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For the Salvation of Zion

Steven C. Harper



I climbed the stairs in the Smith Family Living Center at BYU in 1992 and walked sheepishly into the small office that housed BYU Studies. I had been home from the Canada Winnipeg Mission for less than a year but long enough to know that I'd never be an engineer like my father. I still didn't know what I could become, and I felt anxious about that.

I had enrolled in a class on editing for publication and been assigned to BYU Studies for some experiential learning, as we now call it. I did not know what BYU Studies was. I didn't know what an academic journal was. I didn't know who John W. (Jack) Welch was, that he had recently been named the fourth editor in chief, or that he had found chiasmus in the Book of Mormon while serving his mission in Germany.¹ I didn't know what chiasmus was.

No one knew then that Jack was beginning what would be a quarter-century tenure in his new role, but he had already set the course for it. He had seen no reason to revolutionize what BYU Studies was—a

1. See John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969): 69–84. John W. Welch served as the editor in chief of *BYU Studies* from 1991 to 2018. Previous editors include Clinton F. Larson (1959–1967), Charles D. Tate Jr. (1967–1983), and Edward A. Geary (1984–1991). To learn more about these past editors, see Neal E. Lambert, "Clinton F. Larson: 'I Miss His Booming Laugh,'" *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2 (2010), 178–83; Charles D. Tate Jr., "BYU Studies in the 1970s," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 4 (1991): 11–14; Charles D. Tate Jr., "Brigham Young University Studies: Its Purpose, Its Freedom, Its Scope," *BYU Studies* 8, no. 1 (1967): 1–5; and Edward A. Geary, "Confessions of a Chameleon," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 4 (1991): 15–19.

quarterly journal committed to showcasing the complementary nature of revealed and discovered truth, welcoming contributions from all fields of learning written for educated nonspecialists. He was determined, however, to “expand the variety of its articles and the size of its reading audience,” based on the belief that “*BYU Studies* can and should offer the world the best scholarly perspectives on topics of academic interest to Latter-day Saints.”²

I had barely qualified academically to be at BYU, but as a missionary I had tasted the exhilaration of seeking learning by study and faith, with my head and my heart as God-given allies. One day on the Canadian prairie, it seemed as if the Lord was speaking to me in Doctrine and Covenants section 93 when he said, “Obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man, and all this for the salvation of Zion” (D&C 93:53). So I walked into the BYU Studies office and surveyed the room where I would spend much of the next two years, eager but uncertain whether my mind was capable of the required rigor and unaware of how naïve my faith was.

I met Jack and learned to admire his mind. I worried that my ignorance would be exposed, but Jack was kind to me and cultivated my potential. It was gratifying to see my name listed for the first time as an editorial assistant in issue 33:2.

I was studying paleography and early Church history, so Jack assigned me to work with Bruce Van Orden on his edition of the letters William Phelps wrote to his wife Sally in 1835.³ Then Jack assigned me to assist Jan Shipp as she closely compared William McLellin’s six journals to typescripts she and Jack were preparing for publication.⁴ Like Jack, Jan was a generous and exacting mentor whose knowledge I admired and coveted. Their confidence in me nurtured self-confidence.

My conviction that Joseph Smith was a revelator came from studying McLellin’s journals and his copies of the Savior’s revelations to Joseph. William became convinced that Joseph was a revelator late in the summer of 1831 when he met three of the Book of Mormon’s witnesses on the Illinois prairie. He walked and “talked much” with them

2. John W. Welch, “BYU Studies: Into the 1990s,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 4 (1991): 21.

3. See Bruce A. Van Orden, “Writing to Zion: The William W. Phelps Kirtland Letters (1835–1836),” *BYU Studies* 33, no. 3 (1993): 542–93.

4. Jan Shipp and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994).

and other Saints that summer. Of August 19, William wrote, “I took Hiram the brother of Joseph and we went into the woods and set down and talked together about 4 hours. I inquired into the particulars of the coming forth of the record, of the rise of the church and of its progress and upon the testimonies given to him.” Of the next morning, William wrote, “I rose early and betook myself to earnest prayr to God to direct me into truth; and from all the light that I could gain by examinations searches and researches I was bound as an honest man to acknowledge the truth and Validity of the book of **Mormon**.” Here was learning by study and also by faith.⁵

William asked Hyrum Smith to baptize him. Soon William’s journal entries got even more compelling. He walked to Ohio and met Joseph at a conference on October 25. Then they walked home together. Four days later, while still at Joseph’s home, William prayed and asked God for a revelation, and Joseph received it. William had told God but not Joseph what he was after—the answers to five anxiety-causing questions. And he wanted to know—really know—if Joseph was a revelator.⁶

William wrote that “the Lord condescended to hear my prayr and give me a revelation of his **will**, through his prophet or seer (Joseph)—And these are the words which I wrote from his mouth.” William scribed the original revelation, then copied it carefully into his journal.⁷ As the days and months wore on, he tried to live by it, and when he failed, he alternately repented or rationalized his thoughts and actions.⁸

5. Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 33, bold in original. For the rest of the story, see Mitchell K. Schaefer, “‘The Testimony of Men’: William E. McLellin and the Book of Mormon Witnesses,” *BYU Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011): 99–110.

6. W. E. McLellin, “Our views relative to the legal Successor . . .,” *Ensign of Liberty* 1 (January 1847): 61, <https://archive.org/details/EnsignOfLiberty18471849/page/n59>. See also Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 44–45.

7. Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 45–46, bold in original.

8. It requires analysis of a constellation of documents to arrive at this conclusion: The revelation now in Doctrine and Covenants 66: “Revelation, 29 October 1831 [D&C 66],” [9], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 31, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-29-october-1831-dc-66/1>; McLellin’s August 4, 1832, letter to his relatives, found in Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 79–86; McLellin’s 1831 and 1832 journals, in the William E. McLellin papers 1831–1878, MS 1358, box 1, folders 1–2, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, available at <https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/000241441/> and in Shippo and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 29–78; and Joseph

I read William's journal entries closely under Jan and Jack's supervision. I learned from them the historical method and the discipline of document editing. For me, those academic endeavors were delightfully entwined with inescapable evidence that Joseph Smith revealed the mind and will of Jesus Christ. In 1848, a decade after he became bitterly disaffected from Joseph, William called it "evidence which I cannot refute."⁹

BYU Studies challenged and changed my naïve assumptions about revelation and about human nature. I learned that revelation to William and through Joseph was a marvelous but imperfect process.¹⁰ I found that William and Joseph were complex souls. Jack sent me to Independence, Missouri, to verify the text of William's 1832 letter to his relatives. In it William recounted his conversion, affirmed that Joseph was "A Prophet, a Seer and Revelater to the church of christ," and rationalized his disregard for the revelation the Lord gave to answer his concerns.¹¹ I felt frustrated with William for being both fixed and fickle in his faith, and I felt empathy for him and for myself.

Working on William McLellin's journals, letters, and revelation manuscripts helped my faith mature and showed that it could be strengthened by scholarly work. I learned to think more carefully and critically, to identify and question some of my assumptions, and to expect and cope with ambiguity and paradox in people and in the Church. BYU Studies was the right environment for me to come of age. There I encountered and bridged what Bruce C. Hafen called "the gap between the real and the ideal" on my journey from naïve to informed faith in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.¹²

Smith's June 6, 1832, letter to Emma: "Letter to Emma Smith, 6 June 1832," [2]–[3], Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 31, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-emma-smith-6-june-1832/1>.

9. McLellin, "Our views," 61.

10. For more on this, see Steven C. Harper, "'That They Might Come to Understanding': Revelation as Process," in *You Shall Have My Word: Exploring the Text of the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Scott C. Esplin, Richard O. Cowan, and Rachel Cope (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 19–33. See also Steven C. Harper, "Historical Headnotes and the Index of Contents in the Book of Commandments and Revelations," *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 53–66; and Steven C. Harper, "The Rich Man, Lazarus, and Doctrine & Covenants 104:18," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 4 (2008): 51–54.

11. Shippy and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 82.

12. See Bruce C. Hafen, "On Dealing with Uncertainty" (devotional address, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, January 9, 1979), <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/08/on-dealing-with-uncertainty?lang=eng>; Bruce C. Hafen, "Love

I applied what I learned at BYU Studies in an MA program at Utah State University, writing my thesis on what William's journals and others like them revealed about who joined the Church in the 1830s, how they were proselytized, and what shaped their choices. I earned a PhD in early American history at Lehigh University and then taught for two years in the history and religion departments at BYU–Hawaii before joining the Church History and Doctrine faculty at BYU in 2002.

Jack approached me at that point and invited me to be the document editor for *BYU Studies*. I considered it a high honor and accepted, knowing that I'd be following historians who had become heroic to me.¹³ The best part of the job was mentoring young scholars in the discipline of document editing, helping them apply the historical method, and observing the maturation of their faith.¹⁴

I confess, however, that by 2011 I became less active in my *BYU Studies* role.¹⁵ That year I moved to Jerusalem, became preoccupied with my teaching assignment there, and got out of the habit of attending *BYU Studies* meetings. Then I transitioned to a consuming assignment as the managing historian and a general editor of *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. I never lost my faith in or love for *BYU Studies*, but it became easy to overlook. I missed the fellowship of the Church History Board, but I didn't change my ways.

Jack didn't forsake me. I tried to tell him repeatedly that I couldn't do it anymore, but he kept my name in each issue. He visited with me from time to time. There was no pressure, but he made sure I knew I was always welcome, that *BYU Studies* would take me back whenever I wanted to contribute again. Then one day he suggested that maybe I

Is Not Blind: Some Thoughts for College Students on Faith and Ambiguity" (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, January 9, 1979), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-c-hafen_love-is-not-blind-thoughts-college-students-faith-ambiguity/; and Bruce C. Hafen, "Faith Is Not Blind" (devotional address, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Laie, January 24, 2017), <https://devotional.byuh.edu/media170124>.

13. James B. Allen served as document editor from 1970 to 1982, Ronald W. Walker served from 1983 to 1992, and Brian Q. Cannon served from 1993 to 2001.

14. For example, Mark B. Nelson and Steven C. Harper, "The Imprisonment of Martin Harris in 1833," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 113–106; and Jordan Watkins and Steven C. Harper, "'It Seems That All Nature Mourns': Sally Randall's Response to the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 95–100.

15. See Edward L. Kimball, "Confession in LDS Doctrine and Practice," *BYU Studies* 36, no. 2 (1996–97): 7–73.

could be his successor. My heart rate jumped as nagging insecurities returned. My ignorance would be exposed, especially compared to Jack. I worried that I would always be compared to Jack. I told him to keep looking and suggested some better candidates.

He dropped the idea, but I kept thinking about it. BYU Studies had given me profound and enduring experience of learning by study and by faith. It had launched my career. I mused about what I could potentially give back. A few months later when BYU extended the invitation to me to be the editor in chief, I was almost ready to receive it. I talked it over with my brother, David, as we strolled past the Salt Lake temple and the site where Orson Pratt's observatory once stood.¹⁶ David had spent some time with me at BYU Studies a quarter century earlier. He understood where I had come from and what was at stake for me. He observed that if the only contribution I could make was to help a student experience what I did, I ought to do it. As that thought sank in, concern about how I would be perceived resolved into peace that I could work "for the salvation of Zion" (D&C 93:53).

I don't expect my tenure to last nearly as long as Jack's. To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen: you know Jack and I'm not him.¹⁷ Like Jack, however, I want *BYU Studies Quarterly* to remain committed to showcasing the complementary nature of revealed and discovered truth. I welcome contributions from all fields of learning written for educated nonspecialists. I will expand the variety of articles based on the belief Jack instilled in me: BYU Studies owes readers the best perspectives on topics of academic interest to Latter-day Saints.¹⁸

16. "Vision Statement," The Temple and Observatory Group, http://templeandobservatory.org/?page_id=40.

17. "Lloyd Bentsen," Wikiquote, updated January 30, 2018, https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Lloyd_Bentsen. This quote was said by Lloyd Bentsen in reference to Jack Kennedy at a vice-presidential debate in 1988.

18. Welch, "BYU Studies," 21.

Northern District
of New-York, } Do wit:

104

Be it remembered, That on the eleventh
day of June — in the fifty third year of
the Independence of the United States of America, A. D.
1829 Joseph Smith Senior

of the said District, has deposited in this Office the
title of a Book the right whereof he claims
as Author in the words following, to wit: The

Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates
taken from the plate of Nephi; Wherein it is an abridgement of the record of the people
of Nephi and also of the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel
and also to give a faithful account of the prophecies and also by the spirit
of Prophecy & of revelation, written & sealed & hid up unto the Lord, that they
might not be destroyed, to come forth by the gift & power of God unto the inter-
pretation thereof — sealed up by the hand of Mormon & hid up unto the Lord, to come
forth in due time by the way of faith, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God, as abridg-
ment taken from the book of Ether: Also, which is a record of the people of Nephis which
were scattered at the time the Lord commanded the language of the people, when they were building
a tower to get to heaven, which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great
things the Lord hath done for their fathers; & that they may know the covenants of the Lord
that they are not cut off forever; and also to the increasing of the faith & charity that
Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now if there
be fault, it be the fault of man; otherwise we can not be the things of God, that
ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ. By Joseph Smith Senior, au-
thor & proprietor

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act
for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts,
and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein
mentioned;" and also, to the act entitled "An act supplementary to an act enti-
tled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of
Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during
the times therein mentioned;' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of De-
signing, Engraving, and Etching historical and other prints."

R. R. Shering Clerk of the Dist.
Court of the United States for the Northern
District of New York

FIGURE 1. Copyright application for the Book of Mormon, filed June 11, 1829. Courtesy Rare Book and Special Collections, Library of Congress.

Timing the Translation of the Book of Mormon

“Days [and Hours] Never to Be Forgotten”

John W. Welch

This paper aims to stimulate specific thinking about the intense and complex events during which the Book of Mormon was translated in 1829. Encouraged initially by Elder Neal A. Maxwell,¹ and building on my chapter in the second edition of *Opening the Heavens*,² this article strives to be as precise as possible about the timing of the events and progress of the Book of Mormon translation during the months and days it took place. In 1834, Oliver Cowdery wrote, “These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration*

1. A wise question that Elder Maxwell asked me in 1985 about how long it took Joseph to translate the Book of Mormon launched my thirty-year involvement with this subject. It began with “The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information,” FARMS Paper (1986), which was utilized in an entry I wrote with Tim Rathbone, “Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:210–13; and also John W. Welch, “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 1–8.

2. John W. Welch, “The Miraculous Timing of the Translation of the Book of Mormon,” in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2017), 78–227; also included in the volume is a day-by-day chronology (85–120), the chart “Estimated Day-by-Day Translation in 1829” (121–25), and 206 historical source documents regarding the timing of the translation, arranged in nine categories (126–227). I thank Sandra Thorne and Jennifer Hurlbut for their editorial and sourcing assistance in bringing this new edition to fruition.

of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude.”³ Looking closely at the documents and the dating of all that happened during the three months of April, May, and June 1829 can likewise awaken a greater sense of gratitude and respect for this extraordinary volume of scripture.

After reviewing the previous scholarship on the timing of the translation, five dates will be examined that anchor the chronology of the three months principally involved. Questions such as “How long did it take to translate the Book of Mormon?” and “How much variation has there been in the estimates?” will then be addressed. While most estimates have been imprecise or cautiously conservative, all fall basically within much the same tight time range. Attention then will shift to a new and further question: “How many other time-consuming things were going on in Joseph Smith’s life during the three months of the translation?” Taking all that information into account, this study will then develop and propose allowable rates of speed for the translation in terms of “words per minute” and “hours per day.” All of this more detailed information will open up insights into the historical understanding and experiential comprehension of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Previous Scholarship

A century ago, people such as B. H. Roberts worked on this subject with limited available information. In 1909, Roberts generally concluded that the dictation of the existing English text of the Book of Mormon began on April 7, 1829, and was completed somewhere between the early part of June and sometime in August, taking from as few as 60 to as many as 120 days.⁴

In a carefully written article in 1941, the meticulous Francis W. Kirkham concluded that the translation took “about seventy-five working days.”⁵

3. O. Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834 [Letter 1], printed in *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 14; document 70 in Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 157, emphasis in original.

4. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 2:95, 122–23; see generally B. H. Roberts, “Translation of the Book of Mormon,” *Improvement Era* 9 (April 1906): 425–36, 706. I thank Neal Rappleye for his assistance in researching and updating this review of the previous scholarship on this subject.

5. Francis W. Kirkham, “The Writing of the Book of Mormon: Concerning the Time, the Place, the Scribes, and the Printing,” *Improvement Era* 44 (June 1941): 341–43, 370–75. According to Kirkham, there was no translation between

He and almost everyone else at that time thought that Joseph commenced in April with 1 Nephi 1 (rather than picking up in Mosiah at the point where the lost manuscript pages had left off, discussed below). Kirkham wondered how long into July the translation may have continued.

Kirkham's suggestion that the Book of Mormon was translated within seventy-five working days amazed people, and Fawn M. Brodie countered Kirkham's estimate of this "phenomenal[ly]" short time simply by asserting that Martin Harris had been taking dictation from Joseph for some time before April 7.⁶ But little substantive evidence has turned up that either Harris or Emma Smith took much, if any, dictation in 1828 after the lost manuscript pages were completed in June 1828, or that Martin wrote as a scribe for Joseph during Martin's short visit to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in March 1829.⁷ At that time Martin was embroiled in a lawsuit brought against him by his wife, Lucy Harris, seeking to prohibit him from having any further dealings with Joseph Smith.

After a few publications around 1990 on the translation,⁸ interest about Joseph Smith flourished at the time of the 2005 bicentennial of his birth.

the time the manuscript pages were lost and Doctrine and Covenants 10 was received, which he places in November or December 1828 (342–43). Oliver arrived and began writing April 7, 1829. There is no indication from Joseph Smith that he translated anything besides the lost manuscript pages before April 7. Both Joseph and Oliver indicate that they started at or near the beginning and continued to the end. A small portion was written by Emma before the arrival of Oliver. 1 Nephi 7 is in Oliver's handwriting, so no more than 16 pages could have been written before his arrival (Kirkham is clearly assuming a translation order that starts with 1 Nephi). Translation was completed sometime near the close of June 1829. Ether 5 is assumed to be the passage that inspired the Three Witnesses (373). The translation was complete by July 1, 1829, or shortly afterward (370–73). Thus the book of six hundred pages was prepared in seventy-five working days.

6. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 61. Brodie dates the translation from April 7, 1829, to the first week of July (61–62). She writes, "Mormons have maintained that the volume was written in seventy-five working days. This would mean an average of 3,700 words a day" (62). For her argument that Martin had been taking dictation from Joseph for some time before April 7, see 57–60, 62.

7. The amount that could have been translated between June 1828 and April 1829 is discussed further on pages 19–22 herein.

8. John W. Welch, "I Have a Question: How Long Did It Take Joseph Smith to Translate the Book of Mormon?" *Ensign* 18 (January 1988), 46–47, stating that the Book of Mormon was translated in "about sixty-five working days,"

From 2002 to 2005, the translation of the Book of Mormon was mentioned, mostly in passing, in eight publications, by authors including Robert Remini, Terryl Givens, Milt Backman, Dan Vogel, Richard Bushman,⁹ and

that nearly the entire Book of Mormon “was translated between 7 April and 30 June 1829,” with a few pages being translated in March 1829 with Emma as scribe, and that the translation with Oliver likely began “at the beginning of the book of Mosiah, where Joseph had last left off,” making it “probable that he did not work on 1 and 2 Nephi until later—in June.” (On Joseph and Oliver beginning at Mosiah, see Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 103 nn. 69–71.) This short article states the following: The books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, and 3 Nephi up to chapter 11 were translated by May 15, 1829, since that chapter is likely what “led Joseph and Oliver to inquire of the Lord about the authority to baptize.” Fourth Nephi, Mormon, Ether, Moroni, and the title page were all translated by the end of May. Copyright was secured using the title page on June 11, 1829. The translation reached 2 Nephi 27:12 by June 20, 1829, thus prompting the Book of Mormon witnesses. The process spanned about eighty-five days from April 7 to around June 28, though not all of those days were spent translating. It would have taken about a week to translate 1 Nephi and a day and a half for King Benjamin’s speech.

Welch, “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” 1–8, is a short report that has the same basic information as the *Ensign* article, with some minor differences. Witnesses are said to have seen the plates “about the middle of June” (2) or “in late June” (3), and the translation occurred in “a span of no more than sixty-five to seventy-five total days” for an average of seven to eight pages a day (3–4). Assuming a “Mosiah First” translation, there would have been 212 pages to translate between May 15 (3 Nephi 11) and the witnesses seeing the plates (2 Nephi 27) in mid to late June, making an average of about ten pages a day for that stretch.

Welch and Rathbone, “Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith,” 1:210–13, has one minor difference from the two previous articles in stating that the translation was completed “the last week of June, less than sixty working days” (210).

9. Robert V. Remini, *Joseph Smith* (New York: Viking Book, 2002), 61–65; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31–37; Milton V. Backman, “Book of Mormon, Translation of,” in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 157–60; Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 166; Richard Lyman Bushman, “Joseph Smith as Translator,” in *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Jed Woodworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 236, which states: “translating day after day for three months in 1829 . . . gave Joseph pleasure”; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New

others,¹⁰ but little new information regarding the basic chronology was added. Also in 2005, the year of the Joseph Smith bicentennial, the first edition of *Opening the Heavens* was published by BYU Studies. It contained a lengthy historical chronology of the events in 1828–29.¹¹

In the next decade, bits of new information were suggested. Such statements were common: “The pace of translation was stunning: about eight pages a day—remarkable even for skilled translators,” as Richard Turley put it.¹² In 2015, Michael MacKay and Gerrit Dirkmaat conservatively concluded that “nearly all of the Book of Mormon” was translated

York: Alfred Knopf, 2005), 70, 71, 74, calls the translation beginning in April 1829 “rapid-fire” and notes that Oliver witnessed Joseph’s purchase of the Isaac Hale property, that translation began the next day, and that the translation was completed by late June 1829. See also Richard Lyman Bushman, “The Recovery of the Book of Mormon,” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 21–38.

10. LaMar Petersen, *The Creation of the Book of Mormon: A Historical Inquiry* (Salt Lake City: Freethinker Press, 1998), 95; Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 66 (Joseph Smith “dictated the final manuscript in about ninety days,” but Palmer also asserts that Joseph had nine months to ponder over it before Cowdery arrived in April 1829, and eight months to refine it before publication in March 1830); David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon*, 2d ed. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2000), 83 (which acknowledges that virtually all of the Book of Mormon was written from April to July 1829, nine pages per day, but claims that Joseph had been translating with Emma since September 1828); Matthew B. Brown, *Plates of Gold: The Book of Mormon Comes Forth* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2003), 82, 96; Earl M. Wunderli, *An Imperfect Book: What the Book of Mormon Tells Us about Itself* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013), 25–26 (translation stopped until Cowdery arrived on April 5, completed by the end of June, about sixty-three days, for an average of eight typeset pages per day).

11. The second edition of this book (2017) brings many details up to date and, most of all, provides links added by Sandra Thorne to the places on the josephsmithpapers.org website, where many of the primary source documents can be viewed and accessed.

12. Richard E. Turley Jr. and William W. Slaughter, *How We Got the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 19–20. These authors tell that translation with Oliver as scribe began in earnest on April 7, 1829. “The pace of translation was stunning: about eight pages a day—remarkable even for skilled translators.” Joseph and Oliver began with Mosiah. “By the end of June, the translation was complete.”

“in less than ninety days.”¹³ But how much less than ninety days still remains a question. While there have been differences of opinion, a consensus has emerged on many of the most important points regarding the translation timing. And even a ninety-day maximum estimate is a phenomenally short time range.

Most recently, the second edition of *Opening the Heavens* (2017) contains 150 pages of original source documents and analysis concerning the miraculous translation of the Book of Mormon, including a new five-page chart (reproduced on pages 45–49), projecting, day by day, the likely progress that Joseph and Oliver would have needed to make in their translation, from April 7 to the end of June 1829, in order to stay within the allowable elapsed time frame. Although this interesting and useful study will always be, to some extent, a work in progress, the information now available and the data now developed instills greater confidence about many of these data points than was possible a decade ago. As Richard Bushman said in endorsing *Opening the Heavens*, laying open “all the crucial documents . . . for inspection, with enough commentary to put them in context” provides great benefits to Book of Mormon readers: “nothing could be more helpful—and inspiring.”¹⁴

Five Anchor Dates

On the five-page chart,¹⁵ five dates are in bold. These can be called anchor dates. Whatever one thinks about the timing and sequence of the translation of the Book of Mormon depends largely on what one thinks about the degree of certainty about these anchor dates and the status of the translation project on each of those particular dates. History is admittedly an inexact science, dependent to a large extent on the accidental survival of information and personal memory. In stabilizing historical judgments, one always looks for certain anchor points that

13. Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2015), 114, 119–20, states that Oliver began taking dictation on April 7, 1829; the pace of translation was faster than it had ever been before; and Joseph translated “nearly all of the Book of Mormon in less than ninety days.”

14. As quoted on the back cover of *Opening the Heavens*.

15. The chart on pages 45–49 was included in the printed program for my lecture (the Willes Lecture on November 8, 2017) and is reformatted from the chart found in *Opening the Heavens*, 2d ed., 121–25. I thank Marny Parkin for designing that chart for these various uses.

hold in place the structural girders of historical understanding. While remaining open to any new information relevant to the timing of the translation of the Book of Mormon, I propose that these five anchor dates can be established. Based on credible documents and corroborating details, the overall chronology points reasonably to the conclusion that, with the probable exception of a few pages written before Oliver Cowdery's arrival on April 5, the vast majority of the English text of the Book of Mormon came forth, day after day, and hour by hour, beginning April 7 and ending the weekend of June 30, 1829. Such detail regarding the foundational events of any new religious movement is, as far as I know, unequalled.

Anchor Date 1: April 7, 1829. Oliver Cowdery commenced work as a scribe for Joseph Smith on April 7, 1829, in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Support for this dating has long been found in the September 7, 1834, letter of Oliver Cowdery printed in the *Messenger and Advocate*, the official Church newspaper that year.¹⁶ In this letter, Cowdery says that he arrived in Harmony for the first time in the early evening of Sunday, April 5, and began working as scribe for Joseph on April 7.

Tuesday, April 7, 1829, was the first day on which Oliver Cowdery sat down in the morning, picked up his quill pen, dipped it in his inkwell, and began to write, line after line, the words that he heard coming forth from the voice of the twenty-three-year-old prophet, Joseph Smith. Oliver had arrived in the remote village of Harmony on Sunday evening, April 5. He had walked more than one hundred miles to get there because, as Joseph Smith himself wrote in 1832, "The Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowdery and shewed unto him the plates in a vision and also the truth of the work and what the Lord was about to do through me his unworthy servant. Therefore he was desirous to come and write for me to translate."¹⁷

Corroborating evidence of Oliver's vision may possibly be found in Doctrine and Covenants 6, a revelation given to Oliver shortly after his arrival on April 5, perhaps at the end of the day on April 7 or shortly after Oliver had commenced writing for Joseph as he translated. These words of divine encouragement were given to Oliver "as a witness . . . that the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true" (D&C 6:17).

16. Cowdery to Phelps, 14.

17. "Letterbook 1," [6], Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-1/12>; document 13 in Welch, "Miraculous Timing," 132.

The revelation blessed Oliver for having “inquired” of God and states that because of his inquiry, he had received direction from God to “come to the place” where he then was, namely Harmony: “Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and . . . thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place [Harmony, Pennsylvania,] where thou art at this time” (6:14). The revelation continued, inviting Oliver to ask again, as he had inquired before: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. . . . If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?” (6:21–23).

For reasons that surely pleased and maybe also surprised Oliver, Joseph took Oliver immediately into his full confidence. Perhaps by comparing the details they had each seen independently in their visionary and revelatory experiences, both of them were completely confident that the other was telling the truth. With that assurance, Joseph allowed Oliver to work as his dedicated scribe, seated only a few feet away at the same small table, as Joseph translated. And Oliver obeyed the Lord’s instruction to “stand by my servant Joseph” (6:18).

But how sure can one be that Oliver remembered the date, April 7, correctly? Five years later, in 1834, Oliver wrote to William W. Phelps, “Near the time of the setting of the Sun, Sabbath evening, April 5th, 1829, my natural eyes, for the first time beheld this brother [Joseph].” Perhaps Oliver is suggesting here that he had seen Joseph before with his spiritual eyes, distinct from his “natural eyes.” Continuing, Oliver says, “On Monday, the 6th, I assisted him in arranging some business of a temporal nature, and on Tuesday the 7th, commenced to write the book of Mormon. These were days never to be forgotten.”¹⁸ As memorable as all of those days in Harmony were, Oliver seems to have remembered these first three days most particularly. Like a first day at college or the first time meeting a future spouse, that first day, April 7, must have impressed Oliver deeply, exceeding all of his expectations, as he sat for his first time under the sound of Joseph’s voice as he dictated the Book of Mormon in a most inspirational manner.

Not long ago, Gordon Madsen found in the local Pennsylvania courthouse corroborating evidence regarding Oliver’s presence in Harmony on April 6, 1829. At the courthouse, Madsen found the legal papers for

18. Cowdery to Phelps, 14.

the 1831 sale by Joseph of his property in Harmony to George Noble, a local businessman. These legal documents, securing Noble's chain of title, included the original 1829 agreement between Joseph Smith and Emma's father, Isaac Hale, proving beyond any doubt that on that day Joseph became the legal owner of the cabin and property where the young couple had been living. Two legally required signatures officially witnessed that April 6 agreement: one was Oliver's and the other was Samuel Smith's.¹⁹ So now we know that Oliver was indeed in Harmony on April 6, and we know what the "temporal" business was that was conducted that day. Samuel (Joseph's twenty-year-old younger brother) may have come with Oliver from Manchester, New York. In March, Samuel had been with Joseph Smith Sr. in Harmony, helping Joseph Jr. with work on his farm. He may well have accompanied Joseph Sr. back to Manchester and then turned around to help Oliver find his way to Harmony, or he may have stayed in Harmony. In either event, farm work would probably have consumed a good part of the rest of the day on April 6.

A ledger on the back of the April 6 agreement shows that Joseph paid Isaac sixty-four dollars that day and promised to pay the balance in the future, which he did. This legal transaction gave Joseph Smith ownership and the legal right to say who could or could not come onto his property and into his small wooden home there. With that, he had a degree of essential security to protect against Isaac Hale or others who might disturb the translation process. And with that, the very next day—April 7—Joseph and Oliver commenced work. Thus anchor date 1 is substantially secure.

Before that date, and without property rights and protective security, little translation took place in the first three months of 1829. Of course, a year before, the book of Lehi had been translated, with Martin Harris as the main scribe. Emma and Reuben Hale apparently acted as scribes in those three months as well.²⁰ When Emma said in 1856 that she wrote "a part of" the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, she was referring to a time when Joseph said to Emma that he was surprised to read that

19. "Agreement with Isaac Hale, 6 April 1829," Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/agreement-with-isaac-hale-6-april-1829/1>.

20. Joseph Knight, *Reminiscences*, 2–6, MS 3470, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE1276586.

Jerusalem had walls.²¹ But that text about Jerusalem could have been either at the beginning of the lost book of Lehi, translated in April 1828, or at the beginning of 1 Nephi, translated in June 1829, and was likely not translated between September 1828 and April 7, 1829.

At least six documents say that a little was translated in 1829 prior to April 7. Without going into all of these sometimes conflicting historical sources in detail,²² here are the main documents relevant to this point:

1. In 1832, speaking of the time before Oliver Cowdery received his vision and then came to Harmony “to write for me,” Joseph Smith personally recorded, “Now my wife had written some for me to translate and also my Brother Samuel H Smith.” How many pages they wrote is unknown, but apparently it was not very many—only “some”—and still not enough to “accomplish the work” as “commanded.”²³
2. Emma said in 1879 that Joseph Smith “would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he could at once begin where he had left off.”²⁴ Unfortunately, as she describes his “usual” dictation practices she does not say when it was that he so dictated to her, or perhaps to others, or how many pages of text were created before or after the manuscript pages were lost.
3. Oliver said of the Book of Mormon to William Frampton (as recorded in 1901), “I wrote it (with the exception of a few pages)

21. Emma Smith, quoted in Edmund C. Briggs, “A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856,” *Journal of History* 9 (October 1916): 454.

22. In addition to those six, a statement by Joseph Smith III mentions that Emma did some writing but adds no specific information. Joseph Smith III to Mrs. E. Orton, March 7, 1900, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri, cited in Dan Vogel, comp. and ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Book, 1996–2002), 1:544, cited as document 43, Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 145. And David Whitmer once said to Andrew Jenson as they examined manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, that “excepting comparatively a few pages,” they were all “in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery.” Andrew Jenson, ed., “The Three Witnesses,” *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 216–17, cited as document 80 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 163.

23. “Letterbook 1,” [6].

24. Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald* 26 (October 1, 1879): 289–90; Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Advocate* 2 (October 1879): 50–52, cited as document 41 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 143–44.

with this right hand (extending his hand) as the inspired words fell from the lips of Joseph Smith.”²⁵ Apparently, those “few pages” would have included whatever pages were written by any other scribes at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, after Joseph’s arrival there about June 4, 1829, and also whatever pages were translated before April 7.

4. David Whitmer once said in 1878 that a “few pages” were written by Emma, John Whitmer, and Christian Whitmer.²⁶ John and Christian would have written in June 1829, but it is uncertain what time David has in mind when he says that Emma wrote a few pages. He may be talking about translation during June 1829, but perhaps David had become aware that Emma and Samuel had written “some” for Joseph prior to April 7, well before David came to Harmony.
5. Lucy Smith recalled in her 1844–1845 memoir, “Emma had so much of her time taken up with her [house] work that she could write *but little* for him.”²⁷ But Lucy gives no hint about what that “little” amount consisted of or when she thought Emma had done this writing. She may have been referring to pages that were written in the spring of 1828 and thus were among the lost manuscript pages or perhaps to pages written in the early months of 1829. Lucy was present in Harmony for a winter visit in February 1829, and so she did not see much of Joseph’s activity during the months from the end of September 1828 to the beginning of April 1829 personally. But she was in contact with Joseph and was aware enough of his great need for scribal help, which is why she and others in the Smith family, when they met Oliver Cowdery and found him to

25. William M. Frampton to John E. Booth, September 15, 1901, microfilm of typescript, MS 5641, Church History Library, cited as document 76 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 161, emphasis added.

26. Jenson, “Three Witnesses,” 216–17. See also David Whitmer, interview by P. Wilhelm Poulson, *Deseret Evening News*, August 16, 1878, cited as document 81 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 163; and *Chicago Times*, October 17, 1881, cited in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 10, cited as document 88 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 168.

27. Lucy Mack Smith, “History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 3, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/95>, emphasis added, cited as document 108 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 182.

be trustworthy, told Oliver of the plates and of Joseph's great need for help.²⁸

6. In March 1829, in a revelation, now found in Doctrine and Covenants 5, given to Martin Harris,²⁹ Joseph was told to translate "a few more pages" and then to "stop for a season" (D&C 5:30). How much translation Joseph did before stopping is unknown.

So how many pages of the original manuscript of the current Book of Mormon might have been written before Oliver Cowdery arrived on April 5? Of course, we do not know for sure. But the consistent use of the words "some," "few," and "little" leave the impression that not very many pages—perhaps as few as three or four—were written during those stressful, cold, dark, and needy months, when supplies were limited, visitors were frequent, and timber was being cut, although other farm chores may have been fewer than in the springtime. Although our information is limited, the foregoing six statements are evidence that only a few pages of dictation were written between the summer of 1828 and April 1829.

How many words would usually have been written on a page of common foolscap manuscript paper? Royal Skousen estimates that there were 608 pages of manuscript in the dictation copy of the Book of Mormon and that the earliest text contained a total of 269,510 words,³⁰ thus there were on average 443.27 words per page. At this rate, the 965 words in Mosiah 1 would have taken about 2.2 pages, and Mosiah 2 (with 2,109 words) would have been written on about 4.8 pages. One percent of the total Book of Mormon would be 2,695 words, or approximately 6.1 pages.

We do not know, of course, exactly at what point in the dictation Oliver commenced to write on April 7. Was it early in Mosiah 2 or later in Mosiah 3 or Mosiah 4? For several reasons, there is a strong

28. Lucy Mack Smith, "History, 1844–1845," book 7, pp. 12–13.

29. Isaac Hale recollected in 1834 that he saw Joseph and Martin working together in March 1829 and read certain words that the pair had written and copied on two pages of paper that they were then comparing. Hales's recollection probably relates to the writing of Doctrine and Covenants 5, not part of the Book of Mormon. Isaac recalled seeing words such as "witness," "three," and the "orders" of God, which appear in Doctrine and Covenants 5:1, 11, and 15. "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register* (Montrose, Penn.), May 1, 1834, 1; Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter, *Martin Harris: Uncompromising Witness of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2018), 129.

30. Royal Skousen, *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001), 35–36.

consensus that Joseph picked up where the lost manuscript pages had left off, which would have been in the time of King Benjamin's reign.³¹ These reasons include (1) it was most likely the translation of 2 Nephi 27:12, 22, and not Ether 5:2–4, that triggered the experiences of the Three and Eight Witnesses at the end of June 1829; (2) if they had begun with 1 Nephi, there would have been very little left to translate at the Whitmer home, given that they were already well into 3 Nephi by May 15; (3) as discussed below, the title page of the Book of Mormon, at the end of the large plates of Mormon, was evidently translated before June 11, and not around the end of June; and (4) the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery is on the earliest extant lines of the original manuscript, already at 1 Nephi 2:2–3:16, with that of other scribes in the middle of 1 Nephi (which appears to be the writing of John and Christian Whitmer).³² All this points to the likely conclusion that 1 Nephi through Omni “were probably translated last—that is, after the plates of Mormon and Moroni were translated.”³³ If only the dictation manuscript for the first part of the book of Mosiah had survived, one could answer this question with much greater surety. But no part of the book of Mosiah has survived in the original manuscript pages or fragments.³⁴ The earliest text from the original manuscript that is extant is Alma 10:31, which Oliver Cowdery scribed, and he certainly began writing long before that.

Not wanting to overestimate or underestimate the number of pages written by Emma or Samuel before Oliver Cowdery arrived, I have assumed that the point at which Joseph and Oliver began working was somewhere in Mosiah 2, about five or six pages into Mosiah. They may, of course, have begun at the end of Mosiah 1 or in Mosiah 3 or Mosiah 4 or later. By allowing a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent, a tolerable allowance for statistical reporting, I assume that Oliver began scribing somewhere in King Benjamin's speech. If readers wish to move this commencement point to a place a few chapters later in the text

31. Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 100–103.

32. Skousen, *Original Manuscript*, 62–67.

33. Skousen, *Original Manuscript*, 33. This topic will be explored further in forthcoming sections of volume 3 of Skousen's Book of Mormon Critical Text Project.

34. Jack Lyon and Kent Minson have argued that the changes made on the printer's manuscript (fig. 2) of Mosiah 1 may reflect the place where the lost manuscript pages left off. The first two chapters of Mosiah were lost. Jack M. Lyon and Kent R. Minson, “When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2012): 120–36.

of Mosiah and then make adjustments to the charts presented in this article, that would not necessarily change any overall conclusions significantly. At whatever point Joseph and Oliver began working on April 7, that starting date need not be further debated for present purposes. No data suggests or implies that anchor date 1 is insecure as the day on which they commenced.

Anchor Date 2: May 15. Joseph and Oliver reached the middle of 3 Nephi before May 15, 1829. Joseph Smith's own record tells us that John the Baptist ordained him and Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood and they baptized each other on May 15, 1829.³⁵ Oliver Cowdery adds that John's appearance happened in the context of Joseph and Oliver having just translated and written the middle of 3 Nephi. Lucy Mack Smith confirms that Joseph and Oliver "were deeply engaged in the work of writing and translation, and progressed rapidly."³⁶

In 1834, Oliver said, "After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob upon this continent," Joseph and he saw that "none had authority from God to administer the ordinance of the gospel."³⁷ This led to the appearance of John the Baptist.³⁸ Lucy's narrative adds: "One morning however they sat down to their usual work when the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair to the water each of them to be baptized."³⁹

These accounts may indicate that they were not translating 3 Nephi 11 and 12 on May 15 but had translated those chapters a day or two earlier. That would allow time for Joseph to wonder overnight about the need to be baptized. In those two chapters in 3 Nephi, they would have

35. "History, circa 1841, Draft [Draft 3]," 35, Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-1841-draft-draft-3/35>; "History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 17–18, Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/23>.

36. Lucy Mack Smith, "History, 1844–1845," book 8, p. 4. In agreement is *Saints: The Story of The Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), 66.

37. Oliver Cowdery, "Dear Brother," *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 15.

38. "This [being baptized by authority] was not long desired before it was realized." Cowdery to Phelps, 15.

39. Lucy Mack Smith, "History, 1844–1845," book 8, p. 4.

encountered nineteen occurrences of the word “baptize,” and they would have learned about Jesus giving the authority to baptize to twelve disciples. Then, as they reflected on their need to be baptized in the Lord’s way before commencing work on the morning of May 15, they were commanded by the Lord to be baptized. At that point, John the Baptist appeared and gave them instructions and authority. According to Joseph’s history, Samuel was baptized ten days later, May 25.⁴⁰

On the chart (page 46), I estimate that the text in 3 Nephi 13–15 was translated on May 14 and that 3 Nephi 16–18 was finished during the afternoon or evening of May 15. In translating the sentences at the end of 3 Nephi 18, when the resurrected Lord ascended back into heaven for that night, Joseph and Oliver would have encountered the related passage in which Jesus bestowed upon the twelve New World disciples “power to give the gift of the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 18:37). That awareness of the need to have a higher power in addition to the authority to baptize could well have heightened their desire to be ordained to that higher priesthood, which John had said would be “conferred on [them] hereafter” (JS–H 1:70). The ordination to the higher priesthood by Peter, James, and John may have occurred about May 19 since Joseph and Oliver were returning from a trip to Colesville for supplies about that time, but that remains uncertain although compatible with this overall chronology.⁴¹

Counting from anchor date 2, Joseph and Oliver were right on schedule to finish the large plates by the end of May, assuming that they continued at a steady pace of translation throughout April and May, both before and after May 15.

Anchor Date 3: May 31. This date is derived from several circumstantial evidences that lead to the likely conclusion that the title page of the Book of Mormon was translated on or shortly before May 31, 1829:

1. Joseph said that the body of the title page was on “the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of [the large] plates.”⁴²

40. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 19.

41. See discussion in Brian Q. Cannon and BYU Studies staff, “The Earliest Accounts of the Restoration of the Priesthood,” in Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 233–45.

42. “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 34, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/40>.

2. The copyright application for the Book of Mormon contained the full and exact text of the title page of the Book of Mormon, and it was filed on June 11, 1829 (see the discussion of anchor date 4 below). Thus the title page (and therefore also the books of Ether and Moroni, the last books on the plates of Mormon) must have been translated before June 11.
3. If the title page was translated before June 11, and if the title page was “the very last leaf” of the large plates, what remained to be translated at the Whitmer home in June was, at a minimum, the small plates.
4. Joseph and Emma moved from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York, the first week in June, considerably reducing the number of days (from ten to about six) available for translation work between May 31 and June 11.⁴³
5. While it is possible that the large plates were finished and the title page was translated between June 5 and 10, any such time would reduce inordinately the number of days available for the translation of the small plates, which were finished by June 28 (as shown in the discussion of anchor date 5 below).
6. All of this is consistent with the strong consensus (explained above in the discussion of anchor date 1) that when Oliver arrived, the translation work resumed where the lost pages had left off, with the book of Mosiah in the large plates.
7. Thus, when the translation resumed in Fayette, it most likely began with 1 Nephi.
8. The writing of three different scribes appears on the extant original manuscript pages of 1 Nephi. One of the scribes was Oliver Cowdery, and the other two scribes were most likely John and Christian Whitmer, who were in Fayette.⁴⁴
9. In addition, the title page was published on June 26 in a public notice in the *Wayne Sentinel*, a Palmyra newspaper. That was probably a couple of days before the translation of the small plates was completed at the end of June, which is consistent with Joseph

43. See documents cited in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 108.

44. Skousen, *Original Manuscript*, 62–67; “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 22; David Whitmer, interview by Poulson; David Whitmer, interview by Thomas Wood Smith, *Fall River Herald*, March 28, 1879, in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, cited as document 82 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 163.

Smith's statement that the title page did not come at the end of the small plates of Nephi but at the end of the plates of Mormon.⁴⁵

10. Dating the translation of the title page at May 31 allows for enough days before and after that date to allow for the translation to be accomplished at a steady, uniform pace. Although one cannot be absolutely certain, any assumption that large sections of the Book of Mormon were translated in a concentrated few days, at irregularly rapid speeds or with greatly extended hours per day, strains the already rapid rate of dictation and transcription that would have occurred on the normal days.

