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ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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A Book of Commandments and Revelations

Editorial Introduction to This Special Feature

John W. Welch

We are very pleased to present in this issue of *BYU Studies* the following illustrated group of papers about the recently published Book of Commandments and Revelations, or the BCR as it is called by those who have prepared it for publication. Having the BCR takes us into the earliest transcriptional stages of revelations from 1829 to 1834 now found in the Doctrine and Covenants. Imagine! For textual scholars, having the BCR is something akin to uncovering a discarded draft of the Declaration of Independence or some of the missing records used by Luke in preparing his gospel.

Shortly after arrangements were finalized in May 2009 for the publication of the BCR, a plenary session about it was held at the Mormon History Association (MHA) meeting in Springfield, Illinois, at which the papers in this special feature were presented. BYU Studies thanks the MHA and the Church Historian's Office for making this special feature possible.

As Elder Marlin K. Jensen said in the July 2009 *Ensign*, the BCR "served as the principal source for the 1833 publication of A Book of Commandments,"¹ the precursor to the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. The BCR contains the only surviving early manuscripts of some revelations, as well as a few that are previously unpublished.

This new volume in *The Joseph Smith Papers* is a stunning publication. As said by James Hutson, chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, "This volume is a model of modern documentary editorial practices. Every conceivable device, including color coding of editorial changes, has been used."² No expense has been spared in producing this monumental volume. Its substance will be of enduring value.

On April 6, 1830, the day the Church was organized, the commandment was given that “there shall be a record kept among you” (D&C 21:1). Here we have much of that record. Although it will take years to learn all that this important document can tell us, its value is immediately apparent. The dates and contexts of many revelations become clearer. The editorial care with which commas and periods were added, spellings were corrected, and meanings clarified or adapted all becomes open to view and contemplation. Some sheets contain several such editorial marks, while other pages, especially those at the end of the volume, stand unchanged in pristine condition.

Seeing the actual-sized, high-resolution, color-corrected images of the 210 pages of the BCR puts the viewer in touch with the beginnings of these revelations. Through these impressions, one may see indeed how Joseph Smith was “a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, [and] an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ” (D&C 21:1).

1. Marlin K. Jensen, “The Joseph Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books,” *Ensign* 39 (July 2009): 48.

2. From dust jacket (back cover) of Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009).

Introducing A Book of Commandments and Revelations, A Major New Documentary “Discovery”

Robert J. Woodford

President Gordon B. Hinckley authorized the research of historical documents in possession of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as part of the effort to publish the papers of Joseph Smith. Among these documents was A Book of Commandments and Revelations (referred to hereafter as the BCR),¹ which book proved to be the manuscript collection of revelations Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer took to Missouri in November 1831 from which the Book of Commandments was to be published.² Additional revelations were entered into the volume as they were received, and the BCR was also used as one of the sources for the revelations printed in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C). Hence, the BCR contains the earliest surviving manuscript versions of many of Joseph Smith’s revelations and the only prepublication manuscript copies of some of them. The BCR also contains seven revelations never published as part of the scriptural canon of the Church.³

Except for a few pages in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, the BCR was written by John Whitmer. Similar to the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, revelations as originally copied into the BCR lacked punctuation, thus indicating the revelations were dictations to the scribes, not written compositions. Many other clues within the volume itself inform us these revelations are copies and not the originals, including the order in which some are placed in the BCR and a few cases in which the revelation is not in the handwriting of the one identified as being the scribe of the original.

Regarding the origin of the BCR, several possibilities have been explored. Researchers for the first two volumes of the documents series of

The Joseph Smith Papers have posited the summer of 1830 as being the time when the BCR was started; that is when the *History of the Church* records Joseph Smith saying, “I began to arrange and copy the revelations, which we had received from time to time; in which I was assisted by John Whitmer, who now resided with me.”⁴ As another possibility, archivists at the Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints postulate that John Whitmer began recording in the BCR after he was called by revelation on March 8, 1831, to “write and keep a regular history, and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you” (D&C 47:1). Other researchers will want to study the evidence now that the book has become available for their use and weigh in on this issue.

The BCR is probably the document listed as “Rough Book—Revelation History &c.” in the 1846 inventory of historical documents to be shipped across the plains to Utah.⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, Church Historian from 1921 to 1970, kept the BCR among his papers, and when he became the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1970, the BCR became part of the papers of the First Presidency.

Unfortunately, 26 of the BCR’s 208 pages are missing.⁶ Fortunately, 8 of those pages are in the Community of Christ archives at Independence, Missouri. Those pages were purchased from the Whitmer family at the beginning of the last century and have been commented on by several researchers. A partial index at the end of the BCR provides the information needed to deduce what revelations were included on those pages whose whereabouts are still unknown.

When the BCR was turned over to the Church History Library of the LDS Church in 2005, those in charge of the Joseph Smith Papers Project decided to not announce its existence until basic research about it was accomplished. Senior LDS Church archivist Glenn Rowe was assigned to make a complete typescript of the BCR. This took several months. His work was verified at different stages by *Joseph Smith Papers* editors Robert Woodford, William Hartley, Grant Underwood, and Steven Harper. *Papers* senior editor Dean Jessee and LDS Church archivist Christy Best used their expertise to determine who wrote the basic text and who made the numerous corrections. *Papers* editor and archivist Robin Jensen did the tedious work of making the final verification of the transcribed texts and determining the provenance of the volume.

The complete BCR contained all of the revelations included in the Book of Commandments with the exception of the revelation to Joseph Knight, which is section 12 of the current LDS edition of the D&C.⁷

Because the BCR was taken to Missouri, Church authorities in Kirtland purchased another ledger book in which to continue to record subsequent revelations. This second volume is traditionally known as the

Kirtland Revelation Book, or the KRB. The first revelation in the book is section 76 of the current D&C. Many of the revelations recorded in the KRB were also later added to the BCR as copies were carried or mailed to Missouri, where the BCR was located at the time. Careful text comparisons demonstrate that the revelations published in the 1835 edition of the D&C were taken from both the BCR and the KRB and possibly a few other manuscripts. The BCR contains all of the revelations in the 1835 edition of the D&C except those now known as sections 12, 32, 91, 92, 100 and 102 in the current LDS edition.⁸ Of these, five are found in the KRB, with section 12, the revelation to Joseph Knight, again being the only exception. In addition to those revelations found in the Book of Commandments and the 1835 edition of the D&C, the BCR also contains sections 77, 87, 103, and 105 of the current LDS edition of the D&C.⁹

Publication of the Book of Commandments and the 1835 Edition of the Doctrine and Covenants

Besides the verse numbers added in the BCR that match those in the Book of Commandments, there are other indications in the text showing the BCR was used to publish that book of scripture. One of the more interesting ones is that of the “take mark” made by the printer at the end of each signature. A take mark can best be described as a sideward “u” bracketing the last word or words of a signature. The sheets on which the Book of Commandments was printed were large enough to print sixteen pages on one side, or thirty-two pages in one signature. The signature was then folded four times, sewn to the backing, and the other three sides trimmed. Thirty-two pages then fell into their proper order. Five signatures of the Book of Commandments were finished, and they were probably setting the type for, or even beginning to print, the sixth when antagonists destroyed the printing press on July 20, 1833. The first signature ends with the words “fulness of my gospel from the,” found in what is now D&C 14:10. The page from the BCR on which those words would be found, page 17 or 18, is missing; thus we have no take mark. The second signature ends with the words, “may naturally” from what is now D&C 29:33. They are on page 39 of the BCR, fourth line from the top of the page, and are bracketed with the printer’s take mark. For whatever reason, the last words of the third signature, “may not be,” from what is now D&C 43:6 on the second line of page 68 of the BCR, are not bracketed, but “contrite,” from what is now D&C 54:3, found in the middle of page 90 of the BCR, is bracketed with a take mark, thus signaling the end of the fourth signature. Finally, “Ephraim” at the end of the fifth signature, from D&C 64:36, found on the eighth line of page 111 of the BCR, is bracketed with a take mark.¹⁰

After the BCR was brought back from Missouri, both the BCR and the KRB were used in publishing the revelations in the 1835 edition of the D&C. In the BCR, there are corrections to some of the revelations that match those in the 1835 edition. Also, some revelations have numbers inserted matching the verse numbers of that edition, and several of the later revelations in the BCR have paragraphs that match those in the 1835 D&C.

Future Access to A Book of Commandments and Revelations

Scholars will want to know about the availability of the BCR for research. The first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* contains the complete text as well as that of the KRB. This volume was released on September 22, 2009.

The BCR is a very fragile document; thus, when the editors of *The Joseph Smith Papers* counseled together as to the best format for publishing the BCR, they gave serious consideration to the fact that it would not sustain constant handling by researchers. A typescript of the document would not satisfy the situation since scholars would need to check the typescript against the original if their research were to have validity. With this in mind, the editors decided on the following configuration. Each page of both the BCR and the KRB was photographed and placed in the volume (see fig. 1). The camera and lens used to do this are the finest available, and the images are extremely clear and in color. The format of the book is also larger so there is not a great reduction in size from the BCR and the KRB. Thus researchers will have little or no need to consult the originals.

A second text in the book is a typescript (see fig. 2) that has been verified at least three times. Additions, deletions, alterations, and corrections are all included. Each page of text is on the opposing page of the photographic facsimile. Researchers can instantly check on words and phrases in the original that may be hard to read. Importantly, the handwriting of most of the scribes who made alterations to the text has been identified, and the researcher will know who made a specific change by the color of the alteration. For example, corrections by William W. Phelps are in cyan, John Whitmer, green, and Sidney Rigdon, blue.

The first two volumes of the Documents Series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* will also contain most of the text of the BCR but in a much different format. All of the later alterations are stripped away so that only the original remains. These two volumes in the Documents Series contain all of the revelations dated before 1834, plus letters, certificates, minutes of meetings, and other extraneous documents. Where it can be demonstrated that the BCR or the KRB has the earliest manuscript of a revelation, that particular

one is the featured text. There are a few manuscripts of revelations that are earlier than those in these two volumes, mostly from the Newel K. Whitney collection at Brigham Young University and a few in the collection at the Church History Library. Any major departure from the featured text that is found in the BCR, the KRB, or published versions of the revelations is footnoted.

Future Research

If just one manuscript of a revelation had been found that was definitely the earliest known for that revelation, it would be heralded as a major find, but the BCR has over one hundred revelations, many of which are the earliest or the only manuscripts. This is probably the most important document in the Church History Library other than manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. Thus it opens up exciting possibilities for additional research on Joseph Smith and the revelations he received. The work that has already been accomplished is sufficient to launch the volume into the arena, but there is much left to be done. The insights and the conclusions of others who research any part or all of the BCR in depth will provide interesting reading for some time to come. Following are a few topics that may generate a great deal of interest.

- Alterations made in the revelations have many historical and theological implications. The reasons for editing revelations are almost as numerous as the changes themselves. With the BCR, we now have an assemblage of some of the earliest alterations, and we gain new insight as to when and in whose hand the changes were made.

- Several researchers over the years have written about the attempt to sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada. David Whitmer was critical of the failure to sell it, and later in life he wrote:

[Joseph Smith] received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but they failed entirely to sell the copyright, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking.¹¹

This revelation is not found in any of the literature of the Church, and so researchers have only been able to write about this event with the main piece of the puzzle missing. But the revelation is in the BCR, and now they

2
 Thou do this thou shalt be delivered up & become as a
 man & have no more gift & when thou deliverest up
 which ~~that~~ which God had given thee ^{and power} to Translate
 thou deliverest up that which was sacred into the hands
 of a wicked man who has set at naught the Councils of God
 & ~~has~~ broken the most sacred promises which ~~was~~ made before
 God & ~~has~~ depended upon his own judgement & boasted in
 his own ~~own~~ wisdom & this is the reason that thou hast
 lost thy ~~the~~ Privileges for a Season for thou hast suffered
 that the counsel of thy directors to be translated upon from
 the beginning for as the knowledge of a ~~secret~~ ^{my purpose} ~~has~~ come
 into the world ^{never} so shall the knowledge of my people the Nephites
 & the Jacobites & the Josephites & the ~~Lamanites~~ ^{Lamanites} come to the
 Lamanites Knowledge of the Lamanites, & the ~~Lamanites~~ ^{Lamanites} &
 the Ishmaelites which dwindled in unbelief because of
 the iniquities of their Fathers who ~~have~~ been suffered to
 destroy their Brethren because of their iniquities & their
 Abominations & for this very purpose are these States
~~preserved~~ which contain these Records that the Promises
 of the Lord might be fulfilled which he made to his
 People & that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge
 of their Fathers & that they might know the Promises of
 the Lord that they may believe the Gospel & rely upon the
 merits of Jesus Christ & that they might be glorified
 through faith in his name & that ~~they might~~ ^{though they} report
 the name of Jesus Christ Received in Harmony Shagubannah Dene
 Feb
 1829 To Revelation to Joseph the Father of the
 Seed he desired to know what the Lord had for him to do
 & this is what he Received as follows
 Saying now Behold a Marvelous work is about
 to come forth among the children of men therefore
 O ye that embark in the service of God see that ye
 serve him with all your heart might mind & strength
 that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day
 therefore if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the

FIG. 1. Photograph of page 2 in the Book of Commandments and Revelations as published on page 10 of the first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of The Joseph Smith Papers.

Thou do this thou shalt be delivered up & become as other
 men & have no more gift & when thou deliverdest up that
 Which ~~that~~-which God had given thee ^{and power} {r|s}ight [^] to Translate
 thou deliverdest up that which was Sacred into the hands
 of a wicked man who has Set at naught the Councils of God
 & ~~hath~~ ^{has} broken the most Sacred promises which ^{were} was made before
 God & ~~hath~~ ^{has} depended upon his own Judgement & boasted in
 his own ~~arm~~⁴ wisdom & this is the reason that thou hast
 lost thy ~~Pr~~⁵ Privileges for a Season for thou hast suffered
 that the council of thy directors to be tramped upon from
 nevertheless my work shall go forth & accomplish ~~its~~ ^(my) purposes /⁶ has
 the beginning ^{even} for as the knowledge of a Saveiour ~~hath~~ come
 into the world so shall the knowledge of my People the Nephiti{s|es}
 & the Jacobites & the Josephites & the ^{Zoromites & the Lemuelites} Lamanites come to the
 Lamanites knowledge of the Lamanites, & the L{a|e}manites &
 the Ishmaelites which dwindle in unbelief because of
 the iniquities of their Fathers who ~~hath~~ ^{have} been suffered to
 destroy their Brethren because of their iniquities & their
 Abominations & for this very Purpose are these Plates
^{preserved} ~~prepared~~ which contain these Records that the Promises
 of the Lord might be fulfilled which he made to his
 People & that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge
 of their ^t ~~Fahers~~ & that they ^{might} ~~may~~ know the Promises of
 the Lord [&] [^] that they may believe the Gospel & rely upon the
 merits of Jesus Christ & ~~that they might~~ be glorified
 through faith {i|o}n his name & that ^{through their} ~~they might~~ repent
 they might
 & be Saved Amen Received in Harmony Susquehannah Penn

ORIGINAL INSCRIPTION
 John Whitmer

REVISIONS
 Oliver Cowdery
 William W. Phelps
 Sidney Rigdon
Joseph Smith
 John Whitmer
 Unidentified

4. Two layers of deletion:
 first layer by John Whitmer at
 the time of original inscrip-
 tion and second layer by
 Sidney Rigdon.

5. "Pro" wipe-erased and
 then stricken.

6. Sidney Rigdon inserted
 "r" to separate insertions in
 the manuscript.

- Feb^r
 ♦ AD 182{8|9} A Revelation to Joseph [Smith Sr.] the Father of the
 Seer he desired to know what the Lord had for him to do
 & this is what he Received as follows

Saying now Behold a Marvelous work is about
 to come forth among the children of men therefore
 O ye that embark in the service of God see that ye
 Serve him with all your heart might mind & Strength
 that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day
 therefore if ye have desires to serve God ye are Called to the [pages 3–10 missing]

FIG. 2. Typescript of BCR page 2 as it appears on page 11 of the first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*.

can examine the revelation for any additional evidence to either justify their conclusions or to adjust their arguments.¹²

- Orson Pratt's reference in 1855 to a revelation on the name of God in the pure language has been the basis for numerous articles wherein the words *Ahman*, *Son Ahman*, and *Adam-ondi-Ahman* have been discussed.¹³ Now that we have a source in the BCR, additional research may make a valuable contribution.¹⁴

- The dates of the reception of many of the revelations are given more precisely in the BCR than in other sources. Several of these dates have the potential of changing our views concerning some events in Church history. The same is also true of a few of the places at which revelations were received. For example, those who have used the dates and location found in the Book of Commandments for what are now D&C 21 and 23¹⁵ as part of their argument for placing the organization of the Church at Manchester instead of Fayette may need to rethink their conclusions based on what is found in the BCR.¹⁶

One revelation, D&C 74 in the current edition,¹⁷ is dated almost thirteen months earlier in the BCR than elsewhere, and the site at which it was revealed is given as Wayne County, New York, rather than Hiram, Ohio.¹⁸ Our suppositions about it being revealed as part of Joseph Smith's work on the JST will now need to be reexamined.

- Some of the headings to the revelations in the BCR also need to be studied. The introduction to D&C 29 in the BCR indicates the revelation was given to settle differences of opinion concerning the transgression of Adam.¹⁹ The heading in the BCR of D&C 41 includes an invitation from Leman Copley to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to reside at Thompson.²⁰ This places him on the scene at Kirtland earlier than other records indicate. And the heading to D&C 61 calls the Missouri River the "River Destruction."²¹ This may give us different insights into the revelation itself.²²

- The testimony of the witnesses of the Book of Commandments, which is found in the BCR,²³ is also a subject for further research. It is supposed that this testimony was intended to be placed at the end of the Book of Commandments as were the testimonies of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon in the 1830 edition. Since the book was unfinished, the testimony was not published, but it was included in the introduction to the D&C from 1921 until 1980, when it was finally removed. In the BCR, the testimony is recorded as a revelation and has the names of six of the men attending the November 1831 conference listed at the end of it. What is unusual is that five of those names are in the handwriting of John Whitmer. This raises the question as to why they did not sign for themselves. Also unusual is that only some of the men attending the conference have their names attached. Why did not the others also sign? It is interesting that all those

who did not sign were witnesses for the Book of Mormon. Is that of any significance? An additional twelve men, who were not at the conference, also later signed the document. We know that all but one of them attended a conference in Missouri in January 1832 at which Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were also in attendance. Cowdery and Whitmer had the BCR with them, and so this is the most likely occasion for them to sign. The last person to sign was Thomas B. Marsh, and it is not certain when he endorsed it. What is the significance of these other men signing?

- There are two basic sources reporting the events of the conference of high priests in November 1831 that authorized the publication of the revelations. One is found in the *History of the Church* and the other in the Far West Record.²⁴ When compared, there is some variation in the order of events and other details related to this conference. The BCR includes all the revelations received at the conference with the precise dates they were received. Since the BCR is the earliest source for these revelations and predates by several years both of the other two records cited above, a better reconstruction of the events is now possible.

- It is frustrating that the first three pages in the BCR for D&C 10 are missing from the volume.²⁵ Since there has been considerable discussion over the years as to the correct date this revelation was received, it would have been a valuable piece of information to have the precise date given in the BCR. However, the index at the back of the BCR places this revelation among those received in April of 1829, which is not one of the dates given in other sources. The editors of volume 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* have accepted April 1829 as the correct date it was written, which sheds some interesting new perspectives concerning the revelation and the events occurring when it was written.²⁶

- One final illustration will suffice. Seven revelations in the BCR each have a number in parentheses inserted at the beginning of the revelation, as follows: D&C 68 (“Nº 1”), 65 (“Nº 3”), 67 (“Nº 4”), 70 (“Nº 5”), 57 (“Nº 6”), 69 (“Nº 7”), and 73 (“Nº 8”).²⁷ There is none with the number 2. We have not been able to determine the purpose of these numbers but have discovered in the 1835 edition of the D&C they are sections 22 and 24 through 29, and they are in the same order as the numbers, with what is now D&C 51 in the place where a number 2 would be found between D&C 68 and 65.²⁸ We question why these were the only ones so numbered and if there is some common thread running through these that we have not been able to discover that would cause them to be grouped as they are. Someone out there may be able to see what we have failed to see and shed additional light on this matter.

Conclusion

There are many other topics that could be mentioned, but now that the BCR is available, each researcher will find his own area of particular interest. Scholars who have examined available documents for this period of Church history will welcome the additional vistas the BCR opens to their view. It is with great pleasure that we now introduce this volume to you. We look forward to years of continued research into the document and discussion about its contents that will help us come closer to the people and events of that day.

Robert J. Woodford (robertwoodford1167@msn.com) is one of the editors for three of the volumes of *The Joseph Smith Papers* and is a retired seminary and institute instructor. He holds a PhD from Brigham Young University in scripture. His dissertation is titled “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants.” He has also authored numerous chapters in books and journals.

1. This short title has been accepted and used by those who have done research on the document to date. In *The Joseph Smith Papers*, the BCR is also titled Revelation Book 1, and its companion volume, commonly known as the Kirtland Revelation Book or the KRB, is titled Revelation Book 2. KRB is also used in this article. Other abbreviations include D&C for the Doctrine and Covenants, LDS for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, JST for the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and CoC for the Community of Christ, formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *The Joseph Smith Papers* are also referred to as Papers.

2. The formal title of the book is A Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ.

3. These seven revelations include the following BCR pages (original manuscript pagination used throughout):

- 23–24 (the “articles of the Church of Christ,” which is incomplete in the BCR, but there is a complete copy in the Church History Library that has been published in Scott H. Faulring, “An Examination of the 1829 ‘Articles of the Church of Christ’ in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants,” *BYU Studies* 43, no. 4 [2004]: 57–91; transcription on pages 76–79);
- 30–31 (the “Canadian Copyright” revelation, which has never before been published);
- 85 (a revelation to Joseph Smith Sr. and Ezra Thayre, which is also in KRB, 91–92);
- 121 (testimony of the witnesses of the Book of Commandments, which was published in the introduction to the D&C from 1921 to 1980 but never as a revelation; it is listed in the BCR as a revelation to Joseph Smith);
- 144 (“A Sample of Pure Language,” commented on by Orson Pratt, but never before published);
- 148 (a revelation concerning the purchase of paper for printing the Book of Commandments, also found in KRB, 19); and
- 198 (a revelation on the United Firm, also found in KRB, 111).

4. 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), 1:104.
5. Church Historian's Office inventory, 1846, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
6. The missing pages unaccounted for and therefore not published in volume 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of the *Joseph Smith Papers* are 3–10, 15–22, and 25–26; pages in possession of the Community of Christ but included in the *Joseph Smith Papers* volume are 111–12, 117–20, and 139–40.
7. This is section 11 in the Community of Christ (CoC) D&C. There is no known manuscript of this revelation, and the Book of Commandments is the earliest source for it.
8. These are sections 11, 31, 88, 89, 97, and 99 in the CoC D&C.
9. The CoC D&C does not have the first two of these, but D&C 103 and 105 are sections 100 and 102 in that volume.
10. The references in this paragraph for the CoC D&C are: first signature, D&C 12:5b; second, D&C 28:8e; third, D&C 43:2b; fourth, D&C 54:1b; fifth, D&C 64:7b.
11. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ by a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (Richmond, Mo.: David Whitmer, 1887), 40.
12. Book of Commandments and Revelations, Church History Library, 30–31.
13. Orson Pratt, “The Holy Spirit and the Godhead,” in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 2:342–43 (Feb. 18, 1855).
14. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 144.
15. Sections 19 and 21 in the CoC D&C.
16. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 28–30. See pages 57–59 herein.
17. Also section 74 in the CoC D&C.
18. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 60.
19. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 36.
20. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 61.
21. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 101.
22. The sections in this paragraph are sections 28, 41, and 61 in the CoC D&C.
23. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 121.
24. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:221–37. Far West Record, 15–19, Church History Library; see also Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 26–32.
25. Section 3 in the CoC D&C.
26. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 11–13. The 6th Commandment (D&C 8), which follows the revelation now known as D&C 10 in the BCR, is dated April 1829, as are the 7th Commandment (D&C 7) and the 8th Commandment (D&C 9). Other sources give May 1829 or summer 1828 as the date of D&C 10; see pages 56–57 herein.
27. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 113, 112, 114, 124, 93, 122, 146.
28. These are the same section numbers in the CoC D&C.



FIG. 1. The Book of Commandments and Revelations with its paper chemise cover. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

From Manuscript to Printed Page

An Analysis of the History of the Book of Commandments and Revelations

Robin Scott Jensen

The Book of Commandments and Revelations (BCR) is a surprisingly unpretentious document, judging by its physical condition. Instead of appearing regal and glorious as a symbol of the Mormons' view of the sacred contents, the Book of Commandments and Revelations looks ragged, worn, and somewhat fragile. The book boards enclosing the pages have been missing for over a century and a half, and replacing this sturdy binding is a cover of material slightly thicker than modern cardstock paper wrapped around the existing gatherings (fig. 1). A number of the volume's pages were removed and then reinserted, leaving the edges of those sheets brittle, bent, and folded over onto themselves. The handwriting within the volume is small, written in dark ink, and, in more than half the volume, heavily edited by subsequent scribes. In attempting to read the text with its multiple edits and re-edits, the reader might judge the resulting visual experience as a circuitous ensemble rather than a clear display of text as might be found in a printed work.

This brief sketch is not meant to present the text in an unflattering manner. For anyone interested in historical artifacts, the Book of Commandments and Revelations provides a rich experience. From the soft, slightly worn feel of the nineteenth-century paper largely free from impurities that introduce acidic, browning qualities, to the old, musty smell, the manuscript book provides an experience that only a true antiquarian or bibliophilic palaeophile could fully enjoy. Far more importantly, the Book of Commandments and Revelations, while old, used, and remarkably unassuming, provides historians with unprecedented access to the revelations—and the early attitude towards those revelations—that Latter-day Saints held, and still hold, as sacred texts.

Physical Description and Provenance

The Book of Commandments and Revelations was originally a blank book of about 205 ruled pages, marked with preprinted horizontal and vertical lines. The original boards and several leaves from the volume are now missing, with a paper chemise (a brown, heavy, paperboard cover) replacing the original. This paperboard cover was certainly in place by the 1850s, and maybe as early as the 1830s. The probable reason for the volume's apparent disassembling—publishing the Book of Commandments and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants—will be discussed later in the article. The volume likely contained nine gatherings of twelve leaves, with the pages measuring about 12.5 x 7.75 inches. A label now adorns the current spine of the volume, reading “Book of Commandments and Revelations,” which is a shortened version of the full title contained on page 1: “A Book of Commandments & Revelations of the Lord Given to Joseph the Seer & Others by the Inspiration of God & Gift & Power of the Holy Ghost Which Beareth Re[c]ord of the Father & Son Which Is One God Infinite & Eternal World without End Amen.” Pages 3–10, 15–22, and 25–26 are missing from the volume, and their location is unknown. Similarly, pages 111–12, 117–20, and 139–40 are missing from the volume, but fortunately the location of these pages is known: they are currently located at the Community of Christ Library-Archives in Independence, Missouri. This apparently random separation and mixed provenance will be discussed later.

Placing the BCR near the top of a short list of important historical LDS documents would not exaggerate its significance. Both scholars interested in Mormon history and lay LDS Church members interested in their religion can study this volume to better understand Mormon history and theology—especially critical due to the influence of the rapidly changing revelations on the early history of the Church. This manuscript volume of revelations, which predates the first canonized publication of Joseph Smith's revelations by several years, recently became available due in part to the work done by the Joseph Smith Papers Project—a documentary editing endeavor to publish all extant documents created or owned by Church founder Joseph Smith. The Book of Commandments and Revelations, published as part of the first volume in the Revelations and Translations series,¹ comprises texts of many extant copies of revelations given to Joseph Smith during the early 1830s previously available only in the early printed canon. It also contains texts heretofore unavailable, including the text to the 1830 Canadian copyright revelation and a sample of the pure language referred to by Orson Pratt in an 1855 sermon.² The many other revelations contained therein that are not the earliest extant copies hold great value

as other textual variants from which to compare and contrast in order to understand, in part, how carefully manuscript copies of revelations were transmitted. Additionally, the BCR proffers a critical piece of evidence to those who study the printing of the Book of Commandments and, to a lesser degree, the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

When scholars approach newly discovered documents, several important questions arise. When and why was it created? Who created it? What was it used for? Such analysis is not unlike determining the background of other historical events or individuals. A complete understanding of the content of a document will come only through a proper understanding of the context in which a document comes forth. The excitement surrounding this newly discovered document might entice one into forcing the BCR into an artificial mold—transforming the document into a one-size-fits-all solution to previously unanswered historical questions. However, the first step in a thorough analysis of a document is not to survey the missing pieces in history in hopes that the document will fill those gaps, but to analyze the document itself. Questions basic to archivists in determining the document's provenance should be fundamental to the historian's initial approach in order to avoid misinterpretation.³ The contextual understanding of a document's creation and use leads not only to a better understanding of the content, but also provides an accurate sense of the history surrounding those who created it.⁴

The questions about a document's creation arise from an approach that takes into account both document analysis and historical understanding. By carefully studying both internal evidence (the manuscript itself) and external evidence (the archival understanding of historical record keeping and the history of Mormonism in general), one sees more clearly the relevant questions as well as some answers. Both internal and external evidence are required; ignoring the document in favor of historical evidence leads to misinterpretations, while focusing exclusively on the document and not exploring the wider historical context promotes a naive analysis.

A simple example of close document analysis tied to a historical understanding will illustrate this critical point. On several occasions, David Whitmer claimed that the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which was in his possession, was the original manuscript.⁵ A comparison of the manuscript with an understanding of early Mormon record-keeping history leads scholars to conclude that the manuscript previously in Whitmer's possession was a second copy made for security reasons and sent to the printer. These scholars, however, might conclude

that the entire printer's manuscript was used to set the type for the 1830 Book of Mormon.⁶ Royal Skousen's important analysis of the manuscript itself has unveiled the fact that parts of the original manuscript were used to set the type of the Book of Mormon.⁷ Document analysis contradicting past historical understanding helps us refine our understanding of a document's later use. Because the BCR is a previously unstudied volume, this paper will examine its basic provenance information, largely leaving the content of the volume for future study.

Provenance: Creation

The Book of Commandments and Revelations was created in a context of early Mormon record keeping, which was initially dominated by the recording of religious texts. Joseph Smith recorded almost twenty commandments before the Church was organized, produced forty-six pages of the Bible revision manuscript four months after the Church was organized,⁸ and published a religious book of almost six hundred pages—a volume itself based on two different manuscripts of about 450 foolscap pages each.⁹ In comparison, by the time the Church of Christ made the decision to publish a book of revelations in November 1831, nineteen months after the Church was organized, only about thirty extant pages of “nonreligious” texts had been produced by Smith.¹⁰ Clearly, early Mormon record keeping consisted almost exclusively of texts centered on divine communication—the word of God through revelations, inspired interpretation of the Bible, and the miraculous translation of ancient texts “by the gift, and power of God.”¹¹ The BCR epitomized this early record-keeping endeavor—indeed it is the earliest known effort to bring together almost all revelations texts under one cover.

The Book of Commandments and Revelations not only fits within the early Mormon record-keeping context, but it also precedes the beginning of nonrevelation record keeping. In 1832, five different record-keeping projects commenced. True to the emphasis of Mormon record keeping, the first project in 1832 recorded sacred texts, in what is now known as the Kirtland Revelation Book (begun in about February or March). The history of Joseph Smith was begun shortly thereafter in the summer of 1832, but only six pages were created before the project ceased. Joseph Smith's first letterbook and journal came together that fall as someone gathered the loose letters received in the past three years and collected the thoughts and activities of the founder of Mormonism. Finally, a minute book, later to be known as the Kirtland Council Minute Book, was created about December 1832 in order to copy into one book loose manuscripts of

general conference and other meeting minutes.¹² The context from which the BCR was created and the subsequent record-keeping milieu it helped create revolved around revelation, inspiration, devotion, and religious activity. A better understanding of this first book of revelations provides a deeper context for divine Mormon texts.

With a preparatory context established, one can now look at other questions surrounding the BCR and address one of the most fascinating and important questions for scholars: When? How early was the BCR created? While no explicit statement exists for the initial dating of this volume, internal and external evidence suggests that it was begun in early 1831. Extant documents from early Mormon history suggest that the first revelations were captured on loose pages and stored together, in some cases sewn together, as was done with the Book of Mormon manuscripts.¹³ This loose collection undoubtedly proved problematic when a comprehensive compilation was desired for reference, copying, or other uses. Perhaps intending to solve this problem, Joseph Smith and John Whitmer began, according to the 1839 Joseph Smith history, to “arrange and copy” revelations in the summer of 1830.¹⁴ This was the first known effort by Joseph Smith to collect all the revelations together and provide an order to them. This summer 1830 project of working with the revelations cannot be definitively tied to any manuscript—including the BCR. Although the history’s report of Smith and Whitmer’s work provides a glimpse of the revelation record-keeping context, the detail provided in the history is sketchy and eight years reminiscent. Dating a manuscript book based on a single reference in the official Joseph Smith history is problematic at best and ultimately unnecessary as the decisive source of dating the manuscript book comes from the book itself.

Archivists use many tools to determine provenance of a document. One such tool is called diplomatics. This centuries-old science originated with the need to demonstrate the reliability and authenticity of medieval documents in courts of law or other official records, but it has recently been adapted, along with many other foundational or semifoundational theories, by archival science.¹⁵ Diplomatics involves understanding the process of record keeping by analyzing other manuscripts, learning the contextual history surrounding the scribes, and employing document and paper analysis. Central to the practice of diplomatics is the notion that “the context of a document’s creation is made manifest in its form and that this form can be separated from, and examined independently of, its content.”¹⁶ Thus diplomatics, sometimes known as forensic paleography, is the scientific study of texts—using both external and internal evidence—to

determine the authenticity of that text.¹⁷ In other words, each piece of evidence taken individually proves very little, but taken as a whole, the accumulated evidence points to the likely history of the document.

Tapping into this field of documentary analysis provides an important backdrop for the analysis of the BCR. The analysis includes the document's form—defined as “the overall appearance, configuration, or shape, independent of its intellectual content”—as well as the document's structure—defined as “the manner in which elements are organized, interrelated, and displayed.”¹⁸ When the form, structure, and makeup of a document are more clearly defined, the content of that document is clarified, and consequently the historical evidences based on that content are more accurate.

The first step in determining the creation date of the manuscript book is to look at the scribal evidences. John Whitmer (fig. 2) was the primary scribe of the Book of Commandments and Revelations, writing in about 87 percent of the existing book, a figure that grows to about 96 percent if it is assumed he wrote on the missing leaves. Since he worked on other scribal projects during the same time period, a comparative analysis between these extant manuscripts and the BCR is possible. Whitmer scribed for Smith possibly as early as the Book of Mormon translation in 1829. From October through December 1830, he occasionally wrote while Smith dictated the Old Testament revision. In about December 1830, Whitmer also copied an Old Testament revision manuscript before going to Ohio. Known before the 1970s as Old Testament Revision 1, this manuscript, now known as Old Testament Revision 3, appears to be Whitmer's personal copy of the Bible revision Smith had dictated to that point. In Ohio, Smith received a revelation commanding Whitmer to “assist [Smith] in transcribing all things which shall be given [him]” (D&C 47:1). One of these



FIG. 2. John Whitmer (1802–1878), appointed LDS Church historian in March 1831, served as principal scribe to the Book of Commandments and Revelations. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

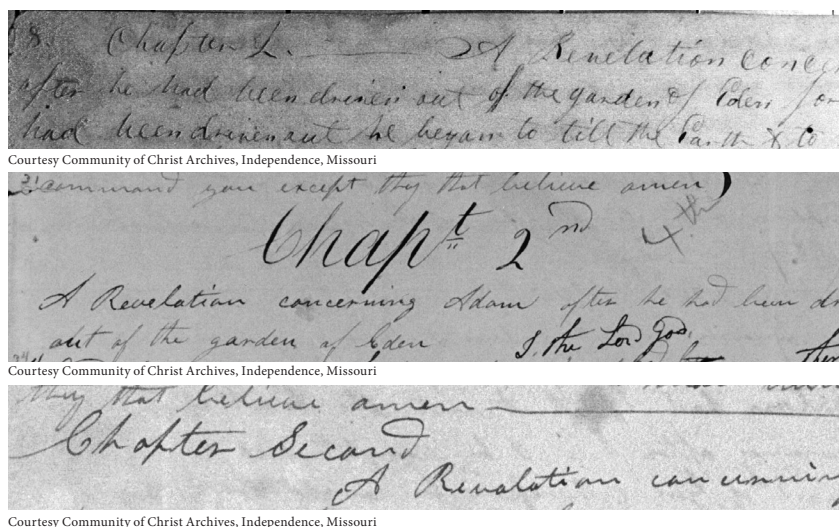


FIG. 3. Samples of Old Testament Revision manuscript 1, 2, and 3 of the heading of chapter two (current LDS Moses chapter 5) created in 1830 and 1831. The middle image (Old Testament Revision manuscript 2) stylistically compares closely with the headings found in the Book of Commandments and Revelations (compare, for instance, fig. 4).

transcription efforts was to again copy the Bible revision, beginning with the Old Testament material in March 1831 and continuing with the New Testament material in late September. Stylistically speaking, the relationship between these copies and the BCR is interesting at least, and at best perhaps provides a clue as to when the BCR was begun. Old Testament Revision 3 was likely begun earlier than Old Testament Revision 2 by about four months. Many elements within Whitmer's copied revelation volume match Old Testament Revision 2 rather than Old Testament Revision 3 (fig. 3). If the style and copying habits—that is, styles of writing, creation of headings, and the appearance of titles and summaries—of different projects influence one another, then one might assume that the BCR was created sometime after Old Testament Revision 3 and sometime around Old Testament Revision 2.

Another piece of scribal evidence that adds support to an early 1831 date is the dating of the revelations themselves. Whitmer's volume was made by copying earlier revelations—possibly recorded only on loose papers until then—into one volume.¹⁹ Whitmer, who was not present at the reception of many early revelations, did not provide specific dates on the early revelations copied into the volume, and he often supplied

only the year of the early revelations. This pattern of dating indicates that Whitmer might not have known the dates of the earlier revelations—meaning they were probably not recorded on the original revelations. As he progressed in his copying work, he began to supply the revelations with more specific dates. One would expect to find that once Whitmer “caught up” in copying the past revelations, he would begin to add days and not just months. He began doing so around what is now D&C 35, received in December 1830. If one looks at all the revelations from the beginning of the volume through November of 1830, there are twenty-six revelations with no specific dates. The next thirteen revelations (through D&C 44, dated February 1831) include four that do not have specific dates. There are thirty revelations from March 1831 to November 1831, and none of them carry generic dates—all have days, months, and years (fig. 4). This transition from generic to specific dating of revelations hints that Whitmer began

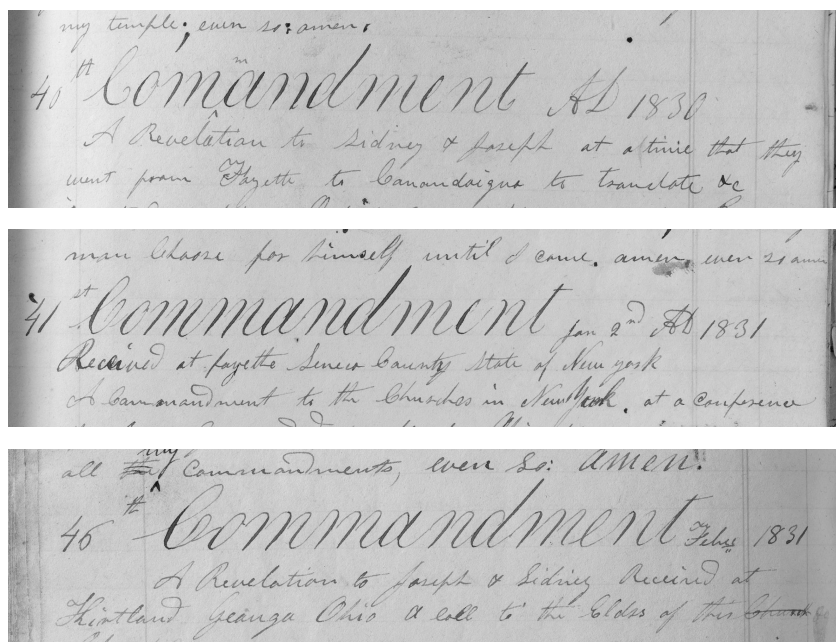


FIG. 4. Dates introduce many revelatory texts throughout the BCR. The revelations found at the beginning contain generic year-only dates (see top image, BCR, p. 49); as Whitmer progressed through the volume, many revelations bear month-specific or day-specific dates (see middle and bottom image, BCR, pp. 49 and 70). Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

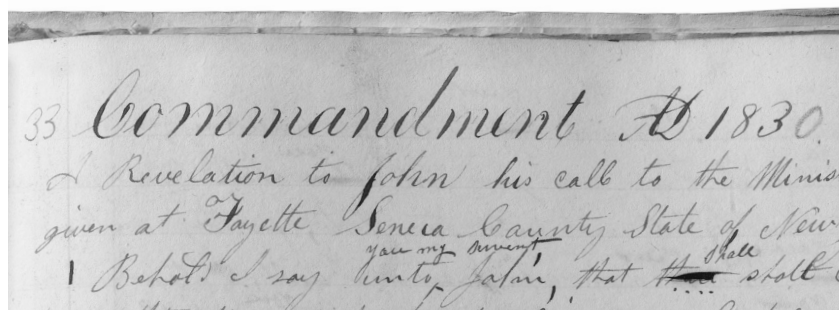


FIG. 5. Whitmer did not immediately inscribe the zero in “1830” either by mistake or due to his not knowing the date of this revelation (BCR, p. 43). Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

recording revelations contemporaneous to their reception in late winter 1830 to early spring 1831.²⁰

To expand this scribal evidence a bit further, one notices a common error in the manuscript book, one that could be facetiously called the “check writing in January” phenomenon. Often when writing dates at the beginning of the year, one slips and writes the previous year. Similarly, scribes who copy dated documents sometimes copy the current date, rather than the date found on the document from which they are copying. This misdating of documents is found several times in the BCR. What is now Doctrine and Covenants 30:9–11, found at the top of page 43 of the manuscript revelation book, originally carried the date of “AD 183[blank].” Later, with a pencil, a “o” was added (fig. 5). Several possibilities arise from Whitmer’s omission. First, it was a simple scribal error; maybe Whitmer simply did not finish the year. Another possibility hints at Whitmer deliberately leaving the spot blank, not knowing whether the revelation’s year of reception was 1830 or 1831. Scribes leave things intentionally blank for several reasons, one of which is to return to it at a later time when they know a particular piece of information. If Whitmer exhibited in the manuscript his confusion over the revelation’s reception, one can conclude that Whitmer was copying this revelation in 1831—not 1830. However, an accidental scribal omission must not be ruled out—Whitmer may have just failed to inscribe the final digit.

Two additional instances of Whitmer copying his present year as opposed to the year found on the document occur elsewhere in the volume, with more apparent meaning. When copying current section 28 on page 40, a revelation received sometime in September 1830, John Whitmer

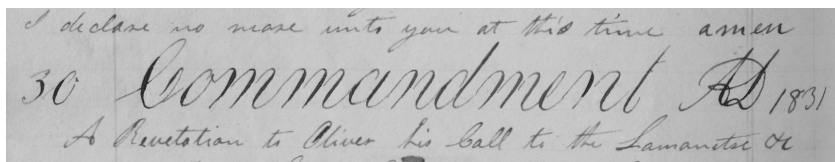


FIG. 6. Whitmer accidentally wrote “1831” when the revelation’s date should have been 1830 (BCR, p. 40). This scribal error indicates Whitmer wrote this portion of the BCR in 1831. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

misidentified the revelation’s date and wrote “AD 1831” (fig. 6). Another example is found even earlier, on page 32, when Whitmer copied section 24—received July 1830—and wrote “1831,” immediately correcting it to “1830” by writing a “o” over the “i” (fig. 7). No satisfactory explanation, other than that he was copying these revelations sometime in 1831, clarifies this scribal lapse. The likelihood of his writing “1831” while doing his copying in the year 1830 when the date should have indeed been 1830 stretches the imagination to the point of incredulity. The possibility of his writing “1831” while doing his copying in the year 1831, when the date should have been 1830, is a logical explanation and occurs frequently in scribal work.²¹ Therefore, Whitmer most likely copied sections 24 and 28 in the year 1831, which places his copying work of an early portion of the book during an early part of the Mormon Church’s history, but not contemporary to the dates of reception.

