

June 1845 and is dated several times in the manuscript. The penmanship of the Lehi entry appears to be consistent with the remainder of the manuscript, having the same style of writing, capitalization, and word-slant. In every respect it seems to be the handwriting of Dr. Bernhisel recorded during the May-June 1845 period. There appears to be no reason to suggest that the entry was not written at the same time as the manuscript which it accompanies.

This matter has importance historically since it suggests that the Bernhisel and the Williams accounts represent the same textual source, while differing somewhat from the account given in the *Compendium*. Even more important is the fact that the Lehi item was considered significant enough to Dr. Bernhisel in 1845 for him to copy it into his records. The Bernhisel copy becomes an earlier source by nearly forty years than the printed *Compendium* of 1884.

Since the "Lehi" information is in no way connected with the "new translation" of the Bible, a question arises as to how Dr. Bernhisel obtained the information in the first place. This of course we do not know, but it is possible that he found it among the sheets of the Bible manuscripts and simply recorded it because it was interesting to him. Whether the Lehi item was ever among the pages of the Bible translation we do not know, but it is certainly not among them today. The original manuscripts of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible which Dr. Bernhisel used are in the RLDS archives in Independence, Missouri, and the writer knows from personal examination that the Lehi statement is not currently in the collection.

We may someday learn more about the statement of Lehi's travels. In the meantime it is a matter of interest to historians to know that Dr. Bernhisel had access to it in 1845 and included it with his copy of Joseph Smith's new translation of the Bible.

## SOLOMON CHAMBERLAIN—EARLY MISSIONARY

LARRY C. PORTER

John H. Gilbert, a typesetter for E. B. Grandin, publisher of the Book of Mormon, stated that the first manuscript pages

of the new book were brought into the printing office "about the middle of August" 1829.<sup>1</sup> The completed edition was offered for sale on 26 March 1830. It is noteworthy that during this interim period, before the copies of the Book of Mormon were bound and available to the general public, interested parties were taking extracts from the volume and carrying them hundreds of miles from their place of origin to share the contents with others. Among the earliest contributors to this proselyting venture was Solomon Chamberlain. The publication was not completed nor the Church yet organized when he performed one of the first missionary labors of the restoration period. Taking sixty-four pages from the Grandin press, he traveled across Western New York and into upper Canada, preaching the Book of Mormon as he went. When the finished edition was issued from the Palmyra Printing Office, he was again on hand; he procured copies and immediately began to distribute them.

Solomon Chamberlain may have been the first missionary to make contact with Brigham Young and his brother Phinehas. He states that just after the publication of the Book of Mormon, he attended a Reformed Methodist conference where some forty preachers had assembled. Among those present were Brigham and Phinehas Young. Solomon indicates that in attempting to introduce the new volume he was badly abused by these preachers, but that Brigham and Phinehas "used me well."

The following excerpts from Solomon Chamberlain's autobiography contain his personal account of his introduction to the family of Joseph Smith, Jr., and his early missionary endeavors:

I was born July 30th 1788, of goodly parents in Old Canaan Connecticut. My fathers name was Joel Chamberlain born in Tolland, Connecticut. Sarah Dean his wife born in same state, by her he had six sons and three daughters. When I was about 20 years old, which would be about the year 1808. I went to the house of Philip Haskins and took one of his daughters to wife, by the name of Hope Haskins, of goodly parents. by her I had one son, and two daughters. . . .

About the time that Joseph Smith found the gold record,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of John H. Gilbert to James T. Cobb, Palmyra, Wayne County, New York, 10 February 1879, located in the New York Public Library, New York City, New York.



I began to feel that the time was drawing near, that the Lord would in some shape or other, bring forth his Church. I made some inquiry thro the country where I traveled if there was any strange work of God, such as had not been on the earth since the days of Christ. I could hear of none, I was living about 20 miles east of where the gold record was found, on the Erie Canal. I had occasion to go on a visit into upper Canada. I took boat for Lockport, when the boat came to Palmyra, I felt as if some genii or good Spirit told me to leave the boat, this was a few miles from where the record was found. After leaving the boat, the spirit manifested to me, to travel a South course, I did so for about 3 miles, I had not as yet heard of the gold bible (so called) nor any of the Smith family. I was a stranger in that part of the Country, a Town where I never before had set my foot, and knew no one in the Town. It was about sun down, and my guide directed me to put up for the night, which I did to a Farm house, in the morning the people of the house asked me if I had heard of the Gold Bible, when they said "Gold Bible" there was a power like electricity went from the top of my head to the end of my toes, This was the first time I ever heard of the gold Bible. I was now within half a mile of the Smith family where Joseph lived. from the time I left the boat until now, I was wholly led by the Spirit or my Genii. The women spoke considerable of the gold bible that Joseph Smith had found. When she mentioned gold Bible, I felt a shock of the power of God go from head to foot, I said to myself, I shall soon find why I have been led in this singular manner. I soon made my way across lots, to Father Smith's and found Hyrum walking the floor, As I entered the door, I said, peace be to this house. He looked at me as one astonished, and said, I hope it will be peace, I then said, Is there any one here that believes in visions or revelations he said Yes, we are a visionary house. I said, Then I will give you one of my pamphlets, which was visionary, and of my own experience. They then called the people together, which consisted of five or six men who were out at the door. Father Smith was one and some of the Whitmer's. They then sat down and read my pamphlet. Hyrum read first, but was so affected he could not read it, He then gave it to a man, which I learned was Christian Whitmer, he finished reading it. I then opened my mouth and began to preach to them, in the words that the angel had made known to me in the vision, that all Churches and Denominations on the earth had become corrupt, and no Church of God on the earth but that he would shortly rise up a Church, that would never be confounded nor brought down and be like unto the Apostolic Church. They wondered greatly who had been telling me these things, for said they we have the same things wrote down