Anchor Date 4: June 11. The June 11 date for securing the copyright for the Book of Mormon is clearly trustworthy. We have long had the Joseph Smith copy of the copyright form, and when the official court version of that document was found in 2005 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. (fig. 1), the information on Joseph Smith's copy was confirmed. The Joseph Smith copy was a secondary, personal copy that he retained. Both the retained copy and the official filed copy were signed on June 11, 1829, by R. R. Lansing, clerk of the U.S. federal district court for the Northern District of New York. This filing was lodged in the court's office in Utica, New York.

As a bonus, attached to that official copy at the Library of Congress was a previously unknown printed mock-up sheet of the title page of the Book of Mormon. The wording (though not the font or layout) is identical to the final printed version of the title page. The mock-up sheet was printed on a letterpress; it was folded as was normally done with filed legal documents in that day, and it was identified and dated. It is not known who printed it or how much time it took to have that done. Perhaps Joseph or Hyrum had already been in contact with a printer such as E. B. Grandin, who supplied the copyright form and information about how to file the form with the federal court. This single sheet was folded and kept with the copyright form, and on the back of this printed page the name of Joseph Smith was written, and it is dated June 11, 1829.⁴⁶

45. "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," 34.

46. Illustrations found in "Gallery Guide," in John W. Welch, ed., *The Worlds of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2005), 136–37; see also *BYU Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 136–37.

It is unknown who delivered this certificate to the clerk of the court. Was it Joseph? Oliver? Martin Harris? Did the clerk happen to be in Palmyra or around Fayette facilitating such filings, or did someone make the six-day round trip from Fayette to Utica and back to handle this filing? It is true that Oliver Cowdery's handwriting is not on the original manuscript for 1 Nephi 4:20–16:1, and so he might have gone to Utica or elsewhere to perfect this filing while someone else acted as scribe. However, I figure that, at a regular pace, only three days would have been normally available for Joseph to cover those chapters, and the journey took six days. So perhaps it was Martin who made the trip.⁴⁷ Martin Harris was probably more available than anyone else and would have had a very strong interest in seeing that the copyright was secured. Still, one cannot know for sure who carried the form to be filed.

What the copyright filing tells us for sure is that the title page of the Book of Mormon was finished and written before June 11.

Anchor Date 5: June 30. The completion of the translation by the end of June 1829 is quite well established. In 1881, David Whitmer stated that “the translation at my father’s occupied about one month, that is, from June 1st to July 1st, 1829.”⁴⁸ Many details corroborate and refine this timing, as do numerous connections between other specific events and the progress of the translation, as shown on the five-page chart on pages 45–49. Around Sunday, June 28, the translation was finished, and word was delivered that evening to Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy in Manchester inviting them to come to Fayette, with Martin Harris, to celebrate. The next day, perhaps Monday, June 29, they arrived just before sunset, and the next morning, they read from the Book of Mormon manuscript, sang, and prayed, and David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris went directly with Joseph to where they received their previously promised manifestation by the angel Moroni. On Wednesday, June 30, or perhaps the first day or two of July, they all gathered at the Smith home in Manchester, where the Eight Witnesses were allowed to handle the plates. Then the testimonies of the Witnesses were written, since soon thereafter they would appear in the preface to the first edition of the Book of Mormon.⁴⁹

47. Black and Porter, *Martin Harris*, 139.

48. David Whitmer, interview by *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881, cited as document 86 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 166.

49. John Whitmer, “Address,” *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836): 286–87, cited as document 101 in Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 177–78; John

Thus, for present purposes, as far as I am aware, no evidence suggests that any of the translation continued after June 30. It is hard to imagine a time or place for any translation to have occurred during the month of July. By the first of July, Joseph had relocated to Manchester, where Joseph and Martin began contacting printers. Joseph met unsuccessfully with Grandin in Palmyra and then with printer Thurlow Weed in Rochester, New York (a fair distance northwest of Palmyra). Then Joseph met successfully with Elihu Marshall (a Quaker book publisher also in Rochester) and, finally, this time successfully, again with Grandin in Palmyra. Joseph was with Martin Harris during some of this time, but he was not with Oliver, who was in Fayette at that time. Negotiations with printers could have begun in June, but it makes more sense for those negotiations to have occupied Joseph's full attention in early July. It is unlikely that Joseph carried any of the original manuscript with him as he met with these publishers.

Indeed, it appears that the original manuscript was not in Joseph's possession in July, so he could not have continued to work on the translation past the end of June. In July, those priceless pages were probably with Oliver in Fayette, both for protection (away from Palmyra) and so that Oliver could begin producing the printer's manuscript, so they could get the book to press as soon as possible, although it is unknown when Oliver actually began his laborious task of copying over the entire manuscript of the Book of Mormon. As Royal Skousen has shown, "There are very few signs of any editing or Joseph changing his mind about the translation"⁵⁰ anywhere on the original manuscript, whether during the translation or at any time afterwards.

How Many Days Did the Translation Take?

In answering the questions of how many days the translation took and how precise we can be about that time frame, we need to know (1) how many actual days Joseph and his scribe had and (2) how many words per day, on average, they needed to write to finish.

Whitmer, quoted in "History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842]," 913, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/95>, cited as document 102 in Welch, "Miraculous Timing," 178; Black and Porter, *Martin Harris*, 141–48.

50. Skousen, *Original Manuscript*, 6.

The total number of days, from April 7 to June 30, inclusive, is eighty-five. This explains the use of that number in some estimates. Other estimates mention seventy-five, sixty-five, sixty-three, or sixty days.⁵¹ Differences in these estimates occur because, even though it is clear that not each of the eighty-five total days was available in whole or in part for translation work, it is not clear how many days, let alone which days, should be excluded from the total.

In the chart, I have excluded eleven full days,⁵² including days such as May 18–19 or June 1–4 or other timespans, when it is reasonably clear that Joseph was on trips or otherwise identifiably occupied, during which no translation could have occurred at all. These eleven days have been eliminated because of the following events:

51. The days worked or available have been expressed as follows, almost all within a relatively similar time frame: “less than 60 working days” (Welch and Rathbone, “Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith,” 1:210, in 1992); “total of 60 working days” (Remini, *Joseph Smith*, 61–65, in 2002); “approximately 60 days” (Backman, “Book of Mormon, Translation of,” 157–60, in 2003); 63 days (Bushman, “Recovery of the Book of Mormon,” 21–38, in 1997); 63 days (adding 45 plus 12 plus 6 days) (John W. Welch, “The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon,” in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestation, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch, 1st ed. [Provo: BYU Studies, 2005], 101); about 63 days (Wunderli, *Imperfect Book*, 25–26, in 2013); “65 or fewer working days” and 85 days is the maximum, both available and unavailable, not the days spent translating (Welch, “I Have a Question,” 46–47, in 1988); “about 65 working days” (Neal A. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” *Ensign* 27 [January 1997]: 36–41; reprinted in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch [Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2002], 1–15; pages cited hereafter refer to the *Ensign* version); “no more than sixty-five to seventy-five total days” (Welch, “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” 1–8); 74 days as the maximum available time (Welch, “Miraculous Timing,” 119, in 2017); 75 days (Kirkham, “Writing of the Book of Mormon,” 341, in 1941); “less than 90 days” (MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 114, 119–20, in 2015); 90 days for the bulk of it (Scott Dunn, “Automaticity and the Dictation of the Book of Mormon,” in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002], 30); 90 days, plus 9 months to ponder in 1828–1829 and to revise in 1829 (Palmer, *Insider’s View*, 66, in 2002). At a rate of 8 printed pages a day, the total needed time would be 66 days to do the 531 pages of the current Book of Mormon, or 74 days for the 589 pages of the 1830 edition.

52. For documentation on these days, see the respective dates in Welch, “Miraculous Translation,” 104–14.

- Trip to Colesville and back at least two days
 - Move to Fayette, with time to pack and unpack at least four days
 - Handling copyright forms, proofing title page one day
 - Sunday June 14, baptisms in Seneca Lake; letter written one day
 - About June 21, Oliver unavailable, Articles of Church recorded one day
 - June 28, visitors and Three Witnesses experience one day
 - June 30, in Manchester, Eight Witnesses experience one day
- = total eleven days

For computational purposes, it is not crucial where within the total time frame those specific days fell. It matters only that those events happened and approximately how much time they would have taken. Thus the number eighty-five gets reduced by eleven to leave seventy-four, which is the number listed on the last page of the chart below for the “maximum possible days available” for the translation from April 7 to June 30.

In addition, there must have been many days during that time period that were only partially available for translation work.⁵³ Such amounts of time should not be completely ignored. On the chart, this sort of time has been reflected only in the average number of pages that would have needed to be translated within the overall time frame. These probable time demands would have been spent on various days for such things as:

- Another trip to Colesville sometime in April for supplies (at least two days)
- Talking to Oliver Cowdery about translating, gifts, and progress
- Business (including arranging to pay his second installment to Isaac Hale)
- Farming, household chores, and personal time
- Twelve Sundays (assuming slightly reduced working hours for Sabbath rest and worship)
- Priesthood restorations

53. For documentation of these activities or demands on time, see the respective dates in Welch, “Miraculous Translation,” 104–14.

- Baptisms in Harmony
- Time with Samuel Smith and his baptism
- Teaching and baptizing Hyrum Smith
- Greeting and satisfying David Whitmer in Harmony
- Likely interruptions from various curious people and harassment from neighbors
- Arranging to ordain priests and teachers per Doctrine and Covenants 18:32
- Planning for and gathering the Eight Witnesses
- Travel to Manchester the end of June, around June 29
- Beginning to contact possible publishers about printing the title page single sheet

And finally, at least one more day can be reserved to allow for the process of receiving, delivering, and recording thirteen revelations now included in the Doctrine and Covenants:

Section	# of Words	Summary
6	1,124	to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, offering encouragement, patience
7	252	about John the Apostle not tasting death
8	389	to Oliver Cowdery
9	397	to Oliver Cowdery, translation not his gift, think before asking
10:38–70	937	instruction on where to begin translating in Fayette
11	789	to Hyrum Smith
12	232	to Joseph Knight
13	66	the words of John the Baptist on May 15, 1829
14	302	to David Whitmer
15	139	to John Whitmer
16	140	to Peter Whitmer
17	311	to the Three Witnesses before viewing the plates
18	1,126	to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer

Total 6,124 words

The total number of words in these thirteen revelations is 6,124. Assuming twenty words per minute—which may be on the fast side—the time it would take to dictate and transcribe these individual sections

computes to another 306 minutes, or at least five hours, or close to one more full day, allowing time for stopping, discussing, and interviewing and seeking, receiving, recording, and delivering the revelation to the recipient, as well as talking about it, getting back to work on the translation, and so on. These thirteen revelations in April, May, and June must be taken into account when estimating the amount of time and effort required to bring forth the Book of Mormon translation during those same months.

Taken all together, these numbers yield a total of only 57 to 63 available full-time working days—74 minus 11 to 17 days. Perhaps these interruptions did not require quite that many hours or that many half-days, but even if that were the case, it would appear that not many more than the equivalent of about 60 actual working days would have been available in April, May, and June 1829. The timing is remarkable. As discussed above, because the amount of translation and transcription work accomplished from September 1828 to March 1829 was probably relatively little, and because Joseph probably had learned to translate more efficiently as he brought forth the lost manuscript pages in 1828, and because Oliver was no doubt more skillful as a scribe than Martin Harris or others had been, the work most likely went faster in April, May, and June 1829 than it had in 1828, which helps to explain the feasibility of the rapidity of the translation in 1829.

Linking Translation Progress with Words in These Thirteen Revelations

It is interesting to connect these thirteen sections in the Doctrine and Covenants that were received in April, May, or June with the timing and sequence of the translation of passages in the Book of Mormon. Beyond the fact that receiving and recording these revelations took time, these revelations can be connected to the unfolding of words and phrases within the Book of Mormon itself. These correlations do not affect estimations of how long the translation took, but they do suggest a little more clearly approximate times when those revelations might have been received as well as when certain portions of the Book of Mormon were translated. For present purposes, these thirteen revelations have simply been positioned on the chart on days close to where some of their phrases connect with relatable Book of Mormon texts. This chronological coalescing happens fairly consistently and distinctively, offering a stream of interconnections.

Doctrine and Covenants 8 can be placed at about April 9, which is approximately the time of the translation of Mosiah 8. Both of those texts deal with the power to translate.⁵⁴

The phrases in Doctrine and Covenants 9, dated to around April 26, connect with words in Alma 11 or 40, which would have been translated around that date.⁵⁵

Doctrine and Covenants 7 has been placed on May 21 because of possible connections to 3 Nephi 28.⁵⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 7 deals with the Apostle John not tasting death. That question was most relevant to the blessing that Jesus gave to the Three Nephites that they would not taste death either.

The words “deny not” appear in the revelation given to Hyrum in Doctrine and Covenants 11:25. Those words may connect with the “deny not” in Moroni 1:2 and 10:7, 8, and 33,⁵⁷ translated around the end of May.

On June 14, Oliver wrote a letter to David Whitmer that day that contains the phrase “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” Those words are also found in Doctrine and Covenants 18:10, as well as in some Book of Mormon passages translated earlier, and so it makes sense to date section 18 a bit earlier than June 14. So I have placed it in the proximity of June 8, not long after Joseph’s arrival in Fayette with Oliver and David, to whom section 18 was directed. These, of course, are just interesting approximations.

But more stunningly, it is known that a two-page document entitled “Articles of the Church of Christ” was composed by Oliver Cowdery

54. As is similarly suggested by Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, 171–74.

55. Vogel, *Joseph Smith*, 171–74, connects Doctrine and Covenants 8 and 9 with Mosiah 7 and 8, but Doctrine and Covenants 9 fits as well, if not better, with Alma 11 or 40, translated later in April.

56. Others have connected Doctrine and Covenants 7 with the disappearance of Alma the Younger in Alma 45:18. See MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 122. But the textual connections with 3 Nephi 28:1 (“what desirest thou?” D&C 7:1), 3 Nephi 28:2 (“speedily,” 7:4), 3 Nephi 28:7 (“never taste death” and “power over death,” 7:2), 3 Nephi 28:9 (“bring souls,” 7:2), and 3 Nephi 28:7 and 8 (2 occurrences, “come in my glory,” 7:3) make 3 Nephi 28 cumulatively a stronger candidate.

57. See also six other occurrences of “deny” in Moroni 1:3; 7:17; 8:19; and three occurrences in 10:32, making this a dominant theme from the beginning to the end of the book of Moroni.

sometime in June.⁵⁸ It is 1,551 words long. How long did it take him to generate that significant document? The better part of a day, one would think. I have placed this document on Sunday, June 21, because it quotes from verse 4 of the recently received Doctrine and Covenants 18 and it also meaningfully and precisely quotes at least 36 verses from the Book of Mormon (verifiably following the original manuscript), many of them in full, namely (in this order): 3 Nephi 11:32, 23–27; Moroni 3:1, 4, 2–3; 3 Nephi 18:12; 2 Nephi 26:33; Moroni 6:6; 4:1–3; 5:1–2; 3 Nephi 18:28–33; 18:22; Alma 31:10; 1:32; 12:15; 3 Nephi 18:31; Doctrine and Covenants 18:34; 3 Nephi 9:15, 16; Doctrine and Covenants 18:34; 3 Nephi 9:18; Ether 5:6; and 2 Nephi 9:7. In writing this document, Oliver must have taken time to remember, locate, arrange, and copy out these passages, quoting them exactly. This document powerfully summarizes key ecclesiastical and administrative provisions that are scattered throughout the Book of Mormon, dealing with performing the ordinance of baptism, the elders ordaining priests and teachers, administering the sacrament, excommunications, laws of the church, promising blessings, invoking authority, and preparing to stand before Christ and being saved eternally in his kingdom through his infinite Atonement. Addressing all of these topics is an impressive and time-absorbing feat, especially since the original manuscript had no finding aids, no chapter and verse numbers, and still remained to be mentally processed and reflectively studied.

All of this explains my thinking in spreading the chapters of the Book of Mormon across the total elapsed time of 74 days on the chart. The suggested dates on which specific chapters may have been translated are not to be taken as certain; they are just statistically feasible estimates. The chart also spreads the distraction times evenly over the

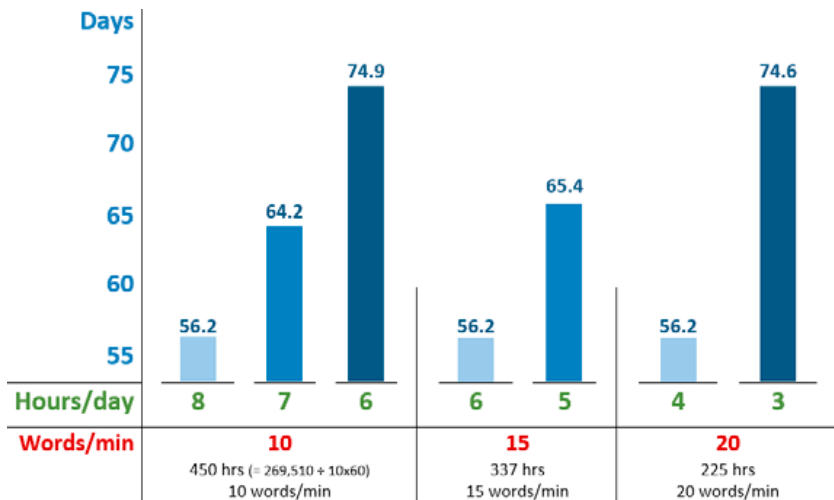
58. Cowdery's original document is at <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-3-articles-of-the-church-of-christ-june-1829/1>. For a superb documentary analysis of this document, see Scott H. Faulring, "An Examination of the 1829 'Articles of the Church of Christ' in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants," *BYU Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 57–91. For a study of the extensive uses of the Book of Mormon in the early administrative history of the Church, see John W. Welch, "The Book of Mormon: The Keystone of LDS Church Organization and Administration," in *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization and Administration*, ed. David J. Whittaker and Arnold K. Garr (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 15–57; or John W. Welch, "The Book of Mormon as the Keystone of Church Administration," *Religious Educator* 12, no. 2 (2011): 83–117.

same 74 days, making the assumption that Joseph's rate of translation was uniform hour by hour and day by day. And in addition, the thirteen revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants from this period may be aligned meaningfully with the distribution of this chronological data over the months of April, May, and June.

Rates and Length of Translation

I now turn to the question of how quickly (or slowly) Joseph and Oliver must have been going in order to translate the total of 269,510 words in the Book of Mormon within the available days on this schedule. Is it even possible for them to have worked fast enough? The answer is yes, as shown on this multivariant graph, which mathematically shows the number of days they would have needed to work to translate the whole Book of Mormon if they went 10 words per minute, 15 words per minute, or 20 words per minute, and if they worked 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 hours per day. About 65 days is within range.

Total Elapsed Time at Various Rates of Translation of 269,510 Total Words



The horizontal axis along the bottom of this graph displays, from left to right, the results assuming that Joseph and Oliver were working at a rate of 10, 15, or 20 words per minute, while working variously for 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, or 3 hours per day. The vertical axis then shows how many hours

(expressed as days) it would have taken them, at a given rate of words per minute, to complete the 269,510 words in the book. The faster they went, the fewer hours per day would have been needed.

At 10 words per minute (left section of this bar graph), the full translation would take 450 hours. Working 8 hours a day, they could translate and transcribe the 269,510 words within 56.2 full-working-day equivalents, slow but steady. If they worked at faster rates (15 or 20 words per minute, shown in the areas in the middle and on the right of the graph), while working an hour or two fewer per day (6 or 4 hours per day), they could also have gotten the job done within that same 56.2 working-day length of time.

As shown in the middle of the graph, working at a rate of 15 words per minute, the total time of translation would have taken 337 hours. And as seen on the right side of the graph, at the rate of 20 words per minute, only 225 total hours would have been needed. Those numbers of total hours can then be translated into possible numbers of days worked.

Several of the resulting hours-per-day and words-per-minute options yield elapsed time figures that fall within the realm of feasibility, but the latitude is not wide. The parameters here do not allow much variation beyond the values shown on this graph. Needing to work more slowly would push the project beyond the number of hours per day probably available or the maximum of 64 working-days reasonably available, given all of the other interruptions one has to factor into the equations here. But, within these parameters, several of these rates and times work. Oliver's statement that they worked "day after day . . . uninterrupted" was correct. To make these numbers work within the available time frame, they indeed needed to work continuously, diligently, and largely without interruption.

Experiments Replicating the Experience and Rate of the Translation

In order to test the feasibility of these calculations of how fast Joseph and Oliver actually could have worked, my wife, Jeannie, and I decided to try it out ourselves. We picked two pages in Royal Skousen's Yale edition of the Book of Mormon,⁵⁹ since that version breaks the text lines into thought clauses that would have been about the length of each translational unit. At first, I played the role of Joseph and read the first

59. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

line slowly and distinctly, while she, playing the role of Oliver, began immediately writing those words down. When she reached the end of that line, she read it back to me, and I confirmed that it was correct or pointed out mistakes. Then I paused, gazed again at the page, uncovered the next line, and read it aloud, which Jeannie likewise recorded and read back. And so we proceeded to the end of the page. All the while, we had a stopwatch running, and at the end, we counted up the number of words on the page and the time elapsed and divided the number of words by the number of minutes to get a rate of words per minute for our work on those two pages.

We found the experience intellectually awakening and spiritually engaging enough that we repeated this activity in my stake scripture class. We all divided up into fifteen groups of three people, with one person playing Joseph, another Oliver, and the third acting as the time-keeper. The experience was quite electrifying for most people in the class.

Altogether, our results showed empirically that a translation rate of right around 20 words per minute was quite possible. But we couldn't imagine sustaining that rate hour after hour, day after day. Our hands got tired, and the one playing Joseph needed to catch his or her breath and clear his or her voice. We used ballpoint pens. We imagined Oliver dipping and using his quill pen. We wondered if they didn't work a little slower, and thus might have worked an hour or two longer on each average day.

Although not strictly scientific, this exercise produced a flood of experiential insights. The stress of trying to achieve a maximum accuracy took a substantial toll on us. People playing the role of Joseph struggled to keep their minds focused on the line at hand as they waited for the person playing Oliver to finish. Their thoughts wandered back to foregoing lines or anticipated what might come next. We noticed more details in the text than ever before. We wondered what Joseph, Oliver, and Emma close by would have thought when hearing these things for the first time. How long did Joseph take after Oliver read back a line to him? Did the translation process work seamlessly and promptly, or were there long pauses to collect his thoughts? Those playing the role of Oliver had to be patient and pay very close attention (as Oliver had been counseled to do in Doctrine and Covenants 6:18–19).

In general, people in our trial wanted to stop to enjoy impressive gems that emerged amid blocks of ordinary narration, but the inexorable process did not allow them the time. Comments regarding the exercise included “My body was tense”; “the doctrine and prose was amazingly

coherent. It is inconceivable to me that he was able to maintain coherence under those conditions”; “even Mormon’s long and complex sentences all made sense in the end”; “it gave us a greater appreciation for the line upon line precept”; “I had empathy for Joseph and Oliver who did this for hours each day”; and “it was a spiritual experience to get these words a bit at a time, coming spontaneously forth.” Several who participated in this experiment were eager to try it again with their families, for youth activities, or in other classes. With everyone taking turns with all three of these roles, it was an unforgettable hour.

Other people have written the entire Book of Mormon out by hand to provide personalized manuscripts for their children and grandchildren. One person, Hunter Desotel, has used text-to-speech software to vocalize the text which he simultaneously wrote down with a quill pen and ink, a couple of hours per day for 115 days between December 13, 2017, and May 27, 2018. These sustained undertakings produced great respect for the accuracy of Oliver as a scribe and for Joseph as an articulator.

Conclusions and Reflections

While it is up to each individual to determine what this information might mean and whether or not it might be useful to them in generating insights or nourishing faith,⁶⁰ all of this background data can offer readers new openings into the Book of Mormon.

Information about the speed with which the translation happened may affect the way any reader interprets and experiences this book. That background can be useful, and not just as cerebral calisthenics, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell once put it. The impact of this information can be fascinating, puzzling, and perhaps even astonishing.

Although it is impossible for readers to relive the translation experience, one may apply the foregoing information to any given day in April, May, or June 1829, to imagine what that day might have been like for

60. See John W. Welch, “The Power of Evidence in the Nurturing of Faith,” in *Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 149–86; reprinted in Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch, eds., *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2002), 17–54; repurposed in “The Role of Evidence in Religious Discussion,” in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University 2011), 259–94.

Joseph and his scribes. By taking any block of three chapters or so, one can imagine what Oliver may have heard on that given day as he heard those words for the first time. Profound teachings, unique vocabulary, and impressive phrases would have greeted Joseph and Oliver among the words found in the voices of Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma, Helaman, Jesus, Mormon, and Moroni. With that model in mind, readers today can strive to read each page as a fresh encounter.

Contextualizing any document or past event is always helpful in understanding it on its own terms. Thus, awareness of how the Book of Mormon came forth may inform, if not transform, a reader's reception of it. This aspect of its dictation delivery may provide a pervasive interpretive lens that sharpens one's focus on details, structures, or elements of orality within the book.

By way of comparative literature, readers may also make instructive use of this information in comparing the Book of Mormon's composition with the manner in which other books have been written. Of course, biblical books did not come forth in a manner anything like the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, which is in a class by itself. Still, one might imagine how differently other books of scripture might be read if we knew as much about how those books were brought forth as we know about the Book of Mormon.

Knowing how quickly it was dictated amplifies the significance of many kinds of details, helping astute readers notice and value literary features that would otherwise go underappreciated. For example, in Alma 36:22, Alma quotes exactly twenty-two words from Lehi as found in 1 Nephi 1:8.⁶¹ Knowing that the passage in Alma was translated in Harmony in April, perhaps about April 24, while the Lehi text was not supplied until June, perhaps about June 5 in Fayette, might be relevant to how those passages and many other instances of complex intertextuality are read.

The pace of the translation might generate new questions yet to be answered. How might the record's ability to keep the lifespans of Alma's genealogy all in line be reanalyzed if one realizes that that lineage-history is widely dispersed among passages that were translated over a span of six weeks, from April 11 to May 22? How might the timing of the translation affect one's thoughts about the significance of the fact

61. See John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), chart 103, available at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/book-of-mormon-charts>.

that the thirty names in the Jaredite genealogy in Ether 1—running from Ether back in time to Jared—would have been dictated on one day, and then they were repeated (apparently without any notes) in exactly the opposite order—from Jared down to Ether—as the story of those Jaredite rulers was translated over the next three days in Ether 2–11?⁶²

How might the sequence of the translation affect one's reading of the account of the great destructions in 3 Nephi 8, which was translated about May 12, as it fulfills prophecies that were detailed in 1 Nephi 19, which was translated a month later?⁶³ The antithetically parallel words of Alma the Younger as he came out of his three-day coma were translated in Mosiah 27 on about April 13, while his chiasmic retelling of that conversion event twenty years later in Alma 36 (which was translated about ten days later on April 24, 1829) reincorporated many of the same distinctive words and phrases.⁶⁴

The seven tribes in the Nephite world (Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites) are listed three times in the Book of Mormon.⁶⁵ The first instance dictated by Joseph comes in a rather inconspicuous spot in 4 Nephi 1:38, translated about May 21, simply conveying a sense of complete inclusivity. A page later, but coming from a century later historically, the same seven tribes are listed exactly in the same order in Mormon 1:8, now marking their division into two warring camps. A third occurrence of this precise seven-tribe list comes later in the translation time frame in Jacob 1:13, where

62. See “Why Does the Book of Ether Begin with Such a Long Genealogy?” Book of Mormon Central, November 21, 2016, <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-does-the-book-of-ether-begin-with-such-a-long-genealogy>.

63. In this connection, consider the correlation between the earth, air, fire, and water elements of destruction mentioned in 1 Nephi 19 and those reported in 3 Nephi 8–9 (Welch and Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon*, chart 49) and also the names of these cosmic powers in 1 Nephi 19 and 3 Nephi 8–9 as they compare with the names of the rebellious evil forces in 1 Enoch, listed in John W. Welch, “Enoch Translated,” review of *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapter 1–36; 81–108* by George W. E. Nickelsburg, *FARMS Review* 16, no. 1 (2004): 415–16.

64. John W. Welch, “Three Accounts of Alma’s Conversion,” in Welch, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 150–53; Welch and Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon*, chart 106.

65. Diane E. Wirth, “Revisiting the Seven Lineages of the Book of Mormon and the Seven Tribes of Mesoamerica,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2013): 77–88.

the reader now learns that this list had its cultural origins back in the days of Jacob. Here, this tribally formative ordering serves other purposes, probably being based on Lehi's final blessings to these seven lineages in 2 Nephi 1:28, 30; 2:1; 3:1 and coming about a month later in the translation, about June 24.

Similarly, the impressive teachings of Abinadi in Mosiah 12–15 came forth early in the process, about April 10. As John Hilton has shown,⁶⁶ thirteen cases of Abinadi's phraseology appear in Alma's words to his son Corianton in Alma 39–43, which were translated on April 26, about 130 pages later. Those allusions make particular sense when one allows that Alma the Younger grew up listening to his father speak of the words and doctrines that he had learned from Abinadi himself.

At an objective level, these details further provide more developed answers to questions that have been asked for decades about when and how fast the Book of Mormon was produced. As a by-product, this study shows that the historical documents relating to this somewhat obscure chapter in early Latter-day Saint history interlock more accurately than might otherwise have been expected. Such information can thus enhance trust in the process by which it came forth. In the midst of uncertainties, the anchor dates and the feasibility of the rate of translation can be known with reassuring confidence by considerable evidence from multiple independent historical documents and confirmed by the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. In 1831, Joseph said it was not intended for people to know the particulars of how the Book of Mormon came forth,⁶⁷ and indeed no one knows how the translation instruments given to him by Moroni worked. One may surmise that even Joseph could not begin to explain the miraculous aspects of the process. But the book happened, and enough can be known about when it happened and how much time it took. And at a religious level, that may be enough.

At a personal level, this information may add to any reader's literary or devotional appreciation of the Book of Mormon—by any account an extraordinary book. Oliver Cowdery's personal reaction to his experience as Joseph's scribe was one of gratitude: "To sit under the sound

66. John Hilton III, Sunny Hendry Hafen, and Jaron Hansen, "Samuel and His Sources," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2017): 115–39.

67. "Minute Book 2," 13, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/15>, cited as document 11 in Welch, "Miraculous Timing," 131.

of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened [in me] the utmost gratitude.”⁶⁸ Modern Church leaders have said: “You and I owe many people for their lives in bringing us the Book of Mormon;”⁶⁹ and “[this book] is one of God’s priceless gifts to us,”⁷⁰ for which people may well feel abundantly grateful.

At the same time, the feat of bringing forth the Book of Mormon within its tight time frame increases appreciation for the achievement of the Prophet Joseph Smith, which can, in turn, increase awe and reverence for God and the word of God. As Elder Maxwell once observed, “One marvel is the very rapidity with which Joseph was translating.”⁷¹ I would add that we should note the marvel of perceiving and vocalizing the text, line after line, with no time for research, for collocating scattered scriptural phrases, for keeping track of numerous threads, for developing an array of characters and their stylistic voices, or for composing coherent accounts.

Such temporal matters may serve more than merely mundane purposes. Mortal beings can know more logically that God loves and cares about them if they know that God cares about time. Being in space and time, God knows about times and seasons, and he gives signs of the times. He works within historical time in order to fulfill covenants he has made. He also gives people time, time to repent, which is the essence of his mercy (see Alma 42:4, 22). Above all, he wants to lovingly bless all his children, for time and for all eternity.

Thus, it can be hoped that this information will help some readers to see how the Book of Mormon sets out to accomplish its self-proclaimed purpose—“unto the convincing” of people everywhere “that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.” It would be a bonus added to the value of this objective data if users experienced any such spiritual impressions as responses to information presented in this study. Such investigations cannot create belief, but these data points

68. “History, 1834–1836,” 47, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1834-1836/49>.

69. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” 36.

70. Tad R. Callister, “God’s Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* 47 (November 2017): 109. See also Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” *Ensign* 47 (November 2017): 60–63.

71. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” 39.

may help maintain a climate in which spiritual feelings and rigorous investigation may interactively flourish.⁷²

Estimated Day-by-Day Translation in 1829

<i>Date (1829)</i>	<i>Possible Chapters Translated</i>	<i>Event</i>
March	Mosiah 1	A few pages translated. The work of translation resumed where it left off after the loss of the manuscript pages in 1828.
April 5 Sun.		Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania.*
6		Joseph purchased property from Emma's father.* About this time, D&C 6 was received, directed to Oliver Cowdery as he began serving as Joseph Smith's scribe.
7	Mosiah 2–4	Oliver began working as Joseph's scribe.*
8	Mosiah 5–7	
9	Mosiah 8–11	About this time, D&C 8 was received, directed to Oliver about the power to translate. Compare Mosiah 8:11–16, speaking of King Mosiah's power to translate.
10	Mosiah 12–16	
11	Mosiah 17–20	
12 Sun.	Mosiah 21–25	About this time, Oliver wrote a letter to David Whitmer.
13	Mosiah 26–28	
14	Mosiah 29 and Alma 1–2	
15	Alma 3–6	

72. I refer to the British theologian Austin Farrar in speaking about C. S. Lewis (and quoted by Elder Maxwell on several occasions): "Though argument does not create conviction, lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows that ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish." Austin Farrar, "Grete Clerk," in Jocelyn Gibb, comp., *Light on C. S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1965), 26; cited by Neal A. Maxwell, "Discipleship and Scholarship," *BYU Studies* 32, no. 3 (1992): 5.

16	Alma 7–10	
17	Alma 11–13	
18	Alma 14–17	
19 Sun.	Alma 18–19	About this time, Oliver wrote a second letter to David Whitmer.
20	Alma 20–23	
21	Alma 24–26	
22	Alma 27–30	
23	Alma 31–33	
24	Alma 34–36	
25	Alma 37–38	
April 26 Sun.	Alma 39–40	About this time, D&C 9 was received (compare D&C 9:14, “a hair of your head shall not be lost, and you shall be lifted up at the last day,” with Alma 11:44 or 40:23).
27	Alma 41–43	
28	Alma 44–45	
29	Alma 46–48	
30	Alma 49–51	
May 1	Alma 52–54	
2	Alma 55–57	
3 Sun.	Alma 58–61	
4	Alma 62–63 and Helaman 1	
5	Helaman 2–4	
6	Helaman 5–7	
7	Helaman 8–10	
8	Helaman 11–13	
9	Helaman 14–16	
10 Sun.	3 Nephi 1–3	
11	3 Nephi 4–6	
12	3 Nephi 7–10	
13	3 Nephi 11–12	
14	3 Nephi 13–15	
15	3 Nephi 16–18	Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.* At this time, Joseph and Oliver went into the nearby woods to pray about baptism for the remission of sins, which they had found mentioned in the translation, presumably in 3 Nephi 11:21–12:2.
16	3 Nephi 19–21	

17 Sun.	3 Nephi 22–23	About this time, Oliver wrote a third letter to David Whitmer.
18		About this time, Joseph and Oliver traveled 30 miles to Colesville, New York.
19		Joseph and Oliver returned 30 miles from Colesville. Perhaps at this time, Peter, James, and John appeared to restore the higher priesthood and the power to give the gift of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in 3 Nephi 18:36–38.
20	3 Nephi 24–27	
May 21	3 Nephi 28–30 and 4 Nephi	About this time, D&C 7 may have been received, speaking about John not tasting death. Compare material in the account about the Three Nephites in 3 Nephi 28:1 (“what desirest thou?” D&C 7:1); 28:9 (“bring souls,” 7:2); 28:2 (“speedily,” 7:4); 28:7 (“never taste death,” “power over death” in 7:2).
22	Mormon 1–4	
23	Mormon 5–7	
24 Sun.	Mormon 8–9	
25	Ether 1–3	Samuel Smith was baptized.*
26	Ether 4–7	
27	Ether 8–10	
28	Ether 11–12	Near this date, Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania.
29	Ether 13–15 and Moroni 1–4	
30	Moroni 5–8	About at this point, D&C 12 was received, directed to Joseph Knight Sr. (compare 12:8, “full of love,” “faith, hope and charity,” with Mosiah 3:19; Ether 12:28; Moro. 7:1; 8:14).
31 Sun.	Moroni 9–10 and title page*	About this time, D&C 11 was revealed to Hyrum. Compare D&C 11:16 (“my gospel”), and 11:25 (“deny not”) with 3 Ne. 27:21 and Moro. 10:8.
June 1		Joseph and Oliver packed and moved from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York.*
2		Travel to Fayette.
3		Travel to Fayette.
4		Travel to Fayette and unpack. About this time, D&C 10 was finalized, telling Joseph to translate the plates of Nephi (D&C 10:41).

5	Translation resumes with 1 Nephi 1–2	About this time, the voice was heard in Father Whitmer's chamber authorizing Joseph and Oliver to be ordained elders.
6	1 Nephi 3–6	
7 Sun.	1 Nephi 7–9	About this time, John and Peter Whitmer Sr. were baptized, and D&C 15 and 16 were received.
June 8	1 Nephi 10–12	About this time, D&C 14 was given for David Whitmer.
9	1 Nephi 13–16	About this time, D&C 18 was received (compare 18:20, "church of the devil," with 1 Ne. 14:10).
10	1 Nephi 17–19	
11		Copyright form was filed in United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, using the full title page as the "title" of the book on the copyright form.*
12	1 Nephi 20–22	
13	2 Nephi 1–3	
14 Sun.		Oliver wrote to Hyrum.* His letter used some words similar to those in 2 Ne. 9:21–23; Mosiah 5:9–10; and Moro. 8. About this time, David and Peter Whitmer Jr. were baptized.
15	2 Nephi 4–6	
16	2 Nephi 7–9	
17	2 Nephi 10–13	
18	2 Nephi 14–19	
19	2 Nephi 20–24	
20	2 Nephi 25–27	
21 Sun.		About this time, Oliver Cowdery composed the "Articles of the Church of Christ." This document quotes extensively, verbatim, from the original manuscript of 3 Ne. 9:15–16, 18; 11:23–27, 32, 39–40; 18:22, 28–33; 27:8–10, 20; Moro. 3:1–4; 4:1–2; 5:1–2; 6:6; and also from D&C 18:4, 22–25, 31, 34.
22	2 Nephi 28–31	About this time, D&C 17 was received, authorizing Oliver, David, and Martin to obtain a view of the plates (17:2; compare 2 Ne. 27:12).
23	2 Nephi 32–33	About this time, the manifestation of Moroni was given to the Three Witnesses, as prompted by the translation of 2 Ne. 27:12–13.

24	Jacob 1–3	
25	Jacob 4–5	
26	Jacob 6–7	
27	Enos and Jarom	
June 28 Sun.	Omni and Words of Mormon	
29		In Manchester, New York.* About this time, the Eight Witnesses were shown the plates.
30		By this date, the translation was finished.* About this time, the testimonies of the Three and the Eight Witnesses were written.
July		About this time, the preface to the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon was written. It uses at least nine phrases found in the title page or in D&C 10.

***Bolded texts give historically documentable details.** For historical documentation, see pp. 16–30.

All other dates are estimates, assuming a relatively consistent rate of translation. Royal Skousen, The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text, has 269,510 words in the original Book of Mormon text. The number of days allotted for the translation of each book in the Book of Mormon corresponds proportionally with the percentage of total words contained in each book, except for Sundays, for which fewer words were counted.

Large Plates

	words	percent
Mosiah	31,348	11.6
Alma	85,753	31.9
Helaman	20,650	7.7
3 Nephi	28,801	10.7
4 Nephi	1,980	0.7
Mormon	9,483	3.5
Ether	16,720	6.2
Moroni	6,140	2.3
Title Page	268	0.1

Small Plates

	words	percent
1 Nephi	25,441	9.4
2 Nephi	29,531	11.0
Jacob	9,212	3.4
Enos	1,177	0.4
Jarom	737	0.3
Omni	1,406	0.5
Words of Mormon	863	0.3

Maximum number of possible days available for the translation of the Book of Mormon from April 7 to June 30:

Mosiah–Moroni:	53 days
1 Nephi–Words of Mormon:	21 days
Total:	74 days

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This presentation was first delivered as the Laura F. Willes Book of Mormon Lecture at Brigham Young University, November 8, 2017; video available at <https://mi.byu.edu/watch-welch-lecture>; with a shortened version presented under the title of “April 7: A Day Never to Be Forgotten,” at the Book of Mormon Central Conference “Experience the Book of Mormon,” Provo, Utah, April 7, 2018; video available at <https://bookofmormoncentral.org/events/book-of-mormon-central-2018-conference>. This paper combines these two previous presentations.

Elvis Has Left the Library

Identifying Forged Annotations in a Book of Mormon

Keith A. Erikson

For nearly three decades, the ghost of Elvis Presley has hung over the historical collections of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1989, a copy of the Book of Mormon was donated that contained marginal annotations purportedly by the “King of Rock and Roll.” Word of the acquisition spread quickly by fireside speakers, classroom teachers, and newspaper columnists. Requests to see and touch the book came repeatedly, so much so that by 2002 the book’s binding had cracked and a digital copy was made for visitors who came each week for a peek. In 2007, an independent film shown at the sixth annual LDS Film Festival in Orem, Utah, used the book as its launching point for a highly creative look at Presley’s later years, titled *Tears of a King: The Latter Days of Elvis*. Now, more than forty years after Presley’s death, the story of his handwriting in this Book of Mormon continues to circulate regularly throughout the Latter-day Saint market for “uplifting” books and social media content.¹

1. See, for example, Paul Skousen, “The King and I,” *Latter-Day Sentinel*, July 26, 1989, A8–A9; Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Elder Elvis? Was the King Close to Converting to Mormon Faith?” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 14, 2001, C1; Cathy Free, “Utahn All Shook Up over Elvis,” *Deseret News*, August 8, 2002, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/929939/Utahn-all-shook-up-over-Elvis.html>; Greg Hill, “Church in Memphis Is on the Rise,” *Church News*, May 30, 2003, 11; Keith McCord, “Movie Shows Spiritual Side of Elvis,” KSL, September 15, 2006, <https://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=494190>; Lynn Arave, “Elvis Almost LDS?” *Deseret News*, October 2, 2006, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/650195503/Elvis-almost-LDS.html>; Michael Rigert, “Elvis Had a Book

Perhaps the most surprising part of this story is how confidently the tale has been told with so little analysis. Journalist Peggy Fletcher Stack presented a detailed recitation of the story in 2001, concluding only tepidly, “As to whether the notes in The Book of Mormon really were made by Elvis, no one can be sure.” Filmmaker Rob Diamond wrote, shot, and produced *Tears of a King* without authenticating the handwriting. He reportedly planned to hire an expert, but “I do have my personal beliefs,” he said, and “I wouldn’t have made the film unless I felt strongly about it.” Published efforts to authenticate “Mormon myths” simply passed along the story with little effort at authentication. In public, Church History Department staff gave neither an endorsement nor a denial. “We believe Elvis owned it,” said one photo archivist in 2001, “but we make no claims about the authenticity of the handwriting.” Another staff member followed up a few years later by confirming that the archive held the book and that no authentication had ever been done: “All we know is what has been told to us.” Despite the lack of verification, boosters of the film happily (and repeatedly) reported that the archive allowed the book to be used during shooting.² This, it seemed, was a storyteller’s dream—a faith-promoting story with touchable roots in the Church’s historical collection.

of Mormon,” *Daily Herald*, September 24, 2006, B12; Rob Diamond, *Tears of a King* (7 Films 7 Productions, 2007); “Filmmakers to Share Experiences of Making Elvis Presley Bio-Movie at LDS Film Festival,” *Meridian Magazine*, January 16, 2007, <https://ldsmag.com/article-1-1114/>; Roger L. Hardy, “‘Tears of King’ Shows Spiritual Side of Elvis,” *Deseret News*, January 24, 2008, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/695246024/Tears-of-King-shows-spiritual-side-of-Elvis.html>; KSL News, “Fact or Fiction? Mormon Stories and Urban Legends,” 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxPJOPHjKfc>; Danielle B. Wagner, “21 Famous People Who Have Been Given a Book of Mormon,” *LDS Living*, August 22, 2018, <http://www.ldsliving.com/Famous-People-Who-Have-Been-Given-a-Book-of-Mormon/s/77518>.

2. Stack, “Elder Elvis?” C1; Rob Diamond, quoted in Rigert, “Elvis Had a Book of Mormon,” B12. Church History Department staff, quoted in Stack, “Elder Elvis?” C1; and Arave, “Elvis Almost LDS?”; J. Michael Hunter, *Mormon Mythellaneous: Amazing True Mormon Stories—and Some That Should Be!* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2008), 196–97. See also “If You Could Hie to Graceland,” *Sunstone*, no. 143 (November 2006): 78; “Filmmakers to Share Experiences”; Roger L. Hardy, “Film Explores Elvis-LDS Link,” *Deseret News*, January 25, 2007, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/650225300/Film-explores-Elvis-LDS-link.html>.

