscious of the fact that I didn't have a visual landscape that I considered home, a place that I identified with."¹²

The materials and form of *Tanner Spiral* augment the organic nature of family relationships. The piece is painted in gouache watercolor on dried goatskin, a parchment used for millennia to preserve histories and scripture because it is sturdy and long lasting. The most famous parchment documents include the illuminated Bibles, Gospel books, and Psalters of the Middle Ages.



FIG. 13. *Tanner Descendants*, detail, BYU Museum of Art, 2002, paper clips. Photograph by David Hawkinson. This bundle of paper clips represents Atkisson's great-grandmother Laura Lauretta Woodland Tanner (1867–1958) and Tanner's descendants. Paper clips are designed to hold things together—an apt medium, therefore, to depict the bonds of family relationships.



FIG. 14. Trondheim, Norway, ancestral home of the Johnson Family.

Since parchment used to be part of a living creature, it is itself a remnant of the past. As can be seen in Atkisson's work, the skin buckles around the edges and slightly warps throughout. The organic nature seen in the uneven texture of the material and in the amoeba-like shapes echoes the organic nature of family relationships. Tanned goatskin was chosen also because of the pun on the family name, Tanner, and because the material's distressed treatment echoed the stresses endured by the Tanner family. "I feel like the [tanned goatskin] was a metaphor for what the family went through and how [Henry's] decisions affected his family," says Atkisson.¹⁴ Henry Tanner would likely find the parchment an apt metaphor because the LDS Church and Mormon society ostracised him for marrying four additional wives a decade after President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto.¹³ In a letter to his family, Henry once wrote, "The furnace has been hot and its season extensive."¹⁵

Family in Norway (2000)

Atkisson has received commissions and does sell some of her artwork. Families have approached her, for example, to create a visual family history for them. These include paintings and works on paper. But most of her museum work resists commodification. It is not something one buys

reproductions of, frames, and hangs on a wall as one might do with a traditional painting or photograph.¹⁶ This is especially true for one-time-only installation works such as *Family in Norway* at the Queens Museum of Art (figs. 7, 8, 9). In this piece, Atkisson explored the ancestry of her Norwegian great-grandmother, Ragna Johnson, who immigrated to Logan, Utah, via New York City as a small child with her Mormon family. Atkisson painted the piece on an 80-foot triangular wall between two sections of a ramp in the foyer of the museum. Instead of the shape of the wall being a hindrance to her work, the triangular shape of the wall became part of the form and accentuated, in the artist's words, the "linear story" of the Johnson family line.¹⁷

Atkisson received a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Grant in 1999 to research and execute *Family in Norway*. She used the money to attend Norwegian language classes and to travel to Norway for two months to conduct research (figs. 10, 11). She found the family home in Trondheim still standing and, therefore, painted the house into the work. The house was originally on Ytterøy Island in Trondheimsfjord in northern Norway, the fjord where the Johnson family was baptized after learning about Mormonism from missionaries in the area. After the members of the family were baptized, the local magistrate gave them an ultimatum: leave the Church or leave the island. They chose the latter, but they were not willing to leave their house behind. The family disassembled the house and sailed it thirty miles south to the city of Trondheim (fig. 14). There they reassembled the house and built on to it. With the increased space, the Johnsons invited the missionaries to live with them and held church meetings there.

After *Family in Norway* closed, the work was painted over. The temporary nature of this and some of Atkisson's other pieces opens another interpretive possibility—pilgrimage. *Family in Norway* and other works are only temporary. But both can create a change in the viewer-traveler, a change forged in liminal self-exploration. Atkisson's journey to Norway through the painting was a finite one that occurred within a specific timeframe and in a specific place. Photographs of the pilgrimage may be viewed, but the experience will never be recreated fully. Interestingly, though, Atkisson's connection with her great-grandmother was heightened when, two years after the show, Atkisson learned that Ragna Johnson Maughan had attended the 1964–65 World's Fair—a fair held on the grounds where the Queens Museum of Art stands today in Flushing Meadow Park, Queens.¹⁸

Religion in Contemporary Art

Atkisson's art is ultimately religious, although its religiosity is somewhat camouflaged. Family history is recognized as a religious subject by Latter-day Saints, but not necessarily by New York exhibition curators. So her work is able to succeed in an environment that is, more often than not, suspicious of religion. Religious art was largely abandoned by the academic modernists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to the extent that today, as one scholar has written, "religion is seldom mentioned in the art world unless it is linked to criticism, ironic distance, or scandal. . . . Fine art and religion have gone their separate ways."¹⁹ This being said, the tides may be changing. Religious discourse is becoming more valued as postmodernism is living up to its own pluralistic agenda.

Some have argued that although overtly religious art has seen a decline, the religious backgrounds of artists continue to inform artworks. Eleanor Heartney, for example, has argued that the Catholic worldview, which stresses the physical, bodied aspects of Christianity, has been the guiding influence of several twentieth-century artists, including Andy Warhol, who attended mass several times a week and whose work was often informed by embodiedness and death as well as the direct imagery of Catholic art in his pastiches of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* and Leonardo's *Last Supper* and *Annunciation*.²⁰ Warhol's Pop art images of everyday objects, the Campbell's soup can being the most famous, can appear "as the expression of a Catholic vision grounded in the concrete reality of the surrounding world" instead of "some ineffable notion of the sublime."²¹ Petah Coyne, Atkisson's mentor, is another artist Heartney mentions. Heartney writes, "The subterranean Catholic motifs and themes which had always been there rise to the surface" of her artworks. Coyne's work began to address "beauty of decay and imperfection" and life and death. She employed statues of the Virgin Mary to explore such concepts. She also created votive-like wax Madonnas and incorporated Catholic liturgical architecture into her forms.²²

But most of the Catholic or ex-Catholic artists discussed by Heartney focused their work on the human body. The Catholic emphasis on bodily concepts such as the incarnation of Christ, the physical crucifixion, the physical resurrection, and the fleshy transubstantiation of the Eucharist may help explain this.²³ In a way similar to many of these artists, Atkisson has been shaped by her religious enculturation. And by creating artworks about family history, she comes as close as may be possible for a student or professional wishing to celebrate his or her Mormon worldview and yet remain a credible artist in avant-garde art galleries and museums. It is not

that Atkisson has intentionally shaped her work away from an overt religiousness, she says. It just happens to fit in within the current art scene.

"Mormonism influences my art," says Atkisson. "My faith has had an effect on my life and who I am, and my artwork is going to pick that up."²⁴ Yet she maintains that her artworks convey a universal message of the equality of mankind. "The essence of my work," she says, "is about the global family and the value of each life and what each life can tell us about ourselves and about them. . . . I want my viewers to see the other people around them as their brothers and sisters, that they have value."²⁵

The potential constructs that a Mormon viewer could form from the artworks are unique because of the way Joseph Smith theologically reoriented relationships and the idea of the family. He was born into and worked within an environment of radical individualism, but the Prophet gradually replaced this individualism with a communal soteriology that spanned the past, present, and future. The Saints would build a city of righteousness in community, a community built upon bonds of eternal friendship. Besides revealing the necessity of working for the collective redemption of those who were alive, Joseph Smith made it clear that the redemption of the dead is necessary to one's salvation. And most revolutionary, his revelations redefined marriage in both form and purpose and imbued it with exalting efficacy.²⁶

Artistic Precedents

The creative impulses of artists work within the bounds of the vocabularies of their historical moment. Because Latter-day Saints have chosen to live "in the world" instead of being communally cloistered away from it, Mormon creators have adopted the vocabularies, mediums, and techniques of music, art, and architecture for Mormon purposes. This borrowing has contributed to the fact that Latter-day Saints as a group have never developed a distinctive artistic style. As museum curator Richard Oman has written, "Cohesion in the Latter-day Saint [art] tradition rests in religious themes and functions, not stylistic continuity or development."²⁷

Similar to the way the painters of the Salt Lake Temple murals picked up the post-Impressionistic artistic trends of their time while studying in late-nineteenth-century France, so twenty-first-century Latter-day Saints have been influenced by the stylistic trends of their historical moment—a moment which, it should be noted, is replete with stylistic retrievals and combinations thereof. During the twentieth century, the diversity of artistic media expanded drastically. Moving away from the traditional vocabularies of painting and sculpture, artists now include a broad swath

of artistic media, messages, and modes of exhibition in their work. Taking advantage of this openness, Valerie Atkisson has painted on preexisting walls and floors, as opposed to gessoed canvases, and has animated objects as quotidian as paper clips (figs. 3, 4, 12, 13).

This use of nontraditional media originates with the twentieth-century anti-Art, Dada, and Conceptual art movements. The Conceptual artists of the 1960s and 70s aimed to critique the Modernists, who had highly valued the formal and aesthetic properties of an artwork over the work's meaning. To the Modernists, the art object itself was of the utmost importance. Conceptual artists, on the other hand, aimed to devalue the art object and to privilege, instead, the potential and realized meanings constructed from a viewer's engagement with an art object. As one scholar has written, "Conceptual art is supposed to be the antithesis of 'artiness.'" ²⁸ Instead of art being an aesthetic solipsism, language—in its broadest sense—was brought to bear on the objects. Nevertheless, as Conceptual art came to be valued as high art, its uniqueness became commonness and it took on an aesthetic of its own. And it has influenced the formal properties of the visual arts ever since. ²⁹

Much of Atkisson's work also functions within the post-1960s trend of installation art, wherein artists create an artwork within, on, or around a preexisting space and incorporate that space into their creation. Much like entering a medieval cathedral, the viewer enters the art instead of being divided from it by a picture plane. And the viewer's perception completes the work as it activates the possible constructs of meaning therein. Installation art "rejects concentration on one object in favour of a consideration of the relationships between a number of elements or of the interaction between things and their contexts." ³⁰ In this way, museum galleries themselves often become a part of Atkisson's artwork.

Aesthetics and Form

The creation of objects of beauty has been a dominant goal of Western art for millennia. In U.S. history, the valuing of art aesthetics over all else reached its apogee in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1903, for example, an assistant director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts declared the purpose of the museum was to "maintain a high standard of aesthetic taste," and the museum would form its collections based upon the "aesthetic quality" of objects. ³¹

This privileging of aesthetic properties was challenged by the Dada and Conceptual artists through their use of nontraditional media to produce work that de-privileged aesthetics. Unlike the austerity of much

Conceptual art of the twentieth century and today, Atkisson has chosen a middle ground in regard to aesthetics being the priority of her artworks. Some of them do have a beauty about them—the sinuous curves of a group of narratives, the organic form of some installations, and the bold use of color. Yet, intended and potential meanings are as, if not more, important as aesthetics. “I feel that beauty is an important part of my work,” says Atkisson. “I use it to draw people in.”³²

What has been written about an important team of Conceptual artists in the 1980s and 90s could be said about Atkisson’s work:

They took the rigor of conceptual art’s research mandate, combined that with a subtle but focused political agenda, and wound that around a body of issues and concerns that were deeply personal and motivated by pleasure. They simply made art about the things which were most important to them, rather than proceeding as though it were a disinterested academic endeavor. . . . They challenged convention and proved that intellectually motivated art need not be materially puritan.³³

As already mentioned, the artistic vocabularies of the twentieth-century avant-garde greatly influence Atkisson’s work. The Dada movement (1917–24) may be most important to understand in relation to her work. In Dada art, everyday objects were assembled in unpredictable ways. Prefabricated commercial objects such as Marcel Duchamp’s bicycle wheel and urinal were exhibited without alteration. Machines were exhibited by themselves or depicted in paintings. And excerpts from newspapers and magazines were pasted into collages and onto objects. These artworks were all “in-your-face” gestures to the artistic, literary, theatrical, and political establishments as well as the traditions that preceded them.³⁴

Mentioning Dada is not to say that the influence on Atkisson is a direct borrowing, or that the influence is readily apparent. Atkisson is right when she says that she is more influenced by her contemporaries in school and in galleries than she is by people from a century ago. But similar to the way that Americans are daily influenced by Plato, John Locke, and others—whether they know it or not—so too do Contemporary artists live in the wake of the Dada and anti-Art movements.

By working in the shadow of this movement in nontraditional ways (using paper clips, hanging pieces of goatskin on a wall, and writing on walls and floors), Atkisson raises an important question: Can artists adopt the forms of a deconstructionist project to create art objects that are not nihilistic, but are imbued with traditional meaning? Moreover, can forms with deconstructionist associations be used to create religious art? The answer is yes, artists can incorporate forms and give them new meaning similar to the way one forms language by combining letters

and punctuation marks into different patterns to communicate different messages. But the engagement of such an artistic vocabulary may limit a work's audience; and the short-lived duration of installation works will naturally limit the number of viewers who are able to see them.

Making Meaning

Atkisson's work is imbued with meaning. But like much of twentieth-century art, that meaning is largely the privilege of the artist. Because viewers are not familiar with the narratives behind the images, the reasons for chosen media, and often the art-historical context of the work, they may gain a general idea, at best, of the work's intended meaning. Artists such as Atkisson withhold some information because they expect viewers to incorporate their own worldview with cues given in the artwork to create a meaning or meanings. This expectation, though, is dependent upon the accessibility of the cues in an artwork. Do the cues contain sufficient information for a viewer to meet the artist halfway or even one-tenth of the way? Should textual cues be explicitly given on a text panel adjacent to the artwork? Is language necessary to unpack the work? Is the artwork prelinguistic or postlinguistic? Or, is it both? And are semiotic planes of meaning inherent in the artwork? No consensus exists among scholars today about these questions, and one can find erudite arguments on all sides. Either way, the composition and display of most contemporary artworks make it difficult at best and impossible at worst for a viewer to access them.³⁵ For this reason, many viewers are put off by twentieth- and twenty-first century art.

In this environment, then, Atkisson has adopted not only the forms of the Contemporary art world, but also its distanced, individualistic ethos.³⁶ The images and objects of Atkisson's work are portals into her individual world. The names of people, the narratives depicted, and the meaning they have are inside the artist's mind as she gazes on her past. She has even painted herself into some of the artworks. They are, for her, an exercise in self-exploration and identity-seeking as she engages her ancestry. "People will get a general idea," she says, "but the details will obviously evade them."³⁷ So, the works are about connectedness, but with an individualistic departure point.

Constructivist Inquiry

Constructivist learning theory and social construction theory (not to be confused with Russian Constructivism in art and architecture) help inform how viewers might create meaning through interaction with



FIG. 15. *Retta*, BYU Museum of Art, 2002, acrylic on pillars.

Atkisson's artworks. These theories attempt to explain the way learning occurs and realities are constructed. The learner is not passive, but instead brings his or her life experience and paradigm of reality to bear on the artwork, and through a dialectic of visual interlocation, new meanings are constructed. The irony of this in regards to Atkisson's work, though, is that social constructivism rejects the existence of an ontological reality, whereas the Mormon theology informing her work affirms one.

As is common in this type of art, the heuristic cues to understand Atkisson's work are subtle. In *Retta* (2002), for example, Atkisson painted two figures on parallel white pillars. Near the bottom of the left pillar was the artist. Midway up the right pillar was Atkisson's great-grandmother, Laura Lauretta Woodland Tanner (nicknamed "Retta"). Between the pillars there was only empty space (fig. 15). This void, like missing information about ancestors, opens up the possibility of filling out the narrative, to provide information where it is missing. "I fill in the gaps of knowledge with my own impressions of my relatives' lives," says Atkisson. Therefore, in the constructivist/interactive vein being discussed, Atkisson's work invites the viewers to go further and to replace her—to see themselves where she sits there at the bottom of that pillar and to look up (or, more correctly, to look back) and gaze at one of their ancestors.

Developing the value of expressing relationships and life stories in creative ways, Atkisson says, “I can put a stack of family group sheets in front of somebody and say, ‘This is really interesting.’ But, is that person going to do anything about them? . . . I can make a visual something or other and that same person will approach it, come closer, and ask, ‘What is this?’ ‘This is my family history,’ I tell them. ‘And you have just as many people who make up you.’ Then, that person may ask, ‘I wonder what my family history would look like.’”³⁸

Atkisson’s works, therefore, can become catalysts of personal and familial inquiry. As Ian Burn, an important figure of the Art & Language movement, pointed out in 1970, the “conversation” surrounding an artwork—“being external, social, and open to scrutiny”—enabled the viewer to “participate in a dialogue that ‘gives the viewer a new significance.’ The viewer becomes an interlocutor ‘involved in reproducing and inventing part of that dialogue.’”³⁹ But as discussed earlier, how much this is possible and how much information is required to enter into such a dialogue is open to debate.

Talking with Atkisson, one gains a better understanding of her pilgrimages into the past. And as one gains more information about the people and events represented in the artworks, fascinating narratives and personalities emerge and bring the works alive. In addition to better understanding her own past, Atkisson’s artwork has the potential to spark dialogue and to invite others to better understand their pasts. Her work is both past and present, statement and catalyst. Those who have preceded her are more than sterile names on pedigree charts; they were living, breathing family members who “had struggles . . . [and] disappointments and excitements and victories.”⁴⁰ This process of ancestral inquiry is open to everyone. By retrieving the past and projecting it into our futures, our presents will be made all the richer. To do so is her invitation.

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1. *Past Tense* [gallery guide] (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Museum of Art, 2002).
2. Valerie Atkisson, quoted in Kathleen Baxter, “All in the Family,” *American Artist* 66 (January 2002): 57.
3. *Artist in the Marketplace Nineteenth Annual Exhibition* [exhibition catalogue] (New York: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1999).

4. Valerie Atkisson, email message to author, August 4, 2006, emphasis in original.
5. D.U.M.B.O. is an acronym for "Down under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass" and signifies a community on the Brooklyn waterfront.
6. For more on Petah Coyne, see Judith Olch Richards, ed., *Inside the Studio: Two Decades of Talks with Artists in New York* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2004), 142–45.
7. Valerie Atkisson, email message to author, September 9, 2006.
8. Valerie Atkisson, interview by Josh Probert, August 4, 2006, Brigham Young University.
9. Peter Everett, interview by Josh Probert, August 11, 2006, Brigham Young University.
10. Tanner's wives are as follows: Laura Laretta Woodland (1867–1958), who has two parchments because of her large number of descendants; Mary Isabel Richards (1878–1968); Clarice Thatcher (1879–1960); Louetta Brown (1884–1977); and Columbia Eden Richards (1887–1980). For a complete list of the descendants of each wife, see Chad M. Orton, *By Reason and by Faith: The Life of Henry S. Tanner* ([Salt Lake City]: William W. Tanner, 1998) 257–97.
11. Orton, *By Reason and by Faith*, 12–13.
12. Atkisson, quoted in Baxter, "All in the Family," 56.
13. See Orton, *By Reason and by Faith*, 134–35, 147–49.
14. Valerie Atkisson, interview by Josh Probert, August 14, 2006, Brigham Young University.
15. Orton, *By Reason and by Faith*, 169.
16. This is not to say that images of installations are not made and reproduced. *The Gates* (2005) in Central Park, New York City, by Christo and Jean-Claude, for example, was photographed and reproduced in numerous postcards, posters, and books. See Jonathan David Fineberg, *Christo and Jean-Claude: On the Way to the Gates, Central Park, New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004).
17. Atkisson, quoted in Baxter, "All in the Family," 56.
18. Valerie Atkisson, email to the author, September 19, 2006.
19. James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 15–16. See also Ena Giurescu Heller, ed., *Reluctant Partners: Art and Religion in Dialogue* (New York: The Gallery of the American Bible Society, 2004). It should be noted, though, that the bias is more specifically an anti-Christian bias. As one scholar has written, "The religion in question is often Catholicism, and sometimes Protestantism. Rarely is it Judaism. Even more rarely, Islam or Buddhism." Elkins, *Strange Place of Religion*, 1.
20. Eleanor Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics: The Catholic Imagination in Contemporary Art* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 2004), 29, 38.
21. Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics*, 32.
22. Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics*, 163–66.
23. Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics*, 6–7.
24. Valerie Atkisson, interview by Josh Probert, August 8, 2006, Brigham Young University.
25. Atkisson, interview, August 4, 2006.

