

“In Honorable Remembrance”: Thomas L. Kane’s Services to the Mormons

Leonard J. Arrington

In May 1846 Elder Jesse C. Little was traveling in the Eastern States in behalf of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Their founding prophet, Joseph Smith, and his brother Hyrum, having been assassinated in Carthage, Illinois, in June 1844, and there having been determined and repeated attempts on the part of Mormon-hating mobs to drive them from their homes in western Illinois, the body of the Church had finally determined during the winter of 1845–1846 to leave Illinois and migrate to the Far West. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of the Church, sixteen thousand members of the Church living in the Midwest would travel overland, beginning in the spring of 1846; the several hundred members of the Church living along the Atlantic would travel by sea around Cape Horn and on to Yerba Buena, the contemporary name for San Francisco, under the leadership of Samuel Brannan. Elder Little was appointed to replace Elder Brannan as leader of the Church in the Eastern States and was directed to make contact with government officials in Washington, D.C., to determine whether they would be willing to offer any assistance to those traveling by land or by sea. On 13 May 1846, Elder Little addressed a special conference of the Church in Philadelphia.

In attendance at the Philadelphia conference was a young adult nonmember, Thomas L. Kane. Son of John Kintzing Kane, a prominent federal judge, young Kane had gone to school in Philadelphia, and in his seventeenth year had gone to the British Isles and France to visit relatives and to study. Among those he studied with was Auguste Comte, the founder of modern sociology, who doubtless

Leonard J. Arrington is director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History and is the Lemuel H. Redd Professor of Western History at Brigham Young University. A version of this paper was reproduced in 1980 as a Task Paper for the History Division of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

influenced the strong social conscience in the young idealist. Upon his return to Philadelphia, Thomas served as a law clerk to his father and was admitted to the bar. At the same time, he read in eastern papers accounts of the persecution of the Mormons, of their having been driven from their beautiful city of Nauvoo, Illinois, in February 1846, and of their heroic migration across Iowa in the weeks that followed. Kane's curiosity was piqued and his humanitarian impulses stirred. When he read of Elder Little's presence in Philadelphia, and of his plan to address the conference, Thomas decided to attend. He was twenty-four years old at that time.

After the morning session of conference, Thomas Kane introduced himself to Elder Little and invited him home. The conversation there lasted several hours. In response to young Kane's earnest questions, Elder Little told not only of the Mormon religion but also of the exodus from Nauvoo, of the voyage of the ship *Brooklyn* to California, and of his own instructions to enlist the possible assistance of the federal government in the move to the West. Indeed, the conversation continued so long that Elder Little failed to get to that Wednesday evening's session of the conference where he had been scheduled to speak.

Two days later the eager young lawyer appeared at Elder Little's hotel room and asked for a letter of introduction to Brigham Young. He had decided to go to California with the Mormons, and he wished to use his good offices to help out the Saints in their plight. There followed a series of meetings between Kane and Elder Little, who was seven years Kane's senior. Thomas Kane gave Elder Little an introduction to the vice-president of the United States, George M. Dallas.

Elder Little saw the vice-president and other leading federal officials during the days that followed. Early in June he wrote Kane, who had never been robust (he was 5' 6" and weighed a frail 130 pounds), to "get up from his couch, and his pains should leave him." Against the advice of his personal physician and family, Thomas Kane went immediately to Washington, arriving there on 7 June and reporting that he felt better than he had for days. The two men called upon a number of government officials during the next five days and had more than one conference with the president of the United States, James K. Polk. As the result of their negotiations, the government agreed to enlist a battalion of five hundred able-bodied young Mormons to participate in the campaign to wrest the West from Mexico. As a part of the Army of the West, they would travel overland from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to San Diego,

California. This they reasoned would help the Mormons not only by providing government transportation for these men, and a number of Mormon women who were to go along as laundresses and cooks, but also would provide pay in gold which might be used to help purchase provisions and equipment for others who would follow.

The favorable agreement negotiated, Thomas Kane and Elder Little went to St. Louis, and Kane then went on to Leavenworth to deliver secret dispatches from the president and the secretary of war to army officials there. Captain James Allen went immediately to the Mormon camps in Iowa to begin the recruiting, and Thomas Kane joined the Mormons on 11 July at their temporary headquarters on the bluffs on the Iowa side of the Missouri, which, out of respect for Mr. Kane, they later named Kanesville.