In the four years that I've served as director of the Church History Library, I've heard the story of this book numerous times, but I only called the book out of the stacks after a Salt Lake City television station wanted to film yet another telling. As I examined the volume, the annotations on its pages immediately raised more questions than answers. Internal records revealed that others had likewise questioned the book's authenticity, as early as 1991 and as recently as 2008. My research accelerated, drawing on a host of recently published works that document Elvis's life and activities more clearly than ever before. The passage of time has introduced more authentic samples of Presley's handwriting into the market, as well as more forgeries to be identified by collectors, dealers, and auction houses.³ By examining the opportunities for Presley to have read this volume and by carefully analyzing the handwriting throughout its pages, I can now affirm that Elvis Presley did not write in this Book of Mormon.⁴ This article describes a collection of items in the Church History Library related to Elvis Presley, places the collection's provenance within the context of Presley's life, and analyzes the handwriting within the book's pages. The conclusion of forgery has been corroborated by industry experts in authenticating Elvis Presley's handwriting.

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

Though the copy of the Book of Mormon purportedly marked by Elvis has received most of the attention in the media and popular culture, the

3. I acknowledge Brandon Metcalf, Christy Best, and Robin Jensen for reviewing my preliminary findings and coaching me in the art and science of handwriting analysis. Brian Reeves, Jeff Anderson, Steve Sorenson, Glenn Rowe, and LaVonne Gaw walked this pathway before me, leaving clues to guide my way. Joan Nay, Lis Allen, Keali'i Haverly, and Brooks Haderlie aided my research. Reid Neilson, Steve Harper, and Deb Abercrombie provided encouragement; Alan Osmond provided inspiration. A dinner conversation with Carolyn, Emily, Alyse, Haley, and Lyndie turned into a charge to get to the bottom of this. To all of these I simply say, "Thank you, thank you very much."

4. These findings were announced in Keith A. Erikson, "Elvis Presley's Copy of the Book of Mormon Ain't Nothin' but a Forgery, Church History Experts Say," *Church News*, November 14, 2018, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/history-revisited/2018-11-14/elvis-presleys-copy-of-the-book-of-mormon-aint-nothin-but-a-forgery-church-history-experts-say-48425>. My research notes are preserved in Keith A. Erikson, "Elvis Presley Research Notes," Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

Church History Library actually holds a collection of six items related to this story: two books and four photographs. In 1989, the donation of the Book of Mormon was accompanied by three photographs—one of the donor, Cricket Coulter, with Elvis in Beverly Hills, California, on August 30, 1968; one of Elvis on a motorcycle in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1956; and one of Elvis on a motorcycle with his cousin Billy Smith at Graceland in 1974. In 2002, Coulter contributed a two-in-one volume containing the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price and an undated photograph of herself and an unidentified woman with Elvis. The Library was not given intellectual rights to any of the photographs and cannot reproduce them in print or online.⁵

The two-in-one combination volume was published in 1974 with a soft red cover. The title page of the Doctrine and Covenants contains three inscriptions by the donor. The first in blue ink, reads “Cricket & Jerry Butler 8-2-77.” The words “& Jerry” have been written over in black ink with the word “Mendell.” The second inscription is in black ink and reads “8-2-77 Elvis, You asked for it. Love, Cricket 8-2-77.” The final inscription is in blue ink and reads “Returned to me 8-31-77 by Vernon Presley (Elvis’ Dad).” Within the volume are handwritten annotations on 40 pages, the first occurring on page 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants and the last on page 27 of the Pearl of Great Price, a pattern that suggests Elvis read the book and engaged with its contents almost from cover to cover. The annotations are made in red, blue, and black ink and consist of square brackets (22 instances), underlining (18), circles (2), a star (1), and an arrow (1). On 35 of the 40 annotated pages, there are also words written in the margin. However, for 17 of the 35 textual annotations, the author has signed a name and a date. These annotations were made after Elvis’s death, in 1981, 1982, and 1983 by at least three missionaries. The names of three additional missionaries are also recorded in the margins. Because the evidence for tampering with this volume after the death of Elvis is so clear, I did not submit it to any further investigation.⁶

5. Cricket Marie Coulter, “Annotated Copies of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, 1976–1977,” Church History Library.

6. Annotations unique to the combination volume include the use of red ink, square brackets, the star, and the arrow. The missionaries who signed the volume are Elders Evans (August 1981), Belliston (September 1981), and Lundburg (April 24, 1982); those named in the volume are Elders Gibson, Barney, and Papa. The earliest dated entry is August 1981, and the latest is unsigned on February 12, 1983.

Crispet M. Butler

Donated to Jimmy Velox
for the Elvis Presley
Museum 12-7-79.
Returned 8-11-81.

This book was given back to me
by Elvis' dad, Vernon Presley on
Aug 19, 1977.

To Elvis,

You said you
wanted to read this
Enjoy - it's interesting
& enlightening. God
bless you always,
my friend. God may
you always be
filled with His
sweet sweet spirit.

Love, Crispet

FIGURE 1. Inside front cover of the Book of Mormon. Photograph by author.

The donated Book of Mormon was published in 1976 with a soft, light-blue cover featuring a golden angel Moroni. The inside front cover contains six inscriptions (fig. 1), which read as follows from the top of the page to the bottom:

1. "Cricket & Jerry Butler" in black ink
2. "8-2-77" and "Mendell" in blue ink, the latter being written over "& Jerry" of the first inscription
3. "Donated to Jimmy Velvet for the Elvis Presley Museum 12-7-79." in black ink
4. "Returned 8-11-81." in black ink
5. "This book was given back to me by Elvis' dad, Vernon Presley on Aug 19, 1977." in black ink
6. "To Elvis, You said you wanted to read this. Enjoy—it's interesting & enlightening. God bless you always, my friend. And may you always be filled with His sweet sweet spirit. Love, Cricket" in blue ink.

The final inscription marking the gift of the book from Cricket to Elvis is undated, but the date of August 2 was written at the top of the page and is the same date given in the Doctrine and Covenants. It also appears to make a reference to the popular 1962 gospel song "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" by Doris Mae "Dot" Akers, a song that was never recorded by Elvis but sung by his backup singers, J. D. Sumner & the Stamps, including during one of his concerts.⁷

Within the Book of Mormon volume are handwritten annotations on 89 of the book's 558 pages—nearly 1 of every 6 pages. The first annotation appears on the first page of the book and the last one on its last page (page 558, in the index), giving the impression that Elvis read the entire book and engaged with its contents from beginning to end. The annotations are made in black and blue ink and consist of underlining (47 instances), curved brackets in the margins (34), check marks (21),

7. J. D. Sumner & the Stamps sang backup for Elvis from 1971 until his death in 1977, and multiple versions of their singing may be found on YouTube. On the writing and popularity of Akers's "Sweet, Sweet Spirit," see C. Michael Hawn, "History of Hymns: 'Sweet, Sweet Spirit,'" *Discipleship Ministries: The United Methodist Church*, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-sweet-sweet-spirit>. For a list of songs recorded by Elvis Presley, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_songs_recorded_by_Elvis_Presley.

and circles (12). On 36 of the 89 annotated pages, words are also written in the margins—including 17 instances of single words, such as “good” or “mine”; 7 instances of two-word phrases, such as “me too”; 2 instances of three-word phrases; 3 instances of four-word phrases; and 3 instances of five-word phrases; and 1 instance each of phrases that are seven, eight, ten, and fourteen words long. There are a total of 103 words written in the margins through the entire book.⁸ Unlike the two-in-one volume, this book does not present evidence of additional persons making annotations in the book. The quantity and length of the annotations, together with the appearance of only one style of handwriting, provide opportunity to analyze this handwriting and compare it to authentic samples of Elvis’s known writing. But first we must consider the question of whether the book could have even found its way into his hands.

PROVENANCE

The basic outline of how this copy of the Book of Mormon made its way into the Church’s archives has been repeatedly told in the news media. It all started with superfan Cricket Coulter, who had followed Elvis Presley for more than a decade before giving him the book. Born in Ohio in 1948, she began a lifelong obsession with “the King” while in fifth grade, founding a fan club at age ten that she later named “Elvis—He Touched Me” after his Grammy-winning song by the same name. She lived in an apartment near his home in California, had homes near Graceland in Memphis and in Las Vegas, attended 533 of his concerts, and appeared as an uncredited fan in his 1970 documentary *Elvis: That’s the Way It Is*, in which the twenty-two-year-old distanced herself from the crazy, teeny-bopper fans, declaring, “I think I’m too mature for that. I’m more of a quiet fan.” She was baptized into the Church in Memphis in the summer of 1976.⁹

8. For verification, I cross-checked the physical volume against microfilm and electronic copies made previously by Church History Department staff. I thank my daughter, Haley Noelle Erikson, for double-checking every page of the electronic copy of the volume.

9. Cricket Coulter’s statement occurs about eleven minutes into Denis Sanders, *Elvis: That’s the Way It Is*, documentary, 1970, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065687/>. See Stack, “Elder Elvis?” C1; Free, “Utahn All Shook Up over Elvis”; Megan Murphy, “Cricket Coulter @ Elvis Week 2011,” *Back in Memphis* (blog), October 15, 2011, <http://backinmemphis.blogspot.com/2011/10/cricket-coulter-elvis-week-2011.html>. Born Cricket Mendell, in 1977, she was married to Jerry Butler and signed the Book of Mormon as Cricket Butler. She presents her name

Coulter reports giving the book to Elvis on August 2, 1977, and that his father returned it to her on August 19, 1977. Over the years, she shared two different stories about why the book was returned to her. In one version, Vernon Presley didn't want Elvis's interest in the Church to be known, so he slipped the book out of the house and into her custody. This version strains credulity because an effort to hide the book would not have resulted in its delivery to a fan who would cherish and tell the story. Vernon would have simply destroyed the book (as had been done previously with Elvis's spiritual books). In the other story, because Cricket was a fan of the Osmonds as well as Presley, she reported that the book was given to her to pass along because Elvis wanted the Osmonds to have it. If so, why did she wait so long, and why did she first try to give the book to Jimmy Velvet?¹⁰ In either case, Coulter later showed the book to Alan Osmond, who "interviewed her on cassette tape" and "had her sign a letter of authenticity." Having documented Coulter's claims, Osmond forwarded the book to Elder Rex Pinegar, a relative by marriage then serving as a General Authority, who delivered the book to the executive director of the Church Historical Department.¹¹ The volume was accessioned into the Church's collection in July 1989. Thanks to Alan Osmond's careful documentation, the chain of provenance from Coulter to the Church is thoroughly documented, but what about the most important links in the chain, those between Coulter and Elvis Presley?¹² Did Elvis read and mark this copy of the Book of Mormon

as Cricket-Marie Coulter in her self-published book, *Elvis's Real Gold: The Spirit of His Fans* (privately published, 2002). She uses Cricket Coulter on both of her Facebook pages, <https://www.facebook.com/cricketmarie.coulterharris> (current) and <https://www.facebook.com/cricket.coulter> (2010–2013).

10. The first version is reported in Stack, "Elder Elvis?" C1; the second appears in Donny Osmond and Patricia Romanowski, *Life Is Just What You Make It* (New York: Hyperion, 1999), 168–69. The book-burning incident is reported in Priscilla Beaulieu Presley, *Elvis and Me* (New York: Berkley Books, 1985), 234. Approached more than twenty years later at a guitar show in Nashville, Velvet could not remember an interaction with Cricket Coulter. Brad Hardisty, phone call with Keith A. Erikson, November 17, 2018. Velvet's transaction records from the period are not available.

11. Stack, "Elder Elvis?" C1; Arave, "Elvis Almost LDS?"; Hardy, "Film Explores Elvis-LDS Link."

12. In the autograph business, certificates of authenticity (COA) are treated with deep suspicion. "Remember a COA is just a piece of paper that anyone—you, I, a reputed dealer, a trusted source, amateur or indeed a fraudster can

during the fourteen days that it was reportedly in his possession in August 1977? Can Coulter's timeline be corroborated?

The last two weeks of Elvis Presley's life were anything but uneventful.¹³ He returned to Graceland from touring at the end of June 1977, and his nine-year-old daughter, Lisa Marie, arrived on July 31. Beyond his daughter, he saw few people during these weeks, principally a few close friends, his doctor, and his twenty-year-old fiancée, Ginger Alden, who brought her ten-year-old niece along to play with Lisa. During this period, Elvis rode motorcycles once, played racquetball once, rented the local amusement park to entertain the kids, and held a private screening of several films. On one evening, he and Ginger visited her family, where he sang and talked excitedly about numerology. Beyond hosting his daughter and visiting family, Elvis was also reeling from the publication of a devastating exposé of his prescription drug abuse and violent behavior. The book, titled *Elvis, What Happened?* relates numerous experiences from three of his former bodyguards about his careless and reckless behavior.¹⁴ His biographer notes that Elvis "alternated between bouts of depression and moments of defiance" as well as "waves of shame and rage" as he worried about the book and his career.¹⁵ And he was preparing to leave on tour on August 16, which involved "many hours and days of planning and coordination." At the same time, he was avoiding and reluctantly starting a liquid diet. This tour would be the first time he would face his fans after the exposé, and he was concerned. Elvis was also spatting with Ginger and trying to persuade her to go with him on tour. Alden reported that Elvis read "some spiritual books"

create at will," states authenticator Garry Gomersall. His first tip for avoiding mistakes is "*Be sceptical of COAs*—COAs do NOT provide a guarantee of authenticity. To the contrary they are used by unscrupulous sellers to lure the buyer into a false sense of security." Garry Gomersall, "Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs," *ElvisToday.com*, January 5, 2009, <http://www.elvistoday.com/index.php/autographs104/155-authenticating-elvis-presley-autographs.html>, emphasis in original.

13. The timeline is reconstructed from Peter Guralnick, *Careless Love: The Unmaking of Elvis Presley* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999), 641–61; Peter Guralnick and Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis: Day by Day* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 376–79; Ginger Alden, *Elvis & Ginger* (New York: Berkley Books, 2014), 327–29, 331–32.

14. Red West, Sonny West, and Dave Hebler, as told to Steve Dunleavy, *Elvis, What Happened?* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977).

15. Guralnick, *Careless Love*, 643–44.

during the summer but named only *A Scientific Search for the Face of Jesus* about the Shroud of Turin and *Sex and Psychic Energy*.¹⁶

Timeline of July 31–August 19, 1977

- July 31 Elvis's daughter Lisa Marie arrives for a two-week visit.
- August 2 Cricket Coulter reportedly gives a Book of Mormon to Elvis Presley.
- August 4 *Elvis, What Happened?* is published.
- August 6 Elvis and Ginger Alden visit her family.
- August 7 Elvis and Ginger are at home in the evening.
- August 8 Elvis rents Libertyland amusement park in the early-morning hours.
- August 10 Elvis watches several films.
- August 14 Elvis goes motorcycling with Ginger and Billy and Jo Smith.
- August 15 Elvis wakes at 4:00 p.m., rides a golf cart with Lisa, and goes to the dentist at 10:30 p.m.
- August 16 Elvis plays racquetball in the early hours, takes medications, and dies.
- August 17 Presley family holds a viewing for Elvis attended by thousands.
- August 18 Presley family holds a funeral and buries Elvis.
- August 19 Vernon Presley reportedly returns the Book of Mormon to Cricket Coulter.

In the midst of hosting his daughter, worrying about the exposé, and planning for his upcoming tour, did Elvis receive a copy of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price from Cricket Coulter? It is possible. Did he read and ponder the nearly 1,000 pages of text in the volumes and leave handwritten annotations on 112 of those pages? It is very unlikely.

16. Nancy B. Rooks and Jim Cox, *Inside Graceland: Elvis' Maid Remembers* (Bloomington, Ind.: Xlibris, 2005), 96–98; Alden, *Elvis & Ginger*, 324, 338–39. Frank O. Adams, *A Scientific Search for the Face of Jesus* (Tucson, Ariz.: Psychological Aid Foundation, 1972); Betty Bethards, *Sex and Psychic Energy* (Novato, Calif.: Inner Light Foundation, 1977).

HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

If a review of the book's provenance set within the context of Elvis Presley's last two weeks of life strains plausibility, then analysis of the handwriting in the volume leaves no room for doubt. The content of the annotations has so captured public imagination that the fact that the book contains a signature has scarcely been mentioned. But neither the signature nor the marginal annotations match authentic samples of Presley's handwriting, a fact corroborated by leading external authenticators of Elvis Presley handwriting.

Signature

The first page of the Book of Mormon contains the forged signature "E. A. Presley." Elvis always signed "Elvis Presley" for fan autographs, but on formal documents such as contracts and especially on checks he was known to sign "Elvis A. Presley" or "E. A. Presley." Because Elvis autographs—real and fake—surface so often in the collecting and auction markets, analysts and authenticators have amassed dozens of authentic samples and published several detailed studies of his handwriting. As collector Garry Gomersall noted in reflecting on thirty-five years in the business, "I've seen and been offered literally hundreds, possibly thousands of 'genuine' Elvis autographs—most of them fake." It is unknown how many times Elvis signed his autograph, but among authentic signatures there are variations and changes over time. He never signed for requests that came by mail (his secretaries and staff did), and he wrote few personal letters. A fan who wanted an authentic signature had to catch Elvis in person.¹⁷

Music industry autograph authenticator and collector Roger Epperson provided the most thorough history of Presley's handwriting in a two-part series for *Autograph Collector* magazine, subtitled "'The Story of Elvis' Autograph through Every Loop and Turn." He observed that

17. Gomersall, "Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs." For samples of fan autographs and formal documents, see Bill White, "A Collector's Guide to Elvis," RRAuction.com, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://www.rrauction.com/elvis.cfm>; color photographs of signatures may be viewed at "Elvis Autographs: Real or Fake: Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs," Elvis Australia, May 20, 2010, <https://www.elvis.com.au/presley/elvis-autographs.shtml>. For examples of Elvis Presley's signature on formal documents, including his divorce (1972), divorce supplement (1972), and last will and testament (March 3, 1977), see Jimmy Velvet's Elvis Presley Museum at elvispresleymuseum.com.

Elvis was “consistently inconsistent . . . in the way he signed.” Further, by the 1970s, the combination of stress and poor health was reflected in handwriting that grew more “shaky and inconsistent” and lost its previous “easy fluidity.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, to the careful observer, there are “some consistencies”¹⁹ in Elvis’s autograph that can be used to establish that Elvis Presley did not sign the Book of Mormon in the Church History Library.

An authentic “E. A. Presley” signature is reproduced in figure 2, and the forged signature from the Book of Mormon in the Church History Library is reproduced in figure 3.²⁰ Several elements of the forged signature resemble known general characteristics of authentic signatures. For example, Elvis did sign “E. A. Presley,” the line of the signature rises to the right, and he typically wrote the words on a single line (unless space would not allow). In both authentic signatures and the forgery, the *P* in Presley is the largest and most prominent letter and the initial *A* is a large rendering of the lowercase letter.²¹ The forger knew a little bit about Presley’s signature.

Despite a general resemblance, however, significant differences appear in nearly every letter—the second *e* is missing, the *s* is misformed, and the *l* and *y* slant improperly (see table 1 for details). The

18. Roger Epperson, “It’s Good to Be King: The Story of Elvis’ Autograph through Every Loop and Turn, Part I: 1955–66,” *Autograph Collector* (April/May 2007): 55; Roger Epperson, “Elvis: The Later Years, 1967–1977,” *Autograph Collector* (August/September 2007): 83.

19. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

20. For my analysis, I examined thirty-three authentic “E. A. Presley” signatures on checks— nine of the dozens of checks on public display in the exhibits at Elvis Presley’s Graceland; fourteen checks reproduced in the “history” section of the Graceland Auctions website, <http://auction.graceland.com/>; and ten checks that have been reproduced in published works such as Alden, *Elvis & Ginger*, first color plate (two checks dated December 17, 1976, and June 2, 1977); Epperson, “Elvis: The Later Years,” 83 (two checks dated October 16, 1975, and December 3, 1975); Heritage Auctions staff, “The Elvis Collection,” *Heritage Magazine for the Intelligent Collector* 17 (Summer/Fall 2012): 62 (check dated July 23, 1975); Gillian G. Gaar, *Elvis the Legend; The Authorized Book from the Graceland Archives* (London: Carlton Books, 2017), 62 (check dated February 14, 1964), 74 (check dated August 24, 1966), 91 (check dated July 17, 1970), 176 (check dated December 11, 1963); and Willie G. Moseley, “Collecting Elvis,” *Heritage Magazine for the Intelligent Collector* 17 (Summer/Fall 2012): 49 (check dated September 27, 1958).

21. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis”; Gomersall, “Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs.”

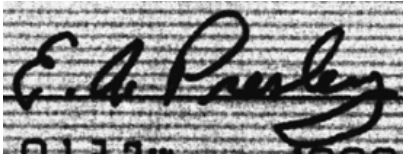


FIGURE 2. Authentic signature from a check dated October 16, 1975. Courtesy Roger Epperson.

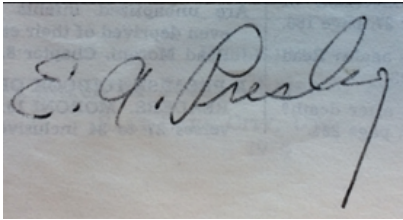


FIGURE 3. Forged Signature in the Book of Mormon in the Church History Library, purportedly made in August 1977. Photograph by the author.

Table 1. Comparison of Authentic Signatures with the Forged Signature

Letter	Authentic Signatures	Forged Signature
E.	Often contains a loop at top and in center ¹	No loop at top or center
A.	Narrow opening, slants right, short tail curves up	Rounded opening, less slant, long straight tail
P	Always separated from “resley” ²	Connected to “resley”
r	Square topped	Peaked
s	Open at the bottom and looks like an <i>r</i> ³	Closed at the bottom
l	Narrow loop or no loop, tilts right ⁴	Loop more rounded than typical
e	Almost always present, even if only as a small bump ⁵	Missing (or the <i>y</i> is misformed)
y	Distinctive, wide loop, different trailing characteristics ⁶	Either missing its upper curve (or misformed), unlooped <i>y</i> more common in 1950s; terminates in a “blunt ending” typical of forgeries generally

1. Gomersall, “Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs.”
2. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis”; Gomersall, “Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs.”
3. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”
4. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”
5. Epperson, “It’s Good to Be King,” 56; White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”
6. Gomersall, “Authenticating Elvis Presley Autographs.” For examples of known variations with the trailing *y*, see White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

two most significant differences are the connection between the *P* and “resley” and the missing final *e* in the forged signature, two telltale signs of forgery.²² Collectively, the differences add up to a clear determination of a forged signature. Writing for Boston-based RR Auction, authenticator Bill White summarized Elvis forgeries as follows: “There is always something missing, be it misformed letters, an improper slant, the wrong relative size of things, the wrong overall feel.”²³ Elvis Presley did not sign this copy of the Book of Mormon.

Marginal Annotations

If the forged signature displays a general hint of Elvis, the marginal annotations throughout the Book of Mormon in the Church History Library demonstrate almost no resemblance to authentic samples of Elvis’s handwriting. As his biographer Peter Guralnick noted, Elvis “never kept a diary, left us with no memoirs, wrote scarcely any letters.”²⁴ Authenticator Bill White characterizes Elvis’s surviving handwriting as “somewhat erratic,” “jerky,” and “childish-looking.”²⁵ The most famous sample is a six-page letter penned to President Richard M. Nixon on December 21, 1970, that Elvis signed on multiple pages (figs. 4 and 5).²⁶

One annotation appearing near the end of the Book of Mormon volume used a word that Elvis did sign frequently. After the end of the main body of text in Moroni 10, a forged annotation reads, “Thanks Cricket!” (fig. 6). Elvis signed the word “Thanks” repeatedly, and many authentic samples exist. Elvis wrote a distinctive capital *T* that looked much like a 7 and connects to the rest of the word. As with the forged signature, the forged “Thanks” gets close to the flavor of the *T*, but its

22. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis”; Roger Epperson, email to Keith A. Erikson, October 17, 2018.

23. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

24. Guralnick, *Careless Love*, xii; see also Peter Guralnick, *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994). For a brief introduction to the life of Elvis Presley, see Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, a Penguin Life book (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003).

25. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

26. Document R-013 re Elvis-Nixon meeting, White House Central Files: Subject Files: EX HE 5-1, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Archives and Records Administration. To view the letter and be directed to an online exhibit about the visit, see <https://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/elvis-letter-to-nixon>. See also Epperson, “Elvis: The Later Years,” 82.

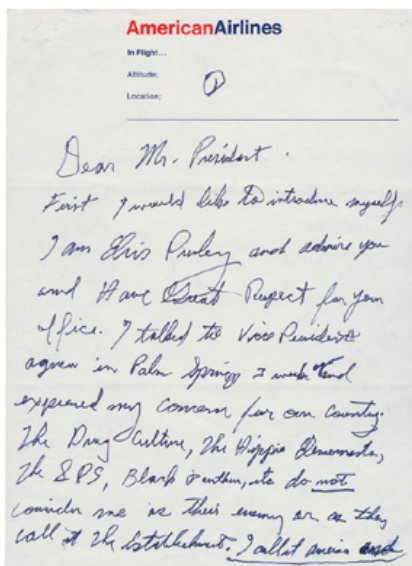


FIGURE 4. First page of Elvis Presley's handwritten letter to Richard M. Nixon, December 21, 1970. Courtesy National Archives.

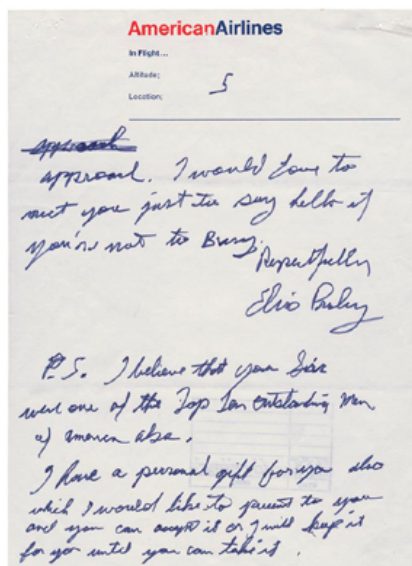


FIGURE 5. Fifth page of Elvis Presley's handwritten letter to Richard M. Nixon, December 21, 1970. Courtesy National Archives.

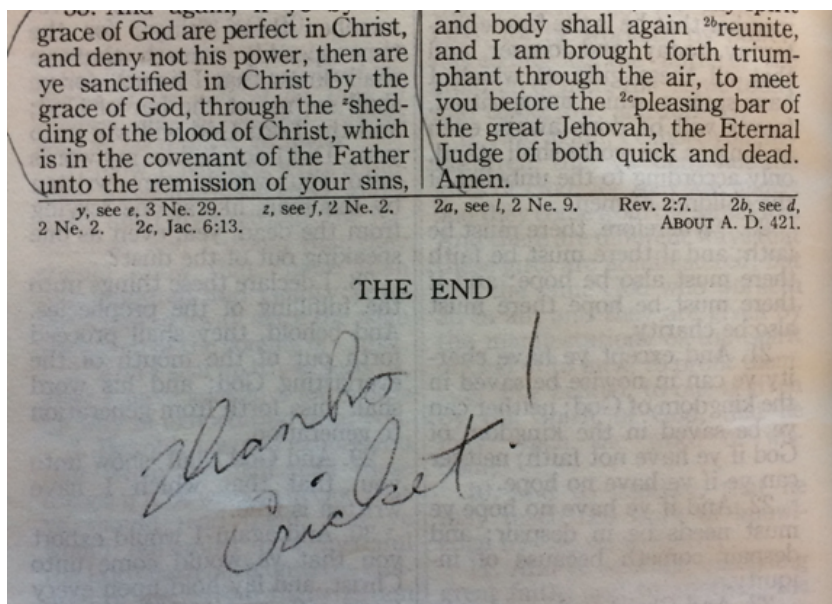


FIGURE 6. Forged inscription in the Book of Mormon. Photograph by the author.

loosely spaced and smoothly curved “hanks” differs markedly from Elvis’s tightly spaced and rougher rendering.²⁷ Beyond the errors of the forged handwriting, the signature and note of thanks are out of place stylistically—if the book had been gifted to Elvis, and if he were actually studying it, he would not have signed it like a check, nor would he have written a thank you note in preparation to return the gift.

Elvis Presley was a reader and a book annotator, and several samples survive of his handwriting in the margins of books.²⁸ His daughter has observed that the books in his personal collection are “covered with his notes. He wrote on the top of the page, on the bottom of the page, in the margins—everywhere.”²⁹ All of the authentic samples reveal the same pattern—Elvis customarily underlined with heavy, crooked lines and wrote in block print letters (fig. 7).

Among the surviving books with authentic annotations are also a few Bibles. One Bible that Elvis marked in 1959 contains an inscription to his recently deceased mother and annotations in several places throughout.³⁰ Another Bible that was recently displayed in the Museum

27. Several authentic examples of Presley’s “Thanks” are reproduced in White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

28. For my analysis, I examined authentic marginal annotations reproduced in David Ritz, ed., *Elvis by the Presleys* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), 114–15; and Guralnick and Jorgensen, *Elvis: Day by Day*, 198 (which features undated annotations in a book titled *Through the Eyes of the Masters*, a page of which is visible online at “Elvis Presley’s Books,” Graceland: The Home of Elvis Presley, September 3, 2015, <https://www.graceland.com/blog/elvis-presleys-books/>). I also examined an annotated copy of *The Impersonal Life*, visible at “The Auction at Graceland, March 4, 2017,” lot #122, Graceland Auctions, http://auction.graceland.com/elvis-presley-owned-and-heavily-notated-copy_of__e-lot2135.aspx, and viewed pages from Elvis’s marked copy of Vera Stanley Alder’s *The Initiation of the World* (1968), 94–95, which is on public display at Graceland in the *Archives Experience* exhibit, and two other samples provided for reference by Graceland Archives in LaVonne Gaw to Jeff Anderson, November 7, 2002.

29. Lisa Marie Presley, quoted in Ritz, *Elvis by the Presleys*, 111.

30. A photograph of Elvis’s inscription about his mother is reproduced in Martin Beckford, “Elvis Presley Wrote ‘I Love Ya Mama’ on Bible after Mother’s Death,” (*London*) *Telegraph*, May 12, 2010, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/7715059/Elvis-Presley-wrote-I-love-ya-mama-on-Bible-after-mothers-death.html>. Photographs of internal pages are reproduced in Jennifer Harper, “‘Sing for the Glory of God’: Museum Highlights Elvis Presley’s Personal Bible,” *Washington Times*, August 16, 2017, <https://www.washingtontimes>

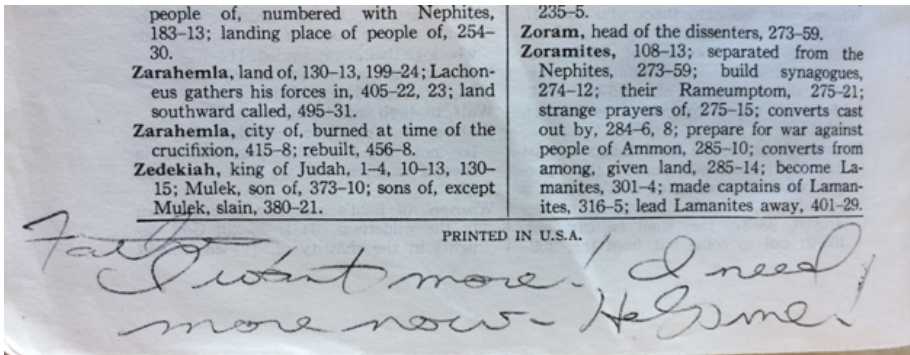


FIGURE 8. Forged annotations in the Book of Mormon. Photograph by the author.

comparisons to his handwriting in the Nixon letter show stark differences. For example, in the Nixon letter the capital *I* looks like a curved 7 with a loop, and in the Elvis Bible it looks like a block *I*, but it looks like an “ampersand” in the forged Book of Mormon annotation. Whereas Elvis’s authentic handwriting is rough script or squared print, the forged script annotations are so smooth, so “mature,” and so legible that they are clearly a forgery.³¹

Beyond the mechanics of handwriting, the content and style of the forged annotations in the Book of Mormon differ from authentic annotations. In Elvis’s authentic Bible annotations, his words frequently repeat words in the text. For example, in Psalm 11 he underlined the words “In the Lord put I my trust” and wrote in the bottom margin, “IN THE LORD I PLACE MY TRUST AND HE WILL GUIDE ME.” He underlined the words “Be still, and know that I am God” in Psalm 46:10 and wrote in the margin, “BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.” Next to Psalm 118:8, which reads, “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man,” he wrote “TRUST IN THE LORD NOT MAN.” His authentic annotations emphasized the words in the printed text, serving as a form of visual index by which to find a page of interest.³²

In contrast to Elvis’s known practice of emphasizing the printed text, the forged annotations in the Book of Mormon present a dialogue-like

31. White, “Collector’s Guide to Elvis.”

32. See a photograph of the annotation of Psalm 11 in Harper, “Sing for the Glory of God”; summaries of the other passages appear in Goins-Phillips, “Elvis Presley’s Handwritten Notes.”

engagement with and extension of the text in a way that appears forced at best and tongue-in-cheek at worst. For example, the forger underlined passages about excessive drunkenness (2 Ne. 15:11) and King Noah's whoredoms (Mosiah 11:2). Beneath a photograph of an ancient gold tablet, the smooth-handed forger wrote, "gold records—real ones." Underlining "Thou shalt have no other God before me" (Mosiah 12:35), the forger wrote, "Fans = Not me either." But the forger also wanted readers to see a change in Elvis's heart. Underlining Alma's warning to his sexually promiscuous son Corianton about unpardonable sins (Alma 39:6), the forger dialed up two ampersand *I*'s to write the book's longest annotation: "I could never deny that which I know in my heart to be true." Yes, there was still hope for Elvis. Next to the underlined words "They were desirous to be baptized" (Mosiah 21:35), the forger wrote "me too." But these forged desires would not come to pass, as the forger suggested that Elvis seemed to know all too well. Next to the underlined words "And now I go unto the father" (3 Ne. 18:35), the forger wrote "me too." If this imagined Elvis had a premonition of his own imminent death, he also found hope for the future in the most widely quoted forged annotation—beneath an underlined warning from Mormon that "awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism" (Moro. 8:16), the forger wrote, "My Lisa needs this church. She's only 9. Help her for me."³³ The annotations in this volume are fabrications manufactured to deceive.

Forgeries are often accepted because they provide something that people already want; in this case, the story of a changed heart, the conversion of a celebrity, and a testimony of the Church. Latter-day Saints are not the only fans of Elvis Presley who have looked for themselves in his image. In an insightful analysis of Elvis fan culture, Notre Dame Professor of American Studies Erika Doss observed that "fan understandings of Elvis's religiosity generally correspond to their own particular religious persuasions"—Fundamentalist Christians cite his Pentecostal upbringing, gospel albums, and Bible literacy; others highlight his spiritualist seeking among New Age philosophies. One of Presley's secretaries reported that "Mormons sent literature and books to Elvis, Jehovah's Witnesses mailed issues of the *Watchtower* to him, and

33. The forged annotation about Lisa Marie Presley has been cited in Stack, "Elder Elvis?" C1; McCord, "Movie Shows Spiritual Side of Elvis"; Hardy, "Film Explores Elvis-LDS Link"; Hardy, "'Tears of King' Shows Spiritual Side of Elvis."

he received copies of the Living Bible and dozens of other Bibles in the mail from people who asked that he read them. (When stories circulated that he was losing his eyesight, someone sent him a Bible in braille.)” Nor are Latter-day Saints the only religionists to tell a story of Elvis’s near-deathbed redemption. One of Presley’s backup singers, Joe Moscheo of the Imperials, reported giving a Bible to Elvis in May 1975 with the sales pitch that it contained “all of the answers you’re looking for.” Moscheo also reported that televangelist Rex Humbard told Elvis of receiving a witness that Elvis would yet receive “a spiritual experience that will cause you to lead thousands of people to the Lord.”³⁴ Many people hoped for a religious Elvis, and for Latter-day Saints the forged annotations in this volume answered that longing.

EXTERNAL AUTHENTICATION

After drawing my own conclusion that the handwriting in the Book of Mormon was not made by Elvis Presley and receiving encouragement from handwriting experts in the Church History Department, I submitted writing samples independently to five Elvis Presley authenticators. I shared the signature from the book’s first page and 17 annotations that included the 14-word declaration of nondenial (Alma 39:6), the 5- and 7-word plea for Lisa that spreads across two pages (Moro. 8:16), the 10-word plea for more on the last page of the volume (see figure 8), and other samples of 5 words (2 samples), 4 words (3 samples), 3 words (2 samples), 2 words (5 samples), and 1 word (1 sample).

All five authenticators are unanimous in declaring the signature and annotations to be the work of someone other than Elvis Presley. Two of the authenticators could not speak on public record because of their respective employment at an auction house and a private archive. The official authentication service of Elvis Presley Enterprises, Graceland Authenticated, hosts a two-tier process designed to identify authentic

34. Erika Doss, *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith, & Image* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 107; Becky Yancey and Clifford L. Linedecker, *My Life with Elvis* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1977), 270; Joe Moscheo, *The Gospel Side of Elvis* (New York: Center Street, 2007), 127, 128. Ed Parker rejects the Humbard story in Ed Parker, *Inside Elvis* (Orange, Calif.: Rampart House, 1978), 131–32. For an example of an evangelical author finding an evangelical Elvis, see Gary Tillery, *The Seeker King: A Spiritual Biography of Elvis Presley* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, 2013).

Presley materials to sell at auction. Their analysts terminated after the first tier, responding, “we do not feel that authentication is possible at this time (or the value of the item does not warrant authentication).”³⁵

Roger Epperson is a collector, dealer, and autograph authenticator who specializes in the music industry. In addition to his own business, he served or serves as the music autograph authenticator for numerous authentication services and auction houses, including Christies UK and Heritage Auctions. On an episode during the tenth season of PBS’s *History Detectives*, he exposed forged autographs purported to be by Beatles John Lennon and Ringo Starr. And he is a regular contributor to *Autograph Collector*, including the already-mentioned historical analysis of Elvis Presley’s signature. After reviewing the eighteen samples from the Book of Mormon in the Church History Library, Epperson wrote: “In my opinion this is not written or signed by Elvis. The signature has some similarities to an authentic signature, but the writing is not really even close.”³⁶

Rich Consola is a collector, authenticator, and owner of Elvis Presley Authentication, who specializes in the autograph and handwriting of Elvis Presley. A 2012 write-up in the *Heritage Magazine for the Intelligent Collector* noted that he “began collecting Elvis memorabilia about two decades ago” and “today, he’s known in the collecting community as a specialist in authenticating Presley items.” Consola wrote: “After reviewing the signature of Elvis Presley and all the writing in this book, it is my opinion that NONE of the writing and the signature are that of Elvis Presley. To this end I am very certain.”³⁷

35. Graceland Authenticated, email to Keith A. Erikson, November 16, 2018. For information about Elvis Presley Enterprises’ authentication process and objectives, see Graceland Authenticated, <https://gracelandauthenticated.com/>.

36. Roger Epperson, email to Keith A. Erikson, October 17, 2018. See also Epperson, “It’s Good to Be King,” 54–59; Epperson, “Elvis: The Later Years,” 80–84; and “Credentials,” Real: Roger Epperson Authentication Ltd., accessed November 29, 2018, <https://rogerepperson.com/credentials.html>.

37. Moseley, “Collecting Elvis,” 49; Rich Consola, email to Keith A. Erikson, October 10, 2018, emphasis in original. See also Anne Neville, “If You Need an Expert on Elvis Presley’s Autograph, Head to Amherst,” *Buffalo (New York) News*, May 22, 2016, <https://buffalonews.com/2016/05/22/if-you-need-an-expert-on-elvis-presleys-autograph-head-to-amherst-3/>.

“TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS IN A FLASH”

Elvis Presley adopted as a personal motto the no-nonsense phrase “Taking Care of Business in a Flash.” He named the band that supported him during the last decade of his life the TCB Band and placed the letters “TCB” and a flash of lightning on the tail fin of his airplane and personal jewelry. In this spirit, the results of this historical and handwriting analysis can be stated quite clearly: Elvis Presley did not write in the Book of Mormon held by the Church History Library. The story of the book’s provenance—its being given to Elvis fourteen days before his death and being read and digested from first page to last—does not fit within the constraints of a period in which he hosted his daughter, prepared for a tour, and responded to an exposé about his prescription drug abuse and erratic behavior. Further, analysis of the handwriting in the Book of Mormon volume—a signature and three dozen smoothly written annotations—reveals dramatic departures from Presley’s authentic handwriting as well as differences in the style of his marginal annotation. After nearly three decades of uncertainty, this investigation can turn on the popular culture public announcement system to declare without hesitation: “Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the library.”

If Elvis did not write in the book, then who did? Unfortunately, it is easier to disprove the writing of a single individual than it is to identify the writing of one of potentially millions of living persons. One might look to the handwriting of the obsessive superfan who followed Elvis across the country and back, but the way she signed “Cricket” and wrote “Presley” inside the front cover (see figure 1) differs from the forged inscriptions within the volume (compare figures 3 and 6). Differences between the sixty-eight words in Coulter’s inscriptions and the 103 words of annotations within the volume are likewise visible in several other instances, including *want*, *it*, *my*, *and*, *be*, and *for*. No, the evidence in the book does not suggest that the “quiet fan” became an open forger. When I presented the findings to her, Cricket expressed surprise and embarrassment, but then restated her story of the book’s provenance, which places it outside of her possession when the annotations were written.³⁸ Several questions remain: Would anybody in Graceland have had the knowledge (and motive) to make such forged and facetious annotations? Would Vernon Presley have returned a book

38. Cricket Coulter Harris, phone call with Keith A. Erikson, November 9, 2018.

with a forged signature and visibly fake annotations to Cricket on the day after Elvis's funeral? Did Cricket quietly modify her handwriting to create something she wished were real? Did she advise an acquaintance about what to write? What happened to the book between 1977 and 1989? Did the book begin as a book with no actual association with Elvis, or was it a book that was in his collection and sold without notice at auction during the 1980s? For now, these questions together with the big question about the forger's identity come back unanswered; much like the love letters in Elvis's song "Return to Sender," they have been marked "No such person, no such zone."

Where does this verdict of forgery leave Elvis Presley's relationship to the Church and its members? Elvis was a seeker who read the Bible, sang gospel music, wondered about the purpose of life, missed his deceased mother, and explored many philosophies and religions, striking up conversations with his maid, his hair dresser, and anyone else who would talk.³⁹ Elvis's best documented Latter-day Saint friend was his karate instructor and later bodyguard, Edmund Kealoha "Ed" Parker. Presley's biographer observes that Ed, a BYU sociology graduate, developed a form of kenpo (multiple martial arts) that fascinated Elvis, and the pair "spent time out by the pool, talking about karate and the Islands, about Parker's royal Polynesian heritage and his Mormon beliefs."⁴⁰ In a memoir written shortly after Elvis's death, Parker defended Presley against the charges made by the other bodyguards and reported giving Elvis a copy of the Book of Mormon, which they discussed, and he related tales of talking with Presley about life, death, resurrection, psychic healing, UFOs (both claimed to have seen one), indigenous ancestors (Parker's in Hawaii and Elvis's among the Cherokee), proxy temple work, numerology, end times, and island Kahunaism. For his part, Parker downplayed Elvis's interest in the occult and New

39. See Guralnick, *Careless Love*, 173–225; Rooks and Cox, *Inside Graceland*, 25; Larry Geller and Joel Spector with Patricia Romanowski, "If I Can Dream": *Elvis' Own Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

40. Guralnick, *Careless Love*, 73; see also 296–97, 626 (visits to Hawaii); 73, 316, 363, 445, 491, 497, 498, 530–32 (karate studies with Parker); 546, 549, 550 (karate film with Parker); 355–56, 393, 540, 542 (Parker and the Las Vegas shows). Guralnick and Jorgensen, *Elvis: Day by Day*, 154 (first meeting of the pair on May 12, 1960), 262 (demonstration together on August 15, 1969), 263 (karate lessons on November 7, 1969), 277, 292, 293, 304, 324, 337 (demonstration together on July 4, 1974); photographs of Parker appear on 337 and 378.

Age religion, observing, “Elvis used to frighten some of his Christian friends when he would talk about concepts like transcendental meditation, Zen Buddhism, reincarnation, numerology and the occult. Elvis wasn’t a convert to these far-out doctrines; he simply had an inquiring mind.” The last statement about not being a convert but only an inquirer also aptly summarizes Elvis’s relationship with the Church. In all, Parker was perhaps most proud that Elvis incorporated karate moves into his onstage performances.⁴¹ In this case, the martial art proved more visibly influential than the message, but, as Elvis sang in his first hit recording, “That’s All Right.”