The definition of several archival terms must be used to explain the next evidence for dating the Book of Commandments and Revelations. The initial portions of the BCR have the characteristics of a ledger record rather than a journal record. A ledger book is a compilation of many different original sources usually compiled during one sitting. For instance, in financial records, an original record would be a receipt or bill of sale

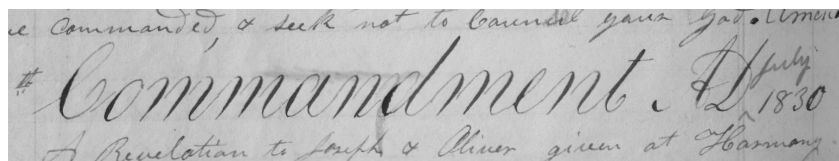


FIG. 7. Whitmer accidentally wrote “1831” whereupon he immediately corrected his error by writing a zero over the second one (BCR, p. 32). This scribal error indicates Whitmer wrote this portion of the BCR in 1831. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

recorded at the time of purchase. This and many other receipts would be brought together and compiled into a ledger record. The second important characteristic of a ledger volume is the nature of recording: the compilation almost always takes place sometime after the date of the original record. This compilation of a day's, a month's, and sometimes more than a year's worth of records usually occurs during a relatively short period of time. For instance, forty different receipts over a span of ten months may be recorded into a ledger volume on a single day.

On the other hand, a financial journal record—closely related to a daily journal of an individual's activities—is a daily recording of financial transactions. Over a ten-month period a person might have purchased food from a store twenty times, and the person would have recorded each of those purchases at different times. A journal record is not normally associated with copied original records; however, in analyzing the BCR, the important element of the journal record is a copied register of other more original records, as long as the register is updated on a day-by-day, week-by-week, or month-by-month basis as the documents come in rather than copied over a shorter period of time.

In other words, Whitmer continued to copy revelations into the BCR, but as opposed to when he copied fifteen revelations into the volume in one day (to provide a hypothetical scenario), he copied fifteen revelations into the volume at fifteen different times, depending on when Joseph Smith received a revelation and provided a copy of it to Whitmer. Each type of recording—whether it be ledger copying of twenty items in one sitting or journal copying of twenty items in twenty different sittings—is evident in the form, makeup, and “feel” of the manuscript (fig 8).

An understanding of ledger and journal records helps determine the creation date of the Book of Commandments and Revelations. Unless Whitmer began the copying work by April of 1829 (an impossibility since Whitmer was not acquainted with Joseph Smith at this time), there must have been a period of ledger-type recording when he was copying a number of previously received revelations into the book. This method of recording is apparent in the document. By contrast, once the record becomes a journal-type record—or in other words, when Whitmer began copying revelations as Joseph Smith received them—the volume takes on a different feel. The BCR turns out to be both types of record—both ledger and journal—depending on when various sections were written.

Whitmer did not begin the BCR in July 1828, which is the date of the first revelation recorded by Joseph Smith. Thus, whenever he started it, he had a number of revelations that needed to be copied into the volume over a relatively short period of time. This ledger method of record keeping is

Received on the 11 of Oct^r 1831 (No 7)

Hearken unto me saith the Lord, for verily I say unto you, for my servant Oliver's sake, it is not wisdom in me, that he should be interested with the commandments & the maney which he shall carry unto the Land of Zion, except one go with him, who will be true & faithful; ^{wherefore} I the Lord willlett that my servant John (^{Whitman}) ^{shall} go with my servant Oliver, & also that he observe to continue in writing & making a history of all the important things which he shall observe & know, concerning my Church; & also that he receive counsel & assistance from my servant Oliver, & others; ^{also} that my ^{servants} ~~servants~~ ^{which} are placed in the East, should send forth their accounts to their stewards; for the Land of Zion shall be a seat & a place to receive & do all these things; nevertheless let my servant John travel many times, from place to place, & from Church to Church, that he may the more easily obtain knowledge; & Preaching & expounding, writing, copying, & selecting, & obtaining all things, which shall be for the good of the Church, & for the rising generations which shall grow up on the Land of Zion, to possess it from generation to generation, forever & ever, Amen.

25 A Revelation given at Hiram Cottage Co. Dec 10th 1831

Of the Church of Christ in the Land of Zion in addition to the Church Laws respecting Church business, verily I say unto you, saith the Lord of hosts, there must needs be ~~preaching~~ ^{preaching} & also to reside over those who are of the office of an Elder; & also Priests over those who are of the office of a Priest; & also Teachers over those who are of the office of a Teacher, in like manner. ^{There} also the deacons; wherefore from Deacons to Teachers, from Teachers to Priests, from Priests to Elders, ^{as they are appointed according to the Church} & ^{ordinances & commandments} then I commit the high Priest hood, which is the greatest of all; wherefore it must needs be that one be appointed of the high Priest hood to preside over the Priest hood; & he shall be called President of the high Priest hood of the Church; ^{for} any other ^{high} words the Presiding high Priest ^{shall} have over the high Priesthood of the Church; ^{from} the same ^{by} the giving up of the hands; wherefore the office of a Bishop is not equal ^{but} ^{the} office of a Bishop is in administering all ^{things} temporal things; nevertheless a Bishop must be chosen from the high Priesthood; that he may be set apart unto the ministering of temporal things, having a knowledge of them by the Spirit of truth; also to be a judge in ^{all} ^{the} ^{business} of the Church, to sit in judgement

FIG. 8. As time elapsed between entries within the volume, the more likely breaks in ink, format, and style would occur in the makeup of the manuscript. BCR page 122 provides an example of one such discontinuity of form. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

evidenced by the few breaks and the continuity of the text within certain portions of the manuscript.

When Whitmer caught up with his copying, he no longer copied many revelations at once but instead copied revelations into the volume as Joseph Smith received them and provided them to Whitmer. This time elapse enhances the likelihood for more breaks in the manuscript or a discontinuity of the text, revealing which portion of the manuscript represents a journal record. Breaks can be seen in a shift of the handwriting style, the ink color or flow, and the sharpness or dullness of the quill. The increased frequency of these breaks indicates an elapsed period of time in copying between revelations in a journal-style record.

The transition from a ledger record to a journal record is a key indication of creation date. Because Whitmer arranged the texts chronologically, the transition of the ledger record to a journal record approximates the time Whitmer began the book. One finds that the transition from ledger to journal record took place circa March to June 1831. In the first thirty-six revelations dated April 1829 to February 1831 (pages 12–70), the copying shows only two obvious disruptions in flow, style, and form—a strong hint that Whitmer was employing ledger-type record keeping for this portion. The next eleven revelations from March to June 8, 1831 (71–90), show six clear disruptions between revelations, more indicative of a journal record. However, something unexpected happens after June 1831: only three clear disruptions occur in the eleven revelations from June 14 to October 1831 (91–112), hinting that Whitmer returned to a ledger-type recording.

Why does the BCR shift back to a record with characteristics of copying many items at once during the summer to early fall of 1831? External evidence explains the apparent inconsistency. During the summer of 1831, Joseph Smith and others from Kirtland, Ohio, visited Missouri to strengthen the Church there and reveal the location of Zion. While in Missouri, Joseph Smith dictated a number of revelations, which were then copied into the volume by Whitmer. Because the historical record indicates that John Whitmer did not accompany the group to Missouri,²² he could not have copied the revelations into the manuscript volume until after the members of the group returned to Ohio in late summer of 1831—the date of the first revelation of the next ledger-style record. Whitmer's absence in Missouri necessitated "catching up" on revelation copying, and therefore the volume again displays the characteristics of a ledger record.

November brought the reception of eight more revelations copied into the BCR. Of these eight November revelations (113–125), seven obvious disruptions occur between revelations, indicating that this portion of the volume is clearly a journal record. While the current evidence does

not—and possibly never will—definitively prove an 1831 creation date, the data strongly point to the conclusion that Whitmer first began work on the Book of Commandments and Revelations in the spring or early summer of 1831.

Provenance: Use

In the early part of March 1831, John Whitmer was called by revelation to “write & keep a regulal history, & assist my servant Joseph in Transcribing all things which shall be given.”²³ By copying the revelations into the manuscript book, Whitmer would obviously be fulfilling the “transcribing” portion of the revelation, but the manuscript revelation book also appears to fit his calling as historian. Whitmer’s role as historian becomes apparent in the manuscript volume. The revelations bear historical headings providing immediate background for the reception of the revelations, thus placing these revelations in their historical context.²⁴

The format Whitmer adopted to present the revelations within the BCR provides some clue to the original intent of the book. Even though the book was eventually used to print the revelations in Missouri and Ohio, its original purpose was not a printer’s manuscript from which to publish revelations—the decision to publish the revelations did not come until November 1831. Unlike the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon, the sole purpose of which seems to have been for use in the printing process, it appears that the manuscript revelation book was originally created as a comprehensive, clean-copy register of revelations in one volume.

The spring of 1831 as a likely creation date marks an important era in John Whitmer’s personal life. For most early revelations in the volume, Whitmer provided a title (usually “Commandment”), assigned a number (thereby ordering the revelations), and gave a date (at times quite generic). In somewhat fewer instances, Whitmer also gave a historical introduction explaining the immediate reception of the text. This format reveals much about the early Church’s record-keeping mentality and the views early Saints had about their sacred texts—a topic this paper can only briefly discuss. For instance, ordering texts chronologically and numbering those texts indicates an attempt to place the many revelations into a manageable whole—one which readers would find useful. The assignment of a title to each revelation suggests an attempt to categorize, familiarize, or otherwise understand the terminology placed upon these sacred texts. The attempt to date every item, even the most generic terms (“AD 1830”), might mean that Whitmer was attempting to place these texts in a chronological time frame. In the early days of the Church, Mormons were beginning to situate

the revelations within their recent history and among the other sacred texts, and Whitmer was capturing this personal and churchwide scriptural fortification on paper. By stringing these documents together with brief bridge narratives, Whitmer was creating a documentary history, the format also used in the early portions of the Whitmer history and the final Joseph Smith history. The precise influence, if any, of the BCR on these and other works is unknown, but its status as a history should not be ignored.

John Whitmer continued to copy revelations into the volume in a chronological fashion throughout 1831. However, following the revelations received in November 1831, the book is not strictly chronological in nature—a fact with a rather practical explanation. The Book of Commandments and Revelations was now in Independence, Missouri, and it took months for the revelations, which were received by Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, to travel by mail or other carriers approximately one thousand miles to John Whitmer in Missouri. The time lapse began to affect the manuscript book not only through breaks in the copying, but also in the order of revelations. The revelations were not supplied to Whitmer constantly, and he copied them into the volume as time and means permitted. By this time, however, the volume was not simply used as a place to store revelations for reference in Missouri. A specific reason brought the BCR to the American frontier: publication.

In July 1831, Joseph Smith received a revelation that appointed William W. Phelps as printer to the Church, to be assisted by Oliver Cowdery (D&C 57:11–13).²⁵ As with other early Mormon record-keeping efforts, the first consideration was to publish these revelations. In November 1831, a conference of the elders of the Church deliberated the issue of how to proceed. The attendees were not governed by caution; they decided to publish ten thousand copies of a book of revelations—twice the print run of the Book of Mormon.²⁶ A council declared that the “book of Revelation” to be published would be “the foundation of the Church & the salvation of the world & the Keys of the mysteries of the Kingdom & the riches of Eternity to the Church.”²⁷ The printed title page provides one glimpse of the purpose of the book: “A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ.” The notice of the revelation book in the Church newspaper told of another purpose: that the Church “may lift up their heads and rejoice, and praise his holy name, that they are permitted to live in the days when he returns to his people his everlasting covenant, to prepare them for his presence.”²⁸ The revelatory preface to the published work contained the words of the Lord concerning the revelations’ import: “Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them, shall all be fulfilled. . . . For behold, and lo, the Lord

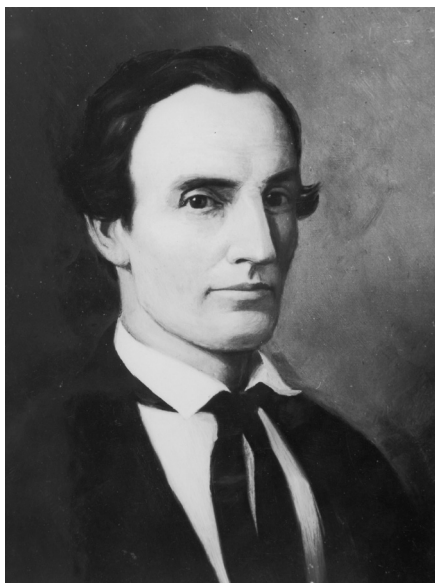


FIG. 9. Oliver Cowdery (1806–1850) was appointed by a conference of leading Latter-day Saints to carry the revelations to Missouri and print them there. Cowdery, at times with John Whitmer's help, also inscribed six revelations in the BCR. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever: Amen.”²⁹ The divine communications were meant to govern the millennial Church until the Savior's return.

Oliver Cowdery (fig. 9), as assistant Church printer, was appointed by a council of leaders to take the “commandments and the moneys” with him to Missouri where a press would be established (D&C 69:1).³⁰ The creator and custodian of the BCR was later commanded by revelation to accompany Cowdery.³¹ Before leaving, the council appointed Joseph Smith to “correct those errors or mistakes which he may discover by the holy Spirit while reviewing the revelations & commandments & also the fulness of the scriptures.”³²

While the Book of Commandments and Revelations is replete with editorial markings, most served to modernize biblical language or clarify existing language, not to correct “errors or mistakes.” Joseph Smith's volume of handwriting pales in comparison to Rigdon's and Whitmer's editorial changes. Smith likely delegated the responsibility of “correcting” to Rigdon, Whitmer, or Cowdery—or to all three. Despite Smith's limited or nonextant effort to “correct” the revelations, in mid-November 1831 he “consecrate[d] these brethren [Cowdery and Whitmer] & the sacred writings . . . to the Lord,”³³ and the pair carried the Book of Commandments and Revelations to Missouri to be used in the publication process.

In Missouri, Cowdery and Whitmer, with the help of Church printer William W. Phelps, published revelations in both *The Evening and the Morning Star* and the Book of Commandments. Every revelation but one (the latter portion of current D&C 42) printed in the *Star* is found in the BCR—many bearing editing marks (fig. 10). Every revelation but one

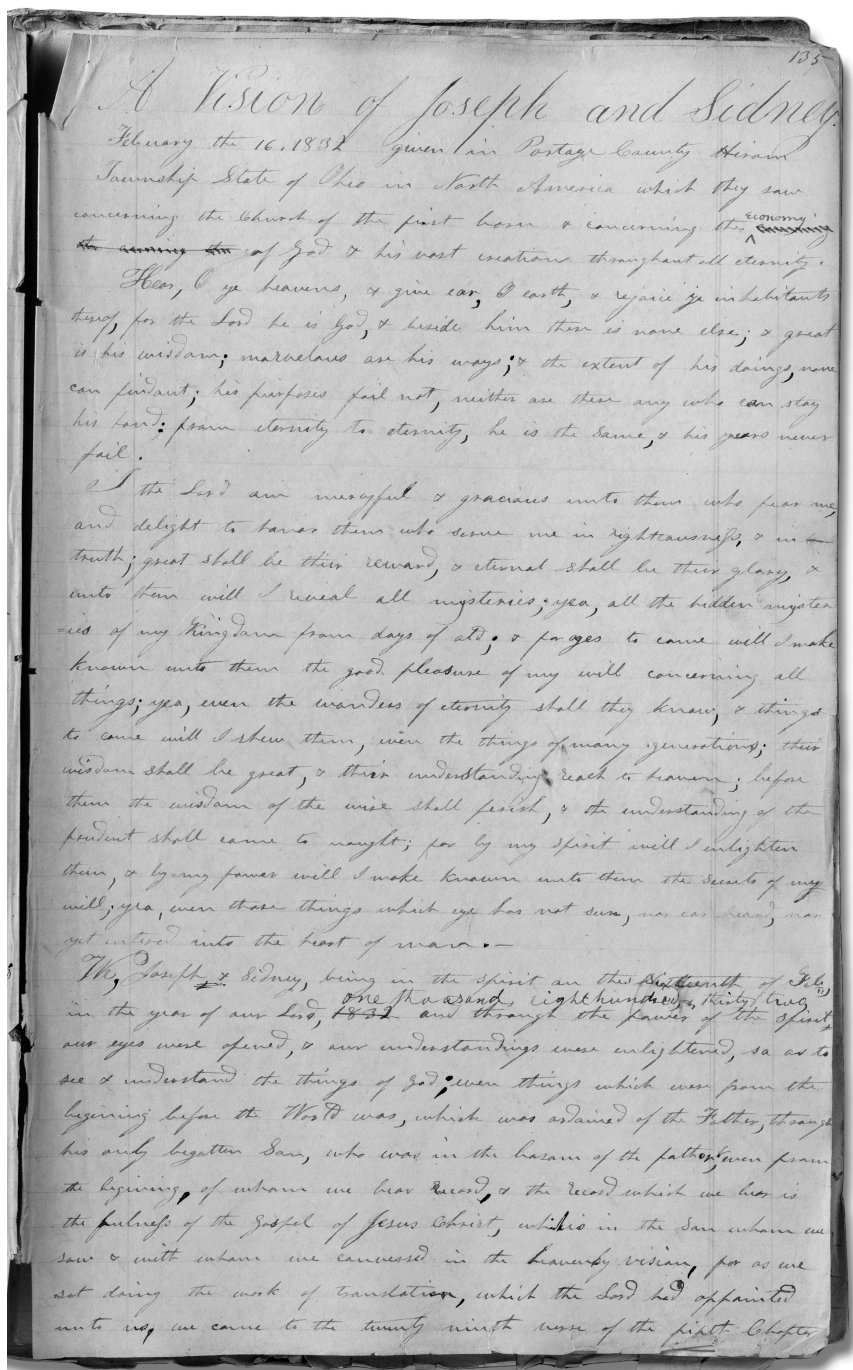


FIG. 10. The punctuation in darker ink was added to the BCR text and was incorporated in the publication of "The Vision" in July 1832 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star* (BCR, p. 135a). Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

(D&C 12) printed in the 1833 Book of Commandments is found in the manuscript revelation book—though fewer bear editing marks.

Two of the three people known to have worked on the publication of the 1833 Book of Commandments had previous, albeit perhaps limited, printing experience. William W. Phelps, the most experienced printer of early Mormonism, had previously been editor of several newspapers before joining the Church.³⁴ Oliver Cowdery also had experience in setting type and helping produce the Book of Mormon at the Grandin print shop in Palmyra, New York.³⁵ Although few primary sources describe the printing activity in Missouri, historians can reconstruct what likely occurred by comparing contemporary non-LDS printing practices and known Mormon printing practices. Such comparison yields an understanding of both the mechanical production and the cultural, social, and theological meaning the Latter-day Saints attached to printing.³⁶ A thorough analysis of the printing of the Book of Commandments is beyond the scope of this article. Yet two questions with regard to the Book of Commandments and Revelations provide a focus into the printing operations of Missouri: First, how was the manuscript volume used in printing the Book of Commandments? And second, did the editors draw from other material when compiling or editing the printed revelations?

Establishing the *when* and *how* of the editorial emendations of the Book of Commandments and Revelations is an important step in understanding the volume's use in the publication of revelations in Missouri. Rigdon's handwriting in the majority of the Book of Commandments and Revelations was inscribed in Ohio in 1831, before the volume was carried to Missouri.³⁷ Whitmer and Cowdery may have made some corrections in Ohio, but they had more time for reviewing the revelations while in Missouri. The heavy ink of William W. Phelps supplying verse numbers and punctuation accenting the BCR must have been done in Missouri as they were preparing for publication. A few trends in the actual editing of the text stand out. Whitmer often restored the original wording of many of the revelations that had been adjusted by Rigdon. For example, as originally recorded, a phrase out of current section 33 reads, "remember they shall have faith in me." Rigdon altered the reading so that it read, "remember you must have faith in me." Whitmer canceled Rigdon's wording and wrote in "they shall" to revert the wording back to the original, which is as it reads today (D&C 33:12).³⁸ Many similar examples fill the pages of the Book of Commandments and Revelations. This return to a conservative editing style might be explained by a letter Smith sent to Phelps wherein Smith counseled the Church's printer to "be careful not to alter the sense of any of [the revelations] for he that adds or diminishes to the prop[h]ecies

must come under the condemnation written therein.”³⁹ Smith must have felt trepidation at leaving the printing of sacred texts to others’ hands—no matter how capable those individuals might have been.

While the handwriting of later editors provides a necessary glimpse of how the BCR was used for subsequent printing, not every revelation eventually published in the printed book had been marked up in the manuscript book. For instance, current section 26 and the beginning of section 25 are found on the same page of the manuscript revelation book. Section 26 is edited with punctuation and versification, but once section 25 begins, all editing marks cease (fig. 11).⁴⁰ Another example complicates the puzzle. The first several pages of current section 63 found on pages 104–8 of the BCR bear inserted punctuation and versification (through the middle of page 106) (fig. 12). The next two pages contain no added verses to the revelation, but the last five lines of the revelation have three verse numbers added (fig. 13).⁴¹ In fact, of the fifty-seven revelations published in the Book of Commandments that are also currently found in the BCR, twenty-six of them have no editorial versification added in the BCR.⁴² If the editors of the Book of Commandments were being consistent in preparing the manuscript texts with punctuation and versification, then there must have been other copies of revelations to work with in the Missouri print shop. The editors clearly accessed multiple sources from which to provide material for the printed edition of the revelations. For instance, current section 12 is not found anywhere in Whitmer’s revelation book, but it is found as chapter 11 in the Book of Commandments. Now that a significant source of the printing effort in Missouri is available, scholars can make an in-depth study of that publishing history.

As mentioned earlier, the original volume was a bound blank book, but the volume was at some point disassembled—likely done purposely. The outer boards of the volume are no longer extant; instead, a heavy piece of cardstock paper encloses the volume’s pages. Several pages are missing from the volume held at the LDS Church History Library; some of them are held at the Community of Christ Library-Archives, and others are nonextant. Other pages bear clear marks indicating they were cut from the volume but are currently still housed within the volume. It appears that pages cut or torn from the volume were removed but then reinserted, where most remain today. The edges of many of these reinserted pages appear worn, but they do not appear to have been through damage such as the destruction of the printing office at Independence in 1833. The current paperboard cover contains pinholes along the spine that match up to holes and a piece of thread found in remnants of the fifth gathering of pages. The sewing would have been done to attach the cover to the volume by fixing

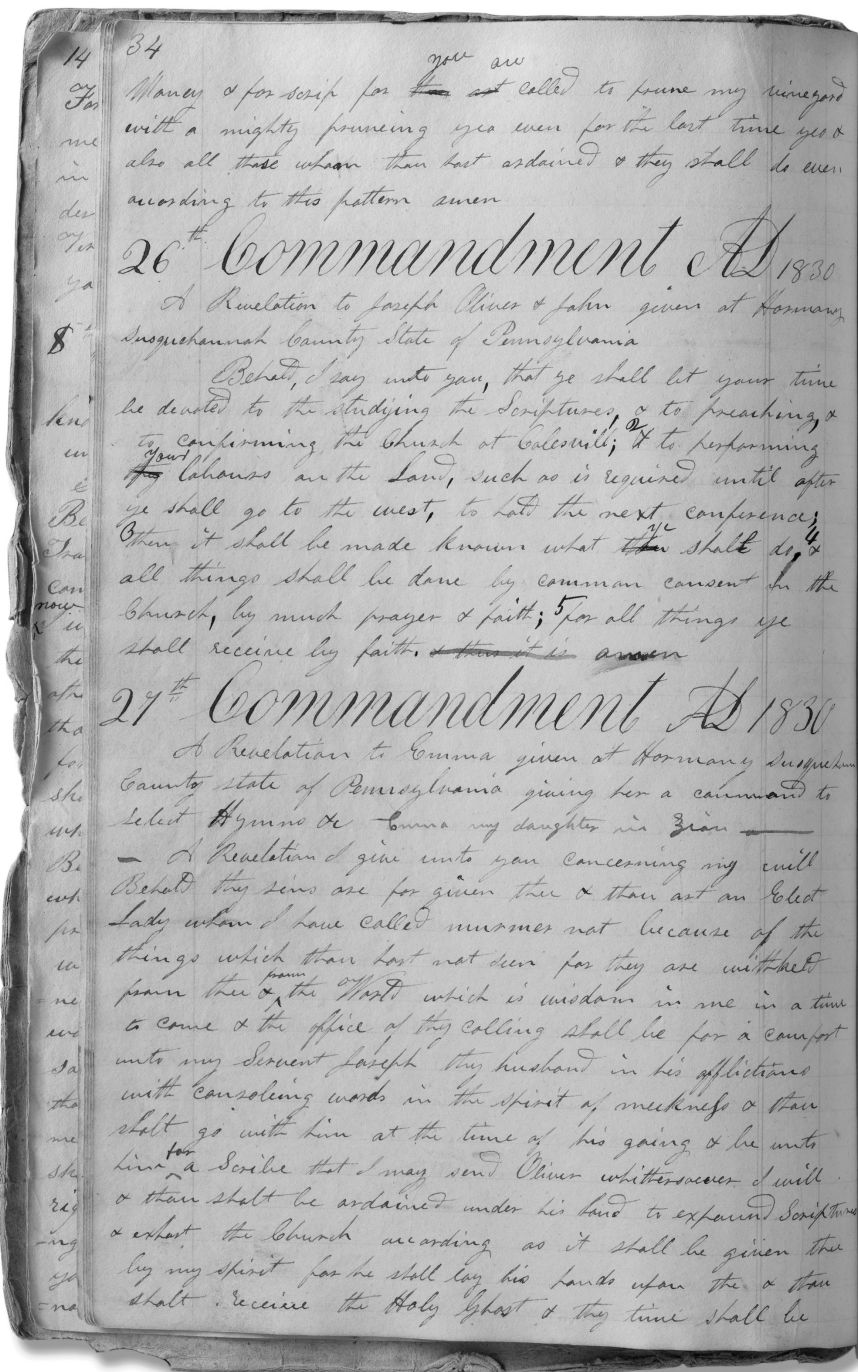


FIG. 11. Scribes did not equally prepare all material in the BCR for publication. Current Doctrine and Covenants Section 26 (under the heading of “26th Commandment”) was edited in preparation for the publication of the Book of Commandments. Current Section 25 (under the heading of “27th Commandment”) bears no such editing. These revelations were presented adjacent in the Book of Commandments as Chapters 27 and 26 respectively. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

it to a middle (in this case, the fifth) gathering. Keeping the fifth gathering between the other gatherings would in turn preserve the cover around all the gatherings. However, the pages from the fifth gathering were later cut and are currently loose, rendering the makeshift attachment of the cover obsolete. All these patterns of use—disassembling covers, then protecting the volume with a temporary cover, and then again cutting pages from the fifth gathering—indicate gradual disassembling of the volume rather than a one-time, abrupt removal of the boards and inside pages.

There are several possibilities as to when the volume was taken apart. Either in Missouri or in the printing of the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* in Kirtland (or both), the printers might have separated some of the leaves from the volume in order to set type from one sheet rather than having to handle a bulky and heavy two-hundred-page manuscript book. The missing leaves (both nonextant and those at the Community of Christ Library-Archives) were probably not permanently separated from the book until after the 1835 publication process. This is confirmed by the fact that one of the separated pages held at the Community of Christ Library-Archives has notations for the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* publication. This 1835 notation is similar to several other notations on the extant pages within the volume. So if the pages were separated in Missouri, they were likely reinserted before Ohio and then separated again after Ohio. While this intricate scenario remains a possibility, a one-time removal of the pages after the Ohio publication would compel a less complex set of assumptions.

Following the forced abandonment of publication of the *Book of Commandments* in 1833, the whereabouts of the BCR can only be surmised through available sources and historical events. Custodianship likely remained with those involved with the printing of the *Book of Commandments*: John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and William W. Phelps. Because Whitmer continued to update the volume as late as summer 1834, we can safely assume that it was he and not Phelps or Cowdery who continued to possess and create portions of the volume. In fact, the BCR was continually updated in Missouri, likely making it the most comprehensive register for the Missouri church and certainly the most complete collection of manuscript revelations currently extant. By 1834, no more revelations were copied into the manuscript volume because the volume was full. When Cowdery began work on the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants* with others in Kirtland, it is evident that he did not have access to the BCR—the volume was likely still with John Whitmer in Missouri.⁴³ Whitmer did not come to Ohio until 1835—just months before the printed *Doctrine and Covenants* became available to the public. The printing of the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, like the *Book of Commandments*, should be discussed elsewhere

Which was shewn unto mine Apostles upon the mount
 of which account, the fullness ye have not yet received. ²⁸ ~~new~~
^{newly} I say unto you, that as I said that I would make ~~it~~
 my will, ³⁰ ~~that I will make it known unto you~~
 know unto you not by the way of commandment, for there are
 many who observe not to keep my commandments, but unto
 him that keepeth my commandments, I will give the mysteries
 of my kingdom, & the same shall be in him a well of living
 water, springing up unto ~~eternal~~ ^{everlasting} life. ³¹ ~~new~~ behold this is the will
 of the Lord your God, concerning his saints, that they should assemble
 themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste but there should
 be confusion, which bringeth pestilence. ³² ~~behold~~ the land of Zion & the
 Lord hath it in mine own hand. ³³ ~~nevertheless~~ of the Lord rendereth
 unto ~~his~~ the things which are sown: ³⁴ ~~therefore~~ the Lord will let
 that you should purchase the lands, that you may have advantage
 of the word that you may have claim on the word that they may
 not be stirred up unto anger for sown putteth it into their hearts
 to ~~anger~~ ^{against you} & to the sowing of blood wherefore the land of Zion shall
 not be obtained but by purchase or by blood otherwise there is none
 inheritance for you & if by purchase behold you are blessed & if by
 blood as ye are positioned to shed blood so your enemies are upon
 you & ye shall be scourged from city to city & from Synagogue to
 Synagogue & but few shall stand to receive an inheritance of the
 Lord I am angry with the wicked I am holding my spirit from the
 inhabitants of the earth I have sworn in my wrath & decreed wars
 upon the face of the earth & the wicked shall slay the wicked & fear
 shall come upon every man & the saints also shall be by escape
 nevertheless of the Lord are with them & will come down in ~~heaven~~
 from the presence of ^{my Father} ~~God~~ & consume the wicked with
 unconquerable fire & behold this is not yet last by & by wherefore
 seeing that I the Lord have decreed all these things upon the face
 of the earth I will let that my saints should be assembled upon
 the land of Zion & that every man should take righteousness in his
 hands & faithfulness upon his reins & lift a warning voice unto
 the inhabitants of the earth & declare both by word & by flight
 that dissolution shall come upon the wicked wherefore let my
 Disciples in ¹⁴³ ~~Christland~~ arrange their temporal concerns which

FIGS. 12 and 13. Pages 104 through 108 of the BCR, current Doctrine and Covenants Section 63, contain intermittent editing marks, hinting that typesetters or other printers of *The Evening and the Morning Star* and the 1833 Book of

to come, even in the day of the coming of the Son of man,
 & until that ^{hour} ~~time~~ there will be foolish virgins among
 the wise, & at that hour cometh an entire separation of the
 righteous & the wicked, & in that day will I send mine angels
 to pluck out the wicked, & cast them into unquenchable fire.
 & now behold verily I say unto you I the Lord am not pleased
 with my servant ^{Joseph} ~~Joseph~~ ^{Rigdon} ~~himself~~ in his heart &
 received not ~~Joseph~~ but grieved the spirit wherefore his
 writing is not acceptable unto the Lord & he shall make an
 other & if the Lord ^{shall} ~~require~~ it not he standeth no longer in the
 office which ^{he} ~~was~~ appointed him, & again verily I say unto
 you, let those who desire in their hearts in misdeeds to
 remain sinners to repentance let them be ordained unto this
 power for this is a day of warning & not a day of mercy
 words for I the Lord am not to be mocked in the last days
 behold I am from above & my power lieth beneath I am over
 all & in all & searcheth all things & the days cometh that
 all things shall be subject unto me. Behold I am alpha &
 Omega even Jesus Christ wherefore let all men ^{have} ~~be~~
 have they take my name in their lips for behold verily I
 say that among these be who are under this condemnation
 who use the name of the Lord & use it in vain having
 not authority wherefore let the Church repent ^{of their sins} & I the Lord
 will save them otherwise they shall be cut off remember
 that. That ^{which} ~~is~~ cometh from above is sacred & must be spoken
 with care & by commandment of the spirit & in this there is no
 condemnation & ye receive the spirit through prayer wherefore
 without this there remaineth condemnation. ⁷⁰ ~~let~~ my servant
^{Joseph} ~~Joseph~~ ^{Rigdon} ~~himself~~ ^{be} ~~be~~ them a home as they are taught through
 prayer by the spirit. ⁷¹ ~~these~~ things remain to overcome through
 patience, that such may receive a more exceeding & eternal
 weight of glory; otherwise, a greater condemnation. Amen

67 Revelation Kirtland Sept 11th 1831

Directions to the Elders &c &c = " " " "

Behold thus saith the Lord your God unto you, O ye Elders

in depth; this paper will only focus on the BCR's minor role in the 1835 printing project.⁴⁴

Unlike the numerous redactions made for the publication of the Book of Commandments, those additions to the manuscript text for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants publication are limited. Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, Joseph Smith, and others who worked on the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants used other printed and manuscript versions of the revelations, including the Kirtland Revelation Book and the Book of Commandments. Redactions in the BCR correspond to lengthy additions found in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. These include the use of asterisks and pinholes found in the manuscript near the place of addition. Neither of these methods contained the actual text to be added, but likely alerted copyists or typesetters where to include the text that was on a separate piece of paper, either pinned directly to the text or found elsewhere. Similarly, several revelations bear markers over proper nouns replaced in the 1835 publication with code names.⁴⁵ Often revelations identified individuals simply by their first names; last names are inserted in many cases throughout the BCR that were then incorporated into the 1835 publication. A few revelations bear paragraph or verse markers, and word changes were occasionally made for the 1835 publication. On the whole, the BCR played a supplementary role in the publication of the 1835 Doctrine in Covenants, though still an important one.

Provenance: Chain of Custody

Following the publication of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the Book of Commandments and Revelations remained obscure for quite some time. The volume itself can be used to determine the chain of custody through 1835, when Whitmer and others ceased writing in the volume. It is unknown who possessed the volume from the Kirtland period until the Saints settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. Based on the likely custody of other similar records, perhaps Whitmer or Cowdery retained the volume, but they both left the Church in 1838 and would likely have retained possession of it, as Whitmer did with his copy of the Joseph Smith Bible revision manuscript and as Cowdery did with the printer's copy of the Book of Mormon manuscript. Phelps might have retained the volume and returned it to the Church when he returned to church activity in Nauvoo. Another scenario perhaps more likely is that Joseph Smith and his scribes held custody of the volume until Smith's death in 1844.

There is a possible reference to the volume in the 1846 inventory of Church documents made previous to the exodus: "Rough Book – Revelation

History &c.”⁴⁶ If this inventory entry indeed refers to the Book of Commandments and Revelations, it means that the volume came with the Saints to Utah in 1847 with the other documents of historical importance. The boxes containing historical material were unpacked in Utah beginning on June 7, 1853.⁴⁷ The BCR is known to have been in the Church Historian’s Office by the mid-1850s, when Leo Hawkins (a historian’s office employee from 1853 through 1856) provided a label to the spine of the cover; the volume was likely with the other historical material at that time. The compilers of the Joseph Smith history in Nauvoo and Utah, if they had access to the volume, used the volume randomly and modestly to correct or add dates to otherwise undated revelations.⁴⁸

Thomas Bullock transcribed two copies of the prophecy on wars given to Joseph Smith on December 25, 1832 (D&C 87) in the mid-1850s from the Book of Commandments and Revelations.⁴⁹ Based on a discourse he gave in 1855, Orson Pratt seemed to have seen the BCR’s copy of the “pure language” document or a copy similar to it.⁵⁰ Two inventories of the Church Historian’s Office historical material, dated 1858 and 1878, list the Book of Commandments and Revelations by title.⁵¹ B. H. Roberts, in compiling what would become the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, did not appear to know about the text of the Canadian copyright revelation when he provided commentary of that episode in his history.⁵² About the same time Roberts was compiling his history, another prominent individual at the Church Historian’s Office, Andrew Jenson, also seemed unaware of the existence of the volume. An entry in the Journal History, dated November 3, 1831, reads, “The Book of Commandments and Revelations was to be dedicated by prayer.”⁵³ Jenson wrote in the margin “Wrong” and underlined the words “Book of Commandments,” apparently not knowing of the existence of a manuscript with the title of “Book of Commandments and Revelations.”

That two prominent figures in the Church Historian’s Office did not seem to know about the BCR at the turn of the twentieth century corresponds to the fact that another prominent individual likely did. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote a letter in 1907 and hinted at knowing about the source used to print the Book of Commandments.⁵⁴ Because the Book of Commandments and Revelations is listed on a 1970 inventory of the Joseph Fielding Smith safe, the question is not *if* the manuscript ended up in Joseph Fielding Smith’s papers, but *when*.⁵⁵ Smith served as Church historian and recorder and also served in the Quorum of the Twelve and First Presidency—all offices that exact considerable demands. If the BCR remained in the personal possession of Joseph Fielding Smith early on, and

if the manuscript was unknown to others, this would explain the manuscript's absence in the twentieth century historiography.⁵⁶

The pages now held by the Community of Christ have their own history once they were separated from the volume. The pages were likely separated before John Whitmer or Oliver Cowdery's excommunication from the LDS Church in 1838. A secondhand source states that the leaves were held by Oliver Cowdery until he gave them to David Whitmer just before Cowdery's death in 1850.⁵⁷ However, the leaves were grouped with other papers held by John Whitmer (including the Book of John Whitmer and the copy of the Joseph Smith Bible revision), possibly indicating that the leaves were in Whitmer's possession until his death in 1878.⁵⁸ Regardless, the pages transferred to David Whitmer eventually came into the possession of George Schweich, David Whitmer's grandson-in-law. Schweich sold these pages to the RLDS Church, where they have remained ever since. Now these pages, along with the volume from which they were separated, have been published in the Revelation and Translation series of the Joseph Smith Papers, allowing historians and interested readers unprecedented access to the revelation texts of Joseph Smith.

The important Book of Commandments and Revelations had a quiet beginning, an important and convoluted printing history, and just as quiet a retirement. The publication of this manuscript volume provides scholars with unparalleled access to earlier and unknown revelation texts, a better understanding of the revelatory publication process, more insight into the revelatory record-keeping practices, and a richer understanding of the changes of the revelation texts. When scholars approach the volume not simply as a register of important religious texts for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but also as an artifact with the potential to exhibit the attitude early Latter-day Saints held toward their sacred texts, they can understand more than just the texts. The Mormons painstakingly copied, published, and incorporated the revelation texts into their lives. John Whitmer did remarkable work in transcribing the revelations of Joseph Smith and keeping a record or history for future use by today's generations. Thus a clearer understanding of the Book of Commandments and Revelations comes through a proper study of its provenance, history, and use, and such an understanding will bring scholars face to face with the seriousness with which Mormons approached their religious texts—as texts to copy, as documents to publish, as a foundation upon which to build and spread the gospel, and, most importantly, as revelations that gave them directions from God.

Robin Scott Jensen (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) is coeditor of volume three in the Journals series and volume one in the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Jensen wishes to express his gratitude to many individuals on the Joseph Smith Papers Project and elsewhere who gave their time to discuss matters relating to the BCR and who read earlier drafts of this paper. Especially helpful were Christy Best, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Jeffery O. Johnson, Ronald K. Esplin, Dean C. Jessee, Nathan N. Waite, Glenn Rowe, Ronald Romig, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper. Thanks also to Emily W. Jensen, who carefully read and commented on earlier drafts of this paper.

1. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009).

2. Book of Commandments and Revelations, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 30–31, 144. Several reminiscent accounts of the Canadian copyright revelation by those close to the event have provided sources for historians for many years. See Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, February 2, 1848, Library and Archives of the Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri, hereafter Community of Christ Library-Archives; David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ by a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (Richmond, Mo.: By the author, 1887), 30–32; William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July 1872, Community of Christ Library-Archives; and William E. McLellin Notebook, John L. Traughber Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. For several scholarly discussions, see 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), 1:162–66; Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 20; and Richard E. Bennett and Daniel H. Olsen, “Of Printers, Prophets, and Politicians: William Lyon Mackenzie, Mormonism, and Early Printing in Upper Canada,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Ohio and Upper Canada*, ed. Guy L. Dorius, Craig K. Manscill, and Craig James Ostler (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2006), 177–208. For the reference to the pure language document, see Orson Pratt, “The Holy Spirit and the Godhead” in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 2:342 (February 18, 1855).

3. The Society of American Archivists define provenance as “1. The origin or source of something. – 2. Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection.” Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), s.v. “provenance,” available at www.archivists.org/glossary.

4. The Society of American Archivists defines content as “the intellectual substance of a document, including text, data, symbols, numerals, images, and sound.” Context is defined as “the organizational, functional, and operational circumstances surrounding materials’ creation, receipt, storage, or use, and its relationship to other materials.” Pearce-Moses, *Glossary*, s.v. “content” and “context.”

5. See, for example, the account of a visit to David Whitmer by Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith: "According to the best of his [Whitmer's] knowledge, there never was but the one copy." *Deseret News*, November 16, 1878, quoted in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 44. James H. Hart recalls an interview with Whitmer: "I remarked that [the manuscript] looked very much as though it was the original copy, and it would in fact take considerable more evidence than I had seen to convince me that it was not the original and only written copy." Hart continued, "Mr. Whitmer said, 'I know, positively, that it is so.'" *Deseret News*, March 25, 1884, quoted in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 111.

6. See Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book: Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 459, for the revelation Joseph Smith received to make a second copy of the Book of Mormon manuscript.

7. See Royal Skousen, "John Gilbert's 1892 Account of the 1830 Printing of the Book of Mormon," in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 383–405; and Royal Skousen, "The Book of Mormon Critical Text Project," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1993), 65–75.

8. From December 10, 1830, through March 7, 1831, JS dictated the majority of Old Testament manuscript 1. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2004), 63–64.

9. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001); and Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001).

10. Most of these documents could be considered religious, or at the very least devotional, but not scriptural. My count of manuscript pages includes the following documents: The "Caractors" document commonly known as the Anthon Transcript (Community of Christ Library-Archives); two land transactions between Smith and his father-in-law, Isaac Hale (both held in the Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library); the copyright registration form for the Book of Mormon (Joseph Smith's retained copy is now in the Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library); and the preface to the Book of Mormon (found in Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript*, 1:50–51); Letters to Oliver Cowdery, October 22, 1829 (Joseph Smith Letterbook, 1:9, in Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library), the Colesville saints, August 20, 1830, and December 2, 1830 (both as copied into the Newel Knight Autobiography, private possession), Martin Harris, February 22, 1831 (Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library), and Hyrum Smith, March 3, 1831 (Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library); a financial agreement with Martin Harris (Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Penn.); five ecclesiastical licenses to John Whitmer, Christian Whitmer (both at Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.), Joseph Smith Sr.

(Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library), Edward Partridge (Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library), and William Smith (Community of Christ Library-Archives); and a signed missionary covenant (as copied in Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, November 29, 1831, as printed in "MORMONISM – NOS. VIII – IX," *Ohio Star*, December 8, 1831). Five of these documents are actually copies of the original; thus the tally of the original, extant documents is even less than the total provided. The Joseph Smith Papers Project will publish these documents in the Documents series, volume 1. A few pages of minutes also exist, but they were not included in this tally, as they were not created exclusively by Smith.

11. "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842): 707.

12. The Kirtland Revelation Book is held in the Revelation Collection in the Church History Library; the 1832 history is contained in the first Joseph Smith letterbook, which, along with the journal, is housed in the Joseph Smith Collection in the Church History Library. The minute book is also held at the Church History Library.

13. For instance, section 5 of the current Doctrine and Covenants was created by Oliver Cowdery shortly after the reception of the original revelation on two loose leaves (Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, Utah). The Edward Partridge copies of revelations held in the Church History Library have evidence of previously being hand-sewn. For discussion of the sewing of the Book of Mormon manuscript, see Skousen, *Original Manuscript*, 34; and Skousen, *Printer's Manuscript*, 1:31–32.

14. Joseph Smith History, 50, as found in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:259, 319.

15. Luciana Duranti, *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

16. Luciana Duranti and Maria Guercio, "Definitions of Electronic Records: Research Issues in Archival Bond," from Electronic Records Meeting, held in Pittsburgh, Pa., on May 29, 1997, available online at <http://www.archimuse.com/erecs97/s1-ld-mg.HTM> (accessed October 22, 2007).

17. As a leading scholar of archival diplomatics puts it, diplomatics "studies the genesis, forms, and transmission of archival documents, and their relationship with the facts represented in them and with their creator, in order to identify, evaluate, and communicate their true nature." Duranti, *Diplomatics*, 45.

18. Pearce-Moses, *Glossary*, s.v. "form" and "structure."

19. There are many copying errors—including those due to homeoarchton or homeoteleuton leading to skipping or repeating text—throughout the BCR. This indicates that very few if any entries are dictated copies of revelations.

20. Of course, this explanation makes an assumption about the connection of the dating of revelations with the BCR; the connection could instead be a reflection of the texts from which Whitmer copied. In other words, as Smith received more and more revelations, the scribes capturing the scriptural texts might have been better at capturing the date of the texts. This would be reflected in the manuscript volume without Whitmer's immediate involvement or effort. Thus rather than interpreting the transition of the dates in the revelation manuscript as evidence of an early 1831 dating, the interpretation may be a development of a better record-keeping culture. However, evidence favors some (although not a perfect) correlation between dates found in the BCR and the creation of the volume itself.