26. See Terryl L. Givens, “‘Lightning out of Heaven’: Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 5–21; and Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

27. Museum of Church History and Art, *Images of Faith: Art of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1995), 2. For a sociological discussion of the relationship of Mormons to their environment throughout the Church’s history, see Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

28. Michael Corris, “Introduction: An Invisible College in an Anglo-American World,” in *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice*, ed. Michael Corris (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6.

29. A concise definition of Conceptual art follows:

Conceptual art or Concept art or Conceptualism, a style of art, originating in the 1960s in the USA, which aims to express ideas rather than create visual images. Its materials include, among others, photographs, written information, diagrams, sound, and video tapes. Continuing the tradition of Dada and anti-art, Conceptual art aims to raise questions about the nature of art by flouting artistic conventions. . . . Conceptual art overlaps with performance art where it uses the human body as a medium for expression; some artists, such as Joseph Beuys, are practitioners of both. (*The Hutchinson Dictionary of the Arts*, ed. Chris Murray [Oxford: Helicon, 1994], 121, s.v. Conceptual Art)

For excellent essays on the Conceptual art movement, see Corris, *Conceptual Art*; and Charles Harrison, *Conceptual Art and Painting: Further Essays on Art & Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).

30. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, and Michael Petry, *Installation Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1994), 8.

31. Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 214. Art historians have created the category “Aesthetic Movement” to describe this time, especially in late-nineteenth-century Britain. The Modernists would force this thinking to its logical end by endeavoring to depict pure form, void of context and narrative. See Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996); and Norbert Lynton, *The Story of Modern Art*, 2d ed. (London: Phaidon, 1989).

32. Valerie Atkisson, interview by Josh Probert, August 25, 2006, Brigham Young University.

33. Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler, *America Starts Here* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 26–27.

34. The Dadaists’ nonsensical poems, tone songs, and whimsical art objects were all intended to induce shock and outrage. They were a severe critique of the cultural values and societal norms of the early twentieth century—a reaction to the unprecedented level of carnage witnessed in World War I combined with European materialistic consumerism and nationalistic egoism. “DADA DOES NOT MEAN ANYTHING,” read the 1918 Dada Manifesto. One member of the Zurich group later recalled, “We were given the honorary title of Nihilists.” Matthew Gale, *Dada and Surrealism* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 47, 50.

35. I thank Jonathan Gibson of Xavier University and Richard Oman of the Museum of Church History and Art for helping me clarify my thinking on this dilemma of art presentation.

36. This, too, has origins in the early twentieth century. For example, in reference to himself and his contemporaries, Marcel Duchamp wrote, "We created it for our sole and unique use." Shiner, *Invention of Art*, 291.

37. Valerie Atkisson, interview by Josh Probert, August 23, 2006, Brigham Young University.

38. Atkisson, interview, August 4, 2006.

39. Corris, "Introduction: An Invisible College," 7, quoting Ian Burn.

40. Atkisson, quoted in Baxter, "All in the Family," 57.

Step Mother

A pure white suit, a blood red flower
grace upon you strong as stone
you chose a sacrificial hour
to care for children not your own

grace upon you strong as stone
perfumed with gifts of godliness
to care for children not your own
knower of thorns and humanness

perfumed with gifts of godliness
gathering up the tattered grief
knower of thorns and humanness
drawing a circle of belief

not of your bones nor of your blood
you chose a sacrificial hour
a silver slipper in your hand
a pure white suit, a blood red flower.

—Carol Clark Ottesen

*This poem received a third place award
in the BYU Studies 2005 poetry contest.*

Transforming Swampland into Nauvoo, the City Beautiful

A Civil Engineering Perspective

*Kyle M. Rollins, Richard D. Smith, M. Brett Borup,
and E. James Nelson*

The history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes a number of significant engineering accomplishments. The Salt Lake Tabernacle was designated a national historic landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers because of the innovative bridge truss system used to support its roof. Latter-day Saints also pioneered a technique known today as dynamic compaction in their efforts to improve the soil below the foundation of the St. George temple. A one-thousand-pound cannon was repeatedly dropped from a height of twenty to thirty feet to drive lava rock into the soil below the foundation level. One of the Saints' most important accomplishments, however, was the transformation of hundreds of acres of disease-infested swampland into "Nauvoo, the City Beautiful."

In the early nineteenth century, a major impediment to land development in the midwestern states was the presence of millions of acres of relatively flat swampland. Throughout much of the century, little progress was made in draining this land. As a result, Congress eventually passed the Swampland Act in 1850, which turned swamplands into public lands with the intent that they be reclaimed. Congress gave 65 million acres to fifteen states for reclamation, and Illinois received nearly 1.5 million acres. Illinois passed the lands on to the counties, but drainage benefits were slow in coming and generally were not realized until after the Civil War.¹ Therefore, the drainage efforts in Nauvoo represent a rare early success story.

Although every account of the development of Nauvoo indicates that drainage was essential, few sources provide any detail regarding how this was done and the actual results of the work. A complicating factor is that over time ditches tend to fill in with silt and organic matter if they are not

M. Brett Borup, Kyle M. Rollins, Richard D. Smith, E. James Nelson

This project began with a conversation between two neighbors, Milton Backman, a former professor of Church history at BYU, and Kyle Rollins, a professor of civil and environmental engineering. After a visit to Nauvoo, Backman suggested that it would be useful for a civil engineer to investigate



how the Saints had drained the Nauvoo swamp, since very little was known. With this encouragement, Rollins applied for a grant from the Religious Studies Center and undertook the study.

A study like this one, however, required a few different areas of expertise. Because Professor Rollins specializes in geotechnical (soil) engineering, he and one of his graduate students, Richard Smith, conducted the field investigations and the historical research. Professors Nelson and Borup specialize in hydrology and water resources. They were enlisted to work with Richard Smith in developing sophisticated computer models of the surface water runoff in Nauvoo, which helped explain the effects of the Saints' drainage work.

When asked what the most difficult part of the project was, Rollins explains: "While the computer modeling was reasonably complicated, the physical effort associated with the fieldwork was probably the most challenging. We spent many long days drilling boreholes with a hand auger, surveying the drainage ditches, and slogging through muddy ground to obtain soil samples. Two large thunderstorms occurred during the fieldwork, and these gave us a firsthand understanding of the importance of drainage for Nauvoo."

Were there any surprises as the project unfolded? "We were quite surprised," explains Rollins, "at how effective the main interceptor drain was in lowering the groundwater level and at the amount of labor that was likely involved in digging this drainage ditch. While many other areas in the Midwest struggled with drainage problems over many years, the residents of Nauvoo worked together quickly to drain their swampland."

maintained. This has happened to many ditches in Nauvoo. A system of shallow ditches on the sides of major roads still drains much of the surface water in Nauvoo today, but these ditches may not be the same ones the Latter-day Saints dug when they settled there. The objective of our study was to combine conventional historical research techniques with modern engineering analysis methods to explain the drainage of the swamplands in Nauvoo, Illinois.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES REGARDING DRAINAGE

Nauvoo (formerly Commerce), Illinois, is located in Hancock County on the east bank of the Mississippi River at the head of the Des Moines Rapids. The lowland section (or “flats”) is surrounded on the north, west, and south by the Mississippi, while bluffs rise about sixty feet to expansive prairie land on the east. Nauvoo is underlain by horizontally bedded limestone that is relatively impervious in the vertical direction but allows horizontal water flow. The overlying fine-grained soil tapers from a thickness of twelve to sixteen feet at the base of the bluffs to about two feet near the Mississippi River. Due to surface water runoff and groundwater flow, the volume of water increases as it moves westward on the flats; however, the impervious limestone layer traps the water in a progressively smaller volume of soil, leading to swampy conditions.

In spite of the obvious challenges this swampland presented, on May 1, 1839, Joseph Smith Jr. and a committee of Latter-day Saints bought 123.4 acres from Hugh White and 47.17 acres from Isaac Galland in the flatlands around Commerce, Illinois. Joseph and Emma Smith with their four children moved into a log cabin on the White property on May 10, 1839.² Joseph Smith described the conditions in Commerce upon his arrival:

When I made the purchase of White and Galland, there were one stone house, three frame houses, and two block houses, which constituted the whole city of Commerce. Between Commerce and Mr. Davidson Hibbard’s, there was one stone house and three log houses, including the one that I live in, and these were all the houses in this vicinity, and the place was literally a wilderness. The land was mostly covered with trees and bushes, and much of it so wet that it was with the utmost difficulty a footman could get through, and totally impossible for teams. Commerce was so unhealthful, very few people could live there; but believing that it might become a healthful place by the blessing of heaven to the Saints, and no more eligible place presenting itself, I considered it wisdom to make an attempt to build up a city.³

A map showing the locations of homesteads in the Nauvoo area prior to 1839 appears in figure 1 and, as Joseph Smith indicated, the population was extremely sparse.⁴

The Saints began arriving in Nauvoo throughout the summer of 1839, and the first official city plat was filed on August 30, 1839. Joseph Smith, in writing to the Saints abroad, expressed his vision for the new city of Nauvoo:

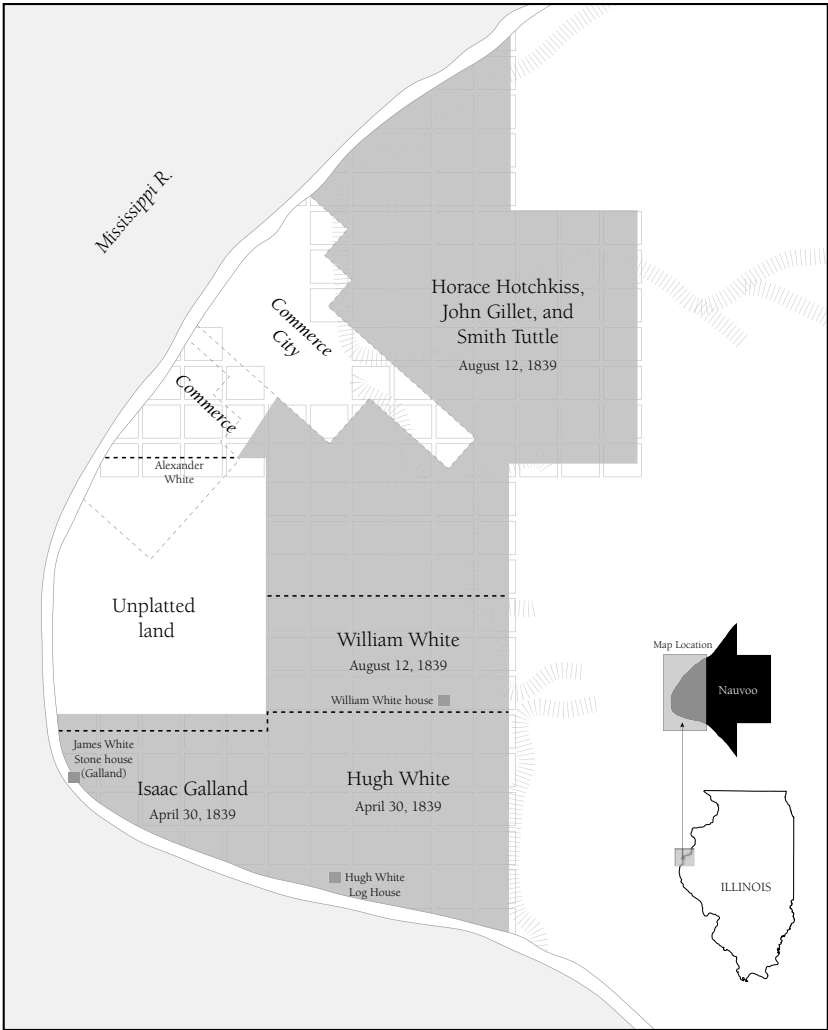


FIG. 1. Original Church land purchases and homes of early settlers prior to Mormon arrival. Courtesy Glen M. Leonard.

The name of our city (Nauvoo) is of Hebrew origin, and signifies a beautiful situation, or place, carrying with it also, the idea of rest; and is truly descriptive of the most delightful location. It is situated on the east bank of the Mississippi River, at the head of the Des Moines Rapids, in Hancock County, bounded on the east by an extensive prairie of surpassing beauty, and on the north, west, and south by the Mississippi.⁵

To fulfill the Prophet's vision for Nauvoo, considerable work awaited the Saints. Theodore Turley completed a home in Nauvoo in early June of 1839, but most of the Saints had inadequate housing upon their arrival. Having been forced to leave the state of Missouri under threat of government extermination, large numbers of refugees camped near the Mississippi River and sickness was rampant. The swampy conditions made ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which transmitted malaria (known then as ague), although the source of the problem was not known at the time. Malaria produces attacks of chills and high fevers every two to three days as well as weakness and anemia between attacks. The experience of Jesse Wentworth Crosby, who arrived in Nauvoo on June 6, 1839, was likely typical of what the early settlers encountered:

Here, instead of meeting the Saints in comfortable circumstances as we had expected to find them in Missouri, they were, as many as had been able to get through, living in tents and wagons for want of houses, some 400 miles from the place whence they had been driven, many in straitened circumstances, some sick and overcome with hardships and fatigue. I walked about the place. The sight was beautiful. Though uncultivated and for the most part covered with timber, brush and grapevines, I concluded to stop and share with the people of the Lord while some of the company chose rather to go where they could fare better. I procured a lot and commenced to build a house for myself, Mother and Sister, who had journeyed with me, a short distance back from the Mississippi and near the residence of Joseph Smith. Here in the midst of these wilds with but little earthly substance, I toiled and assisted in opening some of the first streets in that part of the city, with my own hands by cutting down the timber and underbrush which was so interwoven with grapevines that it was difficult to get one tree to fall till several were cut off. However, the brush and encumbrances soon melted away before the persevering hand of Industry and Houses sprung into being on every hand. At length we were checked a little for the sickly season came on and many very many felt its withering influence. . . . I, myself, was taken sick in July and was laid up till late in September and the house which I commenced was not finished for the season.⁶

Benjamin Brown also moved to Nauvoo in 1839 and commented on the conditions at the time and the prevailing opinion of the nearby residents regarding the place:

Attempts had been made to build a city at this spot, previous to the entrance of the Saints, but all the inhabitants, with the exception of three or four families, had died, and the Saints used the deserted houses as far as they would go. It was a common saying among the inhabitants of the surrounding country that, if the “Mormons” could live there, they could live anywhere. It truly was a most unhealthy spot, filled with ponds and stagnant waters, left by the overflowing of the Mississippi river, afflicting all the neighbourhood with fevers and agues. From this condition I saw the city become, through the industry of the Saints, a healthy and prosperous place, being drained of these swamps.⁷

Although the Saints spent the early months in Nauvoo fighting sickness and providing the bare essentials necessary for survival, their focus soon turned to plans for making the area habitable and realizing Joseph Smith’s vision for the new city. Jesse Crosby noted, “As the winter [1839] approached the sickness disappeared and plans were laid for draining some parts of the land which lay low.”⁸ Little more regarding the planning for the drainage work is reported in the journals of the time. The decrease in disease was likely the result of the disappearance of mosquitoes in the winter.

The map of the city of Nauvoo shown in figure 2, prepared by Gustavus Hill between March 1841 and December 1842, shows the location of the bluffs and the two main drainage channels that flow into the flats.⁹ One drainage channel collects runoff from the bluffs on the northern side of the area and eventually flows north along Main Street and into the Mississippi River. A second drainage channel collects runoff from the bluffs on the southern side of the city and carries it to the Mississippi on the south. While no contemporary reports pinpoint the actual time and details of construction, it appears that early drainage efforts focused on digging a ditch to intercept the flow out of the southern drainage area.

An interceptor drain would provide two important benefits,

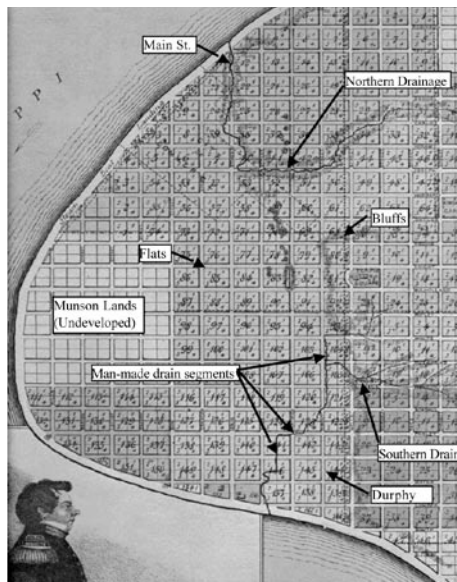


FIG. 2. Map of Nauvoo prepared by Gustavus Hill between March 1841 and December 1842. Courtesy Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.

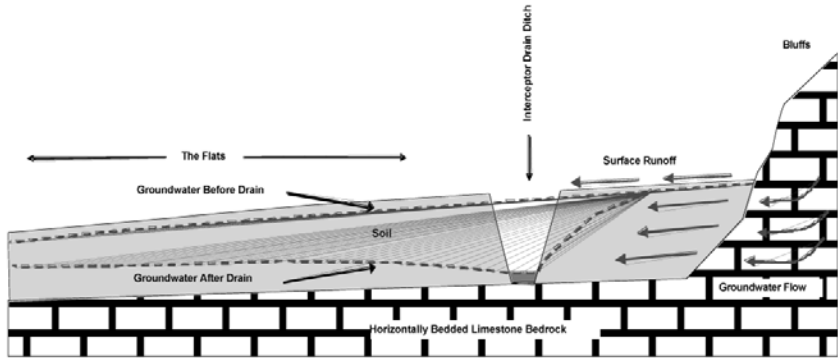


FIG. 3. Schematic drawing illustrating the use of an open ditch to intercept surface runoff and groundwater flow. Figures courtesy of the authors, except as noted.

as illustrated in figure 3. First, the drain would intercept surface runoff water that would normally flow from the bluffs onto the flats and instead channel it south towards the Mississippi. Second, the ditch would also intercept groundwater flowing west out of the limestone bedrock toward the flats and thereby depress the groundwater level west of the drain. The effect on the groundwater level would diminish with distance from the drain but would certainly have been important in the southeast quadrant of the flats.