Elvis also made connections with the Church and its members through his work. His 1966 film, *Paradise, Hawaiian Style*, was filmed at the Polynesian Cultural Center in August 1965 (fig. 9). The center had opened in 1963 and is featured twice on screen—first as the main character (Elvis) flies his helicopter over the PCC, lands in the Tongan village, and rides a canoe through all of the villages while singing; later, as the film ends with Elvis singing a reprise of two songs from the film on the stage of what is now part of the Hale Aloha theater.⁴² Presley was also acquainted with the Osmond family, sharing the same drummer and jumpsuit designer in Las Vegas. Mother Olive Osmond gave Elvis

41. Parker, *Inside Elvis*, 131, 138, see especially 131–52. See also Leilani Parker, *Memories of Ed Parker: Sr. Grandmaster of American Kenpo Karate* (Pasadena, Calif.: Delsby Publications, 1997); Paul Skousen, “Friend Tells of LDS Influence on Elvis,” *Daily Universe*, January 30, 1978. Elvis gave Parker a white, four-door Fleetwood Brougham de Elegance Cadillac, and Parker’s daughter Darlene reports that the pair drove the car from Las Vegas to the Parker home overnight, stopping to visit the early-morning seminary students in the South Pasadena 2nd Ward on Huntington Drive in South Pasadena, California, around 6:30 in the morning. Darlene places the event in the spring of 1973, after Elvis’s *Aloha* concert. Parker did not date the event in his memoir but mentioned Elvis feeling generous after a Las Vegas doctor had treated his throat. Elvis was ill and performing in Las Vegas on March 6–14, 1973. Guralnick and Jorgensen, *Elvis Day by Day*, 321–22; Parker, *Inside Elvis*, 125–27 (photograph of the car on 124); Darlene Leilani Parker Tafua, quoted in Parker, *Memories of Ed Parker*, 103–4.

42. See “Presley Thrills Fans in Laie as He Appears for Movie,” *Ke Ala ka ‘i* (BYU–Hawaii), September 24, 1965, 2; Mike Foley, “MPHS, LCA and BYUH History Department Sponsor ‘Movie Night,’” BYU–Hawaii Newsroom, November 27, 2006, <https://newsroom.byuh.edu/node/102>. See also Guralnick, *Careless Love*, 207–12; Jerry Hopkins, *Elvis in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2002), 49–60; Jerry Hopkins, *Aloha Elvis* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2007), 59–68.

a Book of Mormon, and he gave the Osmonds flowers in the shape of a guitar. Elvis and Olive talked by phone about his mother and the purpose of life, and his sudden death preempted a barbecue he had scheduled with the family.⁴³ When I shared the findings of forgery with Alan Osmond, he was both surprised and saddened. Cricket Coulter had given the book to him and personally certified its authenticity. Over the past thirty years, he had told the story in fireside talks, on his website and blog, and in media interviews.⁴⁴ Though clearly a

victim of the forger, Alan quickly recognized the strength of the evidence and said, “The Church is true, and it doesn’t need Elvis’s name. I am thankful that you have checked this out. We want to put closure on this.”⁴⁵ To me, Alan provides an inspiring example that it is okay to change one’s view when new evidence is uncovered.

What about other stories regarding Elvis and the Church that circulate amongst the Saints? One lesson to learn from this forgery is not to draw conclusions that reach beyond the evidence. For example, just because someone gave Elvis a Book of Mormon does not mean that he read it; and just because he read a copy (or marked it) does not



FIGURE 9. In the film *Paradise, Hawaiian Style*, Elvis rides a canoe past the island villages of the Polynesian Cultural Center while singing “Drums of the Islands,” a song originally written by Fijian musician Ratu Isireli Racule, who later joined the Church. Courtesy of BYU–Hawaii Archives.

43. Alan Osmond, phone call with Keith A. Erikson, October 17, 2018; Osmond with Romanowski, *Life Is Just What You Make It*, 168–69; see also Stack, “Elder Elvis?” C1; and Arave, “Elvis Almost LDS?”

44. Alan Osmond, “Elvis Presley’s Writes a Note to ‘Help His Daughter Lisa!’” *The Family* (blog), February 6, 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704184121/http://thefamily.com:80/2011/02/06/elvis-presleys-writes-a-note-to-help-his-daughter-lisa/>, as archived on 2013-07-04. Alan Osmond’s website elvisbofm.com told the story of the book, presented a copy of Cricket’s certification of authentication, and hosted photographs of some of the forged annotations. Fifteen iterations of the site are preserved in the Internet Archive’s “Wayback Machine” at <https://web.archive.org/web/20071016205932/http://elvisbofm.com>.

45. Alan Osmond, phone call with Keith A. Erikson, October 17, 2018.

mean that he believed it and desired baptism. Both Ed Parker and the Osmonds gave copies of the Book of Mormon to Elvis and reported discussing the text with him. To date, every claim of an active full-time missionary teaching Elvis has turned out to be false—the missionary did not serve in the right mission, or served in the right mission at the wrong time, or the missionary name did not even exist.⁴⁶ Former Latter-day Saint missionary Mike Corfield claimed to have given Elvis a Book of Mormon (documented with a photograph) and invited him to church when Presley was filming *Blue Hawaii* (1961) on the island of Kauai. Former Polynesian Cultural Center cast member Bobby Kauo claims to have given Presley a book and introduced concepts from the missionary lessons in a conversational way during the week he spent at the Polynesian Cultural Center on the island of Oahu filming *Paradise, Hawaiian Style* (1966).⁴⁷ Again, Parker provides an important check against overspeculation: Elvis “often told people what he thought they wanted to hear; not in attempt to be dishonest, but simply in an attempt to be accommodating.”⁴⁸ Thus, when a video published by the Graceland Archives reveals a paperback copy of the Book of Mormon among Elvis’s books, what does it mean? It means simply that a copy made it into his collection. Are there annotations? Yes, but not in Elvis’s handwriting (most likely by a missionary). Did Elvis read it? We can’t be sure. Did he believe it? The book won’t reveal that.⁴⁹

Finally, what about those who have been uplifted by the story of Elvis’s annotations, which now turns out to be false? Some, like the television station that prompted my inquiry into this subject, might want to ignore the evidence and continue telling a story that makes their hearers feel good. Others, like websites that cater to living Latter-day Saints, might want to qualify these findings as only “likely” being a forgery

46. Brad Hardisty, missionary research conducted in 2004–2005, November 17, 2018; Christine T. Cox, personal research notes.

47. Susan Wood, “Riverton Man Gave Elvis a Book of Mormon during Filming of ‘Blue Hawaii,’” ABC4 Utah, September 19, 2006. KSL News, “Fact or Fiction? Mormon Stories and Urban Legends,” 6:15–7:24; Katie Lambert and Jannalee Rosner, “Former Missionary Says He Taught Elvis the Discussions,” *LDS Living*, accessed November 29, 2018, <http://www.ldsliving.com/What-You-Didn-t-Know-About-Elvis-and-the-Polynesian-Cultural-Center/s/82276>.

48. Parker, *Inside Elvis*, 132.

49. Tom Brown with Angie Marchese, *Gates of Graceland—Unboxing Elvis’ Books* (Elvis Presley Enterprises, 2016), 4:14–4:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF_MXLUjsXE.

or by placing a question mark after the article's title. A wiser approach will be to learn the lesson of seeking corroboration before passing on tales that seem too good to be true. Beyond the general fact that the annotations in this volume are forgeries, tellings of the story also accrued additional exaggerations over time, such as that Elvis spent months with the book (it was allegedly two weeks), that he'd underlined "king" throughout the volume (it was underlined once in the book's introductory pages), that it was his first copy of the Book of Mormon (it would have been at least his fifth), that he had wished that Priscilla would read it (the annotation mentions Lisa), and that he had written "There is only one King" (no such annotation).⁵⁰ The last three errors originated in a single volume marketed to Latter-day Saint readers as a "Mormon bathroom reader"—providing pungent reminders that you *should* judge a book by its title and that you get what you pay for. If you rely on the stories of celebrities to strengthen your conversion, then you face the possibility of later getting "All Shook Up."

Keith A. Erikson is an award-winning author, teacher, and public historian who serves as director of the Church History Library. He holds advanced degrees in history and business and has worked in auto manufacturing, scholarly publishing, and higher education. Before directing the library, he served as a tenured associate professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso and an assistant to the university's president. He is the author of numerous books and articles about public interest in history, history teaching and learning, and Church history. He is a popular speaker at BYU Education Week, RootsTech, and other Latter-day Saint conferences and events.

50. Arave, "Elvis Almost LDS?"; McCord, "Movie Shows Spiritual Side of Elvis"; Paul B. Skousen and Harold K. Moon, *Brother Paul's Mormon Bathroom Reader* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2005), 46.



Cecil B. DeMille and David O. McKay, probably in Salt Lake City, circa 1956. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

Cecil B. DeMille and David O. McKay— an Unexpected Friendship

Fred E. Woods

Early in the twentieth century, what should have been a most unlikely friendship curiously evolved into a lifelong amiable relationship between world-renowned filmmaker Cecil B. DeMille and David O. McKay, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In some ways, the two men were polar opposites. DeMille was an icon in the twentieth-century film industry who directed seventy motion pictures in an illustrious career that spanned over four decades. Dwelling in the midst of “Babylon” (Los Angeles), he was referred to as “Mr. Hollywood.”¹ McKay presided from the heart of Latter-day Saint conservatism, Salt Lake City, dedicated to building Zion as prophet, seer, and revelator. Bringing the two men together was Latter-day Saint

1. Sumiko Higashi, “An American Spectacular: The Life and Career of Cecil B. DeMille,” in *The Register of the Cecil B. DeMille Archives*, MSS 1400, comp. and ed. James V. D’Arc (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1991), 1. Herein, Higashi notes that during DeMille’s lifetime, “he was unequaled for the type of filmmaking that consistently broke box-office records and earned him the title ‘Mr. Hollywood.’” This essay also provides a wonderful, succinct overview of DeMille’s life. The best biography on DeMille is by Scott Eyman, *Empire of Dreams: The Epic Life of Cecil B. DeMille* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010). For other treatments of DeMille, see Charles Higham, *Cecil B. DeMille* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973); and Donald Hayne, ed., *The Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985). An analysis of this autobiography was conducted by James Vincent D’Arc, titled “Two Articles: ‘Darryl F. Zanuck’s *Brigham Young*: A Film in Context,’ and ‘So Let It Be Written . . .’—The Creation of Cecil B. DeMille’s Autobiography” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1986), 11–14, 74–88.

Fred E. Woods

I grew up in Southern California, not far from Hollywood. I have vivid memories of driving down Sunset Boulevard as a teenager. I have always loved film and knew about the famed movie director Cecil B. DeMille from his epic film *The Ten Commandments*.

In June 2018, I attended the Mormon History Association in Boise, Idaho, and heard a lecture by Professor Judith Weisenfeld about how Latter-day Saints were portrayed in twentieth-century cinema. One of the silent films highlighted was *A Mormon Maid* (1917), and I noticed that Cecil B. DeMille was listed in the film credits. I also knew from previous reading that DeMille and President David O. McKay had become acquainted, and I wanted to explore how McKay, a holy prophet, formed a friendship with DeMille, once known as “Mr. Hollywood,” who was not a Latter-day Saint.

Soon I began looking at the enormous collection of the DeMille Papers in BYU’s L. Tom Perry Special Collections, containing over twelve hundred boxes. The intimate relationship between these two great men began to emerge. A few days later, I examined the McKay papers at the University of Utah Marriott Library and began to see a broader and more detailed picture from the diaries of President McKay and the rich correspondence he exchanged with DeMille.

Through my research, I again realized the Lord raises up great men such as President McKay and DeMille to accomplish his purposes in different portions of his vineyard. As Elder Orson F. Whitney said, “Many are kept . . . where the Lord has placed them, and can best use them for the good of all.” Such was the case with Cecil B. DeMille, who was attracted to the light in a living prophet. McKay could also see the goodness that shone from DeMille’s life and works, and they forged a sincere friendship and admiration for the work each was chosen to fulfill.





Cecil B. DeMille and Arnold Friberg viewing prints of Friberg's art, circa 1954. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

artist Arnold Friberg, set painter for DeMille's epic film *The Ten Commandments*. Although DeMille had formed good relationships with other religious leaders,² which was simply good business, his friendship with President McKay reveals a deeper and long-lasting bond. Through analysis of their private correspondence and public statements, instances of contact and sentiments shared by President McKay and DeMille emerge. This essay also traces how McKay's friendship influenced DeMille to share a more positive image of the Latter-day Saints, which seems to have influenced American perception of the Church of Jesus Christ in the mid-twentieth century.

These two remarkable men were both directors—influencers who shaped the culture and character of their milieu. A decade after McKay's call to the holy apostleship, DeMille was working as the Lasky Company

2. DeMille's papers reveal correspondence with various religious leaders.

Director-General³ when he lent his support to the production of an anti-Mormon propaganda silent film titled *A Mormon Maid*. Although DeMille was not responsible for the content of the film, he was responsible for the decision of whether or not the film should be released in theaters. He gave his approval, and it premiered on Valentine's Day 1917 during an era when anti-Mormon literature was rampant. The film was "arguably the most potent and important anti-Mormon film in the history of cinema" and "the most-advertised picture in the history of American cinema up to that time." Critic reviews were extremely favorable of the film, and audiences came in droves to view it.⁴

The following is a summation of this damning sixty-five-minute, black-and-white silent film:

Settlers Tom and Nancy Hogue, with their beautiful daughter Dora, are rescued from Indians by a group of Mormons and, destitute, are forced to go live in the Mormon city. After a few years, apostle Darius Burr directs puppet leader Brigham Young to force Hogue to enter plural marriage as part of a plot for Burr to take Dora unto himself. Hogue takes a second wife to save his daughter, but his wife kills herself upon learning of it. Dora is taken prisoner anyway, and as she attempts to escape there is a small battle in which Hogue is killed. About to be forced to marry Burr, Dora lies about her maidenhood to avoid the ceremony, after which she escapes again with her beau, a Mormon scout named Tom Rigdon. They flee with the aid of a renegade Danite, but are overtaken on the plains and in the climactic battle Dora shoots Burr in the back. The Danite is unhooded to reveal none other than Hogue, who secretly survived the previous fight, and three set off together, leaving the Mormons behind forever.⁵

3. Higashi, "American Spectacular," 3, notes, "DeMille's life changed dramatically toward the end of 1913. According to a story that has since become legendary in motion picture history, DeMille joined a venture with Jesse L. Lasky, a vaudeville producer with whom he had collaborated on musical shows; Samuel Goldfish (later Goldwyn), Lasky's brother-in-law and a glove salesman; and Arthur Friend, an attorney. Pooling resources, they founded the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company (named after Lasky because he was best-known) to produce feature film adaptations of stage and literary works for middle-class audiences."

4. "A Mormon Maid," Mormon Literature and Creative Arts, Brigham Young University, <https://mormonarts.lib.byu.edu/works/a-mormon-maid/>.

5. "Mormon Maid." For a critique of the film, see Richard Alan Nelson, "Commercial Propaganda in the Silent Film: A Case Study of *A Mormon Maid* (1917)," *Film History: An International Journal* 1, no. 2 (1987): 149–62. For an overview of anti-Mormon silent films for this period, see Jacob W. Olmstead, "A Victim of the Mormons and The Danites: Images and Relics from Early

The film played frequently for several months “across the United States, Europe, and other countries, and anti-Mormon organizations kept it in private circulation. . . . Mormons at the time and for years to come remembered it as the most lethal cinematic treatment they had ever received, particularly because of its depiction of sacred temple robes.”⁶ Who could have guessed that nearly four decades later DeMille would be taking a private tour of the Los Angeles temple at the generous invitation of his dear friend, President McKay. What were the events that precipitated this ironic twist of fate?

During the early 1950s, DeMille was immersed in the preproduction stages of his final and most successful film, *The Ten Commandments*. After getting a recommendation from an international artist, DeMille hired Latter-day Saint artist Arnold Friberg to design sets and costumes as well as promotional paintings for his epic film. Friberg became the catalyst in bringing Mr. Hollywood and the Latter-day Saint prophet together.⁷

Twentieth-Century Anti-Mormon Silent Films,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 203–21.

6. “Mormon Maid.” For more detail on *A Mormon Maid*, see Randy Astle, *Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952* (New York: Mormon Arts Center, 2018), 147, 157, 160, 178–81, 185, 187–90, 196, 200, 222, 241–42, 259. I wish to thank Joy Loosli, faculty delivery supervisor at the Harold B. Lee Library for her extra-mile efforts to provide this information in a timely fashion. Joy has assisted me with support of needed sources and source checking for this article and many other publications. She will retire at the end of 2018, and her devoted service to BYU will be greatly missed.

7. Velan Max Andersen quotes Friberg about how he came to work with DeMille on *The Ten Commandments*: “Shortly after working with the Book of Mormon paintings an event took place which was to have enormous results later. At the time, I was teaching at the University of Utah. The secretary there was Carey Midgely. . . . Mrs. Midgely had a job with the State Department, probably more honorary than anything else. . . . She told [me] that the next man arriving was coming from Sweden. ‘This man,’ she said, ‘is a publisher of the largest Swedish newspaper and [is] a fine art books publisher. . . . His name was Herman Stolpe. . . . She thought that . . . he might enjoy coming out to my studio. . . . While he was here, I gave him a set of the Book of Mormon prints. When he got to Los Angeles, it had been arranged that he was to see Mr. DeMille. Actually, Mr. DeMille was very busy and he didn’t want any visitors. . . . He asked Henry Wilcoxin to meet with him instead. [Wilcoxin was associate producer of *The Ten Commandments*.] Mr. Wilcoxin . . . has a marvelous eye for art and illustrating. . . . At that time Mr. DeMille was in sore need of a religious illustrator. . . . He had looked around and he couldn’t find a religious artist and so in the course of Mr. Wilcoxin’s talk with Herman Stol[p]e, they talked about printing and publishing and what illustrators Stol[p]e liked

In the course of their collaboration, Arnold and Cecil had many discussions that piqued DeMille's interest in learning more about priesthood, temples, and all things pertaining to this religious film. DeMille asked Friberg to inquire into the possibility of meeting with President McKay because of his desire to tour the Los Angeles temple, then under construction not far from DeMille's workplace. The circumstances and series of events bringing these two influential men together are described in McKay's diary from July 11, 1954:

This morning Mr. Arnold Friberg . . . called at the office and explained . . . his position with Cecil B. deMille who has employed him to paint pictures of characters and costumes . . . for the forthcoming motion picture masterpiece, "The Ten Commandments" which is being produced by Mr. deMille of the Paramount Studios.

He said that next year they are going to Palestine to take scenes of the crossing of the Red Sea. They will also make scenes on Mt. Sinai.

Brother Friberg also said that Mr. deMille confers with him from time to time about different phases of the Old Testament. For example, the conferring of the Priesthood upon Joshua. Mr. deMille said that this was the first instance of the conferring of the Priesthood. Brother Friberg told him No; that Adam conferred the Priesthood upon his sons Seth, Noah, and others. Upon hearing this, Mr. deMille changed the scenes. . . .

Furthermore, Mr. deMille is reading the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, etc.

During one of their conversations, on a certain subject, Mr. deMille said, "If I knew your President, I would telephone him upon this matter." Said he had met President Grant, and President Smith, but that he had never met President McKay." Brother Friberg told him that he was sure

in America and were there any good ones in Europe. . . . Could he tell him of anyone over there? Well, Stol[p]e said that he would have to think about that and then he said that he would write him. Stol[p]e left Los Angeles and after he was back in Sweden, he wrote to Mr. DeMille and sent the Book of Mormon prints of my pictures and said that the man they were looking for was in Salt Lake City." Velan Max Andersen, "Arnold Friberg, Artist: His Life, His Philosophy and His Works" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970), 192–95.

While Friberg was engaged in providing paintings and illustrations of costumes for the film, another Latter-day Saint was involved in making and fitting the clothes to be used in *The Ten Commandments*. Josie Lynn Bird Miller noted she made the "white pleated chiffon" of the female actress, Nina Foch, who tended Moses in the bulrushes. Miller agreed with Anderson that "a DeMille picture was really a major production. . . . He always did it big." Josie Lynn Bird Miller, interview by Jeff Anderson, October 1989, Kanosh, Utah, transcript, 30–31, MS 19814, Church History Library.

it would be perfectly all right to call me, but Mr. deMille was reticent about doing so. He said, however, that he would very much like to make my acquaintance. I told Brother Friberg that I would be in Los Angeles the first week in August, and at that time arrangements can be made for me to meet Mr. deMille.⁸

The following month, on August 5, 1954, DeMille and McKay met at Paramount Studios, making an instant connection. DeMille expressed his desire to go inside the temple.

"I'll take you through myself," said President McKay.

"Now that's before it's dedicated, I may go through?" Cecil inquired.

"Yes."

"Now after it's dedicated I may not go through?" asked DeMille.

"Oh," joked McKay, "We'll take care of that. The first thing we'll do is baptize you!"

Both men laughed heartily.⁹

8. The David O. McKay diaries are located in MS 668, David O. McKay Papers, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. This reference taken from box 33, folder 4, of the McKay Diaries (hereafter cited as DOMD), July 11, 1954, underlining in original. Referring to his experience working with DeMille, Arnold Friberg recalled, "I was surprised at his [DeMille's] grasp of the spiritual things. Many times I was called in on what they called theological consultation." Friberg further noted that DeMille believed the Bible had not been translated correctly and had been tampered with. Further, DeMille told Friberg that the priesthood of God had been perverted in various periods of time, but stated, "It hasn't happened to the Mormon Church yet. They're too young." Friberg also viewed DeMille as a humble man and wrote, "DeMille read the Bible every day of his life." Arnold Friberg, Journal extract, no date, 28–29, transcribed from a recording of Friberg by David C. Skousen, 1957, in possession of the author.

9. Arnold Friberg, interviews by Gregory Prince, August 4, 2000; November 16, 2000; cited in Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 259. Friberg noted that along with the wonderful invention of the motion picture, "a great spirit came into the world who became known as DeMille. He pioneered the motion picture industry and produced some of the great biblical epics. He put great truth into his pictures. . . . Having worked closely with this man for four years, I know of his great sincerity and the deep conviction that made his art so great. He believed that because he served a cause larger than himself that the men whom he needed would be sent to him, and for that reason felt that there was no accident that his path should cross my own. He needed the priesthood to work with him on that motion picture, 'The Ten Commandments.'" Sven Arnold Friberg, "Talk given by Arnold Friberg, 10 June 1961, at a department session of MIA Conference," 8–9, MS 1808 Sven Arnold Friberg, 1913–2010, Church History Library. Three years later, Friberg

A decade later in a BYU devotional speech, Arnold Friberg recalled another detail of this humorous experience when McKay asked, “Will that wash off all this encrusted Episcopalianism?” ‘Oh,’ Mrs. McKay said ‘it’ll wash off every drop.’” Friberg added, “That evening I remember Mr. DeMille stopped me in the hall and was talking about President McKay. He says, ‘You know I sure love that old buzzard.’ . . . It was said with the greatest of affection. . . . He [DeMille] said, ‘When I talk to President McKay, I know I’m in the presence of a prophet. . . . It’s as if I were standing before the burning bush. I feel the same power.’”¹⁰

Concerning this meeting in Los Angeles, McKay’s diary notes, “Mr. deMille received us graciously and had nothing but high praise for Brother Friberg’s work. . . . We were entertained most graciously and interestingly during our visit.” Following their time together, DeMille presented McKay with an inscribed copy of a *Samson and Delilah* handbook, containing research from his previous movie. The inscription read, “To President McKay, with respect—admiration, and now affection.”¹¹

That night from the Los Angeles Alexandria Hotel, President McKay wrote a thoughtful handwritten letter to his new friend:

My dear Mr. de Mille,

your graciousness to Mrs. McKay and me this afternoon, we shall ever cherish as one of the most interesting and informative experiences of our lives. Indeed, we became so absorbed in your presentation of the magnitude and possibilities as well as the responsibility of your art that we failed to realize how grossly we encroached upon your valuable [*sic*] time. The more I think of it, the more keenly becomes my embarrassment.

also said in a public setting that God “uses men of various talents and He places them in the earth at certain times in order that they may throw their talents into the scales on the side of truth. . . . I am sure that men like Mr. DeMille were placed on the earth at such a time. . . . He came at a time when his abilities and his understanding would be a great service in the world.” In this same address, Friberg further noted that after receiving approval from President McKay, “my wife and I went down to the Manti Temple and did the [ordinance] work in one day, both for Mr. DeMille and for Mrs. DeMille, . . . and it was one of the happiest moments in my whole life to be able to do this for him.” Arnold Friberg, Brigham Young University devotional address, Provo, Utah, April 29, 1964, audio recording made from this devotional radio broadcast by KBYU Television, AV 662, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Thanks to Tyson Thorpe, Church history consultant, for making arrangements for access to this audio recording.

10. Arnold Friberg, BYU devotional, April 29, 1964.

11. DOMD, August 5, 1954.

I not only apologize but beg your forgiveness.

In the generosity of your heart kindly remember our overwhelming interest and forget our intrusion.¹²

Less than a week later, DeMille responded: "Thank you for your letter of August 5th. It was a great pleasure to see you and Mrs. McKay. I am the one who should ask forgiveness, if my absorption in my work—which is heavy right now—made you feel in the slightest degree uncomfortable. Far from being an encroachment, your visit was for me a privilege as well as a pleasure—and one which I hope will be repeated if you should come to Los Angeles while I am filming *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* here next year."¹³

The correspondence steadily continued. The following month Mr. DeMille referred to their previous conversation during their initial August meeting: "When you were last in Los Angeles you may remember our touching on the problem of portraying the Voice of God in my forthcoming motion picture of *The Ten Commandments*."¹⁴ DeMille spoke of his efforts to produce such a divine voice and described how one of his staff members ("a brilliant electronics technician" named John H. Cope, who had worked for DeMille since 1933) had remembered "the unique quality of the Tabernacle organ and believes that the *Vox Humana*¹⁵ stop on this magnificent instrument will be the closest thing in the world to a musical representation of the Voice of God."

DeMille asked McKay for "permission to have Mr. Cope record the Tabernacle organ" and persuasively continued, "It would be a great contribution to a proper and reverent portrayal of the Voice of God and to

12. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, August 5, 1954, MSS 1400, box 482, folder 13, Cecil B. DeMille Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as CBDP). The author thanks Cindy Brightenburg and her competent staff for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

13. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, August 11, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

14. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, September 18, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

15. *Vox humana* is the Latin word for "human voice" and is contained in a box that is continually shut. Organ swell pedals determine the tone of what can be admitted from the box at various levels. See *Encyclopedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and General Literature with New American Supplement*, ed. Day Otis Kellogg (New York: Werner, 1898), s.v. "organ." See also Edward L. Stauff, "Vox Humana, Voix Humaine, Voz Humana," *Encyclopedia of Organ Stops*, updated February 13, 2009, <http://www.organstops.org/v/VoxHumana.html>.

the spiritual values which you, and we, hope that THE TEN COMMANDMENTS will carry through the world.” DeMille concluded by reminding McKay that Mr. Cope had “built a radio station that is well known to you, KSL, and also installed the first public address system in the Tabernacle.” Finally, DeMille thanked McKay for the *Gospel Ideals* book McKay had recently sent to him, which contained McKay’s selected public discourses compiled the previous year. The famed filmmaker said he continued to find this book “a source of new inspiration.”¹⁶

Not surprisingly, five days after DeMille sent this letter President McKay and the First Presidency granted DeMille permission to use the tabernacle organ. McKay wrote:

My dear Mr. deMille:

I was greatly pleased to receive your letter of September 18, 1954 in which you refer again to the problem of portraying the Voice of God in your forthcoming motion picture “The Ten Commandments.” As I read your comments I thought—this is another illustration of the masterful, painstaking research that Mr. deMille makes when he produces a great picture. Truly, I admire your greatness and especially your sincerity.

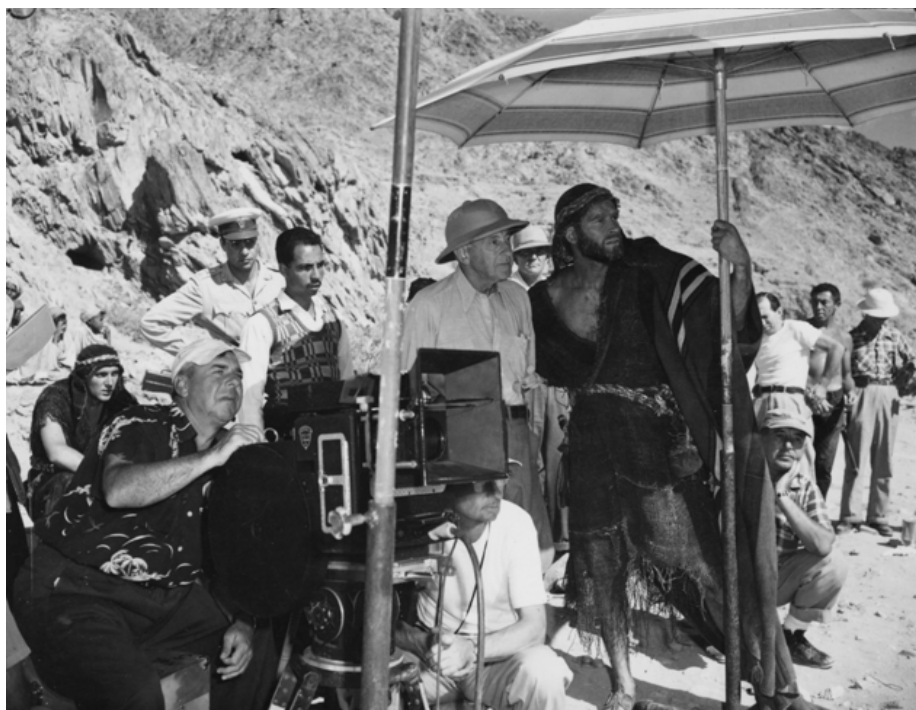
This morning I read your letter in the regular meeting of the First Presidency. My counselors were also deeply impressed. We are one in assuring you that it will be a joy for us to do anything within our power to contribute to the success of the great picture you are producing. If the Vox Humana on the Tabernacle Organ will add to the musical representation of the Voice of God, this is your permission and authority to make any use of it that you wish.¹⁷

The vox humana was then used to accentuate the deep bass voice of former Mormon Tabernacle Choir member Jesse Delos Jewkes, who portrayed the singular voice of God for the film.¹⁸

16. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, September 18, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP. Two weeks earlier, DeMille had thanked President McKay for the *Gospel Ideals* book “so handsomely inscribed,” noting, “on every page to which I open the book, I find some thought worth pondering—so it will be not only a valued memento of your recent visit, but a source of inspiration to me as well. Please remember me most kindly to Mrs. McKay, whose graciousness added so much to the pleasure of my meeting with you both.” Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, September 2, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

17. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, September 23, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

18. Eymann, *Empire of Dreams*, 473, notes, “It [the voice of God] was actually a small-part actor with a bass voice named Delos Jewkes.” The Mormon



Cecil B. DeMille with Charlton Heston (dressed as Moses), a cameraman, and other cast and crew members in the Sinai filming *The Ten Commandments*, 1954. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

The following month, DeMille responded to President McKay's note of permission: "Just returned from more than a week on Mount Sinai—one of the most unforgettably moving experiences of my whole lifetime—without further delay I must thank you and your counselors in the First Presidency for your permission to use the great Tabernacle Organ, as contained in your letter of September 23rd, and for the deep and, I am sure, prayerful interest which you and your counselors are taking in our production of THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. I hope we and our work may be worthy of it."¹⁹

The following year, on July 21, 1955, President McKay and his wife, Emma Rae, visited DeMille's studio in Los Angeles during active filming. On this date, McKay's diary notes the following entry:

Tabernacle Choir is now known as the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square.

19. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, October 25, 1954, box 482, folder 13, CBDP. The address of DeMille's letter was given as 21, Sharia Tewfik, [Egypt].

We went over to the Paramount Motion Picture Studios. . . . This visit to the studios was in accordance with a previous invitation by the producer, Cecil B. deMille, when we met him personally last year. As we approached the set we saw that they were taking shots of the scene just following the building of the golden calf. Moses' descent from the mountain, the breaking of the tablets, and then the wrath of Heaven descending with fire right in the midst of it.

There were four hundred and sixty-five people in this scene.

As we were looking with admiration at what was going on, suddenly we heard over the loud-speaking system a voice saying: "I understand President McKay is in the audience; will you please come up here, President McKay." Right then and there the whole proceedings were stopped and Mr. deMille introduced me to the entire group. Later, he announced that Sister McKay was in the audience, and he invited her to join us. He then presented Edward G. Robinson to us, a prominent actor, who is taking one of the leading parts.

We spent three hours on the set and were intensely interested and amazed at the magnitude of the whole project—what a stupendous thing it is to produce such a play as *The Ten Commandments*! I am impressed more than ever with Cecil B. deMille's ability—he is a great director!²⁰

A week after this impressive experience, President McKay wrote to thank DeMille.

My dear deMille:

As Mrs. McKay and I recall our visits and appointments in the Los Angeles area last week, we hold as the outstanding event our experience at your studio set Thursday afternoon, July 21st.

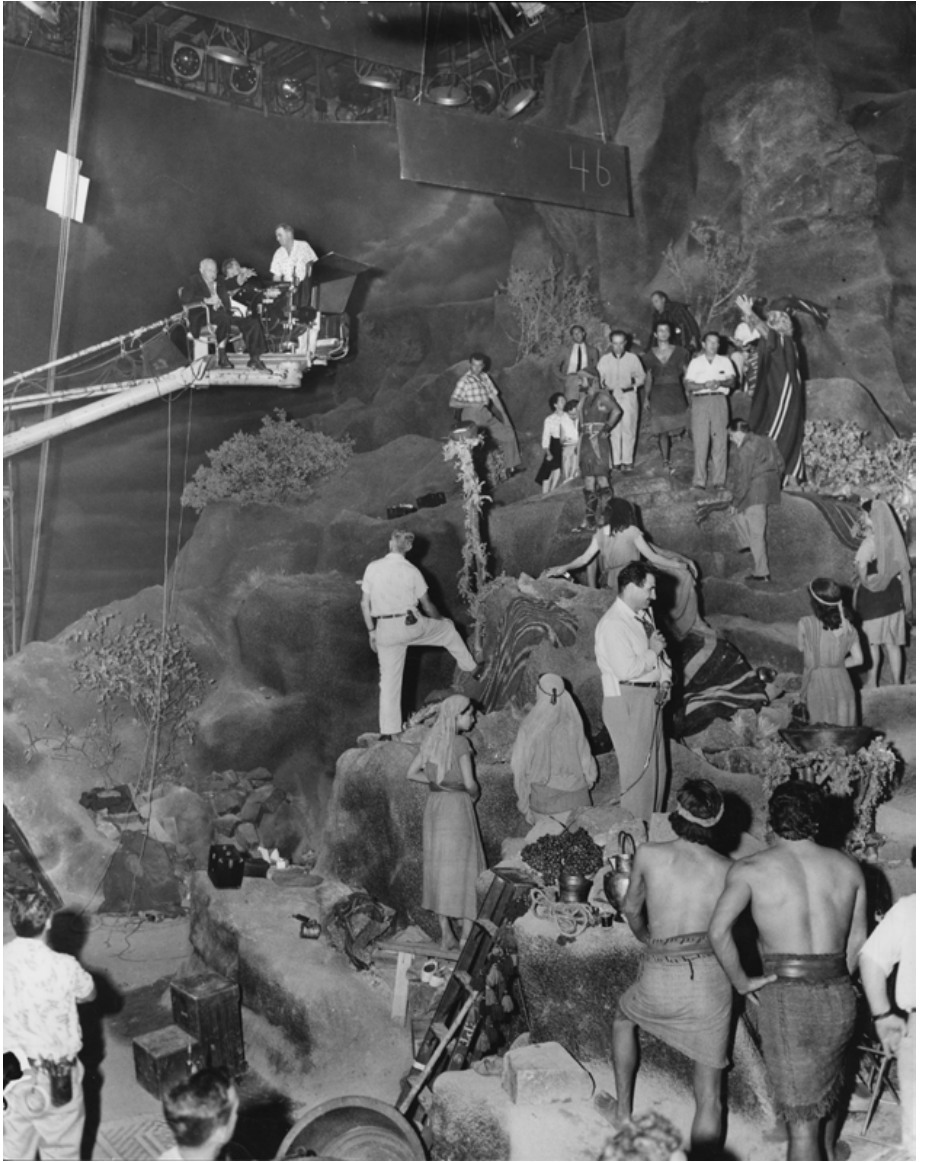
To see the "shooting" of one magnificent scene in the great picture "*The Ten Commandments*" was something to remember always.

Your courtesy and graciousness in recognizing our presence, and paying us tribute (however unmerited) added greatly to the thrill of the occasion.

Mrs. McKay and I have always held you in high esteem and admiration as the greatest director of this modern age; but after glimpsing the stupendousness of your task, in staging the scene following the destruction of the Tablets by Moses so deeply grieved at the people's worshipping the golden calf, and after noting your masterful attention to every detail of scenes in which over four hundred people participated, our admiration of your leadership rose to greater heights!

So also did our appreciation of your nobility of character!

20. DOMD, July 21, 1955.



Filming a scene from *The Ten Commandments* at Paramount Picture Studios, 1955. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

Mrs. McKay joins me in this note of appreciation for a most impressive and memorable visit.²¹

DeMille was deeply touched by his friend's kind letter and responded in part: "Your letter . . . reminds me of the ideal my father had as a playwright—to bring to the larger 'congregation' of the theatre the same message he delivered every Sunday in the little church which he served as lay reader. I have tried to follow in his footsteps; and it means much to me that you believe I have to some extent succeeded."²²

Less than six months later, President McKay took DeMille and his small staff of six through the Los Angeles temple. This special private tour took place on January 16, 1956, two months before the temple was dedicated in March.²³ This was at a time when both men were pressed with many responsibilities and DeMille was still in the middle of filming *The Ten Commandments*.

The local news picked up on DeMille and his Paramount Studios entourage touring the temple. Soon, "DeMille Visits L.A. Temple" headlined the papers. The papers also captured the mutual admiration that DeMille and McKay had for each other. DeMille informed the press that the private tour "was a great privilege and a pleasure." As President McKay bid farewell to the group, he said of DeMille, "Here is one of the true noblemen of this world." DeMille described President McKay to a reporter as "one of the great souls that I have been privileged to meet in this world; he has understanding; he has the true spirit of Christ; he is a great pioneer of God."²⁴

21. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, July 28, 1955, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

22. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, August 5, 1955, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

23. The date of the tour is evident from a letter written by McKay to DeMille, noting January 16, 1956, "will be mutually convenient." The memo also explained that he and Mrs. McKay would meet the DeMille company at the Bureau of Information, on the Los Angeles temple site. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, January 10, 1956, box 482, folder 13, CBDP. A letter from President McKay to DeMille's field secretary, Berenice Mosk, thanked her for sending a list of names on January 21, 1956, of those who had recently come on the tour. (Those listed were DeMille, Joseph W. Harper, who was DeMille's son-in-law, and a few members of DeMille's staff: Donald Hayne, Donald MacLean, Henry Noerdlinger, and Berenice Mosk.) Berenice Mosk to David O. McKay, January 21, 1956; David O. McKay to Miss Berenice Mosk, January 24, 1956, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

24. "DeMille Visits L.A. Temple," *The [Los Angeles] California Intermountain News*, January 26, 1956, newspaper clipping in DOMD, January 15–19, 1956.



David O. McKay and Cecil B. DeMille standing in front of the Los Angeles California Temple, January 16, 1956. Clipping from *California Intermountain News* in Frederick G. Williams collection.

Apparently, the temple tour had a spiritual impact on DeMille. The *Deseret News* reported that President McKay described DeMille as “a longtime friend and interested student and admirer of the Church and its people” and noted he “seemed deeply impressed by his visit to the new temple as were the other members of his party.”²⁵ Friberg later recalled that President McKay’s only explanation to DeMille regarding the temple’s purpose was “to take man from physical man to spiritual man.”²⁶

In his autobiography, DeMille described McKay as a “great-hearted, lovable man who is literally a latter-day saint” and a man “through whom the Divine Mind shines crystal clear.” In addition, the Episcopalian DeMille noted, “Others like me might be more regular churchgoers if there were more McKays.”²⁷

On Thursday, August 2, 1956, DeMille arrived in Salt Lake City to provide a preview of his epic film, *The Ten Commandments*.²⁸ DeMille biographer Scott Eyman noted that this was the film’s “sole public preview.”²⁹ During a press conference, the famed filmmaker of over seventy motion pictures told reporters that his three-hour-and-forty-three-minute film

25. “DeMille Is Guest: Pres. McKay Back from Temple Visit,” *Deseret News*, Church Section, January 21, 1956, newspaper clipping, DOMD, January 15–19, 1956. Another article appeared in the *Deseret News*, Church Section, a week later (January 28, 1956); in that article it was evidenced that DeMille and his group were among thousands who visited the temple prior to its dedication. In fact, a record was set in which over eighteen thousand visitors attended the temple in one day. The title of this article was simply “1600 Per Hour: 18,462 Visit L.A. Temple in Single Day.”

26. Friberg, interviews, August 4, November 16, 2000, cited in Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 259.

27. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 433–34.

28. The 1956 film was a partial remake of an earlier silent film by the same name launched in 1923. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 251, explains that the 1923 version of *The Ten Commandments* was “a modern story with a Biblical prologue. The prologue, following the Book of Exodus. . . . The modern story is of two brothers, one of whom keeps the Commandments while the other breaks them all.” Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 411–12, further notes that decades after the release of this silent film, people wrote letters wanting another Ten Commandments film. DeMille and his staff gave it much thought, and DeMille wanted to focus on the biblical portion of the 1923 film to make a full story out of the Exodus and emphasize the importance of the law. See Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 411–35, for a detailed treatment of the making of *The Ten Commandments* film released in 1956. See also Eyman, *Empire of Dreams*, 438–79.

29. Eyman, *Empire of Dreams*, 474.

was his “greatest achievement.”³⁰ The following night, *The Ten Commandments* was shown. The *Salt Lake Tribune* announced, “Cecil B. DeMille, the undisputed king of Biblical motion pictures, arrived in Salt Lake City Thursday bent on determining public reaction to his latest 13 million dollar epic.”³¹ The Hollywood director will attend a sneak premiere Friday night at the Center Theater to find out what Salt Lakers think of “The Ten Commandments.” DeMille said Salt Lake was selected for the preview “because there are ‘good normal American people’ here and they don’t offer ‘undue criticism or praise.’”³²

In his *Autobiography*, DeMille noted, “I always preview my pictures away from Hollywood, because it is almost impossible to get a typical audience reaction. . . . Most of my staff warned me that I would not get a typical reaction in Salt Lake City either: it would be too heavily weighted in favor of a religious theme because of the preponderant number of Mormons in any Salt Lake City audience.” Yet DeMille reasoned, “If the deeply religious, serious-minded Latter-day Saints of Salt Lake City approved . . . , so would millions of others, of other faiths, throughout the world.” DeMille affirmed the Latter-day Saints “did approve it, enthusiastically. And,” he said, “I may have had a personal, almost a selfish, reason for wanting to preview in Salt Lake City: it gave me another chance to spend some time with . . . the President of the Mormon Church, David O. McKay. There are men whose very presence warms the heart. President McKay is one of them.”³³

The *Deseret News* reported, “About 1,700 lucky Utahns were in the audience, which included many civic, business and church leaders. . . . Many of the audience had stood in line prior to noon Friday to purchase

30. Howard Pearson, “DeMille in S. L. To Show ‘Ten Commandments,’” *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, August 3, 1956, A11. In the appendix of Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 441–46, there is listed in chronological order the seventy films DeMille personally directed, yet 441 notes that the other motion pictures he supervised are not included.

31. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 414, notes the exact cost for the production of the film was \$13,282,712.35. Less than three years after the release of *The Ten Commandments*, the film had grossed over eighty-three million dollars and nearly one billion people had already seen the film.

32. “DeMille Wings in to Test ‘Commandments’ on Utahns,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 3, 1956, D9.

33. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 433. In addition, Pearson, “DeMille in S. L. to Show ‘Ten Commandments,’” 11A, noted DeMille mentioned to reporters he had previously provided a sneak preview of his last movie, *Greatest Show on Earth* (released in 1952), also in Salt Lake City.