Whitmer, from almost the beginning of the volume, created a focus of historical context before each revelation. Even when only the year of the revelation's reception was known, Whitmer provided that seemingly unhelpful information as part of the format or model of copying in this book. He must have had more specific dates in mind when he began to copy (or supply) the nonspecific dates into the beginning of the volume.

21. See, for example, the Kirtland Revelation Book, 11. Doctrine and Covenants 71, received December 1, 1831, was copied in the Kirtland Revelation Book as being received "Dec. 1st 1832." The copying likely took place in March 1832.

22. Of the several sources outlining the summer 1831 visit to Missouri, none mention John Whitmer. There are no sources documenting Whitmer in Ohio, either, but no clear sources survive for that period in Ohio. In Whitmer's own history, he resorts to quoting from Cowdery's account of the Missouri trip, indicating that Whitmer was not there himself to recollect the events. "The Book of John Whitmer," 31–33, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

23. Revelation, circa March 8, 1831, as found in Book of Commandments and Revelations, 79 (D&C 47).

24. It seems Whitmer also added summaries of the chapters of the Bible revision he worked on with Joseph Smith. For instance, several headings were added to Old Testament Manuscript 2 that are not found in Old Testament Manuscript 1, showing that Whitmer might have added additional text in the heading when copying the revelations into the BCR. See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, for the transcript of the Bible revision done by Joseph Smith.

25. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 93–94. Doctrine and Covenants 58:37 directed the purchase of land for a store and print shop in Independence.

26. Minutes of meeting dated November 1, 1831, copied into "The Conference Minutes, and Record Book, of Christ's Church of Latter Day Saints," transcript available in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 27.

27. Minutes of meeting dated November 12–13, 1831, copied into "Conference Minutes, and Record Book," in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32.

28. "Revelations," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (May 1833): 89.

29. *A Book of Commandments, For the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830* (Independence, Mo.: W. W. Phelps, 1833), 6.

30. This revelation seems to indicate that Cowdery had already been appointed before this revelation. The Joseph Smith history supports this conclusion; the revelation copied therein is preceded with this explanation: "It had been decided by the conference that Elder Oliver Cowdery should carry the commandments and revelations to Independence, Missouri, for printing, and that I should arrange and get them in readiness by the time that he left." Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:368. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 122.

31. Revelation, November 11, 1831–A, in Book of Commandments and Revelations, 122 (D&C 69:2).

32. Minutes of meeting dated November 8, 1831, copied into "Conference Minutes, and Record Book," in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 29. The reference to the "fulness of the scriptures" might hint at the desire of Joseph Smith to publish the Bible revision. See Ronald E. Romig, "The New Translation Materials since 1844," in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 29–40.

33. Minutes of meeting dated November 12–13, 1831, copied into "Conference Minutes, and Record Book," in Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32.

34. See Walter Dean Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps—Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958); and Bruce A. Van Orden, "'By That Book I Learned the Right Way to God': The Conversion of William W. Phelps," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, ed. Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Easton Black (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1992), 202–13.

35. Cowdery wrote to Smith in late December 1829, "It may look rather strange to you to find that I have so soon become a printer." Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, December 28, 1829, Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:5, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library. See also the printers' recollection of Cowdery's role: He "was not engaged as compositor on the work or was not a printer. He was a frequent visitor to the office, and did several times take up a 'stick' and set a part of a page—he may have set 10 or 12 pages, all told—he also a few times looked over the manuscript when proof was being read." John H. Gilbert to James T. Cobb, February 10, 1879, Theodore A. Schroeder Papers, New York Public Library, quoted in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:523.

36. For an excellent survey of the historical, non-Mormon context of early Mormon printing practices with an endeavor to understand the cultural implications, see David J. Whittaker, "The Web of Print: Toward a History of the Book in Early Mormon Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 1–41. For a study of Book of Mormon printing and publication, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Gold Plates and Printer's Ink," *Ensign* 6 (September 1976): 71–76; Larry C. Porter, "The Book of Mormon: Historical Setting for Its Translation and Publication," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1993), 49–64; Royal Skousen, "Translating and Printing the Book of Mormon," in *Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness*, ed. John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2006), 75–122, esp. 101–16. A discussion of the printing of the Book of Commandments begins with Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, "First Impressions: The Independence, Missouri, Printing Operation, 1832–33," in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 10 (1990): 51–66; and Robert J. Woodford, "Book of Commandments," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:138. The 1835 publication of the Doctrine and Covenants has garnered very little attention by way of scholarly works; for a general discussion of the publication of the revelations, see Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974); and H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature

Books, 1999). For Joseph Smith-era Mormon printing in general, see the bibliographic studies of Chad J. Flake and Larry W. Draper, *A Mormon Bibliography 1830–1930: Books, Pamphlets, Periodicals, and Broad-sides Relating to the First Century of Mormonism*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2004); and Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 1:1. Other works include David J. Whittaker, *Early Mormon Pamphleteering* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2003); and Terence A. Tanner, “The Mormon Press in Nauvoo, 1839–46,” in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, ed. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 94–118.

37. John Whitmer copied sections 20 and 42 into Zebedee Coltrin’s journal on January 12, 1832, one week after Whitmer and Cowdery’s arrival in Missouri on January 5, 1832 (Zebedee Coltrin Journal and John Whitmer Account Book, Church History Library). The Coltrin versions incorporate the Sidney Rigdon emendations which are in the BCR, meaning that Rigdon had made changes for at least two revelations by that time. Because Rigdon’s presence in Missouri was limited, it can be assumed that the majority of his editing marks were in place before the volume went to Missouri in late 1831.

38. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 45.

39. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library.

40. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 34.

41. Another example is found on page 28, where verse 41 is inserted after a previously clean text.

42. It should be remembered that seven revelations were once found in the Book of Commandments and Revelations but are now missing. Current Doctrine and Covenants 12 was not copied into the manuscript book. There were a total of 65 revelations (the final revelation only partially complete) printed in the Book of Commandments.

43. Oliver Cowdery requested of Newel K. Whitney a copy of modern-day Doctrine and Covenants 42 in his preparation to reprint the *Evening and Morning Star*. Oliver Cowdery to Newel K. Whitney, February 4, 1835, Newel K. Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections). Oliver Cowdery left Missouri about July 26, 1833 (Manuscript History of the Church, A-1, 330, Church History Library), and arrived in Ohio August 9 (Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith to “Dear Brethren,” August 10, 1833, Church History Library).

44. Unfortunately, few scholarly works address the 1835 publication of the Doctrine and Covenants. See the brief mentions in Woodford, “Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants”; Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*; and Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography*, vol. 1.

45. For information about these code names, see David J. Whittaker, “Substituted Names in the Published Revelations of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 23 (Winter 1983): 103–12.

46. Church Historian’s Office inventory, 1846, Church History Library.

47. Church Historian’s Office Journal, Church History Library.

48. For instance, the Joseph Smith history reproduces four revelations (now sections 39, 40, 60, and 133) that match the exact dates found in the BCR, dates not

found on any other extant manuscript (including minutes of meetings). However, sections 48–59 and 61–70 are precisely dated in the BCR, but these dates were not carried over to the Joseph Smith history. It is possible that the compilers of Joseph Smith's history were using other revelation manuscripts now nonextant.

49. The two copies of Doctrine and Covenants 87 are found in the Revelation Collection, Church History Library.

50. Pratt, "The Holy Spirit and the Godhead," 2:342. Four months previous to this discourse, Pratt "called [and] examined some old documents & revelations" at the Historian's Office. Church Historian's Office Journal, October 20, 1854, Church History Library.

51. "Contents of the Historian and Recorder's Office," [5]; "Index Records and Journals in the Historian's Office 1878," [5], Catalogs and Inventories, 1846–1904, Church History Library.

52. B. H. Roberts, "History of the Mormon Church," *Americana* 4, no. 9 (Dec. 1909): 1016–25. Also available in Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:157–66.

53. Journal History of the Church, November 3, 1831, 5, Church History Library, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library. This entry is simply a page cut and pasted from the November 1831 conference found in *History of the Church*, 1:234.

54. In answering a question regarding early revelation record keeping, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "The revelations when first given were written on ordinary sheets of paper, generally foolscap, and were afterwards compiled and recorded in the bound records of the Church by, or under the direction of, Joseph Smith the Prophet, who took great care to have them correct. These records are now in the possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." He continued, "If you desire to compare the manuscript records with the Book of Commandments as that book was fragmentarily published in Independence, a trip to Salt Lake City for that purpose would be almost a waste of time as I can assure you that the manuscript agrees with the revelations as published and revised by the Prophet in 1835, and which have been published in the several editions of the Doctrine & Covenants since that time." Joseph Fielding Smith to John R. Halde-
man, May 24, 1907, Joseph Fielding Smith Collection, Church History Library.

55. "Inventory of President Joseph Fielding Smith's Safe," May 23, 1970, Church History Library.

56. To many, the long absence of the Book of Commandments and Revelations might be startling considering the important revelatory textual versions contained therein. However, one must recognize not only the extremely busy schedule of the First Presidency of the LDS Church in the past century, but also consider that the notice, interest in, or in-depth study of the BCR likely has only just developed. Until recently the study of textual variants—or even the interest in manuscript sources of printed texts—by the public at large has been largely relegated to those in academia. This is made quite clear by Joseph F. Smith's answer to someone offering the Book of Mormon printer's manuscript to the LDS Church: "It has been repeatedly offered to us . . . but we have at no time regarded it as of any value, . . . and as many editions of the Book of Mormon have been printed, and tens of thousands of copies of it circu[l]ated throughout the world you can readily perceive that this manuscript really is of no value to anyone." Joseph F. Smith to Samuel Russell, March 19, 1901, Perry Special Collections.

57. Former RLDS Church historian Walter W. Smith, who was present when these papers were turned over to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, heard from both George Schweich and David Whitmer's family that the leaves were "received by David Whitmer from Oliver Cowdery at his death in 1850." Walter Smith to the RLDS First Presidency, Sept. 14, 1925, Community of Christ Library-Archives; see also Walter Smith to R. L. Fulk, December 13, 1919, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

58. Walter W. Smith noted on two different occasions that "these pages [of revelations] . . . were in the Whitmer manuscript book [Book of John Whitmer] and were the same that [George] Schweich turned over to the [RLDS] church." Walter Smith to S. A. Burgess, April 15, 1926; see also W. Smith to the RLDS First Presidency, September 14, 1925, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

Historical Headnotes and the Index of Contents in the Book of Commandments and Revelations

Steven C. Harper

The Book of Commandments and Revelations (BCR) will have an immense influence on the scholarly study of early Mormon revelations. It will reaffirm many former conclusions and undermine others. It will answer some heretofore unanswered questions, invite some we have not yet thought to ask, and cause us to reassess those to which we already (thought we) knew the answers. The purpose of this essay is not to finish the reassessment but to encourage it by orienting readers to two important features of the BCR: its index of contents and its historical headnotes. I will then conclude with an assessment of the BCR in light of the November 1831 Hiram, Ohio, conference where its publication was planned.

John Whitmer began to compile “The Index of the contents of this Book” in the back, on pages 207–8 (figs. 1 and 2). It covers only the book’s first 94 pages, slightly fewer than half, and only a few more than half (58) of the book’s 104 revelations, ending in the summer of 1831. Whitmer listed the year in the left column, a title for each revelation in the center column, and the beginning page number in the far right column of his index of contents. We can discern much from these data. Whitmer recorded several of the revelations in a different order than they appear in the Doctrine and Covenants. In some instances, it is obvious that he was not recording the revelations in their order of receipt. In other instances, particularly the earliest revelations, Whitmer’s order of recording reflects a chronology of some events that differs from what has been assumed to be the historical order. Several pages of the BCR are missing, but in some instances the index of contents tells us what they recorded. And Whitmer’s titles provide occasional clues to the identities of revelation recipients or ways early saints understood revelations.

The Index of the contents of this Book

	No. Pages
1828 first commandment given to Joseph the Seer	1
1829 first commandment given to Joseph the father of the Seer	2
1829 commandment to Joseph & Martin	3
1829 first commandment to Oliver	5
1829 second commandment to Joseph the Seer	8
1829 second commandment to Oliver	12
1829 A Revelation to Joseph & Oliver	13
1829 third commandment to Oliver	14
1829 first commandment to Hiram	15
1829 first commandment to David	17
1829 A Revelation to Oliver David & the twelve	18
1829 A Revelation to John	20
1829 first Revelation to Peter	21
1829 first 4th Revelation to Oliver	21
1829 A commandment to Oliver David & Martin	25
1829 A Revelation to Martin	25
1829 A Revelation to Joseph the Seer	28
1830 fifth Revelation to Oliver	29
1830 second commandment to Hiram	29
1830 A commandment to Samuel	29
1830 A commandment to Joseph	30
1830 A commandment to Joseph Knight	30
1830 A Revelation given to the Church concerning Baptism	32
1830 A Revelation to Joseph & Oliver concerning their call	32
1830 A Revelation to Joseph Oliver & John	34
1830 A commandment to Emma	34
1830 A Revelation to the Church concerning Bread & Wine	35
1830 sixth commandment to Oliver	40
1830 second commandment to David	42
1830 second commandment to Peter	42
1830 second commandment to John	43
1830 A commandment to Thomas	43
1830 A commandment to Ezra & Nathaniel	44
1830 A commandment to Orson	45

FIGS. 1 and 2. "The Index of the contents of this Book," found on pages 207 and 208

1830	A Commandment to Joseph & Sidney	46
1830	A Commandment to Edward	48
1830	A Commandment to Sidney & Joseph	49
1831	A Commandment to the Church in New York	49
1830	Articles & Covenants of the Church of Christ	52
1831	A Revelation to James a Methodist Priest	58
1831	Second Revelation to Joseph & Sidney	60
1831	Second Revelation to Edward	61
1831	the Church Laws	62
1831	given to the Elders of the Church January 9 th	65
1830	Third Revelation to Joseph & Sidney	70
1831	A prophecy given to Joseph the Son	71
1831	A Commandment concerning confirmation meetings	76
1831	A Revelation concerning the Church in N.Y.	79
1831	Third Revelation to John	79
1831	Commandment to Sidney & Patsy to the Shakers	80
1831	A Revelation to the Elders concerning different spirits	82
1831	A Revelation to Ezra & Joseph concerning a poem &c	85
1831	A Revelation to the Bishop concerning the property of the Church	86
1831	A Revelation to the Elders their Mission to the Moros	87
1831	A Revelation to Sidney Gilbert his call to Mission	89
1831	A Revelation to the Church at Thompson	90
1831	first Revelation given in Missouri	93
	Second Revelation Do Do	94

From the very beginning of the BCR, with few exceptions, John Whitmer began his entry of each revelation with a title line that often assigned a number to each commandment (as he called most of them) and dated its receipt (as in “6th Commandment AD 1829,” or “42nd Commandment Rec^d Jan. 5th 1831”).¹ Whitmer then usually penned a brief preface identifying the person or subject the commandment addressed. Though I wish John Whitmer had recorded much, much more, his terse prefaces are invaluable.² They reveal heretofore unknown dates, places, chronologies, intentions, causes and effects, and meanings. Often they simply reaffirm later sources, but in doing so they give us increased confidence in those sources and in some cases inform our interpretations of them. Occasionally the headnotes challenge later sources. Always the headnotes help us understand how the earliest Mormons and others related to and understood these revelations. One of Ezra Booth’s nine controversial letters to Reverend Ira Eddy, published in fall 1831 in the *Ohio Star*, emphasizes how important the revelations were to the early Saints and in doing so mentioned that Booth had a copy of what he called the “27th commandment to Emma my daughter in Zion,” a reference that has puzzled scholars.³ That is the number John Whitmer gave to the July 1830 revelation to Emma Smith (D&C 25). Ezra Booth was right about the fundamental importance of the revelations in early Mormonism, and it appears that he had, as his evidence, drawn on the BCR.

John Whitmer’s historical headnotes are unique to the BCR. The other revelation manuscript book (Revelation Book 2 or Kirtland Revelation Book) has nothing comparable. By consciously capturing context, Whitmer was perhaps acting on a revelation to him, which he copied onto pages 79–80. He introduced this text as “50th Commandment March 8th 1831,” then noted that it came because he was reluctant to write without a revelation commissioning him to do so. This revelation made it expedient for Whitmer to “write and keep a regular history” even as he assisted Joseph in transcribing revelations and the revised Bible.⁴ The headnotes and the index date several revelations for which we either had no specific date or have accepted a different date. For instance, Whitmer’s index of contents says that Joseph received in 1829 the revelation telling him not to retranslate the contents of the lost manuscript (D&C 10). Joseph’s manuscript history, the 1833 Book of Commandments, and 1835 Doctrine and Covenants date this revelation May 1829.⁵ But Joseph’s later history implies that the revelation came “a few days” after the summer 1828 revelation that rebuked Joseph for mishandling the manuscript (D&C 3). When Assistant Church Historian B. H. Roberts edited Joseph’s history in the twentieth century, he chose to disregard the 1829 date and accept the implied chronology of

& see not parting all these things shall be gathered under
 the Banner of the Church. ²⁵ If ye seek the riches which
 it is the will of the Father to give unto you, ye shall be
 the richest of all People, for ye shall have the riches of
 eternity. & it must needs be that the riches of the Earth is
 mine to give. ²⁶ But beware of Pride lest ye become as
 the Pharisees of old. ²⁷ Again I say unto you, I give unto
 you a commandment, that every man both Elder, ~~and~~ ^{Priest}
 & Teacher & also Member, go to with his might, with the
 Labour of his hands, to prepare & accomplish these things,
 which I have commanded. ²⁸ & let your preaching be the
 warning voice, every man to his Neighbour, in meekness,
 & in meekness. ²⁹ & go ye out from among the wicked & save
 yourselves. ³⁰ & be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Sanctuary

Church Articles & Covenants
 Received in Fayette Seneca County New York April 10th 1830
 Given to Joseph the Seer by the gift & power of God &c
Done after the Order

FIG. 3. John Whitmer's headnote to what is now D&C 20, a portion of page 52 of the BCR. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Joseph's history, thus dating the revelation to summer 1828.⁶ Consequently, the current Doctrine and Covenants lists the date as 1828, but the BCR confirms that 1829 was the correct year after all.

Another significant chronological contribution of the BCR is Whitmer's preface to the text he titled "Church Articles & Covenants," Doctrine and Covenants section 20, which he dated April 10, 1830, four days *after* the Church's organization on April 6 (fig. 3).⁷ In my judgment, the fact that this text was written after, not on or before April 6, strengthens the argument that its introduction is not necessarily revealing, as some have argued, the day and year of Christ's birth.⁸ It also explains in part why we have no record of the Saints giving common consent to section 20 on April 6, but rather at the Church's June conference.⁹

John Whitmer wrote that the 17th commandment, revealed on April 6, 1830, was "A Revelation to Joseph the Seer by way of commandment to the Church given at Fayette Seneca County State of New York."¹⁰ The 1833 Book of Commandments, heretofore the earliest source available,

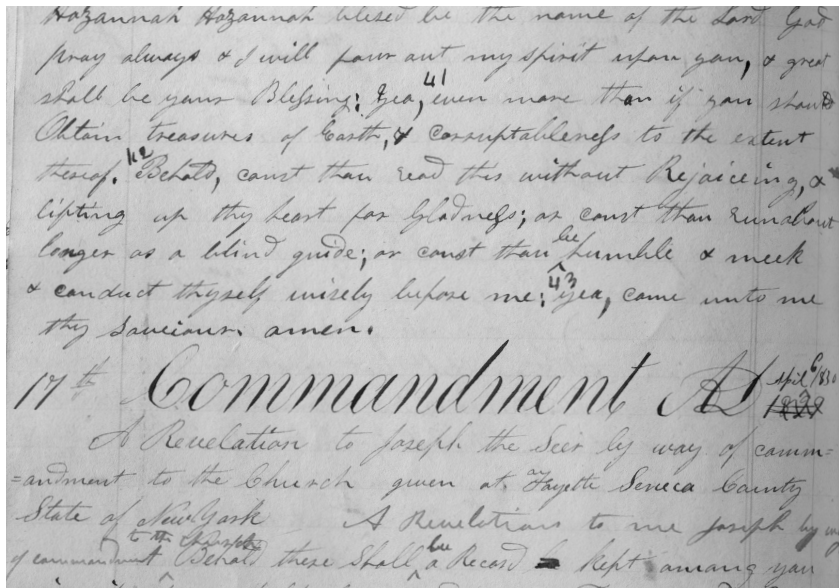


FIG. 4. John Whitmer's headnote to what is now D&C 21, a portion of page 28 of the BCR. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

located this revelation in Manchester, New York. Wesley Walters and Michael Marquardt thus argued that the traditional story of the Church's founding in Fayette, New York, lacked foundation in the historical record. But in this case, tradition and the historical record match very well. The BCR gives Manchester as the location for a series of revelations addressed to Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., Samuel Smith, and Joseph Knight (now combined into D&C 23). However, it gives Fayette as the location and April 6, 1830, as the date of the revelation that calls for a record to be kept and for Joseph and Oliver Cowdery to be ordained as the Church's leading elders (D&C 21). Moreover, in the manuscript BCR, as in the most recent edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, this revelation precedes the several short ones (D&C 23; fig. 4). But for some reason, the published Book of Commandments (1833) put these revelations ahead of the April 6 revelation that precedes them in the BCR. It dates all of them April 6, though none of the short, personal texts is so specifically dated in the manuscript. The one to Oliver Cowdery is dated only to the month of April and all the others only to the year 1830. All were received in Manchester.¹¹ Apparently in the process of printing the BCR, William Phelps or his associates changed the order of the revelations and confused or conflated their dates and places. Whatever happened, it is clear that the

earliest available source, the BCR, reaffirms Joseph's later history in its explicit account of the Church being organized on Tuesday, April 6, 1830, at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York.¹²

John Whitmer did not date the "Explanation of the Epistle to the first Corinthians 7 Chapter & 14th verse," now Doctrine and Covenants section 74, but he located it in Wayne County, New York, and copied it between a January 1831 revelation received in Fayette, New York, and a February 1831 revelation in Kirtland, Ohio.¹³ Joseph's later history, penned by Willard Richards, positioned the receipt of this revelation in January 1832 in Hiram, Ohio, and said it grew out of his New Translation of the Bible.¹⁴ Whitmer's context for this revelation, by contrast, predates Joseph's revision of the New Testament and, by a few days at least, his move to Ohio.

Some of the most significant contributions of Whitmer's headnotes come in the form of short statements that follow the date and place. These sometimes give details about the revelations that were previously unknown. Of all these, I am most excited about Whitmer's historical heading for the September 1830 revelation he called the "29th Commandment," which, conveniently, is D&C section 29 in the most recent LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (fig. 5). Whitmer calls this "A Revelation to

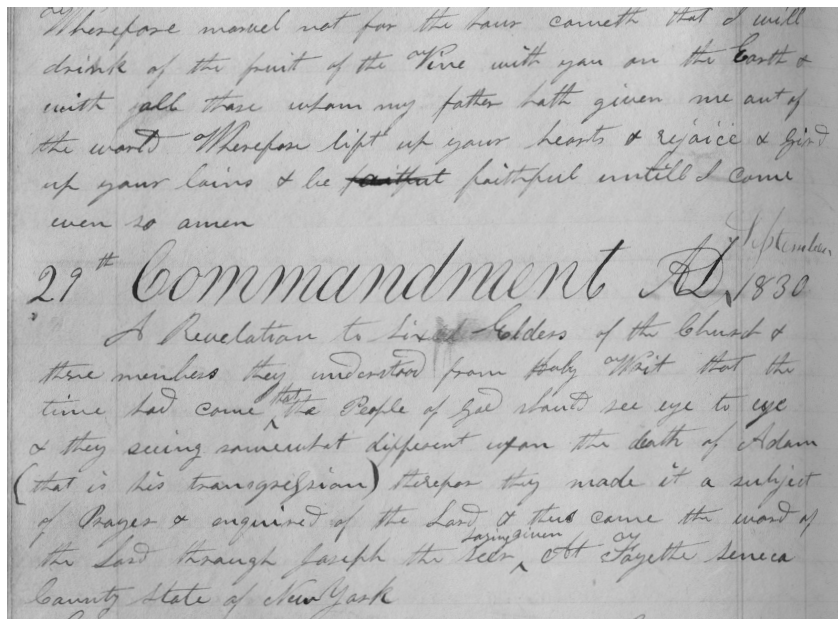


FIG. 5. John Whitmer's headnote to what is now D&C 29, a portion of page 36 of the BCR. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

six {~~eders/el~~/Elders} of the Church & three members they understood from Holy Writ that the time had come <that> the People of God should see eye to eye & they seeing somewhat different upon the death of Adam (that is his transgression) therefor they made it a subject of Prayer & enquired of the Lord & thus came the word of the Lord through Joseph the Seer <saying given> At Fayette Seneca County State of New York.”¹⁵

I do not know of any other source that relates the reason why this revelation was given. But helping us see that this revelation answers a direct question about the nature of the Fall is only one of the BCR’s contributions. It portrays a fledgling church, not yet six months old. It captures a snapshot of early Saints, more theologically attuned, perhaps, than we have imagined them. It shows them reflecting the array of doctrinal opinions that was characteristic of their culture. And then it highlights for us a particularly Mormon response to that culture: namely, acting on the idea that they could unite in prayer, inquire of the Lord, and then listen as their twenty-four-year-old seer dictated scripture. “Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ your Redeemer,” the revelation begins. And they believed it. They captured the words and copied them into the BCR.

Whitmer’s headings sometimes emphasize cause and effect. For example, he wrote that the first revelation he transcribed, D&C 3, was “Given to Joseph the Seer after he had lost certain writings which he had Translated by the gift & Power of God.”¹⁶ That is not novel information, but Whitmer’s particular casting of it emphasizes that the revelation came because Joseph had lost the manuscript. Another example showing how Whitmer’s headings document the reasons for a revelation is his note on the May 9, 1831, revelation (D&C 50). He described this one as “A Revelation to the Elders of this Church given at Kirtland geauga Ohio in consequence of their not being perfectly acquainted with the different operations of the Spirits which are abroad in the Earth.”¹⁷ Whitmer later wrote a fuller description of what he meant, as did others. The later statements are more descriptive of what Whitmer called the “operations of the Spirits,” but do not surpass this earlier note on the relationship between the issue at hand and the revelation given to address it.

The March 1831 revelation through Joseph to John Whitmer is another example of linking historical context to revelation. Whitmer wrote that it was “Given at Kirtland Geauga Ohio = given to John in ~~consequence of not <being> feeling reconciled to write at the request of Joseph without a commandment &c.~~”¹⁸ At some point an unidentified scribe crossed out all but the location and name of the recipient. Even so, Whitmer’s rationale for the revelation matches chapter 6 of his later history. There he explained that Joseph “said unto me you must . . . keep the Church history.” Whitmer

responded, "I would rather not do it but observed the will of the Lord be done, and if he desires it, I desire that he would manifest it through Joseph the Seer. And thus came the word of the Lord."¹⁹

The partial index of contents John Whitmer entered at the end of the BCR contains some information found in no other known Mormon-related documents. Joseph's first known 1831 revelation invited a man named James Covill to receive the gospel covenant. Within days another revelation came, explaining to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon why Covill "rejected the word of the Lord, and returned to his former principles and people."²⁰ These events took place before Joseph began keeping a journal and after Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, who served as the Church's earliest clerks and chroniclers, had left New York for Missouri and Ohio, respectively. In other words, the events were not documented until nearly a decade later as Joseph and his clerks compiled this part of his history from their fallible memories.

Joseph's history says that soon after the January 1831 Church conference at Fayette, New York, "a man came to me by the name of James Covill, who had been a Baptist minister for about forty years, and covenanted with the Lord that he would obey any command that the Lord would give to him through me, as His servant, and I received" the revelation for Covill.²¹ The index of contents lists the early 1831 text as "A Revelation to James a Methodist Priest."²² With that little bit of knowledge, historian Sherilyn Farnes found a James Covell in Methodist records beginning in 1791, forty years prior to the revelation. That year, Methodists appointed him as a traveling preacher on the Litchfield, Connecticut, circuit. He rode various Methodist circuits for four years as an itinerant preacher. Then, in 1795, James married Sarah Gould, the daughter of a Methodist preacher. He rode the Lynn, Massachusetts, circuit for a year before he "located." He settled, raised a family, and apparently practiced medicine but largely dropped out of the Methodist records. Sarah and James had a son, a namesake, James Jr., who followed his father into the Methodist ministry. The Covells moved to Maine, then to Poughkeepsie, New York, around 1808.²³ It is not clear where they were when they heard of Mormonism about 1830, but most likely still somewhere in New York. We would not know any of that if Whitmer had failed to accurately capture Covill's denomination in his index of contents. Moreover, we can see from this evidence that historical memories, including Joseph's, are neither totally fallible nor completely accurate. Rather, historical memories are sometimes fallible and sometimes accurate and often a mixture of both.

To read the BCR is to be not quite present at the creation, but it is awfully close. It transports us back in time to a series of council meetings

convened in the Hiram, Ohio, home of John and Elsa Johnson. The BCR was there. In fact, it was the reason for the meetings. Conscious of the costs and controversy of such an audacious enterprise, the council nonetheless determined to publish ten thousand copies of it. They must have recognized how their decision might appear to outsiders. A poorly educated, twenty-six-year-old farmer planned to publish revelations that unequivocally declared themselves to be the words of Jesus Christ. The revelations called the neighbors idolatrous and the Missourians enemies, commanded them all to repent, and foretold calamities upon those who continued in wickedness. Moreover, the revelations were not properly punctuated, the orthography was haphazard, and the grammar was inconsistent. Reflecting on this council, Joseph later called it an “awful responsibility to write in the name of the Lord.”²⁴ The council minutes tell us that he asked the men present “what testimony they were willing to attach to these commandments which should shortly be sent to the world.”²⁵

Joseph’s later history says that a discussion ensued “concerning Revelations and language.” The discussion led to a revelation that invited the members of the council to confirm their faith in the BCR, which must have been present in the room, by attempting to duplicate one of the revelation texts. Joseph’s later history says that William McLellin tried but failed.²⁶ The revelation that proposed this experiment promised condemnation to any who refused to testify that the revelations were true after failing to convincingly counterfeit one of them.²⁷ The minutes of this council record that “a number of the brethren arose and said that they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they [the revelations in the BCR] were of the Lord,” and also that Joseph then received by revelation the wording of that testimony.²⁸ That revelation is not in the council minutes. The only known text of it is on page 121 of the BCR (fig. 6). Whitmer headed it as “The Testimony of the witnesses to the Book of the Lords commandments which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith Jr who was appointed by the ~~vos~~ <voice> of the Church for this purpose.” It reads, in part, “We the undersigners feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind to every creature upon ~~all~~ the face of all the Earth <&> upon the Islands of the Sea that god hath ~~bor~~ born record to our souls through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us that these commandments are given by inspiration of God & are profitable for all men & are verily true we give this testimony unto the world the Lord being ~~my~~ <our> helper.” McLellin signed along with four others, and John Whitmer copied the revelation and their signatures into the BCR; he subsequently entered the revelation instructing him to accompany Oliver Cowdery to Missouri with the BCR and money

...darkness, where there is weeping, & mourning, & gnashing
-ing of teeth. Behold the Lord your God hath spoken
it. AMEN

Given in Hyrum Postage Co Ohio
November 8th 1831

13 Revelation

The Testimony of the witnesses to the Book of the Lord's commandments which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith p^r who was appointed by the ~~voice~~ ^{will} of the church for this purpose. We the undersigned feel willing to bear testimony to all in the world of mankind to every creature upon all the face of all the earth upon the Islands of the Sea that god hath been record to our souls through the Holy Ghost shew forth upon us that these commandments are given by inspiration of God & are profitable for all men & are really true we give this testimony unto the world the Lord being our helper & it is through the grace of God the father & his Son Jesus Christ that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world in the which we rejoice exceedingly by praying the Lord always that the children of men may be profited thereby AMEN

Solomon Fairchild
Peter D. Widens
Nesrel Knight
Levi Hancock *never to be erased*
Thomas & Marsh

Samuel Rigdon
Oliver Hyde
Wm. C. McElwain
Luke Johnson
Lyman Johnson
Reynolds LaHoon
John Correll
Purley Pratt
Harry Whitlock
Romaine Wright
John Hurdock
Calvin Bube
Zabedee Colburn

FIG. 6. Book of Commandments and Revelations, page 121, which contains the only known manuscript of the testimony of the witnesses to the book of the Lord's commandments, presumably a transcription of the original document. John Whitmer transcribed the first six signatures in the right-hand column. The remaining twelve signatures were added later. Note Levi Hancock's penciled notation "never to be erased" next to his signature. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

to print it (D&C 69).²⁹ Twelve more elders signed the statement in Missouri when the book arrived there for printing.

Joseph undoubtedly appreciated these testimonies. On November 2, 1831, after listening to his associates “witness to the truth of the Book of Commandments,” Joseph “arose & expressed his feelings & gratitude.”³⁰ He knew what was at stake. He felt imprisoned by what he called the “total darkness of paper pen and ink.”³¹ He readily acknowledged that the revelation texts were imperfect. So did his brethren. At the end of the council, they appointed him to edit them for publication as he felt inspired to do so.³²

This history highlights the way Joseph and many of his followers conceived of the revelations in the BCR. In his mind, there was a distinction between the veracity of a revelation and the “crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language” in which it was recorded.³³ At least some of the men in the November 1831 council meetings knew Joseph intimately, knew his literary limits, his imperfections, and thought that his expressions could be improved. These were the very same men who felt willing to publicly proclaim the revelations’ divinity and who obeyed them at considerable inconvenience to themselves.³⁴ They discerned a difference between Joseph the farmer and Joseph the Seer, even when they could see evidence of both in the texts of his revelations on the pages of the Book of Commandments and Revelations.

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1. Book of Commandments and Revelations, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12, 58. Original manuscript pagination used throughout.

2. For Joseph Smith’s 1838 dissatisfaction with John Whitmer as a historian, see Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to John Whitmer, April 9, 1838, Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Church History Library.

3. Ezra Booth to Reverend Ira Eddy, October 2, 1831, in *Ohio Star*, October 20, 1831, 182. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 34.

4. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 79–80; Doctrine and Covenants 47:1.

5. Manuscript History, Book A-1, p. 11, Church History Library; A Book of Commandments (1833), 22; Doctrine and Covenants (1835), 163.

6. 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), 1:112–13.

7. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 52–58.

8. John Franklin Hall, “April 6,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:61–62.

9. Far West Record, June 9, 1830, Church History Library; see also Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 1.
10. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 28.
11. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 28–30.
12. Manuscript History, Book A-1, pp. 34–48, scribed by James Mulholland; first published in *Times and Seasons* 3 (October 15, 1842): 944–45.
13. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 60–61.
14. Manuscript History, Book A-1, p. 179–83, scribed by Willard Richards; first published posthumously in *Times and Seasons* 5 (July 15, 1844): 576.
15. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 36.
16. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 1.
17. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 82.
18. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 79.
19. John Whitmer, “The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment,” Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Mo.
20. Manuscript History, Book A-1, handwriting of William W. Phelps, 87–92; first published in *Times and Seasons* 4 (October 15, 1843): 354, and subsequently in Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:145.
21. Manuscript History, Book A-1, handwriting of William W. Phelps, 87–92; first published in *Times and Seasons* 4 (October 15, 1843): 354, and subsequently in Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:143.
22. Book of Commandments and Revelations, unnumbered page 208.
23. Payne Kenyon Kilbourne, *Sketches and Chronicles of the Town of Litchfield, Connecticut, Historical, Biographical, and Statistical: Together with a Complete Official Register of the Town* (Hartford, Conn.: Case, Lockwood and Company, 1859), 183; accessed in Thomas Gale, Sabin Americana: 1500–1926, available online at <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?locID=byuprovo>. Abel Stevens, *Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States* (Boston: Charles H. Pierce, 1848), 119, accessed in Sabin Americana; Stephen Parks, *Troy Conference Miscellany, Containing a Historical Sketch of Methodism within the Bounds of the Troy Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with Reminiscences of Its Deceased, and Contributions by Its Living Ministers. With an Appendix* (Albany, N.Y.: J. Lord, 1854), 185; *Vital Records of Marblehead, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849*, microform, 3 vols. (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1903–1908,) 2:101, 177, 185–86.
24. Manuscript History, Book A-1, p. 161–62, handwriting of Willard Richards.
25. Far West Record, November 1, 1831; see also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 27.
26. Manuscript History, Book A-1, p. 161–62, handwriting of Willard Richards; Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:226; Jan Shipps and John W. Welch eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin: 1831–1836* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 237–38.
27. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 114–15. See Doctrine and Covenants 67:6–8.
28. Far West Record, November 1, 1831; see also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 27; *History of the Church*, 1:226.

29. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 121–22. No original is known. In the Book of Commandments and Revelations, page 121, the signatures of those who signed in Ohio are all in the hand of John Whitmer.

30. Far West Record, November 2, 1831; see also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 28.

31. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, in Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002), 287.

32. Far West Record, 1–13, November 8, 1831; see also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 29.

33. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 287.

34. Book of Commandments and Revelations, pages 114–15. See Doctrine and Covenants 67:5.

Revelation, Text, and Revision

Insight from the Book of Commandments and Revelations

Grant Underwood

The purpose of this essay is to explore how the textual revisions preserved in the Book of Commandments and Revelations (BCR) shed important light on the process by which Joseph Smith received, recorded, and published his revelations. A few definitional comments may be helpful at the outset. First, Joseph tended to use the term *revelation(s)* in a more focused manner than was common in the formal Christian theology of his day. In his own way, the Prophet did affirm, as Christian thinkers had for centuries, that God revealed himself to the world—that he manifested his character and attributes—in his Son Jesus Christ; in the created, natural order; and in his acts and deeds in human history. However, Joseph primarily used the word *revelation(s)* to refer to the verbal messages God communicated to human beings. Scholars of religion sometimes call this aspect of revelation “propositional” or “doctrinal” because it represents a “setting forth” (an older meaning of *proposition*) of the divine word or will, the disclosing of divine truths or teachings (the meaning of the Latin *doctrina*).¹ Another introductory observation is that throughout this essay I use the phrase *revelation texts*, rather than just *revelations*, to preserve a distinction commonly made in the academic study of scripture between the inner experience of divine revelation and the articulation as text of that divine disclosure.²

Textual Revisions in the BCR

It has long been recognized that between publication in the 1833 Book of Commandments and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants certain revelation texts were revised. Less well known is that those texts were also edited

prior to publication in the Book of Commandments or *The Evening and the Morning Star*.³ What has been entirely unknown, however, until the BCR became available, is the *extent* of those earliest revisions. Literally hundreds of redactions, usually involving only a word or two but sometimes comprising an entire phrase, were inscribed in the BCR between 1831 and 1833. A corollary contribution of the BCR, therefore, is the possibility of seeing the wording behind the revisions. For dozens of revelation texts, this provides the earliest wording now extant. While we cannot be certain that the unrevised wording of the revelation texts in the BCR, or any other prepublication manuscript for that matter, corresponds exactly to the texts of the revelations as Joseph Smith originally dictated them, they appear to be very close.

The strongest support for this conclusion rests on comparison of the BCR with other early revelation manuscripts. For the revelation texts known to early Saints as “Articles and Covenants” (LDS D&C 20/CoC D&C 17) and “the Law” (D&C 42 in both editions⁴), a half dozen pre-1832 versions have survived, and in nearly every instance they all agree with the unrevised BCR in wording. Thus, either each was copied from some now lost urtext that had already been revised, or, as seems more likely, especially because in some cases the time lag from initial dictation to transcription into these sources was very short, the consensus wording of these earliest versions is probably very close to the original. Should additional confirmed dictation texts of a revelation someday turn up (and here it should be noted that almost none are presently extant), they will likely agree almost entirely with the unrevised BCR. Thus, having the BCR is truly the next best thing to having the originals.

As for revisions, it is important to point out that the BCR allows us to see that the bulk of all wording in the revelation texts remained unchanged from initial dictation to publication in the Doctrine and Covenants. Thus, while this article focuses on the revisions, perhaps the real story is that only a small part of most revelation texts was ever revised. Another observation providing perspective is that for the hundred revelation texts published in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, most redactions, especially most of the conceptually significant revisions, were made in 1834–35 while they were being prepared for publication in that volume. A preliminary classification by type of all revisions, both early and late, suggests that redactions made prior to July 1833 tended to be grammatical or stylistic in nature or they sought to clarify meaning, while the later revisions often had as their objective to update and amplify the texts by incorporating recently revealed polity or doctrine.⁵

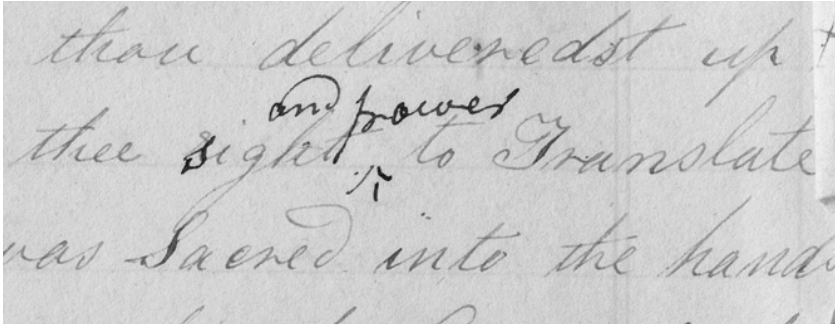


FIG. 1. Edited text from page 2 of the Book of Commandments and Revelations. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Because the BCR appears to have been the primary source used in preparing the revelation texts for publication in the Book of Commandments, most of its revisions were made between 1831 and 1833. Volume 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* presents the entire BCR with photographic facsimiles of each page and an accompanying line-by-line transcription. This allows readers to view each and every redaction in the BCR. For purposes of this overview, however, a mere sampling will be given. Figure 1 shows a portion of the first revelation for which Joseph dictated a text—LDS D&C 3/CoC D&C 2.⁶ Close examination reveals that beneath the overwritten “s” lies an “r.” Thus, prior to revision, the revelation text read, “God had given thee *right* to Translate,” and it was then changed to “God had given thee *sight and power* to Translate.”⁷ Further down the same manuscript page, the addition of an entire line can be seen (fig. 2): “*nevertheless my work shall go forth and accomplish its <my> purposes.*” This emendation is unusual in that most early revisions, as previously mentioned, were simple grammatical changes such as from “ye” to “you” or “hath” to “has” or were stylistic revisions that had a negligible impact on the meaning most readers would have derived from the text.

Another of the rare phrase-length additions from the early period, and one that received subsequent revision as well, is found in an Articles and Covenants passage discussing elders’ conferences. The passage’s history provides a kind of textual stratigraphy enabling us to see several layers of revisions made between 1831 and 1835. The BCR text originally read, as did other early versions: “The several elders composing this Church of Christ are to meet in conference once in three Month to do Church business whatsoever is necessary &c.”⁸ This is also the way the statement read when

...man who had set at naught the counsels of
~~had~~ broken the most sacred promises which ^{were} made to
I & ~~had~~ ^{had} depended upon his own judgement & boasted
his own ~~own~~ wisdom & this is the reason that thou ha
st thy ~~own~~ Privileges for a Season for thou hast sup
plied the council of thy directors to be transacted when
the beginning for as the knowledge of a saviour ~~has~~ ^{must things my work shall go forth & accomplish my purpose}
to the world, so shall the knowledge of my people the chiefs
the Jacobites & the Josephites & the unity of the ~~Josephites~~ ^{Lamsonites}
Lamsonites knowledge of the Lamsonites, & the ~~Lamsonites~~ ^{Lamsonites}
the Lamsonites which divided in unbelief because a
the enigmatics of their Fathers who ~~have~~ ^{have} been suffered

Fig. 2. Examples of an entire line insertion and minor word changes from page 2 of the BCR. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Articles and Covenants was first printed in the *Star* in June 1832. However, when it was republished a year later in the June 1833 issue, to the phrase “once in three months” was added “*or from time to time as they Shall direct or appoint.*” In the BCR, this new phrase appears as a supralinear insertion in the handwriting of John Whitmer. That it is not found among the BCR revisions that Whitmer did include in a copy of Articles and Covenants he made in January 1832 is further evidence that he likely inscribed it in the BCR sometime between June 1832 and June 1833. Later, as Articles and Covenants was being prepared for publication in the Doctrine and Covenants, the word “they” in the Whitmer addition was further emended to read “*said conferences,*” and the original text line “to do Church business whatsoever is necessary” was edited to read “*and said conferences are to do whatever church business is necessary to be done at the time.*” Thus, in its final form, which has remained unchanged since 1835, the passage reads: “The several elders composing this church of Christ are to meet in conference once in three months, *or from time to time as said conferences shall direct or appoint; and said conferences are to do whatever church business is necessary to be done at the time*” (D&C 20:61–62).