A review of the Gustavus Hill map indicates a number of nearly linear drainage channels that were unlikely to be natural streams. These linear segments, highlighted in figure 2, followed roads and property boundaries and made ninety-degree bends. They were likely man-made ditches that carried water between existing natural drainage features. By the time Hill prepared his map, it appears that an interceptor drain had been constructed along the east side of Durphy Street (now State Highway 96) from Hotchkiss Street to Kimball Street. This ditch captures water flowing west out of the southern drainage area along White and Hotchkiss streets and immediately channels it south and away from the flats (figs. 4 and 5a). Subsequent efforts likely extended this main drain southward on Durphy Street to the present exit point at the south end of the street.

Although the stone bridge shown in figure 5b appears to have been constructed after the Mormons left the city, a report in the August 7, 1846, edition of the *Hancock Eagle* provides evidence of the drain's construction during the Mormon period:

That big drain which runs along the base of the hill towards the south, should be bridged wherever it crosses by several streets. Parley is one of



FIG. 4. Drainage ditch on the east side of Durphy Street (State Highway 96) after it makes a ninety-degree bend off Hotchkiss Street.



5a.



5b.

FIG. 5. (a) Drainage ditch at the south end of Durphy Street and (b) water from the same ditch flowing under a stone arch bridge and into the Mississippi River.

the most traveled [streets] in the city, yet it is impassable at the big drain even for foot passengers without crossing several private lots.¹⁰

Although the Saints may have developed drainage plans as early as the spring of 1840, it appears that they had made little progress in carrying out these plans at this point. Swamps and sloughs were still very much in evidence in Nauvoo. According to Mosiah Hancock:

When spring [1840] started to draw near, father . . . made a hickory spade, and we piled up a brush fence and soon had a garden in. There were so many sloughs in Commerce, that the garden was sickly indeed! Our house was on the bank of a slough, and there was a spring about fifty yards down from the house.¹¹

Franklin Woolley also reported that sickness and swamps were common in the summer of 1840:

During the summer [of 1840] my father's family were nearly all sick with the fever and ague[.] I was the only one able to bring them medicine for some time and I remember going to Lyons' Store for it, then, what was afterward Main Street, was a willow swamp.¹²

John Butler's autobiography also notes that "down in the bottom it was all swamp and low, wet places. The Saints went to work and drained it all off so that it became dry and a great deal more healthy."¹³

By the end of 1840, the drainage efforts had progressed sufficiently that the *Times and Seasons* could report on November 15, 1840:

Nauvoo is still growing, great improvements have been made during the past season, the health of the place has been greatly facilitated during the season, by various improvements; such as the digging of excellent wells, draining off stagnant waters, etc. etc. The sickness of the place has generally subsided, and as a community we have great reason to thank a kind and merciful Providence for the bountiful blessings which he has seen fit to bestow upon us.¹⁴

Again, on January 15, 1841, the *Times and Seasons* reported:

The healthiness of the place during the past year had been greatly improved by the digging of wells and the draining off stagnant waters, and there was now but little or no sickness among the inhabitants. The saints were also blessed with an abundant harvest in the year 1840.¹⁵

At the beginning of 1841, various assessments of the situation suggested that the greatest problems with drainage and swamps were now associated with the northwestern part of Nauvoo because earlier drainage efforts had focused on the southeastern part of the city. For example, on January 15, 1841, the *Times and Seasons* reported:

This place has been objected to by some, on account of the sickness which has prevailed in the summer months, but it is the opinion of Doctor [John C.] Bennett, a physician of great experience and medical knowledge, that Hancock Co., and all the eastern and southern portions of the City of Nauvoo, are as healthy as any other portions of the western country, (or the world, to acclimated citizens) whilst the northwestern portion of the city has experienced affliction from ague and fever, which however, he thinks can be easily remedied by draining the sloughs on the adjacent islands in the Mississippi.¹⁶

In his inaugural address on February 3, 1841, Mayor John C. Bennett stated: “The public health requires that the low lands, bordering on the Mississippi, should be immediately drained, and the entire timber removed. This can and will be one of the most healthful cities in the west, provided you take prompt and decisive action in the premises.”¹⁷

Unfortunately, there is little evidence to suggest that the Saints ever fully carried out these drainage initiatives on the islands in Mississippi or bordering lowlands before they left Nauvoo. In fact, in 1843 Joseph Smith offered the following advice to settlers, which essentially reiterates the concerns expressed in 1841:

The lower part of the town is the most healthy. In the upper part of the town the Merchants will say I am partial &c. but The lower part of the town is much the most healthy. I tell you in the name of the Lord. I have been out in all parts of the city at all times of night to learn these things. . . .

There are many sloughs on the Islands from w[h]ere Miasma arises in the summer, and is blown over the upper part of the city, but it does not extend over the lower part of the city. All those persons who are not used to living on a river, or lake or large pond of water. I do not want you should stay on the banks of the river. get away to the lower part of the city.—

Back on the hill—where you can get good well water.¹⁸

Drainage in the Munson lands bordering the Mississippi on the west side of Nauvoo was a particular problem. Regarding this land, Hiram Kimball provides answers to questions posed to him in a court deposition given on October 7, 1842, in the case of *Doyle v. Teas & Munson*:

Q. Is the swampy land in the Teas tract [Munson Lands in figure 6] on the side next to the river or back from the river?

A. It is back from the river.

Q. How far back is it from the river?

A. About sixty rods [990 feet].

Q. Does it extend the whole length of said tract up and down the river? Or only a part of the distance, and if part only, state the distance?

A. It extends about two thirds across the tract up and down the river, and I should think from three to six rods wide [50 to 100 feet].¹⁹

As a result of the high water levels in the Munson lands, by 1846 settlement in this area was limited to the eastern edge and a small section on the southwest corner near the river.²⁰

Despite the relatively hopeful assessments in January and February of 1841, evidence suggests that there was still more work to do in the summer of 1841. For example, Edward Hunter, in a letter from Nauvoo, dated May 6, 1841, said, "It is quite sickly here. Several have died within a few weeks with the winter fever and dysentery. Fever and ague is quite prevalent here."²¹ Brigham Young returned to Nauvoo from a mission to England on July 1, 1841, and reported:

On my return from England I found my family living in a small unfinished log-cabin, situated on a low, wet lot, so swampy that when the first attempt was made to plow it the oxen mired; but after the city was drained it became a very valuable garden spot.²²

Brigham Young's home, at the corner of Granger and Kimball streets (fig. 6), was relatively far west of the Durphy Street drain. Therefore, conditions at this location would probably not have been greatly improved until additional drainage ditches had been completed. Brigham Young's statement also suggests that significant additional drainage work had yet to be completed in the summer of 1841. This idea is supported by a city council memo dated November 1, 1841, which directed that the "swamp west of Brigham Young's home be drained as soon as circumstances will permit."²³ Apparently this drainage project was large enough that the city council organized a community effort.

Figure 6 presents a map showing the areas identified by journal writers as being swampy. Of course, the boundaries of these swampy areas are very poorly defined, and other swampy areas certainly may have

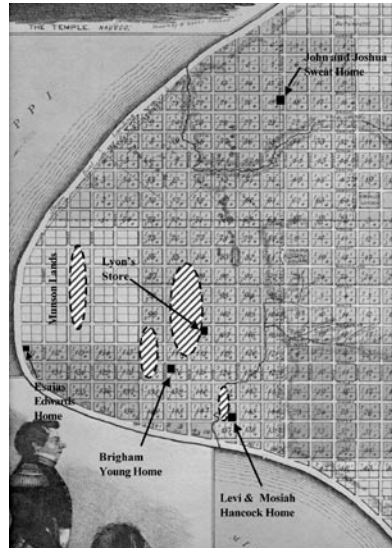


FIG. 6. Location of swampy (cross-hatched) areas, as indicated by historical accounts, overlaid on original plat for Nauvoo by Gustavus Hill.

existed besides those shown on the map. We have drawn on our experience with ponding during storms in present-day Nauvoo to provide some estimate of where the swampy areas may have existed.

Our hydrologic analysis, described later in this article, suggests that additional ditches, besides the Durphy Street ditch, would have been required to drain stagnant water and carry away surface runoff from rainfall on the flats. In contrast to the Durphy Street ditch, which extended to the bedrock to intercept groundwater flow, these ditches would have been smaller and shallower. The drainage work probably involved large community-wide projects requiring the combined efforts of many people as well as smaller ditching efforts undertaken by individuals and families on their own land. For example, ditches along the main streets may have been dug collectively. Joseph Smith gave notice in April of 1843 that “Bro Gardner wanted 2 or 300 hands ditching—a good job.”²⁴ During this time period, drainage ditches and other excavations typically involved horse-drawn plows and scrapers as well as hand excavation.²⁵

Evidence for another large drainage ditch is provided obliquely by an account of an accident in which Brigham Young’s horse team fell through a timber bridge on Parley Street on January 17, 1846. The horses had to be lowered six feet to the bottom of the gully.²⁶ Since a bridge had not been built across the main ditch on Durphy Street where it crossed Parley Street, this bridge must have spanned another large drainage channel crossing Parley Street. In her autobiography, Sarah Carrel also describes a deep ditch located near the river to which John Sweat’s son ran from his home (see John Sweat home in fig. 6).²⁷ Since the Sweat home was in the northern part of the city, this ditch would likely have flowed north into the Mississippi.

In contrast to these larger projects, a number of journals mention individual ditching efforts around homes and farms. Brigham Young noted that after his return from England in 1841 he spent much of his free time “draining, fencing and cultivating” the lot around his home, which was too damp for a proper root cellar²⁸ (see fig. 6). Joseph Smith gave Bathsheba Smith and her husband a lot in Nauvoo in July of 1842. She reported that “by fencing and draining the lot, and putting much labor on it, we soon had a splendid garden with thrifty fruit trees &c.”²⁹ Esaias Edwards built his house in the summer of 1842 on the northwest corner of the Garland Purchase on the banks of the Mississippi River (see fig. 6). He noted that he had a “living spring” on his lot and that he constructed a drain from the spring to the river.³⁰ The historical records note that Joseph Smith spent part of a day (May 21, 1844) shoveling dirt out of a ditch.³¹

In spite of many difficulties, the population of Nauvoo grew rapidly. In July of 1841 Heber C. Kimball wrote to Parley P. Pratt in England and indicated that there were over 1,200 buildings in Nauvoo with hundreds more under construction.³² The map in figure 7 shows the location of occupied lots in Nauvoo based on an 1842 census,³³ and the map in figure 8 shows the location and type of buildings in 1846.³⁴ A comparison between figures 1, 7, and 8 demonstrates the rapid development of this city in just seven years. The location of the Durphy Street interceptor ditch and other possible ditches discussed subsequently are shown in figures 7 and 8 to highlight the importance of these drainage ditches relative to land development. Based on a detailed study of available records, Susan Easton Black has concluded that the population of Nauvoo was about 100 people in 1839 and increased to about 4,000 in 1842. The population peaked at about 12,000 in 1844 and was about 11,000 in 1845.³⁵



FIG. 7. Occupied lots in Nauvoo from 1842 census. Courtesy Glen M. Leonard.

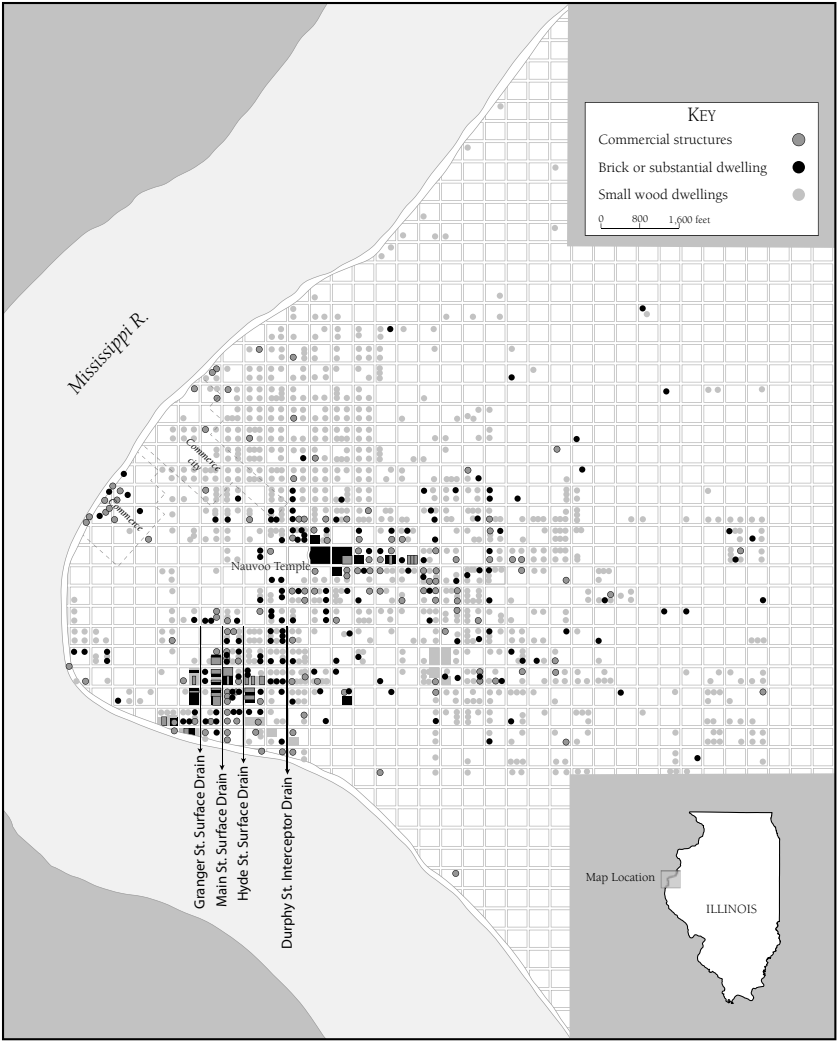


FIG. 8. Map showing locations of various types of buildings throughout Nauvoo in 1846. Courtesy Glen M. Leonard.

While the northwest side of Nauvoo was largely uninhabited in 1842, by 1846 the Saints had constructed a number of homes in this region. In addition, homes had even been constructed on the east side and the southwest corner of the Munson lands. As new inhabitants dug drainage ditches on their individual properties and these drained toward the main ditches along the streets and into the Mississippi, the conditions in the city would have improved. Nevertheless, drainage of surface runoff during intense rainstorms would likely have remained a problem for the

early settlers as it is in Nauvoo even today. For example, Josiah Quincy described the streets in Nauvoo as being “knee-deep in mud” after a severe rainstorm during his visit to Nauvoo on April 25, 1844.³⁶

Despite the poverty, the sickness, and what must at times have seemed a never-ending process, the Saints’ efforts eventually transformed the swampland, in many respects, into “the City Beautiful” envisioned by Joseph Smith. In a letter to Wilford Woodruff in England, dated June 17, 1845, Brigham Young wrote:

There are many good buildings erecting in different parts of the city, there is not much sickness in this place, and there never was a more prosperous time, in general, amongst the saints, since the work commenced. Nauvoo, or, more properly, the “City of Joseph”, looks like a paradise. All the lots and land, which have heretofore been vacant and unoccupied, were enclosed in the spring, and planted with grain and vegetables, which makes it look more like a garden of gardens than a city; and the season has been so favorable, the prospect is, there will be enough raised within the limits of the corporation to supply the inhabitants with corn, potatoes, and other vegetables.³⁷

UNDERSTANDING NAUVOO’S GEOLOGY AND SOIL CONDITIONS

The flats in Nauvoo lie on a limestone shelf that extends into the Mississippi River. This Mississippian age limestone underlies most of the surrounding region, and outcrops of limestone are common along the bluffs overlooking the river. (For more detailed information about the geologic profile of the region, see figure A on the BYU Studies website, byustudies.byu.edu.) Because the limestone is horizontally bedded, water moves along the bedding planes, creating numerous springs at outcrops in the limestone. Figure 9 shows a photograph of a limestone outcrop near Nauvoo, where water has frozen after flowing out of the horizontal beds in the limestone. These horizontal beds would transport water from the bluffs to the flats. Historically, limestone was quarried at a site near the north end of Main Street and used in building the original Nauvoo temple in the 1840s. A photo of the temple quarry is shown in figure 10. The construction of the Keokuk Dam downstream from Nauvoo increased the depth of the Mississippi by about twenty-two feet and raised the level of groundwater near the river so that the quarry is now filled with water.³⁸ The limestone in the quarry is likely Keokuk limestone (see fig. A on BYU Studies website). Surface soils in the area consist of Holocene age alluvial materials derived from runoff from the bluffs as well as flooding from the Mississippi. In addition, some soil may be derived from weathering of the underlying limestone.



FIG. 9. Photograph of frozen water from flow out of horizontally bedded limestone outcrop.



FIG. 10. Photograph in 1998 of limestone quarry used for the Nauvoo Temple in the 1840s.

To better define soil and water conditions in Nauvoo, we drilled nine hand-auger holes (2.5-inch diameter) in June 1998 along an east-west profile running from the base of the bluffs to the Mississippi River. The locations of the nine test holes, determined with a portable GPS unit, are presented in figure 11. (To review the actual boring logs for each test hole, see figure B on the BYU Studies website.) The cross-sectional profile was positioned between Hotchkiss and Munson streets. The test holes typically extended to the underlying limestone bedrock. We obtained soil samples from each hole to define the soil stratigraphy and the elevation of the ground water. In addition, we measured the permeability of the soil at two test hole locations. The permeability is proportional to the velocity at which groundwater moves through the soil. After walking 1,500 feet through water-saturated clay (muddy swampland) to drill test holes 7 and 8, we have a better appreciation for how difficult it would have been to walk across Nauvoo prior to drainage, as related above by Joseph Smith.