Shortly after his arrival, Kane was taken ill. Although he was in real danger of dying from pulmonary tuberculosis, he was nevertheless aware of all that was going on about him. He was forever grateful for the tender nursing and for the solicitude of those who took care of him. He remembered and later described the farewell ball honoring those who had joined the Battalion, the women with pierced ears who had donated their gold earrings to the common purse, and the men with "useless watch pockets," who had sold their watches to buy wagons and supplies. There were hardship, hunger, and death among the Latter-day Saints, but, to Kane's amazement and pleasure, there was also a spirit of hope and good humor. As an example of the latter, it appears that one of the Saints developed an excruciating toothache, and yet there was no one around who could help him. Finally, as written in his diary, he resorted to desperate measures:

I anointed the tooth, laid hands on myself, and uttered a prayer, but there was no relief. I then recollected that James said that faith without works is dead. So I took out my pliers and with a strong effort managed to pull out the tooth. Sure enough, children, it has never ached since.¹

During his long convalescence, Thomas Kane often strolled through the woods, conversed with the Mormon people, and observed their preparations for the western trek and their manner of life. He was often accompanied on these rambles by Henry G. Boyle, a member of the Battalion. During one of these rambles, wrote Boyle, he and Kane heard one of the Latter-day Saint men

¹From the diary of Charles H. Hart, Library-Archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church Office Building, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

praying in secret in the skirt of the woods in the rear of one of our camps. Although we were not near enough to distinguish words or sentences, it seemed to affect [Kane] deeply, and as we walked away he observed that our people were a praying people, and that was evidence enough to him that we were sincere and honest in our faith.

Not long after this, when taking another walk, following a narrow path through a thicket of undergrowth, we came suddenly within a few feet of a man who had just commenced to pray. As we wore on our feet Indian mocassins, we made no perceptible noise, and the man evidently thought himself alone and praying in secret. At the time, I was in the path just in the rear of the Colonel, who, on hearing the beginning of the man's supplication, halted, and, in doing so, turned half around, with his face in the bright light of the full moon, and in such a position that every feature was plain to my view.

I never listened to such a prayer, so contrite, so earnest and fervent, and so full of inspiration. We had involuntarily taken off our hats as though we were in a sacred presence. I never can forget my feelings on that occasion. Neither can I describe them, and yet the Colonel was more deeply affected than I was. As he stood there I could see the tears falling fast from his face, while his bosom swelled with the fullness of his emotions. And for some time after the man had arisen from his knees and walked away towards his encampment, the Colonel sobbed like a child and could not trust himself to utter a word. When, finally, he did get control of his feelings, his first words were, "I am satisfied; your people are solemnly and terribly in earnest."²

Thomas Kane's own recollection of these experiences is equally vivid:

I believe there is a crisis in the life of every man, when he is called upon to decide seriously and permanently if he will die unto sin and live unto righteousness. . . . Such an event, I believe . . . , was my visit to [the Mormon camps on the Missouri]. . . . It was the spectacle of your noble self denial and suffering for conscience sake, [that] first made a truly serious and abiding impression upon my mind, commanding me to note that there was something higher and better than the pursuit of the interests of earthly life for the spirit made after the image of Deity. . . .

I had great temptations to a political career. . . . When I left Washington in May 1846 President Polk gave me *carte blanche* as to what I should ask for you on my return. The mixed meanness and malice of others of his adherents caused him to prove faithless to his promises, and, instead of redeeming these, he endeavored to persuade me to go abroad upon other public service. But now, I have lost almost entirely the natural love for intrigue and management that once were a prominent trait of my character.³

²H. G. Boyle, "A True Friend," *Juvenile Instructor* 17 (1 March 1882): 74.

³Thomas L. Kane to "My dear friends, all of you [Brigham Young and associates]," 11 July 1850, Church Archives.

At the time he wrote the preceding statement, Kane declared he had specified in his will that he wished his heart to be deposited in the great temple in Salt Lake City “that, after death, it may repose, where in metaphor at least it often was when living.” (This extraordinary action was, of course, never taken.)

