

The Historians Corner

EDITED BY JAMES B. ALLEN

In this issue of the Historians Corner we publish two interesting documents relating to early Mormon history, plus a historical note concerning a statement ascribed to Joseph Smith but for which the evidence is missing. The first document, an excerpt from the journal of Solomon Chamberlain, gives valuable insight into the early missionary work performed, even before the Church was organized. The second presents a non-Mormon view of the movement of Mormonism into Ohio. It is valuable not only for the insight it gives into the relationship of Sidney Rigdon to the settlers in Ohio in 1830, but also for showing how non-Mormons felt and what they believed with regard to the new religious group that so rapidly moved in. Whether all that Josiah Jones reported is true or not does not matter as much as the fact that non-Mormons believed such things, and all this is a part of the substance of Mormon history. Finally, Robert Matthews raises the knotty question as to the origin of the traditional statement by Joseph Smith that the Book of Mormon migrants under the leadership of Lehi landed at a certain point in Chile. Half the fun of history is in knowing that many questions, like this one, still remain unresolved, and in looking forward to the satisfaction that will come when the final documentary evidence is discovered.

A NON-MORMON VIEW OF THE BIRTH OF MORMONISM IN OHIO

MILTON V. BACKMAN, JR.

Josiah Jones, a resident of Kirtland at the time of the introduction of Mormonism in Ohio, wrote in 1831 one of the earliest accounts of the rise of the Restored Church in the