A final example from among the handful of conceptually significant redactions made in the early period is located in D&C 8.⁹ As with Articles and Covenants, this revelation text also exhibits layers of revisions. The two instances in which “*gift of Aaron*” in the Doctrine and Covenants replaced “rod of Nature” and “gift of working with the rod” in the Book of Commandments are well known. What the BCR now allows us to see (fig. 3) is that there was an even earlier version of the text in which “working with the rod” read “working with the *sprout*,” and “rod of Nature” read “*thing* of Nature.”

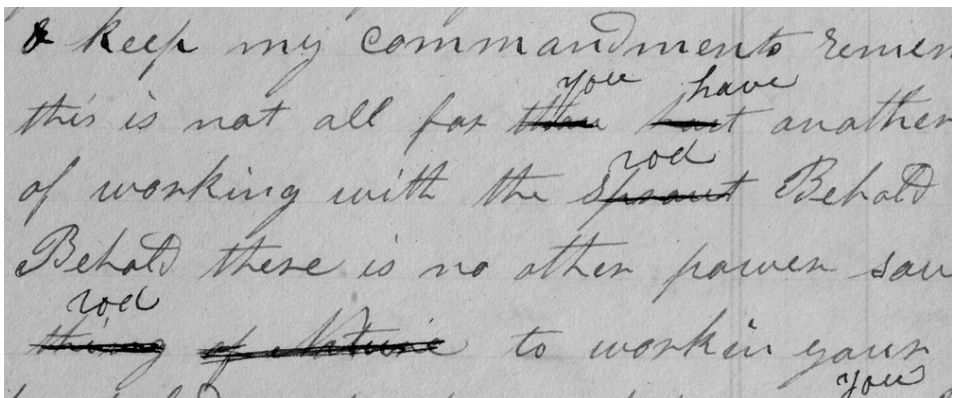


FIG. 3. Edits showing the “original” wording and earliest revisions to a portion of what is now D&C 8 (BCR, 13). Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Who Made These Changes

A truly significant contribution of the BCR is that it allows us to see the textual revisions in their original handwritten form. What immediately stands out is that nearly all redactions in the BCR are in the handwriting not of Joseph Smith, as many Latter-day Saints today might assume, but of his scribal associates Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps. Before the BCR became available, almost no redactions in extant revelation manuscripts could be considered revisions to the revelation texts. Rather, the occasional strikethroughs or insertions corrected transcriptional errors made by the copyists. The vast majority of the actual revisions were discernible only by doing a word-for-word comparison of the printed revelation texts in the *Star* or Book of Commandments with the consensus earliest wording of the extant manuscript versions. Yet where those revisions first appeared, and in whose handwriting, was unknown. Now that the BCR is available for examination, we can see that *it* was the place where nearly all of the revisions incorporated in the *Star* and Book of Commandments printings of the revelation texts were first inscribed. Moreover, careful handwriting analysis has, in most cases, determined *who* inscribed them. As it turns out, each of the known inscribers was a member of the Literary Firm constituted in November 1831 to publish the Book of Commandments and other Church literature (D&C 70). Their widespread involvement sheds light on two related matters of importance—the timing of the early revisions and Joseph’s role in revising the revelation texts.

When These Changes Were Made

With respect to *when* the early revisions were made, comparing the redacted BCR texts with other early versions, where they exist, enables us in some cases to differentiate between revisions made prior to November 20, 1831, when John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery departed Ohio with the BCR, and those that were made afterward.¹⁰ In this analysis, revisions in the hand of Sidney Rigdon are key. Although redactions in the handwriting of other scribes also may have been made in 1831, it is almost certain that Sidney Rigdon’s were. Unlike the other redactors, Rigdon did not reside in Missouri when the BCR was being worked on in 1832 and 1833. More importantly, the fortunate survival of a small notebook belonging to Zebedee Coltrin enables us to pinpoint some of the Rigdon redactions to the period prior to the BCR’s removal to Missouri.

A week after Whitmer and Cowdery arrived in Missouri, Whitmer copied Articles and Covenants and the Law into Coltrin’s notebook and signed and dated his work (fig. 4). As can be seen in figure 5, the Coltrin

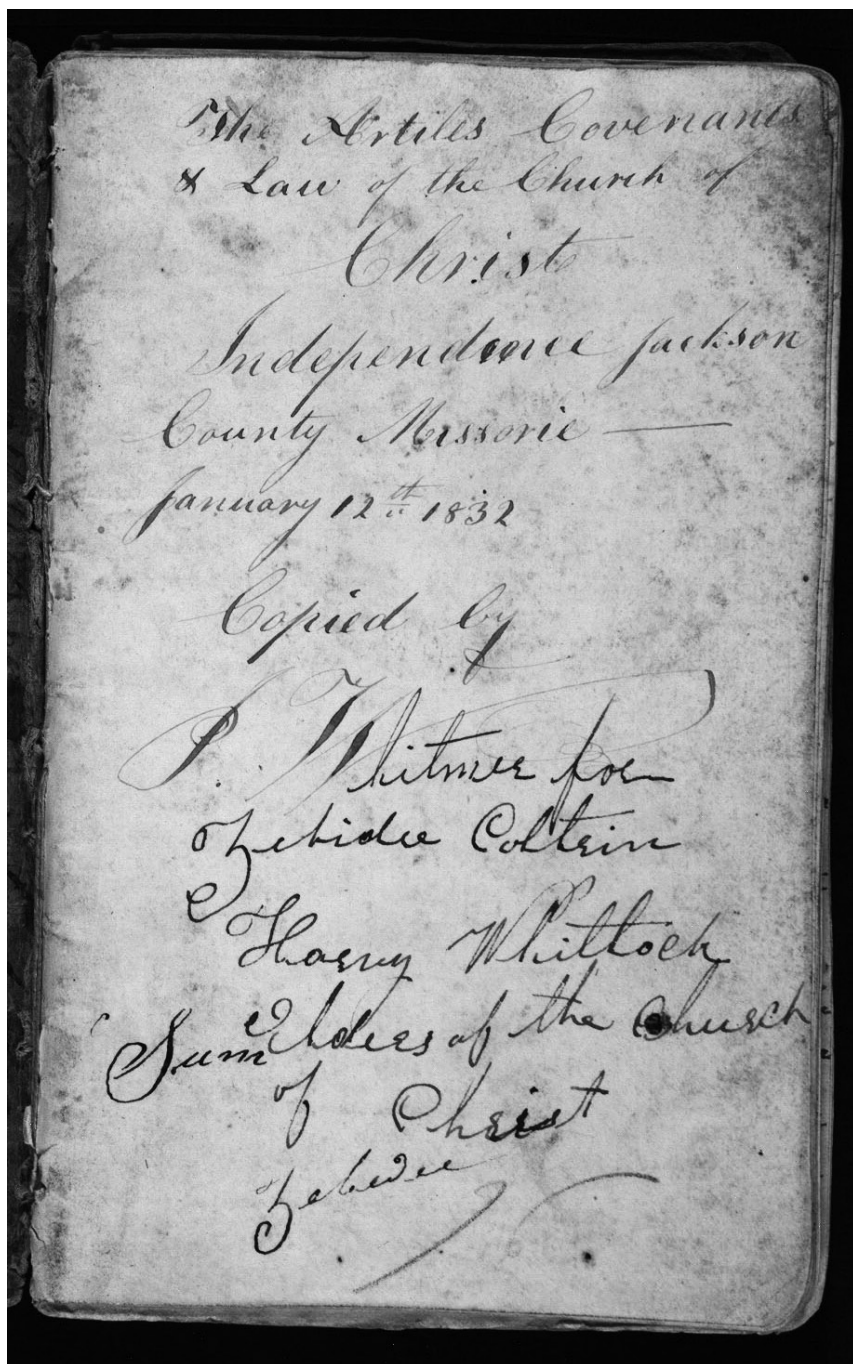


FIG. 4. The first page of one of Zebedee Coltrin's journals titled "Zebedee Coltrin, 1832-33." Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

any that which would be for thy support, thou shalt
give it into my store house, that ~~it~~ may be done according
to that which I have spoken. ^{all} thou shalt ask & my ^{scriptures} ^{safety} ~~salvation~~ it is
shall be given as I have appointed; & for thy
~~requent that~~ ^{Let} thy peace concerning them, untill ye have
received them; ~~then~~ I give into you a commandment that

and if thou obtain more than that which
would be for thy support, thou shalt give
it into my store house, that it may be
done according to that which I have
spoken = Then shalt ask and my ^{scriptures}
shall be given as I have appointed, and
for thy ^{salvation} thou shalt hold thy
peace concerning them till ye have received them.

and if thou obtain more than that which
would be for thy support, thou shalt give
it into my store house that all
things may be done according
to that which I have spoken. Thou
shalt ask & my ^{scriptures} shall
be given as I have appointed & for
thy ^{salvation} it is expedient that thou
hold thy peace concerning them.

FIG. 5. Top: BCR revisions in Sidney Rigdon's handwriting (circa November 1831). Bottom left: Rigdon's revisions absent in a manuscript copied and transcribed by Sidney Gilbert (circa June 1831). Bottom right: Rigdon's revisions present in Zebedee Coltrin's journal (January 1832). Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

texts contain the Ridgon revisions, whereas other earlier manuscript versions, such as one in Sidney Gilbert's hand, do not. This demonstrates that Ridgon must have inscribed them in the BCR prior to November 20 (and probably after June 1831, when Gilbert is likely to have made his copy of the Law). In contrast, many of the BCR revisions in the handwriting of John Whitmer or Oliver Cowdery were *not* incorporated by Whitmer into the Coltrin texts. Nor were Phelps's few redactions. What this seems to indicate, and what is corroborated by analyzing other texts, is that most of the revisions Whitmer, Cowdery, and Phelps made were inscribed in the BCR in Missouri in 1832 and 1833 while preparing the revelation texts for publication in the *Star* and Book of Commandments.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's Involvement

This observation leads directly to the question of Joseph Smith's involvement in revising the revelations. Just as we have reason to believe he dictated, rather than wrote, most of the original revelation texts, it is possible that he dictated many of the revisions, particularly those made in November 1831 after being specifically charged to review the revelation texts and make such "corrections" as he felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to make.¹¹ There is also some evidence that thereafter he occasionally edited the revelation texts as well. For instance, a terse journal entry for December 1, 1832, reads: "wrote and corrected revelations &c."¹² The phrasing of this statement is intriguing. Are "writing" and "correcting" revelations to be understood as two distinct activities with two different groups of revelation texts? Or are the words meant to communicate that the same revelation texts were first corrected and then rewritten to incorporate the revisions?¹³ More importantly, Joseph's journal entry raises a question about intent. *Why* was Joseph writing and correcting revelation texts at this point? Was it for use in Kirtland, or, as seems more likely given the clear commitment to publish the Book of Commandments as soon as possible, was he intending to send them to Missouri? In either case, his revised copies seem not to have survived.

There is a possibility that what Joseph did on December 1, 1832, and perhaps on other unmentioned occasions, is reflected in the BCR. In March 1832, the Prophet was directed to go to Missouri to further organize the financial affairs of the Church (LDS D&C 78/CoC D&C 77). He and his party apparently carried with them copies of the revelation texts that had been dictated between the time Cowdery and Whitmer left Ohio in late November and their own departure for Missouri in late March. The

sequence of these revelation texts in the BCR suggests that John Whitmer started copying them during the Prophet's stay in Missouri and completed the bulk of the transcription after Joseph left in early May 1832.¹⁴ From then until December, when Joseph made his journal entry, the Prophet dictated only two revelation texts that have survived—LDS D&C 99/CoC D&C 96 (August 1832) and LDS D&C 84/CoC D&C 83 (September 1832). It may be that these two were the ones he corrected on December 1 and had a scribe rewrite for conveyance to Missouri, although that would be at a remove of more than two months from the time he dictated the later of the two. What might support this possibility is the fact that there are virtually no revisions in the BCR copies of these two revelation texts, even though LDS D&C 84/CoC D&C 83 is one of the longest Joseph ever dictated.¹⁵ While surviving evidence allows us to trace very few 1832–33 BCR emendations to Joseph, his December 1832 journal entry does indicate that at least occasionally he was involved in revising the revelation texts.

Even if Joseph sent some corrections to Missouri, most of the 1832–33 redactions were made by members of the Literary Firm apparently without his direct involvement. This invites us to adjust our assumptions about the nature of Joseph's involvement with revising the revelation texts and, therefore, about how he viewed the nature of the revelation texts themselves. Borrowing a word from British ecclesiology, it may be helpful to characterize the Prophet's views toward these texts as "latitudinarian" and his views toward assistance from members of the Literary Firm as inclusive rather than exclusive. An argument can be made that Joseph focused on the message, the ideas, or, as he called it, "the sense" of the revelations, and welcomed assistance in the refinement of the language that conveyed those ideas.

To be sure, Joseph recognized that he had the ultimate responsibility, and he took the oversight. He was, after all, the "revelator."¹⁶ That reality had been formally recognized in the November 1831 decision to have him lead out in revising the revelation texts where prompted. Five months later, however, Joseph presided at a council meeting in Missouri that directed that "brs. William [Phelps], Oliver [Cowdery] & John [Whitmer] be appointed to review the Book of Commandments [BCR] & select for printing such as shall be deemed by them proper, as dictated by the spirit & make all necessary verbal corrections."¹⁷ Based on the evidence now available in the BCR, "verbal corrections" primarily, though not exclusively, meant grammatical and stylistic revisions. Despite the current, or even contemporaneous, connotations of the word *correct* and its cognates to suggest squaring with an original, actual practice construed the term quite broadly to include a variety of improvements or revisions. Because such redactions could

sometimes spill over into substantive changes in meaning, several months later Joseph warned W. W. Phelps regarding the revelation texts to “be careful not to *alter the sense* of any of them for he that adds or diminishes to the prop[h]ecies must come under the condemnation written therein.”¹⁸ Significantly “altering the sense” of the revelations was the boundary line, and analysis of the BCR revisions made by members of the Literary Firm in 1832 and 1833 shows that most redactions respected that boundary.

The kinds of changes these men typically made can be seen in their revision of the Articles and Covenants’ description of a teacher’s duty. The original BCR wording was that teachers were to “see that there is no iniquity in the Church nor no hardness with each other nor no lying nor backbiteing nor no evil speaking.”¹⁹ This inelegant English phrasing is also found in the other earliest manuscripts. When John Whitmer copied the passage into Coltrin’s notebook in January 1832, “nor no” must have sounded awkward to him, so he dropped the “no.” Sometime after that, and prior to June 1832 when Articles and Covenants was printed in the inaugural issue of the *Star*, several instances of “nor no” in the BCR text were deleted and Oliver Cowdery inserted “neither” or simply “nor” so that the passage read: “see that there is no iniquity in the Church *neither* hardness with each other *neither* lying nor backbiting *nor* evil speaking.” During the same period, the next line was also revised. Originally the BCR text read: “& see that the Church meets to gether often & also that evry member does his duty.” Whitmer revised it to read: “& see that the Church meets to gether often & also *see* that *all the* members *do their* duty.” Whitmer then edited the concluding statement—“invite all to come to Christ”—to read “invite all to come *unto* Christ.” As with the Cowdery changes, Whitmer’s redactions appear for the first time in the June 1832 *Star* version of Articles and Covenants. Apparently, Joseph did not view his associates’ “verbal corrections,” their linguistic tidying up of the revelation texts, as tampering with their message or altering their sense, because he allowed their redactions to remain. Indeed, with the exception of a single deleted “nor” in front of “backbiting,” they still constitute the canonical wording of the text today.

That Joseph gave the Literary Firm some linguistic leeway in preparing the revelation texts for publication is implicit in another statement made in his July 1832 letter to W. W. Phelps: “You mention concerning the translation [of the Bible]. I would inform you that they will not go from under my hand during my natural life for correction, revisal or printing and the will of [the] Lord be done therefore you need not expect them this fall.”²⁰ What concerns us here is not Joseph’s expectation that the New Translation of the Bible would not be printed during his lifetime, because by the following summer, he had changed his mind. Rather, it is the expression

that captures what Joseph understood would happen to those texts once they went out “from under [his] hand,” that is, “correction, revisal [and] printing.” The BCR data causes us to take notice of this statement in a way that we may not have before. “Correction, revisal [and] printing” seems to be precisely what Literary Firm editor-printers Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer were doing with the revelation texts. As long as the fundamental “sense” of the revelations was not altered, Joseph apparently allowed these trusted associates to make whatever textual “revisals” they felt impressed by the Spirit to make. Joseph seems to have had a healthy awareness of the inadequacy of finite, human language, including his own, to perfectly communicate an infinite, divine revelation. As he wrote in another letter several months later to W. W. Phelps: “Oh Lord God deliver us in thy due time from the little narrow prison almost as it were totel darkness of paper pen and ink and a crooked broken scattered and imperfect language.”²¹

Seeing the Revelation Texts as Both Fully Divine and Fully Human

So what does all this suggest about the revelatory process that eventually produced the final edited version of the revelation texts? Perhaps most significantly, it seems to encourage a view of those texts as the “word of God” (A of F 8) rather than the very words of God, or, as expressed in the title of a study of the biblical texts, that they are the “word of God in words of men.”²² It may be an *a priori* assumption among some Latter-day Saints that the Prophet was not involved in any way whatsoever with the wording of the revelation texts, that he simply repeated word-for-word to his scribe what he heard God say to him,²³ but our *a posteriori* analysis has suggested otherwise. Examination of the BCR and the history of the D&C revelation texts from dictation to final form invite a richer, more nuanced view, one that sees Joseph as more than a mere human fax machine through whom God communicated revelation texts composed in heaven. Joseph had a role to play in the revelatory process. His associate Oliver Cowdery, after all, had earlier been corrected for assuming the revelatory process required no effort, for supposing that God would simply “give” him the words without any thought on his part (LDS D&C 9:7–8/CoC D&C 9:3a–c).²⁴

It seems more suitable to see the Prophet Joseph Smith as the extraordinarily gifted servant of the Lord that he was, who, in the words of contemporary Orson Pratt, received messages from God and then had to “clothe those ideas with such words as came to his mind.”²⁵ Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote: “Seldom are divine revelations dictated to man. . . . Instead, ideas are impressed upon the mind of the recipient, who then delivers the ideas in his own language.”²⁶

If, therefore, Joseph's diction, vocabulary, and grammar, and even that of some of his associates, are discernible in the revelation texts, is that not an impressive testimonial of the fact that even in communicating his word and will to his prophets, God does not override their humanity? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no official statement on the nature of the interaction between Divine Revealer and human revelator in the genesis of scripture, but, as we have seen, a number of its leaders have offered explanations of the revelatory process that allow for Spirit-aided, yet still mortal, articulation and refinement of the divine message. Thus, to borrow an ancient Christological affirmation, the revelation texts can be seen to be both fully divine and fully human.

Such an insight takes cognizance not only of how Joseph Smith communicated his divine revelations but also how he received them. Linguists and linguistic philosophers, at least since the pioneering work of Ferdinand de Saussure at the turn of the twentieth century, have stressed that all communicable thought is mediated through language. That is, whatever the Lord chose to communicate to the Prophet necessarily entered his consciousness through ideas, concepts, and words that he understood, that were part of his mental and linguistic universe. God's inexpressibly perfect, infinite, transcendent thoughts become accessible to mortal minds only through their own imperfect, finite language. This reality seems to be acknowledged in the prefatory statement to the Book of Commandments that "these commandments are of me & were given unto my Servents in their weakness after the manner of their Language that they might come to understanding."²⁷ Thus, from present perspectives, we can see that God, working within the finite limitations of Joseph's language, itself a historically, culturally conditioned inheritance from the world in which he lived, guided *both* Joseph's apprehension of the divine message and his articulation of it in concepts and verbal expressions that were part of his linguistic repertoire.²⁸

That the revelation texts thus doubly bear the marks of Joseph's mind was probably realized by few in his day. At least with respect to the wording of the dictated texts, however, there does seem to be contemporaneous recognition that they reflected his language. During the council meetings convened in November 1831 to consider publication of the Book of Commandments, "some conversation was had concerning Revelations and language."²⁹ This is echoed in the words of a revelation directed to the elders present: "His language you have known, and his imperfections you have known, and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language" (LDS D&C 67:5/CoC D&C 67:2a).

Subsequently, an encouraged attempt to improve upon Joseph's articulation "failed," as the elders seemed to realize that the inspiration of the revelation texts was more than merely a matter of language. Although particular words, phrases, or syntax may have been "weak" or "imperfect," the inspired whole, thanks to the special attendance of the Holy Spirit, was decidedly greater than the sum of its admittedly ordinary linguistic parts.

Latter-day Saints believe revelation comes in a variety of forms, verbal and nonverbal. The foundational Articles and Covenants makes reference to "the revelations of God which shall come hereafter by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God, or the ministering of angels" (LDS D&C 20:35/CoC D&C 17:6f). Most of the revelation texts in the Doctrine and Covenants seem to have come in the first manner, a method clearly affirmed in D&C 8: "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you. . . . Behold, this is the spirit of revelation" (LDS D&C 8:2–3/CoC D&C 8:1c–2a). Even the "voice of God" is portrayed in scripture as something more often internally perceived than externally audible. Reflecting this perspective explicitly, one revelation text reads, "I speak unto you with my voice, even the voice of my Spirit," and the Book of Mormon prophet Enos's revelatory experience is described in these words: "The voice of the Lord came into my mind."³⁰ All of this draws attention to the phenomenological fact that revelation is something that is part of, not apart from, a prophet's mind.

Yet, to acknowledge that divine revelation is verbally communicated in historically, culturally constrained human language does not detract from its divinity. As renowned Catholic scholar Raymond E. Brown has observed regarding the scriptural word of God, "The fact that the 'word' of the Bible is human and time-conditioned makes it no less 'of God.'"³¹ Even the conservative Evangelical Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy affirms that "in inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of his [prophets'] milieu." Otherwise, notes Fuller Theological Seminary professor Donald A. Hagner, "the genuinely human factor of the biblical documents is in effect denied in favor of a Bible that floated down from heaven by parachute, untouched by human hands or the historical process."³² All too often, "the impassioned debate about inerrancy" says less about divine revelation "than about our own insecurity in looking for absolute answers."³³

A view of the revelatory process, then, that sees scriptural texts as both fully divine and fully human allows ample room for regarding as inspired both the earliest wording of, as well as the revisions to, the revelation texts preserved in the BCR. This perspective was eloquently expressed by longtime twentieth-century RLDS Apostle and First Presidency member

F. Henry Edwards: "The revelation of God has come to men" in a variety of ways, "but to record the truth thus received has involved the . . . peculiar difficulty of putting spiritual truths into earthly language. . . . [Thus] we shall not be unduly concerned about the exact phrasing in which revelation is recorded, nor even when further light makes it possible to enrich this phrasing in the attempt to convey this further light. What is important is that the record shall prove the gateway to understanding, as it has to many thousands who have studied it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."³⁴ However one may view the composition of scriptural texts, Edwards reminds us that they should become a "gateway" to God rather than an idol that replaces him. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles put it this way in a 2008 general conference address: "The scriptures are *not* the ultimate source of knowledge for Latter-day Saints. They are manifestations of the ultimate source. The ultimate source of knowledge and authority for a Latter-day Saint is the living God."³⁵ In the end, the written "word of God" must always lead believers to the Living Word himself.

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1. For many contemporary Christian theologians, "The language of divine self-manifestation indicates that the category 'revelation' is not to be construed primarily (as in many medieval and Enlightenment understandings of revelation) as uncovering 'propositional truths' that would otherwise be unknown (i.e., 'supernatural' or 'revealed' truths). Rather, in modern Christian thought since the Romantics and Hegel, revelation has been construed primarily on some form of encounter model as an event of divine self-manifestation to humanity." David Tracy, "Writing," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 386.

2. A vast scholarly literature probes the various theories of revelation, inspiration, and scripture that have been advanced throughout Christian history. Major views are conveniently outlined in Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983). One of the ongoing challenges for both Christian and Jewish theology has been to adequately describe the interplay between the experience of revelation and the written texts that serve as witnesses or testaments to that experience.

3. *The Evening and the Morning Star* was the Church's first periodical and was published monthly from June 1832 to September 1834. The Saints at that time

referred to it simply as the *Star*, a convention that hereafter will be followed in this article.

4. Hereafter, where a section number is the same in both the LDS and CoC editions, it will simply be cited as “D&C XX” without making repeated note of the fact that it is the same in both editions.

5. A comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of all revisions in all revelation texts is underway. Portions of such an analysis for one revelation—D&C 42—are included in Grant Underwood, “‘The Laws of the Church of Christ’ (D&C 42): A Textual and Historical Analysis,” in *The Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, et al. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), 108–41.

6. Book of Commandments and Revelations, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1–2.

7. Throughout this article, new or revised text will be italicized.

8. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 56.

9. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 12–13.

10. In his history, John Whitmer wrote, “We left Ohio, on the 20 of Nov, 1831 and arrived in Zion Mo. Jan. 5, 1832.” Book of John Whitmer, 38, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

11. Far West Record, Church History Library, 16; see also Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 29.

12. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 10.

13. This parallels how Joseph initially proceeded with his “new translation” of the Bible. Joseph had his scribe write out the entire biblical chapter, even though much of it might be unchanged, and incorporate in it such revisions as he directed him to make. See Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 2004).

14. See Book of Commandments and Revelations, 127–48.

15. This observation, however, is qualified by the fact that there is a noticeable decrease in the number of revisions found in the revelation texts that were inscribed in the BCR after it was taken to Missouri.

16. A revelation text dated November 11, 1831, indicated that Joseph was “to be a Seer, a revelator, a translator, & a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestoweth upon the head of the church.” Book of Commandments and Revelations, 123, italics added; first published in 1835 in Doctrine Covenants 3:42. Today, the passage is LDS D&C 107:92/CoC D&C 104:42b.

17. Far West Record, 26; see also Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46. The corresponding account, drawn from these minutes, in Joseph’s later History reads: “Our council . . . ordered that . . . William W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer be appointed to review and prepare such revelations as shall be deemed proper for publication, for the press, and print them as soon as possible at Independence, Mo.” Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:381.

18. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, reproduced in Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 273; for the whole letter, see 269–76.

19. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 56.

20. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, reproduced in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 273–74.

21. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, reproduced in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 287.

22. Jean Levie, *The Bible: Word of God in Words of Men* (London: Chapman, 1961).

23. An oft-cited reminiscence from Parley Pratt’s autobiography tends to promote this assumption. Pratt wrote that when Joseph dictated the revelation texts, “there was never any hesitation, reviewing, or reading back, in order to keep the run of the subject; neither did any of these communications undergo revisions, interlinings, or corrections. As he dictated them so they stood, so far as I have witnessed; and I was present to witness the dictation of several communications of several pages each.” Parley P. Pratt Jr., ed., *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 48. Strictly speaking, Pratt’s observations refer only to the *dictation* of the revelation texts, not to what happened to them thereafter, when, as textual analysis of the BCR makes abundantly clear, they *did* “undergo revisions, interlinings, [and] corrections” before publication.

24. The data pertaining to the history of the revelation texts from initial dictation to the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is a bit different than that pertaining to the Book of Mormon, where relatively few revisions appear in the original or printer’s manuscripts. This leads Royal Skousen, editor of a multivolume, critical text edition of the Book of Mormon, to argue that in the case of the English text of the Book of Mormon, divine “control” of the scripture’s wording “was tight,” though it still was “not iron-clad.” Royal Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 90.

25. Orson Pratt, “Minutes of the School of the Prophets,” Salt Lake Stake, December 9, 1872, Church History Library.

26. John A. Widtsoe, “The Articles of Faith: X. Eternal Increase,” *Improvement Era* 40 (October 1937): 600–601. This perspective is comparable to conservative Christian positions such as that expressed in *Dei Verbum*, the 1965 Roman Catholic pronouncement on divine revelation. Therein the Holy Scriptures are declared to “have God as their author.” At the same time, it is affirmed that in “composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted.” Catholic Church, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965,” available online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html (accessed Sept. 3, 2009).

27. Book of Commandments and Revelations, 126. Compare LDS D&C 1:24/CoC D&C 1:5a.

28. David Carpenter calls revelation “a *process* mediated through language” and notes that throughout that process, from initial experience to canonical expression and beyond, “the language of revelation, precisely as language, participates in all the cultural and historical” particularities that constitute it. David Carpenter, “Revelation in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Interreligious Dialogue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 185, 186; emphasis in original.

29. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:367.

30. LDS D&C 97:1/CoC D&C 94:1a; Enos 1:10. Current LDS Apostle Boyd K. Packer once commented, “I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound.” Boyd K. Packer, “Prayers and Answers,” *Ensign* 9 (November 1979): 19–20.

31. Raymond E. Brown, “‘And the Lord Said’? Biblical Reflections on Scripture as the Word of God,” *Theological Studies* 42 (March 1981): 18.

32. Donald A. Hagner, “The Battle for Inerrancy: An Errant Trend among the Inerrancists,” *Reformed Journal* 34 (April 1984): 21.

33. Brown, “Biblical Reflections on Scripture,” 16.

34. F. Henry Edwards, *The Edwards Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1986), 17–18.

35. Jeffrey R. Holland, “My Words . . . Never Cease,” *Ensign* 38 (May 2008): 93; emphasis in original.

Response to the Book of Commandments and Revelations Presentations

Ronald E. Romig

The publication of the Book of Commandments and Revelations manuscript is extraordinary. It is a foundational document of the entire Restoration movement. The papers presented by *Joseph Smith Papers* editors Robert Woodford, Robin Jensen, Steven Harper, and Grant Underwood during the 2009 Mormon History Association conference afford important insights about the history, provenance, and early uses of the BCR manuscript. As current MHA president and as the former Archivist for the Community of Christ, I am pleased to respond to these papers.

The BCR manuscript has been in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continuously since before the Church's move to Utah. Yet for many, this may be the first they have heard of the fortuitous discovery of the BCR and its import. The ongoing work of the Joseph Smith Papers Project may be directly credited for helping "uncover" the existence of this document and moving it out of its previously "unknown" status. Bob Woodford informs us in his presentation that President Hinckley (fig. 1) personally made the decision to include the BCR with the Papers project. From my perspective as a researcher, I may affirm that this was an inspired decision by President Hinckley. Much credit is also due to Elder Marlin K. Jensen (fig. 1) for his enlightened guidance of the Church History Department in his role as LDS Church Historian and Recorder. In the fall of 2008, Elder Jensen quietly announced the BCR on the Church's website and provided the first public knowledge of its existence, contents, and forthcoming publication. His statement was then published in the *Ensign* in July 2009 in anticipation of the September publication of the BCR in the first volume of the *Joseph Smith Papers* Revelations and Translations series.

The MHA presentations, reprinted here, launch an exciting period of ongoing discovery as scholars begin to develop a better understanding of the



FIG. 1. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who authorized publication of the BCR, and Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church Historian and Recorder. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

nature of this manuscript and its historic role in the early Restoration movement. Scholars may rejoice that one of Mormonism's foundational scriptural manuscripts may now be accessed along with other extant sources.

Historical Uses of the BCR

Woodford observes that the BCR manuscript apparently had multiple uses during its early existence. First, it simply may have been intended as a historical record of Smith's revelations. Then, as Underwood alluded to, it became a printer's manuscript for the Book of Commandments during a series of councils held at Hiram, Ohio, in November 1831. Finally, it served as a supplementary source during the printing of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

Date of Origin

The insightful MHA presentations reveal much about the BCR. However, some central questions about the manuscript remain unanswered, including the date of the manuscript's creation. Woodford postulates that there are two plausible dates for when work began on the Book of Commandments and Revelations: either during the summer of 1830 or

after John Whitmer's (fig. 2) calling as Church historian on March 8, 1831. I lean toward an earlier start date. Even so, I applaud Jensen's application of the archival discipline of diplomatics in an effort to uncover the manuscript's origins; his analysis of the characteristics of a ledger versus a journal record is most insightful. Additionally, Harper's observation that the "Index of the contents of this Book" in the back of the manuscript is only partial encourages the possibility that at least the first portion of the manuscript may be of early origin.

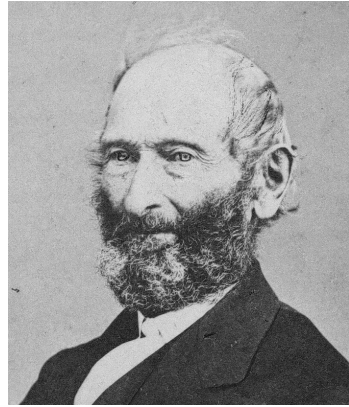


FIG. 2. John Whitmer. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Historical Location of the BCR

Woodford noted that 26 of the BCR manuscript's 208 pages were removed from the volume. This means that thirteen leaves were separated from the manuscript book at some point. We don't know just when, but we believe that John Whitmer removed at least four of these leaves and carried them away when the Whitmer and Cowdery families left Far West in 1838. Whitmer retained his manuscript history (*The Book of John Whitmer*) and some Joseph Smith New Translation–related materials. Likewise, Oliver Cowdery retained the printer's copy of the *Book of Mormon*. Some have suggested all of these materials passed from Oliver Cowdery to David Whitmer and then to the RLDS Church, now the Community of Christ. But more likely, John Whitmer retained some of these items, such as his history and BCR manuscript leaves. When he returned to Caldwell County following the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri in 1840, he brought the materials with him and lived the remainder of his life in Far West.

Shortly after John Whitmer died in 1878, Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith visited Far West, Missouri, in hopes of obtaining his manuscript "*Book of John Whitmer*." However, they were told by Whitmer's son, Jacob D. Whitmer, "We've got no history here, all [of] father's papers have gone to Richmond long ago."¹

At some point, some of John Whitmer's papers apparently passed into the possession of James R. B. Van Cleave (fig. 3), a Chicago newspaper reporter and Illinois politician.² In March 1881, Van Cleave conducted a significant interview with David Whitmer that subsequently appeared in the October 17, 1881, *Chicago Times*. Then Van Cleave successfully courted



FIG. 3. James R. B. Van Cleave. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

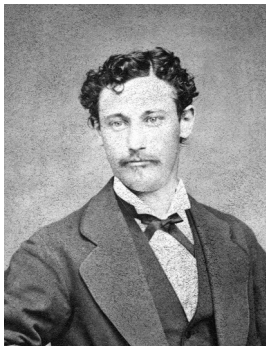


FIG. 4. George Schweich. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

and married David Whitmer's granddaughter, Josephine Helen Schweich.³ Van Cleave planned to write a history of Mormonism from the Whitmers' perspective. In preparation, he "obtained consent of John Whitmer's daughters to remove the papers he had selected . . . and brought them to Richmond, Mo."⁴

John Whitmer's papers were deposited in a Richmond, Missouri, bank vault. But Van Cleave was ultimately unable to compile his book, and Whitmer's papers next passed to George Schweich (fig. 4)—Van Cleave's brother-in-law and David Whitmer's grandson. In 1903, when Schweich sold the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon and "Caractors" document, four leaves of BCR materials also passed to the RLDS Church.

How many BCR manuscript pages did the RLDS Church obtain? Walter W. Smith, who was RLDS Church Historian from 1919 to 1923, initially suggested there were eleven pages. However, rather detailed descriptions from the mid-1920s by subsequent RLDS Church Historian Samuel Burgess indicate there were eight pages, meaning four leaves: pages 111–12, 117–20, and 139–40. All of these pages, except 111, contain content not published in the Book of Commandments.

Historical Responses to the BCR

Along with other primary scriptural manuscripts, the RLDS Church made much of the fact of possessing these papers, using information from the BCR leaves to relatively good effect.

During the 1920s, Church of Christ Temple Lot adherents argued that the Book of Commandments was complete when it was printed, adopting the doctrinal stance that the Book of Commandments was the most correct version of Smith's revelations. Daniel Macgregor (fig. 5), a Church of Christ Temple Lot apostle, published a pamphlet in support of this view entitled *Changing of the Revelations*.

RLDS scholars took issue with these claims. They countered Church of Christ Temple Lot assertions by drawing upon BCR content to affirm the superiority of the Doctrine and Covenants over the Book of Commandments. A printer's "take mark" drawn around the word Ephraim on page 111 of the BCR manuscript underscored the prime rationale for the RLDS Church's viewpoint. This mark corresponds with the last word in the Book of Commandments as published. The remaining text on page 111, complete with added versification, indicates that Church printers intended the Book of Commandments to contain additional chapters.

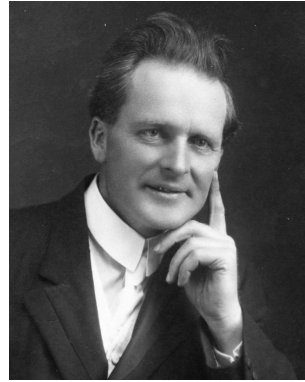


FIG. 5. Daniel Macgregor. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

Mysteries Solved and Questions Raised

The BCR manuscript is already helping solve intriguing historical mysteries. Steven Harper's explanation of John Whitmer's numbering of the revelations in the BCR manuscript is an insightful example: Whitmer's headnote on page 34 of the manuscript reads, "27th Commandment AD 1830." This nicely conforms to Ezra Booth's allusion to the "27th commandment to Emma" in Booth's letter to Ira Eddy, October 2, 1831, published in the *Ohio Star* (October 20, 1831).

On the other hand, textual variants raise new questions for Mormon scholars. For example, the RLDS cache of documents included the manuscript revelation calling Jesse Gause into the Church presidency. In this text, the name Jesse Gause is struck through, with F. G. Williams inserted in its place (fig. 6).⁵ Access to this primary source for nearly a hundred years allowed RLDS scholars to become comfortable with the idea of

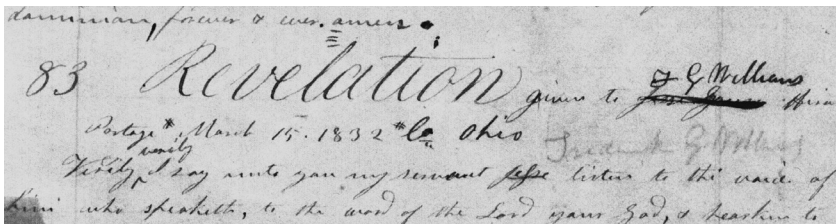


FIG. 6. A revelation calling Jesse Gause to the Church presidency. Later, Gause's name was crossed out and replaced by F. G. Williams. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

perceived inconsistencies in our story. BCR textual readings may challenge some preconceptions of latter-day scripture, just as it led some RLDS students to consider the possibility that the calling of Jesse Gause in the BCR manuscript may not have been completely inspired. The presentations published here show some of the ways LDS scholars have dealt with the same issue. In Revelation Book 2, heretofore known generally as the Kirtland Revelation Book, the name Jesse [Gause] is also struck through and replaced by Frederick G. Williams.⁶ What are the best ways to explain these and the many other editorial changes in the texts of these early revelations?

Grant Underwood wisely begins to offer a rationale to guide students who may encounter these textual variations for the first time. And Steven Harper describes how Joseph Smith's revelation texts are mixtures of the prophetic and mundane, the voice of the Lord captured in what Joseph called a "crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language."⁷

Community of Christ President Stephen M. Veazey's (fig. 7) recent statement on Church History Principles speaks to this issue, affirming that "seeing both the faithfulness and human flaws in our history makes it more believable and realistic, not less."⁸



FIG. 7. Stephen M. Veazey. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

A Wider Context

While RLDS scholars made good use of some of the content upon its BCR manuscript pages, without access to the larger manuscript, they were limited in their analysis. With the publication of the BCR as part of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, a broader interpretation of its contents is now possible. Access to information about scriptural textual revisions will ultimately grant scholars freedom to develop a more flexible view of Joseph Smith's revelatory technique and his humanity.

The Community of Christ Archives is allied with the LDS Archives to ensure that scholars have access to all known BCR content. We are highly pleased that the Community of Christ's eight pages of manuscript material are included in the first volume of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. As an extension of this collaboration in the Papers project, the LDS Archives offered to help conserve the Community of Christ's eight pages of text. This valuable project is now complete, much

to the mutual benefit of the involved institutions and future generations of students and scholars.

In conclusion, I quote the Community of Christ's Affirmation Six: "Faith, experience, tradition, and scholarship each have something to contribute to our understanding of scripture. In wrestling to hear and respond to the witness of scripture, the church must value the light that each of these sources may offer."⁹

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1. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith" [visit to Far West, Missouri, 1878], *Millennial Star* 40 (December 16, 1878): 786.

2. "James R. B. Vancleave [*sic*], (a fine looking, intelligent young newspaper man of Chicago, who is paying his addresses to Miss Josephine Schweich grand-daughter of David Whitmer)." David Whitmer was interviewed by Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, September 7–8, 1878. This is the description given by Elders Pratt and Smith. Van Cleave was present at the interview. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Deseret News*, November 27, 1878.

3. Whitmer Bible, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

4. Arthur Deming, "The Polygamy Revelation—Joseph Smith's Handwriting Still in Existence!" *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (April 1888): 1.

5. Book of Commandments and Revelations, Church History Library, 139.

6. Kirtland Revelation Book, Church History Library, 17.

7. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, November 27, 1832, in Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002), 287.

8. Stephen M. Veazey, "Perspectives on Church History," October 1, 2008, available online at <http://www.cofchrist.org/OurFaith/history.asp>.

9. "Scripture in the Community of Christ," available online at <http://www.cofchrist.org/OurFaith/scripture.asp>.



Ezra Taft Benson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, tosses out the first pitch at the all-church softball tournament in 1962. Visual Resource Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

“Spiritualized Recreation”

LDS All-Church Athletic Tournaments, 1950–1971

Jessie L. Embry

An Arizona dentist cancels all appointments for a week. A Canadian businessman works nights so he can leave the office. Five carloads of men leave Florida. A California electronics worker and his family change their vacation trip plans. They share two things in common: each man is a championship softball player, and all have the same destination—the annual All-Church Priesthood Softball Tournament in Salt Lake City, one of the world’s largest and most unusual sports events.”¹

During the 1950s and 1960s, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sponsored all-church basketball, softball, and volleyball tournaments that brought together teenage boys and men up to the age of thirty. As the above quote from 1961 indicates, men from throughout the United States and Canada participated. While on one level the men were playing a game, on another level the athletic tournaments provide an important lens through which one can view the LDS Church during the mid-twentieth century. The basketball tournament started in the 1920s; the three tournaments thrived during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1971, Church leaders abruptly declared the end of all-church tournaments. Understanding why the Church sponsored the tournaments and then ended them helps scholars understand the Church’s transformation from an Intermountain West/American church to an international religion. This article looks at that change by examining the all-church athletic tournaments.²

Thomas O’Dea and the Sociology of Mormon Athletics

Interestingly enough, it was a Catholic sociologist scholar, Thomas F. O’Dea, who described the cultural impact of sports in the 1950s and then

also predicted a possible change. His brief comments were so accurate that I have chosen them as the framework for this article. O'Dea first did an in-depth study of Mormons in the Harvard Values Study Project. His research became the basis for *The Mormons* (1957), which became a sociological standard for understanding the LDS Church. Brigham Young University sociologists Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffman, and Tim B. Heaton, the editors of a collected volume of essays, agree that O'Dea's work is invaluable and had a major impact on Mormon social sciences.³

O'Dea divided *The Mormons* into nine themes and then mentioned thirty-two specific topics. His topical discussions were brief, often only a few paragraphs or a few pages. Yet his curt comments spoke volumes about the subjects. This is especially true of O'Dea's discussion of Mormon recreation:

Recreation—viewed as closely related to work and health—meets with strong Mormon approval and is seen as important in supporting and refreshing man for a more effective life, as well as for its own sake. It has become (especially since the accommodation that followed the manifesto of Wilford Woodruff ending plural marriage in 1890) an area in which the church has concentrated much of its organizational talent and a large share of its co-operative energy. It is today one of the important spheres of activity in which group action under church auspices engages the individual member in the active life of the church.

While this concern with organized recreation is an outstanding feature of postaccommodation Mormonism, there was very early an emphasis upon play and upon joy. The Mormon repudiation of religious pessimism found expression in the *Book of Mormon* notion that “men are that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Dancing and the theater were emphasized in early Utah and are given considerable attention today, and dancing was a typical Mormon form of recreation even when they were crossing the plains. Beginning as spontaneous, unplanned, but approved activity, Mormon recreation has come to take place more and more within the context of church organization and sponsorship, especially through the auxiliary organizations that activate women and younger people.

In this process the Mormon church has drawn from many sources to develop a composite and many-sided recreational theory. Concern with developing group solidarity, health, leadership, culture, and self-expression has been important to Mormon recreational efforts, while Mormon theory has recognized social, rhythmic, dramatic, constructive, physical, and other urges as seeking satisfaction through recreation. The church program is characterized by a large degree of central planning and direction, and participation in church-sponsored recreation is considered a kind of religious activity.

It has been said: “The Mormons have spiritualized recreation. They have recognized the group factor in play: that the group not only enhances play, but is often the main motivating factor.”⁴ Recreation

has become an important expression of Mormon activism and group solidarity, which it simultaneously reinforces. It is the natural context for the development of the Mormon child, and, together with the other activities of the church and its auxiliary organizations, it provides a most effective context for the learning of Mormon attitudes toward church and world. It is perhaps one of the areas in which genuine creativity has been shown by the Mormon group since the definitive ending of Mormon exclusiveness in 1890. On the whole, it is looked upon as an aid to eternal progression, as a lighter form of education, with which it is considered to be intimately related.⁵

As this article will confirm, sports were "one of the most important spheres of activity in which group action under church auspices engage[d] the individual member in the active life of the church" in the 1950s. Throughout the LDS Church in the United States, Mexico, and Canada, Church leaders encouraged young men to participate in basketball, softball, and volleyball.