Typically, the soil profile contained a two-foot-thick surface layer consisting of dark brown or black clayey silt. This layer is consistent with

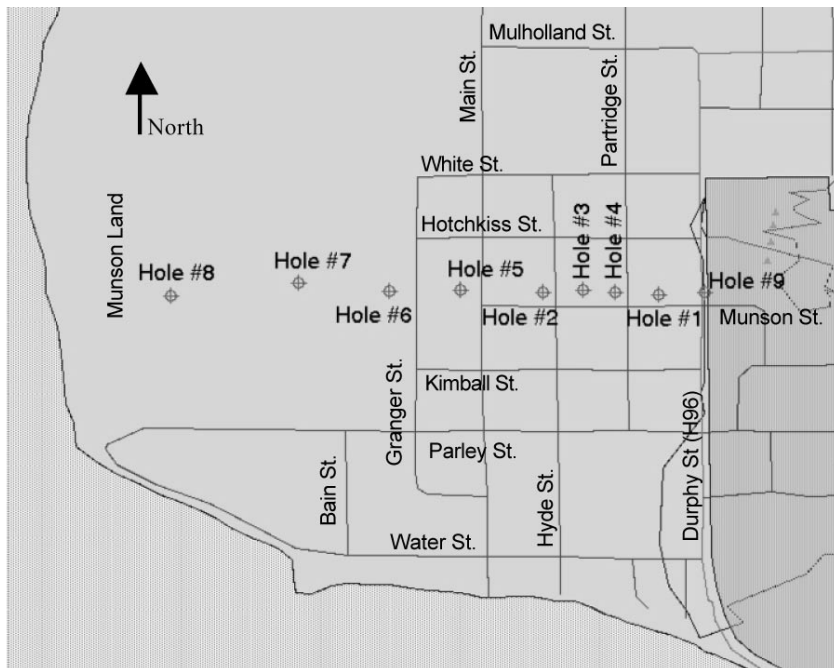


FIG. 11. Location of hand-auger test holes on a line from the bluffs on the east to the Mississippi River on the west between Munson and Hotchkiss streets.

deposition in a swampy environment. Below this surface layer the profile contained layers of brown clay, gray clay, and occasionally some sand layers. Some of the clay layers appear to be derived from weathering of the underlying limestone. A cross section through the test holes is presented in figure 12. This cross section shows the ground surface, the groundwater depth, and the depth of the limestone bedrock along the profile. The depth to bedrock generally decreased from up to sixteen feet on the east side of the flats to as little as two feet on the west side. During our drilling, the groundwater was eight to ten feet below ground level on the east side of the flats but was essentially at the ground surface on the west side in the Munson land area.

The silts and clays, which predominate in the soil samples, have low permeability that prevents rapid infiltration and increases surface water runoff. Water that does penetrate the soil reduces soil strength and requires a considerable time to move out of the soil. The horizontally bedded limestone bedrock tends to prevent vertical water flow, thereby trapping the groundwater in the soil layer, which becomes progressively thinner downstream. These conditions combine to produce a swampy environment in the flats of Nauvoo.

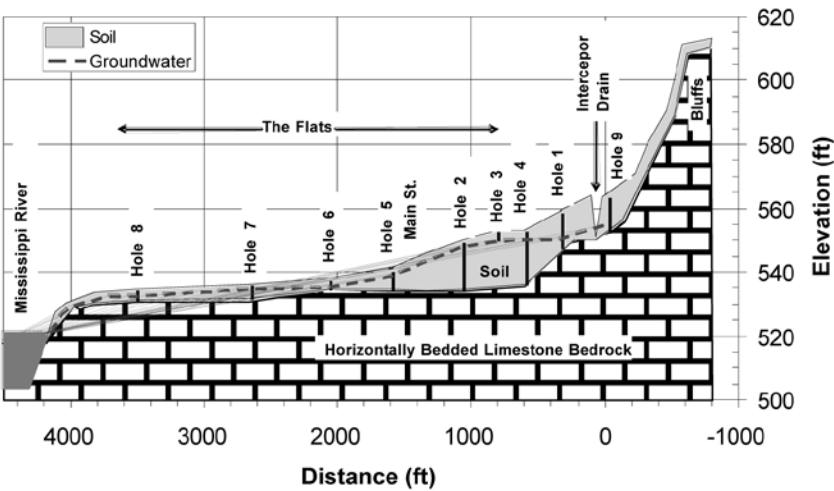


FIG. 12. East-west cross section through Nauvoo between Munson and Hotchkiss streets showing ground surface, groundwater location, and underlying bedrock.

APPRECIATING NAUVOO'S DRAINAGE FEATURES

Survey of Durphy Drainage Ditch

To better define the characteristics of the existing interceptor drain ditch on Durphy Street, we conducted an engineering survey in June 1998. Cross sections of the ditch were typically determined at 100- to 200-foot intervals along its length beginning at a point between Hotchkiss and Munson streets across from Wilford Woodruff's home. North of Hotchkiss Street, the ditch has since been backfilled (presumably with gravel) and a drain pipe installed along the bottom. This shortens the length of the original ditch by about 425 feet. Table 1, found on the BYU Studies website, shows a summary of the cross section locations along with the characteristics of the ditch at each section. The existing ditch is approximately 2,500 feet long with an average slope of 1 percent. Three cross sections (sections 1, 5, and 11) along the length of the ditch are presented in figure 13. The depth of the drain is generally constrained by the location of the underlying bedrock and varies from about ten feet deep at the north end to about four feet deep on the south end. The width of the ditch measured from the top of the inside bank on each side varies from about thirty-five to fifty feet throughout most of its length. Computations indicate that the volume of excavation for this ditch would have been about 17,300 cubic yards. Based on data from the survey, the total excavation volume for the full-length ditch would have been approximately 22,100 cubic yards (about 2,200 dump truck loads). We estimate that hand excavation would have required at least 22,100 man-hours of effort to complete. This equates to approximately one hundred men working eight hours per day for about twenty-eight days.

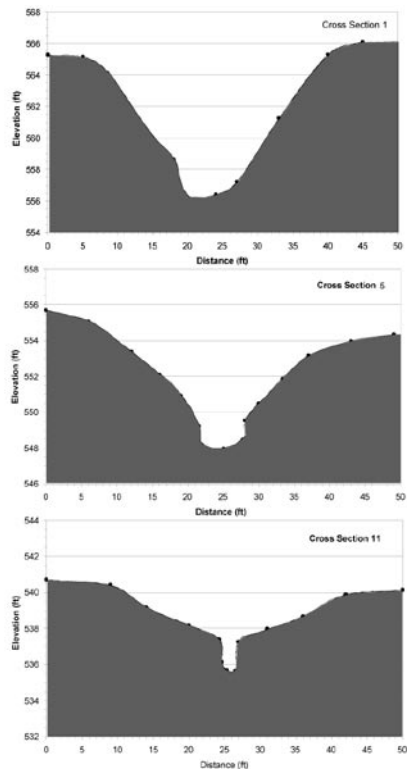


FIG. 13. Cross sections (looking downstream) of the existing Durphy Street drainage ditch.

Flow Pattern within Current Drainage Ditches

Hydrological analyses, described subsequently, and experience during rainstorms in present-day Nauvoo clearly indicate that additional ditches besides the Durphy Street ditch would have been necessary to control surface water runoff. Without supplemental ditches, large areas on the flats would have remained in swampy conditions. In contrast to the interceptor ditch on Durphy, which extended down to bedrock, these ditches for surface water control would likely have been relatively shallow (one to two feet deep). The natural pattern for drainage ditches would be to follow streets and property boundaries. We assume that this would have been the case in Nauvoo. Drainage from individual lots would then flow into main drain lines and eventually into the Mississippi. To obtain some idea of the likely drainage patterns in 1840s Nauvoo, we investigated drainage patterns in present-day Nauvoo during a field survey in June 1998. Fortunately, during our visit two large thunderstorms provided ample evidence of water runoff patterns on the flats. During one storm, the Durphy ditch was flowing nearly three-quarters full, and flow volumes on other major street drains were also substantial. Figure 14 shows the flow pattern observed during storms in present-day Nauvoo and identifies areas where runoff water was ponding.

Consistent with Joseph Smith's statement, drainage in the southern part of the city was better than elsewhere. Besides the southern flow in the Durphy ditch, substantial southward flows were observed on Partridge, Hyde, and Main streets. In addition, surface runoff still followed the drainage channel identified on the map by Gustavus Hill in 1842. A sizeable gully at the south end of Hyde Street, which serves as a natural drainage channel, would have provided a convenient outlet for water draining from the ditches in this area.



FIG. 14. Surface water flow patterns in present-day Nauvoo.

Donald L. Enders indicates that Granger Street (see fig. 7) was a major road in Nauvoo during the Mormon period since it connected to the steamboat landing on the north side of the city.³⁹ A natural drainage channel into the Mississippi at the south end of Granger Street would have provided an outlet for a drainage ditch on this street; however, in present-day Nauvoo, Granger Street terminates at Sidney Street and does not reach the river. This prevents drainage to the south, and water tends to pond between Kimball and Hotchkiss streets. Although a culvert has been extended to the west at Munson Street, ponding still occurs in this location after rainstorms.

Drainage is also relatively poor on Main Street between Mulholland and Munson streets. This region is the dividing line between northward and southward drainage, and the ground surface in this area is essentially flat. As a result, ponding occurs during storms, as shown in figure 16. This area was also identified as a swamp at the time the Mormon settlers arrived in Nauvoo.⁴⁰ The installation of a culvert running west off Main Street at Ripley Street has not prevented ponding.

We also observed significant water flow in drainage ditches running west along Young, Mulholland, Munson, and Parley streets. However, three of these streets drain into the Munson lands where the slope is relatively flat and the soil is not very deep, so that drainage is far from optimal.

Historical data and our surface water analysis (discussed below) indicate that besides the Durphy Street interceptor drain, additional shallower ditches would have been necessary to deal with surface runoff in the flats. These ditches were likely constructed along main roads. North-south ditches would have paralleled Partridge, Hyde, Main, and Granger streets. East-west ditches would have followed Young, Mulholland, Munson, and Parley streets.



FIG. 15. View looking south along Hyde Street at the intersection with Sidney Street showing a drainage ditch flowing south toward the Mississippi River one day after a thunderstorm.



FIG. 16. View showing water ponding on the east side of Main Street north of White Street after a thunderstorm.

NUMERICAL ANALYSES

Hydrology and Surface Water Flow Analysis

Two potential sources of water enter the Nauvoo flats: surface water and groundwater. Surface water may enter the area as the result of direct precipitation or runoff from the streams draining the bluffs. Our objectives in the surface water analysis were to determine the reduction in surface water flow onto the flats due to the Durphy Street drain and to evaluate the surface runoff on the flats due to direct precipitation. Historical precipitation data have not been recorded for Nauvoo, so we collected and analyzed data from surrounding areas. The four closest precipitation recording stations surrounding Nauvoo are La Harpe, Illinois; Keokuk, Iowa; Fort Madison, Iowa; and Donnellson, Iowa. Our analysis of the data from these stations revealed that we could approximate the precipitation in Nauvoo using the data from the Fort Madison station. Precipitation in this area is highest from May to September, with May being the month with the greatest precipitation. Average annual precipitation is about 35.5 inches.

Using these precipitation data, we estimated the relationships between storm intensity, duration, and frequency. Our analysis showed that intense storms of significant duration may occur regularly in Nauvoo.

(Storm intensity-duration-frequency curves are shown in figure C on the BYU Studies website.) These storms, combined with the relatively impermeable soils found close to the surface in the Nauvoo flats, result in significant amounts of standing water.

As discussed above, during a site visit in June 1998 we observed storm water pooling as the result of direct precipitation. Two storms during this visit resulted in significant accumulation of surface water in the flats.

We evaluated surface runoff by analyzing topographic data and developing a digital runoff model. We analyzed topographic data by obtaining digital information and applying several modeling and visualization techniques. The runoff model was developed using local hydrologic data and the Watershed Modeling System (WMS) software⁴¹ developed by the Environmental Modeling Research Laboratory at BYU. This software includes HEC-1, a surface runoff model developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.⁴²

We used a digital topographic map from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to develop the surface water runoff model. The contours derived from the digital terrain model helped us visualize the topography of the area and the direction of flow. We then used WMS to process the digital terrain data, which produced the contours shown in figure 17. In this figure, twenty-five contour lines are evenly spaced between 510 and 690 feet of elevation (approximately seven feet of elevation difference between each contour). The three major drainage channels in the region, derived from the topographic data, appear as heavy black lines.

Another useful method of viewing the area topography is by shading contour changes. Figure 18 shows a shaded terrain model overlain by the USGS quadrangle maps for the area.

An examination of the details presented in figure 18 leads to the conclusion that surface water runoff from areas outside of the Nauvoo flats could produce a significant source of water in the flats. Prior to construction of the drainage ditches, precipitation

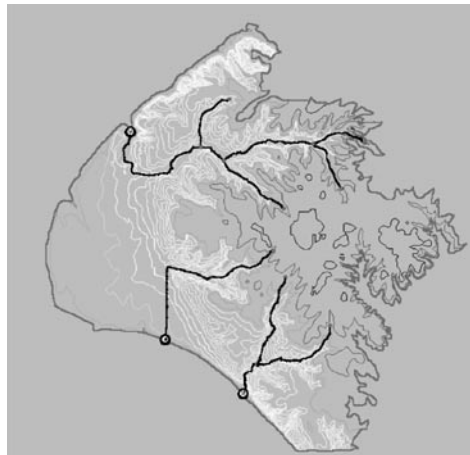


FIG. 17. Hydrologic model of Nauvoo showing elevation contours at seven-foot intervals and the primary drainage patterns after construction of the Durphy Street drain.

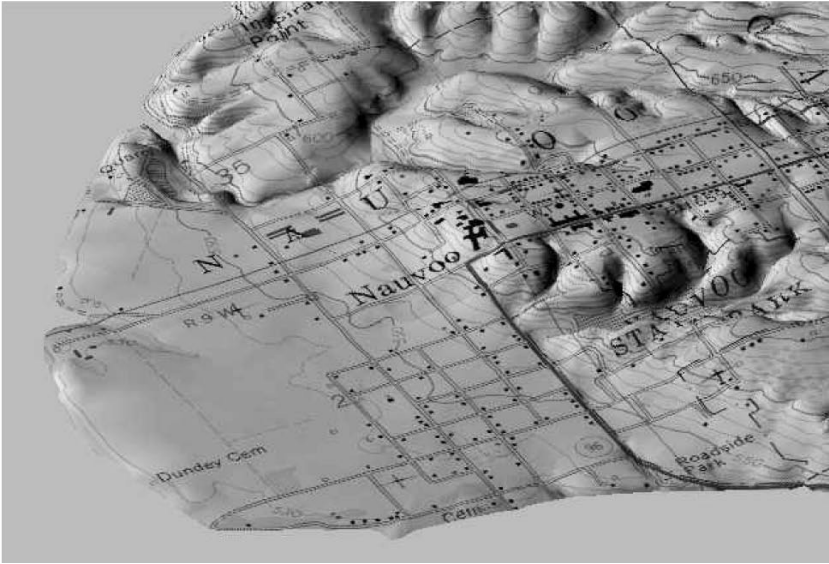


FIG. 18. Oblique view of shaded terrain model of Nauvoo with overlain USGS quadrangle map showing drainage channels from the bluffs that flow into the flats in the foreground. Maps 18, 19, and 20 show features existing today.

falling on the bluffs would likely have run onto the flats below, where it would have collected as standing water.

To better understand this condition, we used WMS to generate flow paths that surface water runoff would take after a storm. We first employed this model assuming the Durphy Street ditch did not exist (as was the situation before the Saints arrived in the Nauvoo area). Results of this study are presented in figure 19. It is clear that without the drainage ditch, runoff from the bluffs would flow onto the southern flats and collect there or gradually flow out to the Mississippi River.

We then developed a model for the same area with the Durphy Street ditch in place. The results of this model are presented in figure 20. These results show that runoff from the bluffs is collected by the ditch and discharged directly to the Mississippi. None of the storm runoff reaches the flats. The Durphy Street ditch eliminates any upstream contribution to standing surface water in this area.

To assess the effect of the Durphy Street ditch, we developed a rainfall-runoff model to estimate the amount of surface water runoff from each drainage area during a typical storm. We used a rainfall-runoff simulation model, HEC-1, in combination with the WMS-delineated watersheds to simulate a storm and estimate runoff volumes from each drainage area.

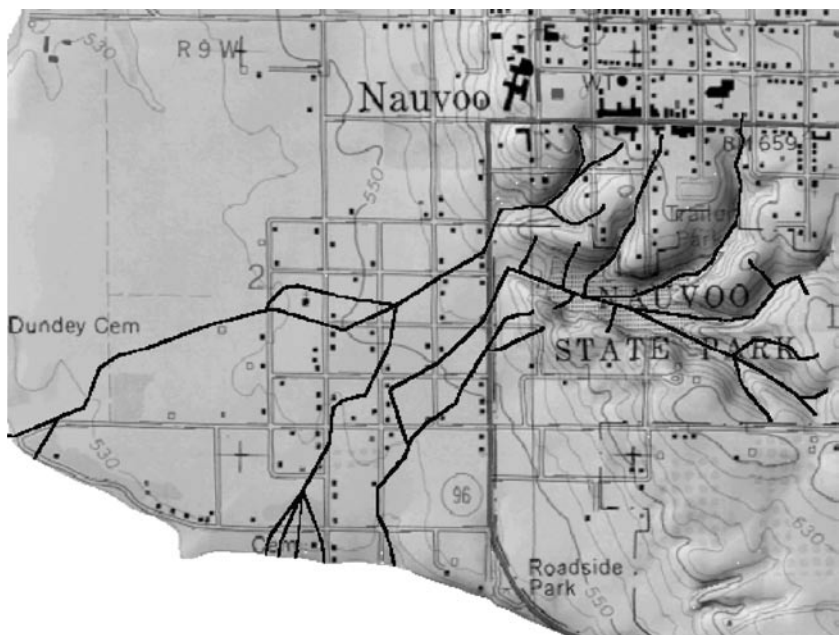


FIG. 19. Runoff flow paths without drainage ditches in Nauvoo (runoff paths shown in black).



FIG. 20. Runoff flow paths after construction of the Durphy Street drainage ditch.

As an example, we used a storm with a twenty-four-hour precipitation depth of 4.06 inches for this analysis. A storm this size was measured at the Fort Madison station and would not be uncommon for the Nauvoo area. According to available statistical analyses of historical rainfall data, such a storm would be expected to occur about once every five years. By contrast, a storm with a depth of 2.5 inches would typically occur every year.⁴³

Our analyses indicate that 4.06 inches of precipitation would produce 100 acre-feet of runoff in the flats. Without proper drainage, much of this water would collect in the area and contribute to the swampy conditions found there naturally. An additional 46 acre-feet of water would run off the area upstream from the Durphy Street ditch. Without the Durphy Street ditch, this water would also run onto the southern flats area and contribute to the swampy conditions. With the Durphy Street ditch in place, this water would be collected and diverted directly to the river, eliminating a significant source of water to the flats. Modeling storms of various sizes reveals that the construction of the Durphy Street ditch prevented about one-third of the storm runoff from flowing onto the flats.

Groundwater Flow Analysis

As indicated previously, in addition to surface water runoff, groundwater flow also contributed to the swampy conditions in the flats. The objective of the groundwater analyses was to determine what effect the ditch had on the elevation of the groundwater downslope from the drain, independent of surface water flow. Once we had defined the geologic cross section shown in figure 12, we constructed a numerical model to analyze groundwater flow through the cross section. We performed analyses with and without the interceptor ditch on Durphy Street using a two-dimensional finite element groundwater analysis program called SEEP2D developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.⁴⁴ We used the Groundwater Modeling System (GMS), a computer program produced by the Environmental Modeling Research Laboratory (EMRL) at Brigham Young University, as a preprocessor to set up the finite element mesh and as a postprocessor to display the results of the analysis.