(left to right) Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., Jessie Ella Evans Smith, Cecil B. DeMille, Emma Ray Riggs McKay, Arnold Friberg, and David O. McKay, Salt Lake City, August 1956. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

tickets to the rare showing. . . . Several thousand others . . . were unable to obtain admittance because the Centre Theater showing was the only one that could be arranged.”³⁴ DeMille’s staff described the Salt Lakers

34. Howard Pearson, “‘Ten Commandments’ Given Premier Test Run in S. L.,” *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, August 4, 1956, B1. It is also evident that the specific nature of this upcoming event was not known. Just three days earlier, the *Deseret News* had mentioned, “A group of top Hollywood personalities will be in Salt Lake City Friday for a special prevue of what is described as ‘one of the most important pictures ever made in Hollywood.’ The name of the film was not divulged.” See “Hollywood Group Coming to S. L. for Top Prevue,” *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, August 1, 1956, C9. Two of the lucky few to attend the preview were Nadine Nelson and her husband, Tom. Nadine recalled, “At nine months pregnant, I stood outside in the August sun for two hours waiting in line to get a ticket. Well, I remember Cecil B. DeMille coming out on stage. . . . He simply said, ‘Ladies and gentlemen and David McKay.’ He



Cecil B. DeMille with Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., Jessie Ella Evans Smith, Arnold Friberg, David O. McKay and others in Salt Lake City, August 1956. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Paramount Pictures Corporation.

as “the perfect audience. . . . It was the best audience reaction we have ever seen.”³⁵

The *Tribune* headline proclaimed, “Previewers Cheer ‘Commandments.’” Praiseworthy comments included “Great beyond words . . . Fabulous . . . Indescribable . . . A masterpiece . . . The best picture ever produced.” DeMille was particularly delighted by the “burst of applause at the scene showing the waters of the Red Sea parting. The scene required three years of effort, he explained.”³⁶

pointed his finger, and he said, “David O. McKay, thou almost makest of me a Mormon.” Nadine Nelson, phone interview with author, December 1, 2018.

35. Pearson, “‘Ten Commandments’ Given Premier Test Run,” B4. Nadine Nelson, who was in the audience, remembered, “The audience reaction at the end was stupendous. It was just absolutely wonderful.” Nelson, phone interview.

36. “Previewers Cheer ‘Commandments,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 5, 1956, B8.

Following the Salt Lake premier, final film editing was completed in Hollywood before the motion picture opened in New York City on November 9, 1956.³⁷ Just prior to the New York opening at the Criterion Theater, DeMille gave an address, later published, titled “Why I Made the Ten Commandments.” In his address he stated, “*The Ten Commandments* are not outmoded relics of a barbaric age. They are as true and valid and real as the day they were burned into tablets of stone by the Finger of God.”³⁸

Near the beginning of the new year, President and Sister McKay sent a pamphlet to DeMille to explain the teachings of the Church. DeMille graciously responded, writing, “Thank you for sending me the inscribed copy of ‘A Look At Mormonism,’ a fascinating and very useful collection of glimpses at the widespread and varied activities of your church. As I leaf through it, one thing that strikes me is the predominance of cheerful smiling faces, even in the unposed photographs—a fine illustration of the wholesome influence of your faith upon its devout adherence.”³⁹

Soon thereafter, DeMille was selected to receive an honorary doctoral degree from Brigham Young University and spoke at the spring commencement exercises on May 31, 1957, following an introduction by President McKay. On that occasion, McKay said of his dear friend, “I have never felt the joy in introducing a speaker to an audience that I experience at this moment in announcing to you, as the Commencement speaker, Mr. Cecil B. deMille.” President McKay added that DeMille was “one of those living light-fountains in whose presence one feels inspired and uplifted.” McKay felt his famed friend’s greatness was “not only in his ability to choose the right . . . but also because of his soul, his faith in God, his confidence in his fellow men,” adding, “I love him because of his nobility.”⁴⁰

37. Pearson, “‘Ten Commandments’ Given Premier Test Run,” B1.

38. Cecil B. DeMille, “Why I Made *The Ten Commandments*,” address given at a luncheon at the Plaza Hotel just prior to the opening of his motion picture production at the Criterion Theatre in New York City, Church History Library. Arnold Friberg noted that DeMille “hoped that God himself will use this motion picture in order that men may know that freedom and the law were once given from the fiery summit of Mount Sinai. That it has been the basic law of mankind ever since. . . . That was his purpose in making the Ten Commandments.” Arnold Friberg, BYU devotional, April 29, 1964.

39. Cecil B. DeMille to President and Mrs. David O. McKay, January 15, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

40. Introduction by President David O. McKay, in *Addresses of the Eighty-Second Annual Commencement Exercises and Baccalaureate Services, 1957*, in

DeMille then spent the bulk of his well-prepared speech⁴¹ on the importance of law and keeping the Ten Commandments, a theme apparent in his landmark film, which was nominated for seven Academy Awards and which he produced, directed, and narrated. He also spoke of his friend President McKay: "One of the most valued friendships that I have [is] the friendship of a man who combines wisdom and warmth of heart. . . . I have known many members of



Brigham Young University Bulletin 54, no. 17 (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1957), 1, Perry Special Collections. DOMD, May 31, 1957, evidences that President McKay "had great joy in introducing Cecil B. DeMille as the Commencement speaker."

41. It is readily apparent that DeMille had a gift for speaking, as evidenced by his commencement address, which was carefully organized and executed. Evidence of such preparation is revealed in notes DeMille made over a year before the commencement address: "There are three approaches. this is a graduating class. One is their duty to their God first, duty to their country second and their home third. I would talk on those three things and in the commandments you have those three things. Definitely provided for." "Notes for Possible Mormon talk," April 17, 1956, box 482, folder 13, CBPD. In a May 31, 1957, "7:00am" diary entry, there is also evidence that President McKay diligently prepared to introduce DeMille that night at the commencement exercises: "Although the office is closed today, in order to give employees a week-end holiday, I came to the office to study for three important events." President McKay then notes the funeral of Elder John V. Bluth, the issue of whether to have Ricks College in Rexburg or Idaho Falls, and his commencement introduction of DeMille. Concerning this introduction, McKay noted, "I shall preside and also introduce Mr. Cecil B. DeMille, movie producer, who is delivering the Commencement address and also receiving an honorary doctorate." See DOMD, May 31, 1957.

Cecil B. DeMille and David O. McKay at the Brigham Young University commencement exercises at which DeMille spoke and received an honorary doctoral degree, May 31, 1957. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

your Church . . . but David O. McKay embodies, more than anyone that I have ever known, the virtues and the drawing-power of your Church.” DeMille then said, “David McKay, almost thou persuadest me to be a Mormon!”⁴²

About six weeks later, McKay sent DeMille a letter with enclosed photographs of the commencement activities of which DeMille had been a part. President McKay noted, “I cherish these pictures as being reminiscent of one of the greatest days in the history of the Brigham Young University. Your Commencement address . . . won and merited the praise of tens of thousands who heard it directly and over radio and television.”⁴³ A week later, DeMille thanked the President for “the touching inscription on the photograph which . . . enshrines forever the memory of that wonderful evening at Brigham Young University.”⁴⁴

On September 7, 1957, DeMille sent a birthday telegram to McKay: “The world has changed mightily since 1873 [the year of McKay’s birth on September 8], but through all worldly changes the eternal values abide, the faith in God of which your life is a valiant example, the hope that has inspired you, and the love with which you are surrounded on this happy birthday, in which I join with warmest greetings and affection.”⁴⁵

Four days later, President McKay wrote a letter to DeMille thanking him for his thoughtfulness in sending a birthday greeting, noting, “It was gracious of you to take time to send affectionate greetings. . . . None of the many received gave me more joy.” McKay also wrote, “Among the ‘eternal values’ that direct men’s souls toward the Infinite is the desire to be of service to one’s fellowmen. You have demonstrated that you possess this virtue in rich abundance. May God’s choicest blessings be your reward! For your graciousness and friendship I am deeply grateful.”⁴⁶

42. Cecil B. DeMille, in *Addresses of the Eighty-Second Annual Commencement*, 3. The news also captured DeMille’s commencement address: “BYU Hears: ‘Understand Law of God,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 1, 1957; “Keep Ten Commandments, DeMille Tells BYU Graduates,” *Deseret News*, June 1, 1957, newspaper clippings, DOMD, May 31, 1957.

43. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, July 9, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

44. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, July 18, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

45. Cecil B. DeMille to David O. McKay, telegram, September 7, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

46. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, September 11, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

As the year drew to a close, President McKay and his wife, Emma Rae, sent a Western Union telegram on December 29, 1957, to DeMille stating, "YOUR WIRE DELIVERED XMAS DAY IN THE MIDST OF FAMILY FESTIVITIES. . . . MAY THE NEW YEAR BRING YOU RESTORED HEALTH HAPPINESS AND CONTINUED SUCCESS IN YOUR BENEFICIAL SERVICES FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MAKING [MANKIND]." ⁴⁷

The well wishes for a restoration of health were sent due to a recent heart attack DeMille had suffered in Egypt. Six months after the warm holiday wishes sent by DeMille to the McKays, he testified for the right to work before a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives. On his return to his home in Hollywood, June 18, 1958, he suffered another heart attack, which was more serious than the previous one. ⁴⁸ Llewelyn R. McKay, the second oldest son of President McKay, also sent a Christmas gift in November, a short book he and his father had written this same year titled *Christmas Silhouettes: Two Christmas Stories*. ⁴⁹ Two months later, on January 21, 1959, DeMille died at his home due to heart failure at the age of seventy-eight; his friend McKay outlived him by a decade, not passing until 1970 at the age of ninety-six. ⁵⁰ On the eve of his passing, DeMille discussed with his granddaughter their family and God, whom Cecil described as "the mind of the universe." ⁵¹ While on his deathbed, DeMille had marked various passages in his Bible, including Psalm 121:1: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills; from whence cometh my help?" ⁵²

47. David O. McKay to Cecil B. DeMille, telegram, December 29, 1957, box 482, folder 13, CBDP.

48. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 438. At this same time, President McKay was recuperating at his home from an eye operation. See DOMD, June 17, 1958. Yet two days later, he "unexpectedly arrived at the office. . . . His eye still bandaged, and the stitches still in." See DOMD, June 19, 1958.

49. Box 482, folder 13, CBDP. Llewelyn R. McKay and David O. McKay, *Christmas Silhouettes: Two Christmas Stories* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958). This short book was only twenty-eight pages in length. It contained a story titled "The Two Waifs," written by President McKay, and another story, titled "The Talking Clock," written by Llewelyn. Inside the book given to DeMille is an inscription that states, "To Cecil B. deMille with highest regards. Llewelyn R. McKay."

50. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 438–39; Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 393.

51. Eyman, *Empire of Dreams*, 500.

52. Eyman, *Empire of Dreams*, 502.

On the day of DeMille's death, McKay's diary notes, "Received word of the passing of Cecil B. DeMille . . . a friend for many years, and I held him in the highest esteem." In addition, he sent a telegram to the DeMille family stating that Mr. DeMille "merits the welcome, 'Well done thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the rest prepared for the just.['] Heartfelt condolence to his bereaved Loved Ones."⁵³ A *Deseret News* reporter called at McKay's office that same day to request a statement on his friend's passing. President McKay stated, "I am deeply grieved. He was a great man, fearless in the defense of what he considered to be right. I consider him the greatest leader in the motion picture business, really a world benefactor. He was a man of high ideals. This was demonstrated in his strenuous fight a few years ago for the right to work. I was proud to be counted among his friends."⁵⁴

A few days after the passing of DeMille, President McKay received a letter from the Paramount Pictures Corporation notifying him of a gift that would soon be coming—"an especially bound copy of the screenplay for THE TEN COMMANDMENTS." President McKay learned that there were just twenty-five of these works printed and only nineteen of them were inscribed, one of which was McKay's.⁵⁵ Soon thereafter, the gift arrived, and President McKay expressed in his diary his delight at receiving one of only nineteen bound inscribed screenplays and described "the beautiful book with my name imprinted in gold." He added, "So genuine is my affection for this great man that I feel honored to have my posterity know that, in part at least, he reciprocated my friendship."⁵⁶

Such a special, inscribed gift seemed fitting, since DeMille had spent years trying to produce a moving piece to hold up God's law, engraved on stone tablets, while President McKay had spent a lifetime trying to etch spirituality in the Latter-day Saints and the good people of the

53. DOMD, January 21, 1959. In the diary, it is recorded that the following month, Joseph W. Harper sent a note of appreciation for McKay's telegram noting, "Your message of sympathy was most understanding. You have Mrs. deMille's and our deep appreciation." Joseph W. Harper to David O. McKay, February 19, 1959, copy in DOMD, January 21, 1959.

54. "DeMille Dies of Heart Ill," *Deseret News*, January 21, 1959, copy of newspaper clipping in DOMD, January 21, 1959.

55. Paramount staff member Ann del Valle to David O. McKay, January 26, 1959, copy in DOMD, February 6, 1959.

56. David O. McKay to Miss del Valle, February 6, 1959, copy in DOMD, February 6, 1959.

earth. Like David O. McKay, Cecil B. DeMille spent his life filled with a desire and unique ability to lift his fellowman via his extraordinary gifts. Donald Hayne, his close associate and editorial assistant to his autobiographical work, wrote on the night before his funeral, “He was a man of unquenchable faith and hope and a courageous heart. . . . He was a man of vision.”⁵⁷ James Vincent D’Arc, who was well acquainted with DeMille’s *Autobiography* and wrote part of his dissertation on the creation of this work, noted:

According to his close associates, DeMille was not the crassly commercial purveyor of sex and redemption that many critics of his films have written of him. His creation, early in life, of the Champion Driver—“the Robin Hood whose Sherwood Forest was the world”—who fought against the forces of evil, was sincerely felt. Whether as a child jousting artichokes in his mother’s garden in acting out the chivalry of his Champion Driver, or later in life showing Moses in glorious Technicolor uttering God’s retribution to an unrepentant Ramses, DeMille’s deeply rooted values espoused by his minister-playwright father spoke to generations of eager moviegoers. “He sold the same message as the great illustrator Norman Rockwell,” wrote DeMille screenwriter Jesse Lasky, Jr., and son of his former partner, “by using Babylon instead of the small-town drugstore.”⁵⁸

Both David O. McKay and Cecil B. DeMille had a great impact on their generation. President McKay wore out his life building what he believed to be God’s kingdom on earth. While DeMille spent most of his life in the flash and pomp of Hollywood, he never seemed sullied by it.

Orson F. Whitney of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles discussed the influence of such good people: “The Lord’s Work has need of auxiliaries outside as well as inside, to help it along. Because of their worldly influence—which would depart if they connected themselves with the Church—many are kept where they are, where the Lord has placed them, and can best use them for the good of all.”⁵⁹ DeMille certainly seems to fit into this category.

57. Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 439.

58. D’Arc, “Two Articles,” 87–88. See also Hayne, *Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille*, 38–39, on the imagination of a young boyish DeMille, concerning his perceived imagined role of “The Champion Driver,” spurred by “heroic tales my father read us.”

59. Orson F. Whitney, in *Ninety-Eighth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Sale Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), 60.

Because of the laws both DeMille and McKay lived, they were both considered men of honor, decency, and nobility in their different spheres of society. The genuine friendship of David O. McKay and Cecil B. DeMille was not only unexpected but remarkable, shining a bright light down the corridor of history's shadows and also yielding a more favorable view of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the midst of the twentieth century.

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Back

In early morning, as you run down the hall
tumbling over the rug, clutching a stuffed animal,
I can't help but toss you over my shoulder,
your fly-away curls blind
both of us, your squeals sling down
my ear, the notes peal
sharper than winter air.

You hop down and toe into the kitchen,
pleased that I now understand your raised finger,
your whispered plea *cup of milk, cup of milk*.

You came into our lives like a bird
flying out of a magician's fiery pot.
Your wings and rhythms forming somewhere else.
What did you do with what you left behind?
Are scarves and jump ropes winding you
through an antemortal wormhole or tipping point?

For you, the only tip is a head moving forward,
no going back to a fist in the mouth
or smacking gums or cells quick
to divide.

Yet occasionally I go back,
attempting to piece together
your essence with the verbal splashes
I hear now.
How a blueprint exists for each house
and a mathematician knows the endlessness of a line.
Even when you aren't here,
I still hear footsteps down the hall.

—Mark D. Bennion

This poem won third place in the 2018 Clinton F. Larson
Poetry Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.



FIGURE 1. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 1226, 10.8 × 9.8 cm on mount 16.5 × 13.8 cm, Church History Library). The First Presidency stands together in this historic photograph taken on the day the Salt Lake temple was dedicated, April 6, 1893. Figure 8 shows a variant pose.

The image and mount provide important information. The mount has pre-printed text: the logo (S.&J. on a black triangle), Sainsbury and Johnson, and Salt Lake City, Utah. The photographers wrote “Copyright 1893 S-J” on the photo. They also printed on the mount the names of the three men (George Q. Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith) and “The First Presidency Of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Photographed April 6th, 1893, Copyright by S. & J.”

Photographs of the First Presidency, April 6, 1893

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas R. Wells

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints witnessed momentous events that directly affected them in 1893. Along with other Americans, the Latter-day Saints in the western United States experienced the terrible effects of the Panic of 1893, one of the worst financial depressions in the nation's history.¹ The early signs of the economic decline appeared in February 1893 when receivers were appointed for the debt-ridden Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. Soon thereafter, stock prices plummeted, more than fifteen thousand businesses failed, people walked away from their farms and homes unable to pay their mortgages, unemployment rates hit as high as 43 percent in some states, and by the end of the year more than four thousand banks had closed.² Despite the economic crisis that gripped the nation, 1893 was a year of celebration for Church members as they dedicated the Salt Lake temple, built a resort at Saltair on the Great Salt Lake, and participated in the Chicago World's Fair. Finally, by the end of 1893, the way began to open for Utah Territory to become a state. Each of these events made 1893 a significant year in the history of the Church, which was undergoing a cultural shift after the 1890 Manifesto.

Photographs in this article highlight one day in one of these events: April 6, 1893, the day of the temple dedication, when the First Presidency had portraits taken in Salt Lake City (fig. 1). These historic photos became

1. See Ronald W. Walker, "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893," *Arizona and the West* 21 (Autumn 1979): 257–78.

2. See Elmus Wicker, *Banking Panics of the Gilded Age*, Studies in Macroeconomic History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

scattered; some have never been published, and the collection has never been published together. This article will briefly review the events of 1893 and then discuss April 6 and the photo session in detail.

Construction of the temple foundation and walls took thirty-nine years, culminating in a capstone-laying ceremony in 1892 (fig. 2). This lengthy endeavor was followed by a year of tireless work and significant financial expense to complete the interior. The First Presidency, consisting of Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, were ready to dedicate the edifice in April 1893. This temple was the sixth to be dedicated and the fourth in Utah, but because of its significance at Church headquarters, the First Presidency scheduled a first-ever temple open house for about a thousand non-Latter-day Saints on Wednesday, April 5, the evening before the first dedication session. President Woodruff entered the temple on the last day of the Church's annual general conference, Thursday, April 6, 1893, for the dedication ceremony.³ To accommodate all those seeking to participate in the longed-for celebration, the First Presidency scheduled an unprecedented thirty-one sessions in the grand assembly hall in the upper floor of the temple, including an evening session and five children's sessions, from April 6 to April 24 (fig. 3).⁴

The Saltair resort came about as Church leaders, anxious to help the Saints with employment and to provide wholesome recreation, financed two interrelated projects: the construction of the Saltair resort (fig. 4),

3. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, April 6, 1893, 15, Wilford Woodruff Collection, 1828–1898, MS 1352, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. See also Brian H. Stuy, "'Come, Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord': The Salt Lake Temple," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 101–2; and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *Every Stone a Sermon: The Magnificent Story of the Construction and Dedication of the Salt Lake Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992). Wilford Woodruff (1807–1898) served as the President, George Quayle Cannon (1827–1901) served as the First Counselor, and Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) served as the Second Counselor.

4. See "Viewing the Temple," *Deseret Evening News*, April 6, 1893, 1. Even federally appointed Utah Territorial Supreme Court Justice Charles S. Zane, a longtime critic of the Church, was impressed by the quality of design, decorations, and craftsmanship. "The building is furnished opulently," he noted in his journal after attending the open house. Charles S. Zane, Journal, April 5, 1893, Charles S. Zane Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, quoted in Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Every Window, Every Spire Speaks of the Things of God," *Ensign* 23 (March 1993): 19–20.

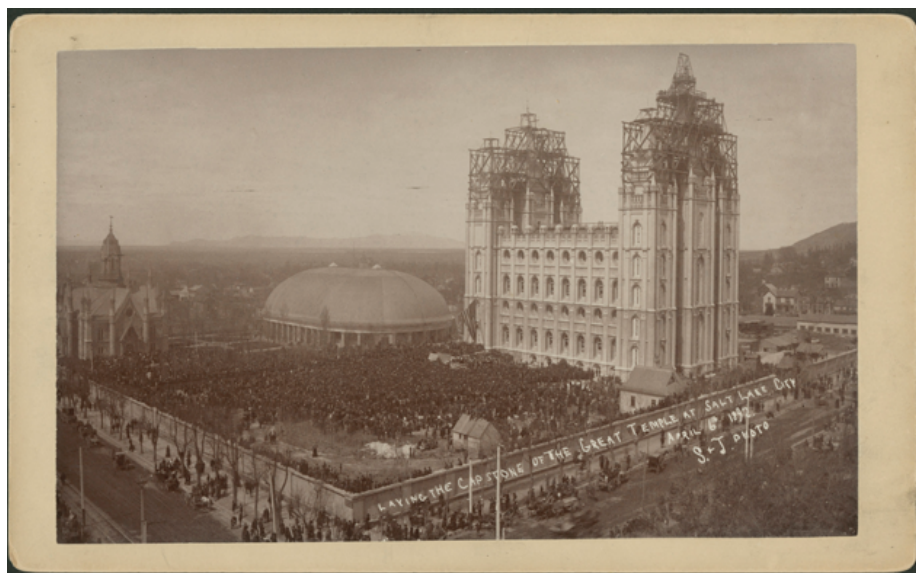


FIGURE 2. Salt Lake temple capstone ceremony, April 6, 1892, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 1256 12 × 19 cm on mount 14 × 22 cm, Church History Library).



FIGURE 3. Salt Lake Temple, ca. April 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (P0011, box 1, album 1, C. E. Johnson Photograph Collection, 1860–1920, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan). A collection of Charles Ellis Johnson photographs, including photo albums, was discovered at the Sons of Utah Pioneers Museum at Lagoon Amusement Park in Farmington, Utah, and transferred to Utah State University. The albums appear to be Johnson's personal photo album with prints attached in the album pages without mounts, as is the case with this photograph. This view was taken about the time of the dedication and possibly on the day of the dedication (compare with fig. 6).



FIGURE 4. Saltair pavilion, ca. 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 8513, 12 × 19 cm on mount 14 × 22 cm), Church History Library.

located on the south shore of the Great Salt Lake, about sixteen miles from downtown Salt Lake City, and the Saltair Railway, which connected the resort with the city.⁵ Saltair opened to the public on Memorial Day, May 30, 1893, but was officially dedicated on Thursday, June 8, by Woodruff in the presence of ten thousand people.⁶

The Chicago World's Fair in 1893, known officially as the World's Columbian Exposition, celebrated the four-hundred-year anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Western Hemisphere. It opened in May 1893, and in September, 250 members of the Tabernacle Choir traveled nearly fourteen hundred miles to compete in an event that was part of the World's Fair: a Welsh *Eisteddfod*, a musical competition (fig. 5). The Tabernacle Choir competed with some of the best choirs from Great Britain and the United States during the event. A second-place award catapulted the choir and the Church into the national spotlight in a most positive way.⁷

5. See Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985).

6. Woodruff, *Journal*, June 8, 1893, 20.

7. Reid L. Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).



FIGURE 5. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir traveling to Chicago in September 1893. The caption written on the photo reads, “Mormon Tabernacle Choir serenading Henry Irving, U.P.R.R. [Union Pacific Rail Road].” The banner on the side of the railcars reads, “250 Voices Enroute to Chicago.” Photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 4390, 12 × 19 cm on mount 14 × 22 cm, Church History Library).

Finally, during the fall of 1893, the way opened for Utah to become a state, ending a nearly forty-year struggle to obtain home rule for the citizens of Utah. Joseph Rawlins, the Democratic territorial delegate to Congress, introduced the Enabling Act on Wednesday, September 6, 1893. It passed the House on Friday, December 15, 1893, and the Senate on Tuesday, July 10, 1894, and was signed by President Grover Cleveland on Monday, July 16, 1894, providing for Utah’s admission to the union.⁸

The Morning Temple Dedication Ceremony

At the end of the year 1893, Woodruff opined that the dedication of the Salt Lake temple was “the greatest Event of 1893. . . . The power of God was manifest in the dedication of this Temple.”⁹ From his perspective,

8. Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

9. Woodruff, *Journal*, December 31, 1893, 54.



VIEW OF TEMPLE ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 6.—CHURCH AUTHORITIES ENTERING THE SOUTHWEST DOOR FOR THE DEDICATION.

instruction and comfort flowed from the lips of the First Presidency and Apostles. The Spirit of the Lord rested in power upon the congregations of the Saints, and their hearts were filled with the heavenly joy and peace which passeth all understanding. Their toils and sacrifices for forty years were crowned in glorious triumph by the revelation from

God that He accepted of the Temple as a habitation holy to His name.

With the completion of the beautiful edifice in Salt Lake City, whose very appearance is a symbol of purity and peace, and whose existence is a witness of the favor and power of God, the work of temple-building by the Saints does not cease. The divine obligation to

FIGURE 6. "View of Temple on the Morning of April 6.—Church Authorities Entering the Southwest Door for the Dedication," April 6, 1893, photograph by unknown photographer (but possibly Sainsbury and Johnson since it is similar to known Sainsbury and Johnson photographs). This historic photograph was printed in a Church magazine, "The Salt Lake Temple," *Contributor* 14 (April 1893): 302.

the dedication of the Salt Lake temple was not only the “greatest Event” in 1893, it was also one of the most important days in his life. Woodruff believed that he had been foreordained to dedicate the sacred building and that the Lord had watched over him throughout his life to accomplish that task.¹⁰ Several years following the temple’s dedication, he reflected, “I was ordained to dedicate this Salt Lake Temple fifty years before it was dedicated. I knew I should live to dedicate that Temple. I did live to do it.”¹¹

When the day finally arrived to celebrate the completion and dedication of the temple, there was great anticipation, excitement, expectation, and anxiety among the Church leaders and members. For example, George Q. Cannon recorded in his journal on the day of the dedication, “My sleep was interrupted a good deal last night through my anxiety to get moving early that we might not be behind in reaching the Temple.” Cannon did arrive at the temple in time for the first dedicatory session, scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on April 6, 1893. He reflected, “We reached the east gate before eight o’clock and were arranged in the form of a procession, President Woodruff’s family leading and mine and Brother Smith’s and the families of the Twelve following[.] I had forty-five in number, not counting myself”¹² (fig. 6).

Cannon continued his description of the morning events: “This morning it took a long time for the people to get into the [assembly] hall and get seated. A great many had to stand for want of room. There was a choir of three hundred voices under the direction of Brother Evan Stephens, and the singing was very delightful. In the stand of the First Presidency there were on the centre seat Presidents Woodruff, [Joseph F.] Smith and myself of the First Presidency and Brother Lorenzo Snow, president of the Twelve.” One of the distinguishing aspects of the dedication is that all members of the First Presidency and Twelve were present on this special occasion. The Twelve in that day had a variety of

10. Stuy, “‘Come, Let Us Go Up,’” 101–2. Wilford Woodruff became the fourth President of the Church on April 7, 1889, after presiding as the senior Apostle during the apostolic interregnum between July 25, 1877, and April 7, 1889, following the death of John Taylor (1808–1887).

11. Wilford Woodruff, in *Sixty-Eighth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1898), 29.

12. George Q. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1893, George Q. Cannon Collection, 1825–1898, MS 4777, Church History Library, on Church Historian’s Press, <https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/george-q-cannon/1890s/1893/04-1893?lang=eng>.

duties and obligations, including serving as mission presidents abroad, that they do not have today. Cannon observed, "There were four chairs placed in the stand in which Brothers F. D. Richards, Brigham Young [Jr.], Moses Thatcher and Patriarch John Smith sat, there not being room on the seat below for all the Twelve to sit. . . . All the Twelve were present, something which rarely happens."¹³

Many witnesses of the dedicatory services in the large assembly hall, which takes up the entire top floor of the Salt Lake temple, left records of the proceedings that have been published in newspaper articles, magazine stories, and popular and academic articles and books.¹⁴ Anthon H. Lund, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, observed, "The Dedication was grand. Prest Woodruff Geo Q Cannon and Jos. F. Smith spoke. L Snow led in the Hosannahs. Jo F. melted every heart with his sweet speech on forgiveness."¹⁵ Cannon himself provided a lengthy description of the morning session in his journal:

The hall presented a beautiful appearance this morning, and the congregation was exceedingly pleased with it. An anthem was sung by the choir, when President Woodruff arose and spoke beautifully for some little time. He then read the dedicatory prayer after which President Lorenzo Snow, at the request of President Woodruff, instructed the congregation as to the manner of crying "Hosannah, hosanna, hosanna to God and the Lamb. Amen, amen, amen," and the hall resounded with the cry of the host that was present in following him in these words. It was a grand sight and one that is not soon to be forgotten to see the people standing on their feet and waving their handkerchiefs in unison at each cry and uttering a volume of sound which might be heard a long distance. After this, the choir sang the anthem "Hosannah" and the people joined in singing "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning." When this was finished President Woodruff called upon me to speak, and when I did so my feelings almost choked me. My words were entirely too feeble to express my thoughts. After speaking a few minutes, however, I obtained control of myself. I touched

13. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1893.

14. See, for example, "Annual Conference," *Deseret Evening News*, April 6, 1893, 5; and "The House of Mormon," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 7, 1893, 1.

15. Anthon H. Lund, Journal, April 6, 1893, MS 5375, Anthon H. Lund Journals 1860–1921, Church History Library. See also John P. Hatch, ed., *Danish Apostle: The Diaries of Anthon H. Lund, 1890–1921* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006), 11. Anthon H. Lund (1844–1921) became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on October 7, 1889.

upon a number of subjects which I thought needed mentioning. I felt to praise the Lord for the union He had given us and the results of the course which the First Presidency had taken in asking the people to fast and pray. I then related a little of our experience in counseling the people. The First Presidency knew by the Spirit of the Lord which He had revealed to them that the course they had taken was from Him, and that they had been guided by the revelations of Jesus in taking it. After I got through, President Woodruff spoke excellently, after which President Jos. F. Smith spoke with great power and under the influence of the Holy Ghost.¹⁶

The Historical Department office journal noted, “Dedication of the Temple Services at ten and two. Wind very rough during morning services. Tried to rain & snow several times. Very cold when congregation came out at noon. The wind this morning blew over a locust tree on the sidewalk in front of office lot, in the street.”¹⁷

Cannon provided an important detail about the events of the day: “After the meeting we went down to Sainsbury & Johnson’s art gallery and sat for a number of portraits.”¹⁸

Sainsbury and Johnson Photographers

By February 1891, Hyrum Sainsbury and Charles Ellis Johnson began a photographic partnership in Salt Lake City. Later, following the dedication of the Salt Lake temple, Sainsbury retired from the partnership, leaving Johnson as the sole photographer.¹⁹ Johnson continued operating a state-of-the-art photographic studio in the V.T.R. Building located at 54–56 South West Temple.²⁰

16. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1893.

17. Historical Department office journal, 1844–2012, April 6, 1893, 49:4, CR 100 1, Church History Library.

18. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1893.

19. Nelson B. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Mormons, the West, and Their Photographers* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 273–74. This book was first published under the title *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers* (1992).

20. Johnson operated two stores on the main floor and occupied the entire upstairs above both stores for his photographic business. The building was often identified as the V.T.R. building for “Valley-Tan Remedies,” Johnson’s family home remedies business. An 1892 guide to Salt Lake noted, “Valley-Tan or V.T.R. Laboratory of Mr. C. E. Johnson, located at 54 and 56 S. West Temple.”

Some of Sainsbury and Johnson's photographs include information printed on the reverse side of the mounts. For example, one mount has printed on the back, "Sainsbury & Johnson. Artistic Photographers. Salt Lake City. Utah. Studio at 54 S. West Temple St. V.T.R. Building. Duplicates may be had at anytime. Special attention given to profession and character portraits. Professional portraits for sale. Gold Medal Award 91-92." This printed information accompanied the Sainsbury and Johnson logo, a dark triangle with S.&J. highlighted. In some cases, another symbol, a crane standing on one leg, was also included.²¹

Photographic historian Nelson Wadsworth observes that Charles Ellis Johnson "was one of the most prolific and enterprising photographers on the Mormon scene. He photographed thousands of people in his modern, state-of-the-art studio in Salt Lake City."²² Sainsbury and Johnson also made Utah landscapes and Salt Lake City views.²³ Later, Johnson captured daily life in Jerusalem during the late Ottoman period while traveling in the Holy Land in 1903.²⁴

Regarding Sainsbury and Johnson's particular photographic practice and skills, Wadsworth observes, "Johnson liked to use large format cameras. Because photographers of that time worked primarily with albumen or bromide 'printing-out papers,' large negatives were required for large pictures. Negatives were contact-printed in large, wooden frames, the exposures made either in the sunlight or by bright, kerosene lamps called gaslights. Then the prints were gold-toned, fixed, washed, and

Utah: Her Cities, Towns and Resources (Chicago: Manly and Litteral, 1891-92), 46; see also *Utah Gazetteer 1892-93* (Salt Lake City: Stenhouse and Co. Publishers, 1892), 619, 849.

21. See portrait of Jeanette R. Young Easton, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City, PH 1700 3670, 14 x 9.2 cm on mount 16.5 x 10.8 cm, Church History Library.

22. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 274.

23. Even though Johnson captured important moments in the lives of Church leaders in the 1890s and early 1900s, he also explored an increasingly popular genre of photography—female glamour poses that included partially clothed women models and theater actresses in costume. See Daniel Davis, "Appreciating a Pretty Shoulder': The Risqué Images of Charles Ellis Johnson," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 74 (Spring 2006): 131-46; and Mary Campbell, *Charles Ellis Johnson and the Erotic Mormon Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

24. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas R. Wells, "Photographs of Jerusalem, 1903," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001): 135-46.

mounted for display. Johnson's modern, north-light studio with huge cameras capable of making negatives up to 18-by-24 inches was one of the best equipped in the state."²⁵

Copies of Sainsbury and Johnson's work are found in many repositories and in private collections throughout the United States, but three libraries are the primary repositories of his work: the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; and Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.²⁶

The Photo Session with the First Presidency

In March 1893, just days before the temple dedication, Sainsbury and Johnson invited the First Presidency to come to their gallery. In a letter, Sainsbury and Johnson explained why they hoped the First Presidency would accept the invitation: "We desire the privilege of making a picture of the First Presidency on the day on which the Temple will be dedicated (April 6th 1893.) The fact of its being taken on that date will cause the picture to be of great historical interest and value in all time." They asked, "Would it be convenient for you to call at our gallery immediately after the morning service, or as soon thereafter as you can make it convenient, on April 6th? Should you grant us this favor we will not detain you longer than from fifteen to twenty minutes as we will have everything prepared to take the negatives without delay"²⁷ (fig. 7).

Fortunately for the photographers and for us, the First Presidency consented and walked the short distance to the Sainsbury and Johnson gallery following the morning session. During this historic photographic

25. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 297.

26. Charles Ellis Johnson glass-plate negatives, circa 1892–1913, PH 10229, Church History Library; Charles E. Johnson glass-plate negative collection, circa 1890–1918, PH 9612, Church History Library; manuscript page 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Photograph Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; and P0011, C. E. Johnson photograph collection, 1860–1920, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.

27. Sainsbury and Johnson to President Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, March 31, 1898, box 5, folder 9, CR 1 171, First Presidency (Wilford Woodruff) general correspondence 1887–1898, Church History Library.

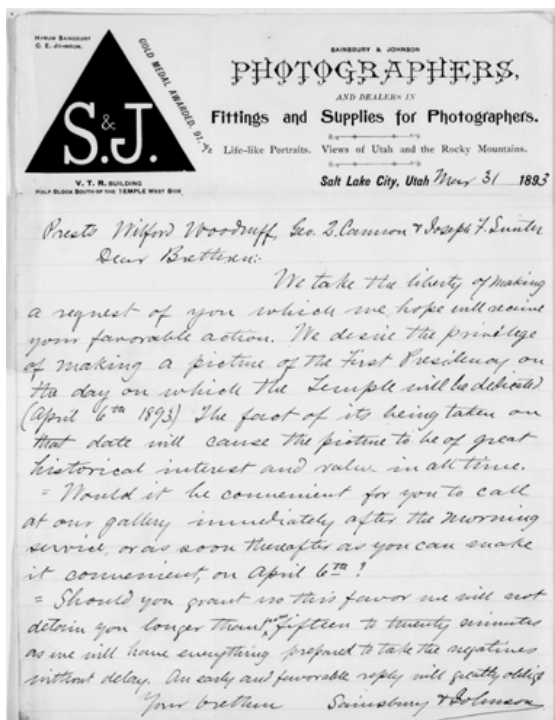


FIGURE 7. Sainsbury and Johnson to the First Presidency, March 31, 1893, Church History Library.

session, the First Presidency posed for several group and individual photographs. The Church History Library preserves two views of the First Presidency with all three men standing but with slightly different poses (figs. 1 and 8). In both views, Joseph F. Smith places his right hand into his coat.²⁸ Two views from this photo session show the First Presidency seated (figs. 9, 10).

In a stunning large-format photograph of the First Presidency measuring 42 × 54.5 cm on mount 52.1 × 60.8 cm (fig. 11), Sainsbury and Johnson added the exact time when the photograph was taken—1:55 p.m., April 6, 1893. By coincidence, there is also a source that provides the temperature in Salt Lake City at about the

same time. The Historical Department office journal noted, “Therm. 54 at 1:45 pm. Cold wind, Spitting rain.”²⁹ Individual portraits of Smith (fig. 12) and Woodruff (fig. 15) were also taken that day, and possibly other individual portraits (see discussion below).

The story of this historic collection of First Presidency photographs taken on April 6, 1893, five preserved in the Church History Library and

28. Placing the right hand into a coat had a long tradition but had been popularized in portrait paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including paintings of French statesman, military leader, and emperor Napoleon (1769–1821). With the invention of photography, the tradition was revived, especially during the American Civil War among military officers.

29. Historical Department office journal, April 6, 1893, 49:4. “Spitting rain” refers to small drops—not a heavy rain.



FIGURE 8. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (P0011, box 1, album 1, C. E. Johnson Photograph Collection, 1860–1920, Utah State University). This view is a variant of figure 1; Cannon (on the left) has changed the position of his gaze slightly by looking more toward the camera.



FIGURE 9. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 2016, 9.2 × 14 cm on mount 10.8 × 16.5 cm, Church History Library). In this pose, George Q. Cannon sits on Wilford Woodruff's right with Joseph F. Smith to his left—a traditional arrangement for the First Presidency (First Counselor on the right and the Second Counselor on the left). Sainsbury and Johnson have noted on the print, in white India ink, "Copyright 1893 by S.&J." They attached the print to a mount horizontally, with part of the preprinted Sainsbury and Johnson logo still visible in the lower right-hand corner of the mount and with the name "Johnson" cut in half on the upper right-hand corner. The lower portion of "Salt Lake City" is barely discernable. Sainsbury and Johnson printed on the mount, "The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Photographed April 6th 1893 by S.&J."

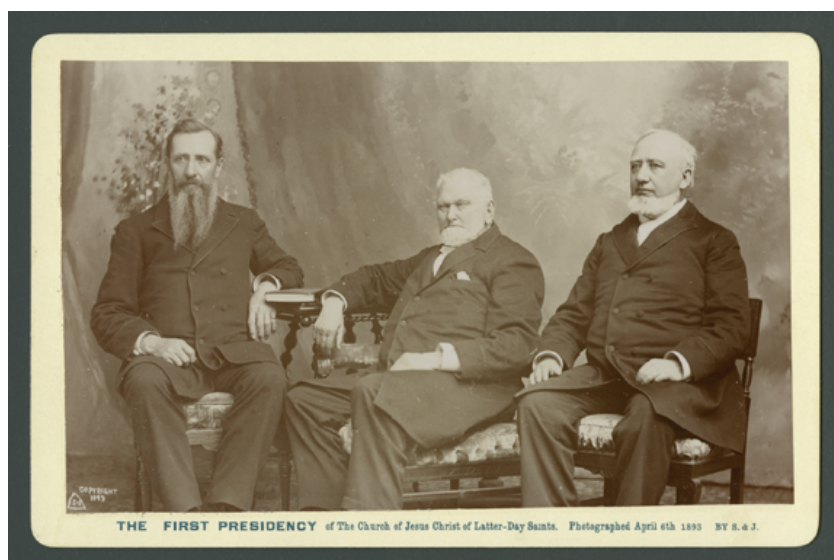


FIGURE 10. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 2016, 9.2 × 14 cm on mount 10.8 × 16.5 cm, Church History Library). In this pose, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith are seated in different positions than in figure 9. Like the previous image (fig. 9), Sainsbury and Johnson attached the print to a mount horizontally. In this case, the print completely covers the preprinted mount material. Sainsbury and Johnson have printed on this mount, “The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Photographed April 6th 1893 by S.&J.”



FIGURE 11. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 2722, folder 1, 42 × 54.5 cm on mount 52.1 × 60.8 cm, Church History Library). Compare with figures 9 and 10. On the print, Sainsbury and Johnson wrote, in white India ink, “Copyright 1893 by S.&J.” In the lower left-hand corner, the names of the First Presidency are positioned one above the other: “Wilford Woodruff. George Q. Cannon. Joseph F. Smith.” It appears that George is spelled “Ceorge.” However, an enhanced view suggests the letter “G” is simply worn off, as is the case in the printing of “Wilford.” Sainsbury and Johnson provided a title for the photograph in extra-large typeface, “The First Presidency,” and added in a smaller typeface, “Of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” Information regarding the photo session is printed below the name of the Church in a different color and font size: “Photographed at 1:55 p.m. April 6th 1893, immediately after the Dedictory Services of t[he Salt] Lake Templ[e].” Sainsbury and Johnson attached a piece of paper in the lower right-hand corner of the mount, “Sainsbury & Johnson Salt Lake City, Utah. Copyright 1893.” The attached paper also includes the Sainsbury and Johnson logo, a dark triangle with the letters “S.&J.” highlighted within the triangle.

one at the Utah State University library, is incomplete without further information provided by photograph historians. Charles Ellis Johnson left Utah for San Jose, California, in 1917 and took with him some of his original glass-plate negatives (those of his 1903 trip to the Holy Land). He left the majority of his negatives in Salt Lake City in the care of his younger brother Rufus. Because Johnson never returned to Utah, these negatives eventually passed into the hands of two of Rufus's children. In their care, the negatives did not fare well. A great number of negatives were destroyed by vandals or exposure to the weather. Most of those that did survive suffered some water damage or were cracked, but that any survived at all is remarkable. The negatives Johnson took to California came into the possession of a relative, David Fox, and were donated to Brigham Young University in 1975. Prints were made of some of those negatives and were shown in an exhibition in 1977. At that exhibit, it was made known to Brigham Young Uni-

versity representatives that other glass-plate negatives still existed in Salt Lake City. These glass-plate negatives were later also donated to Brigham Young University.³⁰ A careful examination of these negatives, the Johnson collection at Perry Special Collections at BYU, revealed



FIGURE 12. Joseph F. Smith, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (PH 512, box 1, folder 8, 9.2 × 14 cm on mount 10.8 × 16.5 cm, Church History Library). The mount features the Sainsbury and Johnson logo, a dark triangle with "S.&J." highlighted; the company's name, "Sainsbury and Johnson"; and the location, "Salt Lake City, Utah." Sainsbury and Johnson printed over the preprinted mount in a larger font, "Joseph F. Smith." In a smaller font, they added, "Photographed April 6th 1893 Copyright by S. & J."

30. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 315–17.

what appear to be additional images taken during the photographic session on April 6, 1893, and others whose date cannot be determined but are likely also from the April 6, 1893, session.

We can propose dating for the images based on Cannon's journal. He was a meticulous journal recorder, and his journal records his visits to photographers. According to Cannon, Johnson, as an individual photographer, took photographs of him and others on September 21, 1888, and September 8, 1898, and Cannon went to Sainsbury and Johnson on March 27, 1891; April 6, 1893; and May 27, 1896.³¹ Our examination of these images and comparison of the Sainsbury and Johnson photographs to the glass-plate negatives, looking at clothing, including jackets and overcoats (for example, Cannon wore a regular necktie while Woodruff wore a bowtie); furniture, including table, chairs, and props; and backdrops at the studio, suggest that several photographs (figs. 13/14, 15, 18) are clearly from the April 6, 1893, session, while the date of some plates (figs. 16, 17) remains less certain. The photos in figures 16 and 17 may have been taken on one of the other dates noted in Cannon's journal. No date is provided on any of the glass-plate negatives. But it is certain that these photographs were taken by Sainsbury and Johnson.

The following photographs include a photograph of an original glass-plate negative for illustration (fig. 13) and modern prints made from the original glass-plate negatives (figs. 14–18). These glass-plate negatives are remarkably large, especially figure 13, measuring 55.88 × 45.72 cm. Even though it is water damaged, this glass-plate negative beautifully preserves a particular moment in time.