in our house, taken from the Gold record, that you are preaching to us. I said, the Lord told me these things a number of years ago, I then said, If you are a visionary house, I wish you would make known some of your discoveries, for I think I can bear them. They then made known to me that they had obtained a gold record, and just finished translating it here. Now the Lord revealed to me by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost that this was the work I had been looking for. Here I stayed 2 days and they instructed me, in the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. After I had been here two days, I went with Hyrum and some others to Palmyra printing office where they began to print the Book of Mormon, and as soon as they had printed 64 pages, I took them with their leave and pursued my journey to Canada, and I preached all that I knew concerning Mormonism, to all both high and low, rich and poor, and thus you see this was the first that ever printed Mormonism was preached to this generation. I did not see any one in traveling for 800 miles, that had ever heard of the Gold Bible (so called). I exhorted all people to prepare for the great work of God that was now about to come forth, and it would never be brought down nor confounded. As soon as the book was printed, I took 8 or 10 of them and traveled for eight days, and sold one in that time. About this time I thot if I could see the reformed Methodists I could convince them of the truth of the Book of Mormon. I accordingly went to one of their conferences, where I met about 40 of their preachers and labored with them for two days to convince them of the truth of the Book of Mormon, and they utterly rejected me, and the Book of Mormon. One of their greatest preachers so called, by the name of Buckly, (if I mistake not) abused me very bad, and ordered me off from their premises. He was soon, taken crazy, and died a miserable death. at this conference was Brigham and his brother Phinehas Young, they did not oppose me but used me well. On my way home I stopped at their Camp meeting, where I found one of their greatest preachers, whom I contended with concerning the Book of Mormon, by the name of Wm Lake, who utterly condemned it and rejected it, who spurned at me and the Book and said, if it was of God, Do you think He would send such a little upstart as you are round with it. but he soon after died a poor drunken sot. While on my way home I stopped at a free will Baptist Church, and preached to a large congregation, and they received the work, but there was no one to baptize them, the Church was not yet organized, but was soon after April 6th 1830. a few days after I was baptized in the waters of Seneca Lake by Joseph Smith, and emmigrated same spring<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>This is apparently an error, for Solomon Chamberlain actually emigrated to Kirtland, Ohio, in the spring of 1831.



to Kirtland Ohio, and in the fall of 1831, emmigrated to Jackson Co., Missouri, and in the beginning of the winter of 1833 was broke up by mobs, and driven out of the County and suffered, the loss of all things, with hundreds of my brethren and sisters.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Solomon Chamberlain, "A Short Sketch of the Life of Solomon Chamberlain," Beaver City [Utah] 11 July 1858. The original is located in possession of Mrs. Albert D. Swensen, Provo, Utah. Mrs. Swensen is the great-granddaughter of Solomon Chamberlain. Solomon Chamberlain died on 26 March 1862, in Washington County, Utah.

## THE DEATH DATE OF LUCY MACK SMITH: 8 JULY 1775 — 14 MAY 1856

Buddy Youngreen

Several competent historians record the death date of Lucy Mack Smith as having occurred in May of 1855. That date must stand corrected in the light of three historical documents. The first source to challenge the 1855 death date is the journal of John Lyman Smith. In recording a visit with his Aunt Lucy on Monday, 2 July 1855, he writes, "Aunt Lucy has been confined to the bed for 10 months unable to walk with the rheumatism."<sup>1</sup> The second source is a letter verifying the sale of Egyptian papyri, dated 26 May 1856 and signed by L. C. Bidamon, Emma Bidamon (former wife of Joseph Smith, Jr.), and Joseph Smith (son of Joseph Smith, Jr.). The letter mentions that Lucy's death "... occurred on the fourteenth day of May last this month."<sup>2</sup> The third document, which establishes the year, day, and hour of Lucy's death, is a letter of Joseph Smith III's to Miss Emma Knight, dated (Friday) 16 May 1856, "Last Wednesday morning at 2 o'clock Grandmother died and yesterday we buried her."<sup>3</sup>




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<sup>1</sup>John Lyman Smith, Journal, Entry for Monday, 2 July 1855 (Original and microfilm copy in Special Collections, BYU Library).

<sup>2</sup>A photograph of the original letter is reproduced in *Brigham Young University Studies*, VIII (2):180 (Winter 1968).

<sup>3</sup>Xerox copy of original letter on file in the Utah State Historical Society.