The SEEP2D model is composed of a two-dimensional mesh consisting of 4,229 triangular elements. Each element in the mesh represents a part of the cross section and can have different properties. For each element, soil properties were used to define the vertical and horizontal permeability of the soil or rock material. In addition, measured water table elevations were used to define groundwater levels at the upstream and

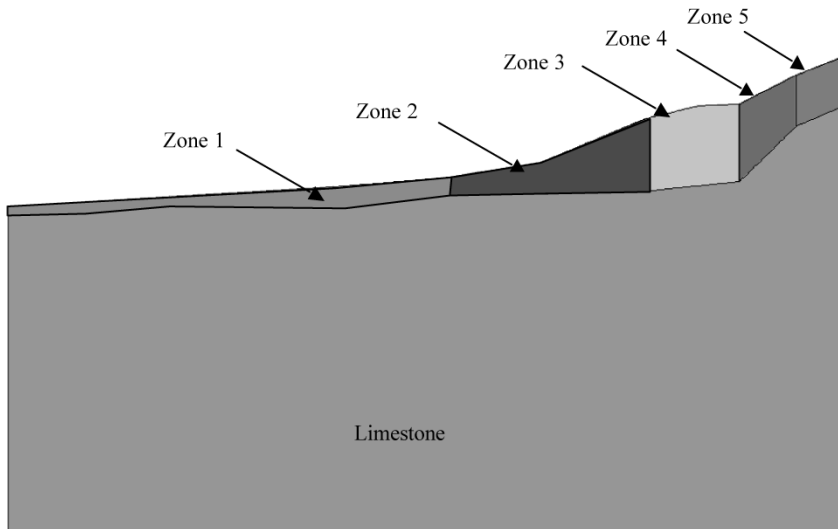


FIG. 21. East-west cross section through Nauvoo showing soil zones used to model groundwater flow.

downstream boundaries of the model. We assumed the limestone to be essentially impervious at a depth fifty feet below the top of the limestone layer on the downstream boundary. The upper boundary of the model was free to move up and down to match the computed elevation of the groundwater level. We assumed water infiltration through the top boundary to be negligible for these analyses.

Although the nine test holes drilled across the flats defined the soil types and thicknesses, we were able to determine the permeability only approximately. Experience indicates that the permeability for a given soil type can vary significantly. Therefore, we initially calibrated the numerical model based on the measured groundwater elevations. We progressively modified estimates of the soil permeability in the model to improve the agreement between the measured and computed groundwater level across the model. For these calibration analyses, the water level at the upstream boundary was equal to the water level in the ditch (552.7 feet) and the water level at the downstream boundary was equal to the water level in the Mississippi at the time of our study (518 feet). To simplify the permeability adjustment process, we divided the soil cross section into eight zones, and the elements in each zone had the same permeability characteristics. These analyses justified a simplification of the model to only five zones with little additional error. The locations of the soil zones are shown in figure 21. The horizontal and vertical permeabilities can be found in table 2 on the

BYU Studies website. The calibration results were reasonably good, with an average error between the measured and computed groundwater level of 0.75 feet.

Once we had determined that the model was a reasonable representation of the groundwater system, we modeled the flow in the cross section with and without the Durphy Street drainage ditch, but we assumed a water level in the Mississippi River twenty-two feet lower, where it would have been prior to the construction of the Keokuk Dam, which was completed in 1913. In all cases, the calibrated soil properties and soil zone locations remained the same. Therefore, for our model, both with and without the Durphy Street ditch, we decreased the water level at the downstream boundary to an elevation of 496 feet. Prior to construction of the ditch we

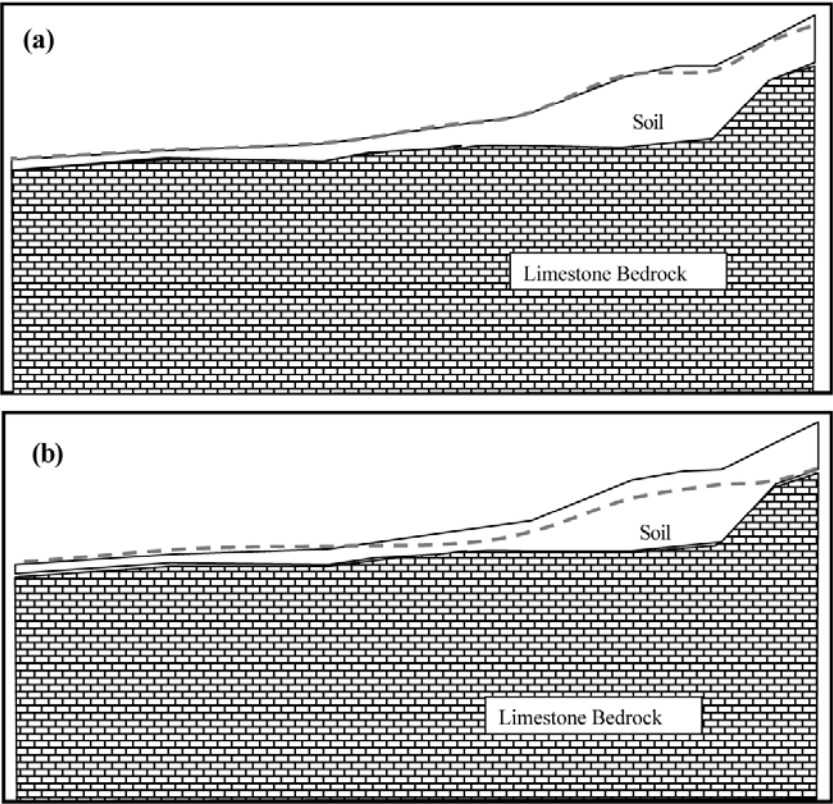


FIG. 22. Computed groundwater elevation (dashed line) relative to the ground surface (a) before and (b) after construction of the Durphy Street drain but with the Mississippi River at its 1840s elevation of approximately 496 feet.

assumed that the water level was seven feet higher at the ditch location than after the ditch was constructed.

Cross sections showing the computed groundwater level relative to the ground surface are provided in figure 22 for conditions (a) before and (b) after construction of the Durphy Street drain and with the Mississippi water level typical of the 1840s. For the case without the drain, our analyses suggest that the groundwater would have intersected the ground surface at an elevation of 550 feet, or 15 feet higher than it did after the drain was in place. The maps in figure 23 show the zones where the water level would be at or above the ground surface both with and without the Durphy Street drain. Without the Durphy ditch, groundwater would have been at or above the ground surface for most of the land west of Hyde Street in the north, and south of Kimball Street. After construction of the main ditch, this boundary would have moved west a distance of about 1,500 feet to about Bain Street. These analyses show that the Durphy drain likely produced an important decrease in the groundwater level downstream from the drain by intercepting groundwater flow. When these results are coupled with those showing that the drain reduced surface water runoff by 33 percent, the value of the Durphy drain becomes very clear.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Nauvoo Saints excavated the main interceptor drain ditch along the base of the bluffs on the east side of Durphy Street. The drain intercepted both groundwater flow and surface water runoff from the bluffs. Intercepting surface water would have decreased the total volume of surface water on the flats by about one-third. Intercepting groundwater would have moved the boundary where groundwater was at or above the ground surface west by a distance of about 1,500 feet.

This ditch was typically six to nine feet deep and thirty-five to fifty feet wide at the ground surface. It eventually extended for a length of approximately 3,000 feet. Its construction required excavation of approximately 22,100 cubic yards of clayey soils to the limestone bedrock. This project would have required at least 22,100 man-hours of effort to complete by hand.

Although efforts to drain off stagnant water commenced soon after the arrival of the Saints in 1839, the process of draining Nauvoo continued throughout their stay. The drainage system likely consisted of major ditches excavated by the community as a whole, as well as smaller ditches dug by individuals for their own private property.

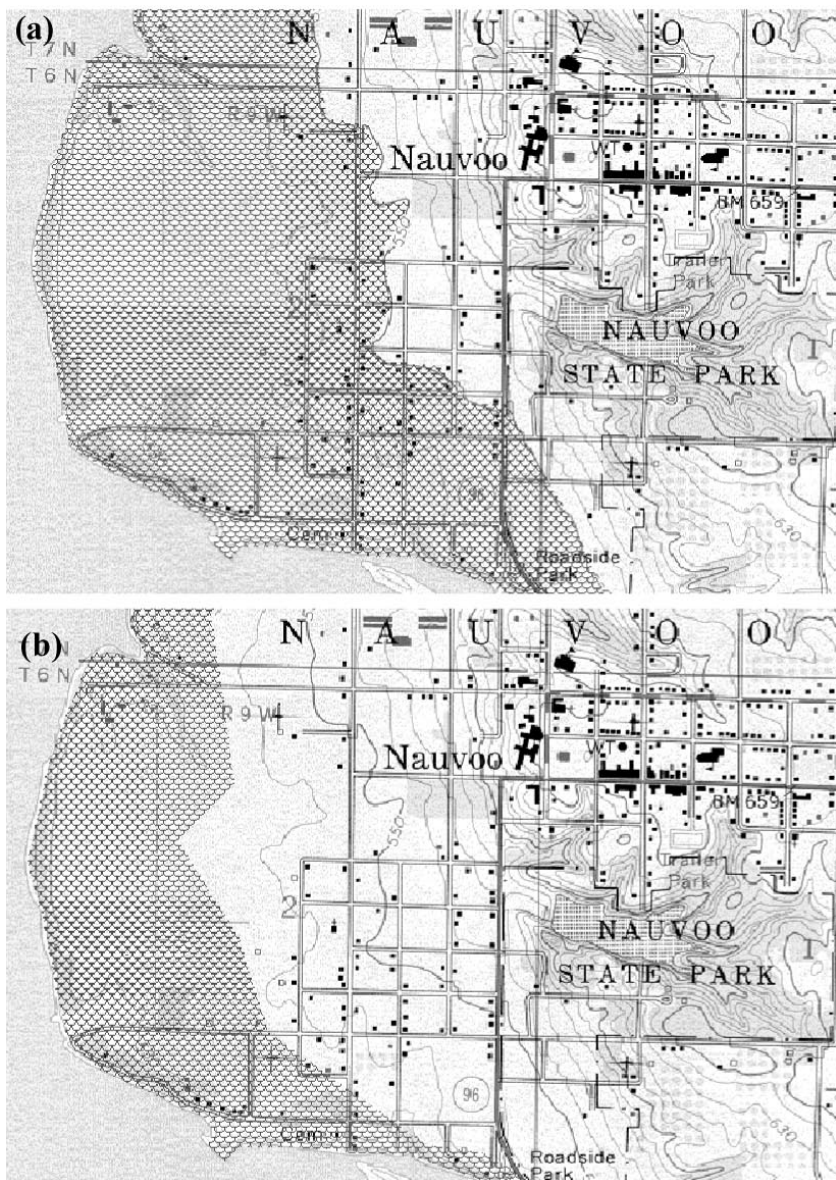


FIG. 23. Map of the flats in Nauvoo showing the extent of the zone where the groundwater would equal or exceed the ground surface elevation (a) before and (b) after construction of the Durphy Steet drain.

Twenty-first-century engineering analysis methods shed much light on the great industry and wisdom of the nineteenth-century Mormon settlers in constructing the Durphy Street drain. Nevertheless, persistent work was still required to dig additional ditches and drain the land in the face of adverse geology and topography. Their communal and individual efforts to transform swampy land covered with dense underbrush into Nauvoo, the City Beautiful, stand as a monument to the extraordinary ingenuity of these people.

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Not for Tourists

Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith:
Rough Stone Rolling*

David J. Whittaker

In reading this volume¹ I have imagined that its author, Richard Lyman Bushman, early in his academic career, found himself trolling through the literary remains of early Mormonism in a way similar to Edward Gibbon, as the latter wandered among the physical remains of the Forum in Rome in October 1774. Gibbon must have seen the tourists to the ancient city, interested only in carrying away a stone or two as a reminder of their visit, with little desire to probe or understand Rome's rich history. In his *Memoirs*, Gibbon spoke about the qualities he felt were needed for the real traveler, including a restless curiosity, an interest in life not studied in the closet, and a "flexible temper which can assimilate itself to every tone of society."²

Like Gibbon, Bushman could not remain a tourist, nor could he be satisfied with just walking among the remains of something older and no longer alive. He would have to bring the past to life, not for entertainment's sake or as a museum relic, but as a living, dynamic force. While Gibbon would treat the decline and fall of Rome, Bushman would treat the rise and vitality of a major religion, and especially its founder.

Tourists, as Daniel Boorstin reminds us, seldom travel to leave the familiar behind. Hence, the "packaged tour," which is usually led by a guide with a memorized monologue that is guaranteed to insulate one from the reality of another culture or time while providing all the amenities of home. Tourists travel to be entertained and often to be reassured that their home world is, after all, really the best. But "travel," as Boorstin reminds us, which "was originally the same word as 'travail,'" is an activity that requires something laborious or troublesome. The traveler is an

active person at work. Where the tourist has become passive, the traveler is active.³

Despite its obvious limitations, the traveler metaphor is useful when addressing Mormon historical studies. As all tourists quickly learn, travel is never ideal: the weather may be bad; museum pieces may be away on loan; not all that is seen is self-interpreting; docents and tour guides have their own slants and sometimes make mistakes; and some trips turn out to be more rewarding than others. And while we all may begin as historical tourists, the danger is that any biography or historical treatise can easily become a commodity marketed only to tourists, and offer little of lasting value. Ultimately, the risk is that historical study itself can easily become more of a spectator sport than a discipline demanding active intellectual participation. If Latter-day Saint histories and biographies only reassure and comfort their readers, they will never venture into new worlds or offer better ways of seeing the world they inhabit; they will simply pander to the popular rather than lead the reader into areas that produce new insights and encourage spiritual growth.

Bushman's biography is probably not for the historical tourist. For those wanting easy answers or emotional reassurances of a simple faith, they should probably stick with the older or safer biographies, the kind of studies that removed Mormonism from its historical and informational environment. But if you are willing to become a traveler, willing to open yourself up to new perspectives, to travel into and through the life and times of Joseph Smith, then this is a study you will want to read and have as a resource in your library.

The Daunting Task of Writing a Joseph Smith Biography

The work of a biographer, James Boswell warned long ago, is a "presumptuous task." His great work, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, was a monumental accomplishment based on personal knowledge, close observation, acquaintance with, and encouragement from his subject. But Boswell still worried that his portrait of Johnson was incomplete and inadequate to fully convey the breadth and depth of Johnson's life and thought. The challenge to a modern biographer of Joseph Smith is even greater.

Richard Lyman Bushman is not the first to prepare a full-length biography of Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–1844),⁴ but he brings to this task a deep preparation from his degrees at Harvard University and a lifetime of teaching early American history at such schools as Brigham Young University, Boston University, the University of Delaware, and, most recently, Columbia University (as the Gouverneur Morris Professor of History).

In addition to authoring a number of books—one of which received the prestigious Bancroft Prize⁵—and a number of shorter studies of Joseph Smith,⁶ he has served in the LDS Church as a bishop, stake president, and patriarch. Thus he brings a long apprenticeship in worlds both sacred and secular to his work.

Bushman's strength was augmented by his collaborator, Jed Woodworth, a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Woodworth brought a valuable familiarity with Mormon history and its archival sources to the project. Bushman writes that Woodworth “checked my text against the sources, tested my claims, elaborated ideas, and enriched the scholarship” (xxiii).

Without purporting to give the final word on the subject, *Rough Stone Rolling* is clearly the most professional Joseph Smith biography to date, and it will likely remain so for several years to come.⁷ Its presentation is generally well researched in the contemporaneous sources and is well informed by much current scholarship. It is a complex and finely nuanced study of Mormonism's founder and founding years, a study that is sensitive to the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in the formation of a new religion. The subtitle of the book, and name by which it will largely be referred, is an excerpt from a sermon delivered by Joseph Smith on May 21, 1843: “[I am like a] rough stone rolling down hill.” Willard Richards recorded only the words “rough stone rolling down hill.” The complete-sentence version was created by the Historian's Office staff and printed in the multivolume *History of the Church*. Bushman acknowledges this textual history in the book's front matter when he brackets the nonscribal words “I am like a” in the reproduction of the quote. In saying he was “rough,” Joseph sought to differentiate himself from the polished, academy-trained theologians and ministers of his day. Joseph commented that, like Jesus, he was from humble beginnings in a noncosmopolitan village.

The volume itself consists of twenty-nine chapters plus a prologue and an epilogue. Its presentation is chronological, with six chapters devoted to the New England and New York period (1805–1831), fourteen chapters on the Ohio and Missouri period (1831–1838), and seven chapters to the Illinois period (1839–1844). The earliest chapters draw heavily upon his previous study, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (1984), and are thus a little dated, failing, for example, to make use of work published since then such as Don Enders's ongoing research on the Smith family. But these chapters present a fine overview of the family background and early religious experiences of Joseph Smith. One of the keys to understanding Joseph Smith, which is a major subtheme of *Rough Stone Rolling*, is to trace his constant yearning for family and kin.

In fact, *Rough Stone Rolling* could be considered the most consolidating study in Mormon history since Leonard J. Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom* (1958). As the Arrington volume was both a culmination and summation of a wide range of scholarship to 1958, Bushman's volume provides the same kind of contribution to LDS scholarship to 2005, the bicentennial of Joseph Smith's birth. But both volumes are more, because each provides insightful perspectives on their subjects and both point the way to further work.

To accomplish his goal, Bushman, or anyone who would comprehend Joseph Smith, must face and try to overcome at least three realities in Mormon history:

1. He or she must navigate the Mormon folk memory of Joseph Smith, images that are reinforced (and thus perpetuated) in Sunday School and in other church classes. Any presentation that assumes Joseph Smith walked out of the grove in 1820 a polished stone will have a very difficult time dealing with the historical record or Joseph's own autobiographical statements. By the end of the nineteenth century, the generation that knew Joseph Smith was almost gone, and with them went a major check on the accuracy of the historical memory. At the same time, the visual portrayals and popular works on the early Church were simplifying and smoothing out the rough edges. Even B. H. Roberts, when he edited the *History of the Church* in the early years of the twentieth century, moved to modernize the language and spelling as well as to ameliorate some of the reports of Joseph's personal habits.

2. The modern scholar must conquer the huge secondary literature on Joseph Smith and early Mormon history and thought. Bibliographies that guide the researcher to this material are available, but they can be intimidating to the beginning student.⁸ This work is not just a problem of quantity, for the modern student must navigate a historical literature that is highly polemical. Joseph Smith is not a person that people are neutral about, and this has been so from the earliest years of the Church. Hence, one's religious assumptions will always influence the work of reconstructing the past.

The scholarly handling of religious topics is always a charged problem. The vocabulary is charged, and the assumptions of faith (or lack thereof) that always accompany such a work are difficult to address. In a "truth-in-advertising," upfront way, Bushman makes his assumptions of faith clear to his readers when he says that he is a believer (xix). The difficult part of being a believing author is having to deal with the specifics, not the generalities. Topics always become complicated by the textual changes to the revelations and a closer examination of the cultural environment.