These plates include a view of the full presidency (fig. 13/14), individual portraits (figs. 15, 16, 18), and, in an unusual arrangement, Woodruff and Cannon seated together without Joseph F. Smith (fig. 17). Contemporary written sources reveal a close personal relationship between Woodruff and Cannon, which may explain the decision to have a portrait taken with just the two of them.³² Cannon was with Woodruff in San Francisco, California, when Woodruff died on September 2, 1898.³³

31. See Cannon, Journal, for these dates.

32. See Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 422.

33. George Q. Cannon to Joseph F. Smith, September 2, 1898, MS 1325, Joseph F. Smith Papers, 1854–1918, Correspondences, Letterpress copybooks, Church History Library. See also Cannon, Journal, September 1–2, 1898.



FIGURE 13. Original glass-plate negative of the First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City (MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 55.88 × 45.72 cm, Perry Special Collections). Figure 14 is a modern print of this negative.

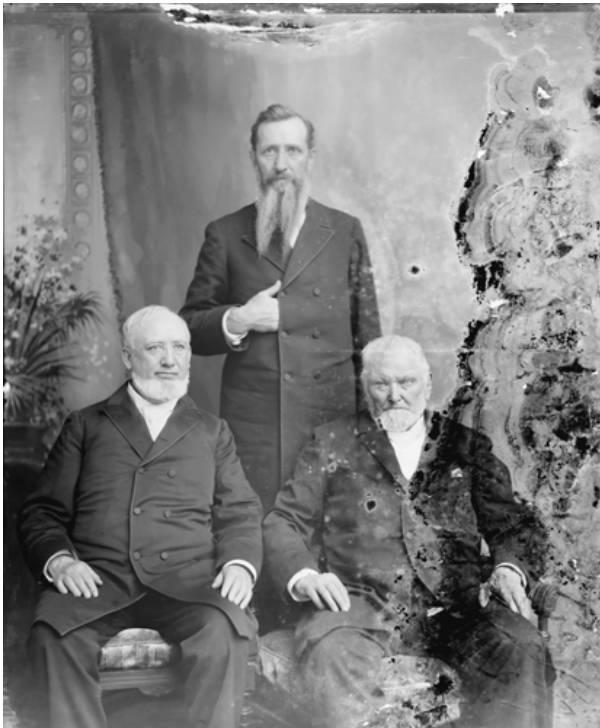


FIGURE 14. The First Presidency, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City. Copy print reproduced from the original glass-plate negative (fig. 13; MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 55.88 × 45.72 cm, Perry Special Collections). In this view, Joseph F. Smith, with his right hand tucked into his coat, stands behind and between George Q. Cannon (seated on the left) and Wilford Woodruff (seated on the right).

FIGURE 15. Wilford Woodruff, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City. Copy print reproduced from original glass-plate negative (MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 42.18 × 35.56 cm, Perry Special Collections). Woodruff stands alone with his cane in one hand and his top hat in the other hand.



FIGURE 16. George Q. Cannon, ca. April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City. Copy print reproduced from original glass-plate negative (MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 42.18 × 35.56 cm, Perry Special Collections).





FIGURE 17. George Q. Cannon and Wilford Woodruff, ca. April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City. Copy print reproduced from original glass-plate negative (MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 42.18 × 35.56 cm), Perry Special Collections.



FIGURE 18. Joseph F. Smith, April 6, 1893, photograph by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City. Copy print reproduced from original glass-plate negative (MSS P 6, Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, 42.18 × 35.56 cm, Perry Special Collections). Smith is seated with his arm resting upon a table that features a book (see figs. 9, 10, and 11, where the same chair, table, and book appear).

Several other photographs from collections at Utah State University (figs. 19–22) and BYU’s Perry Special Collections (figs. 23–24) may also belong to the April 6, 1893, photography session. No dates are written or printed on these photographs. However, it is certain that these photographs were taken by Sainsbury and Johnson, and the subjects wear clothing similar to what they wore in photographs known to be taken on April 6, 1893.



FIGURES 19–22. George Q. Cannon, ca. 1890s, photograph by Johnson, Salt Lake City (P0011, box 2, album 2, C. E. Johnson Photograph Collection, 1860–1920, Utah State University). Based on clothing, these photographs may have been taken on April 6, 1893. However, they may have been taken on March 27, 1891, two years before the Salt Lake temple dedication, or May 27, 1896, three years after the dedication.

FIGURES 23–24.

George Q. Cannon and Wilford Woodruff, photographs by Sainsbury and Johnson, Salt Lake City, possibly April 6, 1893 (MSS 8685, Julina Smith Collection, 13.97 cm × 9.84 cm on mount 16.51 cm × 10.8 cm, Perry Special Collections). One challenge in dating these images is that the print and mount do not provide the kind of data generally



found on Sainsbury and Johnson photographs. Therefore, the exact date will remain unknown. However, the clothing Cannon and Woodruff are wearing in these views is the same they were wearing on April 6, 1893.

The Afternoon Temple Dedication and Reflecting on the Day

After the photograph session, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith left the studio and returned to the temple for the afternoon dedication meeting that began at 2:30 p.m. The second dedication session went as planned. Cannon noted, "In the afternoon the services commenced at half past two o'clock. The choir in this meeting was reduced to fifty, but did excellent service. The prayer was read by myself. After the Hosannah shout and the singing, President Woodruff called upon me to speak. I only occupied about ten minutes. He followed, and after him Brother Lorenzo Snow spoke. We all enjoyed the meeting very much."³⁴

Activities of the special day, April 6, 1893, were not over when the last amen was spoken in the closing prayer of the afternoon temple dedication session. Later, between 6 and 7 p.m., twenty-seven missionaries were set apart by Church leaders.³⁵ Additionally, a special musical program called the "National Children's Concert" was held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle for conference visitors. Some "1,200 took part," and, as one observer noted, "it was very inspiring."³⁶

Reflecting on the events of the day, Cannon noted, "This has been a most delightful day for every Latter-day Saint who participated in these services."³⁷ Woodruff added, "The spirit & Power of God rested upon us. The spirit of Prophecy & revelation was upon us & the Hearts of the People were Melted and many things wer[e] unfolded to us . . . and we had a glorious time."³⁸

The events of the day the Salt Lake temple was dedicated were recorded, published, and preserved, including in a remarkable series of

34. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1893.

35. Among the twenty-seven missionaries set apart were future Church Apostle Charles A. Callis and the sons of several well-known early Latter-day Saints, including the sons of Edward Bunker, Philo F. Farnsworth, Benjamin F. Johnson, Miles P. Romney, Joseph Toronto, Octave Ursenbach, and Lorenzo D. Young; see *Missionary Record* (Missionary Department Missionary Registers), book B, 1860 April 24–1894 April 27, 136–37, CR 301 22, Church History Library; and at *Early Mormon Missionaries*, <https://history.lds.org/missionary/?lang=eng>. The Historical Department Office Journal mentions twenty-six missionaries; see April 6, 1893, 49:4, Church History Library.

36. Lucy Hannah White Flake, *Reminiscences and diaries, 1894–1900*, MS 1952, Church History Library.

37. Cannon, Journal, April 6, 1898.

38. Woodruff, Journal, April 6, 1898.

portrait photographs of the First Presidency taken between the morning and afternoon dedicatory sessions in a photographic studio located near the temple. These images, as Sainsbury and Johnson predicated, are “of great historical interest and value in all time.”³⁹ We are most fortunate that these photographers captured this remarkable moment in a remarkable year of new opportunities for the Church.

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Thomas R. Wells is a senior librarian and curator of photographic archives at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and the author or coauthor of several articles dealing with historical photographs, including “Copper, Glass, Eggs, and Silver: Photographers of the Mormon Frontier,” in *A. Dean Larsen Book Collecting Conference March 17–18, 2011* (Provo, Utah: L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 2011), 16–20.

39. Sainsbury and Johnson to Woodruff, Cannon, and Smith, March 31, 1898.

Fine, Thanks

Darlene Young

This doctor, yet another one I hoped would be able to help when others couldn't, calls me "Sweetheart." Is there anything more patronizing? He pats my shoulder. He thinks I'm crying because I feel lousy and he can't figure out why. I'm crying out of fury that he, and everyone in his office, treats me like a child, like I don't have a brain and a life and *better things to do*. And fury that I'm crying in front of him. And, yes, a little bit because I feel lousy.

"Sweet" and "heart." As if being ill makes me gentle, docile, harmless.

He recommends meditation. Yoga. Vitamins. A daily nap. Perhaps increasing my fiber intake? He is looking toward the door, and I am sitting on an exam table in a stupid paper towel like a piece of meat ready for processing.

Ah, yet another doctor I won't be returning to.



I'm not sure how to live this life of chronic illness. Ghosts of pioneer ancestors moan at me from the freezing plains of Wyoming: "Buck up, you wimp." I seesaw daily between pushing myself through tasks, determined not to let others down, and shaming myself for playing the martyr. There's no steady ground here. What is my duty?

I have always been a "good girl," a rule follower, righteous, reliable. I do my duty. Being sick has therefore put me in a pickle because there is no knowing how to be a "good girl" when I am sick.

Here's what I've picked up, from who-knows-where, about the duties of a "good" sick girl.

First of all, a good sick girl never gives up. She would never accept a diagnosis of “chronically ill” just because one doctor in town thinks he’s solved the mystery with some vague, catch-all diagnosis. She owes it to herself and her family to push on in search of a cure, trying doctor after doctor until she sees progress.

Except, of course, when money’s tight (which it always is). No, a good sick girl accepts a diagnosis with serenity and would never waste her energy and her family’s money pursuing a more accurate diagnosis or, heaven forbid, a miracle cure.

Except, of course, for miracles that come from God. A good sick girl always seeks those.

Except, of course, when it’s God’s will that she not be healed. And if that’s the case, she would never murmur or complain.

Except, of course, to her true friends, who want her to feel free to vent, free to call when she needs help, because when they drop off their casseroles, they’ll never notice how lazy her kids are or how amazing it is that she’s somehow able to keep up her blog and get her hair highlighted even though she can’t seem to get her floors mopped.

A good sick girl appears at her doctor’s office clean and neat because to appear too shabby shows she is wallowing and doesn’t really want to get well.

Except, of course, she wouldn’t appear *too* neat because, really, how sick can she be with that ironed shirt? She needs her doctor to take her distress seriously.

A good sick girl trusts her doctor, who obviously knows best. She follows his instructions exactly because that proves to him and the world that she sincerely wants to get well.

Except, of course, that doctors sometimes make mistakes, so she researches everything for herself. But she would never Google her symptoms because that’s a sign of hypochondria and negative thinking. In fact, she avoids negative thinking like the plague (which she probably doesn’t have), and so she would never join a “support group.” Instead, she surrounds herself with healthy, positive people.

A good sick girl would never pay money for anything not FDA approved or chase after practitioners of alternative therapies because those people are quacks, simply out for her money.

Except, of course, for that guy who really helped Aunt Fern. *He’s* worth trying, and if the sick girl refuses to try, she’s closed-minded and doesn’t deserve to get well. She’s obviously giving up.

And a good sick girl never gives up.



I don't know where I got these ideas. I've never felt judged by my circle of family and friends; nothing they've said or done has made me think they are judging me.

But I can't deny the expectation of self-sufficiency that is part of my hearty Latter-day Saint culture, like all the ward council discussions on how to help the needy, which occasionally include the debate about whether Sister So-and-so has been "taking advantage." On the street level, the wards I've belonged to have been generous and nonjudgmental. But there is a pride among us Latter-day Saints in the fact that our welfare system encourages productivity and independence even as it dispenses aid. We don't mind helping the needy, but they'd better be truly needy, deservingly needy, and they'd better be doing their best not to remain needy.

At the same time, I both worry that I am not truly needy and fear that I might be.



I spend a lot of time in bed or a recliner. I am lucky to have been blessed with a personality that enjoys being sedentary. Many of my favorite activities can be done from a recliner—reading, writing, watching movies. I've picked up a few new ones since getting sick: knitting, meditation. And family history. Recently, sifting through charts and records for people who'd left their bloody signatures in my genes, I found a sixth-great-grandmother of mine. Tucked into a corner of a census under her husband's name, she is listed simply as "Rebecca." Under the "Profession" column, where other women's records say "wife" or "mother" or sometimes "nurse," the census taker has scrawled the word *Invalid*. As her profession. As the one word to describe what she did with her life. She, an entire person, living day after day of life, mornings followed by afternoons, followed by evenings and nights, was simply an invalid. Certainly she was a mother—several children are listed below her name—but the census taker has decided that *this* word, more than any other, defines this woman and her contribution to the world.

Invalid. Not valid.



I know you're curious. So here are some cures I've tried (most of which came highly recommended by acquaintances whose lives have been changed by them): Eating "clean." Homeopathic drops. Juice cleanses.

Chiropractic adjustment. Kinesiology. Hypnotism. Cognitive therapy. Acupuncture. Hormone balancing. Increased intake of vitamin D, C, E, and potassium. Other “supplements” like CoQ10, phosphotidal serine, and Core Greens. Sacral-cranial manipulation. Probiotics. Essential oils. CPAP machine. Antidepressants. Blood sugar regulation. Chinese herbs. Visualization. Yoga. “Being less perfectionistic.”

Oh, and two more things: prayer and faith.



Most of the time, I’ve accepted that I’m probably going to feel like this for the rest of my life. But occasionally I stumble across a story of a new miracle cure I haven’t tried. I’ll overhear someone talking at the grocery store, maybe, about a chronic illness to which she has finally found the answer, and now she feels better than she ever could have imagined. Or I’ll meet someone at a mutual friend’s house who, maybe not even speaking to me, will tell about her sister’s rejuvenation after trying out a new doctor who “finally really listened.” And for a few days I will prod this new idea in my mind the way you might prod roadkill with your foot. Is it alive? Is it for me? Or should I leave it alone? Because it’s my duty to be open; anything I encounter might be God, right?

Always, then, the decision is: jump back into the hunt, the gamble of hope and money and time, or make peace yet again with the fact that this is my life? These days I almost always choose the second option, knowing I am much more likely to end up with it anyway, at the end of another exhausting journey.

Is this faith, or a lack of it?



In the beginning stages of any new friendship, I wonder when and if I should tell my new friend about my illness. I think about that word, *invalid*, and then I usually choose not to. But while I’d like to be considered a whole person, separate from my illness, I can’t deny that any account of me isn’t complete without an accounting of the long, pea-green, seasick afternoons in the recliner, listening to life going on outside my window, envying the miserable people on talk shows who, while full of other problems, still have energy enough to jump around the stage. Days of feeling like gray mop water—a big part of my life, a part of my biography, but impossible to document.

I guess this essay is my effort at documenting.



I have studied the scriptures for every reference to health, healing, illness, and the body. Most of the time, health is mentioned in connection with a miracle of healing. Miraculous healing happens. Of course it happens.

Early in my marriage I gained a testimony of the power of priesthood blessings. After a struggle with infertility, my first pregnancy was precarious. Some unusual and, apparently, unhealthy hormone levels caused my doctor to pronounce the pregnancy “nonviable.” He recommended a dilation and curettage procedure (a “cleaning out of the nonpregnancy”) so that we could try again. But in a priesthood blessing, my husband promised that the baby would survive and be fine. I called the doctor, asking again how sure he was that this pregnancy was no good, and he said, “Well, 99 percent.” But a one-percent chance and my husband’s blessing words were enough to make me refuse the procedure.

Eight months later, my son was born, perfectly healthy. As my doctor stitched me up, I asked him, “Shall we name this baby Little One Percent?” I wanted a reaction from him—a big reaction that acknowledged the pink and mewling soul I held—but he said nothing. But I held that baby, and held my faith in priesthood blessings.

So, of course, in the early years of this long illness, I sought blessings. In these blessings, my husband always said that this was a “blessing of health,” but he didn’t expand on what that meant, elaborating rather on the great things I would learn as a result of this experience and the ways it would bring me closer to others.

What does “a blessing of health” mean? I pestered him to explain what it meant, and he wasn’t sure. Years passed, and I didn’t get significantly better. But I didn’t get worse. Was that what it meant?

I think about priesthood blessings. Is the healing power in the actual words? Or is it just about guessing what God has planned anyway? Maybe my husband has been using the wrong wording. Maybe he isn’t supposed to promise me health but rather to actually deliver it. Maybe he is supposed to say something exact like “Be healed!” and then it would happen. I tiptoe around the subject with him. I don’t think I’m supposed to tell him what to say. I throw it out there as a possibility. He says, “I say what I feel I should say.” I drop the subject.



Six months or so into my illness, I was released suddenly from my calling as Primary chorister. I had been in the calling for only a year and was just barely beginning to enjoy it, to relax with the kids and be flexible

with time (see “be less perfectionistic” above). It was the first time I had ever been released from a calling before I was ready.

It’s true that Sundays were exhausting for me, that I came home from church and collapsed into bed. But it’s also true that on Sundays I saw God’s hand in my life. I would pray before Primary that I would be able to make it through singing time, that I wouldn’t have an attack while I was teaching the children, and I know that God helped me, every time.

I suspected that the release wasn’t God’s doing but rather a mistake caused by the mortal weaknesses of the Primary president (my visiting teacher) and the bishopric counselor. Probably, I guessed, they had used their knowledge of my illness (I had no illusions that I wasn’t being discussed regularly in ward council) to make the logical decision that I “needed a break.”

More than just suspecting, I *needed* to believe that the release wasn’t God’s doing. Because if it was, it meant something: it meant that I wasn’t going to get better soon, that healing wouldn’t be a quick thing.

Desperate for reassurance, I went to the bishopric counselor, in tears, and begged him to tell me the truth: was this release inspired?

He sputtered. What could he say? Another woman had already been called, was already leading the singing down the hall that I could hear in the background as we sat together on a couch in the foyer. He finally said, while looking away, that yes, he did feel that this was an inspired change. I went home from church and got into bed.



When I was twenty-three, my mother died of cancer. She had fought it the first time, doing the whole chemo thing. Then she was supposedly cancer-free, and her hair grew back, and all was good. And then, two years later, it wasn’t. When the cancer came back, she didn’t fight it, by which I mean that she didn’t do surgery or radiation or chemo again or try any of the alternative therapies people suggested but moved right to comfort care to make the best of the time she had left.

And we didn’t blame her. We had seen how miserable the fight was. We knew that the odds of beating it now, when the first time hadn’t worked, were extremely small. It seemed a reasonable choice. Even—dare I say it?—a healthy choice.

During this time, the time of her dying, my friend Henry’s father was newly diagnosed with cancer. Henry came to talk to me about my experience. When he heard that my mother was not doing chemo again,

was simply moving toward hospice, he was shocked. “How could you let her do that?” he asked. “Don’t you have any faith?”

Before I could answer, he continued: “I have faith. I have faith enough. I know my father will be cured.”

The conversation unsettled me. Were we giving up too easily on Mom?

Her dying took about a year. And a year or so after that, after I had moved to a different town, I heard the news that Henry’s father’s treatments had been unsuccessful—he had died. I did not ever ask Henry about it—what could I have said? What could he?

A year or so into my illness, I thought I’d probably die. It didn’t help that one doctor told us he strongly suspected I had a form of cancer (which was finally ruled out after many tests). And of course it didn’t help that my mother and her mother had both died young of cancer. The point is that I was pretty quick to abandon faith for fear. And I’m sure my anxiety made me sicker, at least until I realized that I wasn’t dying, that things didn’t seem to be getting any worse.



The thing is, I do have a story of faith. Although I’ve been frustrated at the lack of stories in the scriptures about sick people who *aren’t* healed, I have always been grateful for the story of the people of Alma. They were enslaved and wanted to be released. They had faith enough to be released. But instead, at least for a while, God strengthened their backs so that their burdens felt light. Of course, eventually they were also led out of slavery. I know that eventually I will be, too, even if that eventually happens after death. But also like the people of Alma, I have felt my burden being made light at times. For example, during a time when I was quite debilitated, I one day realized that we had been experiencing an amazing period of time without household challenges. For about two years, none of our children had had problems at school or in their social or spiritual lives. Nothing around the house had broken down—not the car, dishwasher, garage door, water heater, or lawnmower—nothing. For *years*. I knew, in that moment, that this had been God’s doing, that he had known we couldn’t handle anything else right then.

At other times, I’ve found that while God hasn’t made me well, he has given me enough strength to accomplish small, immediate duties when I have asked particularly for it. Like the Primary music I mentioned above. “Just let me be able to get through my child’s parent-teacher

conference,” I might pray. Or, “Just let me make it through this drive to this doctor’s appointment without having an attack on the freeway.” These are my mini-miracles of healing, and I acknowledge them with gratitude. They tell me that God is there, walking with me. And when I am firm of mind, I know that that is enough help, moment by moment, to get me through my whole journey.

I wish I could remember this all the time, but I don’t. I forget. I forget when my family goes hiking and I have to wait in the car. I forget when the young moms in the ward talk about the relay race they are running together. I forget when my seventy-five-year-old mother-in-law offers to carry a heavy box for me. I forget when, from my recliner once again, I hear the front door slam as my children come home from school and fix themselves a snack, and I wait, staring at the bedroom door, hoping they’ll remember to come upstairs to greet me.

This essay by Darlene Young won second place in the 2018 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

An Egyptian Linguistic Component in Book of Mormon Names

Eve Koller

In February 2012, while studying the Book of Mormon, I searched in the index of the Triple Combination to clarify the identity of an individual. I came across names starting with “Z” and noticed a pattern—*Zenephi*, *Zenos*, *Zenock*. They looked as though they were composed of scriptural names (*Nephi*, *Enos*, *Enoch*, and so forth) with different forms of a z- prefix that might mean “son of” or “descendant of.” Later, I noticed the name *Cezoram* and wondered if it was part of the same pattern, with a variation of the same prefix. Over the years, I investigated the matter further, and I eventually came across the work of Stephen Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes. They suggested that *Zeezrom* (see Alma 10–12, 14–15, 31; and Hel. 5) incorporates the Hebrew *zeh*, which would render the meaning of *Zeezrom* as “he of ezrom.”¹

At first, I thought that perhaps *Zenephi*, *Zenos*, *Zenock*, and *Cezoram* also incorporated the Hebrew morpheme *zeh*, meaning “he of.”² However, in the summer of 2017, I came across Val Sederholm’s blog, in which he

1. *Zeezrom* may very well incorporate the Hebrew *zeh*, since it differs from the names investigated here in that “ezrom” is a common noun (the name of Nephite money) rather than a personal name and potential ancestor. It is even possible that the Hebrew *zeh* and the Egyptian *z3* are historically connected, since both the phonology and semantics overlap to a degree.

2. See Stephen D. Ricks, “A Nickname and a Slam Dunk: Notes on the Book of Mormon Names *Zeezrom* and *Jershon*,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 191–94; and Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Origin of Some Book of Mormon Place Names,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 257–58.

connects the Book of Mormon name *Zenephi* with the Egyptian pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (known as G39 in Gardiner's sign list of Egyptian hieroglyphs; fig. 1). Understanding the interpretation of this hieroglyph and how it can be pronounced is helpful in grasping the possible etymologies of the names I investigate in this article.

G39 denotes filiation and can bear the meaning "son of/male descendant of" or "daughter of/female descendant of." In Egyptian orthography, while G39 indicates filiation, the hieroglyph that follows it indicates the gender. Thus, when G39 is paired with the seated-man hieroglyph (known as A1), the pair means "son of." When G39 is paired with B1, the seated-woman hieroglyph, and the feminine ending *t* (represented by an image of a small loaf of bread, X1 in Gardiner's list), the interpretation is "daughter of" (fig. 2).³ (This latter construction is not explored in detail in this article because there are no female names in the Book of Mormon that appear to incorporate G39). The G39 hieroglyph may have been pronounced *za* or *sa*, and the pronunciation of this morpheme is rendered as *z3* or *s3* (*z3* or *s3* in some Egyptian transliterations).⁴ C. Wilfred Griggs confirms the filial use of hieroglyph G39, noting that Egyptologist Raymond O. Faulkner verifies both the phonological and semantic readings.⁵ Sederholm thus



FIGURE 1. The Egyptian pin-tailed duck hieroglyph indicates filiation and can mean "descendant of." It is known as G39 in Gardiner's sign list of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d rev. ed., repr. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 2001).

3. See Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d rev. ed., repr. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 2001), 547.

4. 𐩌, sometimes written as 3, represents aleph in ancient Egyptian. Some people have proposed that the G39 morpheme is pronounced *sa* or *za*. Any pronunciation of the vowel, however, reflects scholars' best guesses, since exactly what vowels the ancient Egyptians used is unknown. The consonants (*z* and *s*) are more important to the analysis of this article, and those are known with more certainty to have existed in ancient Egypt. The phonological sound rules proposed here apply to the Book of Mormon language approximately six hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem, and not necessarily to the original Egyptian.

5. I thank Dr. C. Wilfred Griggs, who directed me to Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1981) and the specific page number on which the entry for *z3/s3* was located. Mark Collier and Bill Manley also mention the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph, referring to it as B7, in *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs: A Step-by-Step Guide to Teach Yourself*

suggests that the “Ze-” in *Zenephi* was of Egyptian (not Hebraic) origin and that it follows the common Egyptian name pattern of *z3* (son of) + name: thus, “Ze + Nephi” yields “son of Nephi.”⁶

Inspired by this observation and by my own internal linguistic analysis, this article proposes that in addition to *Zenephi*, the Book of Mormon names *Zenos*, *Zenock*, and *Cezoram*⁷ incorporate the names of other Book of Mormon or biblical individuals and the Egyptian morpheme *z3*-/s3- to denote filiation with these ancestors.⁸ If this hypothesis is accurate, *Zenos* would mean “son/descendant of Enos,” *Zenock* would mean “descendant of Enoch,” and *Cezoram*, “descendant of Zoram.” This naming practice is akin to Hebrew and Scandinavian patronymics⁹ and, if accurate, could provide insight into some aspects of the structure of the language of the Book of Mormon. It could also reveal information about Book of Mormon naming practices and genealogical lineages of the people who received these names.

The Ce- Prefix in Cezoram

Of the four names considered in this article, *Cezoram* may need more particular examination, since it begins with a *ce-* prefix instead of a *z-* or *ze-* prefix. The *ce-* morpheme (pronounced *se*) likely stems from the same G39 Egyptian hieroglyph and was changed to *ce-* because of a morpho-phonological¹⁰

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). I thank Don Norton for reviewing earlier drafts of the paper in 2017.

6. Val Sederholm, “Zenephi and Zat Mormon Girl (Mormon 9:16),” *I Began to Reflect* (blog), May 31, 2014, <http://valsederholm.blogspot.com/2014/05/the-egyptian-name-zenephi-in-book-of.html>.

7. For instances of the name *Zenos*, see 1 Nephi 19:10, 12, 16; Jacob 5:1; Alma 33:3, 13, 15; and Helaman 8:19; for *Zenock*, see 1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:15; 34:7; Helaman 8:20; and 3 Nephi 10:16; for *Zenephi*, see Moroni 9:16; and for *Cezoram*, see Helaman 5:1; 6:15, 19.

8. See Rainer Hannig, *Ägyptisches wörterbuch 1: Altes reich und erste zwischenezeit* [Egyptian dictionary 1: Old empire and first intermediate period], *Kulturgeschichte der antiken welt* [Cultural history of the ancient world], book 98 (Mainz, Ger.: Philipp von Zabern, 2003).

9. Patronymics are names derived from those of an ancestor, usually through the addition of a prefix or suffix. For example, Stevenson (son of Steven), Andersen (son of Ander, where *-sen* is a variant of *-son*). This was also used for women—for example, Nielsdotter (daughter of Niel) and Hansdotter (daughter of Hans). Suzanne McVetty, “Anatomy of a Surname,” *Ancestry* 15, no. 4 (1997): 38–41.

10. Morpho-phonology (also “morphophonology”) refers to the interaction between word structure and sound—for example, how the pronunciation of a word changes when a prefix or suffix is added to it.

rule known as “voicing dissimilation.”¹¹ The rule would require differing pronunciations of the prefix, determined by the base name to which it is affixed.¹² In the case of *Cezoram*, voicing dissimilation would differentiate the *ze-* prefix from the word-initial *z-* in the base name, so as not to lose its semantic contribution in spoken communication. So for a listener hearing the name *Ze-zoram*, the *ze-* prefix could easily blend with the rest of the name, leaving the listener to interpret “Ze-Zoram” as simply “Zoram,” which also changes the semantics; the term would become simply the personal name *Zoram*, rather than a name that means “descendant of Zoram.”

Other than its prefix, *Cezoram* is presumably a Hebrew name, and Hebraist Jiří Hedánek noted that ancient transcriptions reveal partial regressive dissimilation in Hebrew dating to around 720 BC.¹³ In other

11. In articulatory phonetics, “voicing” refers to a quality of a speech sound that distinguishes the sound from other speech sounds in a language. That quality is whether or not the vocal chords vibrate when the sound is made. In the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), *s* is a voiceless alveolar fricative, meaning that when the sound is made, the vocal chords are still (voiceless), the tongue touches the alveolar ridge/hard palette (alveolar), and there is turbulent air stream (fricative). *Z* is a voiced alveolar fricative, meaning the vocal chords vibrate (voiced), the tongue touches the alveolar ridge/hard palette (alveolar), and there is a turbulent air stream (fricative). The only articulatory difference between *s* and *z* is whether or not the vocal chords are vibrating; all other factors are identical. Because of voicing dissimilation, the voicing of the sound is changed; while the sound can still be identified with its underlying form, it is differentiated from adjacent or nearby identical sounds (for example, *Ze-zoram* becomes *Se/Cezoram* so that the sound of the word-initial *ze-* can be distinguished from the sound of the *z* in *zoram*). This morpho-phonological rule of voicing dissimilation is motivated by clarity (a common motivation for rules of dissimilation).

12. One possibility I propose is that the morpheme affixed to the beginning of the name is *ze-* before both oral and nasal stops (*stop* is a linguistic term that refers to consonants that, when spoken, block the vocal tract, stopping airflow); *se-* before *z*; and *z-* elsewhere. I would have suggested a rule where the morpheme is *ze-* before obstruents (which include fricatives and stops), and *z-* elsewhere, but that rule does not work for the name *Zenock*, which I suggest is derived from *Enoch*. In Hebrew, *Enoch* would have been *הֲנוֹךְ* (Hanokh), which begins with [h], a pharyngeal fricative, which is also an obstruent.

13. Jiří Hedánek, “Phonology of Masoretic Hebrew I” (PhD diss., Hussite School of Theology of the Charles University, Prague, 2011), 112. In partial regressive dissimilation, a sound changes only in part, not completely. In other words, a sound maintains some shared features with the original sound and the later sound in the word, from which it is trying to differentiate. For example, when *z* becomes *s*, the sound is still an alveolar fricative and the only change is in the voicing (as opposed to the sound becoming something completely

words, the segments of a word sometimes changed partially to differentiate them from later segments in a word, which could be the case with *Cezoram*. That being said, evidence of Hebrew or Egyptian dissimilation is not essential to support the hypothesis of this paper because *Cezoram* appears toward the end of the Book of Mormon, after centuries of language change, so the changing of the sound from *z* to *s* could be unique to the Book of Mormon people, having developed centuries after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem. The rule of voicing dissimilation is only relevant to the name *Cezoram* in this discussion.¹⁴

An Egyptian versus Hebraic Prefix

Like Ricks's observation for *Zeezrom*, some may observe that the Hebrew *zeh*, instead of the Egyptian *ze*, would be a likely component of the names under consideration here. However, though these Book of Mormon figures have Hebrew ancestry, from a linguistic perspective, an Egyptian rather than a Hebraic etymology is more likely for the “*ze-/ce-*” component in the names *Zenephi*, *Zenock*, *Zenos*, and *Cezoram* for at least four reasons:

1. Pronunciation. G39 has attested variations of both *z* and *s* in Egyptian; the Hebrew *zeh* does not also have a “*seh*” pronunciation of which we know.
2. Semantics. The semantics of the Egyptian *ze* are more specific to ancestry. While the Egyptian *ze* means “descendent of,” the Hebrew *zeh* means “he of,” which has a more general semantic meaning.
3. Simplicity of explanation. Hebrew would require an explanation for a deletion of the word-final *-hei*, whereas the proposed Egyptian does not. The Hebrew *zeh* is spelled *zayin-hei* (the letters *z*

different like a *k*). “Regressive” means sound change happens backwards—that is, the later sound in a word influences the earlier sound to change.

14. A. E. Cowley discussed consonant and vowel changes in ancient Hebrew. Although the changes he discusses do not include a rule of voicing dissimilation, the rule of dissimilation I discuss applies only to *Cezoram*/*Seezoram* of the few names in question. *Cezoram* appears around 30 BC and *Seezoram* about 26 BC—both roughly six hundred years after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem. Within six hundred years, a language can change quite significantly from its ancestral language, developing its own sound changes and sound rules that did not exist in the ancestral language. In this case, while it would be interesting and relevant if Egyptian or Hebrew had a rule of voicing dissimilation anciently, even if neither had such a rule, voicing dissimilation could still occur in the daughter language of the Book of Mormon six hundred years later. A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2d ed., repr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1956), 68, 88.

and *h* in Hebrew). If, for instance, *Cezoram* were really *zeh-Zoram*, one would have to account for the deletion of the last letter, *hei*. Occam's razor states that the simplest solution is the most likely solution: the Hebrew *zeh* proposal is complex, whereas the Egyptian *ze* proposal requires no additional explanations of letters or sounds being added or dropped.

4. Presence in personal names. The Egyptian *ze* is commonly attested in personal names, whereas the Hebrew *zeh* is not attested in personal names and only rarely in titles (such as in "Yahweh *zeh* Sinai").¹⁵

Egyptian Naming Patterns

In his blog, Val Sederholm noted that it was Hugh Nibley who first concluded that *Zenephi* has an Egyptian etymology. "How could it be otherwise?" asks Sederholm. "As Hugh Nibley well knew, there is no more common pattern in Egyptian naming than . . . *z3* or *z3.t* + Name," which means "Son or Daughter of So-and-So" (see fig. 2).¹⁶

To show that this Egyptian naming pattern was indeed common and is therefore a logical explanation for use of *z-* (or one of its variants) in some Book of Mormon names, I provide here some concrete examples. The pin-tailed duck prefix is attested in ancient Egyptian names, often attached to the name of a god or predecessor to create a new personal name. For example, the name *Zamonth/Samont* (Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1800 BC) means the "son/descendant of Month."¹⁷ Günter Vittmann also notes the type of naming pattern. He points out that "from the Middle Kingdom onwards," the *s3* and *s3t* prefixes were used to denote

15. Michael Grant, *The History of Ancient Israel* (London: Orion Publishing, 2012), ch. 4; Samuel E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 119; Karl van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2d rev. ed. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 387.

16. *Z3t* or *s3t*, pronounced "zat" or "sat," is the feminine form of "descendant of." The morpheme thus means "daughter of/female descendant of" and is represented by the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (G39) along with the feminine ending *t*, represented by a small semicircle loaf of bread (X1) and the seated woman hieroglyph (B1).

17. See "List of Viziers," Digital Egypt for Universities, 2002, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/administration/viziers.html>; and Nigel Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: The Highest Titles and Their Holders* (London: Kegan Paul, 1985), 301–3.

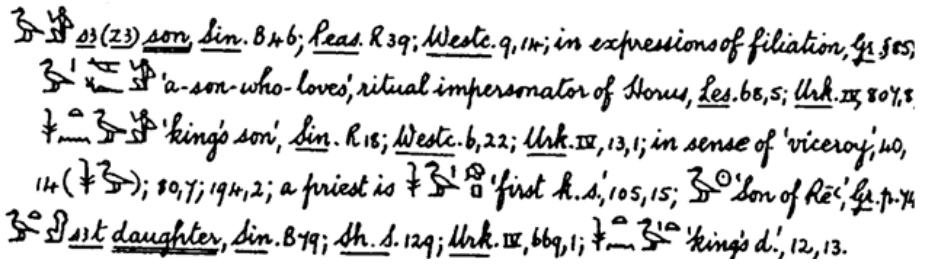


FIGURE 2. Image of Faulkner's entry for *s3* (z3) from his *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian Hieroglyphs*, 207. Note that the hieroglyph following the pin-tailed duck determines the gender—the seated man (seen in the first line) denotes a son, and the seated woman, along with the feminine ending *t*, represented by a small semicircle loaf of bread (seen in the last line), denotes a daughter. Courtesy Griffith Institute, Oxford University.

that person was a son or daughter of a god. For instance, “*S3-Sbk*” meant “son of Sobek” and “*S3t-3wt-3r*” meant “daughter of Hathor.”¹⁸ Given historical precedent, it is not unreasonable to assume that the same naming pattern may have been applied to the names *Zenos*, *Zenock*, *Zenephi*, and *Cezoram* in the Book of Mormon, incorporating the same Egyptian component *z3/s3*, with its filial meaning.

Table 1. Linguistic Analysis of Names with Z- Prefix

Name	Ancestor's Name	Morpheme Boundary	Allomorph
Zenos	Enos	Z + Enos	Z-
Zenock	Enoch	Z + Enoch	Z-
Zenephi	Nephi	Ze + Nephi	Ze-
Cezoram/Seezoram	Zoram	Ce + Zoram (Se + Zoram)	Ce- (Se-)

18. Günter Vittmann, “Personal Names: Structures and Patterns, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: n.p., 2013), accessed June 30, 2018, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/42v9x6xp>. Although here the names are purely attributed to gods, there are earlier royalty who are also named after the god, so one possibility is that *s3-sbk* (with hieroglyph G39, the pin-tailed duck) of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty could be referring to either or both the god Sobek and an earlier royal individual also named after the god Sobek. There were variants of the name Sobek in earlier dynasties: Sobekemhat (Senusret III) of the Twelfth Dynasty, Sobek-aa Bebi from the end of the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty, and Iiie-meru Neferkare (Sobekhotep IV) of the Thirteenth Dynasty. It is likely there may have been other individuals named Sobek not included here. See Strudwick, *Administration of Egypt*, 301–3, and “List of Viziers.”

Mixture of Egyptian and Hebrew

One objection to my proposal that these names incorporate an Egyptian morpheme is that it would require the mixing of two different languages in a single name, which some would perceive as unlikely. In this case, the Egyptian *z3/s3* is being attached as a prefix to Hebrew names (like *Enos* and *Enoch*). The more recent versions of the entry for *Cezoram* in the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (an online published collection of names found in the Book of Mormon with a brief linguistic analysis of each name) states that for *Cezoram*, it is “possible, though unlikely because it would mix languages, . . . that *ce* is Egyptian *s3*, prefix for ‘son’ (JAT), yielding the meaning ‘son of Zoram.’”¹⁹

Although the Book of Mormon Onomasticon opines that it is unlikely *Cezoram* is composed of the Egyptian *s3* and *Zoram*, where this idea originated is unclear. The Onomasticon cites “JAT,” or John A. Tvedtnes, but no source in particular. Though the entry states that such a construction is unlikely because it would “mix languages,” in actuality, mixing languages does not make this proposed etymology less likely.

Tvedtnes notes that the Tel Arad ostraca (inscriptions on potsherds from Tel Arad) dating to 598–587 BC contained both Egyptian hieratic and Hebrew scripts, with both Egyptian and Hebrew words and with some Egyptian words depicted in Hebrew script. He observes: “There are two major historical implications of the Tel Arad finds. The first is that, in the seventh century BC, there were close ties between Judah and Egypt. This, of course, is a conclusion that has been gaining much more support as time has gone by, and which was discussed by Dr. Hugh Nibley in 1950. The second historical implication is that there were in Judah, in the late seventh century BC, persons who made use of *both* the Hebrew script and the Egyptian hieratic system of writing.”²⁰

Inscriptions sometimes contained mixtures of Egyptian and Hebrew, both with regard to content and script. Although the etymology proposed here would indeed be unlikely if no Hebrew names with Egyptian elements affixed to them were attested in the Old World, names that mix languages

19. The Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies, Book of Mormon Onomasticon, s.v. “Cezoram,” last modified October 3, 2016, <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/CEZORAM>.

20. John A. Tvedtnes, “Linguistic Implications of the Tel-Arad Ostraca,” in *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S. E. H. A.* (Society for Early Historical Archaeology) 127 (October 1971), ed. Ross T. Christensen and Bonny M. Fifield, accessed September 11, 2018, http://www.shields-research.org/General/SEHA/SEHA_Newsletter_127-2.PDF, emphasis in original.

are attested in the ancient Near East. Even more convincingly, names that specifically mix Egyptian and Semitic languages are attested. According to James K. Hoffmeier, “Egypto-Semitic hybrid names are attested from ancient times in Egypt and the Levant (e.g., Abd-osir = Servant of Osiris, Ahimoth = Brother of (the goddess) Mut, Asarel = Osiris is god, Abd-hor = ‘Servant of Horus’), and might indicate bilingual or bicultural influence on the naming process.”²¹ The proposed compositions of *Zenos* and *Zenock* would also fall into this category of Egypto-Semitic hybrid names.

Denoting Lineage

The idea that *ze-* and its variants (*z-* and *se-*) are used as prefixes in Book of Mormon eponyms to indicate genealogy is further supported by the fact that in the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, the name of the prophet *Zenock* is spelled “Zenoch” (a clearer incorporation of the name *Enoch*).²²

Because the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph (G39) is used to denote filiation, the genealogy of the individuals whose names we are examining is relevant to the study of this article. The Book of Mormon states that Lehi was a descendant of Joseph in Egypt. When Lehi is speaking to his son, Joseph, he states: “For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and *I am a descendant of Joseph* who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph” (2 Ne. 3:4, emphasis added). Lehi clarifies that he is a descendant of Joseph, and a genealogy of Joseph in Egypt can be found in the Old Testament.

Adam > Seth > Enos > Cainan > Mahalaleel > Jared > Enoch > Methuselah
> Lamech > Noah > Shem > Arphaxad (Gen. 10:22; 11:10-11) > Salah (Gen.
10:24; 11:12) > Eber (Gen. 10:24; 11:14) > Peleg (Gen. 11:16) > Reu (Gen.
11:18) > Serug (Gen. 11:20) > Nahor (Gen. 11:23) > Terah (Gen. 11:24) >
Abram (Gen. 11:26) > Isaac > Jacob > Joseph > Manasseh (Gen. 48:1) > . . .
Zenos? . . . > Zenoch? . . . > Lehi > Nephi > . . . Zenephi

FIGURE 3. A genealogy of Lehi

21. James K. Hoffmeier, “Egyptian Personal Names and Other Egyptian Elements in the Exodus-Wilderness Narratives,” in *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224.

22. Royal Skousen has published the earliest text of the Book of Mormon and in his introduction wrote, “Longtime readers of the Book of Mormon will notice that I have modified a few familiar names so that they match their earliest spellings in the manuscripts. These include Zenoch (instead of Zenock).” Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xli.

Joseph is a descendant of Enoch, of the city of Enoch. Enoch was the great-great-grandson of Enos, so both Enoch and Enos were ancestors of Joseph of Egypt (Gen. 5). We do not know for certain if Zenos and Zenock were descendants of Joseph of Egypt, but it seems that they may have been since Book of Mormon people descended from Lehi (a descendant of Joseph) state that they are also descendants of Zenos and Zenock. Robert L. Millet concluded similarly, when, in reference to 3 Nephi 10:15–16, he stated: “This passage certainly suggests that Zenos and Zenock were of the lineage of Joseph.”²³

If Zenos and Zenock were descendants of Joseph of Egypt, they would also be descendants of Enos and Enoch. If they were not descendants of Joseph of Egypt but were ancestors from another of Lehi’s genealogical lines, then the ancestry/genealogical part of this argument would fall apart; however, it’s also possible Zenos and Zenock could have been named after prominent prophets to whom they were not related. The Book of Mormon does not give us the ancestries of Cezoram or Zenephi, but if this paper’s thesis is correct, they may have descended, respectively, from Zoram and one of the figures in the Book of Mormon named Nephi.

Conclusion

A naming pattern that includes the ancient Egyptian morpheme represented by the pin-tailed duck hieroglyph G39 (with its filial meaning) involves attested linguistic phenomena that could point to the Book of Mormon as an authentic translation from an ancient text with both Egyptian and Hebrew linguistic components. Since we currently have access only to the English translation of the original text, the few words maintained in the original language are the only direct access we have to the morphology and phonology of the language of the ancient people who wrote the record. Names in the Book of Mormon were transliterated rather than translated and comprise a large portion of the small corpus of lexical items preserved in the original Book of Mormon language, from which we may derive a deeper understanding of the linguistics and culture of those people. If accurate, this naming pattern may also provide us with further clues regarding the genealogies of these Book of Mormon individuals.

