

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1827–1828

Key Scripture Joseph Smith—History 1:59–65

Explanation After Joseph Smith obtained the gold plates in September 1827, opposition threatened to stop the work of translation. Several attempts were made to steal the plates, and mounting persecution forced Joseph and Emma to move to Harmony, Pennsylvania. In early 1828 Professor Charles Anthon in New York certified in writing that the characters copied from the plates and Joseph's translation of them were correct, but he tore up the certificate upon hearing that an angel had told Joseph where the plates lay buried. June 1828 saw the death of Joseph and Emma's newborn first child. Another setback occurred when Martin Harris lost 116 pages that Joseph had translated from the book of Lehi and, as a result, the Lord chastened Joseph and suspended his translation privilege for a season. While on a business trip to Palmyra in December 1828, David Whitmer met Oliver Cowdery, who would become Joseph's chief scribe. Although the years 1827 and 1828 presented obstacles to the translation effort, the stage was being set for Oliver's arrival in Harmony in April 1829.

Sources *History of the Church*, 1:18–28. For additional sources and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 3–15; and John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 1–8.

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1827	Sept.	Joseph obtains the plates from the angel Moroni
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	Joseph and Emma move to Harmony, Pennsylvania
1828	Jan.	Joseph translates some characters from the plates
	Feb.	Martin Harris takes sample of characters and Joseph's accompanying translation to Charles Anthon
	Mar.	
	Apr.	Book of Lehi translated (April 12–June 14)
	May	
	June	Joseph and Emma's first child is born and dies Martin Harris loses 116 pages
	July	Joseph travels to Manchester, New York Interpreters and plates are taken away from Joseph
	Aug.	
	Sept.	Joseph reobtains interpreters and plates
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	David Whitmer makes business trip to Palmyra, where he meets Oliver Cowdery