It was partly as a result of his illness and of his spiritual experiences that, although not a member of the Church, Thomas Kane requested the Church’s patriarch, John Smith, uncle of the slain prophet Joseph Smith, to give him a special blessing. This blessing, given 7 September 1846 at Cutler’s Park, Omaha Nation, is included with others in a sacred book in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City:

Inasmuch as you have had in your heart to promote the interest of the Children of God, the Lord is well pleased with your exertions. He has given His angels charge over you to guard you in times of danger, to help you in time of trouble, and to defend you from your enemies. Not a hair of your head will fall by the hand of an enemy. For you are called to do a great work on the earth and you shall be blessed in all your undertakings. Your name shall be had in honorable remembrance among the Saints to all generations. You shall have a comforter to comfort your heart, and to sustain you in all your trials. You shall raise up sons and daughters that shall be esteemed as the excellent of the earth.⁴

As a result of these experiences and blessings, Thomas Kane later wrote, he committed himself to being a friend of the Latter-day Saints—their “second in an affair of honor,” as he expressed it—identified forever after as one who stood “in the vindication and defense” of the Latter-day Saints. I learned to “feel our brotherhood,” he later wrote. Those experiences “taught me,” he said, “to know from the heart, that I love you, and that you love me in turn.” It fit me, he wrote, “for the inheritance of my higher humanity, to become truly pure and truly strong—to do the work of God persevering unto the end.”⁵ That was the experience which leads Latter-day Saints to express love and admiration for General Kane to this day.

A recitation of all of General Kane’s services on behalf of the Latter-day Saints would require a long book to detail. Much of this has already been done by the late Albert L. Zobell in his book, *Sentinel in the East: A Biography of Thomas L. Kane*, published in 1965. Let me select some of those contributions and associations with the Saints which deserve special mention.

While in the Mormon camps during the summer of 1846, Thomas Kane helped to secure consent of the Potawatomi Indians

⁴John Smith’s Patriarchal Blessings, 1846–1849, p. 211, Church Archives.

⁵Thomas L. Kane to “My dear friends,” 11 July 1850, Church Archives.

for the Mormons to occupy part of their lands. On his return to Philadelphia, he stopped in Nauvoo to witness with his own eyes the sad situation created by the actions of the anti-Mormons of that region. When he reached the East, he went to Washington to inform the president firsthand of what he had seen. He then traveled about the metropolitan areas of the East in an effort to correct the misconceptions that existed about the Mormons and their religion. In the years that followed he often wrote letters to the president of the United States about "the Mormon situation," made personal visits to cabinet members and members of Congress, wrote letters to editors of leading newspapers, and wrote regularly to Mormon leaders in the Great Basin giving them advice and encouragement. It was he who suggested the formation of the State of Deseret and sought congressional approval for its recognition. As part of the campaign to secure the latter, he was granted the opportunity of addressing the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on the Mormons. While preparing this address, he was afflicted with a severe case of gout as well as pulmonary hemorrhages and was in constant and excruciating pain. Only sincere devotion to the people of whom he was to speak drove him to endure the pain so the address might be prepared and given. With his approval and encouragement this lofty address, written and spoken with intense conviction, was published as an eighty-four page pamphlet, which was sent to the chief executive, cabinet members, senators, congressmen, editors, and other prominent men in Washington and other eastern cities.

Even though the State of Deseret for which he lobbied was not approved, and a territorial government instituted instead, the Mormons were immensely grateful to Thomas Kane for his help. They sent him some of the gold which the Mormon Battalion members brought back from California (one of them, with James Marshall, had been involved in the discovery of gold on Sutter's Creek), and they also sent him a specially made wolfskin sleigh robe. Kane had the gold made into seal rings for Horace Greeley and other persons who had assisted in the vindication of the Mormons, and one each for the leaders of Deseret: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards. The sleigh robe was given to his brother Elisha Kane, who was just leaving for his mission of mercy to search for Sir John Franklin, imprisoned in the Arctic ice. The robe, wrote Kane to Brigham Young, "may be only the more honored by being the first missionary of Mormonism to the North Pole."⁶

⁶Thomas L. Kane to "My friends [Brigham Young and associates]," 24 September 1850, Church Archives.