In 1957, O'Dea felt that the LDS Church was using recreation to support its spiritual goals. He did not elaborate on how play met those religious goals, but his brief comments supported what Church leaders and members said about the role of recreation: the all-church athletic tournaments brought young LDS men together, helped them strengthen their testimonies, reactivated those who were not attending church, and introduced nonmembers to Mormonism. The tournaments also promoted fair play and built character. These were all ways to "engage the individual member."⁶

O'Dea went beyond describing Mormonism in the 1950s and tried to predict future problems. While he saw Mormon recreation in the 1950s as positive, he was not sure that it should continue. He praised Mormon recreation as the only field where "Mormonism [has] been able to meet the challenge" of dealing with "this-worldly spheres" for which other groups—government, voluntary, and secular—could have more "attractive" appeals. But he questioned whether "organized religion [should] offer competition in spheres of life in which non-religious organizations do better." Instead religions should deal with "deeper human problems." He also foresaw a time when the Church would not be as closely connected to Salt Lake City and Utah. "The Mormon movement may be on the eve of its Diaspora . . . [where] belongingness would no longer be exclusively identified with a specific place."⁷

These statements sum up the reasons for the Mormon all-church athletic tournaments and why they were discontinued in 1971. Sports activities played—and in some cases continue to play—an important role in Mormon daily life on the ward, stake, and Church level, but the

tournaments ended when a worldwide church moved the focus from Salt Lake City and Church leaders focused less on recreation.

Beginnings of Mormon Athletics

“Beginning as spontaneous, unplanned, but approved activity, Mormon recreation has come to take place more and more within the context of church organization and sponsorship,” wrote O’Dea.⁸ He was correct that LDS sports (just one form of recreation that the Latter-day Saints used) started as a “spontaneous, unplanned, but approved activity.” The growth of basketball provides a good example of an activity that started at a grass-roots level and became institutionalized. In fact, basketball itself began in this manner. In 1891, James Naismith, who started college as a theology major but left the ministry to study recreation, invented basketball as a Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) activity. The YMCA started in England as a way to keep young men in an urban setting off the street. It was not directly connected to any religion but promoted Christian values. About the same time, churches were concerned about young men falling from Christian standards and also not attending church meetings. Religious leaders promoted basketball games as a way to attract young men to the church building and then hopefully to attend worship services. Naismith was pleased that “churches . . . accepted athletics as an aid” to attract young men to religion.⁹

This effort to include sports in religion was often referred to as muscular Christianity. According to historian Clifford Putney, muscular Christianity is defined as “a Christian commitment to health and manliness.” Reviewers of the English novelists Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes coined the phrase in the 1850s and used it to describe a new type of “adventure novels replete with high principles and manly Christian heroes.” Putney argues, “Between 1880 and 1920, American Protestants in many denominations witnessed the flourishing [of muscular Christianity] in their pulpits and seminaries.” Many church leaders believed that men viewed religion as too “feminized” and in fact churches in industrial cities were attracting only women. Muscular Christianity flourished during that time as churches dropped their opposition to sports and the YMCA created new games and introduced athletic programs. Churches believed that sports taught moral lessons such as “reveren[ce], adventureness, courage, cooperation, loyal[ty], self-restraint, fairness, honor, [and] unenvious approbation of another’s success.”¹⁰ Putney says, “After 1920, pacifism, cynicism, church decline, and the devaluation of male friendships combined to undercut muscular Christianity.”¹¹

According to Richard Ian Kimball, Clifford Putney's *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America* "situates LDS recreational activities on the extreme edge of Protestant recreation." Putney writes that before other churches accepted sports and recreation, "the Mormon Church was the first to support Boy Scout troops, the first to erect a recreation hall wherein athletic competitions were held." Putney guesses, "Why exactly they pioneered these forms of organized uplift is difficult to explain. Possibly it devolved somehow from their belief in familial, as opposed to individual, salvation: the notion that more important even than inner goodness was outward conformity to the laws of God and society."¹²

Sports in Early Mormonism

Putney fails to understand that recreation was not new to Mormons in the twentieth century. Joseph Smith Jr., founder of the LDS Church, taught that religion involved all aspects of life. He enjoyed arm wrestling and pulling sticks (a game similar to arm wrestling, except participants put the soles of their feet together, held a stick in their hands, and tried to pull over the opponent). He also promoted ball games, music, and drama. Mormon scholar Rex Skidmore overstated his case when he argued, "Joseph Smith must be considered as one of the outstanding leaders in the modern recreation movement."¹³ In contrast, Ruth Andrus wrote in her dissertation that Joseph Smith's support of recreation was practical. He was involved in play, but he "did not preach on that subject."¹⁴

Smith's successor, Brigham Young, expanded the Church's view of recreation. He promoted and practiced physical activities. To make that possible, he put a gymnasium in his Utah home and encouraged his children to exercise. He believed play should be where members could "enjoy the Spirit of the Lord." In other words, he felt Mormon recreational activities should be held with other Latter-day Saints in Mormon homes and meeting places. Church members should not frequent taverns and bars, where LDS standards are not followed. By not playing in those settings, Young believed, young people would have "mastery over [themselves] and command the influences around [them]." He explained that it was not their "lawful privilege to yield to anything in the shape of amusement, *until [they had] performed every duty, and obtained the power of God to enable [them] to withstand and resist all foul spirits*" and "obtained . . . the blessings of the Holy Spirit."¹⁵ He encouraged "eight hours work, eight hours sleep, and eight hours recreation."¹⁶

Brigham Young had organized the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) in 1875 to help young men grow spiritually, socially,

and physically in a Mormon environment. That organization's focus shifted in 1908 when Joseph F. Smith asked the priesthood quorums and not the YMMIA to teach theology. The move was part of Smith's Church-wide correlation movement, which put more emphasis on priesthood quorums and less focus on the Church auxiliaries such as the YMMIA. In response, the YMMIA General Board passed a resolution: "Owing to the fact that the Priesthood quorums have formally taken up the study of theology, the YMMIA [will] take up educational, literary, and recreative studies, permeated by religious thought." These activities included music, art, "social culture and refinement," and "athletic work." The YMMIA leaders stressed that "recreation and amusement are indispensable to our social and moral development, but should be under the same vigilance and control as our religious training."¹⁷

As Kimball explains, recreational activities became more important over time. At the turn of the twentieth century, some Mormons left their agricultural roots and moved to cities to work in business and industry. Salt Lake City was growing. In addition, the first generation of converts had died and with them some of the religious zeal. Their children did not always share their parents' enthusiasm for religion. LDS youth began turning to non-Mormon programs for entertainment and education. Programs like the Boy Scouts of America, the YMCA, or local clubs and debating societies kept young men off the streets but not necessarily in church.¹⁸

Like other Christians, Latter-day Saints played basketball, but it did not start out as a churchwide activity. Instead, individual wards started their own programs and determined their own criteria for selecting winners. For example, young men were playing basketball in the Twentieth Ward in Salt Lake City in 1906. After seeing that the game attracted young men to church, the YMMIA leaders formed two teams that played for a pennant based on attendance at meetings and recruitment of new members. The Twentieth Ward program was so successful that the Ensign Stake adopted the ward's program two years later in 1908 and formed a stake basketball league. The Twentieth Ward triumphed over the Eighteenth Ward with a score of 28 to 23 for the first championship.¹⁹

E. J. Milne, a physical education professor at the University of Utah, worked with the Ensign Stake athletic committee and saw the value of basketball in a Mormon setting. The same year the Ensign Stake held its first tournament, Milne received quasi-Church approval to promote basketball when the Church magazine the *Improvement Era* published his article about converting "ward and gymnasium halls" for "basket ball, hand ball and gymnastic work" because of "numerous inquiries . . . [about] adopting a course in physical education or athletics." In other words, other local

units had independently thought of expanding the use of sports and wondered how to do it. Milne saw many uses for the halls but he focused on basketball because it was "the greatest of all indoor games in the country, and especially in the state of Utah."²⁰

The early programs were for teenage boys who also participated in Boy Scouts. But general Church leaders soon recognized that they needed to provide a program for young men after Boy Scouts to keep them involved. As with basketball, the general Church leaders looked at locally planned programs. They were impressed with a 1919 Salt Lake City Eighteenth Ward program that provided activities for teenagers and men in their twenties. Just a year later, the YMMIA General Board adopted the Eighteenth Ward program, which included basketball.²¹

At first, wards competed only within their stakes. But the young men wanted more competition, and their leaders agreed. So in September 1921 the superintendent of the Ensign Stake YMMIA met with his counterparts in other Salt Lake stakes—Granite, Liberty, Salt Lake, and Pioneer—and they decided to sponsor a tournament.²² The young men enjoyed playing with a larger set of teams, and the leaders declared the first tournament a success. It was so well received, the Salt Lake stakes made it an annual event. The stake leaders from the entire Salt Lake Valley area drew up a constitution with rules. In 1923, eight Salt Lake Valley wards took part in what became the all-church tournament.²³

Basketball started on a local ward and stake scale, but it did not remain merely a Salt Lake City tournament. To use O'Dea's wording, the tournament was eventually brought "within the context of church organization and sponsorship."²⁴ While adding basketball to the general church focus was new, programs for the young men were not. With this new focus, the organization's leaders recognized basketball's value and took over the Salt Lake stakes' tournament in 1929.²⁵

All-Church Tournament Organization

"The church program is characterized by a large degree of central planning and direction," wrote O'Dea.²⁶ Once the YMMIA took over the basketball tournament, "a large degree of central planning and direction" was indeed required. To facilitate the process, the YMMIA General Board appointed an athletic committee that met throughout the year to plan the weeklong tournament.

The committee had to decide the rules of the game and the rules of participation. With this in mind, the YMMIA published a yearly athletic manual. While the core of the manual remained the same from year to



The 1955 all-church tournament committee. *Front row:* Dick North and Ned Winder. *Second row:* H. W. Mansell, Clark Stohl, Jay DeGraff (chairman), and Fred Schwendiman. *Third row:* Lester Hewlett, Harold Glen Clark, and Dave Hatch. Also on the committee but not pictured were Gordon Owen and Parry D. Sorensen. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

year, small details changed to meet concerns that arose over time.²⁷ Using these rule books, wards and stakes sponsored basketball teams that played each other during a season and then held a tournament. The YMMIA offered suggestions for scheduling these seasons, but it set the dates for all-church tournament participants. Although only a limited number of teams and players came to the tournament, Church leaders were very proud of the overall participation. According to Church estimates, the number of boys and men playing basketball grew to ten thousand by the mid-1930s. That number continued to grow so much in the 1950s and 1960s that the YMMIA could keep track of only the number of teams and not individual

players. In 1952, there were 970 teams. When the Church added a junior division in 1955, there were 1,211 senior teams and 1,161 junior teams. When the tournament ended in 1971, there were 2,358 senior teams, 2,814 junior teams, and a small college division. Teams had to win on a division level in the 1930s to get to all-church. While the number of teams grew, the number of teams permitted at the tournament did not change. By the 1960s, teams had to win at a regional and then a zone tournament to qualify for all-church.²⁸

Once the teams made it to the all-church tournament, the athletic committee had to find gyms to play in. The Church owned the large Deseret Gym in Salt Lake City, but there were so many games going on, the Church had to use ward and stake gymnasiums. The committee then had to seed the teams and develop a schedule. The Church provided meals and housing for all the players. But the goal of the tournament was not only the game. The Church wanted to provide spiritual training and a chance for young men to meet Church leaders. The committee opened the tournament with a devotional in which Church leaders discussed sports as a model for the young men's lives. The committee also planned a banquet for participants and coaches and asked Church leaders to attend.²⁹

This basketball program was so successful that after World War II the YMMIA added two more large scale all-church tournaments: softball and volleyball. The two new and always smaller tournaments were also centrally organized and required a great deal of time and effort. Softball started as fast pitch and then evolved to slow pitch as more teams played slow pitch and fast pitch lost its supporters. At first, the Church leased baseball fields in the Salt Lake City area but in 1955 built a four-plex diamond named after George Q. Morris of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who was instrumental in the athletic program.³⁰

The first official softball tournament was held in 1949. In 1954, control of the softball tournament was moved from the YMMIA to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which meant that instead of the YMMIA planning and operating ward softball teams, local softball officials reported directly to a stake president. The stake president could select a stake softball director from the high council or from the MIA stake board. Church leaders argued that softball was more than just a sport; it was a way to keep men active in the Church.³¹

Softball grew in popularity because Church leaders encouraged members to play. Joseph Fielding Smith, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, asked all stake presidents in 1961 and 1962 to have their stakes participate since the softball tournament was an "important priesthood activity."³² There are no records that suggest why Smith singled out



The George Q. Morris softball field in Salt Lake City. Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

softball among all the sports as a priesthood responsibility. Basketball was always a more popular sport in terms of number of teams and participants. Smith may have wanted softball to grow in popularity because with ten men on a softball team (instead of the five on a basketball team) more boys and men could participate. Also, few high schools and colleges had softball teams, which meant that fewer people were restricted from playing on Church teams because of their participation in school athletics. Outside of Joseph Fielding Smith's encouragement, however, the basketball and softball programs ran very much the same. Regardless of the reason, making softball a priesthood responsibility made it even more centrally controlled.

Spiritual Purposes of Church Athletics

"Recreation has become an important expression of Mormon activism and group solidarity. . . . It provides a most effective context for the learning of Mormon attitudes toward church and world. . . . On the whole, it is looked upon as an aid to eternal progression," wrote O'Dea.³³ The all-church tournaments included devotionals and banquets because the purpose of Mormon athletics was primarily spiritual and not social. In the

1950s, Walter Stevenson, an MIA general officer, gave an address at BYU: "Why an All-Church Basketball Tournament?" He explained, "We have an activity program in the M.I.A. for one purpose, and that is to develop Latter-day Saints among the participants."³⁴ General Authorities and local Church leaders frequently repeated that idea. For example, Paul Hansen, the basketball coach of the Edgehill Ward in Salt Lake City, taught his players at the start of each season: "This is a basketball. Behind me is a basketball floor. Across the basketball floor is a chapel. The reason for this game is to put into practice the things you learn in that chapel."³⁵

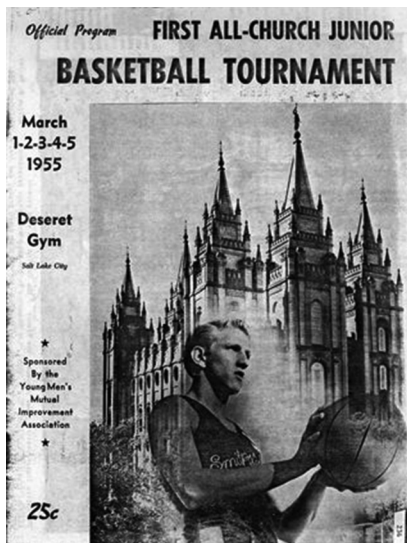
As late as 1966, Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said at a softball tournament that while the games would be a "challenge" and "explosive," playing softball itself was not the main goal. Softball was "a part of the great program to build men." There were "problems, sure," but the games served a bigger purpose. "As we go into this great church softball tournament of champions may we not forget that much greater ball game of life. May we all be champions in that all important tournament." In conclusion, Benson offered a blessing. "May [the tournament] bring joy to our hearts, may it teach you valuable lessons, may it make you appreciate more fully the rich program of the church, the purpose of which is to build men and women of character and strengthen and deepen spirituality."³⁶

Church leaders used anecdotal examples to support Benson's conclusion. For example, W. Floyd Millet, an athletic committee member, wrote, "[Softball will] strengthen testimonies" and "point the way to missions and temple marriages." He then cited a letter from James E. Hill, the bishop of the Jacksonville, Florida, Fifth Ward. Hill listed each position on the Jacksonville ward team and then where the young man was on a mission. He said at the first of the season, three had not been attending church and only two were considering missions. All the Mormon players ended up serving missions, and the one nonmember was still attending meetings.³⁷

Church leaders listed several spiritual and social goals that they hoped the tournaments fulfilled. They included testimony building, reactivating members, and converting nonmembers. Social goals included fellowshiping, building character, practicing sportsmanship, and developing talents.

Gaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ was the most important goal. Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, explained in August 1956: "Keep in mind above everything else . . . that these activities are for the purpose of making you better Latter-day Saints, and help lay a foundation in truth and righteousness."³⁸

LDS author L. E. Rytting writes, "Through the fellowship and spirit of teamwork which come from the activity, participation and interest in the church's other programs often result in a spiritual reawakening."³⁹



The schedule for the first all-church junior basketball tournament in 1955. Even on the program cover, organizers sought to express the spiritual aspects of the tournament. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

While no statistics could provide evidence of increased spirituality, there are many personal accounts of men who saw the benefits in their lives. For example, basketball player Randy Wardwell from Cincinnati, Ohio, felt that playing the game and watching other teams practice gospel principles “was a spiritual experience for me personally. It was a testimony building experience.”⁴⁰ Richard Perkins from Blanding, Utah, played for the Grayson Ward, which won the all-church tournament in 1954. Perkins was the most valuable player that year. He explained, “I’ve become more religious and in the Church more through basketball.” LaRay Alexander, the coach of the Grayson Ward from Blanding, bragged about his players’ basketball skill and teamwork. But he was equally proud of their records

in the Church since their basketball participation, pointing out that one had since been a stake president and four had served as bishops. After listing their callings, he bragged, “You can tell what caliber of guys we had.”⁴¹

Church sports and recreation were, according to a Church magazine article, “an excellent rehabilitating force which will bless and benefit the lives of all male members of the ward.”⁴² Church-sponsored athletics and recreation provided opportunities to create or renew friendships among players—something that helped inactive members feel welcome. Richard Perkins recalled that when the Blanding town team became a church team, some players were not eligible. But they started going to church so they could play.⁴³ Gary Fish, who played in Cincinnati, explained that sports kept members active since everyone had to attend meetings. As a result, half of the young men who played ended up going on missions. Randy Wardwell’s family did not regularly attend church. But playing basketball introduced him to Church doctrines and motivated him to attend church.⁴⁴

Missionary work is an essential part of the LDS Church. Just as sports and recreation provided a place for active members to include those who

did not attend church regularly, these activities could also be used to introduce others to the Church. The 1953–54 *MIA Athletic Handbook* stated, "The athletic program is sponsored with the understanding that it will be used as a missionary tool to make converts."⁴⁵ A stake president told of two missionaries who "formed the nucleus" of a basketball team in 1958 with seven nonmembers. All seven joined the Church, and five served missions. In 1956, Elder Mark E. Petersen suggested that conversion for the youth of the Church and others was the purpose of MIA. "Every chapel must be a mission field. Every class must be a mission field, and every child who comes to MIA must be considered an investigator of the gospel."⁴⁶ Church President David O. McKay viewed the same belief on a larger basis when he introduced the slogan "Every member a missionary" in 1959. McKay hoped that Church members would invite their friends to church meetings and to their homes. Then they could invite them to listen to the missionaries.⁴⁷

Basketball was a way for LDS youth to invite their friends to church. One example was R. Conrad Schultz, who later became a General Authority. Schultz was born in 1938 and lived in Eugene, Oregon, during his teenage years. He played high school basketball but quit when a coach criticized him. Some Mormon friends invited Schultz, who was not a Latter-day Saint, to play church ball. The first year the team went to the all-church tournament and lost after two games. But Schultz attended a banquet where Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then an Apostle, spoke. Schultz was impressed. He also enjoyed attending church meetings and felt accepted by the young men and other members of the ward. As a newcomer to the town, Schultz met people and made friends through his contacts at church. However, Schultz stopped attending church meetings after the basketball season because the rules no longer required him to attend. The next year he decided to play church ball again. That year the coach invited him to listen to the missionaries and consider joining the LDS Church. Schultz had lots of questions, but through prayer and fasting he decided to be baptized. The year after his baptism the team played at the tournament held on the Utah State University campus that year and won fourth place. Schultz's play impressed the USU coaches and he was offered a scholarship at Utah State. Because he did not want to leave his girlfriend who lived in Oregon, he turned it down. Instead, he played basketball his freshman year at the University of Oregon. Schultz also played on a ward softball team that went to all-church, placing second the first year and first the next.

Looking back on the experience, Schultz saw God's hand in his decision to quit the school team because he found the Church. But he also saw problems, explaining that church ball "has to be friendly and it has to be Christian." Schultz generally saw basketball as a good way to do missionary work

and reactivate members, especially youth. He remembered that about half of the non-LDS players during the time he played joined the Church, and about half of those remained active beyond their teenage years. For Schultz, playing church ball was a life-changing event.⁴⁸

Schultz represents a positive example, but was his experience typical or unusual? How effective were church sports in reactivating and converting young men? Church leaders did attempt to keep track of numbers, but they always felt that the totals were incomplete. Joseph Fielding Smith's letters to stake presidents about priesthood softball asked the leaders to report baptisms and reactivation among those associated with softball. Based on the replies he received, Smith reported 250 converts and at least 350 wives and children who joined in 1963. In addition, 1,600 men and boys returned to church attendance. He added that those figures did not include the "untold number who remained active" because of softball.⁴⁹ In 1966, Elder Delbert L. Stapley, who took over responsibility from Elder Joseph Fielding Smith for encouraging softball, explained that 164 stakes had reported 109 conversions, 90 conversions of families, and 1,179 reactivations; he speculated that if all the stakes had reported, the numbers would have been 400 converts, 350 families, and 4,432 reactivations. Even in 1971, just before the all-church tournament ended, Stapley was still asking stake leaders to keep track of the number of converts and people returning to church activity: "We are anxious to determine the actual accomplishment from the church softball program."⁵⁰

Social Benefits of Church Sports

Sports and recreation also met social needs. The men enjoyed playing together and created friendships that lasted their entire lives. The 1944 all-church basketball champions from Grantsville, Utah, developed a sense of community and friendships that continued for a lifetime. Fifty years after their win, all but one player met for a reunion; the one missing man had died.⁵¹ The 1947 Glenwood, Alberta, team developed the same closeness without winning a single game at the all-church tournament. Years later Glenwood team members met and put together a book about their memories of the team. They also recreated their all-church tournament photo.⁵²

In many cases, the fellowshiping extended beyond the team and to the members of the ward. Blanding, Utah, residents, for example, were proud of their team. Team member and coach Neldon Cochran explained that ward members had few options for entertainment in Blanding: "They didn't have anything else to do but go see the ball game." Local games were a highlight, but not everyone could leave the Four Corners area to attend



The 1947 basketball team of Glenwood (Alberta) M Men won the right to participate in the all-church tournament in Salt Lake City. This was the first Glenwood team after World War II ended and some of these men had returned from the war. They did not win any games in the tournament, but the camaraderie of participating in this small-town team, making the trip to Salt Lake, and meeting Church President George Albert Smith lasted a lifetime. *Left to right:* Dan Lybbert, Keith Law, Dean Quinton, Dennis Prince, Loril Bohne, Winston Bohne, Byron Smith, and Wilbur (Bill) Hansen. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.



The 1947 Glenwood M Men basketball team has held many reunions, including this one in 1995—forty-eight years after the tournament. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

all the tournament games. In order for fans at home to share the victories and losses, Coach LaRay Alexander called the local operator after each game and gave her the score. But seven hundred Blanding residents traveled to the final game in Provo, Utah.⁵³

Play became a “special laboratory where the young people actually put into practice the many principles” learned in church meetings. The 1967 athletic report explains, “We see how well our young people apply that which we have tried to teach them. In the heat and excitement of the games there is no place for sham or pretense. It is here that we find out whether the individual really believes in sportsmanship, in fair play. It is here that we find out if honesty is more important than winning at all costs and if the players do unto others as they would be done by.” Sports were a “firing line” where participants learned to “hold their tongue.”⁵⁴ To support that idea, young men who played basketball and volleyball took a pledge: “In order that I might render my finest service to humanity, I pledge before God and my fellows to keep myself morally clean, to defend fearlessly the truth, to learn modesty and manliness, and to obey the true rules of sportsmanship.”⁵⁵

Meeting the Challenges of Church Sports

Clearly, then, Church leaders emphasized the positive reasons for church sports, and all the examples so far show how they met those goals. Yet the program had several problems as well as successes. As with the successes, there are anecdotes but no figures about the problems. A common problem was that team members did not attend the church meetings that the rules required of both Mormons and non-Mormons. R. Conrad Schultz is an example of someone who attended only when he was playing. Some wards recruited members—invited good basketball players to move to their ward boundaries so they could play on their team. Larry Schlappi recalled inviting people who lived in Sevier County, Utah, to move to Glenwood, Utah, where there was a good basketball team. He also remembered being offered a job in California if he would move to Baldwin Park and play on their ward team. During an all-church tournament, Schlappi pointed out to the authorities that a team included an ineligible college player, and that team was cut from the competition.⁵⁶ Sometimes team members did not follow the Word of Wisdom. Softball player Mark Hutchings recalled that two nonmember starters on the Merced, California, team were cut from the team during the all-church tournament for smoking.⁵⁷

It was also a problem to find qualified referees. The Church paid for professional referees at the all-church tournament, but stakes could seldom afford them; local officiating was often subpar because the referees did not always know the rules. Also, the Church barred those who played on high school or college teams from playing on church teams, eliminating the best players. Those who did play church sports often did not know the rules and tried to bully their way through the game to make up for their lack of athletic skills. And as is often the case in the heat of the game, players often lost their tempers. Schultz recalled one elders quorum president who just stopped playing because he could not control his temper.⁵⁸ Local and general church athletic leaders recognized these problems and took steps to prevent them. To encourage good play, Schultz's stake did not allow swearing; one violation and the person was ejected from the game. Church leaders offered clinics for referees.

Other Christian Churches' Sports Programs

Other Christian churches that used sports to bring young men to church had the same purposes and experienced the same problems as the LDS Church. For example, Shirl J. Hoffman explains in his article "Sport, Play, and Leisure in the Christian Experience" that "the suggestion that sport has the potential for touching our minds and emotions and spirits in ways denied us in everyday life, or that it, like art, poetry, and the dance, can be an avenue of religious expression is radical only because of the distance we have allowed to occur between sport and religion." Therefore, "can sports, like religious festivals, really nourish an attitude of expectant alertness in players and spectators? Under the right conditions I believe they can."⁵⁹

Hoffman describes some of these conditions. The goal for sports as a religious activity is not winning as it is in other places. "Athletic contests are not times for giving glory to God as much as they are times for receiving insights from God. They are not worship but they can be occasions for sensing the greatness and goodness of God." For example, mountain climber Frank Gabelein believed "mountain mysticism" was not "true religion," but supported the belief that "climbing can uplift the spirit and give one a sense of the greatness of God."⁶⁰

To help promote the type of sports that Hoffman suggested, Protestant sports ministers have published manuals. Steve Connor's *Sports Outreach: Principles and Practice for Successful Sports Ministry* (2003) explains, "Sport has the ability to build bridges in relationships and transcend cultural barriers in a world that is more and more compartmentalized." The

rest of the book then discusses how sports can be a way to bring people together by emphasizing rules, sportsmanship, and fellowship.⁶¹

The Roman Catholic Church also emphasized sports ministries throughout the twentieth century. Catholic teams participated in basketball, soccer, track, indoor baseball, gymnastics, wrestling, basketball, and boxing. In 1933, the Chicago baseball-softball tournament expanded to include teams from four states, including Utah. The *New World* newspaper declared that adding new teams was valuable because Catholic youth had been playing with non-Catholic leagues, and those youth needed the church's influence in sports. A Salt Lake City priest commented when the Salt Lake City team went to the tournament, "I wish you would stress the point that the boys are going to Chicago not so much with the idea of winning ball games but because of the support given their pastors in the development of Catholic athletes in Salt Lake."⁶² During the 1940s and 1950s, the future Pope John Paul II also acknowledged the value of sports. He installed a swimming pool in his residence and took skiing trips to relax. He told the Italian Olympic Committee that he and the church supported sports because of the positive impact on a person's body and soul. Sports fostered self-discipline while promoting fellowship and community. Competition encouraged participants to excel, and sports taught important life lessons. The Pope believed sports encouraged world peace by bringing people together. While championing sports, he discouraged its violent aspects.⁶³ At times, high-ranking Catholic Church leaders expressed concerns about sports. A 1956 pamphlet declared, "Sports have all the tingling tang of a bottle of soda pop, and the intriguing suspense of a fizzling fuse." To avoid the fuse, the pamphlet recommended that participants focus on fun, friendship, strong bodies, and charity because "the matter of winning is entirely of secondary importance."⁶⁴

Women in LDS Sports

All of the examples cited so far deal with boys and men. Mormon recreation was not only a male activity; women participated in dance, music, speech, and drama along with the men, and girls and women played sports. But they never played in the all-church tournaments. O'Dea omitted discussing this aspect of church sports. In fact, most scholars did not consider gender issues in 1957. As anthropologist Janet Bennion explains, "O'Dea was simply painting a true depiction of what was served up to his own eyes: a system in which men were in the public forefront as political and religious actors, and women remained in the background as dutifully supportive 'auxiliaries' of the larger patriarchal structure. Paradoxically,

O'Dea genuinely felt women in Mormon society *were* equal to men, while in the same breath he underscored the basic inequities that women faced within that society."⁶⁵

So why were women not as involved in sports and especially tournaments as the men? Until the 1970s, many sports directors in the United States feared that physical activity would damage women's reproductive organs. In *Women and Sports in the United States: A Documentary Reader*, Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Cahn describe a typical intercollegiate basketball game for women in the 1960s. Teams participated in a "rare 'playday' . . . [where] no records [were] kept, set, or broken because statistics did not matter. What mattered was playing the game and extending that opportunity to as many players as possible." The teams used the "old half-court rules" developed in 1892 because women's basketball founders felt that women could not run the entire court.⁶⁶ Even those who allowed women to participate in church sports, such as the Catholic youth programs in the 1950s, felt that women had "less muscular constitutions" and "more delicate functions in life."⁶⁷

This attitude started to change in the 1950s and 1960s, partially because of the focus of United States Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy on physical fitness. As women became more involved in exercise, the rules for basketball changed. For example, in 1969, women were allowed to dribble, steal the ball, and have more than two full-court players. In 1971, women could finally play the entire court. While some women's sports histories briefly refer to these changes, most focus on Title IX, federal legislation that required equal sports opportunity for women in schools and universities.⁶⁸

Mormons fell into the same pattern. While the Young Women Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA) leaders saw a need for women to be involved in activities, they believed, like American physical fitness experts, that women were not competitive like men. Therefore Mormon men participated in athletics that were competitive, and Mormon women took part in sports and camping that were social activities. As in most early women's sports, at first Mormon women did not even form teams. Instead they had fun days where the organizers created teams on the spot to allow the women to make friends. In 1936, an *Improvement Era* article asked women sports directors to follow the Platform of the Women's Division National Amateur Athletic Federation guidelines, which included among its twelve "aims" a suggestion that women's sports should stress "enjoyment of sports" and not "winning of championships" and encouraged that women not travel to games.⁶⁹

In 1956, the YWMIA started keeping track of young women participating in sports and allowed multistake tournaments when the participants did not need to travel very far.⁷⁰ Claudia Shelton played softball on her stake level in the west Salt Lake City area in the 1950s. However, Eloise Godfrey Fugal remembered in the late 1960s that her ward softball team in Cornish, Utah, won the stake competition and participated in a regional tournament in Preston, Idaho. While Fugal commented that the region was large because it covered all of Cache Valley in northern Utah and southern Idaho, her Cornish team traveled approximately fifteen miles for the regional activity.⁷¹

The Church's purposes for women's sports were the same as for men. *Church News* reporter Monitor C. Noyce explained in 1964, "While there are some differences in the program for young women compared with the young men's plan, the ultimate goals are the same. Both are charged with providing wholesome recreation, building testimonies within youth so they will remain active, strong members of the Church, and influencing nonmembers to investigate the gospel further by interesting them in specific activities."⁷² Eloise Godfrey Fugal explained that for her women's sports were to "[build] self-esteem" and physical fitness. She continued, "I laugh a little bit. I know sometimes a big deal is made about the sports programs as a fellowshiping tool. It makes me smile now to think how anybody could be attracted to the Church when they watch us behave like we do in that setting." Fugal's comment points that women are competitive. Despite that, she tells that a nonmember in Cornish played softball and did join the Church, although she was not sure softball played a role in that conversion.⁷³

Although women did not play at all-church tournaments, they had specialized roles that matched expectations of women at the time. For basketball, women served as sponsors—cheerleaders, tour directors, and social chairpersons for the teams. The athletic committee assigned each team—especially those from out of town—two young women sponsors from a local stake. The women and their stake "adopted" the visiting team. The young women attended the team's games and sat on the bench. The committee told potential volunteers, "A sponsor is love, faith, hope, and gratitude all rolled up into one pretty package and tied with a beautiful banner that she wears with pride to let the world know who her team is."⁷⁴

At the all-church softball tournament, women also worked as volunteers. Effie Gunderson started attending church sports after her marriage because her husband coached basketball and softball. She explained, "I was there, so he put a score book in my hand." At one game the umpire asked to see her books and then invited her to be "the first woman to score



This team from Lovell, Wyoming, won the all-church basketball tournament in 1946. They pose with their sponsor, a woman assigned to host and cheer for the team. *Front row, left to right:* Norm Doerr, Bob Doerr, Carol Davis, Elmer Burnham, Orvin Asay. *Second row:* Steve Meeker, Dick Swift, Max Jones, Brownie Brown, and Gerald Doerr. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

the all-church championship.” Gunderson went on to serve on the all-church softball committee. She arranged for scorers and announcers, who worked twelve-hour days. She also reported scores to the newspapers.⁷⁵

Another volunteer, Claudia Shelton, helped because her father, Paul “Red” Shelton, served on the all-church tournament committee and asked her to help. Claudia explained, “My girlfriend and I were the ones who went to the George Q. Morris Field. We would be the scorers and announcers. We did all the Church softball games. Our ward happened to go to the junior softball tournament and took first place. We were so excited about that.”⁷⁶

End of All-Church Tournaments

The all-church tournaments were still important in 1957 when O’Dea published *The Mormons*, but he suggested a day when the program might

end.⁷⁷ He was right. At June Conference 1971, YMMIA General Superintendent W. Jay Eldredge announced the “elimination of all-Church championship finals in all athletic events.” Eldredge justified the change: “We want to stress that the reasoning behind the new program, which is under the direction of the General Authorities, is we will have the opportunity to hold larger and more interesting events. . . . We anticipate that the area tournaments will increase the activity of the youth and the participation of youth and adult in leadership roles.” Eldredge encouraged local areas to plan programs that fit their needs.⁷⁸

Initially the Church encouraged regional tournaments. Mel Jones, the director of church sports in the Southwest Area, remembered when Church leaders decided to discontinue all-church tournaments, they told him, “Brother Jones, we want you to go back to Arizona and build a program that will make them forget Salt Lake City finals.” Jones set up regional programs, including a slow-pitch tournament in Prescott, Arizona. All the teams could play for four days, and families planned their vacations around the tournaments just as they had the all-church tournament. While Jones worked on other regional tournaments for twenty years, he explained that softball was the highlight. Jones continued that after he was released, the Church started to scale back on regional programs: “I’m sure it was because the regional Church leaders, the stake presidents and the region people determined to scale it back. Now it’s not doing so much. It’s very scaled back. In some stakes, they don’t hardly have any play. But they’re doing other things, so they’re keeping the youth entertained.”⁷⁹

While Jones’s program continued to offer a replacement for the all-church tournament for two decades, Church leaders started discouraging regional play as early as 1971. In order to have larger tournaments, the stake presidents and the stake YMMIA superintendents had to agree.⁸⁰ Successful programs like Jones’s remained, but poor sportsmanship and other competing activities eliminated regional activities in other areas.⁸¹

Why did Church leaders move from the all-church tournament to regional and then do away with those activities? While there were problems with teams recruiting players, poor officiating after a decision not to hire professionals, and accidents, the major concerns focused on a bigger picture. Three major reasons for the change were growth in membership, an international church, and a shift to a redefinition of the Church’s mission statement.

Growth in Membership. A growing church was the number one concern that led to the change. A few numbers demonstrate this growth. During the 1960s, LDS Church leaders organized two hundred new stakes and nearly two thousand new wards. Only 20 percent of the new stakes were in

Utah (a quarter of those at Brigham Young University); 62 percent were in the rest of the United States, and 18 percent were outside of the United States. This was a major change from 1950, when there were 180 stakes; in 1969 there were 496.⁸² Even the athletic program showed this change. In the 1950s, there were seventeen divisions: eight were in Utah; three were outside the Intermountain West. By the time the program ended in 1971, there were thirty-nine zones throughout the world that were broken down into divisions and regions.⁸³

Historians James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard explained that the change from all-church activities "was designed to stimulate greater local participation and minimize expenses and logistical problems involved in annual treks to Salt Lake City."⁸⁴ The few Charles Redd Center for Western Studies interviewees who discussed the end of the tournaments restated the Church's position that growth was the major concern. Ron Gerber, who continues to be involved in local LDS sports, explained, "The all-church got to be so large with people coming. There were so many costs involved in it. The costs became prohibitive." Judy Donaldson, who worked as a secretary to the YMMIA athletic committee, also saw size as a problem: The tournament "could not continue on because it was so big. It would have to have gotten like the NBA the way the Church is growing."⁸⁵

In other words, the Church was rapidly becoming too large and too international to have a churchwide tournament. Besides the Church's tournament expenses (renting gyms, hiring officials, paying for rooms and meals), leaders had to consider the costs to the individual teams to travel to Salt Lake City. They also might have been forced to create another level of tournament to avoid having even more teams come to the all-church tournament.⁸⁶

The International Church. Closely related to growth was the Church's expansion into an international church. O'Dea foresaw a day in which the focus would not be on Salt Lake City or even the United States: "The Mormon movement is on the eve of its Diaspora . . . [where] belongingness would no longer be exclusively identified with a specific place."⁸⁷ The all-church tournaments did deal with a specific place, and there was always a predominant American element. The basketball tournament included an opening ceremony similar to the Olympic Games in which all the teams and their sponsors marched. Music included "God Bless America" and "The Star Spangled Banner." A day of softball also began with the United States national anthem.⁸⁸

But as the Church grew, the intensity of the focus on Salt Lake City had to change. A move similar to the cancellation of the all-church athletic tournaments came in June 1975, when Church President Spencer W.

Kimball announced that that June MIA conference would be the last. Instead of the annual leadership meetings for youth organizations and other auxiliaries, the Church planned to “decentralize” to “meet the increased challenges of a worldwide organization” because, as President Kimball said, of “the impracticality of concentrating our activities and learning processes in the headquarters center only.”⁸⁹ Sociologist Armand L. Mauss saw the focus on individual countries as positive in his study *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle for Assimilation*. He concluded that as the LDS Church grew, “church members might think of Utah as the Rome or Mecca of their faith, but they do not identify with it so strongly as in earlier stages.” Instead members looked at their own temple or their hope for one and focused on the Church in their area. As a result, “each cultural community could adapt and embroider the core in accordance with its own needs.”⁹⁰

Becoming an international church also meant a change in sports. Many of the worldwide membership did not even play basketball, volleyball, and softball: other countries had their own sports. The 1971–72 MIA *Athletic Handbook* stated that the LDS Church sponsored senior, M Men, and Explorer basketball; senior and Explorer softball; senior and Explorer volleyball; veterans, senior, and Explorer golf; and tennis. But YMMIA leaders stressed that those did not have to be the only options. While participation had always been emphasized, the choices of sports that the Church sponsored had been limited. Without all-church tournaments, the types of sports could be limitless. The manual explained, “Participation is a prime objective of the Church priesthood athletic program. There are many who cannot compete in basketball, volleyball, and softball. These, and many others, may be interested in less strenuous activity” that ward and stake leaders could determine. Some possibilities included “archery, badminton, bicycling, bowling, cricket, croquet, fencing, gymnastics, handball, horseback riding, lacrosse, paddle ball, running, shuffleboard, skating, skiing, squash, swimming, table tennis, track, [and] wrestling.” Leaders often encouraged co-ed sports that had “man-and-wife” or “boy-and-girl” teams.⁹¹

Church leaders stressed, “We should always remember and keep uppermost in mind that our greatest concern is the welfare of each individual participant in athletic events. The entire recreational and athletic program is a means to an end, and that end, of course, is to build Latter-day Saints strong in the faith and dedicated to the Church. Nevertheless, it is necessary to keep in mind that the athletic program is only a part of the great MIA institution. Athletics are an excellent drawing card and missionary tool in attracting young men to the Church and in reactivating

many who have become inactive."⁹² So even before the all-church tournament ended, the athletic handbooks suggested flexibility. "The type of sports selected will vary throughout the Church and will be decided by local priesthood and YMMIA officers. Such sports will consist of athletic activity which fits the needs, interests, and cultures of the membership in that particular area. For example, sports selected for Europe or the Orient may be different than those selected for the United States and Canada."⁹³

Redefinition of the Church's Mission Statement. "For organized religion to offer competition in spheres of life in which non-religious organizations do better—spheres themselves inadequate to the facing of deeper human problems—is to be found wanting. The basic need of Mormonism may well become a search for a more contemplative understanding of the problem of God and man,"⁹⁴ wrote O'Dea.

Just as O'Dea suggested, the LDS Church changed several of its programs to focus more directly on saving souls. During the 1960s, General Authorities, under the direction of Elder Harold B. Lee, focused on priesthood direction rather than auxiliaries groups like the YMMIA and YWMIA. In 1948, the First Presidency had asked Lee to chair a committee to correlate Church auxiliaries under the priesthood, but Church President George Albert Smith did not think the timing was right, so the changes were delayed. By 1960, Church President David O. McKay believed that there needed to be changes, and Lee was asked to study Church curriculum. Three groups examined programs for children, teenagers, and adults and determined four major areas of priesthood authority: missionary work, genealogy, welfare, and home teaching. Based on these findings, the Church leaders reorganized the auxiliaries. As historians James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard explained, "Auxiliary organizations were in reality only helps to the priesthood in carrying out its proper function."⁹⁵

The priesthood became even more central for youth programs in 1973, when the First Presidency announced the creation of priesthood-controlled MIA directed by the Presiding Bishopric. According to Allen and Leonard, "In 1973, when Elder Lee was President of the Church, a major step toward clarifying this philosophy was taken when the Mutual Improvement Associations and the priesthood were combined." The next year Lee eliminated the MIA as a separate organization, and the teenager groups were known as the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women. This change meant that a bishopric would call four adult male leaders, a president and three class advisors, who would be in charge of the young men and who would answer to the bishopric. Four adult women leaders, a president and an advisor for the Beehive, Mia Maid, and Laurel classes, directed the Young Women. A service and activity committee would plan dance,

drama, and athletic programs for the ward, and a special effort would be made to include service activities. Teenagers would direct a local ward youth council. At this same time, Church leaders stressed that regional activities were discouraged and were allowed on a case-by-case basis with a special committee appointed “through the Melchizedek Priesthood MIA regional organization.”⁹⁶

These changes also affected the sports program. The mission of the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women programs was to focus on bringing youth to Christ and no longer to provide recreation. So while the growth of the international church led to an end of all-church tournaments, a more important reason was a shift in focus on what the Church should be about. Sports was one of the programs that was eliminated. Armand Mauss discusses how the Church moved from its “extension education program” of the MIA youth activities to a focus on the spiritual elements. As Mauss writes, “Gone are the speech and drama and dance competitions provided by the old Mutual Improvement Association.” In their place were “priesthood correlation and youth temple trips.” As a result, “this spiritual core would link Mormon communities around the world into one universal religion.” This shift illustrates his theme of a conflict between two symbols in downtown Salt Lake City, the Angel Moroni on the temple and the beehive on the Joseph Smith Memorial Building (formerly the Hotel Utah). For Mauss, the angel represents the spiritual and the beehive the more secular cultural elements of Mormonism. For years Mormons focused on the beehive and assimilating into the American culture. With the change in focus, Mauss believes, “If the Mormon Church is to become truly a new world religion in the twenty-first century, as some scholars have projected, the angel will have to be largely disengaged from the American beehive” so that the Church can create new cultural beehives in other places.⁹⁷

A View into Mormon History

In just a few paragraphs, Thomas F. O’Dea summarized the history and impact of the Mormon recreational programs. The all-church tournaments fit his model. They started small but were soon swallowed up by the general Church bureaucracy. The tournaments took time and effort to organize, but the goal was never simply sports. Rather, the focus was spiritual—to build testimonies and bring young men into or back into the Church. These tournaments were eliminated because the Church was becoming an international church. A worldwide church needed to look beyond its narrow Intermountain West beginnings. O’Dea missed some points, especially women’s studies, but he represented the research of his

time. Looking at the all-church tournaments via O'Dea's comments shows how sports history can illustrate an effective and entertaining way to understand the Church's broader twentieth-century history.