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23. Robert L. Millet, “The Plates of Brass: A Witness of Christ,” *Ensign* 18 (January 1988), <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/01/the-plates-of-brass-a-witness-of-christ?lang=eng>

Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James

Edited by James Goldberg and Veronica J. Anderson

The following transcription of Jane Manning James's autobiography is provided in light of the essays and reviews found in this issue on the recent film Jane and Emma, so that readers can examine a major primary source on which the filmmakers relied. A transcription of this autobiography was previously published by Quincy D. Newell.¹ The following transcription and annotation are taken from James Goldberg's "The Autobiography of Jane Manning James: Seven Decades of Faith and Devotion."² BYU Studies staff verified the transcription, added sections that had been omitted, and modified the annotation to fit our desired format. As in Goldberg's original transcription, the original spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing have been modernized and standardized. Those wishing to see

1. See Quincy D. Newell, "The Autobiography and Interview of Jane Elizabeth Manning James," *Journal of Africana Religions* 1, no. 2 (2013): 251–70. For more of Newell's scholarship on James, see Quincy D. Newell, "What Jane Saw," in *Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Patrick Q. Mason (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016); Quincy D. Newell, "Jane James's Agency," in *Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016); and Quincy D. Newell, "Narrating Jane: Telling the Story of an Early African American Mormon Woman" (lecture, Logan, Utah, Tabernacle, September 24, 2015), in *Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series* 21 (2015): 1–27, https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=arrington_lecture.

2. James Goldberg, "The Autobiography of Jane Manning James: Seven Decades of Faith and Devotion," *Church History*, December 11, 2013, <https://history.lds.org/article/jane-manning-james-life-sketch?lang=eng>.

*the images of the original document can do so freely through the Church History Library's online catalogue.*³

Introduction

The short autobiography of Jane Manning James gives us a snapshot of the incredible life of one of the first black members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.⁴ Jane dictated her life sketch to Elizabeth J. D. Roundy, a pioneer in family history efforts. We don't know exactly when this happened, but Jane's statement that Joseph F. Smith was Church President at the time suggests a date of 1901 or later. During her nearly seven decades of Church membership, Jane Manning James lived in the homes of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, survived the 1850 cricket crisis, and was baptized for ancestors in the Salt Lake temple after its dedication. She also raised ten children, helped her neighbors through difficult times, and shared her testimony of the gospel. Though she had experienced many different kinds of trials in her life, her faith remained strong.

Jane was born into a free black family in Connecticut in 1822. Though slavery was rare in Connecticut well before it was abolished under state law in 1848, conditions were difficult for the state's black inhabitants. Opportunities were limited and discrimination intense. Jane worked as a live-in servant from childhood, but her life story shows her strong sense of independence and deep longing for a fuller religious experience. She joined the Church in 1841 and was active in the faith until her death in 1908.

Like many early Latter-day Saints, Jane and her family longed to gather together with the main body of Saints to help build up Zion. In her life sketch, Jane described some of the common and unique trials they encountered on their journey to Nauvoo, Illinois, including sleeping in the cold, wounded feet, and persecution.

3. Jane Manning James, Autobiography, circa 1902, MS 4225, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE6369620.

4. An online database created by W. Paul Reeve at the University of Utah features biographical information, primary source documentation, and photographs for Jane Manning James as well as dozens of other early black Latter-day Saints. See Century of Black Mormons, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, <https://exhibits.lib.utah.edu/s/century-of-black-mormons/page/welcome>.

When Jane and her family arrived in Nauvoo, they stayed with the family of Joseph and Emma Smith for the first few months. In the fall of 1843, the Smith family's home was a large house, known as the Mansion House, that also served as a hotel for visitors to Nauvoo. Going there provided the Manning family with a place to stay while they established themselves in the city and gave them an opportunity for personal interaction with the Prophet. Jane's account gives a valuable glimpse into Joseph and Emma's approach to hospitality. Jane lived at the Mansion House for several months.

Because the Nauvoo temple had not yet been completed, Joseph Smith conducted some early endowments at other locations including an upper room of the Mansion House. Jane remembered washing the Prophet's temple clothes and feeling a sense of reverence as she handled them. She also remembered discussing the gospel with four of Joseph Smith's plural wives—Emily Partridge, Eliza Partridge, Maria Lawrence, and Sarah Lawrence—and having positive relationships with them, as well as with Lucy Mack Smith and Emma Smith.

Jane was in Nauvoo during a difficult period for the Saints. For Jane, 1844 began with a departure: when Ebenezer Robinson assumed management of the hotel portion of the Mansion House, she left to live with her mother. She apparently maintained personal ties with Joseph Smith, however, and asked his advice that summer on how to make it through the economically difficult times.

While the events of 1843 and 1844 take up the bulk of her life sketch, more than two-thirds of her life was spent in Salt Lake City. She and her family played important roles in the history of the area. Jane's short autobiography represents her life as she wanted it to be remembered: she told Sister Roundy that she wanted it "read at her funeral." Over a century after that funeral, the example of Jane Manning James continues to inspire Latter-day Saints, and her brief life sketch remains a precious link connecting Church members with the first generation of those who embraced the restored gospel.

Transcription

Biography of Jane E. Manning James, written from her own verbal statement and by her request. She also wishes it read at her funeral. By E. J. D. Roundy.

Written in the year 1893

When a child only six years old, I left my home and went to live with a family of white people; their names were Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fitch.

They were aged people and quite wealthy, I was raised by their daughter. When about fourteen years old, I joined the Presbyterian Church. Yet I did not feel satisfied; it seemed to me there was something more that I was looking for. I had belonged to the Church about eighteen months when an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was traveling through our country [and] preached there. The pastor of the Presbyterian Church forbid me going to hear them—as he had heard I had expressed a desire to hear them—but nevertheless, I went on a Sunday and was fully convinced that it was the true gospel he presented and I must embrace it.

The following Sunday I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. About three weeks after, while kneeling at prayer, the gift of tongues came upon me and frightened the whole family who were in the next room.

One year after I was baptized I started for Nauvoo with my mother, Eliza Manning; my brothers, Isaac, Lewis, and Peter; my sisters Sarah Stebbings, and Angeline Manning; my brother-in-law Anthony Stebbings; Lucinda Manning, a sister-in-law and myself. Fall 1840.⁵

We started from Wilton, Connecticut, and traveled by canal to Buffalo, New York. We were to go to Columbus, Ohio, before our fares were to be collected, but they insisted on having the money at Buffalo and would not take us farther. So we left the boat and started on foot to travel a distance of over eight hundred miles.

We walked until our shoes were worn out, and our feet became sore and cracked open and bled until you could see the whole print of our feet with blood on the ground. We stopped and united in prayer to the Lord; we asked God the Eternal Father to heal our feet and our prayers were answered and our feet were healed forthwith.

When we arrived at Peoria, Illinois, the authorities threatened to put us in jail to get our free papers. We didn't know at first what he meant, for we had never been slaves, but he concluded to let us go, so we traveled on until we came to a river and as there was no bridge, we walked right into the stream. When we got to the middle, the water was up to our necks, but we got safely across. And then it became so dark we could hardly see our hands before us, but we could see a light in the distance, so we went toward it and found it was an old log cabin. Here we spent the night. [The] next day we walked for a considerable

5. The autobiography transcript dates this journey as taking place in 1840, but contemporary evidence indicates it happened in 1843.

distance and stayed that night in a forest, out in the open air. The frost fell on us so heavy that it was like a light fall of snow. We rose early and started on our way, walking through that frost with our bare feet, until the sun rose and melted it away. But we went on our way rejoicing, singing hymns, and thanking God for his infinite goodness and mercy to us in blessing us as he had, protecting us from all harm, answering our prayers and healing our feet.

In course of time we arrived at La Harpe, Illinois, about thirty miles from Nauvoo. At La Harpe we came to a place where there was a very sick child. We administered to it and the child was healed. I found after [that] the elders had before this given it up, as they did not think it could live.

We have now arrived to our destined haven of rest, the beautiful Nauvoo! Here we went through all kinds of hardship, trial, and rebuff, but we at last got to Brother Orson Spencer's.⁶ He directed us to the Prophet Joseph Smith's Mansion.⁷

When we found it, Sister Emma was standing in the door, and she kindly said, "Come in. Come in!" Brother Joseph said to some white sisters that was present, "Sisters, I want you to occupy this room this evening with some brothers and sisters that have just arrived." Brother Joseph placed the chairs around the room. Then he went and brought Sister Emma and Dr. [John M.] Bernhisel⁸ and introduced them to us.

Brother Joseph took a chair and sat down by me and said, "You have been the head of this little band, haven't you?" I answered, "Yes, sir!" He then said, "God bless you! Now I would like you to relate your

6. Orson Spencer had served a mission to Connecticut in April 1843 and may have become acquainted with the Manning family then. In Nauvoo, he served both as a university professor and as one of the town aldermen. "Spencer, Orson," The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/person/orson-spencer>.

7. The Smith family moved into the Mansion House in August 1843, shortly before the Mannings arrived. Joseph Smith, Journal, [80] (August 31, 1843), in "Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 3, 15 July 1843–29 February 1844," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-3-15-july-1843-29-february-1844/86>.

8. In 1843, John M. Bernhisel was a recent convert, Joseph Smith's physician, and a resident of the Mansion House. He later served as the first Latter-day Saint representative to the U.S. Congress and organized Utah's territorial library. "Bernhisel, John Milton," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/person/john-milton-bernhisel>.

experience in your travels.” I related to them all that I have above stated and a great deal more minutely, as many incidents has passed from my memory since then. Brother Joseph slapped Dr. Bernhisel on the knee and said, “What do you think of that, doctor: isn’t that faith?” The doctor said, “Well, I rather think it is. If it had have been me, I fear I should have backed out and returned to my home!” He then said, “God bless you. You are among friends now and you will be protected.” They sat and talked to us a while, gave us words of encouragement and good counsel.

We all stayed there one week; by that time all but myself had secured homes. Brother Joseph came in every morning to say good morning and ask how we were. During our trip I had lost all my clothes. They were all gone. My trunks were sent by canal to the care of Charles Wesley Wandell.⁹ One large trunk full of clothes of all descriptions, mostly new. On the morning that my folks all left to go to work, I looked at myself clothed in the only two pieces I possessed; I sat down and wept. Brother Joseph came into the room as usual and said, “Good morning. Why—not crying, [are you]?” “Yes sir,” [I said]. “The folks have all gone and got themselves homes, and I have got none.” He said, “Yes you have, you have a home right here if you want it. You musn’t cry. We dry up all tears here.” I said, “I have lost my trunk and all my clothes.” He asked how I had lost them; I told them I put them in care of Charles Wesley Wandell and paid him for them and he has lost them. Brother Joseph said, “Don’t cry, you shall have your trunk and clothes again.”

Brother Joseph went out and brought Sister Emma in and said, “Sister Emma, here is a girl that says she has no home. Haven’t you a home for her?” “Why yes, if she wants one.” He said, “She does,” and then he left us.

Sister Emma said, “What can you do?” I said, “I can wash, iron, cook, and do housework!” “Well,” she said, “when you are rested, you may do the washing, if you would just as soon do that.” I said, “I am not tired.” “Well,” she said, “you may commence your work in the morning.”

The next morning, she brought the clothes down in the basement to wash. Among the clothes, I found Brother Joseph’s robes. I looked at them and wondered. I had never seen any before, and I pondered over them and thought about them so earnestly that the Spirit made

9. Charles Wesley Wandell was a missionary who had served in the East and returned to Nauvoo before the end of 1843. Marjorie Newton, *Hero or Traitor: A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing, 1992), 16.

manifest to me that they pertained to the new name that is given the Saints that the world knows not of. I didn't know when I washed them or when I put them out to dry.

Brother Joseph's four wives Emily Partridge, Eliza Partridge,¹⁰ [and] Maria and Sarah Lawrence and myself were sitting discussing Mormonism, and Sarah said, "What would you think if a man had more wives than one?" I said, "That is all right!" Maria said, "Well, we are all four Brother Joseph's wives!" I jumped up and clapped my hands and said, "That's good." Sarah said, "She is all right. Just listen, she believes it all now."

I had to pass through Mother Smith's room to get to mine. She would often stop me and talk to me. She told me all Brother Joseph's troubles and what he had suffered in publishing the Book of Mormon. One morning I met Brother Joseph coming out of his mother's room. He said, "Good morning," and shook hands with me. I went into his mother's room; she said, "Good morning; bring me that bundle from my bureau and sit down here." I did as she told me. She placed the bundle in my hands and said, "Handle this and then put in the top drawer of my bureau and lock it up." After I had done it, she said, "Sit down. Do you remember that I told you about the Urim and Thummim when I told you about the Book of Mormon?" I answered, "Yes, ma'am." She then told me I had just handled it. "You are not permitted to see it, but you have been permitted to handle it," [she said]. "You will live long after I am dead and gone and you can tell the Latter-day Saints that you was permitted to handle the Urim and Thummim."¹¹

Sister Emma asked me one day if I would like to be adopted to them as their child. I did not answer her. She said, "I will wait a while and let you consider it." She waited two weeks before she asked me again. When she did, I told her, "No, Ma'am!" because I did not understand or know

10. Eliza Partridge and Jane maintained a connection to each other years later in Utah, documented in Eliza's journal. Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Journal, February 1846–December 1885, 47, (April 25, 1849), MS 9546, Church History Library.

11. The bundle likely contained Joseph's seer stone, which had been used during the Book of Mormon translation process, rather than the interpreters which had accompanied the golden plates. Nineteenth-century members appear to have used the biblical phrase "Urim and Thummim" for both. "Joseph Smith as Revelator and Translator," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/revelations-and-translations-series-introduction>; Richard E. Turley Jr., Robin S. Jensen, Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Joseph the Seer," *Ensign* 45 (October 2015): 48–54.

what it meant. They were always good and kind to me, but I did not know my own mind. I did not comprehend.

Soon after they broke up the Mansion [House], and I went to my mother. There was not much work because of the persecutions, and I saw Brother Joseph and asked him if I should go to Burlington and take my sister Angeline with me. He said, "Yes, go, and be good girls, and remember your profession of faith in the everlasting gospel, and the Lord will bless you." We went and stayed three weeks, then returned to Nauvoo. During this time Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

I shall never forget that time of agony and sorrow. I went to live in the family of Brother Brigham Young. I stayed there until he was ready to emigrate to this valley [Salt Lake Valley]. While I was at Brother Brigham's, I married Isaac James. When Brother Brigham left Nauvoo, I went to live at Brother Calhoun's.¹²

In the spring of 1846, I left Nauvoo to come to this great and glorious valley. We traveled as far as Winter Quarters. There we stayed until spring. At Keg Creek, my son Silas was born. In the spring of 1847 we started again on our way to this valley; we arrived here on the 22nd day of September, 1847, without any serious mishaps. The Lord's blessing was with us and protected us all the way. The only thing that did occur worth relating was when our cattle stampeded. Some of them we never did find.

May 1848 my daughter Mary Ann was born.¹³ All of my children but two were born here in this valley. Their names are Silas, Sylvester,¹⁴ Mary Ann, Miriam, Ellen Madora, Jessie, Jerry, Boln, Isaac, Vilate; all of them are with their Heavenly Father except two, Sylvester and Ellen Madora. My children were all raised to men and women and all had families except two. My husband, Isaac James, worked for Brother Brigham, and we got along splendid, accumulating horses, cows, oxen, sheep, and chickens in abundance. I spun all the cloth for my family clothing for a

12. Possibly Reynolds Cahoon.

13. Mary Ann James was the first African-American child born in Utah. See "James, Mary Ann," *Century of Black Mormons*, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://exhibits.lib.utah.edu/s/century-of-black-mormons/page/james-mary-ann#c=o&m=o&s=o&cv=o&xywh=-1985%2C-169%2C7592%2C3372>.

14. Usually spelled "Sylvester." Records indicate that he served in the Nauvoo Legion in Utah. Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Test of Faith: Jane Elizabeth James and the Origin of the Utah Black Community" (unpublished manuscript, 1973), 2–3, 5, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

year or two, and we were in a prosperous condition—until the grasshoppers and crickets came along, carrying destruction wherever they went, laying our crops to the ground, striping the trees of all their leaves and fruit, bringing poverty and desolation throughout this beautiful valley. It was not then as it is now. There were no trains running bringing fruits and vegetables from California or any other place. All our importing and exporting was done by the slow process of ox teams.

Oh how I suffered of cold and hunger, and the keenest of all was to hear my little ones crying for bread and I had none to give them; but in all, the Lord was with us and gave us grace and faith to stand it all.¹⁵ I have seen Brother Brigham, Brothers Taylor, Woodruff, and Snow rule this great work and pass on to their reward, and now [we have] Brother Joseph F. Smith. I hope the Lord will spare him—if 'tis his holy will—for many, many years to guide the gospel ship to a harbor of safety, and I know they will, if the people will only listen and obey the teachings of these good, great, and holy men. I have lived right here in Salt Lake City for fifty-two years, and I have had the privilege of going into the temple and being baptized for some of my dead.¹⁶

I am now over eighty years old,¹⁷ and I am nearly blind, which is a great trial to me. It is the greatest trial I have ever been called upon to bear, but I hope my eyesight will be spared to me, poor as it is, that I may be able to go to meeting and to the temple to do more work for my dead.

I am a widow. My husband, Isaac James, died in November 1891. I have seen my husband and all of my children but two laid away in the silent tomb. But the Lord protects me and takes good care of me in my helpless condition, and I want to say right here that my faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

15. Jane does not mention her work helping others during this difficult time, but Eliza Partridge's journal for 1849 recounts how Jane shared half her own flour with Eliza at a time when Eliza's family was destitute. Partridge Lyman, Journal, April 25, 1849.

16. Jane also sought permission to be endowed and sealed but was unable to do so because of the policy of the time. Jane Manning to John Taylor, December 27, 1803, Church History Library. Other black women were baptized for the dead in the temple during the priesthood restriction era, but temple endowments and sealings became available only through the 1978 revelation on priesthood. Jane's work was done by proxy following the revelation. "James, Jane Elizabeth Manning," Century of Black Mormons, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://exhibits.lib.utah.edu/s/century-of-black-mormons/page/james-jane-elizabeth-manning#c=o&m=o&s=o&cv=o&xywh=-1351%2C60%2C4761%2C2114>.

17. An insertion here reads, "Her brother Isaac said she was born in 1813."

Saints is as strong today, nay, it is, if possible, stronger than it was the day I was first baptized. I pay my tithes and offerings [and] keep the Word of Wisdom. I go to bed early and rise early. I try in my feeble way to set a good example to all.

I have had eighteen grandchildren, eight of them are living; also seven great-grandchildren. I live in my little home with my brother Isaac, who is good to me. We are the last two of my mother's family. I want him to stay there after me.

This is just a concise but true sketch of my life and experience.

Yours in truth,

Jane Elizabeth James

Jane Elizabeth James called on me to write this. It was her own statement, and she declared it was true. The only error, or you may call it evasion, was her reticence pertaining to one of her children. She stated in her brother's presence that all but two were born in the valley. One, Silas, was born on their way to the valley, but the other was born before she was baptized or soon after.

Patriarch John Smith read or heard her history read. He said that when she came to Nauvoo, she had a boy five or six years old. At any rate, he said that he was a good chunk of a boy and told me to find out about it; I could not get anything out of Jane, but her brother Isaac came to my house one day, and he said that the boy was Sylvester, that he was born in Connecticut at her mother's, that he was the child of a white man—a preacher—but he could not tell if he was the child of the Presbyterian or a Methodist preacher, that Jane was nearly eighteen or quite that old when the child was born, and [that] her mother kept the child, and Jane went back to the Fitch family, and then she heard the gospel and was baptized, and soon after she got her mother and the whole family to be baptized. Isaac said in a year or two after, they all started for Nauvoo, as Jane has stated in her sketch.

Elizabeth J. D. Roundy

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Finding Jane

Melissa Leilani Larson

The first time I tried to find Jane Manning James's grave was in November 2016. It was a brisk autumn afternoon, and traffic was horrible. My apartment at the time was pretty far east in Salt Lake City, not too far off Foothill Drive, and I had been downtown for a play reading. I couldn't get home because of University of Utah football traffic, so I took a detour and stopped by the city cemetery to pass the time. When I had the idea to look for Jane, the sun was already low in the sky. I parked the car and wandered. I had messaged a friend for directions to the site, but I couldn't get my bearings. The sun, oblivious to my frustration, dropped lower and lower. The air had a bite to it, and my ears began to ache. It was time to leave. As the sun set, I tripped and nearly fell in an open grave. I guess there is good reason for cemeteries to close at sunset.

The traffic had finally let up, and I drove home, disappointed. I had spent the better part of 2016 steeping myself in Jane's history and was excited to visit her resting place—as if seeing it would somehow cement her realness in my mind. I had at that point written several drafts of the screenplay that would eventually become the film *Jane and Emma*, and I was discouraged at the progress I was making. I didn't feel that I had found Jane as a character yet, and I was worried I wouldn't ever find her.

There has always been a lot riding on this film. Coming on board, I felt a tremendous sense of expectation. *Jane and Emma* adds up to a lot of firsts: a Latter-day Saint history centered on a Black female protagonist. A female-driven production team. A film that would acknowledge and even attack thorny issues in Latter-day Saint culture: race, gender, polygamy, and personal revelation. All of this, plus the simple fact that

the two women of the title, Jane Manning and Emma Smith, are icons in the Church's history. And if that wasn't enough, Joseph Smith himself would probably need to make an appearance.

I don't remember learning about Jane in Primary or seminary growing up. I don't think I can put a finger on when I first heard her story, but I'm fairly certain I was already in college. I knew she was Black; I knew she had joined the Church in 1844 in Connecticut; I knew she came west to Salt Lake with the Saints. I didn't know that she had lived and worked in Emma and Joseph's house or held the Urim and Thummim or discussed religion with several of Joseph's plural wives. All that came with studying the brief but jam-packed life sketch Jane had dictated shortly before her death. Can a whole life really be contained in nine typed pages? Can a two-hour movie do the same?

The best biographical films, I've come to realize, don't try to tell a whole life story. It's too daunting a task. The best biopics focus on a particular period in the protagonist's life—a time when the dramatic stakes were high and that person's life changed irreversibly. At the same time that you are telling a true story, you are telling a story, and drama has to drive it forward. A narrative film isn't about presenting information; it's about giving the audience an emotional experience.

Jane's life is a fascinating one, but the events highlighted in her history are scattered. I would need to create a narrative thread to connect one event to the next. Without a narrative tying the plot points together, the film would just be a series of vignettes: moments in Jane's life that, in a feature film, would feel episodic and isolated instead of cohesive. If I did find the right connecting thread, I would need a miniseries to properly tell Jane's life story.

But some say necessity is the mother of invention. The film, as a small, independent project, already had a number of parameters in place. It was a low-budget feature, intended to be small and intimate because, well, that's what we could afford. As a self-producing playwright, I was very familiar with the limitations of budget. I needed to find a story that could be easily confined. That confinement would limit production costs—of cast, crew, costumes, and so on—and allow us as filmmakers to really focus on telling a good story.

When the project was pitched to me, the title was already in place: *Jane and Emma*. The intent was to introduce Jane as a significant character in the Latter-day Saint pioneer tapestry through presenting her friendship with Emma Hale Smith. From Jane's autobiography, I learned that Emma had welcomed Jane and her family into her home on first sight, though they had been walking in the same clothes and shoes for weeks. She offered Jane a home and a job when Jane feared having

neither. And, ultimately, Emma invited Jane to be sealed to Emma and Joseph as a member of their eternal family.

Already the scope of the story was narrowed down to Jane's time in Nauvoo, from the fall of 1843 until the summer of 1846. Jane spent roughly the first six months of that time living in the Mansion House hotel, working in the employ of Joseph and Emma. I had found what I hoped was the window of time in which our story would take place.

But what was the right narrative thread? I needed to give Jane a problem to solve. Her friendship with Emma needed to be put through a crucible. Both would need to be changed at the end of the film.

I went back to Jane's life sketch in search of inspiration. I noticed a major event I hadn't considered before: Jane left Nauvoo briefly in the early summer of 1844 looking for a new job, possibly because Joseph had decided to lease the Mansion House to another owner. When Jane returned to Nauvoo just a few weeks later, Joseph was dead.

I was in a meeting with several key voices in the film's production—executive producer Arthur VanWagenen, director Chantelle Squires, and producers and story collaborators Tamu Smith and Zandra Vranes—when I imagined what it must have been like for Jane, thirty miles away in Burlington, Iowa, to come home without knowing what had happened in Carthage, Illinois, and discover that the Prophet was dead. We didn't know exactly when Jane came home, only that she wasn't gone long, and that Joseph and Hyrum were killed in the meantime.

Pieces began to click into place. I imagined scenarios in which our characters would have to make choices. What if Jane said she was going to find a new job but really left Nauvoo because she was disappointed by racism among the Saints? What if Emma tried to be a good friend to Jane but simply didn't understand what it was to be a Black woman in America in the years before the Civil War?

We had our crucible. What if Jane returned to Nauvoo the same day that Joseph and Hyrum's bodies were delivered from Carthage? I would have to imagine it and hope that audiences would follow my lead. But the stakes on that night would be so high for both women, providing a situation that was ideal for drama. I saw Emma as fragile and anxious, terrified that the same mob that killed Joseph might return to desecrate his body. Jane, meanwhile, decides to keep watch over Emma through the long night. It was a simple story that fit all of our parameters: it focused on Jane and Emma's friendship; it was mostly confined to the interior of the Mansion House; the stakes were high; and both women would be changed by the end of the night.

Not everyone will believe that Jane and Emma were friends. Some will even argue that Jane fabricated Emma's offer for Jane to be sealed to



Jane Elizabeth Manning James is buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery alongside her husband, Isaac James. His headstone is to the left of a large memorial marker, and Jane's headstone is on the right. Her headstone reads:

Jane E. James
Born
May 11, 1822
Died
Apr. 16, 1908
only sleeping

The large memorial marker to the left of Jane's headstone reads:

Jane Elizabeth Manning James
"I try in my feeble way to set a good example for all."
Born free in 1822. Fairfield County, Connecticut
Baptized LDS in 1841. She led a group of family members to
Nauvoo, Illinois in 1843
"Our feet cracked open and bled until you could see the whole prints
of our feet with blood on the ground"
Jane lived with Joseph, Emma and Mother Smith
"Brother Joseph sat down by me and said, 'God bless you.
You are among friends.'
Married Isaac James around 1845
Arrived in Salt Lake September 22, 1847
"Oh how I suffered of cold and hunger, but the Lord gave us faith
and grace to stand it all."
Shared half her flour with Eliza Partridge Lyman,
who was near starving.
Died April 16, 1908. Outliving all but two of her eight children
"But we went on our way rejoicing, singing hymns, and thanking god
for his infinite goodness and mercy to us."

the Smiths because Jane wanted so desperately to enter the temple. But I believe that they were friends and that Emma did make that offer, and I think that even just the possibility is worth exploring in a story.

My first adventure to search for Jane's grave happened on a Saturday evening. The next morning, after church, I went back to the cemetery. I figured out the directions I had misunderstood the night before and, after some determined wandering, found a pair of rounded stone markers separated by a bronze monument. I had found Jane and her first husband, Isaac.

I stayed there for nearly half an hour and talked to Jane. I apologized for not having the skill to tell her story. I confided that I didn't have the right experience, that I was feeling a lot of pressure. I told her that I knew her story was important, that her connection to Emma was real. I said I was embarrassed that she had been attached to Emma and Joseph as a servant rather than sealed as a daughter. I was upset that she had to wait nearly another lifetime after her death—seventy-one years—before her temple work was completed.

I don't know if Jane heard me that day, but it didn't matter. She let me talk, and she let me cry, and she let me write. I had found her—not just as a distant historical figure, but as a real, human woman. I left the cemetery that morning with renewed confidence, ready to work. I went back several times over the next two years to refocus when things got hazy and the job seemed impossible. I'd visit Jane and remind myself that she was, in fact, a real person and it was a privilege to tell her story. And I'd return home and try again. A new angle, a new scene, a new draft.

Of course, what I've written in that script is only a guess. I like to think of it as an educated guess, but at the end of the day it's just a guess because it has to be. Yes, I had to fill in holes that history left behind. But this story, this friendship, is important enough to guess about. We don't have enough of a record to know, but we can guess. We should guess. We should imagine. Through imagining, we can put ourselves in Jane's shoes and in Emma's, allowing them to be real women, like us. And that imagining, I hope, will open us up to be better people. To be better Saints.

Melissa Leilani Larson is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter whose work has been seen on four continents. Her plays include *Martyrs' Crossing*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Happy Secrets*, *Pilot Program*, *The Edible Complex*, *Sweetheart Come*, and *Mountain Law*. Her films include *Jane and Emma* and *Freetown*. Two of her plays are published in *Third Wheel*, available from BCC Press. Mel is a three-time winner of the Association for Mormon Letters drama award and was a 2016 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference semifinalist. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Playwrights Workshop.

Jane and Emma
 Directed by Chantelle Squires
 Excel Entertainment, 2018

Reviewed by Camlyn Giddins

As I entered the Jordan Commons theater for the Salt Lake City premiere of *Jane and Emma*, I quickly got the sense that this event was bigger than I had imagined. I recognized several well-known entertainers and political and religious leaders who were in attendance. Crowds of people lined up to get a picture with the lead actors or have them sign a poster. There was so much buzzing as people conversed and connected with one another that the film didn't start on time.

Finally, Excel Entertainment Group executive Arthur Van Wagenen walked to the front of the theater and welcomed everyone. He immediately invited members of the production team to join him. Among them were a host of women: director Chantelle Squires, actresses Danielle Deadwyler and Emily Goss, screenwriter Melissa Leilani Larson, and producers Tamu Smith and Zandra Vranes. Surrounded by these friends, Van Wagenen recounted the development of their relationship as they began meeting and creating this story. Then with emotion, Van Wagenen said, "These women are going to change the way we do storytelling."

As a woman, as a person of color, and as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I am relieved that I can genuinely recommend *Jane and Emma* as a quality film—unique, significant, and relevant to the needs of our day. The strength of the film can be found in its story and content, casting and production team, soundtrack, cinematography, and driving purpose.

The film opens with text introducing the year, 1844, and our starring character, Jane Manning. It describes Jane as a free black woman who found a new faith and built her life around it—a description stripped of all things that would segregate her from other denominations or human experiences. Then we are thrown into a forested dream sequence in

which Jane hears Emma Smith call her name. Stumbling through branches and shadows, Jane calls back to Emma. As Jane startles awake, her sister asks what she saw in her dream—as if it were a frequent occurrence. Jane shares that she needs to go back to Nauvoo, Illinois, where Emma and the main body of Saints lived.

Around July of 1844, about three weeks before the night of that dream, Jane had left Nauvoo for Burlington, Iowa, in order to find more work for her and her sister, away from the persecutions she found among the Saints.¹ But, rising from the dream, Jane immediately packs up and travels the thirty miles back to Nauvoo. Finally, Jane arrives at what came to be known in Nauvoo as the Mansion House, the home of Joseph and Emma Smith.² As the prophet and leader of this self-built religious community, Joseph Smith and his wife Emma used their home as a hotel and often welcomed guests. But when Jane knocks, no one comes to the door. Jane, being familiar with the home, decides to enter through the back.

Very shortly, Jane sees the prophet lying on a table, covered with a linen sheet. She realizes he has been killed. While we are introduced to Jane through a visionary dream, we are introduced to Emma's character through a close-up of her steady hand cradling a revolver. Alone in the house, Emma is unaware of who has entered, but she is prepared. Luckily, Emma sees Jane's face before anything unfortunate happens. We learn that Emma is alone by choice, watching over her husband's body. She has sent away Joseph's other wives as well as brethren of the Church who desire to move his body to another location. Jane chooses to stay with Emma for the night. They both keep watch, braced for any mobs seeking the bounty on Joseph's head.

The rest of the film follows the events of that night. Intimate moments as well as confrontations spark flashbacks that tell us the story of how Jane and Emma's lives intertwine. The film also shows the depth of Emma's yearning for more time alone with the man she has always had to share. By the time morning comes, we've journeyed far enough to

1. James Goldberg, "The Autobiography of Jane Manning James: Seven Decades of Faith and Devotion," December 11, 2013, <https://history.lds.org/article/jane-manning-james-life-sketch?lang=eng>; see also James Goldberg and Veronica J. Anderson, eds., "Autobiography of Jane Elizabeth Manning James," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2018): 156 herein.

2. "Mansion House, Nauvoo, Illinois," Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, accessed November 14, 2018, <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/mansion-house/>.

understand the significance of Jane supportively grasping Emma's hand as she finally steps outside to face the encroaching, mournful public.

According to existing records, Jane staying with Emma that night, helping keep vigil over Joseph's body, is not historical, but some of the basic framework of the story is.³ Through flashbacks we see how faithfully Jane led her family to Nauvoo to join their new religion. We see Emma thrive as the first lady in this growing community. We see Jane begin to live and work alongside Emma in running the hotel. We see Jane's developing relationship with the favorable Isaac James. We even see Emma's earnest invitation to adopt Jane into their family. All of these events are supported by historical records, and particularly Jane's own autobiography.⁴

The film does not shy away from confrontations. In one flashback, we see a white woman enter the Smith home without looking at or acknowledging Jane who opens the door. The woman proceeds to speak directly to Emma about borrowing the "girl" for some work. Instead of letting Jane speak for herself, Emma explains that Jane is not hers to lend but that the woman is welcome to hire Jane for her excellent work. Shocked, the woman asks if the Smiths pay Jane for her labor. Emma confirms, and the woman, still processing this information, leaves. There is silence between Jane and Emma as they continue working. Jane is visibly bothered by something. We later learn why.

This interaction is comparable to a later flashback involving the Prophet Joseph. A clerk from the Church begins telling Jane how the curse of Cain would not allow for her to be baptized. Joseph cuts him off and firmly corrects what has been said with a monologue I will not spoil. But in effect, he describes Jane as a daughter of God and ends with "to curse the negro is to tempt damnation." When the clerk leaves, Joseph says to Jane, "That should not have happened. I'm sorry." He then promises Jane that when the temple is finished, he and Emma will personally escort her in themselves. Emma's soft response and lack of correction still left Jane painted as a laborer, which contrasts with Joseph's direct chastisement. In Jane's mind, while Emma did not quite see Jane as an equal, Joseph truly saw her as a sister and was not afraid to defend her and to be seen as her

3. *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2018), 494–508.

4. For the full text of Jane Manning's autobiography, see Goldberg and Anderson, eds., "Autobiography," 151–66 herein.

brother. In the film, Emma desires to reconcile this and be the true sister she hopes to be.

The lead roles of Jane Manning, Emma Smith, and Joseph Smith are not played by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This may have allowed the actors to enact the roles with what they know from human experience and without prescribed ideas of who these individuals were. The performance of Brad Schmidt, who plays Joseph Smith, is an example of this. Having little time to research the role, Schmidt's approach to Joseph made the character affable and perhaps more relaxed than Latter-day Saint audiences have seen before. I consider that delivery to be a gift.

Danielle Deadwyler, who plays Jane, brings an appropriate groundedness to the role. If you were to watch or read any of her interviews, this depth of connection seems to come not only from acting but from who she is. A tribute to both the writing and the acting, Emma's character (played by Emily Goss) is portrayed with satisfying strength as well. This strength is present in her role as both the grieving widow and the active partner we see in the flashbacks. It's refreshing to see that, though in the midst of terrible loss, Emma does not dissolve in the same way I might have.

The music Mauli Jr. Bonner arranged for *Jane and Emma* is exceptional. It's not melodramatic in the sense that it elicits strong emotions out of the viewers. Rather, the music is meant to personify Jane's spirit. It is driven and culturally fitting. Not even four minutes of the film pass before you hear the deep, rich tones of gospel music move Jane on her journey. This rhythmic, ancestral presence is woven throughout the entire film.

I wish I could elaborate more eloquently on Wes Johnson's cinematography, but I found that it did not call attention to itself—and that's the beauty of it. It respectfully supported the characters, their relationships, and their storytelling. Contrastingly, I *do* notice the cinematography of lower-budget films about Latter-day Saints that seem to humbly say, "This is the best we could do with our resources." But if this was a low-budget film, I could not tell. Seeing that Johnson's experience with cinematography is primarily in action and thriller films, I was impressed that his work presented in *Jane and Emma* left me feeling intimately connected to the dynamic relationship of the two leading women.

This tribute to cinematography can't be isolated from the editing that pieced it together. I am still amazed by Chantelle Squires, who not only directed this film but also edited the story and footage together. *Jane*

and Emma is Squires's narrative directorial debut. Her previous directing role was for a documentary titled *Reserved to Fight* (2008) about four marines and their reintegration to civilian life. To successfully move from a war documentary to *Jane and Emma* speaks to Squires's ability to reach into a story, intimately and respectfully, and listen to its stylistic needs.

In the midst of all the strengths, I did find flaws. Aesthetically, the makeup on Emma and Jane (and even Joseph) was too noticeable and took me out of the time period. I was also disappointed that whenever other women from the Church, or even Joseph's other wives, were depicted, they were often sitting, silent, while knitting or sewing. I am keenly aware of the female progressive activists from our early Church years, and I look forward to seeing them portrayed more. Perhaps the intent of such omissions was not to detract from Jane and Emma's relationship.

Surprisingly, the climax seemed forced. After a long night of ministering to Emma, as her dream had inspired her to do, Jane is found in the middle of the forest during a storm. She prays to God, saying she doesn't know where she is supposed to be or what he would have her do. Emma calls her name, and Jane, as if only now connecting the dots, says Emma's name. Did Jane forget the dream that sent her to Nauvoo? The dream seemed too literal and recent for Jane to be confused.

As is usually the case, several articles and statements claim that this is not a "Mormon" film. To be honest, I don't entirely know what is meant by that. Perhaps that's a discussion for another article. The subject matter and context is definitely a part of the Church's history, though the film does speak to topics that extend beyond that sphere. At the Salt Lake premiere, for example, nonmember actress Emily Goss stated that she approached her role as Emma with the thought that she was portraying an important legend within American history.

To speak to the film's significance and driving purpose, I will just invite reflection: How often, in our media and our Church meetings, do we inquire into the experiences of our Saints of color? Do we wonder what keeps them from coming to Church? Do we ask them what makes it hard to stay? Many members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not know of the relationship Emma and Joseph had with Jane, one of the earliest black converts to the Church. If members don't know it, then non-Latter-day Saints especially don't know it. Yet members of any faith can learn much from the exchanges between the socially segregated disciples in our history.

The night of the Salt Lake premiere, producer Zandra Vranes commented that *Jane and Emma* was made for this cultural time in order to invite us to “build relationships and become more than friendly and become true friends.” Jane Manning James is a rich example of having faith in God. You certainly get a sense of that faith through her actions and visionary experiences, though the film may not explore her personal relationship with God as deeply as some may like. But the intent of the film is more about confronting us and encouraging us to look at and improve our relationships with our neighbors—which is the same as strengthening our faith in God anyway.

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Jane and Emma
Directed by Chantelle Squires
Excel Entertainment, 2018

Reviewed by Eric Samuelson

The new film *Jane and Emma* is about the friendship between Jane Manning and Emma Smith. The film is loosely historical, based on the limited writings that Jane left behind, but though some aspects of the story are imagined, the film speaks to many facts about Latter-day Saint history that we know to be true. The film openly acknowledges, for instance, the fact of Nauvoo polygamy and Joseph Smith's multiple wives. It sympathetically depicts Emma Smith, who must surely be one of the most equivocally viewed figures in the early history of the Church. And central to the film's thematic concerns is the tangled and contentious history of race relations in Latter-day Saint history. It presents early converts as sharing the unabashedly racist worldview of nineteenth-century Americans, and it prefigures the ways in which the most retrograde notions of race and privilege would continue to impact Latter-day Saint culture and thought going forward from Joseph Smith's martyrdom. Despite, and perhaps because of, the difficult issues the film addresses, I would describe the film as faith inspiring and powerfully spiritual.

The film imagines the night of June 28, 1844, one day after Joseph Smith's murder. In Nauvoo, Illinois, Emma (Emily Goss) has refused to allow anyone else into her home, guarding Joseph's body alone. Her former servant, Jane Manning (Danielle Deadwyler), asks if she can wait with her; the film is about that night, two women, alone, and the difficult conversations they had not previously felt able to share. The events of that one night make up perhaps 70 percent of the film; the rest consists of flashbacks, in which we see the beginnings and evolution of their relationship. In the flashbacks, we also meet a charismatic Joseph Smith (Brad Schmidt) and witness his dynamic leadership and, at times, challenging and difficult teachings. Jane was also, during this time, courted by Isaac James (K. Danor Gerald), whom she would

eventually marry, and he proposes, not for the first time, during the long night of the film.

The film is, first and foremost, about journeys. We see Jane's long walk with the nine faithful members of her family, including her son, from her home in Wilton, Connecticut, to Nauvoo. They intend to take the steamboat from Buffalo, New York, but are not allowed to board because of their race and are therefore obliged to walk the eight hundred or so miles. When her party arrives in Nauvoo, their shoes are mere scraps and their feet are bloody. But Emma and Joseph make them welcome. Tellingly, the other members gathered in the Nauvoo House emphatically do not.

There are other journeys. Joseph lends Jane a horse when she leaves to find employment; a thuggish lout steals it from her, and again, she walks. She again travels to be with Emma for their one night together. And the entire film is about a journey, the journey of the Church itself after the martyrdom and the journey of America in those crucial and ugly and contentious years before the Civil War. Above all, the film describes the personal journeys of Jane and Emma, of two women working through pain and heartbreak, finding their truth together.

I rather suspect that the historical Joseph wasn't quite as "woke" as this film portrays him. In the film, Joseph shares some remarkably anti-racist sentiments and forcibly defends Jane against racism. Schmidt's performance captures Joseph's open kindness but elides the complexities of the man underneath that veneer. The film creates the impression that opposition to racism was perhaps central to his ministry, which I suspect is not wholly accurate historically, but the film isn't particularly interested in capturing some essentialist Joseph Smith but in Joseph as Jane knew him. He was kind to her and defended her from the open racism of some Nauvoo townspeople. So that's the Joseph we see in this film.

But the focus is almost always on Jane, and that places the responsibility for carrying the film directly on Deadwyler. She is absolutely up to it. Her walk, her carriage, and her body language carry the portrayal. In group shots, she's not always in the center of the frame, but her presence is unmistakable and compelling. And her face has the focus and intensity that speaks to an earned pride her society would have denied her. Director Chantelle Squires loves tight close-ups, with lots of hand-held camera work, mostly on Deadwyler and the emotional directness of her remarkable eyes. It's a tremendous screen performance, one that validates and honors the historical Jane.

Above all, I love the way Deadwyler captures Jane's intelligence. Jane sees the world clearly and reasons her way to the heart of several matters, and she knows that her conclusions are valid. She knows, for example, that Isaac James loves her, and she is willing to love him in return, but she has no intention of committing herself blindly. He wants to move to the frontier West, where he believes he will find opportunities for individual achievement not available to him in Illinois or further east. He seems to think of the West as a place of boundless promise, free from discrimination. Jane seems to know better. His priorities are not her priorities, and though she understands his deep need for accomplishment and achievement, the world is what it is for young black men. He's going to get hurt and she as well, and she wants to be sure of him before agreeing to that journey. She knows that Emma is kind to her and that she can rely on that kindness up to a point. But she also knows that Emma does not see her as an equal, as a sister in the gospel, but rather as an inferior to whom kindness is a kind of reflexive noblesse oblige.

Jane also knows her own worth, her inherent value. She has reason to believe that Joseph sees it too, that despite what nearly everyone in nineteenth-century America believes, she is equal, she is loved by her Heavenly Father, she is only a hewer of wood and drawer of water through a grotesque accident of history, unrelated to any false theological construct. She is not Emma's "girl." She is Emma's sister and friend.

I have yet to discuss Emma and Emily Goss's fine performance. For the most part, this is Emma at the most difficult and painful time in her life: after the death of her husband, a death for which the Saints hold her partly complicit. And she may very well be, she thinks. She did, after all, write to Joseph and urge him to return and face Governor Ford, leading to his arrest, incarceration in Carthage, and death. Jane reassures Emma, however, that she is not to blame. Goss plays Emma as a deeply distressed woman, fiercely defending what she sees as her prerogatives as Joseph's widow, while painfully aware of other women who have grounds to consider themselves identically situated. And so we see an Emma who has been stretched to her emotional limits by grief, by pain, by guilt, and under it all, by a deeply rooted feeling of betrayal. She is close to the edge of madness, and the film suggests that without Jane's sturdy sanity to ground her, she may well have slipped over the edge.

But of course, this isn't the only Emma we see. In the flashbacks, we see Emma the theologian, Emma the highly respected and strong leader of Nauvoo's women, and Emma the compassionate individual, defending Jane and giving her employment, without ever quite granting her

equality. And yet, even equality is possible, we think. Emma Smith is, of course, a difficult subject for historians of the Church, even today. I thought this film gave us, ultimately, a sympathetic portrayal of an exceptionally complex character. Goss's performance matches and complements Deadwyler's.

I found the film not just well acted and written. It also manages likely audience sensitivities while telling a difficult-to-tell story about our past, striking a most difficult balance. Credit, first, goes to Melissa Leilani Larson's screenplay, which honors the history in which the story is rooted while fictionalizing when needed. It is a film for today, reflecting our tensions and concerns. And the key to its achievement can be found in the title. The film is called *Jane and Emma*. It's a film about Jane Manning first and Emma Smith second. The film focuses more on the woman who served in the Smith household than it does on her employer, more on the marginalized woman of color than her privileged white town leader, and more on the woman on the periphery of Nauvoo society than the woman who served as president of the Relief Society. That shift in emphasis is crucial and allows us to see the ways that Jane Manning was extraordinary. Her faithfulness, tenacity, and courage, as played by Deadwyler, are precisely why the film is so inspirational.