Here Bushman leads the reader into considering the possible horizontal and vertical dimensions of the revelatory process. But such an approach will always be unsatisfactory to those who refuse to allow the possibility of communication from the heavens, and it will also bother those who see the process as entirely divorced from the earthly.

3. Finally, and most importantly, the student must work though the serious challenges that face any researcher who uses manuscripts containing material created during Joseph Smith's lifetime. While there is not always as much information as historians would like, there is enough to keep students occupied for a long time. The real challenge, one currently being addressed by the editors of the forthcoming multivolume Joseph Smith Papers project, is the difficulty in dealing with records that are often in the handwriting of other people, have been filtered through at least one other mind, and are thus at least once removed from the Prophet himself.

The Challenge of Handling the Joseph Smith Sources

To get a sense of these challenges of comprehensively and accurately recovering the history of Joseph Smith from the extensive historical documents,⁹ consider the issues arising in each of the following record categories that are being used to organize and publish the Joseph Smith Papers:

Journals. In the Church Archives in Salt Lake City are ten volumes containing the journals of Joseph Smith. They comprise 1,587 manuscript pages, but of these pages, only 31 contain holographic or personal writing of Joseph Smith, and only about 250 additional pages were probably dictated by Joseph Smith to his scribes. That means the remaining 1,306 pages (or about 80 percent of the total) are primarily the work of four men whom Joseph Smith appointed to keep his journals for him: William Clayton, James Mulholland, Willard Richards, and George W. Robinson. Such a practice was common at the time, but it does mean that much of the content of the Prophet's journals are the products of other men's work and minds and are thus one step removed from the Prophet himself. And, the number of days for which entries could have been made (from November 27, 1832, when the first journal entry was made, until Joseph's death on June 27, 1844) total 4,229, but the extant journals contain entries for only 1,228 days (or about 25 percent of the possible total days), thus leaving large gaps in the daily record of the Prophet's life.¹⁰

Sermons and Discourses. Just what records do we have of Joseph's sermons? Dean Jessee has summarized the challenges in dealing with the public discourses of Joseph Smith:

During the last eighteen months of his life, the Prophet is known to have given 78 public addresses, or an average of a little more than one a week.

Assuming conservatively that he averaged 30 speeches a year during earlier years, the total discourses of his public ministry (1830–44) would number about 450. Available sources, however, identify only about 250 discourses, and his published history gives reasonably adequate summaries of only about one-fifth of these. Not until the last eighteen months of his life were the Prophet's speeches reported with reasonable consistency. Of the 52 addresses reported in some detail in his history, 35 date from that time period. The remaining 17 average about two a year between 1834 and 1842. These figures suggest that probably not more than one in ten of Joseph Smith's discourses were recorded, and most of these come from the last three years of his life.¹¹

Of the 52 extant reports, Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff recorded 40 of them. Those who reported Joseph Smith's speeches did not know shorthand. (Even when George D. Watt began to advertise for his classes in shorthand in Nauvoo, it does not appear that Joseph sent any of his scribes or clerks to learn the system). To record longhand the comments as a speaker spoke was a slow process and clearly an incomplete one, and thus the handwritten record is a serious limitation on our attempts to understand the Prophet.

Revelations. There are about 100 extant manuscripts of revelations received through Joseph Smith in addition to the Book of Mormon, the Book of Moses (which includes materials from Enoch), the Book of Abraham, and Joseph Smith's revisions of the Bible. These date from July 1828 to November 1843. There are, in addition to the revelations printed in the Doctrine and Covenants, about 60 other known revelations, of which texts are extant for about 30. Thus the total number of known revelations is about 170. These provide the texts for the biographer to examine and then relate to Joseph Smith's life. But the greater challenge is to understand the process of revelation behind these texts and their emendations through time, a process that the Prophet consistently refused to discuss in detail. But Bushman understands the difference between revelation and the record of revelation, and he also knows that revelatory texts are best understood from within the religious community that produced them.

Correspondence. There are approximately 308 extant letters written by Joseph and 380 of which he was the recipient. These letters cover the Prophet's whole ministry, and treat just about every conceivable subject—but few are ordinary. Joseph's letters convey his strength of leadership, his prophetic mantle, and his concerns over his family and his people. But they also convey his doubts, his loneliness, his deep religiosity, and his tendency toward melancholy. Again, Bushman has mined this rich source to provide a deeply personal interpretation of Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith's History. On the day the Church was officially organized, April 6, 1830, the first verse of the first formal revelation received that day instructed, "Behold, there shall be a record kept" (D&C 21:1). All of Joseph's attempts to keep a record of both his own life and the Church he presided over date from that commandment, even though it took years to understand who would keep the record and what would go into it. From the early instructions to John Whitmer (D&C 47) to the later counsel to the whole Church to create accounts of their experiences and losses in Missouri (D&C 123), direction gradually came. Joseph also moved to keep his own history. His seriousness about record keeping is illustrated in this example from an experience of November 7, 1843:

Mr. Cole moved the tables back into the hall, when [Willard] Richards and [William W.] Phelps [who were clerks working on the history] called to report that the noise in the school disturbed them in the progress of writing the History. I gave orders that Cole must look out for another place, as the history must continue and not be disturbed, as there are but few subjects that I have felt a greater anxiety about than my history, which has been a very difficult task, on account of the death of my best clerks and the apostasy of others, and the stealing of records by John Whitmer, Cyrus Smalling and others.¹²

Thus, one of the great projects begun under the Prophet's directions, but not finished until years after his death, was the preparation of a multi-volume "History of the Church," or, in its manuscript title, "History of Joseph Smith." It runs to 2,300 pages in six manuscript volumes. There were eleven principal scribes and clerks who worked on the project. Howard Coray, one of the clerks, recalled the process or methodology used to create this history: "The Prophet was to furnish all the materials; and our business, was not only to combine, and arrange in cronological [*sic*] order, but to spread out or amplify not a little, in as good historical style as may be."¹³

The work on the history began on April 27, 1838,¹⁴ and was finished on November 6, 1856, twelve years after the Prophet's death (it was compiled only up to August 5, 1838, when Joseph was killed in June 1844). The history's featured text was Joseph Smith's journals, which obviously helped keep the focus on him. The project was mostly a kind of documentary scrapbook of the early Church over which Joseph presided. In its published form, it is often referred to as the "Documentary" History of the Church. So anxious was Joseph that his people have access to it that it began to appear in serialized form in the Nauvoo *Times and Seasons* in March 1842, and it was reprinted in the Church's British publication *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, and later in the *Deseret News*.

At the end of the nineteenth century, first George Q. Cannon (d. 1901) and finally B. H. Roberts received permission to gather this history into a multivolume format. It is this version (revised in 1956) we know today. Roberts added to the problems by placing on the title pages the words “By Joseph Smith Himself,” which distorted and thus complicated modern attempts to either understand or use this important record.

Additional Records. A full discussion of the records of Joseph’s life must include the various institutional record books of the organizations the Prophet played a key role in establishing and directing—for example, the Kirtland High Council Minute Book, 1832–1837; the Far West Record (Conference Minutes and Record Book), 1830–1844; the Relief Society Minutes, Nauvoo, 1842–1844; and the Nauvoo Legion Minute Book, 1841–1844. And not to be neglected are the Joseph Smith legal papers (there are about 180 known lawsuits, about 70 of which related directly to the Prophet, not to mention the voluminous land and financial records); printed sources, both Mormon and non-Mormon (newspapers, books, travel accounts, pamphlets); personal records and sermons of the people who knew Joseph Smith and left us a record of their interactions with him (for example, Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and William Clayton); and the large body of reminiscences spoken and recorded years later, which reveal the emergence of Joseph Smith in Mormon folk memory and therefore must be used with some degree of caution.

These challenges and resources make it clear that no biography of Joseph Smith is ever likely to be worthy of the accolade “definitive.” These difficulties also explain why all biographers must select an approach in leading travelers on a tour through such materials.

A Cultural Religious Approach

Bushman’s study basically takes the approach of a cultural biography. It is a serious work that tries to situate Joseph Smith in his culture and time. Bushman regularly uses selected contemporary records, movements, and persons to provide insights into and comparisons with Joseph Smith. Cultural biographers use contextual materials to help evaluate the documentary record. The process is somewhat similar to the peeling of an onion. The real Joseph Smith is down in there somewhere, but many layers must be peeled back in the attempt to get closer to him.

Bushman’s biography does just that. The Joseph Smith presented here is not a static, perfected individual, but rather a person who grows, changes, has real spiritual experiences, feels deeply about his calling, and has to learn

from his revelations. Above all, this biographical study is a deep meditation on early Mormon thought, growing out of the known sources.

Bushman is not hesitant to point out questions about the date of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood (he argues for a post-April 1830 date). He can treat Joseph as a man of deep feelings with an occasional temper, who did not like to be crossed by his followers but was also quick to forgive. He presents his views about the origins of Joseph's plural marriage in Kirtland (323–25), expansion of the practice in Nauvoo (437–46), and its destructive impact on his marriage to Emma (490–99); for many, this obscure subject is the most sensitive and morally challenging aspect of Joseph's life.

Rough Stone Rolling offers an explanation of Joseph Smith that situates him in his world but that allows for real religious experiences and motivation in his life. As Bushman unfolds this life story, he also answers a larger question: what was there in Joseph Smith's thought and teachings that assured its survival and growth when most contemporary religions hardly lived past their founder's death? Thus, embedded throughout the narrative are thoughtful moments of exegesis that connect Joseph Smith to his biblical heritage, to a deeply religious family, to the larger field of religious studies, and to the internal coherence of Mormon thought, thereby providing the reader with insights into the nature of the Latter-day Saint religious experience itself. Some of this seems to be an internal dialogue the author is having with himself, but most of the time Bushman is trying to help the serious traveler understand "a prophet of puzzling complexity" (143).

Revelation is the key that Bushman uses most often to elucidate Joseph Smith's life. For Joseph, revelation was both horizontal and vertical; it surely reached up into the heavens, but it also looked out into the environment, and he invited everyone to share in these experiences. In chapter 4, Bushman provides a fine discussion on the meaning and place of the Book of Mormon in Church history. Throughout the volume he remains aware of the role of the Book of Mormon and other scriptures in providing windows into Joseph Smith's religious views. While he does not say it outright, Bushman provides reasons for seeing Joseph's prophetic calling as more involved in revealing the past than in predicting the future. But he does provide plenty of evidence that Joseph was constantly striving to connect the modern house of Israel with both ancient Israel and early Christianity. Whether Joseph was establishing Zion or the kingdom of God, he saw himself as gathering people and ideas into cities where Saints could be made. At its core, his religious genius was to be able to bring old worlds into the new lives of his followers.

Thus, for example, in his discussion of Freemasonry, Bushman shows Joseph's awareness of the movement and its ritual forms but shows that Joseph "had a green thumb for growing ideas from tiny seeds" (449) and thus went beyond what the Masons offered. Here Joseph

turned the materials to his own use. The Masonic elements that appeared in the temple endowment were embedded in a distinctive context—the Creation instead of the Temple of Solomon, exaltation rather than fraternity, God and Christ, not the Worshipful Master. Temple covenants bound people to God rather than to each other. (450)

For Joseph, these rituals stabilized and perpetuated the deepest purposes of the endowment and keys of sealing that were revealed earlier in 1836 in Kirtland (449–51).

The religious richness of this cultural biography can hardly be more than suggested in any short review. Bushman's discussion of the religious path of Joseph Smith from a village seer to a translator to a called prophet offers an insightful analysis that allows the folk religions of his New England background to prepare the young boy for greater callings (48–52, 54, 127–31). Bushman's insightful tracing of the Church's institutional growth also offers new insights to the role of councils and conferences in the early Church (251–58). He specifically argues that almost all of Joseph Smith's "major theological innovations involved the creation of institutions" and that he "thought institutionally more than any other visionary of his time, and the survival of his movement can largely be attributed to this gift" (251).

Bushman writes as a believing Latter-day Saint, and occasionally he stops short when dealing with some of the more problematic episodes of the Prophet's life. His study will not please everyone, but he has understood that what attracts people to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that its founding narrative weaves a coherent story that continues to make sense to people worldwide. Because of this, the volume left me wishing it could have come out as a longer, two-volume work.

In his great and, as it turned out, last general conference address (April 7, 1844), Joseph Smith said something that should give us all pause: "You don't know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot tell it: I shall never undertake it. I don't blame any one for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I would not have believed it myself."¹⁵

Perhaps Joseph Smith was saying the same thing that Mark Twain later noted. In a fragment found among his autobiographical writings, Mark Twain further pondered the real challenge of telling a person's life story:

What a wee little part of a person's life are his acts and his words! His real life is led in his head and is known to none but himself. All day long, and every day, the mill of his brain is grinding, and his thoughts, not those other things, are his history. His acts and his words are merely the visible, thin crust of his world, with its scattered snow summits and its vacant wastes of water—and they are so trifling a part of his bulk! a mere skin enveloping it. The mass of him is hidden—it and its volcanic fires that toss and boil, and never rest, night nor day. These are his life, and they are not written, and cannot be written. Every day would make a whole book of eighty thousand words—three hundred and sixty-five books a year. Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man—the biography of the man himself cannot be written.¹⁶

Richard Bushman has provided a very good mapping of the life, thought, and experience of Joseph Smith. Joseph himself gives us fair warning in our continuing journey to seek a better understanding of him and the genesis of Mormonism. The richness and rigors of that pursuit assure us that the journey will be best undertaken by serious travelers, not casual tourists.

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- Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945);
- Norma J. Fischer, *Portrait of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960);
- John J. Stewart, *Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1966);
- Carl Lamson Carmer, *The Farm Boy and the Angel* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970);
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- William D. Morain, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998);
- Heidi S. Swinton, *American Prophet: The Story of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1999);
- Robert V. Remini, *Joseph Smith* (New York: Viking, 2002);
- Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2004); and
- Richard Lloyd Dewey, *Joseph Smith: A Biography* (Arlington, Va.: Stratford Books, 2005).

For discussions of biographies of Joseph Smith, see Richard Lyman Bushman, “A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-First Century,” in Richard Lyman Bushman, *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 275 n. 6; and Richard Lyman Bushman, “Joseph Smith’s Many Histories,” in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2006), 3–20.

5. Bushman’s best-known publications include *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992); *King and People in Provincial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); and *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut (1690–1765)* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1967), winner of the Bancroft Prize—one of three in 1968 for works of American history and/or diplomacy that are awarded annually by Columbia University in honor of historian Fredric Bancroft.

6. See “Joseph Smith and Culture,” a series of eight essays in Bushman, *Believing History*, 143–278.

7. It is not surprising that *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* won the “best book of 2005” award from the Mormon History Association.

8. A useful bibliography, whose title is absent from Bushman's bibliography, is James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

9. For more on the sources of Joseph Smith biography, see Dean C. Jessee, "Sources for the Study of Joseph Smith," in *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 7–28; and David J. Whittaker, "Joseph Smith in Recent Research: A Selected Bibliography," in Whittaker, *Mormon Americana*, 29–44. For an extended bibliography of writings on Joseph Smith, see Davis Bitton, *Images of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1996), 171–96.

10. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–1992), 2:xxii–xxiii.

11. Dean C. Jessee, "Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (1991): 23. Jessee notes that the surviving records "do not measure up to the stature of the life they chronicle" (22).

12. 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), 6:66; see also 2:198–99; 4:470; 6:409 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

13. Howard Coray, "Autobiography," ed. Dean C. Jessee, *BYU Studies* 17, no. 3 (1977): 346.

14. Joseph Smith Journal, April 27, 1838, in "General" Record Book, 1838, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

15. *History of the Church*, 6:317. In an earlier moment of self reflection, on April 6, 1843, Joseph told a general conference, "If I had not actually got into this work and been called of God, I would back out. But I cannot back out: I have no doubt of the truth." *History of the Church*, 5:336.

16. *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, with an introduction by Albert Bigelow Paine, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1924), 1:[xviii]. Twain's comments were originally called to my attention by William G. Hartley.

Jaime Lara. *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain.*

Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004

Reviewed by Allen J. Christenson

In this outstanding new contribution to the scholarship of the immediate post-contact world of New Spain (modern-day Mexico), Jaime Lara goes a long way in correcting the general misperception among many researchers in the field that the introduction of Roman Catholicism in the New World ended traditional indigenous culture and theology. For instance, in a paper pointedly titled "On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of Precolumbian Art," George Kubler asserted that indigenous buildings, statues, paintings, and tools were so inextricably linked to the cultures that produced them that they became primary targets for destruction and replacement with more acceptable art forms:

In the sixteenth century the rush to European conventions of representation and building, by colonists and Indians alike, precluded any real continuation of native traditions in art and architecture. In the seventeenth century, so much had been forgotten, and the extirpation of native observances by the religious authorities was so vigorous, that the last gasps of the bearers of Indian rituals and manners expired unheard.¹

Lara rightly challenges Kubler's position, giving extensive evidence that although the introduction of Spanish rule and Christianity resulted in the abrupt suppression of indigenous art styles and many of its more public religious institutions such as human sacrifice, polygamy, and the worship of pre-Columbian stone images, much less of the old indigenous theology was destroyed than has been generally assumed. He asserts that, rather than being destroyed, authentic pre-Columbian rituals, symbols, and core elements of their theology survived by giving them new Christian names and metaphors. Lara suggests that this was not a simple process of syncretization, a haphazard blending of two cultures, but rather what he calls a "guided syncretism or synthesization" (10) in which the inhabitants of the New World actively selected those elements of Roman Catholicism that made sense to them within their own indigenous theology and

ignored those elements that did not. Too often in the past, scholars have divided themselves into two opposing camps—those who see indigenous society as an artifact of the pre-Columbian era, and those who see indigenous society as an artifact of the early colonial Christian eras. Both of these positions assume that indigenous people are incapable of assimilating new ideas without abandoning their own identity.

Following the conquest of the Aztec empire, centered at Tenochtitlan, the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés requested mendicant priests of the Franciscan and Dominican orders to commence teaching and baptizing the inhabitants of the New World. The first twelve priests arrived in the spring of 1524 under the leadership of Fr. Martín de Valencia. These twelve Franciscan monks, taking the title of apostles, were fired with a fervent millenarian zeal, seeking to establish a New Jerusalem in Mexico and Central America that would prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ, an event they believed to be imminent. They immediately set about baptizing the indigenous people of Mesoamerica by the tens of thousands, beginning with the surviving members of the old nobility. It is unlikely, however, that the Aztecs and Maya understood baptism as a sweeping renunciation of their ancient deities. As Cervantes wrote, “The initial enthusiasm of the Indians to accept Christianity had more to do with the Mesoamerican tradition of incorporating alien elements into their religion than with any conviction about the exclusivist claims of the Christian faith.”²

Lara gives abundant evidence that the early Franciscan missionaries saw the inhabitants of the New World as children of Israel and that they were much like “soft wax” ready to receive the seal of Christ upon them if only given the opportunity to be taught. Many held to the doctrine that Mesoamericans were descendents of the lost ten tribes, or that Aztec traditions of Quetzalcoatl represented vague recollections of an ancient visit by St. Thomas the Apostle, who they believed to have visited the New World following the death of Christ (68). Early missionary priests (including many of their best writers such as Durán, Motolinía, Torquemada, and Mendieta) wrote that Aztec temples were likely patterned after Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem with two sanctuaries separated by a veil, the inner “Holy of Holies” being visited only by a high priest when he conducted blood sacrifices.