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1. L. E. Rytting, "Priesthood Softball: Play Ball," *Improvement Era* 64 (August 1961): 589.

2. Jessie L. Embry, *Spiritualized Recreation: Mormon All-Church Athletic Tournaments and Dance Festivals* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 2008), ebook at <http://reddcenter.byu.edu/Spiritualized.dhtml>, spells out the details of the tournaments in a chronological and descriptive format. While this article looks only at sports, athletics was just one of many recreational activities that the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) and the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA) offered. These included speech, dance, music, and drama. For young men and women who were not athletically inclined, there was something for them as well. These programs followed a similar pattern to athletics, with the big event for them taking place at the annual June conference for YMMIA and YWMIA leaders. Sports serves as an example for all MIA activities. My book and this article are based on 125 interviews conducted by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies about LDS recreation. Most of the interviews deal with athletics, but some have information on other MIA programs. The interviews are housed in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).

Other studies have looked at the role of recreation in the LDS Church, including several dissertations at non-Mormon universities. In 1941, Rex A. Skidmore wrote "Mormon Recreation in Theory and Practice: A Study of Social Change" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1941). Two decades later, in 1962, Ruth Andrus completed a dissertation "A History of the Recreation Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (PhD diss., State University of Iowa, 1962). A more recent study is Richard Ian Kimball, *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), which was adapted from his PhD dissertation. Scott Kenney also discussed recreation in his preliminary history of the Mutual Improvement Association in the 1970s. "The Mutual Improvement Associations: A Preliminary History, 1900-1950," Task Papers in LDS History, number 6 (Salt Lake City: History Division, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976). Two BYU theses looked at specific tournaments: Edward Donald Snow, "An Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1954), and Gordon Norman Oborn, “An Historical Study of the All-Church Softball Tournament of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1961). These studies outline Mormon recreation and sports, but except for Kimball’s, they do not talk about a time when recreation would no longer be a focus.

3. Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffman, and Tim B. Heaton, *Revisiting Thomas F. O’Dea’s The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 437–38. These essays, while seeing O’Dea’s work as invaluable, also point out what O’Dea missed, especially gender studies.

4. O’Dea cites Rex A. Skidmore, *Mormon Recreation in Theory and Practice: A Study in Social Change* (Philadelphia, 1941), 5; *MIA Activities Manual* (Salt Lake City, 1933), 46 ff.

5. Thomas F. O’Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 146–47.

6. O’Dea, *The Mormons*, 146.

7. O’Dea, *The Mormons*, 261–62.

8. O’Dea, *The Mormons*, 147.

9. James Naismith, *Basketball: Its Origin and Development* (1941; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 42–60; Allen Guttman, *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sports* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 70–71. The information on the importance of the YMCA comes from Guttman’s volume. See also C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association, 1951); Clifford M. Drury, *San Francisco Y.M.C.A.: 100 Years by the Golden Gate, 1853–1953* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1963); *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City*, ed. Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

10. Guttman, *Whole New Ball Game*, 73–74; Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1, 2, 3, 7, 12.

11. Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, 7.

12. Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, 53, quoted in Kimball, *Sports in Zion*, 17 n. 10. In *Sports in Zion*, historian Richard Ian Kimball carefully spells out the beginnings of Mormon athletics. He demonstrates how the Mormon movement matched the muscular Christianity of other churches and religious-based organizations that used sports as a way to turn young men to spirituality. Kimball’s excellent introductory study could not cover all the elements of Mormon recreation; it barely mentions basketball and does not discuss softball or volleyball at all or the all-church athletic tournaments. This study ends in 1940 and therefore misses the 1950s and 1960s, a period that those who participated in the tournaments would call the height of Mormon sports.

13. Rex A. Skidmore, “Joseph Smith: A Leader and Lover of Recreation,” *Improvement Era* 43 (December 1940): 763.

14. Andrus, “History of the Recreation Program,” 492.

15. “Brigham Young Said: On Recreation,” *Improvement Era* 53 (June 1950): 529.

16. Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 251.

17. "Our Work: To Stake and Ward Officers of the Y. M. M. I. A.," *Improvement Era* 9 (June 1906); Kenney, "Mutual Improvement Associations," 9.
18. Kimball, *Sports in Zion*, 5–9, 30.
19. Snow, "Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament," 4–5.
20. E. J. Milne, "Ward and Gymnasium Hall," *Improvement Era* 12 (December 1908): 162–63. For more information on the LDS Church and sports in the Progressive Era, see Kimball, *Sports in Zion*.
21. Snow, "Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament," 6–8.
22. Snow, "Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament," 9.
23. Snow, "Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament," 12, 43–44; John D. Giles and Helena W. Larson, "The M Men–Gleaner Silver Jubilee," *Improvement Era* 50 (March 1947): 143, 178–81; "First M Men Athletes Get Together," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, March 7, 1953.
24. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 147.
25. Snow, "Historical Study of the M Men Basketball Tournament," 13.
26. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 147.
27. For details in changes made in the policies, see Embry, *Spiritualized Recreation*. The changes included how often Mormons and non-Mormons had to attend church, how long they had to live in the ward boundaries, and so on.
28. YMMIA Athletic Committee Files, 1942–1972, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; used by permission. The numbers come from this source. The paragraph is a summary of the information in Embry, "Basketball," in *Spiritualized Recreation*, 54–93.
29. For greater detail about activities associated with basketball, softball, and volleyball tournaments, see Embry, *Spiritualized Recreation*.
30. Oborn, "Historical Study of the All-Church Softball Tournament," 60–65.
31. "Melchizedek Priesthood: Softball," *Improvement Era* 57 (April 1954): 218, 252.
32. Joseph Fielding Smith to all stake presidents, March 10, 1961, Church softball committee circular letters, CR 68/3, Church History Library.
33. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 147.
34. A. Walter Stevenson, Marvin J. Ashton, and Elbert R. Curtis, "Why an All-Church Basketball Tournament?" in *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1953–54* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1954), 287.
35. Allen Brown, interview by Benjamin C. Sandel, 2003, 1–5, LDS Sports and Recreation Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Perry Special Collections.
36. YMMIA Athletic Committee Files, used by permission.
37. YMMIA Athletic Committee Files, used by permission.
38. Joseph Fielding Smith, "64 Softball Teams Guests at Banquet," *Church News*, August 25, 1956, 3.
39. Rytting, "Priesthood Softball," 592.
40. Randy Wardwell, interview by Michael Cannon, 2003, 12, Charles Redd Center.
41. Richard Perkins, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 7, Charles Redd Center; LaRay Alexander, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 4, Charles Redd Center.
42. "Melchizedek Priesthood: Softball," 252.
43. Perkins, interview, 7.
44. Gary Fish, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 4; Wardwell, interview, 1–2.

45. *MIA Athletic Handbook, 1953–54* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 13.

46. Doyle L. Green, “A Decade of Service: 1948–1958,” *Improvement Era* 61 (July 1958): 525; Allie Howe, “Carry On, MIA,” *Improvement Era* 59 (August 1956): 574.

47. *Church History in the Fulness of Times: Student Manual. The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 555.

48. R. Conrad Schultz, interview by Benjamin Sandel, 2004, 1–13, Charles Redd Center.

49. Joseph Fielding Smith to all stake presidents, February 28, 1964, March 8, 1965, Church softball committee circular letters, Church Records 68/3, Church History Library.

50. Delbert L. Stapley to All Stake Presidents, March 22, 1967, Church softball committee circular letters.

51. Other teams also held reunions, such as the Grantsville, Utah, Second Ward 1944 champion team. See the photos at <http://reddcenter.byu.edu/Spiritualized.dhtml>.

52. Cliff Williams, Grantsville file, LDS Sports and Recreation file, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, donated to Perry Special Collections; Commemorative Booklet of the Glenwood [Alberta] M Men Basketball Team of 1947, Glenwood file, LDS Sports and Recreation file.

53. Neldon Cochran, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 5, Charles Redd Center; Alexander, interview, 5.

54. YMMIA Circular Letter, December 18, 1967, Church Record 15/1, Church History Library.

55. “M Men: True Sportsmanship and the M Men,” *Improvement Era* 41 (January 1938): 48.

56. Larry Schlappi, interview by Susan R. Wheelwright, 2003, 3–7, Charles Redd Center.

57. D. Mark Hutchings, interview by Erin Hutchings, 2003, 13, Charles Redd Center.

58. Schultz, interview, 5.

59. Shirl J. Hoffman, “Sport, Play, and Leisure in the Christian Experience,” in *Christianity and Leisure: Issues in a Pluralistic Society*, rev. ed., ed. Paul Heintzman, Glen A. Van Andel, and Thomas L. Visker (1994; repr., Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 2006), 148, 160–61.

60. Hoffman, “Sport, Play, and Leisure,” 161–62 (*italics in original*).

61. Steve Connor, *Sports Outreach: Principles and Practice for Successful Sports Ministry* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2003), 15.

62. *New World* September 7, 1933, 11; September 8, 1933, 11; September 18, 1933, 11.

63. Robert Feeney, *A Catholic Perspective: Physical Exercise and Sports* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Aquinas, 1995), 59–62.

64. John M. Scott, *How to Be a Christian in Sports* (St. Louis, Mo.: Queen’s Work, 1956), 4, 13.

65. Janet Bennion, “Mormon Women’s Issues in the Twenty-first Century,” in Jacobson, Hoffman, and Heaton, *Revisiting O’Dea*, 135; *italics in original*. See also Carrie A. Miles, “LDS Family Ideals versus the Equality of Women: Navigating the Changes since 1957,” in Jacobson, Hoffman, and Heaton, *Revisiting O’Dea*, 101.

66. Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Cahn, "Introduction," in *Women and Sports in the United States: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Cahn (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007), xi; see Joan S. Hult and Marianna Treckell, eds., *A Century of Women's Basketball: From Frailty to Final Four* (Reston, Va.: National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1991), 3–108.

67. Daniel A. Lord, *Your New Leisure and How to Use It* (St. Louis, Mo.: Queen's Work, 1950), 29.

68. Department of Health and Human Services, The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, "About the Council: President's Council History," http://www.fitness.gov/about_history.htm (accessed September 25, 2008); see Joan S. Hult, "The Story of Women's Athletics: Manipulating a Dream, 1890–1985," in *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1994), 94–96; Shelley Smith, "Not Quite the Game Intended," in *Nike Is a Goddess: The History of Women in Sports*, ed. Lissa Smith (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1998), 298–99.

69. "Mutual Messages: Athletics for Girls," *Improvement Era* 39 (February 1936): 109.

70. "YWMIA Sports: 32,000 Girls Play Competitive Games," *Church News*, October 27, 1956, 4.

71. Claudia Shelton, interview by Jessie L. Embry, 2006, 1, Charles Redd Center; Eloise G. Fugal, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 1–13, Charles Redd Center.

72. Monitor C. Noyce, "Athletics and Sports," *Improvement Era* 67 (September 1964): 735.

73. Fugal, interview, 9.

74. YMMIA Records, Church Record 15/7, Church History Library.

75. Effie Gunderson, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 1–4, Charles Redd Center.

76. Shelton, interview, 1.

77. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 262.

78. "All Church Tourneys to Be Eliminated: Athletic Program Changed For Greater Participation," *Church News*, June 26, 1971, 10; "MIA Festival Last 'World Scale' Fete," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 27, 1971, B1.

79. Mel Jones, interview by Michael Cannon, 2003, 3–5.

80. *YMMIA Athletic Handbook, 1971–72: Rules and Procedures for the Operation of the YMMIA Athletic Program* (Salt Lake City: Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971), 17.

81. For more information on regional play, see Embry, "LDS Church Youth Activities Since the 1970s," in *Spiritualized Recreation*, 164–200.

82. L. Tom Perry, "He Hath Given a Law unto All Things," BYU Devotional, November 29, 1977, <http://speeches.byu.edu>; Church News Staff, *Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1974), 168–74, 207.

83. YMMIA Athletic Committee Files, used by permission.

84. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 600–601.

85. Ron Gerber, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 18, Charles Redd Center; Judy Donaldson, interview by Jenny Harris, 2003, 15, Charles Redd Center.

86. A survey of more than one hundred interviews showed that not everyone talked about why they felt all-church tournaments were discontinued. In many cases, the question was not asked.

87. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 261.

88. W. O. Robinson, *The Church and Recreation: A Résumé of the LDS Recreation Program as Directed by the Mutual Improvement Association* (N.p.: By the author, n.d.), 119–20; Gary Rummmler, "All-Church Meet Opens: Banquet Sets Stage For Week's Events," *Deseret News*, August 19, 1957, 2B.

89. "June Conference 1975—The End of an Era," *New Era* 5 (October 1975): 16.

90. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 13, 209.

91. YMMIA Athletic Handbook, 1971–72, 10–11, 17.

92. YMMIA Athletic Handbook, 1971–72, 3.

93. YMMIA Athletic Handbook, 1972–73: *Rules and Procedures for the Operation of the YMMIA Athletic Program* (Salt Lake City: Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), 4. This statement was also in the 1969–70 and 1971–72 handbooks.

94. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, 262.

95. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 593–600.

96. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 600; Victor L. Brown, "The Aaronic Priesthood MIA," *Ensign* 3 (July 1973): 80.

97. Mauss, *Angel and the Beehive*, 26, 198, 202, 207, 209, 212.

Yellow Shirt Riddles

Holly Rose Hansen

Baby-Yellow

The story I'm most curious to write is the one I forgot. I know I forgot it, in its entirety, because Rachel,¹ my ex-sister-in-law-more-like-a-sister, told me about it two years after it happened. During one of our all-night talkathons, where we cry but mostly laugh about the darkest moments in our lives, Rachel started telling me a story I had no memory of. "Come, on," she said, "you remember when Kevin came to his parents' house after one of your blow-ups" She repeatedly recounted details, but not one stitch of that yarn belonged to me. At first I was frightened, realizing my brain had done something extraordinarily funky. Then I wanted to recall the moment for myself. I believed her, but I couldn't understand how or why I could block the memory out. Nutters, people on heavy medication, and victims of trauma lose their memories, not normal people like me. It was easier to believe the fight got lost somewhere in the chaos of those crying years, like children do at busy shopping malls, and if I got on the PA system, my little lost memory would surface from the crowd. But when I strain even now, the only memory I locate in the slot where that fight should be is the image of an ordinary collared shirt that I wore to work a year after the divorce. This image baffles me. How did that shirt, without my permission, replace the fight memory, and what message is my subconscious sending me? The shirt is the pale yellow of pre-ultrasound pregnancy, not a color I'd imagine connected to a silent fight I had with my husband in front of his family, which everyone heard anyway. The more I push this forgotten moment, the more my brain cloaks it with distracting riddles, as if to say, *don't go there, you're better off not knowing*.

Writing my silent fight in vivid details might be cathartic, bringing healing, but memory and meaning are lost. My pallet isn't empty though; I can paint pictures of things that matter least. Like the gold, U-shaped '70s armchair I was probably sitting in when Kevin, my then-husband, opened the front door to his parents' house—because I can remember that chair. I'd seen it every Sunday for five years. Except I can't remember if I was in that chair or out in the back garden, sitting on the faded red picnic table, escaping Heber's summer heat amid the corn and asparagus.

The bits of fight I do know, skinny Rachel lent me—an interesting dilemma to examine my life only in the colors another's eyes have seen. I'm not sure I like it. While editing this, I called Rachel to refresh my "memory" again because of my frustration trying to write true descriptions of things I can't remember. She told me I drove an hour from my house to Heber to surprise Kevin with dinner—a make-up for the fight we had before he left on a backpacking trip with his dad and brother. Rachel told me how my smile stayed frozen on like nothing happened when I said "Hi" to Kevin as he walked by without saying a word or looking in my direction. But it was my eyes, she said, that gave me away, looking like a lost child's. Those lost eyes watched as he ignored my greeting, grabbed his dinner and backpack, and drove off in my cherry Toyota pickup, leaving me standing—I don't remember where—but Rachel tells me I was there. I suppose I made my excuses for Kevin to his family, smiled that fake pin-up I'd been doing for the last three years, and drove myself home. I divorced him two years later. That I remember.

Untying

Bill Kittredge said, "If you are not *risking* sentimentality, you are not close to your inner self."² I believe I've risked a great deal of sentimentality in writing the emotional death of my married, abused self.

Pink alpine glow was the last beautiful thing I saw. Spindrift rolled off the mountain in rising undulating clouds that poured into our eyes, mouths, down collars, into hoods. It was impossible to find camp and set up our tent inside the swirling white. I wasn't even sure we were on the mountain anymore, and I was terrified of stepping off. We dug seats into the sheer sides, an almost ineffectual exercise with snow lifting and moving at once, filling in our small places of security. And night was impossibly long; sitting on coiled ropes in the dark, snow pricking our faces, munching frozen candy bars for warmth. I don't remember slipping, but must have because waking found me alone, my eyes a stranger in the place where they opened. I could see him somehow—alone in that crouched

position, the rope clenching his harness, crampons crushing dry snow. He would try to look for me once he realized I had gone, perhaps when the early light of morning revealed my absence. But he would never find me. I would not even know where to look. He did not hear above the slipping wind the rustle of my body as I rolled away. It is strange I did not feel it, exhausted as I was. It was simple, really, why I fell into the night. We untied the short rope tethering us together. When had we taken it off? I couldn't remember loosening the knot. But it happened, I knew. How strange, it wasn't the mountain that took me after all, but our own folly. It is an odd thing to know of one's own dying, to analyze it with detachment, not regret. And what would he do? Would he see my end of the untied rope? He would come down the mountain, of course, because that was the only thing to do. He would go, stomping the snow, digging his axe as he taught me, sometimes reaching instinctively to belay his disappeared partner. He would not return to this mountain, but certainly would go up others. Climbing them, he would think of me, only speaking my name when it was whipped from his lips and tossed incomprehensibly into the spindrift and perhaps the alpine glow.

Tying Quilts

Mom and I were relieved—they weren't playing inane baby-shower games, like tasting and guessing contents of baby food from unlabeled jars. A baby quilt was set up instead. I was surprised I remembered how to do it, mostly. Pierce the fabric, push down hard, up again, needle slipping, under thick red yarn, feel fibers tug as you pull. Done already, move on, next marks waiting, cut the yarn when the row is done, pull tight knots, the baby will wind them in tiny fingers. I learned to tie quilts at girls camp and church socials. Lujean Spencer, with white poodle-permed hair, was the authority. She taught me to stretch fabric on wooden frames, push big silver tacks, roll a tied section under to start another row. The quilt Lujean helped me make, cut from blue cloth reminding me of baby eyes, is folded unused at the top of my closet. The yarn is perfect, not frayed by any baby's hands.

These were the life skills they taught good girls at my church. When we weren't tying quilts for Kurdish refugees or making hygiene kits for the homeless, our leaders were doing their best to convince us we could become saints. I can see my teacher, her perfectly manicured nails holding the thin white manual. The answers were simple, and I knew them all. Read your scriptures, pray, beg forgiveness. Those answers haven't changed much. I still believe. But my manual is not white anymore. It's

an 8½ x 5 blue spiral notebook that I carry almost everywhere I go, and scribble in: jotting down lines that run through my head at night; stories I'm working on; conversation scraps; bits of class lecture; song lyrics; prayers; secret notes to my best friend; anything that will help me tie up the loose ends that are running willy-nilly through my head. These pieces get terribly disorganized, almost frightfully so at times, until I believe I'll never straighten it all out. But I do somehow, shaping the scraps into a pattern. Simplicity is not an attribute I'd pin on my life, but I've come to prefer attempting to organize the chaos rather than pretending it's not there.

Broken

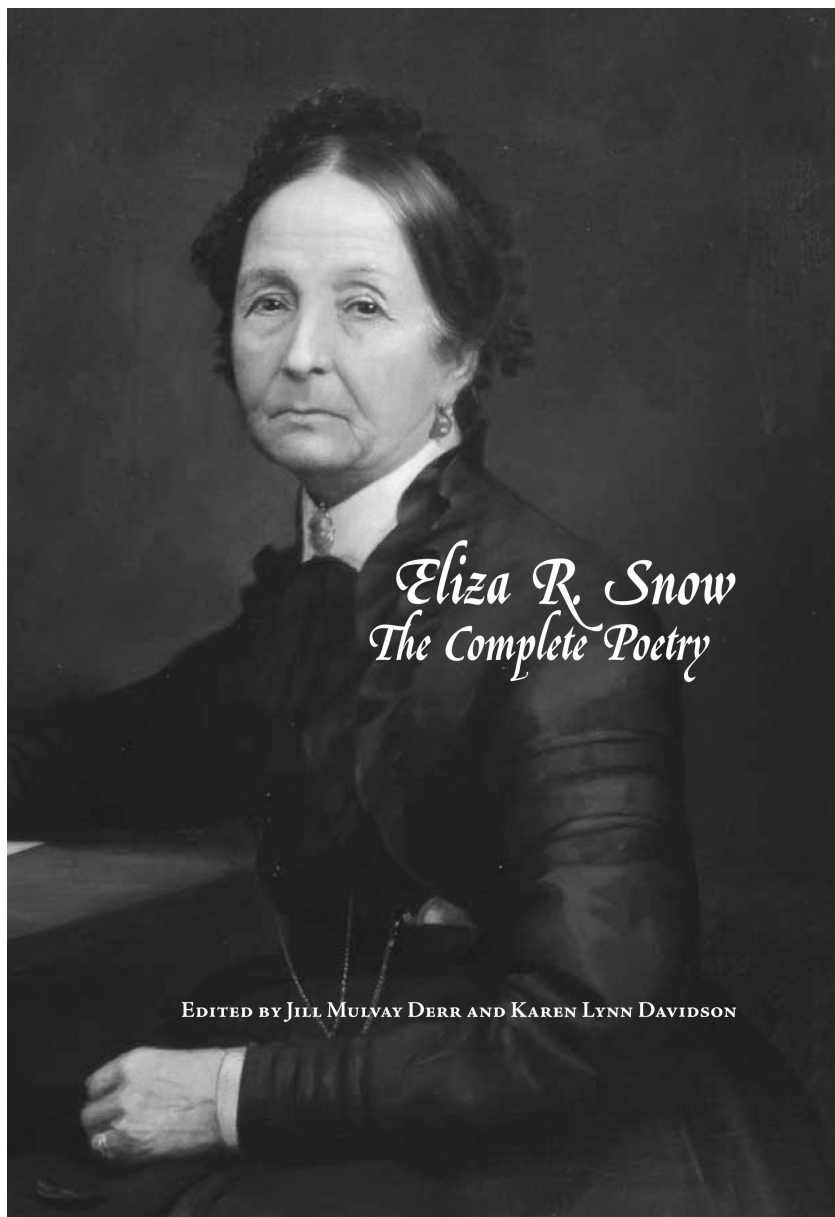
I made orange-passion fruit juice this morning in my glass pitcher that kind of looks like the Kool-Aid man. I have two of them, exactly the same. One I got for my wedding; the other I got five years later for my divorce, I guess you could say. I can't tell one from the other, so alike they seem to me. I'm happy to use them both, the juice tasting as good, pouring out as well, mixing as smoothly. Both were gifts from family members, wishing happiness, giving what the occasion and conscience demanded. The first pitcher I unwrapped in a white dress standing in a reception hall; the second gift I got outside my townhouse. I was walking to my door from the carport when Kevin's sister's family appeared on the sidewalk, holding a wrapped gift and the new baby I'd never seen, already six months old. It was dark and Christmas cold, but they couldn't come in. They were tired, the night spent, excusing themselves with their two babies' bedtimes. Hannah was strapped in her car-seat, so I kissed her there, my tears wetting her toddler face as she cooed out something sounding like Aunt Holly. I hugged Micah, crying harder now, his big toothy grin revealed in the lamplight. And Chrissy, large glasses glinting, awkward and fumbling with the baby, crying too, the dark past of the asphalt beneath our feet. Sniffing, wiping at the tears washing over my cheeks, no Kleenex, just brushing it on my jeans, asking about his siblings who wouldn't speak to me, hugging them, holding the baby, not knowing what to say. Smiling and crying and wondering what I was doing outside on a dark and cold Christmas night with people I used to call my family. I waved to them, wiping at my eyes as they drove, their headlights flashing, blinding me as they turned away. I went inside and, without turning on the light, unwrapped the box, the cool beams of the streetlamp streaming through my gauzy curtains. *Another pitcher*, I thought, *just like the old one*. I don't think they knew they completed the pair, don't think they could have foreseen the irony when they picked it up at Lechters or Walmart as they dashed off to

buy other things on their list. But I did as I put it in the cupboard next to its mate. There wouldn't have been space, not before he took his bowls and pie plates.

It's a good pitcher, even though I have to put Cling Wrap over it when I put it inside the fridge to keep the juice from tasting like salsa and potatoes. I like that I can see swirls in the orange-pink juice, that it's heavy in my hand, solid as I pour, that the glass belly feels icy cupped in my palm. If I dropped it, the glass would shatter, forever broken on the hard floor, unfixable, to be swept up and put in the garbage can. Perhaps finding pieces, little shards months later as I sweep a forgotten corner, or while walking in the kitchen one morning wanting some juice, but instead pushing a hard sliver in my toe, the red drop of blood forming unexpectedly. But I do not drop it; I hold it carefully, wash it out, and put it safely in the cupboard with its other, their bases kissing. I do not know which one was the start and which one the gift of the end, nor am I able to tell which I like better, so alike they seem to me.

This essay by Holly Rose Hansen (hollyrosehansen@gmail.com) won first place in the *BYU Studies* 2009 personal essay contest.

1. All names have been changed.
2. In Richard Hugo, "Writing off the Subject," *The Triggering Town: Essays and Lectures on Poetry and Writing* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 7.



In her hymns and her hundreds of poems, Eliza R. Snow captured nineteenth-century Mormonism in revealing detail while conveying sublime truths about the human condition. In this superb study, every known Eliza R. Snow poem is presented with historical context and perceptive commentary. *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, a copublication of Brigham Young University Press and University of Utah Press, is available at <http://byustudies.byu.edu>. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

Eliza R. Snow's Poetry

Edited by Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson

As plural wife of two prophets and sister of a third, as an admired leader of women, and as an acknowledged voice of the Saints to the outside world, Eliza R. Snow was as close to the center of formative events and ideas as any woman of early Mormondom. More than her letters, discourses, or journals, her poems are comprehensive in their scope and as immediate as snapshots in their depiction of Mormon culture. The more than five hundred poems written by Snow capture the lived Mormonism of the nineteenth century, where revelation and history intersected and Latter-day Saints labored for the meeting of heaven and earth they named Zion.

Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry is a collection of all her known poems, drawn from both published and manuscript sources dating from 1825 to 1887. The poems are arranged chronologically, and in the samples on the following pages, footnotes and annotations from the book appear as endnotes. She was twenty-one years old when her first poem appeared under a pseudonym in a frontier Ohio newspaper and eight weeks away from her death at the age of eighty-three when her last poem appeared in the Mormon *Woman's Exponent*. Her "variegated life,"¹ as she described it, swept her across the United States, from the East to the Midwest to the West, and briefly abroad. She moved not only geographically but also spiritually, from Christian primitivist to Latter-day Saint, from unmarried adult to plural wife of two prophets, from faithful follower to renowned leader. Her poems document these passages. She did not journey alone or write in isolation: ties to her family and friends, to her people, and to her nation shaped her subject matter and her sentiments. Connections and painful disconnections are the substance of her work.

For Snow, the writing of poems was a sacred calling, a means of drawing people closer to God and of building a holy community. Through poetry that evidenced her capacity for revelation, Snow affirmed the promise and possibility of revelation for every ordinary Saint. This annotated collection of Snow's poems provides a window on her self-understanding as a poet, as a woman, and as a Latter-day Saint. Indeed, her title as "Zion's Poetess"² underscores the essential importance of her religion, her vocation as poet, and her gender.

When Eliza R. Snow died, the *New York Times* noted the demise of "the Mormon Poetess . . . one of the central figures of the Mormon galaxy."³ Snow was without question the most important woman of letters to emerge from early Mormonism. Whether a comprehensive collection of Snow's poems will broaden her reputation as a poet among and beyond Latter-day Saints remains to be seen. Certainly, it will further secure the hope Snow expressed as a young unknown poet: "*I would not be forgotten quite.*"⁴

The following poems with introductory notes providing historical context are a handful of the more than five hundred compiled in *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, recently produced by BYU Studies, copublished by Brigham Young University Press and University of Utah Press.

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1. Eliza R. Snow, "Sketch," in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995; reprint, Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 6.

2. E[mmeline] B. W[ells], "Pen Sketch of an Illustrious Woman," *Woman's Exponent* 10 (1 November 1881): 82.

3. "The Mormon Poetess Dead," *New York Times*, 6 December 1887.

4. Eliza R. Snow, "Forget Me Not," Poem 35 in Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, eds., *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, l. 32; italics in original.

9 The Farmer's Wife

Although the Snow family lived in town—Mantua, Ohio—ERS's father, Oliver Snow, was, according to her, "a farmer by occupation," familiar with the hardships and privations of the heavily timbered Ohio country. As a young girl growing up in a small community, ERS learned how to spin, dye, and weave. Her mother, Rosetta Pettibone Snow, "considered a practical knowledge of housekeeping the best, and most efficient foundation on which to build a magnificent structure of womanly accomplishments—that useful knowledge was the most reliable basis of independence."¹ Although this poem may seem to be a romantic, sentimental notion of rural joys, it is more complex than it first appears. "The Farmer's Wife" comments indirectly on the question of women's roles in a changing society. The praise of the farmer's wife echoes Proverbs 31, the tribute to the virtuous woman whose "price is above rubies." When ERS copied this poem into her 1842–1882 journal, she dated it 1828; no published version of the poem has been found.

If there's a smile on nature's face	
It is the farmer's dwelling place—	
If house-wife has whereof to boast	
The farmer's wife may claim the most.	
The richest products of the soil,	5
The finest wheat, the wine and oil—	
The fruits, the dainties of the land,	
Are at the farmer's wife's command.	
The wool and flax which he provides,	
She manufactures and divides	10
Among her household as they need. ²	
She's blest in blessing—rich indeed!	
Well busied at the wheel and loom	
Her constant feet abide at home:	
Her husband's heart rewards her toil,	15
Without distrust—no fear of spoil. ³	

Well skill'd in all domestic cares—
 Content to mind her own affairs—
 What truly makes a woman blest
 Is by the farmer's wife possess'd. 20
 Ye idle fair, who scorn employment,
 Yours is a mimic pale enjoyment:
 The royal treasures of content,
 Unto the farmer's wife, are sent.

Ye maidens who are blest with sense, 25
 Wit, beauty and intelligence;
 Whene'er you leave the single life,
 Be each, a thrifty farmer's wife.
 Ye vainer ones, who're fond of show,
 Who step so mincing as you go,⁴ 30
 If you would make the best of life,
 Be, (if you can) the farmer's wife.

*[pages 20–22]
 composed 1828*

44 On Being Importun'd by a Friend, to Write

This undated poem from ERS's journal constitutes a paradox: while claiming that poetic inspiration has deserted her, ERS writes one of her best poems, a poignant expression of her frustration. It is placed here in the collection because it may belong to the nearly three-year period, from January 1836 to October 1838, for which no ERS poems, published or unpublished, have yet been located. She felt the impact of the dissension, persecution, and displacement Church members experienced in Ohio and Missouri during these years. Whatever the reason for the dark feelings expressed in this poem, her discouragement—and it is the only time in her writings that she reveals such negative feelings concerning her poetic role—is unmistakable. The friend's request to her is not for a single poem to commemorate or celebrate an event, but for ERS to resume composing sacred poetry (l. 6), a role to which Joseph Smith appointed her in 1838. ERS left no indication of the identity of the friend referred to in the poem's title.

Friendship's imperative—I own its sway:
 Its unction,⁵ angels dare not disobey;
 And could its sacred voice inspire
 Sweet pathos through my slumb'ring lyre,
 To you I'd dedicate its softest lay. 5

You ask me to awake its chords again—
 But dull monotonies would fill the strain
 For every strain has been twice sung,
 And every chorus, three times rung,
 And every novelty has grown insane. 10

I would not aim at things, before unsung,
 Nor such as move upon a seraph's tongue,
 But, till its numbers shall be fraught
 With novel sound and native thought,
 O, let my stupid lyre remain unstrung.
[page 77]
n.d.

155 Song for the Camp of Israel

Written the day the Latter-day Saints departed from Sugar Creek, Iowa, journeying like ancient Israel to a place of refuge, this song portrays camp life in unusual and vivid detail. “Most midwestern poetry,” writes John E. Hallwas, “did not reflect the reality of life on the frontier” but focused instead on “romantic diction and sentimentality.” ERS’s poems, however, “are strikingly original in subject matter.”⁶ Her refrain, “all is well” (l. 32), echoing the watchman’s cry, predates William Clayton’s use of those words in the pioneer anthem now titled “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” which was written on 15 April 1846.⁷

Lo! a mighty host of Jacob
 Tented on the western shore
 Of the noble Mississippi,
 Which they had been crossing o’er;
 At the last day’s dawn of winter, 5
 Bound with frost and wrapt in snow:
 Hark! the sound is onward, onward!
 Camp of Israel! rise and go.

became the third wife of Joseph Leland Heywood, merchant and bishop of the Seventeenth Ward, in January 1851, and she moved south with him to the new settlement of Salt Creek (Nephi) that September. She was visiting Salt Lake City in May 1853 when ERS composed this poem for her.⁹ In one of her most original personal tributes, ERS builds on a fine extended metaphor—a masked drama that symbolizes the disguises and superficialities of mortal life.

Like the figures *incog*,¹⁰ in a masquerade scene,
 Are some spirits now dwelling on earth;
 And we judge of them only by actions and mien,
 Unappriz'd of all relative worth.

In the transforming mask of mortality clad, 5
 Kings and princes and peasants appear;
 All forgetting whatever acquaintance they had
 In existence preceding this here.¹¹

When the *past* shall develop, the *future* unfold,
 When the *present* its sequel shall tell— 10
 When unmask'd we shall know, be beheld, and behold;
 O how blest, if *incog*. we've *done well*.

[pages 446–47]
 composed 27 May 1853
 published in *Poems* 1, 1856

426 A Winter Soliloquy

Just how good a poet was Eliza R. Snow? This poem, along with poems 427 and 428, seems to spring from pure poetic impulse, rather than from ERS's role as a spokesperson for the Saints, and these poems are among her finest. The dates and circumstances of their composition are unknown. They were first published in *Poems* 2 (1877). The three poems are written in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), the form of much of ERS's most successful work. "A Winter Soliloquy" shows her awareness of the subtle possibilities of the iambic pentameter line. As do all effective writers of blank verse, she occasionally reverses the stress order of the first foot so the stressed syllable begins the line; besides avoiding metrical monotony, each reversed foot (ll. 2, 5, 14, 26, and 27 are examples) calls attention to the drama of the line. Her placement of the line's natural pause

(the caesura) varies from line to line, giving a pleasing rhythmic variety, as does her mixture of end-stopped lines and those that continue without pause. Spring always follows winter, and thus resurrection is inherent in nature. ERS affirms that the sacrifice of the Savior Jesus Christ promises spring and newness of life for humankind. In a wonderful final line, she ties man's mortal life back to the foreboding metaphor that begins the poem.

I hear—I see its tread as Winter comes—
 Clad in white robes, how terribly august!
 Its voice spreads terror—ev'ry step is mark'd
 With devastation! Nature in affright,
 Languid and lifeless, sinks before the blast. 5

Should nature mourn? No: gentle Spring, ere long,
 Will reascend the desolated throne:
 Her animating voice will rouse from death,
 Emerging from its chains, more beauteous far,
 The world of variegated Nature. 10

Not so with man—Rais'd from the lowly dust,
 He blooms awhile; but when he fades, he sets
 To rise no more—on earth no more to bloom!
 Swift is his course and sudden his decline!
 Behold, to-day, his pulse beat high with hope— 15
 His arms extended for the eager grasp
 Of pleasure's phantom, fancy's golden ken
 Paints in a gilded image on his heart.
 Behold, to-morrow where? Ah! who can tell?
 Ye slumb'ring tenants, will not you reply? 20
 No: from his bow, death has a quiver sent,
 And seal'd your senses in a torpid sleep.
 Then who can tell? The living know him not:
 Altho' perhaps, a friend or two, may drop
 A tear, and say he's gone—she is no more! 25

Hark! from on high a glorious sound is heard,
 Rife with rich music in eternal strains.
 The op'ning heavens, by revelation's voice
 Proclaim the key of knowledge¹² unto man.

A Savior comes—He breaks the icy chain; 30
 And man, resuscitated from the grave,
 Awakes to life and immortality,
 To be himself—more perfectly himself,
 Than e'er he bloom'd in the primeval state
 Of his existence in this wintry world.

[pages 825–28]
 published in *Poems* 2, 1877

454 “Our former, loved associates”

As they crossed the United States following their grand tour to Europe, Palestine, and Africa, ERS and Lorenzo Snow stopped in Ohio for a visit to their childhood home. “Those of our relatives and acquaintances who remain, received us with affectionate cordiality,” reported ERS. “Even children born since we left that country came distances to see and converse with us, the former friends of their deceased parents. . . . We visited night and day—going from place to place in rapid succession. I am inclined to think that so much visiting was never before done in so little time.”¹³ The pair also gathered genealogical information and stopped in Kansas to visit their youngest brother, Samuel Pearce Snow, whom they had not seen for more than twenty years. The following wistful verses appeared in the *Woman’s Exponent* as part of ERS’s letter dated 20 June 1873 from St. Louis, Missouri.

Our former, loved associates,
 Have mostly passed away;
 While those we knew as children
 Are crowned with locks of gray.

We saw Time’s varied traces, 5
 Were deep on every hand—
 Indeed, upon the people,
 More mark’d, than on the land.

The hands that once, with firmness,
 Could grasp the ax and blade, 10
 Now move with trembling motion,
 By strength of nerve decay’d.

The change in form and feature,
 And furrows on the cheek;
 Of time's increasing volume,
 In plain, round numbers speak,

15

And thus, as in a mirror's
 Reflection, we were told,
 With stereotyp'd impressions,
 The fact of growing old.

[pages 879–80]

composed 20 June 1873

published in *Woman's Exponent*, 1 August 1873

1. Eliza R. Snow, "Sketch of My Life," in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995; rpt, Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 6.

2. See Proverbs 31:13, 15.

3. See Proverbs 31:11.

4. See Isaiah 3:16.

5. That which softens or mitigates.

6. John E. Hallwas, "The Midwestern Poetry of Eliza R. Snow," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 5 (Fall 1982): 145.

7. *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), no. 30; William Clayton, *William Clayton's Journal: A Daily Record of the Journey of the Original Company of Mormon Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921), 19.

8. Juanita Brooks, ed., *Not by Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood, 1850–56* (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1978), 35.

9. Brooks, *Not by Bread Alone*, 64, 79–80.

10. Incognito.

11. Refers to the Latter-day Saint belief in a premortal existence. See poem 152.

12. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:19.

13. George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists, Comprising a Series of Letters* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing Establishment, 1875), 381.

Book of Mormon Stories That Steph Meyer Tells to Me

LDS Themes in the Twilight Saga and *The Host*

Jana Riess

Publishing professionals call it a phenomenon. In 2008, Little, Brown sold 27.5 million copies of Stephenie Meyer's four vampire novels; the *Twilight* movie grossed \$191 million in domestic box office sales; and Meyer's adult novel, *The Host*, sold an additional million copies. *Publishers Weekly* crowed, "A new queen has been crowned."¹ *USA Today* reported that Meyer was the bestselling author in the world for the year 2008, accounting for one in five of the books sold from Thanksgiving to Christmas.²

That's not bad for an author who, as the media incessantly reminds us, is little more than a "Mormon housewife." It seems that nearly every major article about Meyer's success has focused on this label, as though Mormon housewives constitute a group of whom little can be reasonably expected. *Time* magazine called her "a Mormon housewife turned novelist,"³ while *Entertainment Weekly* trumpeted the fact that back in 2003, Meyer had been "a 29-year-old Mormon housewife" who was mystified by the rarefied world of New York publishing and was merely a member of a "cozy, supportive" women's writing group before being plucked from obscurity by a New York agent.⁴ The *Time* profile, in fact, went out of its way to attest to Meyer's literary inexperience: "Meyer had not written anything much before then. Her main creative outlets were scrapbooking and making elaborate Halloween costumes."⁵

For the record, Meyer studied English literature at Brigham Young University, wrote some, and read widely before having her famous dream that birthed Edward Cullen, a Byronic but noble vampire. The media would prefer to have Meyer's pre-*Twilight* world intellectually limited because it makes for a better story. To that end, they have revived the term "housewife" instead of using today's far more common (and less

provincial) phrase, “stay-at-home mom.” The persistence of the housewife image says a good deal less about contemporary Mormonism than it does about what Americans believe about Mormonism.

If the media cannot get the major facts of Meyer’s own story straight, it is not surprising that journalists have missed a good deal of the theological underpinnings of her work. When Mormon themes are mentioned at all, they are explicitly tied to sexual abstinence to the exclusion of all else. That is not to say that sexuality is not a hugely important element of *Twilight*, or indeed of all vampire fiction: vampirism is nearly always a literary stand-in for eroticism, and falling in love with a vampire is the pinnacle of forbidden fruit.⁶ But the media’s focus on the steamy but restrained sexuality of the *Twilight* series, equating “Mormonism” with the fact that Bella and Edward do not have intercourse until marriage, misses the richest connections between LDS theology and Meyer’s writing. At least the *Atlantic* recognized this tendency and grieved it: in Caitlin Flanagan’s brilliant article about the *Twilight* saga’s commercial appeal, she noted that, although every reviewer had made mention of Meyer’s Mormonism, “none knows what to do with it, and certainly none can relate it to the novel.”⁷

Meyer has publicly declared the Book of Mormon to be the book that has made the most significant impact on her life. A careful reading of her fiction attests to the reality of this statement; it is not just window dressing or pious platitude. Meyer’s theology is impressionistic and not systematic, and it is always embedded within story—very much like in the Book of Mormon itself—yet it is clearly discernible.

One of the most important theological aspects of the *Twilight* series is its emphasis on what the Book of Mormon would term overcoming the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19). This phrase crops up throughout LDS scripture as a reflection on sin and redemption. To understand this term, we have to go back to the first parents, Adam and Eve. The specific transgression that resulted in their exile and the fall of humanity stemmed from the desire to become like God. The Book of Mormon’s unique twist on traditional Judeo-Christian theology ties their proactive decision to partake of the forbidden fruit to their desire for procreation. The Book of Mormon also makes the audacious claim that the pair chose to give up mere immortality for the chance of eternal life in relationship—with God, each other, and future children. As a result of their choice, their life in the fallen world would be a struggle, and human nature would become something to transcend.

In *Twilight*, the problem of a carnal, sinful nature is embodied and symbolized by the figure of Edward. His sole purpose in life (well, death) is to feed on human blood, to be literally carnal and carnivorous. Edward,

encouraged by his foster father, Carlisle, makes the decision to reject this way of life for a better, if more difficult, one. He makes this choice on a daily basis, and the temptation is always strong, especially when a new girl shows up at high school whose blood “sings” to him.⁸

Mormonism teaches that the natural human stands in opposition to Christ. The natural person is selfish, whereas Christ is selfless; the natural person is carnal, whereas Christ is incarnational. In Mosiah 3:19, King Benjamin expresses it this way:

For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

In the Book of Mormon, the term “natural man” is not employed just to describe the wicked or the immoral but anyone prone to the human condition of alienation from God.⁹ It is a description of the absence of relationship, not a tidy pejorative statement about immorality. It is disarmingly universal.

In *Twilight*, Edward is able, through sheer willpower and a desire to do no harm, to subdue his monstrous nature and avoid preying on humans for many decades. But it is not until Bella comes into his life that he is transformed by love, and he makes efforts to become like the “children” he calls his senior high classmates.¹⁰ Saying that he becomes submissive and meek is a stretch—in fact, his behavior is often mercurial and inscrutable—but what changes fundamentally for Edward is the new desire to live wholly for another. As he tells Bella, “You are my life now.”¹¹ In *Twilight*, Edward’s self-control goes a long way toward throwing off the natural man, but it is Bella, working as a kind of Christ figure, who becomes a vehicle of grace in Edward’s transformation. Her determination that he does indeed possess a soul goes a long way toward convincing him that he does. Her trust in his nobility in turn generates in him a new confidence that he is worthy of her trust, and that he can withstand unthinkable temptation.

Choice and accountability are crucial values here, not just for Edward and Bella, but for her friend Jacob as well. When Bella and Jacob get in a heated argument about Jacob’s werewolf nature, Bella spits the retort, “It’s not what you *are*, stupid, it’s what you *do*!”¹² She is telling Jacob that he does not have to act on any natural inclinations a werewolf might have to destroy or to feed. He is free. In the Book of Mormon, right choices pave the way for receiving Christ’s Atonement, which is the “way for our escape

from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit” (2 Ne. 9:10; see also verse 19). Just as important for Meyer, love saves us from the monster within.

