

The Historians Corner

Edited by James B. Allen

Two interesting essays are included in this issue of The Historians Corner. The first is by Steven G. Barnett, an inveterate collector of little-known facts and documents in Mormon history. His discussion of "The Canes of the Martyrdom" clearly demonstrates the love and reverence Joseph Smith's closest associates held for him. But it also provides some significant insight into the nature of some Mormon believers whose devotion to the relics associated with their martyred prophet bordered on veneration.

Our second essay is provided by Florian H. Thayn, head of the Art and Reference Division in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Thayn had a great deal to do with the historical research involved in the restoration of some of the rooms in the U.S. Capitol building. As a member of the Church, she has also taken an active interest in Mormon historic sites or memorabilia in Washington. Her essay should provide some ideas for Mormon history buffs and tourists who visit the nation's capital, in addition to its basic intrinsic interest.

THE CANES OF THE MARTYRDOM

Steven G. Barnett

Shortly after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1844, unusual mementos in his memory—wooden canes—were fashioned from the oak planks of the rough-hewn coffin in which the body was returned to Nauvoo. The history of these mementos—the Canes of the Martyrdom—is elusive, but some conclusions may be drawn from what little solid information can be found.

Steven G. Barnett is a collector of original historical documents.