Mendicant priests constructed temple complexes, often using the stones salvaged from destroyed pre-Columbian temples, that replicated the appearance and organization of the temple of New Jerusalem as described in scripture. Thus, at Huejotzingo, the friars built, with labor from the indigenous people, a monastery complex that included a highly

sophisticated hydraulic system of clay pipes, reservoirs, and aqueducts that brought water to a series of fountains that flowed to the four cardinal directions in emulation of the temple described in Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Revelation 22:2 (140–41). Yet at the same time, the Aztecs who helped to construct such complexes did not remain passive recipients of Christian and European culture. Stones from pre-Columbian temples and deity images were reused not so much because they were readily available building materials, but because they bore the living and animate souls of the Aztecs' ancient deities and ancestors. Crosses were carved to represent not crucifixes but pre-Columbian notions of the tree of life. Fountains were placed at the center of courtyards and cloisters as metaphors for the waters of creation that indigenous peoples believed to occupy the center of the world. In some cases, these symbols resonated with European Christianity. In other cases, they did not.

While the practice of traditional Mayan religion ceased to be a state function after the Spanish Conquest, many public ceremonies, such as ritual dance performances, survived. In many cases, elements of ancient pre-Columbian ritual dances and ceremonies were even encouraged by the Franciscan missionaries as a means of attracting potential converts. But such strategies of Christian appropriation actually fostered the survival of preconquest rituals and theology.

Fuentes y Guzmán wrote that although the Maya acknowledged the Christian saints during confraternity dances, they continued nevertheless to honor their pre-Columbian gods:

They celebrate today the festivities of the saints; dancing around with the tenacity, which we shall see, adorned with the same regalia, which they used in that deluded time [before the conquest]. . . .³

They dance singing the praises of the saint, which they celebrate, but in the prohibited dances they sing the histories and deeds of their ancestors and false gods.⁴

Yet Roman Catholic and other European elements in early Aztec and Mayan ritual practices were not a mask to hide an ancient and pristine indigenous worldview. The two religious systems are not separable, and any attempt to distinguish between the two would ultimately lead to an artificial construct that is foreign to indigenous experience and understanding.

Lara's stated objectives for this book were to correct the general misperception among scholars of the interaction between Spanish missionaries and the indigenous population of the New World in the sixteenth century, claiming that the interaction was much more complex and dynamic in both worlds than has been generally assumed. In this he has done a masterful job. He also aims to correct the tendency in past research

to ignore native voices and instead encourages scholars to look in meaningful ways at the traditional theology of all of Mesoamerica, particularly the Aztecs/Mexica and the Maya. Most of the text addresses the first goal, leaving the second goal less developed than the first. The book is overwhelmingly Mexica-centric, and Lara's exploration of indigenous theology is mostly descriptive, with few references to indigenous literature in which native writers might speak with their own voices.

Overall, this elegantly illustrated book is a welcome and important contribution to our understanding of the post-conquest world of Mesoamerica. Lara helps the reader understand that indigenous people have the capacity to change while maintaining their identity. The Aztecs and Maya adapted to their changing world by interpreting those changes in uniquely Mesoamerican ways. A young traditionalist Mayan priest once told me, "As the old people say, when the Spaniards came they broke off many of our branches. They even burned the trunk. But we will never die because the roots have power. We draw strength from the ancestors who live in our blood. If we as a people ignore our roots, we will all die."

Aztecs and Maya did not abandon their identities by accepting elements of foreign ideas in their worship. Nor are these Christian elements just a superficial gilding of Roman Catholicism to hide their "true" indigenous nature. The Maya in particular have adapted while keeping their identity for thousands of years, from Olmec beginnings, to Teotihuacan, to so-called "Toltec" influences, to contact with the Mexica of central Mexico. The capacity of indigenous people to change while maintaining their identity and core ideology characterizes much of the history of Mesoamerican culture. This capacity is a source of great comfort in the face of a modern world that is often cruel and ever-changing.

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1. George Kubler, "On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of Precolumbian Art," in *Studies in Ancient American and European Art: The Collected Essays of George Kubler*, ed. Thomas F. Reese (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 66.

2. Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 42.

3. Don Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, *Obras Históricas de Don Francisco Antonio y Guzmán*, ed. Carmel Sáenz de Santa María, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1969), 77.

4. Fuentes y Guzmán, *Obras Históricas*, 217.

Jeffery E. Sells, ed. *God and Country: Politics in Utah*.

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005

Reviewed by Jacob W. Olmstead

In this volume, editor Jeffery E. Sells, former associate priest at the Cathedral of St. Mark in Salt Lake City and current rector of St. David of Wales Church in Shelton, Washington, has assembled an impressive array of legal, religious, and historical scholars along with political and community leaders to contribute essays to a “multi-faceted scholarly investigation of the issues” accompanying the overshadowing political presence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah (xi). The handsome dust jacket, depicting Brigham Young wearing the cupola of the state capital as a crown, cleverly depicts the book’s underlying position. Many authors in this volume argue that Utah functions as a theocracy in a nation where the separation of church and state is sacrosanct; the arguable breach of the First Amendment in Utah is particularly repugnant to those who find themselves outside the Mormon and Republican majority. *God and Country* is primarily intended to represent the views of the religious and political minorities in Utah who feel disenfranchised because the political system is dominated by Mormons. Though not advocating that the LDS Church or any other sect should have no influence on politics in Utah, Sells asserts the essays contained in *God and Country* are intended to offer suggestions for the future interaction of religion and politics.

The essays are divided into two sections. Part one comprises primarily historical treatments of the development of the First Amendment and Utah’s political past. In part two, the essays are geared toward identifying “the social consequences of religious dominance” (vi). As with any volume containing contributions from numerous authors, the quality and relevance of the scholarship varies from essay to essay. Because this tome contains some twenty contributors, I shall discuss only examples that are indicative of the strengths and weaknesses of this compilation.

In part one, the essays authored by notable Mormon historians Jan Shipps, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Indiana University–

Purdue University at Indianapolis, and D. Michael Quinn, recent Beinecke Senior Fellow at Yale University, will likely be of most interest to scholars familiar with Utah's political history. Shipps's essay, "The Persistent Pattern of Establishment in Mormon Land," poses a new orientation for evaluating the conflict between the Mormon theocracy and the federal government during the nineteenth century. She argues that both the Mormons in Utah and the Protestant-based civil religion in America can be viewed in relation to each other as conflicting *de facto* religious establishments. For Shipps, the Reed Smoot hearing is the best example and culmination of this nineteenth-century conflict. Because the Protestant establishment dissipated after World War I, Shipps suggests the Church is allowed to go unchecked in Utah. With the Mormon establishment tied to Salt Lake City, she ultimately suggests that, although the Church is growing nationally and internationally, its power to influence politics will likely not expand beyond the Mormon heartland. Though compelling, the approach outlined in her essay is only a research itinerary and not a fully developed analysis.

Taking the opposite viewpoint, Quinn, in "Exporting Utah's Theocracy Since 1975: Mormon Organizational Behavior and America's Culture Wars," argues that the Mormon theocracy is expanding its reach beyond Utah into a number of western states. Citing the LDS efforts to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s as a model for LDS political mobilization, Quinn claims that the Church has continued to manipulate politics in a number of instances since that time. These cases include issues such as pornography, same-sex marriage, and selected state lotteries in Oklahoma, California, Idaho, Hawaii, Colorado, Alaska, Nebraska, and Texas. The greatest weakness of Quinn's essay is his methodology. Rather than drawing upon source materials documenting Mormon political action, Quinn infers hierarchical orchestration based upon the Church's organizational structure coupled with the voting pattern and political actions of Mormons at the regional level. In addition, the use of charged language such as "political hysteria," "plausible denial," and "homophobia" to describe the actions and motivations of the LDS leadership is also distracting (133, 138, 139).

The other essays in part one will provide those unfamiliar with the history of the First Amendment and Utah's political history with some valuable insight, but most offer little original scholarship and are not heavily grounded in primary source material. For example, the essay by television journalist Rod Decker, titled "The LDS Church and Utah Politics: Five Stories and Some Observations," is devoted to offering various episodes of the Church's encounter with politics since the 1890s. These

included Moses Thatcher's 1895 senatorial campaign, Reed Smoot and the Federal Bunch's support of Prohibition in 1916, Utah's support of Prohibition and the New Deal in the 1930s, Legislative Reapportionment in the 1950s, and the Church's 1970s national anti-ERA campaign. Unfortunately, the essay lacks a strong interpretive thesis to direct the reader and give a purpose for the inclusion of each vignette. Moreover, these episodes have been examined elsewhere in much greater depth.

The essay authored by former Utah governor Calvin L. Rampton, "Toleration of Religious Sentiment: Helping It Work from the Governor's Chair," presents a simplistic view of Utah's political past and demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the secondary source literature on the subject. However, the article's value is in the portions describing his personal recollections of the relationship of the LDS Church with state politics during his own administration.

With the exception of University of Utah emeritus law professor Edwin B. Firmage's article "Why Did the Watchdogs Never Bark?" which argues that the moral influence of religion is essential to good governance, most of the essays in part two perceive the LDS Church's influence as a malignant force upon Utah society. Though the chapters in this section are intended to discuss social issues, most contain extensive historical components. These essays are not strongly rooted in primary or secondary research—a major weakness of this section of the book. For example, former owner of the *Salt Lake Tribune* John W. Gallivan Sr.'s essay "The Other Voice in Utah: The Role of the *Salt Lake Tribune*" recounts the historical impact of that newspaper in Utah but draws solely upon O. N. Malmquist's book *The First Hundred Years: A History of the Salt Lake Tribune*.

In at least one instance, additional secondary source research could have resulted in a more refined analysis. In "The Ethics of Marginalization: The Utah Example," John J. Flynn, the Hugh B. Brown Professor of Law Emeritus and Professor of Law at the University of Utah, describes the political marginalization of non-Mormons and non-Republicans in Utah. Flynn's underlying assumption is that the LDS Church is the sole reason for the recent dominance of the Republican Party in Utah. To the contrary, Utah historian Thomas G. Alexander demonstrated that the GOP dominance in Utah has been a far more complex evolution, involving economic and political developments in Utah and the greater American West.¹

Other essays in part two, however, offer valuable and interesting perspectives relating to religion, politics, and society in Utah. For example, "The Only Game in Town: An ACLU Perspective," by Stephen C. Clark, Professor of Law at the University of Utah and former Legal Director of

the ACLU of Utah, offers an insightful account of the ACLU's perceived role in the controversy surrounding the LDS purchase of a segment of Main Street in Salt Lake City in 1999.

In the essays "Living a Jewish Life in Utah Society," and "A Muslim Family in Utah," Frederick L. Wenger, Rabbi Emeritus at Kol Ami, and Maqbool Ahmed, a prominent business owner in Midvale, describe life in Utah from the Jewish and Muslim perspectives respectively. These essays provide a unique, and seldom heard, view of life in the Beehive State. However, discussions of the impact of the LDS Church on politics as it relates to their experiences are limited.

Coming mostly from the political left and from non-Mormon perspectives, *God and Country* succeeds at advancing numerous views and ideas concerning the impact of the LDS Church and its members on politics in Utah. Though some have a polemical tone, the essays generally will expand readers' understanding of both current and historical issues. Unfortunately, the unbalanced scholarship prevents this work from becoming essential reading for scholars interested in Utah's political history.

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1. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Emergence of a Republican Majority in Utah, 1970–1992," in *Politics in the Postwar American West*, ed. Richard Lowitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 260–76.

Glenn L. Pace. *Safe Journey: An African Adventure*.

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003

Emmanuel Abu Kissi. *Walking in the Sand: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ghana*.

Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2004

Reviewed by William C. Olsen

While both volumes were published by LDS Church-owned presses around the same time, and both deal with the experiences of General Authorities primarily in West Africa, it should be emphasized that these are two very different accounts of many of the same places during roughly the same time period. Readers should approach *Walking in the Sand* as a general, and quite thorough, introduction to the details of expansion of the Church in Ghana. It is written by a firsthand witness to many of the early developments and setbacks to Church growth in that region, and it culminates in the dedication of the Accra Temple in 2004. The book is also valuable because the author personally knows most of the local leaders, early missionaries, and General Authorities sent to work in Ghana. This is an insider's view of Church history in Africa from a Ghanaian who witnessed the Church struggle and yet continue to develop its own African identity. On the other hand, *Safe Journey* portrays an outsider's limited understanding of African culture and society in the late twentieth century. Thus, observations about Africa that are not related to Church activity and its members often seem unnecessary and out of place.

Safe Journey pivots between two broad themes: the author's own experiences as a General Authority handling routine activities and crises, and a personal analysis of people, things, and places. The book is most successful with the former theme. The earliest involvement in Africa for Glenn L. Pace, now a General Authority emeritus, came in 1985, when he headed the Church's humanitarian relief efforts to victims of drought in Ethiopia. The drought was unquestionably one of the two worst natural disasters in the last twenty-five years in Africa—the other being the Mozambican flood of 2000. This introduction to catastrophe is significant for the author since the book begins with the same question that a majority of travelers from the Western world ask themselves when visiting or living in the Third World: "Why all this suffering?" Attempts in this book to answer that

question dwell on issues that range from theological to sometimes satirical. The author's personal thinking about the suffering question utilizes several pre-1978 statements on Africans and the priesthood, specifically those addressing the succession of premortal behavior and its implications for mortal station and privilege. Younger readers might not be acquainted with these references, and they may find his reasoning on this issue peculiar or offensive. However, Elder Pace does warn that it is "dangerous to jump to conclusions as to the exact whys and wherefores. If we are not careful we can begin to make judgments about people and their circumstances of birth. . . . Each of us as a daughter or son of Heavenly Parents have received the genes of godhood" (13–15).

Many personally enriching and endearing experiences in Africa took Elder Pace to a broader appreciation of people's individual struggles and commitment to the gospel despite their economic and political restrictions. For example, his experiences in central Africa came during times of civil war and political upheaval. Visits to the Congo were particularly challenging since the political crisis of the mid-1990s, and the change of government in that region demonstrates some of the worst of post-World War II governments in Africa. For Elder Pace, the presence of faithful Latter-day Saints—even when their numbers are in a stark minority—at regular sacrament meetings, missionary training sessions, and special fire-sides indicates the enduring nature of faith, love, and the light of gospel truth that forever changes the soul of an individual under any circumstances.

Our members had been living in the bush to escape the war and were just working their way back to their empty homes. . . . Here I was looking at people who were as impoverished as any of our members in the world, and I was impressed to speak very boldly about tithing. I was surprised with the strong feeling I had that that was the most important thing they could do as they began rebuilding their lives. (190)

The insight into the detail behind the government permission for construction of the Accra Temple is a particularly interesting point of the book. Notes from speeches given by Elder Pace given to Church members in Ghana provide spiritual background to a further comprehension of the great value of the temple in the region.

Our current leaders are stressing the payment of a full tithe. . . . We should be challenging members to get ready to go to the temple. We cannot lower our standards of worthiness. Local bishops cannot compromise standards. The humble Saints throughout the world will be blessed spiritually and temporally as they live the gospel, including the law of the tithe. (206)

His narrative then tells about the work of Church leaders, both local and general, in persuading government officials to grant permission to build a temple on the site that had long before been purchased by the Church. Some of the details of these discussions are given. But, for my own reading, not nearly enough is revealed about the contents of meetings with Jerry Rawlings (president of Ghana) and other top officials who generally operate in this part of the world only under conditions in which one side “passes the envelope” to the other to obtain political favors. It would be interesting to know what sorts of diplomatic steps were taken and how persuasion was gained in such meetings.

One can sense throughout the book the enormous dedication that Elder Pace brings to building the kingdom in Africa: “Never have I felt so dependent upon instant revelation as I did during my years in Africa” (160). His account shows very clearly that he was often operating in uncharted territory, which challenged his common sense of bureaucracy, practical expediency, and familiar resourcefulness. Aside from his valiant efforts and successes during times of civil war, political violence, and natural disaster, Elder Pace attests to his abiding faith in the Lord to make important decisions regarding Church business and individual members.

Outsider perspectives on difficult daily living conditions surface in numerous references to awkward or peculiar experiences that happen to anyone who has lived in the Third World: problems with transportation, food, hot weather, power outages, clean water, bugs, disease, and so forth. These stories will provide the most valuable reading for senior couples who are called to serve or contemplating being missionaries in developing countries.

Walking in the Sand by Elder Emmanuel Kissi is a detailed history of the Church in Ghana. The book sometimes turns autobiographical, but that usually adds to the narrative’s immediacy, as Kissi was one of the early and most important local members in Ghana. He and his family joined the Church in 1979 while he was in England attending medical school. Rather than accept professional employment in Europe or America, Elder Kissi chose to return to Ghana, where he joined the medical staff at the large Korle Bu hospital in Accra and also lectured at the medical college at the university. Eventually he left employment at Korle Bu and, along with his wife, took over operations of a large clinic in an Accra suburb to give medical relief to many who can afford only partial payment of their expenses. The clinic has grown into a small hospital, and Elder Kissi and his spouse, who is a midwife, are still quite active in running the medical operations there. The unit today is called Deseret Hospital.

The great value of this book emerges in recounted discussions between the author and numerous local and general authorities as they try to

organize local wards and stakes. Middle chapters demonstrate both the personal style of early authorities and also the applications of their various individual talents to solve particular problems and administer to a rapidly expanding Church membership in both urban and semi-urban areas. Training issues, administrative concerns, and the stress for accountability in church assignments are part of the narrative. Numerous journal entries give an account of the fledgling congregations in diverse regions:

[On Sunday, 8 May 1988, at Sankubenase Branch conference, there were about] 86 people in attendance. At this time they [had] to meet outside in the back of the [branch president's] home, under a palm-branch bowery, erected mainly for the purpose of keeping the members out of the hot sun or the rain, when they [met] together on the Sabbath day. (151, brackets in original)

Or in another entry:

The next day, Sunday 31 August [1980] we were scheduled to hold a baptismal service in Accra. There was a water shortage so we all went to the Black Star beach for the service. The waves were so powerful out where the water was deep enough [for baptizing] that the waves knocked us off our feet before we could perform the ordinance. Sister Kissi suggested that we form a human chain circle around the [area for the baptism] so as to break the impact of the waves. We were able to baptize all of the candidates[.] We returned to the Mission Home for their confirmations and a Sacrament Meeting. (58, brackets in original)

Walking in the Sand will have a particular appeal for the now numerous North American missionary couples and regular missionaries who have served in Ghana. Elder Kissi cites the names of the first three young North American missionaries who arrived early in 1996. I spoke with these elders in Accra three months after their arrival, and they divulged to me their culture shock and fears.