In the Book of Mormon, Alma teaches that mortality is a “probationary state” during which humankind strives to overcome its evil nature (Alma 42:10). But in *Twilight*, such testing happens in immortality as well, calling attention to a second major Mormon theme: the basic but subtle Mormon distinction between immortality and eternal life. The vampires in *Twilight* represent some of the less savory aspects of immortality. Not being mortal means not being subject to death, and in the case of Meyer’s vampires it also means certain enhancements in the form of superhuman strength and speed, acute hearing, or clairvoyance. But immortality, with all its perks, is not a gift to be envied. There is a loneliness and restlessness to the Cullen family. They are isolated from their kind by their decision to become the vampiric equivalent of vegetarians and are doomed to roam the earth as inconspicuously as possible, which precludes close relationships with humans. There is a flatness, an eternal sameness, to this life, symbolized most prominently by the vampires’ inability to procreate. Carlisle and Esme cannot have children, and Rosalie (Edward’s adoptive sister) knows that her greatest longing in life—to have a baby—will never come to pass. This reality causes her deep bitterness, especially when she sees Bella so ready to blithely throw away her precious human life and her ability to become a mother.

But in the fourth installment of the saga, Bella gets to have it all—motherhood of a unique child, superhuman strength and immortality, and a perfect soul mate in Edward—and she can enjoy these blessings for eternity. Here the series’ love story trips over something more substantial: a rumination on the social context of eternal life. In Mormonism, eternal life includes the promise of a resurrected, perfect body, which Bella receives when she gives her life to save her child. Meyer is careful to show that Bella does not throw over her precious humanity merely to be with Edward or stay young forever; in a crisis, she gives herself up to save another, typifying Christ’s teaching that “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Bella then enters a postresurrection world, and she brings her husband and daughter with her. Mormon beliefs about bodily resurrection do not differ markedly from those of orthodox Christianity; the distinctions are more a matter of degree. Almost all Christians affirm the resurrection of the body, but few have speculated about what we might actually be doing with those bodies in the hereafter. Mormonism nourishes the idea that those bodies will be

sources of strength and pleasure, of creation and procreation, of worship and marital sexual expression—all of which Bella experiences in her new state. Moreover, in Mormonism, resurrection occurs in the context of relationship, not aloneness. Bella enjoys her new body in the company of her immediate circle of Edward and Renesmee, but also in the bosom of her new family, the Cullens.

A third and final theme woven into Meyer's fiction is her commitment to the theological principle of agency—a theme that is central to *The Host*, her adult novel. *The Host* has some funny Mormon trappings, which even my non-Mormon friends who have read the book picked up on. At one point Wanderer, the parasitic Soul who takes over Melanie's human body, is adamant that she has “never refused a Calling,” and plenty of Latter-day Saints will recognize the archetypal frog-in-the-boiling-water analogy as an inside joke.¹³ There is even an apocalyptic Mormon survivalist ethos in the characters of Jeb and Maggie, who eccentrically stockpile food and water and live separate from the power grid in the expectation that, someday, disaster will come.

But a deeper Mormon theology undergirds *The Host*, even more explicitly than in the Twilight saga. The character of Wanderer, who has experienced full lives on seven different planets, with many diverse hosts, provides a unique perspective on the contradictions of human life. On the one hand, she is appalled by the atrocities of humanity, especially war and torture, but she is also inexplicably drawn to the richness of human emotion. As Melanie's mind competes more and more effectively with her own, Wanderer briefly contemplates skipping out on her Calling for an easier one, but she finds that other planets seem dull and unappealing after the complexity of human life, riddled with its many contradictions. “This place was truly the highest and the lowest of all worlds,” Wanderer reflects. It has “the most beautiful senses, the most exquisite emotions . . . the most malevolent desires, the darkest deeds. Perhaps it was meant to be so. Perhaps without the lows, the highs could not be reached.”¹⁴

In other words, “It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Wanderer—who adopts the human name “Wanda” as she goes native—comes to realize that the harmonious existence she has always prized as a Soul is a fallacy masking a hidden dystopia. Because the Souls' lifestyle offers no choice, no true freedom, the surface beauty of the Souls' civilization—which has eliminated war, pain, and disease—begins to disintegrate. It is a mere illusion. In contrast, the wild gorgeousness of humanity simply refuses to be snuffed out. Melanie's tenacious self-assertion stands in for humankind's refusal to accept anything less than *all* of it: the woolly mess of light and dark, good and evil, joy and

despair. And in the end, it takes both Melanie's passion and Wanda's tranquil self-sacrifice to achieve the novel's resolution. Opposition is the key, ironically, to harmony and justice.

Meyer's use of the Mormon doctrine of agency is evidenced in the character of the Seeker, an ambitious and almost fanatical Soul who believes she is doing humans a great favor by giving them perfection, assurance, and safety in exchange for their spirits. Any Latter-day Saint reader will recognize this ideology as Satan's ill-fated plan to "save" every person by removing even the possibility that they could choose anything other than God. In the novel, the Seeker plays the Lucifer role in some fairly obvious ways: dressing in nothing but black, pursuing Wanderer at every turn, seeking opportunities for self-aggrandizement, relishing her role as the god of this world, and loathing humanity and its emotions. In the novel's contempt for the Seeker, Meyer holds up human freedom as paramount, and any system that would deny that freedom, no matter how attractive it may seem on the surface, is deeply flawed.

On a personal note, I have mixed feelings about Meyer's fiction. I find the theology intriguing and often beautiful and her plots wonderfully imaginative, but she is correct when she assesses herself as a storyteller more than a writer.¹⁵ More than with the technical problems in the writing, I find myself concerned about the retrogressive gender stereotypes in all of her novels, particularly the ineptitude of Bella. Although the novels repeatedly *tell* the reader that Bella is smart and strong, they repeatedly *show* her powerlessness. She passes out; she trips repeatedly; she is victimized three times in the first novel alone, only to be rescued by Edward. Worse than Bella's role as a damsel-in-distress is her disturbing tendency to blame herself for everything, expose herself to serious harm, take over all the homemaking chores for a father who seems incapable of the most rudimentary standards of self-care, and sacrifice everything for a man who is moody, unpredictable, and even borderline abusive. Many women readers will also be troubled by the extreme self-abasement of Wanda in *The Host*, particularly one scene where she mutilates her own flesh and another where she lies to protect the man who tried to murder her. These are themes I hope do *not* originate with Meyer's Mormonism. But while they are cause for concern, they do not mar the creative spirit and theological matrix of Meyer's work.

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Do? The Vampire Slayer as Spiritual Guide (Wiley, 2004). She spent nine years as the Religion Book Review Editor for *Publishers Weekly* and is now an acquisitions editor at Westminster John Knox Press.

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4. Karen Valby, "Stephenie Meyer: Inside the 'Twilight' Saga," *Entertainment Weekly*, July 18, 2008, <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20211938,00.html>.

5. Grossman, "Stephenie Meyer."

6. This forbidden eroticism comes into play right in the beginning of vampire lore, with the nubile Lucy so willingly falling prey to Dracula's advances, and stretches all the way to the girl-power heroine Buffy the Vampire Slayer, who falls for a vampire not once but twice. In the first instance, the sexual subtext becomes explicit when, after consummating his relationship with Buffy and experiencing a moment of perfect happiness, Angel loses his fragile soul and becomes the evil vampire Angelus. In *Buffy*, as in *Twilight*, sexual expression can lead to death and monstrous destruction.

7. Caitlin Flanagan, "What Girls Want: A Series of Vampire Novels Illuminates the Complexities of Female Adolescent Desire," *The Atlantic*, December 2008, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200812/twilight-vampires>. Flanagan also notes the fact that Meyer's novels gently evoke the girlhood of a more innocent age, before MySpace, text messaging, and the celebutante vacuity of *Gossip Girls*.

8. Stephenie Meyer, *New Moon* (New York: Little, Brown, 2006), 409.

9. Rodney Turner, "The Great Conversion: Mosiah 1–6," in *Studies in Scripture: 1 Nephi to Alma* 29, ed. Kent P. Jackson, 8 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 7:217.

10. Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight* (New York: Little, Brown, 2005), 269.

11. Meyer, *Twilight*, 314.

12. Meyer, *New Moon*, 307.

13. Stephenie Meyer, *The Host* (New York: Little, Brown, 2008), 248, 240–41.

14. Meyer, *Host*, 141.

15. Grossman, "Stephenie Meyer."

Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds.
The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839.
 Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2008

Reviewed by Thomas Coens

Joseph Smith's journals for the years 1832 to 1839, published by the Church Historian's Press, constitute the inaugural installment of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, an ambitious documentary editing project that is projected to contain upon completion at least thirty-two volumes. Founded in 2001 as a collaboration between Brigham Young University and the archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Joseph Smith Papers Project aims to produce critical, annotated texts of virtually every word written or dictated by Joseph Smith (xl). In addition to Smith's journals, the project will produce five additional multivolume series: Documents (consisting of "correspondence, revelations, reports of discourses"); Revelations and Translations ("earliest texts of foundational documents"); History ("early histories and the official history of the church"); Legal and Business ("court, land, and business papers"); and Administrative ("minutes and other official records").¹

The volume at hand is the first of three that together will constitute the project's Journals series. Between 1832 and 1844, Smith maintained ten journals. The first volume includes the first five journals, which respectively cover the time periods 1832–34, 1835–36, March–September 1838, September–October 1838, and 1839. "Journals" as a term to describe these writings is, as the editors explain, something of a misnomer:

By the end of Smith's life, he and his scribes produced ten volumes of Joseph Smith journals comprising over 1,500 manuscript pages. Of the total, only about 35 manuscript pages contain autograph writing, where Smith put his own pen to the paper. Internal evidence suggests that he dictated another 250 or so pages. The remaining pages—about 1,300, or more than 80 percent of the total—were primarily the work of five men who were appointed to keep Smith's journals: Warren Parrish, George W. Robinson, James Mulholland, William Richards, and William Clayton. (xliii–xlv)

Consequently, "only a tiny proportion of Smith's papers were written by Smith himself, meaning that in most of the documents we come at Joseph

Smith through another mind. . . . Extensive as the papers of Joseph Smith are, they do not afford readers unobstructed access to his mind and heart” (xxxvii–xxxviii).

In accordance with prevailing documentary-editing standards regarding transcription, the editors have replicated the original spelling and punctuation of the journals, while only occasionally including bracketed words to improve readability or to clarify otherwise ambiguous proper names. A typical entry from the journals, chosen virtually at random, is for October 6, 1833, and written in Smith’s hand: “6th arrived at Springfield [Pennsylvania] <on the sabbath> found the Brotheren in meeting Brother Sidney [Ridgon] spake to the people &c—and in the [p. 5] <Evening> held a meeting at Brother Ruds [John Rudd Jr.’s] a had a great congregation paid good attention Oh God Seal our te[s]timony to their hearts Amen” (12). Smith’s indifference to punctuation and frequently shaky orthography is preserved intact; bracketed insertions clarify the references to Springfield and to Brothers Sidney and “Ruds”; the angled brackets indicate that “on the sabbath” was an insertion; “[p. 5]” marks the start of a new manuscript page; and the cross-out over “Evening,” of course, indicates that Smith struck the word out.

The subject matter of these journal entries are the Prophet’s day-to-day activities in the 1830s. For the time period covered by the first two journals, Smith resided mostly in Kirtland, Ohio; Smith’s third and fourth journals were composed in 1838, when he spent most of his time in Missouri; and the last journal, written in 1839, finds Smith in southwestern Illinois, where he lived the remainder of his life. Most entries describe Smith’s efforts to build up and consolidate LDS congregations in Ohio and Missouri.

By far the best and most interesting of the five journals is the second (1835–36), which is also the longest. It covers, as the editors explain, both “institutional and spiritual developments and provides revealing glimpses of Smith’s relationships with his family” (lii). Unlike the other journals, which are in large part “fragmentary” (li), the second journal’s entries are longer, have fewer gaps, and thus provide “a connected and much fuller narrative” (lii). Especially interesting are the accounts of Smith’s encounter with Robert Matthews, also known as the Prophet Matthias (87–95), and a falling-out between Smith and his brother William, in which the two came to blows (120–42). The second journal ends with a dramatic description of the completion of the Kirtland Temple, the ceremonies for which were capped on April 3, 1836, with Smith’s vision of the resurrected Christ (219–22).

Truth be told, Smith’s journals do not make for exciting reading. Those hoping to find in Smith’s journals the readability of Samuel Pepys’s diaries or the thoughtfulness of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s journals will be

disappointed. Only occasionally do the journals yield quotable quotes, but there are some. I was especially struck by Smith's entry for September 1, 1838, when the Prophet declares that he and his people will no longer passively suffer persecution at the hands of Missourians:

But in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God we will ~~do~~ it endure it no longer, if the Great God will arm us with courage, with strength and with power, to resist them in their persecutions. We will not act on the offensive but always on the defensive, our rights and . . . our liberties shall not be taken from us, and we peaceably submit to it, as we have done heretofore, but we will avenge ourselves of our enemies, inasmuch as they will not let us alone. (312)

Such stirring passages, unfortunately, are the exception rather than the rule. The true value of this volume lies in the painstaking annotation and the historical essays introducing each of the five journals. Preceding the texts of the journals are 66 pages of introductions, and following them are another 146 pages of reference material, including a timeline, maps, a "Geographical Directory," a "Biographical Directory," and a glossary. Accompanying the texts of Smith's journals are exhaustive footnotes, which explicate context, identify people and places, and point readers to related manuscript sources and printed secondary literature. One could easily quibble that the volume contains too much information and annotation, as many facts appearing in the various introductions are repeated in both footnotes and in the reference material at the volume's end. However, this information overkill—if it can be called such—is deliberate policy on the part of the editors, who explain on the project's website:

Each volume is designed and will be used principally as a reference work, not as a narrative to be read straight through, cover to cover. For that reason, a modest amount of 'friendly redundancy' is not only tolerated but expressly built in. For example, a theme introduced in the volume introduction might be treated briefly again in a document introduction so that a reader who goes directly to the document will have the essential information at hand.²

Because of his status as a prophet within the LDS religion, the audience for an authoritative edition of Joseph Smith's utterances should be both large and grateful. As the editors of the present volume freely confess, "The motivation to engage in this vast project comes from the great respect in which Latter-day Saints hold Joseph Smith as the church's founder and a modern prophet. We believe Joseph Smith will be better understood and appreciated if the documents he produced are available for all to examine" (v). Given Smith's stature as a historical figure, however, interest in Smith's papers should extend far beyond the ranks of the LDS faithful, regardless

of how one takes Smith's claims to prophethood. Historians of antebellum America and American religion and culture have just as much reason to celebrate the inauguration of the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Smith, after all, can lay claim, in Josiah Quincy's famous estimation, to having been the "historical American of the nineteenth century [who] has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen."³ A critical edition of his writing is long overdue.

Both LDS and non-LDS scholars, in short, will wish to use this and future volumes produced by the Joseph Smith Papers. Though the editors acknowledge being LDS adherents, they have done their work according to the modern standards of documentary editing and are at no point guilty of preparing or presenting their texts in tendentious ways. "Although the revelations have religious meaning to us as Latter-day Saints," the editors state in the volume's preface, "we present them in these volumes without comment on their ultimate source. In the tradition of documentary editing, our aim is simply to reproduce the documents and their historical setting so far as we can reconstruct it" (v). To be sure, one can detect, if one is looking for it, a certain predisposition in the editors to treat Smith favorably. For example, they marvel at the Book of Mormon and the speed with which it was written (xxi) and claim that the scriptures Joseph Smith produced "exceed anything one would expect from a poorly educated rural visionary" (xvii). They also treat Smith's forays into treasure-seeking, wildcat-banking, and plural marriage with leniency and merciful brevity (xix, xxx, 227, 253 n. 92). But, in fairness, if the editors betray a certain sympathy toward their subject, it is no more pronounced or intrusive than that evinced by most documentary editors. Familiarity seems inevitably to breed affection in editors for their subjects.

All in all, the volume is an impressive achievement, and it is to be hoped that future volumes in the Joseph Smith Papers Project will match its quality of scholarship.

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1. The Joseph Smith Papers, available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org>.
2. The Joseph Smith Papers, "About the Volumes," available online at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/AboutTheVolumes.htm>.
3. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past: from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 376.

Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds.
The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839.
Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2008

Reviewed by James B. Allen

Several years ago, when I heard that the Joseph Smith Papers Project was approved for publication, I was delighted for at least two reasons. First, I considered Joseph Smith's papers to be the most valuable resource extant for researching early Latter-day Saint history. Making them available to all would enhance the accuracy of future scholarship. Second, it would be clear that the Church had nothing to hide concerning Joseph Smith. For too long, stories had circulated that the archives were closed, and the Church History Department did not allow access to important documents. The stories were partially true, though scholars who were not antagonistic to the Church could eventually obtain access to most of what they needed. With the announced publication of Joseph Smith's papers and a generally more open policy, that image was about to change. I understood, of course, that some things should still be restricted, such as private financial records, minutes of confidential General Authority meetings, and personal documents donated to the archives with specific instructions restricting their access. However, the openness with which Joseph Smith's papers would be handled was exhilarating, not just because of easy access, but also because my frequent assurances to friends—that the Church is not afraid of its own history—was now being verified.

When I began working on a volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, I was impressed with the exacting demands the general editors were imposing on the editorial process. I left the project due to my heavy involvement in other projects and commitments, including a semester teaching at BYU–Hawaii. Now that the first volume of *Papers* is out, I am impressed with the fact that the editorial demands are even more stringent than during my brief association. My hopes and expectations for the project seem more than fulfilled.

Because *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* is the first volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers* to appear, a comment on the overall project seems appropriate.

Papers is the most important and ambitious publishing venture ever undertaken under the auspices of the Church History Department or its predecessors. Previous milestones include Andrew Jenson's four-volume *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* and his nine-volume *Historical Record* series; B. H. Roberts's six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church* and his editing of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church*; and the remarkable ten-year activity of Church historian Leonard J. Arrington and his associates. Their publications are important, but, for the most part, they keep readers one step away from the firsthand records of the past, the stuff from which history is created. Church historians have done a credible job of collecting such primary sources, and, in recent years, those working on *Papers* have located even more original documents pertaining to the founding prophet. The eventual publication of all these papers will provide scholars and others with unprecedented firsthand access to many aspects of Joseph Smith's life and thought.

The Joseph Smith Papers Project is rooted in Dean C. Jessee's early work on the papers, including his publication of three volumes. Eventually, a more comprehensive plan was approved, and the project became an integral part of the program of the Church History Department. Such an undertaking is very expensive; the projected volumes will take years to complete and will involve the full-time work of numerous scholars. Larry H. and Gail Miller generously offered to supply crucial funding. This ambitious venture will rival in quality and thoroughness the published papers of such important figures as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Journals, Volume 1 includes an essay that describes the goals and editorial methods of the entire project. The goal, it affirms, is "to present verbatim transcripts of Joseph Smith's papers in their entirety, making available the most essential sources of Smith's life and work and preserving the content of aging manuscripts from damage or loss." It will include documents created by him, "whether written or dictated by him or created by others under his direction, or that were owned by Smith, that is, received by him and kept in his office." Further, the intent is to "publish, either in letterpress volumes or electronic form, every extant Joseph Smith document to which its editors can obtain access. Certain routine documents, such as some notes and certificates and some legal or business documents, will be calendared and published in their entirety online with only samples published in the letterpress edition" (lix). This suggests that everything of significance will be published in the series and that other "routine" materials will be made available online.

According to the Joseph Smith Papers website, <http://josephsmithpapers.org>, the papers will appear in six different series comprising possibly thirty-two volumes. The three-volume Journals series will incorporate all ten journals kept by Joseph Smith and his clerks from 1832 to 1844. A projected eleven-volume Documents series will publish all of Joseph Smith's correspondence, his revelations, reports of his discourses, and many other documents (such as notices, notes, and editorials) authored by him. It will also include selected minutes of meetings. A four-volume Revelations and Translation series will, reads the website, "present the earliest manuscript texts of Joseph Smith revelations, manuscript revelation books, the printed revelations as published during Joseph Smith's lifetime, and the Book of Mormon and the printer's manuscript from which it was produced." This series will be especially valuable to scholars interested in textual development of the scriptures. A Legal and Business Records series comprising three volumes will provide scholars with access to all known surviving records of judicial proceedings in which Joseph was involved. It will also include contractual and business documents of all sorts. A four-volume Administrative Records series will include minute books, letter-books, and other documents pertaining to Church institutions that Joseph Smith directed or was otherwise involved in personally.

Finally, of special value to those who have long relied on the six-volume *History of the Church*, a seven-volume History series in *The Joseph Smith Papers* will reproduce that history from original manuscripts, clearly identifying the various sources. Joseph Smith and some assistants began a history in 1838 and it was completed in 1856. Later, B. H. Roberts edited the history, and it was published as *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.¹ Based on Joseph Smith's journals, it drew from several other sources that were transposed into a first-person narrative, making it appear as if it were all written by Joseph himself. As the *History* is a standard source to which scholars turn when writing about the early Church, they look forward to knowing the various sources on which it was based.

Since many, if not most, of the Joseph Smith papers are not in Joseph's own handwriting, one of the project's first important tasks was to identify scribes. Under the expert guidance of Dean C. Jessee, this has been done, and the person who wrote each document will be clearly identified in the texts.

Scholars will be impressed with how the editors insured accuracy in the entire *Papers* project. As explained in the introduction to the journals, the transcription of each document was verified by three different processes:

The first two verifications were done using high-resolution scanned images. The first was a visual collation of the journal images with the transcripts, while the second was an independent and double-blind

image-to-transcript tandem proofreading. The third and final verification of the transcripts was a visual collation with the original document. At this stage, the verifier employed magnification and ultraviolet light as needed to read badly faded text, recover heavily stricken material, untangle characters written over each other, and recover words canceled by messy “wipe erasures” made when the ink was still wet or removed by knife scraping after the ink had dried. (lix)

The “verified transcripts” thus “meet or exceed the transcription and verification requirements of the Modern Language Association’s Committee on Scholarly Editions and the National Archives and Records Administration’s National Historical Publications and Records Commission” (lix). Hence scholars are assured that spelling, punctuation, strikethroughs, insertions, word changes, revisions, and anything else in the original document are preserved as accurately as possible. This is imperative to scholars who do not have immediate access to the documents. In fact, these publications will probably be more useful than studying the originals, which are sometimes highly difficult to work with.

The essay also explains that “redactions and other changes made on the manuscript after the original production of the text, such as when later scribes used the journals for drafting history, are not transcribed. Labeling and other forms of archival marking are similarly passed by in silence” (lxi). However, anyone wishing to see such markings may go to josephsmithpapers.org where a detailed “diplomatic” transcript, “including all redactions and other subsequently added elements, along with letter-by-letter presentation of all revisions” will be included (lxii).

The painstaking editing process has been invaluable in assuring accuracy and also in correcting past textual errors. Ronald K. Esplin comments that early historians transcribed an entry in one of Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo diaries to read that “Emma had another child,” adding an explanation that the child had not survived. However, the diary actually reads, “Emma had another chill,” thus correcting a serious misimpression. In another example, an 1843 journal entry in the handwriting of Willard Richards noted what Joseph Smith said about certain legal proceedings that resulted in his release following a *habeas corpus* hearing. According to an earlier published transcription, Joseph described those involved as a “spiritually-minded circuit judge and a few fit men,” thus seeming to praise them. In the more careful transcription, however, we see that he was rather disgusted (or perhaps amused) by them, mocking them as a “spindle-shanked circuit judge and a few fat men.”²

Journals, Volume 1 deserves only the highest praise. It contains five journals: 1832–34, 1835–36, March–September 1838, September–October

1838, and 1839. Each includes a source note that describes the journal itself and its history. A historical introduction provides an overview of what was happening to Joseph Smith and the Church at the time, while editorial notes supply historical transitions between the journals. There are also photographs of each journal and several journal pages, and of people mentioned in the journal. In addition, the excellent footnotes give valuable context for the various entries. The substance of these notes attests to the careful scholarship of the editors.

Only the first two journals contain much of Joseph Smith's own handwriting, which appears mainly in the early pages of the first journal. Joseph often relied on his assistants to record his daily activities, and whatever they recorded became his "journal." The editors identify Joseph Smith's handwriting in boldface font and other writers with a footnote at the spot where their handwriting begins.

The editors have also provided 146 pages of reference material to help readers with almost any reasonable question they might have. The "Reference Material" section begins with a brief chronology for the years 1832–39. This is followed by a geographical directory that provides descriptions of nearly all the places—including landforms, waterways, and important buildings—mentioned in the volume. In addition, almost all specific locations named in the journals are included in a series of eleven maps. A biographical directory includes entries for nearly everyone mentioned in the journals. This is followed by a series of charts showing the development of ecclesiastical organizations during the period and a glossary identifying terms peculiar to Latter-day Saints. An essay on sources and a bibliography comes next, followed by a table providing corresponding section numbers for material canonized during Joseph Smith's lifetime with those contained in the current editions of the Community of Christ and LDS Doctrine and Covenants. The table also includes material that originated with Joseph Smith but was canonized in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants after his death (for example, section 137). Each section is listed chronologically according to the date it originated, so far as the editors have been able to determine.

The only serious problem with *Journals, Volume 1* is that it was published without an index. This is crucial for scholars and other serious students of Church history. Apparently the index simply was not finished before publication and distribution deadlines mandated that it go to press. However, it has since been published and made available to download at josephsmithpapers.org.

Since Joseph Smith and his scribes were somewhat sporadic in keeping his journals, this volume clearly does not touch on all that happened from

1832 to 1839. Simply reading the journals, therefore, can hardly provide a satisfactory view of Joseph's life or the history of the Church. However, with the fine historical introductions and the helpful editorial insertions and footnotes found in *Journals, Volume 1*, readers can follow at least the rudiments of the story. The six-volume *History of the Church* fleshes out the record further.

The first journal commences on November 27, 1832, nearly two years after Joseph Smith and the New York Saints moved to Ohio, and concludes on December 5, 1834. During that time Joseph received numerous revelations, conducted Church business in Missouri and other places, established the School of the Prophets, organized the First Presidency of the Church and the first high council, finished work on his inspired revision of the Bible, agonized over the persecution in Missouri, and led Zion's Camp in a failed effort to help the Missouri Saints regain their lost property.

Not much of this is reflected in the journal, though on the day he purchased the record book (November 27) he wrote on the front cover that he intended to keep a "minute account of all things that come under my observation." He then wrote a prayer: "oh may God grant that I may be directed in all my thoughts Oh bless thy Servent Amen" (9). He spent the next day reading and writing, and then recorded at the end of the day that "my mind is calm and serene for which I thank the Lord" (9). Such prayers and expressions of thanksgiving are common and certainly reveal, as well as anything could, the genuine Joseph Smith—his humility and his devotion to God and family.

However, for some reason Joseph was unable to keep a regular record. The first nine entries are disappointingly terse, and then, after December 6, 1832, he waited ten months before making another entry, on October 4, 1833. Entries continued, with sporadic and sometimes significant breaks, until April 30, 1834. The next entry was posted nearly three months later on August 21, 1834, a gap that occurred while Zion's Camp was organized and marched to Missouri. Three subsequent entries cover the period through September 4, then three more entries cover November 29 through December 5. Whenever such gaps occur in *Journals, Volume I*, the editors have provided brief historical notes regarding events that occurred during the hiatus.

Readers may find interest in comparing the journals with the published *History of the Church* in order to see how many journal entries actually went into the history, how these entries may have been modified or added to, and how they may throw additional light on what is in the *History*. A journal entry in the handwriting of Joseph Smith dated December 6, 1832, reads, "translating and received a Revelation explaining

the Parable the wheat and the tears [tares] &c” (11). The parallel entry in the *History* says “On the 6th of December, 1832, I received the following revelation explaining the parable of the wheat and tares,”³ and this is followed by what is now Section 86 of the Doctrine and Covenants. It seems apparent that this revelation was connected with Joseph Smith’s work on the inspired revision of the Bible, but it is the journal, not the *History*, that makes this clear.

Other accounts in the *History* are based solely on the journal. On November 13, 1833, Joseph describes, again in his own handwriting, his joy on being awakened at 4 a.m. to see the “stars fall from heaven yea they fell like hail stones” (16). This was the famous Leonid meteor shower that was seen across the country and viewed by many as a sign of Christ’s imminent Second Coming. Joseph, too, believed this and wrote, “Oh how marvellous are thy works Oh Lord and I thank thee for thy me[r]cy unto me thy servant Oh Lord save me in thy kingdom for Christ sake Amen” (18). Several other entries in the journal were obvious sources for entries in the *History*, though a few were not picked up at all.

The second journal begins on September 22, 1835, more than nine months after the first one ends. The longest of the five journals, it covers, with daily entries, Joseph Smith’s activities in and around Kirtland until April 3, 1836, the day Joseph and Oliver Cowdery beheld Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah in vision in the Kirtland Temple. Seven entries are in Joseph Smith’s handwriting, but it is the last journal in which his handwriting appears.

The *History* is based more heavily on this journal than on any of the other four journals in *Papers, Volume 1*. The *History* repeats all the entries, usually in modified form, though on numerous dates there is also considerable expansion in the *History* from other sources and in some instances part of the journal entry is left out. One example of an addition is in the *History* entry for December 31, 1835. Besides the short journal entry, the *History* includes a long entry concerning the Egyptian mummies and papyri that Joseph had earlier acquired. Another example is on January 29, 1836. The *History* lists several people to whom Joseph Smith Sr. gave patriarchal blessings that day.⁴ The journal records the actual blessings (176–78). An interesting omission occurs on November 9, 1835, where the *History* tells of the visit of a man calling himself “Joshua, the Jewish Minister.” After briefly describing the introduction and early conversation, the *History* then reads: “I commenced giving him a relation of the circumstances connected with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, as recorded in the former part of this history.”⁵ However, instead of saying “as recorded in the former part of this history,” the journal says “as follows—” (87). It then

proceeds with an account of the First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that does not appear anywhere in the *History*. Why the compilers of the *History* (Willard Richards and others) left out this part of the journal entry is not known, though it may be speculated that they saw no need for it since the *History* begins with the founding story. However, the account is worded differently in the journal and includes several details that Church members may be unfamiliar with. For example, in describing his “fruitless attempt to pray,” Joseph said that

my tounge seemed to be swollen in my mouth, so that I could not utter, I heard a noise behind me like some person walking towards me, [I] strove again to pray, but could not, the noise of walking seemed to draw nearer, I sprung up on my feet, and looked around, but saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking, I kneeled again my mouth was opened and my tounge liberated, and I called on the Lord in mighty prayer, a pillar of fire appeared above my head, it presently rested down upon my [me] head, and filled me with joy unspeakable, a personage appeared in the midst, of this pillar flame which was spread all around, and yet nothing consumed, another personage soon appeared like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God; (and I saw many angels in this vision). (88)⁶

The story of the appearance of an angel announcing the plates of the Book of Mormon follows, but likewise it is not in the *History*, and the journal includes differences from the account at the beginning of the *History*.

On November 26, 1835, the *History* says that Joseph Smith spent the day “translating”⁷ Egyptian characters from the papyrus in his possession, but the journal uses the word “transcribing” (110). The editors of the *Journals, Volume 1* determined that “transcribing” is probably correct, for a footnote indicates that the transcriptions made that day may have been the manuscripts now known as the Kirtland Egyptian Papers.

The second journal is the source for Section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which records the visions in which Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery beheld Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah on April 3, 1836. This and the previous day’s entry are in the handwriting of Warren Cowdery and, differing from other entries in the journal, they are recorded in third person rather than first person language. As a result, where the revelation reads “our minds” or “we” or “us,” the journal says “their minds” or “they” or “them” (219).

It was almost another two years before the Prophet began his third journal. This journal does not begin with daily entries but rather with synopses of various events, beginning in March 1838. This was about the time Joseph Smith arrived at Far West, Missouri, after being forced to leave

Kirtland in January. These events included the trials of certain Church leaders before a high council as well as a few revelations. The early pages of the journal also include some documents produced before Joseph left Kirtland, and they were inserted into the *History* in the proper place, chronologically. Beginning April 27 and ending September 10, the entries become almost daily. The substance of most of them eventually appeared in the published *History*, though expanded upon from other sources. The journal was written by George W. Robinson, the Church's general clerk and recorder. Robinson wrote in the third person, so Joseph Smith is referred to as "he" rather than "I," and "I" usually refers to Robinson himself.

The fourth, and shortest, journal overlaps the previous one by a week, covering September 3 through October 6, 1838. Recorded by James Mulholland, it does little more than tersely note the comings and goings of the Prophet for that month. The entries are all third-person in nature, such as the one on October 4 that reads, in part, "Saw him at home about sunrise, all the forenoon, and at noon" (330). These entries give no hint at all of Joseph Smith's intense legal activities during that time,⁸ some of which are clarified in the previous journal. None of the entries in this journal found their way into the published *History*.

The final journal, also kept by James Mulholland, covers the period from April 22 to October 15, 1839. During the interim, the Missouri war heated up as some Mormons plundered residences and businesses of their enemies; two Mormons were killed at the Battle of Crooked River; Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued his infamous extermination order; Joseph Smith was arrested and incarcerated in Liberty, Missouri; the Saints migrated from Missouri to Illinois under trying circumstances; and Joseph Smith's captivity in Missouri ended. The journal commences on the day he and his companions were able to leave Missouri and then recounts his arrival in Quincy, Illinois. The six months covered by the journal were extremely busy for Joseph as, among other things, the land on which Nauvoo was built was purchased, he renewed working on his *History*, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles prepared for their important mission to the British Isles, and Joseph prepared for his trip to Washington, D.C., to seek financial recompense for the Saints' loss of property in Missouri. The daily journal touches only lightly on most of these activities, but at least it is more detailed than the previous journal and, as usual, footnotes and editorial notes help fill in the gaps. This journal must be read carefully in order to determine whether Mulholland was writing about Joseph's activities or his own. Again, the editors have helped clarify the text.

The entries in this final journal are often very terse, yet most of them provided the basis for a daily entry in the *History*. In some cases, however,

the journal is considerably expanded from other sources. The journal entry for May 20–24, 1839, for example, reads, “Monday 20th this week at home and employed dictating letters and attending to the various business of the Church” (339). The *History* entry for May 20 reads, “At home attending to a variety of business,” but then the daily entries for May 21–24 are extensive.⁹ There are also several gaps in the journal, some of which were filled in from other sources by the *History* editors.

It is uncertain whether most Church members, even those who enjoy Church history, will want to pursue all the volumes of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, including the Journals series. These are scholarly editions designed primarily for scholars engaged in research. However, those who are willing to approach the journals in more than a casual manner will likely find them valuable and inspirational. Through the pages of *Journals, Volume 1*, we see the genuine Joseph Smith—the man who had visions and revelations, the man who constantly prayed for God’s help in promoting the gospel of Christ, the man who loved and prayed for his family, and the man who was deeply concerned about the well-being of his followers. Nothing in the journals smacks of deception or fraud. Instead, the journals reflect sincerity and honesty. Despite their spotty and incomplete nature, they are an essential source for both understanding and appreciating the founding prophet.

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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., 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971).

2. Ronald K. Esplin, “Why a Joseph Smith Papers Project Now?” <http://josephsmithpapers.org/Essays/esplin.pdf>.

3. *History of the Church*, 1:300.

4. *History of the Church*, 2:347–48, 387–88.

5. *History of the Church*, 2:304.

6. This 1835 account of the First Vision was published in Dean C. Jessee, “The Earliest Documented Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press), 8.

7. *History of the Church*, 2:320.

8. For a chronology of Joseph Smith’s legal activities in the fall of 1838, see “A Chronology of the Life of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 46, no. 4 (2007): 98–99.

9. *History of the Church*, 3:356.

Gary Topping. *Leonard J. Arrington: A Historian's Life*.

Norman, Okla: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008

Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander

Gary Topping, a professor at Salt Lake Community College, has previously published a number of books and articles on Utah environmental history and historians who have lived in Utah. In some ways, Topping's article on Robert Dwyer and his book on historians Bernard DeVoto, Juanita Brooks, Wallace Stegner, Dale Morgan, and Fawn Brodie can be considered precursors to this book.¹

In other ways, this book is also somewhat of a new foray; unlike most of the other historians Topping has treated, Leonard Arrington was neither a non-Mormon nor a lapsed Mormon. He remained an active Latter-day Saint throughout his life. Arrington served in numerous ecclesiastical positions, including as a counselor in a stake presidency and Church Historian—the only person whom the First Presidency has called to the position who was not also a General Authority. President Gordon B. Hinckley asked Arrington's widow, Harriet Horne Arrington, for permission to speak at his funeral, which she gladly gave.

In spite of the title, Topping's book is a selective intellectual biography rather than a complete "Historian's Life." In the preface, Topping clearly states, "I have confined my attention to those works that strike me as most important and also from which I can most efficiently and persuasively make the points I wish to make" (8). This procedure results in a book that touches on Arrington's early life and education but focuses almost entirely on his books and articles on Mormon topics, especially those about the nineteenth century. With the exception of Arrington's biography of Brigham Young,² the biographies Topping reviews are those commissioned by families, and all of them consider Latter-day Saints who lived in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Topping examines works such as *Building the City of God*, *The Mormon Experience*, and *Mormons and Their Historians*, this book does not consider the extensive body of Arrington's work, often

written in collaboration with others, on twentieth-century Utah and Western economic and social history.

In the first chapters, Topping sketches out Arrington's life as an Idaho farm boy and notes the impact of his education and reading on his personal philosophy. Arrington came to see the views of Wisconsin economic historians like Richard T. Ely and John R. Commons as compatible with nineteenth-century Mormon economic philosophy and practice. He also admired southern agrarians who, like his professors at the University of North Carolina, championed rural life.

Arrington's dissertation, after much revision, became *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900*, published by Harvard University Press in 1958.³ In polishing the dissertation, Arrington owed a great debt to S. George Ellsworth, an excellent historical craftsman and his colleague at Utah State University. Ellsworth helped to reshape the dissertation into a book and assisted in stylistic improvements in Arrington's articles on Mormon economic history. In addition to outlining Arrington's achievement in *Great Basin Kingdom*, Topping provides critiques, some of which others have already made, which argue that *Great Basin Kingdom* most likely "exaggerat[ed] the degree to which Mormon cooperation existed" (93). He is undoubtedly right. Nevertheless, in defense of Arrington, Topping may have exaggerated Arrington's emphasis on Mormonism's accomplishments. After all, Arrington argued that various enterprises, including the Moab settlement, the 1850s sugar enterprise, the Iron Mission, and the Cotton Mission, all failed. But Topping correctly argues that the ideal settlement pattern Arrington outlined existed only in some of the settlements. Lowell C. (Ben) Bennion has already made that point in an essay for *Great Basin Kingdom Revisited*.⁴

Topping also points out that Arrington ignored much of the development of the West, especially that which was promoted by non-Mormons. Again, in defense of Arrington, non-Mormon activities lay beyond the scope of Arrington's book. Topping's point is well taken, though, since Arrington should not have excluded Mormon mining developments such as the activities of Jesse Knight, George Q. Cannon, and John Taylor. In his final judgment, Topping concludes (and justly so) that "the reality, expertly narrated in *Great Basin Kingdom*, is captivating, inspiring, and significant enough" (94).

The story Topping tells of Arrington's experience as Church Historian has been told before, and especially well, by Davis Bitton.⁵ Arrington's story is one of triumph and tragedy. In my view, the triumphs outweigh the tragedies, though Arrington suffered personally because of the treatment he received from critical Church members and leaders and the eventual outcomes of this underlying antagonism. Perhaps the greatest tragedy

was that the *coup d' grace* came from Elder G. Homer Durham, a scholar from whom Arrington expected a more favorable reception to the projects the Historical Division undertook. I well remember Arrington and me discussing our belief that Elder Durham would review the manuscripts we wrote with a scholar's eye while at the same time representing the General Authorities. Neither of us anticipated the results of Elder Durham's critique—the dismantling of the division and its removal to BYU in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, Topping is right in concluding, "One certainly cannot say the total experience of the History Division was catastrophic in any sense, for the flood of new publications has enriched Mormon historical understanding immeasurably" (130).

In my view, Topping is less than fair in some of his evaluations of *Brigham Young: American Moses*. In the first place, he expects Arrington to have been privy in 1985 to the work of Will Bagley, which was not published until 2002.⁶ Moreover, Arrington and his staff went carefully through Young's papers, and their examination demonstrated that Topping's assertion that Brigham Young "tacitly approved the [Mountain Meadows] massacre" (166) is a claim thoroughly ungrounded. Significantly, more recent research, of which Topping should have been aware, has shown that Young tried as early as 1859 to bring perpetrators to trial, but anti-Mormon federal officials thwarted both Young and friendly federal officials who agreed to help in prosecuting the perpetrators.⁷

Since Topping writes from outside the experience of practicing Mormons, one might excuse some unfamiliarity with Latter-day Saint ecclesiastical terminology, practice, and doctrine. The proper title of a member of the First Presidency is "President," rather than "Elder" (100). G. Homer Durham was a member of the presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, not an "apostle" (189). And drinking Coca-Cola, which, as Topping observed, Arrington loved, is not "a violation of the dietary rule of the Mormon Word of Wisdom" (23). Significantly, however, Topping is correct that Arrington rightly considered himself an orthodox and faithful Latter-day Saint.

With respect to the story of the sixteen-volume history of the LDS Church that Arrington fathered, Topping is only partly right. The LDS Church did not cancel the series as Topping believed. Rather, a number of authors did not complete their books. In a contract with Deseret Book, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve decided not to publish the entire series at that time, and each of the authors agreed to allow Deseret Book to reserve the right to publish the series at a later date. At the same time, the General Authorities and Deseret Book left the authors free to seek other publishers. Richard L. Bushman and I published with University of Illinois Press, while Deseret Book published some of the

volumes in the series, including those by Milton V. Backman, R. Lanier Britsch, and Glen M. Leonard. The major failing in the sixteen-volume history was with the authors who failed to complete their writing. Had those authors completed their writing, those volumes would have most likely seen the light of day.

On the whole, with the exception of the points I have made above, I believe that Topping stakes out a tenable position. On the other hand, had I written the biography, I would have been more favorable toward Arrington's work. I hasten to admit that I am an extremely biased observer. I love Leonard Arrington who, along with George Ellsworth, served as a mentor in my career. Drawing conclusions is Topping's right as an author, but I believe that Leonard Arrington deserves more credit, along with his collaborators, for opening the way to a professional exploration of twentieth-century Mormonism (through the sixteen-volume history) and Utah history through the extensive research he did on David Eccles, William Spry, the sugar industry (all of which Topping considers), as well as defense installations, mining, and general economic development.

I would recommend this book as a starting point in evaluating Leonard Arrington and his work, though I believe a full-scale biography is still needed.

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1. Gary Topping, "Robert J. Dwyer and the Writing of Utah History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 71 (Winter 2003): 4–19; Gary Topping, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

2. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985).

3. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

4. Lowell C. Bennion, "A Geographer's Discovery of Great Basin Kingdom," in *Great Basin Kingdom Revisited*, ed. Thomas G. Alexander (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1991), 109–32.

5. Davis Bitton, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir," *Dialogue* 16 (Autumn 1983): 9–33.

6. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

7. Thomas G. Alexander, *Brigham Young, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the Latter-day Saint Investigation of the Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series no. 12 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007).

Marleen S. Williams, W. Dean Belnap, and John P. Livingstone.
Matters of the Mind: Latter-Day Saint Helps for Mental Health.
Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008

Reviewed by James D. MacArthur

Mental health continues to be difficult for many people to understand. We seem to grasp physical ailments; bruises and cuts and headaches are pains we all have experienced. More serious health troubles—diabetes, cancer, or the physical pain associated with a broken arm or surgery—are still in the realm of the tactile and thus are fairly easy to grasp conceptually, even by those who have not gone through any such trauma. But when it comes to the realm of mental illnesses—bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or even more common ailments like dysthymia—we may find ourselves scratching our heads. What is the nature of mental disorders? Are they considered diseases? Or are they the byproduct of poor choices?

This is not to say that the general population is any better off, but most Latter-day Saints have very little direct understanding of mental illness. Many feel confused by mental health in general, and that confusion certainly does not get any better when they attempt to understand specific disorders. Their knowledge of mental illness usually ends at the rudimentary level of “I have heard a few things about it.” Predictably, such informal understanding helps to promulgate inaccuracies and myths, which obviously are not helpful to those who are suffering or looking for answers.

Home teachers, visiting teachers, and even bishops and stake presidents are not immune to a certain amount of confusion on the subject. How will a bishop, for example, counsel a young woman struggling with an eating disorder when he has no knowledge on the subject? He may give invaluable spiritual advice, but with no frame of reference, he is unlikely to point her in a direction that can directly address her problem.

A bishop or stake president may assume that an individual who visits his office full of heaviness and sadness is suffering spiritually—a sorrow for sin is the likely cause of the disturbance. The one suffering may assume the same thing, even in the face of clinical depression. (A depressed individual often has a special talent for feeling guilty even when he or she is not.)

So Church leader and member work together to fix the problem through traditional Church interventions like prayer, fasting, and scripture study. While these spiritual ways of helping are a great blessing to members struggling with mental challenges, many times they only address certain parts of the human condition and thus professional skill is also needed.