Later, of course, the Mormons offered to elect Colonel Kane as their delegate to Congress, but he declined, saying he could do more for the people as an independent than as one of their agents.

All this is not to imply that Thomas Kane's interests were restricted only to the Latter-day Saints. For years he also lobbied in the interests of American Indians. Similarly, he embraced the cause of Abolitionism, and he became an active agent in the underground railroad. He managed the Philadelphia House of Refuge, actively sought to improve conditions in the Pennsylvania penitentiary, and established and maintained at his own expense an infant school modeled on the experimental kindergartens of France, Switzerland, and Italy. He traveled on three occasions to the West Indies to study British efforts at slave emancipation. In 1853, he married Elizabeth Dennistoun Wood, his second cousin, who later became a doctor of medicine, graduating from the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia, of which Kane was one of the founders.⁷

Probably the most monumental and spectacular service of Colonel Kane to the Mormon people occurred during what is usually referred to as the Utah War, or perhaps more accurately as Buchanan's Blunder. President James Buchanan had received reports from three appointed federal officials who had served in Utah that the Mormons were in a state of substantial rebellion, that federal court records had been destroyed, that mail service was openly interfered with, and that government officials were fearful of their lives. Without the consent of Congress, which was not in session, without any investigation, and possibly with the hope of making some political capital out of the situation, President Buchanan ordered the bulk of the United States Army to Utah to install newly appointed territorial officials in Utah, by force if necessary. He did this without conveying any official word to Brigham Young, who was the governor, or to other officials and residents of Utah Territory. The Utah Expedition, consisting of about twenty-five hundred troops and about as many drivers, suppliers, and other hangers-on, got underway from Fort Leavenworth in the summer of 1857. A number of Mormons headed for Salt Lake Valley saw this movement of troops, infiltrated their companies, and learned that they were headed for Utah "to scalp old Brigham," "massacre Mormon leaders," and "drive the hated Mormons from their homes." Four of these Mormon observers drove their horses as

⁷It was to this college that many Mormon women were sent in the 1870s and 1880s to obtain medical training which they then imparted in Salt Lake City and trained most of the early women doctors in the Great Basin. The current member of the Mormon Church Presidency, N. Eldon Tanner, was delivered by one of these early-trained doctors, Ellis Shipp, and Ellis Shipp trained Anna Maria Swenson, a midwife, who delivered me—Leonard J. Arrington—on an isolated farmstead in southcentral Idaho in 1917.

rapidly as they dared and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley the afternoon of 24 July 1857. The bulk of the settlers, including Brigham Young, were in Big Cottonwood Canyon southeast of Salt Lake City celebrating the tenth anniversary of their entrance into the Salt Lake Valley.

Having no official notice of the advance of the expedition, and listening to the reports of the Mormon infiltrators about the army's intentions, Brigham Young and his associates could only regard the troops as a repetition of Missouri and Illinois—a federal militia on its way to exterminate the Mormons. The Saints hurriedly armed, dispatched an army to eastern Utah to intercept the troops, and prepared for the worst. Mormon raiders slowed the movement of the troops by burning their supplies and capturing their cattle and horses. So effective were these efforts that Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, who commanded the troops, ordered them to “hole up” at Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. There they spent the winter of 1857–1858.

Meanwhile, Colonel Kane, learning of the dispatch of the expedition and realizing the danger to the Saints in this precipitous action of President Buchanan, took immediate steps to intercede on their behalf. He contacted newspaper friends and political acquaintances and delivered to President Buchanan a letter recounting the treatment given the Mormons at the hands of the government from the Missouri period to the calling of the expedition. Finally, he determined he would offer to serve as a mediator. His willingness to do the latter demonstrates his personal courage and also his understanding that only the conciliation of a person respected by both sides could avoid bloodshed. We should not overlook the heroism of this volunteer action. He had married within the past five years, he was rearing a family, he had recently lost his elder brother, Elisha. His father was strongly opposed to any course that would take him to Utah. The father felt the perils were too great: Thomas's health was poor, and it was likely that he would not survive the trip.