A broader appeal of the book comes in the chapters dedicated to persecution and ridicule of the LDS Church from other Christian congregations—mostly the pastors of those churches. This persecution culminated in the “Freeze,” in which all proselytizing was banned, missionaries were expelled from the country, and some Church buildings were seized by the government. The Freeze lasted for seventeen months beginning in June 1989. Many members of the Church in Ghana, then and now, see this time as their own personal experience similar to the travails of early Mormon pioneers in Missouri and Illinois. It had a similar purifying effect.

Some of the members yielded to the buffetings of the enemy. Members were ridiculed and called names. Articles against the Latter-day Saint faith were orchestrated in the largely biased media. Some members wandered, and their faith was shaken. Some of them went back to their

former churches with the excuse that they would return if the Freeze was lifted. (239)

And then when the Freeze was lifted, “the joy of the Saints was indescribable. It was like a dream” (239).

Elder Kissi’s prose reveals his Ghanaian English, which is always honest and open. This is another reason why the book has a vernacular feel to it. It demonstrates the gratitude, strength, and faith of a man who has been an insider to Church expansion in a developing country. The value of this book lies in its ability to portray the struggles and events of the Church among some of the first black African members in the continent and in its ability to inspire other missionary couples to be readily engaged in the work. It is good that this book has already seen a second printing in Ghana, where it memorializes among the local Saints the powerful story of their own sands of life.

The publication of both works reviewed here coincided with the dedication of the temple in Accra in early 2004. Similarly, both books recreate the front lines of doing missionary work and living as Latter-day Saints in an environment that is challenging and endearing.

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Jeffrey S. O'Driscoll. *Hyrum Smith: A Life of Integrity*.

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003

Reviewed by C. Gary Bennett

There can be no question that Hyrum Smith is on the “short list” of the most influential leaders in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As Joseph Smith’s faithful elder brother, Associate President of the Church, Patriarch, Apostle, and co-martyr; as the progenitor of two future Church Presidents, Church Patriarchs, Apostles, other Church leaders, and literally thousands of posterity, his life story deserves a better telling than heretofore. Jeffrey O’Driscoll has taken a significant step forward in filling this need.

I found this biography to be thorough and the research, with heavy emphasis placed on primary sources, to be impressive. It became clear that the author had access to both the Church resources and family resources including Hyrum’s journals, letters, and other related materials (“Bibliography,” 405–24). Content that readers might find especially interesting includes Hyrum as one of the eight special witnesses of the Book of Mormon (295); the early experience of Hyrum as a Mason (261–63); the blessing at the time he was called into the presidency of the High Priesthood in 1835, that “if it please thee, and thou desirest thou shalt have the power voluntarily to lay down thy life to glorify God” (112); and the fact that it was Hyrum, not Joseph, who asked John Taylor to sing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief” (362 n. 91). It is clear, too, that as the title of the book declares, O’Driscoll most desires to show Hyrum as a man of integrity. Of course, the scriptural witness of Hyrum’s integrity (D&C 124:15) and Joseph’s own affirmation of it (10–11) are fundamental support for O’Driscoll’s title, but the book also shows that the word of friends and even enemies confirm the biography’s central thesis. The illustrations, maps, and brief chronology of Hyrum’s life in the appendix are helpful in offering a clearer view of him and his work. In his acknowledgments the author states, “Hyrum deserves better than the aggregate of my researching and writing skills” and that it

would be “naïve to consider” this biography as “definitive” (xix). Yet there is much of value here.

The reader comes away from this work knowing much *about* Hyrum but still not really *knowing* the man. Great biography is not merely telling; it must get inside the mind and the heart. This may not have been fully possible because, as O’Driscoll admits, Hyrum’s journals are “frustratingly brief” (61). Joseph Smith also articulated a major challenge in early LDS historiography and biography:

Since I have been engaged in laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I have been prevented in various ways from continuing my journal and history in a manner satisfactory to myself or in justice to the cause. Long imprisonments, vexatious and long-continued law-suits, the treachery of some of my clerks, the death of others, and the poverty of myself and brethren from continued plunder and driving, have prevented my handing down to posterity a connected memorandum of events desirable to all lovers of truth; yet I have continued to keep up a journal in the best manner my circumstances would allow.¹

With all that is said in this book, some significant things remained unsaid. O’Driscoll says little about Hyrum and the succession question. He touches only briefly upon Hyrum’s struggle over plural marriage. He reveals little of Hyrum as a husband or father. Another appendix on Hyrum’s pedigree and posterity would have been helpful.

These missing elements notwithstanding, this book will be a valuable, productive, and enlightening experience for those wishing to know more about Hyrum Smith.

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1. 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), 4:470.

Richard Ian Kimball. *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890–1940*.
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003

Reviewed by Brian J. Hill

Richard Ian Kimball's treatise, *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890–1940*, provides an illuminating view of the history of Church recreation. With careful documentation, Kimball links a lesser-known period and aspect of Church history to the social history of the United States and its Progressive Era. Just as America turned some of its attention during this time to the social ills of industrialization and urbanization, Church leaders likewise expressed concern for youth and their movement away from religious foundations. During the early twentieth century, social reformers across the United States turned in part to recreation facilities and programs to address society's ills. The Church also embraced recreation to combat a spiritual drift attributed to the evils of a move to the city. The commitment to recreation and sport within the Church then was deeper and different than what we see today.

Stories of recreation from early Church history are well known and sometimes mentioned from the meetinghouse pulpit. Joseph Smith's stick pulling, Brigham Young's homilies about the need for eight hours of recreation, as well as dancing on the plains and in the social halls of Utah are a part of popular history, even taking on the patina of folklore. Likewise, current generations have likely heard of all-church sports tournaments, early Church involvement with the Boy Scouts of America, and the development of girls' camp properties. However, they are not likely to know of the institutional commitment to recreation during the middle years of Church history. Even professors who currently teach and prepare recreation leaders are not likely to be conversant with a Church era of intense dedication to recreation principles as a measure of social reform.

Kimball describes the physical facilities and properties developed during this era such as ward amusement halls, Deseret Gym, and various girls' camp summer homes. He also chronicles the athletic, scouting, and youth programs within the Church. But more importantly, he documents

the Mormon recreation ideology that grew in the Church during this time and provided a foundation for the Church's building and program efforts. That ideology featured a recognition of social problems associated with urbanization including adolescent delinquency, idleness, sexual indulgence, drunkenness, and general rowdiness. Church leaders of the day feared that city life was destroying the spirituality of the rising generation, who were three generations removed from the pioneer converts. As an answer to these urban troubles, theories and philosophies of recreation were considered and adopted.

Kimball's careful research of original documents highlights key publications that delineate this Church-focused recreation ideology, such as *Parent's Bulletin No. 1: Recreation and Play*, published by the Deseret Sunday School Union in 1914. This pamphlet included excerpts from the writings of reputable sociologists, play theorists, and social reformers. The problem of "urban commercialized recreation and the lack of parental involvement at home" (39) suggested the need for the Church to address not only spiritual development but physical development as well. Dr. E. G. Gowans, the editor of the bulletin, emphasized, "The time is on us when we must take this phase of life into our own hands and provide wholesome pastimes for our children just as systematically, just as religiously, as we provide for their educational instruction and their religious training" (39–40). Further, Gowan also urged parents to play with their children, claiming that "the father who plays with his boy, or mother who plays with her girl, are far more likely to save their souls than those who merely clothe and feed and school" (40). Recreation was also seen as a way to integrate individuals more deeply into a larger group, in this case, the Church (41).

Another crucial feature of recreation ideology during this time was leadership development and training. The general Mutual Improvement Association conferences held each June included instruction in proper recreation and amusement as early as 1906 (35–36). Further, the MIA organizations offered four-week training courses in sports and recreation leadership beginning in 1912 (37). Wards and stakes organized amusement committees to take some control over leisure time, especially among the youth, that culminated a few years later in the establishment of a general Social Advisory Committee (41). Besides conferences, training curriculum, and institutes, publications were prepared that provided instruction and detailed the developing recreation ideology. Articles in Church periodicals and special bulletins issued by various Church auxiliaries document the growing concern for recreation and its place in the Church from 1900 to 1940.

Kimball's sources draw heavily upon primary Church documents. His narrative and bibliography suggest he has carefully considered every issue of the *Improvement Era* published during the fifty-year period of his study. His research in the LDS Church Historical Department's archives uncovers illuminating manuscripts from the Deseret Gym records and a variety of recreation committee minutes. His background in Progressive Era history and the general milieu of Church history are also apparent from his comprehensive bibliography. In short, his historical analysis appears sound, thorough, and well-documented.

Perhaps Kimball's most meaningful contribution in this piece, besides the history in both broad and detailed perspectives, is in raising a consciousness about the potential of recreation and sport to address societal challenges. During the Progressive Era, the evils of urbanization, juvenile delinquency, idleness, increasing sexuality, and overly-commercialized amusements crept into the lives of Church members and were resisted through systematic wholesome recreation. Any thoughtful reader of this work may wonder whether the social problems of our day that slip into the lives of Church members could be prevented through wholesome recreation. Should violence, pornography, childhood obesity, materialism, unsportsmanlike competitiveness, and time poverty be combated by purposeful Church and family recreational programs? By carefully analyzing a time when recreation and sport were systematically utilized to do good, Richard Kimball furtively asks us if the same might be utilized again.

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Charles C. Rich DVD Library, produced by the BYU Studies Staff (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2005)

Charles C. Rich and his colorful life and career warrant a work as comprehensive as this DVD publication. Born in 1809 in frontier Kentucky, he spent a good part of his life pioneering and colonizing the expanding American frontier in his effort to establish The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and build up the kingdom of God.

The documents included in the *Charles C. Rich DVD Library* reflect Rich's life and his pursuit of "purity and holiness." Beyond the necessary system requirements, foreword and acknowledgments, and DVD bibliography, the collection has seven sections. The first section is a chronology of Charles C. Rich, his wives, and his family beginning in 1809, the year Rich was born, and continuing through 1917, when Emeline Grover Rich, the last of Rich's wives, died. Next follows a Biographies section and a Family Histories section, which include biographical studies of Rich and his wives. A letters section follows containing six letters written by Charles C. Rich. The Manuscripts section of the DVD contains high-resolution scans of handwritten manuscripts from as early as 1833 such as journals, mission records, financial papers, certificates, blessings, family documents, and personal, ecclesiastical, and business correspondence. Many photographs of Rich and his family have been included in the collection as well as some speeches he gave as a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Unfortunately, there is one drawback to this DVD collection. The collection, because it contains so many scanned documents, is not fully word

searchable. This means that though some individual documents can be searched, no searches can encompass the whole collection. This minor problem notwithstanding, I wholeheartedly recommend the *Charles C. Rich DVD Library* to scholars of Mormon or Western history, as well as those who are interested in studying the family dynamics of a nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint family.

—Craig Foster

Women in Utah History: Paradigm or Paradox? edited by Patricia Lyn Scott and Linda Thatcher (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005)

In 1983, the relatively new Utah Women's History Association met in the Salt Lake City Public Library and proposed that a volume on the history of Utah's women be written. In 2005 that goal finally came to fruition when two members of that organization, Patricia Lyn Scott, a section manager at the Utah State Archives, and Linda Thatcher, the Historic Collections Coordinator for the Utah State Historical Society and former president of the Utah Women's Association, published *Women in Utah History: Paradigm or Paradox?* in connection with the Utah State Historical Society.

Scott and Thatcher have compiled a series of essays from an all-star cast of historians, and the result is the most comprehensive look at the experience of Utah women yet. While the study of Utah's women has burgeoned in the past several decades, most works have focused on individual women or distinct groups of women. This book surveys the experience of a much larger category, from polygamous and monogamous Mormon women to Protestant and Catholic women to a variety of ethnic groups of women. It also examines the evolution of their lives within a multiplicity of contexts,

from the progression of their legal status to the changing roles they have assumed in the work force to their involvement in farm life, education, scholarship, arts, and politics.

Any serious scholar of women's history, Utah women's history, or Utah history in general will want to read this book. It celebrates the contributions Utah's diverse groups of women have made to the state's history and its ultimate thesis is this: that while Utah women's experience has differed from that of other women in the American West, it has also been representative of the experience of other women in the American West. Paradigm or paradox? Scott and Thatcher's answer is, simply, both.

—Jana Lloyd

God's Country, Uncle Sam's Land: Faith and Conflict in the American West, by Todd M. Kerstetter (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In a focused journey, Todd Kerstetter, assistant professor of history at Texas Christian University, considers the promise of religious freedom in the United States. He looks closely at three religious groups: nineteenth-century Mormons living in Utah, the Lakota Ghost Dancers in South Dakota during the 1890s, and the 1993 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. Each group sought a place of refuge in the Great American West, that region of the country most filled with individualism and independence, the mythic and heroic God's country. For each there was a dramatic and violent confrontation with both their neighbors and the government.

How far does the rhetoric of religious independence extend and for whom does it hold true? Speaking of the Mormons living in Utah in the nineteenth century, Kerstetter states that they "and anyone else who doubted it, learned that morally

speaking, the Constitution is a Protestant document and the United States is a Protestant nation" (80).

To a lay reader, the book is accessible and interesting. Kerstetter sets forth the features of the three historical events with detail sufficient to capture the mood and setting of each episode. He offers evidence as a historian, fairly and without comment, allowing each narrative to set the stage. He steps us through the inflammatory rhetoric and imprudent posturing of each side. The drama between these religious groups and their neighbors stands out all the more clearly for Kerstetter's dispassionate stance. We learn that the song of the West is not truly sung on key.

Each of these histories has been told before. Each is dramatic and tragic and makes for good telling. It is not difficult to find accounts from both devotees and detractors but in this telling, the combined weight of uncompromising religious values and the collapse of promised freedoms is significant. To those questions already raised in this book, there are more. Is there a point at which it is appropriate, even responsible for citizens or government to intervene and withdraw promised freedoms? Who decides when and where?

—Liza Olsen

How Free Can Religion Be? by Randall P. Bezanson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In *How Free Can Religion Be?* Randall P. Bezanson, who holds an endowed professorship of law at the University of Iowa, surveys the U.S. Supreme Court's leading cases on the religion clauses of the First Amendment. Of particular interest to students of Mormonism will be Bezanson's treatment of *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), in which the Court rejected the

claim that the First Amendment protected the Latter-day Saints' religious practice of plural marriage.

It is clear that *How Free Can Religion Be?* is a book written by a law professor. Bezanson writes, "This book . . . is neither a history nor a compendium of legal answers. It is, instead, a set of questions and arguments, a written Socratic dialogue, with me on one side, and the reader on the other" (5). Those unburdened by a legal education can get some taste of what a constitutional law class is like by reading the book, while others who have run the gauntlet of law school will find the stream of question-punctuated commentary familiar.

The strengths and weaknesses of Bezanson's approach are on display in his discussion of the *Reynolds* case. He provides a workman-like summary of the facts, albeit one that ignores virtually all the published work done on the case by legal historians both within Mormon studies and within the legal academy generally. He then walks the reader through the Court's reasoning step-by-step, asking—without answering—at each point whether the moves made by the Court were justified in light of this or that competing argument.

The appearance of the *Reynolds* case in Bezanson's book is a testament to the continuing importance of the fundamental legal questions raised by the confrontation between Mormons and the federal government over the practice of polygamy. It also illustrates the extent to which Mormon history as a discipline has failed—with a few notable exceptions—to present the richness of its research on this period in a form capable of penetrating the mainstream constitutional discussion that Bezanson models.

—Nathan B. Oman

Believing History: Essays on Latter-day Saint Belief, by Richard Lyman Bushman and edited by Jed Woodworth and Reid L. Neilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

Those who enjoyed Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* will be just as pleased with *Believing History*, a collection of Richard Bushman's essays on Mormon history and his personal beliefs. The essays in *Believing History* are not necessarily related, but by reading them together one captures the flavor of both the author's scholarship and his person. The essays span a period of thirty-two years, beginning in 1969 and ending in 2001. They have all been published previously in books and journals, including some in *BYU Studies*.

The value of *Believing History* is that it brings all of the essays—and thus, much of Bushman's thought—into one place. The book also contains a new afterword by Bushman where, like the first two essays of the book, he identifies himself as a "dialogic historian" who is "fighting on both fronts" (281) of critical scholarship and uncritical belief within Mormon studies. In writing to both skeptics and believers, Bushman shows his desire to not alienate readers from either audience.

In adding structure to the collection of essays, the editors—both of whom have studied under Bushman—have divided the selections into three general categories: (1) Belief, (2) The Book of Mormon and History, and (3) Joseph Smith and Culture. While the essays are categorized as such, their richness defies categorization as Bushman addresses a wide array of historical and social issues including the possibilities for faith among skepticism, the roles of the kingdom and Zion in a world dominated by secular corporatism, the urban landscape created by early

Mormons, the rhetorical space created by the language of Joseph Smith's revelations, and the way that sources closest to the Book of Mormon translation are used or ignored by both believing and non-believing historians.

—Josh E. Probert

Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment, edited by George B. Handley, Terry B. Ball, and Steven L. Peck (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006)

Latter-day Saints are becoming increasingly environmentally sensitive. LDS scripture and modern prophetic utterance is full of counsel regarding their responsibility to the environment. Bringing together seasoned experts in fields from public management to botany, *Stewardship and the Creation* gives compelling interpretations to that surprisingly ubiquitous prophetic counsel.

In the past century, there has been little practical consensus among Latter-day Saints with regard to an environmental ethic, but in reading the various viewpoints that *Stewardship and the Creation* has to offer, a more unified consensus begins to emerge, one based on the principle of subduing the earth so that it brings forth more abundantly. Several articles address the significance of technology, ingenuity, and human energy as resources that can be employed to bring forth bounteous life of all kinds on the earth. Respect for the earth isn't so much about conserving God's creations as it is in multiplying his creations. Though preserving natural habitats may be a great work, actively managing habitats is a greater, even sacred, work. The latter work has ties back to Adam, who, as a steward with dominion over all things, actively tended the Garden of Eden and then

later subdued the earth in order to bring forth plant, animal, and human life more abundantly. Godliness has deep ontological meaning for Latter-day Saints, and an environmental tradition that places Latter-day Saints in the position of co-creators with God in bringing forth life more abundantly has great potential to resonate with them. *Stewardship and the Creation* successfully resonates in this way.

Of particular interest is the book's dialogue concerning LDS eschatology: If God rarely does things that we can do for ourselves, why would we not be involved in returning earth to its paradisiacal, edenic state at the Second Coming of Christ? And, as that great day of regeneration approaches, what are we as Saints doing, environmentally speaking, to prepare for it?

A few of the articles seemed too forceful in attempting to reconcile the current political environmental movement with LDS religious principles. Notwithstanding this, those Latter-day Saints who read the book and take their stewardship over the earth seriously will find themselves vastly more educated and equipped to inspire others in why and how we should care for the environment.

—James T. Summerhays