Of course, bishops and stake presidents are primarily spiritual leaders and cannot reasonably be expected to give any sort of professional, clinical diagnosis for a mental disorder. The same can be said of all nonprofessional members. So how do members and their loved ones—parents, leaders, friends, or spouses—determine when it is necessary to reach out to professional services provided by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and professional counselors of one type or another? The answer is found in education; if Church members and leaders had a basic working knowledge of common mental disorders, those seeking relief for their problems would more often be pointed in the right direction.

Beyond knowing where to point members, Church leaders do better work when they have a more adequate understanding of common mental health challenges. For example, a stake president and high council sitting in judgment over an elder's bizarre and outrageous behavior are more likely to show more judicious mercy if they understand that he, being bipolar, suffered a severe manic episode and did not commit a willful and premeditated sin against God. In my own experience as a Church leader, I have seen mistakes made due to the inadequate understanding of bishops and stake presidents in the area of mental health.

Matters of the Mind: Latter-Day Saint Helps for Mental Health can go a long way in remedying some of these misunderstandings. The book provides an excellent and competent understanding of a complex array of mental disorders and problems along with insights into treatment possibilities that leaders and lay members of the Church can readily understand. Chapters 1 through 3 give an overview of mental illness and the basics of brain function; Chapters 4 through 8 discuss issues concerning mental illness that relate particularly to Latter-day Saints; and chapters 9 through 18 explore the particulars of mental illnesses, such as mood and anxiety disorders, cognitive disorders, eating disorders, Asperger syndrome and autism, depressions peculiar to women and men, and psychotic disorders. Chapters 19 through 24 conclude the book with methods for coping with mental illness.

Matters of the Mind is the best book I am acquainted with to provide Latter-day Saints much-needed insight and understanding about mental health. Among the book's most outstanding contributions is a perceptive spiritual insight into the traditionally secular field of mental health.

A great potential of this book is to link mental health professionals and Church members with leaders through mutual understanding. The book shows how mental health and spiritual health can and should grow together; Latter-day Saints and mental health professionals can work hand in hand rather than in competition with each other.

I highly recommend this book and feel it will help members, leaders in the Church, and professional mental health workers bring many to greater mental and spiritual health—as a result, many more will find their journey of coming unto Christ filled with greater stability, peace, and joy.

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George Weigel. *Against the Grain: Christianity and
Democracy, War and Peace.*

New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2008

Reviewed by Gary P. Gillum

Deification has been a difficult theological concept for mankind to accept. St. Augustine's doctrine of original sin and the depravity of man helped spur on a deep skepticism to the idea that God's children could become anything like God, let alone progressing to the eventual state of gods or goddesses. Latter-day Saints have often been cautious about broaching the topic of deification around most Catholics and Protestants, for fear that our Christian friends would brand us as blasphemers and cease any further discussion about Mormonism. But the climate surrounding deification and other doctrines, such as baptism for the dead, seems to be changing in some circles—Catholic circles included.

A recipient of ten honorary doctorates, George Weigel is a well-known spokesman for Catholics in America. As Senior Fellow and Chair of Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., Weigel is author of the best-selling *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. Weigel's worthy accomplishments seem to have led him to discuss a new day of openness and transparency in the teachings of his church, which have heretofore been shrouded in mystery, superstition, and indifference.

Against the Grain: Christianity and Democracy, War and Peace is a mind-opening and spiritually refreshing collection of essays and lectures concerning Catholic social doctrines that Latter-day Saint thinkers should ponder. Topics include democratic structures, the uses of war, human freedom within society, jihadism, world politics, the future of western civilization, and the nature and sovereignty of the individual. Concerning this last topic, many of Weigel's insights should be familiar to most Latter-day Saints, particularly as he openly explores deification:

To confess the Lordship of Christ is to proclaim to the world that, in and through Jesus Christ, God finally and definitively achieved what he had intended for human beings from the beginning: glorification as

companions of God within the light and love of the Trinity. Thus Christianity exalts the human person and the human race almost beyond the point of human comprehension, for the Christian claim is that the divinely willed destiny of every human being is, in the startling term of the Eastern Fathers of the Church, nothing less than θεωσις [theosis] or “deification.” “God was made man so that man might become God” is the characteristic patristic formulation of this dramatic assertion. (40)

Wiegel further defines his concrete understanding of deification¹ by linking human nature closely with Christ’s nature:

The Gospel episode that most dramatically captures this central truth of Christianity is the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus. There, on Mt. Tabor, Peter, James, and John were given, not only a vision of the glorified Christ, but also a glimpse of their own future glorification. And as it was for them, so it is for us. Although we see only with the eyes of faith, we have Christ’s pledge that “blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29). Seeing Christ, who is one like us, transfigured, we can know our own destiny. Or, as the apostle Paul put it to the early Christians of Corinth, we can understand that in Christ we are being transformed “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18). (41)

A resurgence of the doctrine of deification in Catholic and other religious circles has me questioning: Will the “restitution of all things” referred to in Acts 3:21 come only through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? May I be so bold as to suggest that it will not. Is there a reason why other faiths around the world cannot share in the joy of rediscovering lost doctrines? What is the mechanism that brings about a restoration or recovery of knowledge anyway? Is it only through Joseph Smith and the prophets? Cannot revelation, past or present, influence the modern Roman Catholic Church? What about better scholarship in Hebrew and New Testament studies, or a clear and objective look at history, tradition, and culture? Is the need to change and adapt to modern circumstances involved? Whatever it is that compels greater openness, certainly the ramifications behind a more general acceptance of the doctrine of deification would include a more positive outlook on the human condition, its progress, and its ultimate purpose for existence.

It seems Wiegel discusses the striking subject of theosis so early in his volume to prepare the reader for what is coming. Indeed, throughout the book Wiegel writes on many important Catholic issues of current controversy. Many will resonate in the hearts and minds of most Latter-day Saints:

There is something morally wrong (and, ultimately, economically destructive) about imagining that *having more* is *being more*. The Church must, in other words, develop and inculcate a spirituality for abundance, in which the solipsism and selfishness too often characteristic of certain developed

societies (and manifest, for example, in their demographic suicide) is challenged by the call to a rich generosity. (32–33; italics in original)

Lived out in the world amid the agitations of the politics of the world, Christian hope should reflect the temporal paradox of Christian life: that Christians are a people both in and ahead of time. Christians are the people who know, and who ought to live as if they knew, that the Lord of history is in charge of history. Christians are the people who know how the story is going to turn out, and that puts Christians in a unique position vis-à-vis the flow of history. (68)

Regime-change in Iraq was a necessity: it was necessary for the people of Iraq; it was necessary for peace in the Middle East; it was necessary to vindicate the fragile steps toward world order that had been taken since Eisenhower's staff wore those flaming-sword shoulder patches; and it was necessary in order to challenge Arab self-delusion, out of which had emerged, among other things, contemporary jihadism. (256–57)

From the very beginnings of the Church in this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught and practiced the principle of religious tolerance, despite the hateful and dangerous manner in which he was treated by some men of the cloth. In a sermon given on June 16, 1844, in the grove east of the Nauvoo Temple, Joseph Smith said, "The old Catholic church traditions are worth more than all you have said. . . . Any man who will betray the Catholics will betray you."² Fortunately, that spirit of tolerance has been retaught and reemphasized by nearly every latter-day prophet since. They would have felt very comfortable in the same room with Pope John Paul II, who, in his bestseller *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, said the following:

Christian Revelation has viewed the spiritual history of man as including, in some way, all religions, thereby demonstrating *the unity of humankind with regard to the eternal and ultimate destiny of man*. . . . "There is only one community and it consists of all peoples."

"The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. . . . Those precepts and doctrines . . . often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men."³

The foregoing attitude, familiar to our own, explains a lot about the recent phenomenon of Latter-day Saints and Catholics working together on California's Proposition 8 (which dealt with traditional marriage) and issues related to abortion. We, like they, are "against the grain" in so many ways: we would agree that "Europe is committing demographic suicide" (280), that "debonair nihilism" (76) is rampant throughout the world, leading to a "new world disorder" (176).

Throughout the centuries, the God-like attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, as taught by both liberal and orthodox

theologians, often obfuscated the more important divine attributes of God's fatherhood and his love for and desire to glorify his children. How often did these theologians and philosophers write about the family or the sanctity of marriage? With such books as *Against the Grain*, it is happening more and more, and on these and other important issues Latter-day Saints find themselves agreeing more and more with our Catholic brothers and sisters. In a final espousal for the spirit of this insightful book, and to capture the ecumenical essence found in the Catholic tradition, I quote C. S. Lewis: "There are no *ordinary* people. . . . Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses" (97-98).⁴

Neither is this any ordinary book.

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1. On "deification," see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, 100-600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom, 600-1700*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). See also my earlier review of Pelikan's *Whose Bible Is It?* in *BYU Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 148-50.

2. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 375.

3. Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 78, 80, emphasis in original.

4. C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 19; emphasis in original.

W. Paul Reeve. *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes.*

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006

Reviewed by Jay H. Buckley

University of Utah historian W. Paul Reeve has written an intriguing and engaging monograph examining the dynamic interchange between Mormons, miners, and Southern Paiutes along the Great Basin's southern rim. Broadly covering the last four decades of the nineteenth century, Reeves focuses his lens most closely on southwestern Utah and southeastern Nevada during the turbulent 1860s and 1870s, when the clash of cultures reached its zenith.

Paiutes, Mormons, and miners possessed quite different worldviews relating to their notions about identity. The "complicated and messy" story that unfolds tackles the economic, cultural, political, and religious clashes that intertwine (and entangle) these three groups' perspectives (3). A cursory list of the historical actors includes a carpetbag governor, anti-Mormon military officers, corrupt Indian agents, jury members passing contested decisions, murderous scoundrels, and even lynch mobs. Notable Mormons and Southern Paiutes include Brigham Young, Erastus Snow, Bush-head, Tut-se-gav-its, Taú-gu (Coal Creek John), and Moroni. James Ashley, Patrick Conner, Thomas Sale, and George Hearst round out the cast of politicians, military personnel, Indian agents, and mining investors.

The first act opens with the murder of George Rogers, a Kentucky miner killed in 1866. Fifteen armed miners suspect Mormon treachery and set off to exact vengeance. As the drama unfolds, a Paiute named Okus admits committing the murder and implicates three of his friends. By night's end, all four have paid the price for Okus's actions. Reeve uses the event to demonstrate that as their worlds collided, Mormons, Paiutes, and miners sought to shape their "own world in meaningful ways" while defining and defending their power, place, and space (4).

Reeve develops this theme by seeking to understand each group's physical and spiritual struggle over land and resources. While the three groups were contending against one another on location, the matter was

being decided thousands of miles away by eastern politicians, who entitled mining interests over Mormon concerns or Indian rights. During the Radical Reconstruction period of the post-Civil War era, politicians busy reconstructing the South also focused considerable attention on reshaping the West. They championed legislative measures to eradicate polygamy and bring the “Mormon Question” to an end. Concurrently, they sought to annihilate or assimilate tribal peoples in order to remedy the “Indian Problem.” To make matters worse, crooked governors, Indian agents, lawyers, and local officials allowed personal greed and corruption to triumph over civic service and the public good. As a result, the 1860s represented the expansion of Nevada at the expense of Paiute and Mormon lands, resources, and influence.

Reeve uses Pioche, Nevada, as an illustrative case study of the complexity. In 1864, a silver mine opened, but Southern Paiutes defended their ancestral lands and mineral resources and drove the miners away. Five years later, San Francisco financier François Louis Alfred Pioche purchased the site and poured in investments, such that the town rose in influence to rival the Comstock Lode in silver mining importance. The town attracted all kinds of people—good and bad—and had more than its fair share of saloons and brothels. It was a violent place, and many staked their final claim in Boot Hill.

Many Americans during the Gilded Age felt mining represented American industry, individualism, risk taking, and progress. Certainly the acquisition of wealth was more palpable to them than Mormon communal farming, the practice of polygamy, or Paiute subsistence. Preference turned to prejudice as men like Patrick Conner, who disliked Mormons and Indians, used mining to attract outsiders to the region in order to diminish the power and influence of both groups. Federal Indian agents such as Reuben Fenton and Thomas Sale commingled civic and personal interests in favor of pursuing personal profit.

Congress, too, supported increasing Nevada Territory in 1861 and 1862 at the expense of the Mormon Zion and Paiute homelands. After Nevada joined the Union in 1864, Governor Henry Goode Blasdel encouraged politicians like James Ashley, chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Territories and a member of the Mining Committee, to expand Nevada’s borders further eastward in order to make sure all the silver mining operations and towns such as Pioche fell within Nevada’s borders. Reeve does a masterful job showing how Nevadans exaggerated the mineral wealth of the region and Congress acted without the consent of the residents living in the contested space. Politicians categorically chose to dismiss Mormon complaints and ignore Paiute claims in order to expand Nevada’s border

in 1866 and 1867. By 1869, Ashley even tried to draw Utah out of existence, a measure that ultimately failed. His motives for doing so likely resulted from his quest for wealth and power after he lost his reelection campaign, although some claimed it was his disappointment with Mormons for failing to provide him with appropriate “female companionship” while he was visiting Utah Territory (59).

Arizona Territory, too, lost its northwest corner in order for Nevada miners to gain access to the Colorado River. These boundary shifts favored Nevada’s state interest over those of the two territories, and mining enterprises over subsistence and communal farming. Miners tended to be racist toward Paiutes and prejudiced toward Mormons but remained somewhat dependent upon Paiute labor and Mormon foodstuffs for survival. Paiutes resented the Mormon presence but, for various reasons, some were baptized. Mormons found the mining towns a bit uncouth, yet they went there anyway to trade food for currency. Reeve paints a vivid scene of three disparate groups chasing their own American dreams in a seemingly barren corner of the West.

Paiutes adapted to the changes by repeatedly refusing to remove from their lands to join their traditional enemies—the Utes—on their reservation in the Uintah Basin. The Southern Paiutes defended their lands and stayed upon them. Some joined with the Utes in raiding towns, stealing stock, and killing during the Black Hawk War. Others found ways to survive as wage laborers for miners and Mormons. Paiute leaders played Mormons and miners off one another when they could. Leaders like Bush-head favored antagonism while Moroni chose the path of friendship and conciliation. The author asserts that the Paiutes successfully withstood the overwhelming forces surrounding them by retaining portions of their traditional lands in reservations like Shivwits, Moapa, and later ones created between 1891 and 1929. Nevertheless, just as the territories of Utah and Arizona lost ground to Nevada, the Moapa River Indian Reservation also faced significant reductions that were added to the Silver State (56–57).

Mormons, too, accommodated the changes. Unable or unwilling to pay Nevada’s taxes in hard currency, Mormons abandoned many of their Nevada settlements at Clover Valley, Eagle Valley, and Spring Valley and retreated to build up strength in other locales. Mormon leaders preached maintaining independence from the gentile world by avoiding individualistic mining and attempting to keep contact between the communities to a minimum. After Brigham Young’s death in 1877, Mormon-miner interactions increased and became relatively commonplace. Over time, resolving conflicts allowed all three groups to form temporally symbiotic relationships while maintaining spiritual separateness.

Reeve has mined the manuscripts, newspapers, government documents, and secondary literature well, sorting through a lot of overburden to pursue the vein of richest color. While the maps are adequate, several of them lack sufficient detail to really see the communities that were founded or abandoned because of the realignments. Moreover, the three group identities often come across as monolithic constructs between “spiritual” and “worldly” without adequate exploration of their ethnic makeup or their regional and nationalistic diversity. Nevertheless, Reeve has provided a thoughtful approach to examining how several frontier communities and peoples in the southern Great Basin responded to internal and external pressures during the Gilded Age.

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David L. Dungan. *Constantine's Bible:
Politics and the Making of the New Testament.*

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007

Reviewed by Carl W. Griffin

The canon of Christian scripture has received much scrutiny since the rise of historical criticism in post-Enlightenment Europe. Nineteenth-century discoveries of new apocryphal gospels and epistles also fueled academic debate over canonicity, which has reached an even higher pitch since 1945, with the discovery of a corpus of Gnostic Christian “scriptures” at Nag Hammadi, Egypt. More recently, best-selling works by scholars like Bart Ehrman and Elaine Pagels, as well as Dan Brown’s novel *The Da Vinci Code*, have introduced to a wide nonspecialist audience the historical problems surrounding the formation of Christian scripture.

Into this crowded conversation enters David L. Dungan, former Professor of Religion at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with a new examination of the formation of the Christian canon, specifically the New Testament. While much past attention has been focused on apocryphal writings and the Bible, Dungan addresses the question of why there is a Christian canon at all and examines the historical and political process that brought it into being. General readers interested in how and why the scriptural books of the New Testament era were eventually selected or excluded from the canon will find useful information and questions in this brief treatment of the subject.

Dungan first makes a careful terminological distinction between *scripture* and *canon*. Scripture “refers to a semidurable, semifluid, *slowly evolving* conglomeration of sacred texts . . . in use by members of a religious tradition over hundreds or even thousands of years” (2, emphasis in original). In contrast, “a canon results when someone seeks to impose a strict boundary around a smaller subset of writings or teachings within the larger, slowly evolving ‘cloud of sacred texts’” (3). Nearly all religions have scripture, but very few religious traditions have canons—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam being the notable exceptions (5).

From here the author begins to explore the history and meaning of the Greek term *kanōn*. While originally describing a carpenter's ruler, with the rise of the Greek city-state (*polis*) *kanōn* began to be "used as a metaphor for accuracy, definiteness, and truth" of democratic law (14). This "Greek *polis* ideology" (19) and the philosophical ideals behind it subsequently influenced Jewish and Christian culture and institutions. Dungan sees great significance, for example, in the term adopted for a Christian congregation, *ekklēsia*. This was also "the name of the popular assembly in the Greek *polis* responsible for all decisions of internal or external policy" (22). This adoption of name correlates with the Christian adoption of the Greek political ideal of unity achieved through the logical ordering and standardization of laws and institutions.

This standardization is seen in the Church regulations issued in the Pastoral Epistles and early Church orders like the *Didache* and *Apostolic Constitutions*, among other texts (23–25). It is perhaps natural, then, that the term *kanōn* (*regula* in Latin) also begins to be used to describe the normative standard of apostolic teaching and tradition, which comes to be called simply "the rule of faith" (*kanōn tēs pisteōs* in Greek; *regula fidei* in Latin) (27). Among its many Christian usages, however, the term *kanōn* is never used specifically for scripture before the fourth century CE (29).

With this (perhaps overly) substantial prologue, the author now arrives at his main topic. Dungan argues that Greek philosophy decisively shaped Christians' attitudes toward their authoritative texts. While anonymity and pseudepigraphy were common in early Greece, as in other cultures, the scholar-librarian Callimachus of Cyrene (305–240 BCE) began an enduring critical movement to establish the authorship and authenticity of works in the great library of Alexandria. To illustrate the methodology that was developed, Dungan examines Diogenes Laertius (ca. 230 CE), who authored a study of the lives of the philosophers. Laertius established lists of genuine writings for both the founders of the philosophical schools and their disciples, relying heavily on the opinions of the successive leaders of the schools, as well as on a direct examination and study of the most accurate copies of these texts available. All this was vital to establishing authentic teaching. Laertius's method was substantially paralleled in the writings of early Christian apologists, such as Irenaeus, who "most clearly exemplifies the three-fold philosophical school model: standing in the *true succession of leaders* back to the founder, possession of the only *genuine writings* written by the founder's disciples (with accurate texts), and adhering to the *correct doctrine*" (44, emphasis in original).

Irenaeus (died ca. 200 CE) stood near the beginning of the debate over which Christian books were authentic. Dungan rightly gives Origen of

Alexandria (ca. 185–253 CE) some close attention, but the cardinal figure for him is Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (ca. 265–340 CE). In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius followed in the footsteps of his orthodox predecessors in documenting the succession of bishops in the patriarchal sees (meaning “chairs,” denoting seats of authority) and examining the attribution of various Christian books and their reception in orthodox Christian communities. He arrives at a surprisingly brief list of authoritative books, divided into two or three categories of “accepted” or “disputed” writings (Dungan argues for two categories, the latter bifurcated [72–78]). Dungan evaluates Eusebius’s criteria for inclusion or exclusion from the Christian canon and judges the Bishop of Caesarea favorably. Eusebius’s method was surprisingly impartial, grading the various books according to the philosophical standards previously discussed, and adopting an “open-ended” attitude towards the canon of scripture (91–93).

Dungan’s final chapter provides a history of the conversion of the emperor Constantine (died 337 CE), the adoption of Christianity as the state cult of the Roman Empire (313 CE), and the Council of Nicea (325 CE). This provides plenty of background leading to the central question: How did Constantine influence the selection of Christian scripture? Constantine condemned all heretics and their books, eventually drawing up an index of proscribed writings. He also ordered fifty complete copies of the Bible, which would include all twenty-seven books of the New Testament listed by Eusebius as either “approved” or “disputed.” Constantine’s actions ended “what had been an open, vigorous debate about scripture” (119), which the author believes amounted to a final and formal closing of the canon (122).

This book is not an academic monograph, but rather is intended for a general readership, serving to contextualize the early Christian canonization of the New Testament. Dungan covers much historical and intellectual ground in brief compass. The result is, in places, a broad generalization that may just rehearse common knowledge or, more seriously, a lack of specific evidence. He says, for example, that “Eusebius and his predecessors sifted through more than 100 writings that had been cited or used as supposed apostolic writings” by earlier Christian authors (69), and he provides a list of such in his Appendix B (148–50). But he does not document this vague sifting process (there is, in fact, little historical data for this), and the list of writings he provides includes works postdating Eusebius (such as the Gospel of Nicodemus, dating to about 600 CE). His list includes the New Testament, but for most of the other writings, there is often little evidence to establish how authoritative they were for any specific Christian group.

I am also concerned by the author's overly narrow focus on Eusebius and Constantine in the canonical process. Neither of them clearly or definitively closed the New Testament canon. In fact, the famous Codex Sinaiticus is thought by many to be one of the imperial Bibles ordered by Constantine (it is certainly contemporary), and following the New Testament it contains two of Eusebius's "spurious" works: the Epistle of Barnabas and part of the Shepherd of Hermas. The earliest extant, complete "orthodox" canonical list is in fact the one issued by Athanasius of Alexandria in his thirty-ninth Festal Letter for Easter (367 CE). Several post-Constantinian councils took up this issue; the emperor clearly did not settle it. It should be noted, too, that Eastern Christians outside the Roman Empire were beyond Constantine's authority altogether, and for centuries after him many used a shorter New Testament canon (usually of twenty-two or twenty-six books; the book of Revelation was broadly rejected). These important facts (many more might be noted) are not discussed by Dungan, though they are relevant to his thesis and to any broad discussion of the development of the New Testament canon. While this book is a serviceable general work on its topic, readers should be aware that it is not a complete treatment and, at key points, is potentially misleading.

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Richard Lyman Bushman.
Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2008

Reviewed by John G. Turner

Combining history, theology, and contemporary observations, Richard L. Bushman has crafted an engaging introduction to Mormonism, aimed primarily at outsiders to Latter-day Saint traditions and related movements. Anticipating skeptical non-Mormon readers, Bushman centers his book on several fundamental questions, including “How can twenty-first-century Americans believe in a prophet who translated golden plates and claimed constant revelations?” and “How can a religion that runs against the grain of modern secularism evoke such strong loyalties?” (xiii).

Bushman’s latest work may indeed be “very short,” but it simultaneously provides eloquent and sophisticated answers to such questions. Although he discusses post-Manifesto polygamists and the movement that became the Community of Christ, he brings to the foreground the “church headquartered in Salt Lake City” (15). Beginning with three thematic chapters that focus on the concepts of revelation, Zion, and priesthood, he then adds a chapter on “cosmology,” which fleshes out key points in Mormon theology. These chapters blend nineteenth-century starting points with more recent developments. For instance, the chapter on Zion covers Jackson County, consecration, contemporary microcredit efforts, Mormon-Gentile tension in 1830s Missouri, and the Latter-day Saint missionary impulse in fewer than twenty small pages.

For the most part, Bushman’s *A Very Short Introduction* succeeds brilliantly, particularly in the realm of theology. Most outside the LDS faith—myself included—feel themselves standing on somewhat shaky ground when discussing Latter-day Saint teachings on priesthood, exaltation, intelligence, or the Godhead. Bushman succinctly explains all of these complex topics. His explication of Smith’s rejection of an *ex nihilo* creation is particularly illuminating. Depending on their relative interest in theology, Bushman’s work will interest some readers more than others. Most Protestants and Catholics will still raise their eyebrows when encountering Joseph Smith’s King Follett discourse. Indeed, Bushman often discusses King Follett and other topics within the context of Mormonism’s

divergences from both postapostolic Christianity and nineteenth-century Protestantism. Although most focused on the nineteenth century, Bushman highlights the dynamism of Mormon theology, rooted in Joseph Smith's restoration of ongoing and immediate revelation. For example, he explains that "late twentieth-century Mormonism pulled back from" an "entrenched aversion to doctrines of grace" (76-77). To counter the argument that Mormons are not Christians, Bushman discusses a renewed appreciation for the Atonement; however, he might have more fully explained the place of Jesus Christ in Latter-day Saint theology, a subject perennially confusing to outsiders.

As the nation's most eminent historian of early Mormonism, Bushman also provides healthy doses of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint history. While some readers might desire more coverage of twentieth-century developments, Bushman wisely caters to enduring popular interest in the Joseph Smith and Brigham Young eras. One hopes that many newcomers to Mormon history will find themselves inspired to read further, as Bushman can only scratch the surface of many compelling topics. Among the strongest are Bushman's discussion of Mormonism within various restoration movements, including the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the combination of wide participation and hierarchical authority in Mormon priesthood.

It seems unfair to demand more of a "very short introduction," but while Bushman discusses many aspects of Joseph Smith's career, he does not introduce enough of the prophet's complex and engaging personality. Although most Latter-day Saints converted to the faith without meeting Smith, when they did meet him most found his charisma and personality attractive. Smith was affable, athletic, and full of dynamic energy, energy that sometimes became tempestuous and even reckless. Readers will find all of these traits on display in Bushman's *Rough Stone Rolling*, but to have included more of them in this short volume would have helped explain Joseph Smith's appeal. Similarly, although Bushman covers the roles of women in both historical and contemporary Mormonism, vignettes of leaders such as Eliza R. Snow would have enlivened these sections.

It is hard to say exactly how many pages an author of a brief volume on Mormonism should expend on treasure hunting, Danites, polygamy, Mountain Meadows, and blacks in the priesthood. Given Bushman's ultimate goal of making the Latter-day Saint faith comprehensible to outsiders, his treatment of these topics is adequate, but it is safe to say that some readers will not agree. "Even today," Bushman writes of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, "critics consider it the archetypical event in Mormon history. Mormons protest in vain." Bushman asserts—persuasively, in my reading of the evidence—that Brigham Young "was far too astute not to

see the damning effect of such an event on Mormon fortunes” (96). Fore-shadowing the argument of the subsequently released *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, Bushman suggests that “the leaders of the massacre were ordinary, respectable citizens whose humanity broke down at one terrible moment” (96). Perhaps that was true of many perpetrators, but John D. Lee at least had other grievous lapses of humanity in his tragic life.

Bushman deftly makes many aspects of Mormonism comprehensible, including the Word of Wisdom (had he mentioned the average Latter-day Saint lifespan he might even have won a few converts), family home evening, and baptism for the dead. Other points, some trivial and some important, could use further illumination. What is Deseret? Why do Latter-day Saints accompany sacramental bread with water instead of wine or grape juice? Although Bushman devotes several pages to the significance of obtaining a personal testimony, one suspects Protestant readers, particularly evangelicals, will stumble over the subtly different meaning of “testimony” for Latter-day Saints.

The only other serious omission is a fuller discussion of global Mormonism. Bushman observes that “a majority of the Mormons who settled in the western United States would be Britons, Scandinavians, and other Europeans,” but he does not document the more recent growth of the Church in places like Latin America or assess the potential of Mormonism to become an enduring global religion. Since about half of all Latter-day Saints now reside outside of the United States, a brief summary of these trends would have served Bushman’s readers well.

These are all quibbles, however. Bushman succeeds in his effort to explain the continued appeal of the restored gospel in contemporary America. “Beyond the community and the wholesome life,” he observes, “Mormonism gives its members a place in the universe” (114). Even skeptical Saints hesitate to leave this “beehive.” “To depart from the Mormon circle is to abandon a plenteous and ordered existence for the perplexities and sorrows of modern life,” Bushman concludes. “All this gives Mormons reason to hold on to the faith at the center of their lives” (116).

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Melvin C. Johnson. *Polygamy on the Pedernales: Lyman Wight's Mormon Villages in Antebellum Texas, 1845 to 1858.*

Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2006

Reviewed by Ken Driggs

Polygamy on the Pedernales is about the Mormon settlements in Texas during the 1840s and 1850s, whose primary allegiance was to Lyman Wight. Christened the “Wild Ram of the Mountains” by the *New York Sun*, Wight was ordained an Apostle by Joseph Smith in 1841. Because he was “charismatic, intensely personal, and often domineering in his dealings with others,” writes author Melvin C. Johnson, “the Wild Ram became influential with Joseph Smith” (3). Wight’s group broke with Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve, and they pursued Wight’s vision of a Latter-day Saint safe haven in Texas, which Wight believed was commanded by Smith.

Born in 1796, Wight served in the War of 1812, married Harriet Benton Wight, and settled in frontier Ohio by 1826. Lyman and Harriet joined Sydney Rigdon’s Campbellite community in 1829, where Lyman became passionately converted to New Testament Christian primitivism and common-stock economic communalism. He was part of a large body of Rigdon’s followers who converted to the LDS faith when missionaries arrived.

Joseph Smith, apparently recognizing Wight’s passion and promise, ordained him the first high priest of the Church in 1831. Later that year, Wight was called to help the Saints in frontier Missouri. In 1834, he participated in Zion’s Camp and was called by Joseph Smith, reports the author, into “an irregular, paramilitary force,” claimed by some to be the Danites (15).¹ In 1838, Wight was seized along with Smith and five others by the Missouri militia, after which General Samuel D. Lucas ordered that they be executed. “Given the opportunity by General Moses Wilson to escape the firing squad if he would testify against Smith, Wight is supposed to have said, ‘Shoot and be damned’” (19). He remained in Liberty Jail with the Prophet for several months until the group was allowed to escape in 1839 and joined the refugee Saints in Illinois. “Wight later wrote that while in jail, he assisted Joseph Smith Jr. to ordain one of his sons as

his successor” (19). In 1841, Smith ordained Wight an Apostle, and shortly before Smith’s own murder in June 1844, he called Wight into the Council of Fifty. As an Apostle, Wight was initiated into the then private practice of plural marriage and into the highest levels of the new temple rituals and teachings, which he maintained for the rest of his life (32).

Nauvoo’s rapid growth required building materials, and the Saints found lumber up the Mississippi River in the wilds of Wisconsin. In 1841, along with Bishop George Miller, Wight was dispatched to organize and manage the lumbering operations, an assignment he took on with his usual zeal and success. This operation would become the Black River Pine Company, “a thriving community with four sawmills along the Black River and a dozen logging camps” (34). The work and living conditions were hard, and the experiences produced intense loyalties between Wight and the other laborers: “The majority of [Texas] Wightite colonists came from the Pine Company, which spent two distinct periods in Wisconsin—from late fall 1841 to June 1844, and from the fall of 1844 to the spring of 1845. The latter period completed the transformation of Wight’s followers into a distinctive faction opposed to Brigham Young and Utah Mormonism” (23).

As Smith and his followers encountered new friction with non-Mormons in Illinois, the Prophet began to look for more remote and friendly havens. In addition to the Rocky Mountain West, he considered the newly independent Republic of Texas. Smith sent Lucien Woodworth to negotiate with Republic of Texas President Sam Houston about such a settlement and found him receptive. Woodworth reported to Smith in May 1844, and Smith personally called Wight and Miller on a mission to prepare Texas for a possible Mormon migration after they finished the season’s lumbering in Wisconsin. Wight was winding down that business when the Prophet was murdered. “The commitment to carry out his mission to Texas would drive Wight for the rest of his life” (31). At the same time, “Brigham Young never understood the depth of Wight’s commitment to the Texas mission, nor did he comprehend Wight’s literal interpretation of Smith’s instructions, that is, to prepare a gathering place for the church membership in Texas” (36).

At the October 1844 general conference of the Church, “Young called Wight a coward for leaving Nauvoo,” but Wight was again confirmed as an Apostle after the Twelve deliberated the matter (52). In March 1845, Wight and his followers, about 150 persons, “fired their log cabins” in Wisconsin and began the journey to Texas by river (54). Six months later, they began colonizing near Austin, Texas.

Although not all research studies on Mormon population movements agree, Johnson writes that by 1848 only “a slight majority of the Mormons

had settled either in Utah Territory or were under the direction of the Twelve in Winter Quarters, Iowa. Almost one-half of the membership, along with apostles John Page, William Smith, and Lyman Wight, had rejected the leadership of the Twelve” (35).² By December 1848, after continued defiance in joining with the Church in Utah, Wight was excommunicated and dropped from all Church offices. His excommunication, along with other recalcitrant Apostles, “removed all remaining major opposition to Young’s succession” (122).

Wight and his followers finally colonized Sycamore Springs near Austin (1846–47), Zodiac near Fredericksburg (1847–51), Hamilton Mills (1851–53), and finally Mountain Valley (1854–58), all in the Texas hill country, which amounts to a geologic division between eastern and western Texas. The Wightites’ cooperative industries in the area dominated regional commerce. Though their population was significant in pioneer Texas, their numbers never exceeded 175. Yet their organizational and industrial skills made them important pioneers, even if other settlers kept them at arm’s length.

In Johnson’s view, this Mormon splinter group was held together by Wight’s forceful personality. “The autocratic frontier leader, increasingly addicted to his alcohol and opium as time passed, still inspired others to follow him for more than fifteen years, in situations often grim and troubled, across America’s borderlands in pursuit of their common faith” (3).

The Fredericksburg area was settled by German immigrants who were unsettled by Wight and his followers but came to tolerate them for practical reasons. “Although the Germans considered the Mormons to be ‘lawless of religious practices,’ they accepted the newcomers because they realized the need to learn the American ways of milling, agriculture, and livestock” (88). Zodiac was also the site of a modest temple constructed at Wight’s direction and was dedicated on February 17, 1849.

By 1858, the need for a Texas sanctuary was less compelling, and Wight’s hold on his flock was weakening. At age sixty-two, Wight wanted to join with like-thinking Mormons in Missouri and Iowa. His antagonism toward the Utah leadership continued; he had written an especially bitter letter to Brigham Young a year earlier. On March 30, 1858, Wight and a small party began the journey to Jackson County, Missouri, but the next day a fatal seizure felled him at Dexter, near San Antonio, apparently “caused in part because of years of alcohol abuse and the medicinal opium he used to treat earlier illnesses” (190). He was buried the following day in Zodiac. Those followers who remained found their way mostly into the Reorganized Latter Day Saint tradition, although they continued practicing plural marriage for a time. Others fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. Johnson sums up their dissolution: “After 1865, more

than 200 former Wightites were living in Texas, California, Missouri, and Iowa. Almost all had joined other branches of Mormonism. The majority, including the wives of Lyman Wight and most of the other polygamists and former polygamists, joined the RLDS church in the Upper Midwest. About twenty in number reunited with the LDS church in Utah” (197).

Notwithstanding some dispute about raw numbers, a particular strength of the book is the discussion of *how* the Mormon community splintered after the June 1844 murder of Joseph Smith. It is documented that Smith gave clear direction on prophetic succession or institutional primacy in council meetings, but the general membership and some leadership, not privy to those councils, was disoriented. Many, including Wight, believed in patrilineal succession, under which the child Joseph Smith III would assume leadership when able. Initially, many Mormons debated what religious institutions would direct the Church until the son was able. Who would be regent? Would it be the Quorum of the Twelve, whose history to that point had included little administration of the Church? Would it be the now nonexistent Council of Fifty, which included Wight, and which he felt should lead? Would it be Sidney Rigdon as the lone survivor of the First Presidency? Others also added to the confusion: there was the sole surviving black sheep brother, William Smith, and other charismatic pretenders like James Strang.

In summary, I found this book to be especially interesting and worth reading, and I strongly recommend it. It is short and readable and an excellent history of the succession crisis that followed the Prophet’s murder in 1844 and of the important Mormon role in settling frontier Texas. It may not be for casual students of Mormon history in that some basic knowledge is required, but serious students of the Latter-day Saint experience will find it fascinating.

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1. For a full account of the Danites and the propagated legends surrounding them, see David J. Whittaker, “Danites,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:356–57.

2. Richard Bennett covers this at length in his book *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: “And Should We Die—”* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987). For example, he shows that over 76 percent of the membership in Nauvoo in 1846 made it west.

Ron Williams, director. *Happy Valley*.

Orem, Utah: Forever Green Pictures, 2007

Reviewed by James Willmore and Jenny Willmore

Producer and director Ron Williams began his film as an attempt to follow his ex-wife, Nancy, as she entered drug rehab. While filming, Nancy's daughter, MaCall Peterson, was involved in the accidental overdose and death of her friend Amelia Sorich and the subsequent attempt to hide the body. From this development, the filmmaker realized the scope of the movie had changed considerably. He began to wonder if there was a relationship between Utah County residents' reputation for overly blissful happiness and the struggles that addicts in Utah face. Thus was born the documentary *Happy Valley*, a title meant as a play on the nickname for Utah Valley. Although much of the movie does not take place in Utah Valley, the title and publicity poster conjure up caricatures of the stereotypical Utah County resident—determinedly and obviously happy.

This is not a drug addiction story like those we see in VHI's *Behind the Music*, where overindulged rock stars are torn apart by excessive partying. The strength of *Happy Valley* is in hearing a beautiful young girl with a Utah accent say, "All I remember is teaching her how to shoot up." These stories are compelling because the people in them are so familiar. We see those who are suffering from the consequences of drug abuse as brothers and sisters and not as statistics with accompanying mug shots or obituary photos.

Of the two of us reviewing the film, this reality came as no surprise to James, who has worked as a pharmacist for twelve years. He has seen many respectable men and women humbled by addiction to legal and illegal drugs. He and others in the medical field recognize the common faces of drug addiction: the friend next door, a member of the ward, a grandfather with silver hair and a winning smile, the popular athlete in high school.

Such individuals in *Happy Valley* let us into their lives and provide likeable smiles for us to put onto the face of drug abuse in Utah.

The movie begins with Danny Allen—a Utah TV personality with a fifteen-year drug problem. Danny expresses his deep love for the LDS Church and his determination to face his addiction, all while on his way to buy drugs from his dealer. At the end of the film, he is seen throwing up next to his truck on the first morning of rehab. The charming and funny Danny, at this point shaking and visibly ill, pleads, “If you can *just not start*.”

The death of Amelia Sorich is told by her parents and also by her friends MaCall Peterson and Jasen Calacino, who are both serving time in prison for their involvement. We learn that MaCall introduced drugs to Amelia after learning how to shoot up from her mom, Nancy. She felt it was the only way to bond with a mother who was around so seldom that her older sister often missed elementary school to take care of her. We listen to Amelia’s parents tell about the pain of having to identify their daughter’s body from a horrible photograph, even though the picture had been retouched in an attempt to not frighten them.

We also meet the family of Colton Berger, a popular student whose entire high school attended his funeral after his drug-related death. As his father says, “Everyone who uses drugs isn’t just hanging out in a dark corner with just a few people. It could be anybody.” Other compelling stories include that of Blake Ballingham, who overdosed and almost died while his older brother was serving as a missionary for the Church.

The movie suggests we have work to do in educating each other about drug abuse. When the Soriches are asked if Amelia had ever done drugs before the night she overdosed, they reply, “Hard drugs? No. She just did marijuana and ecstasy.” Detective Lambert tells of being undercover at a prescription drug party where he knew that a significant number of LDS kids there would be blessing the sacrament and attending church the next day. When the young people were asked why that did not bother them, their response was, “It’s not against the Word of Wisdom—it’s just a pill and some water.”

But, as documentary producer Sheila Curran Bernard says, making a documentary is not just about good storytelling but about good journalism as well.¹ This is where *Happy Valley* falters. The statistics on prescription drug use, suicides, and Jell-O consumption, instead of adding to the narrative, seriously detract. Some of the statistics, like the one stating that “40 percent of Utahns have used prescription drugs for nonmedical use in their lifetime,” do not match with James’s medical experience, and there is no way to check the numbers or look into the studies, because there is no reference—just a line that says *The Daily Herald*. The film does not even

attempt to tie in a statistic about antidepressant use when claiming that “Utah prescribes nearly twice as many antidepressants [as] the national average.” Once again, there is no way to check it, because the line merely reads *L.A. Times*.

Most information presented is on the high rate of prescription drug abuse in Utah, but of the eight addicts whose stories were told in this film, only three used prescription drugs. Did the others start there? The film does not say, and so we were left confused. Another problem is that the film seems to swing back and forth between insisting that the drug abuse we see is typical, and that the drug abuse we see is unique to Utah. We do not necessarily have a problem with either point of view, but the film would have been more powerful if the filmmakers had picked one or the other.

We were also very distracted by the segment on addiction to sugar, and the statement that sugar is the ultimate gateway drug. This claim makes more sense when you know that Williams owns a company that sells natural “farmaceuticals,”² but the subject of sugar addiction really should have been made into its own movie if he wanted to make that point. Instead, the placement of such a segment in a movie about drugs suggests that sugar is just as dangerous as heroin and OxyContin abuse, but without statistical or even anecdotal evidence. Here *Happy Valley* begins to cross the line into what Daniel B. Wood of the *Christian Science Monitor* calls “docu-ganda.”³

Perhaps what we need most, however, is not so much stellar documentation as a catalyst for debate and even a call to repentance. The film can be useful in opening the eyes of many in a community that may believe LDS values make us drug-abuse-proof. After getting to know and love the individuals and families in this movie, we cannot deny the potential for our loved ones becoming involved in drug abuse. James, knowing what he does about the way drugs work with the chemistry of the brain and body, understands that drugs are no respecter of persons, and he is glad that this film points out that anyone is susceptible.

The film asks us to evaluate whether or not we truly understand and believe in the power of change and redemption. This question reminds us of something Sheri Dew wrote: “I fear that some of us understand just enough about the gospel to feel guilty . . . but not enough about the Atonement to feel the peace and strength, the power and mercy, it affords us.”⁴ Perhaps we know enough about our faith to feel guilty about drug abuse problems, but we need to work on our belief that guilt and other spiritual consequences of drug abuse can be faced and overcome through the power of the Atonement. Hugh Nibley said that “the Book of Mormon tells us that the essence of repentance is knowing exactly what we are.”⁵

The participants in this film show that we are a people capable of drug abuse. We are a people capable of being judgmental, hurt, and angry. We are also capable of unbelievable patience and forgiveness. We are a community capable of addressing our drug abuse problem.

In the final minutes of the film, a lonely teenage girl serving a prison sentence holds up a handwritten sign: "I am still somebody." And a grieving mother is a witness for forgiveness and redemption by letting that girl know that she agrees. Some of us *do* live in *Happy Valley*—a valley that is not only joyful, but one that is also wise.

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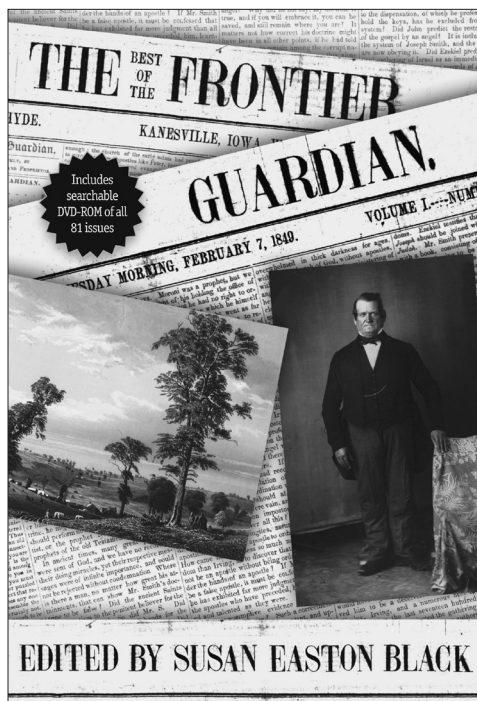
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The *Frontier Guardian* was published in Kanesville, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, from 1849 to 1851. The newspaper was started by Orson Hyde, who used it to maintain contact among the Latter-day Saints and to help keep them focused on their ultimate destination in the West.

This book, *The Best of the Frontier Guardian*, contains an introduction and overview of the newspaper, sample articles from the *Guardian*, and a searchable DVD-ROM of all 81 issues.

"The *Frontier Guardian* connected the Latter-day Saints in Kanesville and recorded their experiences. Including people of all faiths, the newspaper highlights miners, politicians, business owners, and newspaper subscribers, alongside Mormon emigrants, missionaries, and dissidents. Even newlyweds and the deceased emerge from the *Guardian*'s columns in Black's annotations, the sum total bringing rich human texture to this period of constant movement."

—Jill Mulvay Derr, co-editor of *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*