At any rate, in December 1857 Thomas Kane expressed to President Buchanan his desire to mediate the dispute, and the president congratulated him on his willingness to abandon the comforts of friends, family, and home, and go to Utah at his own expense without official position during the inclement season of the year. “Your only reward,” wrote the president, “must be a consciousness that you are doing your duty.” In a letter written later in the day, the president added that Colonel Kane had the president's confidence and was “recommended to the favorable regard of all the officers of

the United States whom he would meet as he traveled.”⁸ Leaving on a steamer from New York in January, Kane was accompanied by a black servant named Osborne, and he conveniently appropriated that name, traveling as Dr. A. Osborne, a botanist connected with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. They debarked at Panama, crossed the Isthmus, and sailed up the California coast, from where they hurried on to the Mormon community of San Bernardino. They were assisted there by two Mormon families, who arranged transportation for them to Utah and provided them with provisions and equipment.

Colonel Kane, alias Dr. Osborne, arrived in Salt Lake City on 25 February and immediately held a series of conferences with Mormon leaders. Brigham Young’s journal describes the result as follows:

Colonel Kane . . . tried to point out a policy for me to pursue. But I told him I should not turn to the right or to the left, or pursue any course except as God dictated. . . . When he found that I would be informed only as the Spirit of the Lord led me, he was at first discouraged. Then he said, I could dictate he would execute. I told him that as he had been inspired to come here, he should go to the Army and do as the Spirit of the Lord led him, and all should be right. He did so and all was right.⁹

When talk turned to the Colonel’s health, President Young said:

The Lord has sent you here, friend Thomas, and He will not let you die. No, you cannot die until your work is done. Your name will live with the Saints in all eternity. You have done a great work, and you will do a greater work still.¹⁰

About ten days after his arrival in Salt Lake City, the Colonel started for the army camps in Wyoming, accompanied by an escort of Mormons. As he neared the camps, he dismissed the escort and rode on alone. He arrived there exhausted, and the soldiers had to take him from his horse. But he insisted on transacting his business with the newly appointed governor, Alfred Cumming. He was able to persuade Governor Cumming that the Mormons would recognize Cumming as governor, that the court records were not burned, that the Mormons were not in a state of rebellion against the government, and that the army should not be allowed to remain in Salt Lake Valley. (Kane had heard enough soldier boasts to know what they

⁸These letters are published in Albert L. Zobell, Jr., *Sentinel in the East: A Biography of Thomas L. Kane* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., 1965), pp. 104–106.

⁹Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 120.

would do if they were allowed to mingle in Mormon society.) The negotiation with the army leaders was not so pleasant. One of Colonel Johnston's officers shot at Kane, narrowly missing him. Colonel Johnston dispatched an orderly to invite Kane to dinner, but the orderly, perhaps purposely, placed Kane under arrest. With Cumming's approval, Kane then sent a challenge for a duel to Johnston. The affair blew over quickly when Kane was informed that Colonel Johnston had not ordered the arrest.

Thomas Kane and Governor Cumming left Camp Scott, the army camp, for the Salt Lake Valley in April and there met Brigham Young. The new governor verified that President Buchanan's charges were untrue and that he would be acknowledged as governor. When Kane had what he called his "final and decisive" interview with Alfred Cumming, on 24 April, he wrote in his diary: "I am and know myself to be happy."¹¹ Kane then left the Salt Lake Valley, accompanied Governor Cumming as far as Camp Scott, and then continued east. He reported to President Buchanan, who then arranged to have the Mormons "pardoned" and to have the army located no closer than forty miles from Salt Lake City. Thomas Kane had accomplished his mission and not a person was killed in what is called the Utah War. It was a magnificent triumph; at great personal sacrifice Colonel Kane had accomplished everything he had hoped. In his next annual message to Congress, President Buchanan paid special tribute to Kane:

I cannot refrain from mentioning . . . the valuable services of Colonel Thomas L. Kane, who from motives of pure benevolence, and without any official character or pecuniary compensation, visited Utah during the last inclement winter for the purpose of contributing to the pacification of the territory.¹²

The Mormon tribute written by Wilford Woodruff was even more glowing:

[You were] an instrument in the hands of God, and you were inspired by Him to turn away . . . the edge of the sword, and save the effusion of much blood, and performing what the combined wisdom of the nation could not accomplish, changing the whole face of affairs, the effects of which will remain forever.¹³

¹¹Diary of Thomas L. Kane, in possession of E. Kent Kane, near Kane, Pennsylvania. Also Oscar O. Winther, ed., *The Private Papers and Diary of Thomas Leiper Kane: A Friend of the Mormons* (San Francisco: Gelber-Lilienthal, 1937), p. ix.

¹²Zobell, *Sentinel in the East*, p. 172.

¹³Wilford Woodruff to Thomas L. Kane, Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1859, p. 214, Church Archives.

But all the feelings of satisfaction were as nothing. For shortly after this diplomatic triumph, while still in Utah, Kane received the news that his father had died during his absence. The news almost broke his heart.

The years that followed saw Colonel Kane's involvement in the Civil War. It is said, in fact, that Colonel Kane was the first man to offer his services to the governor of Pennsylvania. From the wooded hills of the northcentral part of the state he raised up a regiment of loggers, hunters, raftsmen, and farmers who were known as the "Bucktails," because each wore a bucktail in his hat. This group elected Kane as their colonel and went on to achieve distinction. As the group headed for Richmond, Kane was wounded at Dranesville, captured at Harrisonburg, Virginia, but was freed in a prisoner exchange which made it possible for him to get back into action. He distinguished himself again at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Ill-health forced him to resign from the service in November 1863. For his meritorious service at Gettysburg, he was brevetted major general. He had proved to be a gallant soldier and fearless leader.

The war having depleted his personal fortune, as well as his health, the now General Kane turned to his one remaining opportunity, the undeveloped land owned by his family in McKean County. He took his family there to begin life anew. He built a log cabin, a sawmill, a barn, and a number of cabins for his workmen. He opened roads, built railroads, and in a few years once more became financially independent. He lived like a squire in the midst of his lands and holdings. A succession of Mormon missionaries and envoys visited him with regularity and were regarded as "family." Upon the urging of Brigham Young, he took Elizabeth and his two smallest children, Evan and Thomas L., Jr., and a black cook to Utah to spend the winter of 1872-1873. His wife's father later published Elizabeth's letters in a book, which was recently reprinted, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona* (1874). It contains fine descriptions of Mormon social customs and gives insights into Mormon-Indian relationships. Elizabeth pictures Brigham Young, whom both she and her husband admired, as a leader who gained his power from a deep interest and concern for the welfare of his people. Both Elizabeth and Thomas received patriarchal blessings in St. George during this trip.

During that trip General Kane intended to keep notes of his conversations with Brigham Young and hoped to do a biography of him, but this was never accomplished. General Kane did prepare a will for President Young, assisted him in separating his own assets from

those of the Church, and prepared documents which helped him in founding the Brigham Young College in Logan, the Brigham Young Academy in Provo, and the Young University in Salt Lake City, which later was absorbed into the University of Utah. When President Young died in 1877, General Kane characteristically dropped everything and hurried from Philadelphia to Salt Lake City to express his sorrow and to assure that the Mormon cause would continue to prosper despite the death of their leader for whom he had so much affection and respect. At that time the General commented to one of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

When the word came to me of President Young's demise, I was somewhat concerned . . . as to the position in which matters [in the Church] would be placed . . . ; but when I met with the brethren, conversed with President John Taylor, looked over the men who stood around him as leaders, I said to myself, the Lord has made ample provision for the preservation of that cause which lies near to my heart.¹⁴

As his development project in northwestern Pennsylvania progressed, Kane built a chapel, in 1878, on behalf of his aunt, Ann Gray Thomas, of Philadelphia, who wanted the new town of Kane to have a chapel. As all can observe, it was and is a magnificent chapel. General Kane also engaged in other philanthropies. He was the first president of the Pennsylvania Board of State Charities, a member of the American Philosophical Society, and organizer of the New York, Lake Erie, and Western Coal Railroad Company, serving as its president. He also ordered, directed, and financed the building of what was described for many decades as the largest railroad bridge in the world, the 2,053-foot Kinzua viaduct that spans the 301-foot deep Kinzua Creek Valley near Kane. He was the author of two books in addition to his discourse on the Mormons: *Alaska*, published in 1868, and *Coahuila* (a province in Mexico), published in 1877.

On 26 December 1883, General Kane, at sixty-one years of age, died of pneumonia at his home in Philadelphia. Even in his last moments his thoughts were of a people and a faith that he loved and respected. A letter from Elizabeth to George Q. Cannon described his last moments:

Your friend suffered intensely until a few hours of his release, his mind was wandering from the outset of the attack. Yet in the intervals of consciousness he was fully persuaded of the approach of death, and made efforts to give us counsel and bid us farewell. In one of these lucid moments he said: "My mind is too heavy, but do send the

¹⁴Statement of John Henry Smith, cited in Zobell, *Sentinel in the East*, p. 219.

sweetest message you can make up to my Mormon friends—to all, my dear Mormon friends.’’ Nothing I could make up could be sweeter to you than this evidence that you were in his last thoughts.¹⁵

General Kane often expressed to his family and friends that he wished to be buried between the twin stone entrances of his lovely chapel, and this was done. The chapel was later acquired by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has used it, not only for worship services for members in this region but also as a memorial to its special friend. His Latter-day Saint friends also named a city and county in Utah for Thomas L. Kane and in 1959 erected a heroic statue of him, which is placed in the rotunda of the Utah State Capitol. In this and other ways the Church has perpetuated Brigham Young’s promise and prophecy that Thomas L. Kane would always be held “in honorable remembrance” among the Latter-day Saints.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The principal primary sources of information on Thomas L. Kane are the Thomas L. Kane Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, which include many letters from Thomas L. Kane to Brigham Young and other LDS church officials, as well as copies of letters which they sent to Colonel Kane. All of these were transcribed by Edyth Romney and bound in a volume which is in the Office of the LDS Church Historian. Another primary source is the Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. A large collection of manuscripts—diaries, letters, and other documents—formerly in the vault of E. Kent Kane, near Kane, Pennsylvania, are now at the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Photostats of many of the documents were given by Mr. Kane to the Church Archives in 1936 and are available there. Kane’s own book, available in many libraries, is Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: An Historical Discourse* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1850). In using the documents in this paper, prepared for oral delivery, I have taken some liberties with original punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and wording, so as to make the narrative smoother and more meaningful.

The most complete study of Thomas L. Kane is Albert L. Zobell, Jr., *Sentinel in the East: A Biography of Thomas L. Kane* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., 1965). A fine summary article by Zobell is “Thomas L. Kane, Ambassador to the Mormons,” *Utah Humanities Review* 1 (October 1947): 320–46. See also John H. Frederick, “Kane, Thomas Leiper,” in *Dictionary of American Biography*, p. 258. A good introduction to Kane is in Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona*, ed. Everett L. Cooley (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund of the University of Utah, 1974). Some primary documents related to Kane are published in Oscar O. Winther, ed., *The Private Papers and Diary of Thomas Leiper Kane: A Friend of the Mormons* (San Francisco:

¹⁵Elizabeth Wood Kane to George Q. Cannon, 30 December 1883, Church Archives.

Gelber-Lilienthal, 1937); and Donald Q. Cannon, "Thomas L. Kane Meets the Mormons," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Fall 1977): 126-28.

The following reminiscences of Thomas L. Kane have been published: George Q. Cannon, "Editorial Thoughts [on the death of General Kane]," *The Juvenile Instructor* 19 (15 January 1884): 24-25; H. G. Boyle, "A True Friend," *Juvenile Instructor* 17 (1 March 1882): 74-75; Augusta Joyce Crocheron, "Reminiscence of General Kane," *The Contributor* 6 (September 1885): 475-77; Junius F. Wells, ed., "General Thomas L. Kane," *The Contributor* 5 (March 1884): 234-39; and [John Q. Cannon], "The Spouting Well at Kane," *The Contributor* 2 (February 1881): 151-53.

Secondary treatments include Wendell J. Ashton, *Theirs Is the Kingdom* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970), pp. 167-205; Norman R. Bowen and Albert L. Zobell, Jr., "General Thomas L. Kane: The Soldier," *The Ensign* 1 (June 1971): 23-27; Norman R. Bowen and Albert L. Zobell, Jr., "General Thomas L. Kane: The Pioneer," *The Ensign* 1 (October 1971): 2-5; and Charles Peterson, "Kingdom Revisited: Thomas L. Kane and Mormon Plans for a Southern Commonwealth, 1869-1877," paper prepared for delivery to Western History Association, 1976.