Ultimately, this is a film about the relationship between two beautifully drawn women. That's a rare enough achievement. It's wonderfully well written by perhaps Mormondom's finest young playwright and directed by a director of almost limitless potential. I should also mention Squires's use of music. The film's score, by Maui Jr. Bonner and Jonathan Keith, is entirely gospel music, and it's wonderful and underscores the action throughout. The film is fantastic and could hold its own with the best films I would expect to see at Sundance or Cannes. There have surely been times when I have thought, "For a Mormon film, that's not bad," and made allowances for good intentions. Not this time. This film is just plain good.

But I'm a Latter-day Saint film scholar and can only evaluate it through my own cultural lens. I think this film is an example of how our newfound openness about Latter-day Saint history and culture works. We are just beginning to process difficult questions of our history, and *Jane and Emma* does for Latter-day Saint film what Richard Lyman Bushman's *Rough Stone Rolling* did for Latter-day Saint history—it shows us what's possible if we can overcome defensiveness and cultural insularity. (I'm writing of Church membership at large, not the community of fine Latter-day Saint historians.) Once it was possible to pretend that Joseph

Smith did not practice plural marriage, that racial questions had not risen or that they had already been resolved, or that controversies over race were overblown or artifacts of propaganda by ill-intentioned folk working to destroy the work in which we were engaged. In our current information age, however, those approaches are no longer tenable. *Jane and Emma* is a film that says, yes, Joseph was married to many women in Nauvoo, many of them very young. And he lived in a racist society, and that racism has continued to plague us for many generations. And yet there's also this: the example of one astonishingly faithful woman whom we find inspiring, a woman whose life can still testify to our soul. Hallelujah.

Eric Samuelsen is a Mormon playwright and former BYU professor. He received a BA in theater from BYU in 1983 and a PhD in dramatic history, theory, and criticism from Indiana University in 1991. He has written more than two dozen plays, including *Gadianton* and *A Love Affair with Electrons*, and has been called a Mormon Henrik Ibsen or Charles Dickens. He has won several awards from the Association for Mormon Letters for his works and served as president of that organization. In 2012 he received the Smith Pettit Award for lifetime work.

Feeding the Flock:
The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Church and Praxis
By Terryl L. Givens

New York: Oxford University Press, 2017

Reviewed by Mark A. Wrathall

Overview

Feeding the Flock is a landmark study of the history of the practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Professor Terryl L. Givens's aim in the book is to answer the question "What did Joseph Smith and his successors understand the purpose of the church to be, and how did the resultant structure and forms of practice evolve over time?" (x). As the compound form of this question makes clear, and as Givens reminds the reader repeatedly throughout the book, his project involves attending to the way that theological and practical aspects of the Church inform and affect each other—although in point of fact he tends to focus mostly on the way that theological doctrines inform and shape the practices, not the other way around. So Givens not only explains what Latter-day Saints believe but also shows how the practices of the Church developed over time in such a way as to sustain a form of life that expresses those beliefs. This is a monumental and ambitious task on its own. But Givens further enriches his account by setting his practico-theological account of the Church in a comparative context, drawing out affinities and contrasts between the Church and other forms of religious life (primarily Christian and Jewish).

The first three chapters of *Feeding the Flock* lay out the theological framework that structures the subsequent eight chapters, each of which offers a detailed analysis of some particular domain of Latter-day Saint life and worship. In the opening three chapters, Givens offers an interpretation of the primary purpose and function of the Church: "the church exists as a steward over the authority and ordinances which both foster and constitute a relationality between humans and God on the one hand, and humans with humans on the other. *In sum*," he argues, "*the church exists to create the kind of persons, in the kinds of*

relationships, that constitute the divine nature" (34, italics in original). Givens quite rightly emphasizes the intense focus that Church practices place on developing and nurturing both human relationships to God ("vertical relationships," as Givens terms them) and interhuman (or "horizontal") relationships—with a special significance given to familial relationships, a significance that has grown more pronounced over time.¹ This defining purpose of the Church—the purpose of creating a certain kind of person in a certain kind of communion with God and others—is put into practice through the administration of covenants and sacraments, the theology of which is outlined in chapter 2, "Latter-day Saint Covenant Theology," and chapter 3, "Sacramental Theology." I'll return to Givens's account of this theology later.

The eight chapters that follow show how the Church's covenant and sacramental theology is worked out in the practices and institutions that structure the Latter-day Saint form of life. Givens reviews the functioning of the various priesthood quorums and offices (chapter 4); the ecclesiastical structure of general and local Church authorities (chapter 5); "salvific" sacramental ordinances, such as baptism, confirmation, the temple endowment, and sealing (chapter 6); "nonsalvific" sacramental ordinances such as the sacrament and priesthood blessings (chapter 7); the use of spiritual gifts and the place of revelation in institutional and personal life (chapter 8); the canonization and interpretation of scripture (chapter 9); the conduct of worship services and the law of the fast (chapter 10); and "boundary maintenance"—that is, the establishment of institutional identity through mechanisms of Church disciplinary proceedings and temple recommend interviews, as well as through markers like strict compliance with the law of tithing and with prohibitions against the consumption of alcohol, tea, coffee, and so forth (chapter 11).

Each of the eight practice-oriented chapters, and the main subsections within those chapters, follow a more-or-less standard procedure. First, Givens situates Latter-day Saint practices in a broader Christian context. For instance, the chapter on salvific sacramental ordinances (chapter 6) begins with a review of the seven sacraments of medieval

1. See, for example, the discussion of sealing in chapter 6: "After a fifty-year meander through various experimental forms, Mormon temple rituals began thereafter to seal parents to children and children to parents, in ascending and descending lines. . . . Since 1894, an increasingly family-centered orientation to both LDS practice and rhetoric has firmly entrenched the traditional, nuclear family as the core image of both Mormon social life and heavenly aspirations" (185–86).

Christianity, notes how Luther pruned these seven down to two (baptism and the eucharist), briefly recapitulates Methodist efforts to “[circumvent] sacramental debates,” and finally sets out the Latter-day Saint doctrine regarding those ordinances that are “requisite to (and constitutive of) salvation”—namely, “baptism, confirmation and bestowal of the Holy Ghost, conferral of the priesthood (for men), the endowment, and marriage sealing” (145). Having situated a Latter-day Saint practice in a comparative and historical context, Givens then recounts the evolution of the practice throughout the history of the Church. In addition, he generally offers an account of the theological doctrines that explain or rationalize the practice. For instance, Givens argues that in the theology of “Mormon baptism,” the ordinance “signifies a shift in eternal status that moves far beyond simple forgiveness of sin”—through baptism, an individual begins “the process of initiation, actually reincorporation, into heirship with heavenly parents” (155). In his review of how the practice of baptism developed over time, Givens relates that at some point, catechumens (or “investigators,” in the Latter-day Saint vernacular) were required to “explicitly and verbally place themselves under a covenant.” But baptism since has evolved into “an implicit covenant,” where the individual receiving baptism says nothing (157). Givens discusses the once-common practice of rebaptism as a way of solemnizing a person’s “fresh start in their spiritual journey” or of receiving a renewed remission of sins (158). He also discusses the now-extinct practice of “healing baptisms” (160–61) before finally turning to the temple ordinance of vicarious baptism for the dead. In this way, the reader is provided with a genealogy of contemporary Latter-day Saint practices. Through a masterful assembling and interpretation of the historical materials, Givens demonstrates just how fluid Latter-day Saint religious practices have been, as Church members have adapted themselves to changing conditions and emerging understandings of the nature, role, and function of the Church. (Changes in 2018 to the organization of priesthood quorums and the Sunday block of meetings and the introduction of the ministering program are the latest examples of the continuing mutability of Church practices.) As a result, reading Givens’s book ought to inoculate Church members against fetishizing the current form of Church organization and practice.

Another recurring feature of Givens’s standard procedure involves highlighting, wherever possible, ancient antecedents of the Latter-day Saint form of the practice—especially when Latter-day Saint practice departs significantly from the practices and teachings of mainstream Christian sects. For instance, in discussing the vicarious baptism for the

dead that is performed in Latter-day Saint temples, Givens discusses the Marcionite (second century AD) practice of vicarious baptism for catechumens who died before baptism could be performed. Information on these historical antecedents will undoubtedly be of interest to members of the Latter-day Saint Church who believe that the current organization of the Church constitutes a restoration of the structure and ordinances of primitive Christianity. But there is a risk of confirmation bias—of falling into the error of fixating on just those historical antecedents (however anomalous and idiosyncratic they might be) that happen to resemble current Latter-day Saint practices and then taking those resemblances as proof that current Latter-day Saint practice is a straightforward restoration of *the* one primordial practice of Christianity. That worry aside, *Feeding the Flock* is essential reading to anyone interested in acquiring a better-grounded appreciation of the meaning and sources of Latter-day Saint religious practices and in obtaining a granular knowledge of the similarities and disparities between the practices and theology of the Church versus other Christian religions.

Salvation as a Form of Life

Givens's interpretation of Church practice proceeds analytically. He dissects Church organizations and practices, places them into distinct categories, and interprets them piecemeal. In proceeding in this way, Givens is able to offer an extremely clear and encyclopedic account of the multifarious aspects of Church practice. The analytic approach, however, risks obscuring the holism that is intrinsic to the practices of the Church—both an internal holism that unites the various practices of the faith and an external holism that connects religious practices with other practices to form a whole, coherent style of life.

Internal holism means that we can't really understand the meaning of any practice in isolation. A corollary is that we can't really understand the significance of any *change* in practice in isolation—the meaning of a change in the practices regarding baptism, for instance, depends on the specific impact it has on other practices. Givens hints at this in discussing how the once-common practice of rebaptism disappeared from Latter-day Saint life—a change, Givens notes, that coincided with a new emphasis on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper “as a means of renewing the baptismal covenant” (160). Givens complains that this new understanding of the sacrament as a renewing of baptismal covenants has “no particular scriptural warrant” (of course, neither did the practice of rebaptism in the first place). But my point is this: to assess

the significance of the cessation of rebaptism for the overall Latter-day Saint experience of the world and our place in it, it matters a great deal that a different practice for covenant renewal emerged to take its place. It matters because it suggests that the form of life stands in need of a mechanism for covenant renewal. It also matters because of the distinctive way that each practice shapes our experience of covenant renewal. One might suspect that covenant renewal through rebaptism imbued the moment with a gravity and solemnity that is easily lost in a routine and simple act like weekly participation in the brief sacrament ceremony.² The holistic character of religious practices suggests, then, that an analytic approach to religious practices needs to be guided by an understanding of the way practices interact in shaping the significance of the whole form of life.

An appreciation of the external holism of religious practices leads us to the same conclusion. We can't fully understand the meaning of any particular set of practices until we see how they interact with other practices in the world. Religious practices are no exception. The practices through which we are initiated into Church membership are meant to transform the way we carry ourselves in everyday life, including how we perceive the significance of the people, events, and situations we encounter and how we are disposed to respond to them. And that means that we can't fully understand the significance of Church practices until we see how they affect the conduct of our day-to-day lives. Givens, at least tacitly, invokes this external form of holism at numerous points in *Feeding the Flock*—perhaps most clearly as he traces the history and evolution of the concept of Zion in chapter 2. “The church is to *be* Zion,” Givens notes, “enfold[ing] us in a society that merges seamlessly with a communal heaven” (34, italics in original). Indeed, Givens describes eloquently the way that Latter-day Saint doctrine equates salvation with a life in which all our social relationships and daily activities are integrated with and expressive of our relationship to God: “Mormons, then, take the project of Zion-building literally, believing that the church must build a community prepared to meet the Lord and join the heavenly community of the righteous. The process of sanctifying disciples of Christ, and constituting them into a community of love and harmony, does not *qualify* individuals for heaven; sanctification and celestial relationality *are* the essence of heaven. Zion, in this conception, is both an ideal and

2. My thanks to Aaron Reeves for emphasizing this point to me in conversation.

a transitional stage into the salvation toward which all Christians strive” (36, *italics in original*). In the Latter-day Saint understanding, Givens quite rightly insists, salvation is not a reward extrinsic to the relationships we form in the course of our mortal existence. Salvation simply is a particular form of life—one that is well suited for eternity. As we come to be at home in religious practices, the interpersonal relationships that make up this form of life are “established, developed, and secured” (25). And this is why “Mormons believe the institutional church to have a vital—or even indispensable—role in human salvation” (8): “in its final form, the church will provide the structures, principles, and practices that provide concrete preparation for, and assurance of, integration into an eternal heavenly family” (21).

But the holism of practices, both internal and external, renders problematic the most important division that Givens demarcates within Latter-day Saint practices—the division between salvific and nonsalvific ordinances. While conceding that the Latter-day Saint Church “do[es] not have formal categories of sacraments,” Givens holds that “some are clearly essential to salvation and others are not” (145). I confess, the distinction is not clear to me. Consider, by way of analogy, the practice of forming an intimate and exclusive relationship between two equal partners—let’s call this “marriage.”³ Marriage includes a variety of subpractices—for instance, practices for securing and preparing food, for washing clothes and dishes, for raising children, for coordinating daily activities, for fostering and reinforcing shared intimacy and devotion, for extending familial and amical bonds, and so on. Now suppose we live in a society and age of world history that officially recognizes a relationship as a marriage only if the partners perform one particular subpractice—they engage in a specific nuptial ritual.⁴ Suppose further that the society has a mechanism whereby an intimate and exclusive relationship can be recognized retroactively as an official marriage (countries with a legal framework for recognizing common-law marriages have just such a mechanism). And suppose, finally, that some partnerships are unhappy and ultimately founder, while other partnerships are extraordinarily happy and successful—the partners flourish

3. Of course, this analogy is not selected at random. Marriage plays an outsized role in the overall form of life that leads to salvation within Latter-day Saint theology.

4. A ritual is a solemn act performed with express intent and conforming to a set form.

within their intimate and exclusive relationship, and they perform to a very high standard many (although perhaps not all) of the subpractices that contribute to a marriage relationship. Now, my question is this: under these suppositions, can we meaningfully identify some actions or subpractices as “essential” to a successful and happy marriage and others “nonessential”? One might argue that the ritual that solemnizes a partnership as a marriage is essential to a successful marriage because, without the ritual, the partnership wouldn’t count as a marriage in the first place. But one could equally argue that the everyday practices of caring, loving, nurturing, and sustaining one another are essential to a successful marriage because, without them, the partnership wouldn’t be happy or successful. Moreover, given a legal mechanism for retroactive recognition of partnerships as marriages, one might argue that an ability to perform well the everyday practices of a marriage partnership are *more* essential than the ritual. After all, unless those everyday practices are performed well, no subsequent event can make it the case that the marriage was happy. Conversely, a happy and successful partnership can later come to count as a marriage.

Exactly the same considerations complicate the distinction between salvific and nonsalvific sacraments in the Church. In addition to the temple ritual for solemnizing a marriage, the Latter-day Saint form of life involves a number of other ritual acts that give official sanction to various relationships: “Through baptism, we formally and publicly agree that we accept Christ’s invitation to be our spiritual Father. We thus signal our desire to be adopted into His family. Through further covenantal gestures, we affirm our commitment to bind ourselves more closely to Him and concretely establish a relationship of reciprocity, through progressively greater demonstrations of our love and fidelity. And in Mormon temple marriage, individuals enact their willingness to expand the intimate association with the Divine, both laterally through marriage and vertically through posterity” (53). But salvation doesn’t follow simply from entering into these relationships any more than a happy marriage follows simply from the ritual taking of marriage vows. Salvation in the Latter-day Saint view, as Givens so eloquently explains, requires us to learn to be completely at home in the Christian form of life. Given that all the various practices of the Church (and not merely the “salvific” rituals) mutually define and sustain each other in helping us to achieve this form of life, on what basis can we draw a sharp distinction between salvific and nonsalvific practices? It’s true that one might not count as a Christian without baptism. But nor does one attain

salvation (where that means something like coming to be completely committed to, dispositionally at home in, and successful at living a Christian life) without throwing oneself passionately into all the “non-salvific” practices that make up the Christian way of life—the everyday, simple practices of ministering to others in compassion and love, blessing children and attending the sick and dying, communing with others in worship and social activities, praying, and repenting. Because the rituals and saving ordinances of baptism, bestowal of the Holy Ghost, confirmation, endowment, and marriage sealing can be performed retroactively by proxy in the temple, the Latter-day Saint form of life arguably places even greater emphasis on the everyday, mundane activities that “constitute the human family into a durable, eternal, heavenly association” (28).⁵

The Latter-day Saint conception of salvation, in other words, is not achieved by checking off a list of necessary ordinances or assenting to a list of essential beliefs or doctrines. Salvation is the transformation of existence that is effected by our coming to be at home in the world disclosed by our religious practices. Givens notes insightfully: “Salvation is not just *achieved* in community; eternal community is the form salvation takes” (181, italics in original). But if eternal community is the *form* of salvation, then the whole rich texture of our shared way of life is its *substance* and, as such, is equally essential to the achievement of salvation.

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5. There’s much more to be said about the special status of certain sacraments or rituals. Givens discusses the importance of the “salvific” ordinances in providing moral reinforcement (49–50), exercising metaphysical power to sustain our relationships (50), and shaping our character and dispositions through the very act of explicitly performing them (51–52). But even if those ordinances are unique in these respects, they are still not sufficient to provide salvation without being interanimated by the other elements of the Latter-day Saint form of life.

Educated: A Memoir

By Tara Westover

New York: Random House, 2018

Reviewed by Angela Hallstrom

Tara Westover grew up at the base of Buck's Peak, raised by Latter-day Saint parents in rural southern Idaho. Her father operated a junkyard, and her mother was a self-taught herbalist and midwife. Fueled by fears that powerful, secret forces had infiltrated the federal government and other institutions, Westover's parents distrusted public education and the medical establishment. Her father in particular subscribed to a number of radical beliefs that became more entrenched over time, and he dreamed of a day when his family could live completely "off the grid." As the youngest of the family's seven children, Westover's upbringing was the most isolated of all her siblings. She never attended school or saw a doctor throughout her childhood. She was nine years old when her mother finally agreed to apply for her birth certificate, but even then, none of Westover's family members could recall the exact day in September that she was born.

Westover's memoir, *Educated*, details her life on Buck's Peak, as well as her decision to leave that life behind. Desiring an education beyond the haphazard homeschooling she received as a child and eager to escape the increasingly abusive behavior of her older brother "Shawn" (a pseudonym), Westover decides to apply to Brigham Young University. Encouraged by another brother, Tyler, who had attended BYU himself, Westover purchases an ACT study guide, and in order to pass the test, she resolves to teach herself algebra. On her second attempt at the ACT, Westover earns a score high enough to be admitted to BYU. She enters the university as a seventeen-year-old freshman in 2004, and the trajectory of her life is completely changed.

Educated hit the shelves in February 2018 and quickly became a runaway success, enjoying both popular and critical acclaim. Mentioned on numerous "Best of 2018" lists, from *Publishers Weekly* to *Time* magazine, the memoir has maintained a presence on the *New York Times* Best

Seller list for nine months and counting. The book's enthusiastic reception is well deserved: it is both a compelling page-turner and an insightful meditation on family, memory, and the construction of the self.

What the book is not, however, is a meditation on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints specifically or, even more broadly, on religious faith. Westover no longer considers herself a practicing Latter-day Saint, and though she was raised in a Latter-day Saint family, she takes pains to ensure that readers do not conflate her experience with that of an average member of the Church. An author's note at the beginning of the book reads, "This story is not about Mormonism. Neither is it about any other form of religious belief. In it there are many types of people, some believers, some not; some kind, some not. The author disputes any correlation, positive or negative, between the two" (xi).

While Westover spends some time in the book grappling with spiritual questions, the themes that truly animate the narrative are centered on family. "What does it mean to belong to a family?" Westover asked during a television interview with *CBS This Morning* earlier this year. "What obligations do we have to our family, and are there limits to those obligations?"¹ *Educated* does not provide easy answers to these questions.

Westover deftly characterizes the family members that populate her story. Her father is a larger-than-life figure, confident but paranoid, certain that he is doing right by his family when he forces them to do dangerous work in his junkyard or refuses to take them to the doctor when they are injured or sick. His certainty carries a conviction that his actions are God's will—a conviction that, at times, places his family members' lives at risk. Westover's mother is introduced as a timid woman, so anxious to please that she apologizes for appearing without makeup in her own home. Her confidence increases as her essential oils business takes off, but even though she is treated with deference by her employees, she reverts to subservience when challenged by her domineering husband.

And then there is Shawn, Westover's troubled older brother. During Westover's childhood, Shawn can be kind, even generous at times, but his mean streak is evident as well. As Tara grows into young womanhood, she becomes the target of Shawn's explosive anger, suffering

1. "Tara Westover's Journey from Off-the-Grid Childhood to Cambridge," *CBS This Morning*, aired February 21, 2018, on CBS, 5:25, <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/tara-westovers-journey-from-off-the-grid-childhood-to-cambridge/>.

increasingly horrific incidents of emotional and physical abuse. In the hands of a less skillful writer, it would be easy to turn Shawn into a one-dimensional villain, but Westover allows the reader glimpses into the siblings' deep bond. She also describes Shawn's own pain and trauma, particularly a series of head injuries that may or may not have been a factor in his propensity for violence.

Although her brother's abuse is deeply painful, Westover appears just as scarred by her parents' refusal to do anything about Shawn's violent behavior. Some family members—Westover's father in particular—even doubt that she is telling the truth about him. During the second half of the book, as Westover graduates from BYU, earns a prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholarship, and embarks on earning a PhD in history, her formal education moves in lockstep with a more personal search for understanding. Interestingly, both undertakings seem to be asking the same question: how does a person make sense of the past?

At Cambridge, Westover decides to focus on historiography, which is the study of how history is written. She writes, "I needed to understand how the great gatekeepers of history had come to terms with their own ignorance and partiality. I thought if I could accept that what they had written was not absolute but was the result of a biased process of conversion and revision, maybe I could reconcile myself with the fact that the history most people agreed upon was not the history I had been taught" (238).

While studying historians' "biased process of conversion and revision," Westover considers her past. How can she trust her own memories when her loved ones insist they aren't valid? Even her own journal has shifted in meaning over time. As an adult, she rereads an entry from her adolescence, describing an incident when Shawn violently dragged her from a car. Then she finds another entry, written after Shawn had apologized a few days later, maintaining that the whole incident was a misunderstanding. Looking back, she can see why she felt compelled to revise her own story, even to herself. She is more surprised that, as a teenager, she had the courage to write the initial entry in the first place.

As her education progresses, Westover finally concludes it is time to claim her own history. "Not knowing for certain, but refusing to give way to those who claim certainty, was a privilege," Westover writes. "My life was narrated for me by others. Their voices were forceful, emphatic, absolute. It had never occurred to me that my voice might be as strong as theirs" (197).

At the conclusion of the book, Westover decides to speak her truth, and as a result finds herself estranged from half of her family. While

some family members support her, others, including her parents, deny her version of events. Some even claim she has been influenced by the devil. Now that the memoir has been published, her parents have gone on record disputing their daughter's narrative. Recently, attorney Blake Atkin, speaking on Val and LaRee Westover's behalf, said, "Tara's parents are disappointed Tara would write a book that maligns them, their religion, their country, and homeschooling."² Westover does not agree that her book maligns the Church. "I have a lot of respect for Mormonism," Westover told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "In particular for . . . the people at BYU, all of them Mormon, who helped and befriended me for no reason other than because they were kind, good people."³

Memoir is a slippery art, and memoirists are often dogged by questions about how reliably they can claim their own story as "true." If given a chance to publish their own stories, other members of the Westover family would certainly have different tales to tell. Latter-day Saint readers, as well, might disagree over how much Westover's experience as a member of the Church reflects their own.

But as for Tara Westover, she has ably answered the question once posed by her BYU history professor, Dr. Paul Kerry. "Who writes history?" Kerry wrote on the blackboard many years ago. With the confidence born of an arduous education, Westover is finally able to answer the question for herself. "I do," she says (318). It is a history worth reading.

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2. Necia P. Seamons, "'Educated' Should Be Read with Grain of Salt, Says Family's Attorney," February 23, 2018, *Herald Journal* (Logan, Utah), https://www.hjnews.com/allaccess/educated-should-be-read-with-grain-of-salt-says-family/article_0583f217-6fd2-51de-a891-9ca32adb589c.html.

3. Bob Mims, "Idaho Woman's Best Seller Tells How She Fled Mormon Survivalist Upbringing, Alleged Abuse to Earn Degrees at BYU and Cambridge," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 19, 2018, updated March 21, 2018, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2018/03/19/idaho-womans-best-seller-tells-how-she-rose-above-spotty-home-schooling-and-a-mormon-survivalist-upbringing-to-earn-degrees-at-byu-and-cambridge/>.

*Textual Studies of the Doctrine and Covenants:
The Plural Marriage Revelation*

By William Victor Smith

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018

Reviewed by Brian C. Hales

With the 2013 publication of the Gospel Topics essay addressing the introduction of polygamy in Nauvoo, Illinois, it was only a matter of time before commentaries would be written for mainstream Church members explicating the Joseph Smith revelation on celestial and plural marriage.¹ William Victor Smith is the first to make the attempt in *Textual Studies of the Doctrine and Covenants: The Plural Marriage Revelation* (hereafter *TPMR*). The book is the latest addition to Greg Kofford Books' series Textual Studies of the Doctrine and Covenants and is a scholarly examination of Doctrine and Covenants 132, which contains the most controversial of all Joseph Smith's revelations.

TPMR begins by scrutinizing the provenance of the revelation, including its publication history (6–20). A second, shorter chapter outlines the different introductory headings applied to the revelation in each published version (23–26). This comparison shows that though Orson Pratt (who wrote the headings) equated the “Patriarchal order of matrimony” with a “plurality of wives” in 1853, by 1876 he considered section 132 to be a “Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, Including Plurality of Wives,” apparently indicating the revelation's content was not limited strictly to plural marriage (24). Remaining chapters explore the text of section 132, usually by quoting a few verses at the beginning and then using excerpts from verses as subheadings throughout the remainder of the chapter.

Coming in at 273 pages, *TPMR* is a relatively long commentary, considering that the revelation contains 66 verses and 3,271 words. Readers

1. See “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” Gospel Topics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2016, accessed 14 November 2018, <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng>.

might therefore expect an in-depth examination of nearly every nook and cranny of the revelation and its history. Such an examination is indeed applied to some of section 132's background issues and topics, which the author follows chronologically, exploring the history of each topic at the time the revelation was recorded and then tracing its interpretation over time, into the twentieth century (see 47, 53, 67, 75, and 79, for examples).

One such topic that the author addresses is priesthood keys. At several points, section 132 discusses the importance of priesthood power in relation to the "new and everlasting covenant" of marriage (D&C 132: 6–7, 18–19). And among the book's strengths is its discussion of Brigham Young's challenges to establish himself as the "one" man holding the priesthood keys after Joseph Smith's death (43–45). This discussion is helpful given that even today, rival fundamentalist factions dismiss the mainstream Church's line of authority, making claims and counter-claims concerning the identity of Smith's successor and inheritor of the highest priesthood keys.

Another relative strength of the book is its discussion of an "offer," mentioned in verse 51, that had been extended to Emma Smith and that was later rescinded. What this offer refers to is not clear, but theories have included polyandry, a husband "swap," and a divorce with property settlement.² In relation to the last theory, *TPMR* helps its readers understand the problems Joseph Smith would have confronted in deeding building lots to Emma on the day after the revelation was written down (148).

Although the research and analysis within *TPMR* shines at times, the book fails to cover some essential—and difficult—issues present in the text. Indeed, among the book's chief limitations is its tendency to ignore or diminish important or alternative interpretations of topics that are mentioned in section 132. A few of the book's most obvious oversights relate to the topics of polyandry, the sealing authority, and damnation for not obeying "the law."

Polyandry (Verse 41)

Perhaps the most controversial accusation leveled at Joseph Smith during his lifetime and after was that he practiced polyandry—that is, that he married several women who were already legally married to other men, thereby making him a second husband. Verse 41 could allude to such a

2. See Brian C. Hales, "‘He Had No Other Wife but Me’: Emma Hale Smith and Mormon Polygamy," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 37 (Spring/Summer 2017): 19–23.

practice: “And as ye have asked concerning adultery, verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed.” Concerning this verse, *TPMR* explains: “Although a husband and wife might be sealed, the revelation leaves open the possibility of the wife being ‘appointed’ to someone else. Thus, sexual relations with another man would only be adultery if she were not appointed to him. Though the language here is somewhat confusing, it may be interpreted (together with verses 42 and 61) in terms of polyandry or ‘dual wives’” (117–18).

After its brief introduction of the topic of polyandry, *TPMR* dismisses further discussion by referring readers in a footnote to Samuel Morris Brown’s book *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*,³ volume 2 of the Journals series of the Joseph Smith Papers Project;⁴ and to the book’s own chapter 6. None of these references discuss polyandry in any detail. Understandably, *TPMR* may not have wanted to dive into the polyandry controversy, but there are several other sources that the book could have engaged.⁵ Though

3. *TPMR* refers specifically to pages 241–47 of Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

4. *TPMR* cites specifically *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), xxiv–xxx.

5. Prior to the 2013 printing of my three-volume *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, other authors addressed Joseph Smith’s plural marriages to legally married women, largely assuming that these relationships functioned like traditional marriage relationships. See Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 308; George D. Smith, “Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841–46: A Preliminary Demographic Report,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Spring 1994): 10; Todd Compton, “Fawn Brodie on Joseph Smith’s Plural Wives and Polygamy: A Critical View,” in *Reconsidering No Man Knows My History: Fawn M. Brodie and Joseph Smith in Retrospect*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst (Logan: University of Utah Press, 1996), 165; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 184–85; and Martha Sonntag Bradley and Mary Brown Firmage Woodward, *4 Zinas: A Story of Mothers and Daughters on the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 132–33; see also Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 105–6.

Since my 2013 work, which casts doubt on Smith’s practice of polyandry (Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013], 1:303–74), Church historians have written, “Polyandry, the marriage

wading through these sometimes sensational sources and determining their accuracy can be complicated, it seems that verse 41 makes such a discussion about polyandry unavoidable for any detailed commentary of section 132.

Key to any discussion of this verse is the possible meaning of “holy anointing.” Though the author is somewhat tentative in proposing polyandry as an interpretation to verse 41, the book limits its discussion of this topic by assuming that the holy anointing creates a second husband-wife relationship. No other interpretations are discussed, including the possibility that the anointing would simply supersede the previous sealing (leaving the woman still with only one husband).⁶ *TPMR* does not ask what the “holy anointing” might be. The answer is not obvious, which may have contributed to the author’s decision to essentially avoid the topic.⁷ Hopefully a more definitive study of this verse will be published in the future.

of one woman to more than one man, typically involves shared financial, residential, and sexual resources, and children are often raised communally. There is no evidence that Joseph Smith’s sealings functioned in this way, and much evidence works against that view.” “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” n. 30.

6. In regard to the “holy anointing,” dubious interpretations have already been published. For example, antagonistic writer Wilhelm Wyl declared in 1886: “You remember that passage in the Revelations about celestial marriage, where ‘the Lord’ says to Joseph: ‘and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her *by the holy anointing*, she has committed adultery;’ Well, an old Mormon, who had been very intimate with Joseph in Nauvoo, assured me that the prophet always carried a small bottle with holy oil about his person, so that he might ‘anoint’ at a moment’s notice any woman to be a queen in Heaven.” William Wyl, *Joseph Smith, the Prophet, His Family and His Friends: A Study Based on Facts and Documents, with Fourteen Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: Tribune, 1886), 55, italics in original. It is certainly reasonable to ignore Wyl’s propaganda, but William Smith does not venture to explore what “holy anointing” might refer to.

7. The word “holy” can refer to a temple activity or rite. “Anointing” too is an ordinance that commonly occurs in a temple setting. One explanation posits that “holy anointing” refers to the ordinance that, according to the Joseph Smith Papers, Wilford Woodruff “often referred to as a ‘second anointing’ in his journal.” The ordinance was administered to Joseph and Emma Smith and other couples and was described in Joseph Smith’s journal as being “anointed & ord^d [ordained] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood.” “Nauvoo Journals, May 1843–June 1844,” introduction to *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers, *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2015), xxi.

The Importance of Sealing Authority (Verses 7–20)

TPMR analyzes the text as if the entire revelation is about plural marriage, which is not wholly unreasonable (40). It is true that the first verse of section 132 mentions a plurality of wives and early Latter-day Saint pluralists generally accepted this interpretation between the 1840s and 1890. However, a strict reading of the text reveals that polygamy is not specifically mentioned again until verse 34. The intervening verses introduce the new and everlasting covenant of marriage using monogamous language: “if a man marry a wife” (verses 15, 18, 19, and 26).

TPMR fails to consider the possibility that Joseph’s question that precipitated this revelation elicited a broader response from God—an answer that far surpassed the original question. This situation occurred in 1833 when Joseph Smith prayed about the use of tobacco.⁸ The Lord responded by giving him a general dietary code we now call the “Word of Wisdom” (D&C 89). God’s answer to Joseph’s question included a single verse discussing tobacco tucked within a much broader instruction on dietary issues.

Several observations support that Joseph’s question about *plural* marriage brought forth a discussion about *eternal* marriage, which incorporated the principle of polygamy but also introduced a much grander doctrine of *sealing authority*—the doctrine that through proper priesthood authority individuals can be sealed together in eternal familial relationships. It might be argued that the greatest significance of Joseph Smith’s plurality was not in multiple wives, but in the authority that sealed those wives.⁹ In Joseph Smith’s cosmological calculus, sealing ordinances reach much further than polygamy alone ever could.

Instead, *TPMR* treats sealing as a subtext to polygamy, stating there is “seeming inseparability of polygamy and eternal sealing” (2; see also 4, 132). This creates a sort of polygamy tunnel vision throughout the remaining text, which contrasts with how current Church members usually refer to section 132. Twenty-first-century Latter-day Saints usually refer to the revelation to discuss the importance of the sealing ordinance and its use in creating eternal marriages and families, not to

8. See Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 12:157–58 (February 8, 1868).

9. See Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 331; John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:222–23 (April 7, 1866).

study plural marriage. Although one could argue that this is because the Church itself has downplayed the doctrine of plural marriage, the fact that Church members commonly see this revelation as relating to sealing and eternal marriage may be justification enough to consider that interpretation of the text. *TPMR*, however, does not address the topic of sealing authority on its own terms.

“Damnation” for Not Obeying the “Law” (Verse 6)

TPMR’s scope is significantly narrow in its interpretation of the “law” in verse 6: “And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.” *TPMR* tells its audience: “The revelation [makes] clear that after receiving knowledge of the law of plural marriage, a failure to participate resulted in damnation (verse 4 [*sic* verse 6])” (86). This view is consistently put forth within the pages of *TPMR* (35, 37, 76–77, 82–83).

TPMR’s interpretation is certainly not foreign. Plural marriage was taught as a commandment to Latter-day Saints living between the 1840s and 1890, similar to other customized commandments, like animal sacrifice and circumcision, which had been divinely issued at specific times and places in the past. Today, some Latter-day Saints, particularly women, have expressed their concerns that *TPMR*’s interpretation is indeed correct and that plural marriage will be required in heaven.¹⁰ Mormon fundamentalists, who continue to marry polygamously, would happily agree,¹¹ while critics likely enjoy an interpretation that alleges that all Church members today are going to be damned because they are monogamists.¹²

10. See Carol Lynn Pearson, *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Mormon Women and Men* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Pivot Point Books, 2016). See also my response: Brian C. Hales, “Opportunity Lost,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 91–109. The Church’s Gospel Topics essay “Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo,” published in 2016, states that “Latter-day Saints believe that monogamy—the marriage of one man and one woman—is the Lord’s standing law of marriage” and that “the precise nature of these relationships [marriages to more than one person] in the next life is not known, and many family relationships will be sorted out in the life to come.”

11. Anne Wilde, “Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Fundamental Mormon Perspective,” in *The Persistence of Polygamy: Fundamental Mormon Polygamy from 1890 to the Present*, ed. Newell G. Bringham and Craig L. Foster (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2015), 502–37.

12. See discussion under the subheading “They Receive Me Not” (82–84).

An alternate explanation observes that sealing authority is introduced in the very next verse (verse 7), suggesting that the “law” refers not to plural marriage but to being sealed according to that “law.” Further, *damnation* does not necessarily refer to a lack of salvation. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “to damn” as “to condemn to a particular penalty or fate.”¹³ Verses 16–17 describe the eternal destiny of those who have not been sealed by this newly revealed authority to a spouse (in life or by proxy) at the final judgment. They are saved but not exalted and live singly, not with a family, for all eternity. This fate is a form of damnation. Thus, one can read this text as meaning that not receiving the sealing ordinance (introduced in verse 7) brings about this form of condemnation. *TPMR* does not mention this possibility but instead asserts polygamy is the “law” referred to.

Summary

TPMR contains numerous useful discussions of topics that are connected to section 132. Though the history and theological underpinnings of the revelation are presented somewhat unevenly, readers will undoubtedly come away with a greater understanding of the revelation’s provenance and its importance to early Church members and ecclesiastical leaders. Though space in any book project is necessarily limited, the analyses in this book would have benefited from discussions of alternate interpretations regarding pertinent historical and doctrinal subjects currently overlooked. Such discussions would have given readers a more complete contextual understanding of section 132.

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13. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1:642.

Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843

Edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith,
and Richard Lloyd Anderson

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011

Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844

Edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith,
and Brent M. Rogers

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2015

Reviewed by James B. Allen

These two volumes complete the important Journals series of the Joseph Smith Papers¹ and once again demonstrate the determination of the Church, through its Church History Department, to make available the full body of the papers of the founding prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each volume includes a fine historical introduction to the period covered along with an essay on the editorial method that the editors followed when transcribing the original documents. Each volume also reflects a remarkable job of editing, including the voluminous footnotes that add valuable clarifications and supplementary information. The original journals are in the handwriting of various assistants Joseph Smith used to record his daily activities, and in their transcription the editors have identified whose handwriting appears in the journal and each place where the handwriting changes. Their meticulous attention to detail is illustrated by the fact that they even indicate what color ink was used in the various entries and where the color changes.

Volume 2 begins on December 13, 1841, twenty-six months after the completion of Smith's previous journal, found in *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*. During that journal-keeping hiatus, many important things happened. Among them were the Prophet's trip to the nation's capital to seek redress for Latter-day Saint losses in Missouri—an effort that was ultimately unsuccessful. This period also saw the rapid growth of Commerce, Illinois, and its renaming to Nauvoo; the Illinois legislature's

1. For a brief explanation of the whole series see James B. Allen, "Review of *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*," *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 152–61.

granting of a very liberal city charter that gave the Latter-day Saints unusual autonomy; the Quorum of the Twelve's all-important mission to Great Britain that laid the foundation for a massive immigration program; the expanding of the authority and responsibility of the Twelve; the revealing of the doctrine of baptism for the dead and Church members performing such baptisms, first in the Mississippi River, and then in the baptismal font in the basement of the unfinished Nauvoo temple; Joseph's introduction of the doctrine of plural marriage to members of the Twelve and other trusted associates; and the ever-increasing persecution of Joseph Smith and other Church members. All these events and more created quite a different community than what the Saints had lived in before, and established the background for the developments and challenges of the next two and a half years of Joseph Smith's life.

Volume 2 includes two journals: The first, covering December 13, 1841, through December 20, 1842, is mostly in the handwriting of Willard Richards, though for a short period the journal was recorded by William Clayton, and a few entries were written by Eliza R. Snow and Erastus Derby. The next journal, covering December 21, 1841, through April 30, 1843, was entirely recorded by Richards. Entries and notes related to the attempt to extradite Joseph Smith to Missouri, Smith's attempts to evade authorities, and his ultimate arrest and hearing before a federal judge in Illinois take up more pages than any other topic. The editors therefore included an interesting and valuable twenty-six-page appendix that summarizes the case and provides the full text of the documents most relevant to the extradition attempt (2:377–402). A second appendix features the April 1–4, 1843, entries from William Clayton's personal journal (2:403–6). The Prophet was in Ramus, Illinois, during those days, but Richards, who was keeping Joseph Smith's journal, was not with him. However, William Clayton accompanied Smith, and when Richards made his entries into Smith's journal for those days, he drew on what Clayton wrote in his personal journal. Most of the instructions recorded in section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants are based on the Clayton journal (see 2:403–5). The curious reader will find it interesting to compare what Clayton wrote in his journal to what Richards thought important and recorded in the Prophet's journal—Richards ignored a few things and added others.

In the years covered by volume 2, Joseph Smith received increasing criticism and persecution, much of it related to the still-secret practice of plural marriage. Any specific reference to that practice in the journals is, at best, oblique, but in their introduction the editors take several

pages to responsibly address the topic and some of the problems related to it. For example, a January 25, 1842, entry records a revelation dated December 2, 1841, for Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, wife of Apostle Orson Hyde, who was on a mission at the time. The revelation ends by admonishing her to “hearken to the counsel of my servant Joseph in all things whatsoever he shall teach unto her, and it shall be a blessing upon her and upon her children after her” (2:37). The editors explain in their volume introduction that this curious wording may well have been connected to Joseph’s having taught Marinda the “doctrine of celestial marriage,” which included plural marriage, and to the fact that eventually she was married, or at least “sealed,” to the Prophet, as were many other women (2:xxvi). This particularly significant explanation illustrates the importance and breadth of the Joseph Smith Papers Project, for only in recent years have official Church publications been able to discuss such complexities so frankly and openly.

In historical and Church materials, we sometimes see references to the “Book of the Law of the Lord,” but many are unaware of what that book was. Annotation in volume 2 clears up any confusion by explaining that an early revelation indicated that a history and “general church record” must be kept that would include a record of people who made consecrations and donations to the Church and also their “manner of life and the[ir] faith and works.” It was to be called “the book of the Law of God,” though when Willard Richards inscribed the title page, he called it “The Book of the Law of the Lord” (2:6–7). It contained not only Joseph Smith’s journal entries but also records of donations as well as names of people who helped the Prophet in other ways. Smith’s first Nauvoo journal was recorded in *The Book of the Law of the Lord* and is the first journal transcribed in *Journals, Volume 2*. The donation records—which are not considered part of the Prophet’s journal—are not included in the publication, though the editors have indicated the spots at which such entries occurred.

Volume 3 covers the last fourteen months of Joseph Smith’s life, from May 1, 1843, until his death on June 27, 1844. All but the last five days were recorded in three books, each in the handwriting of Willard Richards. The first of three significant appendices in volume 3 is an excerpt from Willard Richards’s journal that covers those final days (3:303–30). Smith’s journal ended just before he left Nauvoo for Carthage, Illinois, but Richards accompanied him and remained with him until his death. This journal excerpt provides a valuable firsthand account of the last five days of Joseph Smith’s life. The second appendix is William Clayton’s daily account for June 14–22, 1844, of Joseph Smith’s activities (3:331–33).

Clayton kept a record of his own activities for those days in his personal journal, which also includes references to Joseph Smith's activities, but for some unknown reason he also inserted a longer and more detailed account of the Prophet's activities during those nine days. While much of this account includes the same incidents recorded in Joseph's journal kept by Richards, Clayton's account is, in fact, more comprehensive and includes some events not noted in the journal kept by Richards. The third appendix consists of three "draft notes" made by Willard Richards of some of Joseph Smith's activities that were the basis for what he eventually wrote in the journal (3:341–51). These notes provide the curious reader with a bit of insight into the process of creating at least some of the journal.

Again, the editors present a fine overview of the period in their introduction (3:xiii–xxvii). As they point out, in Joseph Smith's position as President of the Church, trustee-in-trust, mayor of Nauvoo, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, and a candidate for the presidency of the United States, his last months were some of the busiest and most complex of his lifetime. He was also involved in building the Nauvoo temple and was drawn into various legal disputes and other activities, all well summarized in the editors' introduction, even though some of these events are less prominent in the actual journal than more mundane activities.

The authors also present a brief discussion of the continuing practice of plural marriage. As in volume 2, references to the practice in the journal are oblique, with the one exception being the indication in the entry for June 12, 1843, that Joseph was married to Willard Richards's sister Rhoda that day and that Richards was married to a second wife, Susan Liptrot (3:35–36). Richards made this entry in shorthand, but the editors transliterated it and placed the transliteration in brackets in the journal. A more oblique reference appears in the entry for July 12, 1843, which says that Joseph received a revelation in his office in the presence of Hyrum Smith and William Clayton (3:57). Though the entry does not say so explicitly, this revelation was on celestial and plural marriage, recorded at the time by Clayton and now known as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

No doubt scholars will be interested in making comparisons between the text reproduced in these volumes and that in Joseph Smith's six-volume Manuscript History of the Church (later edited and published as the popular *History of the Church*).² The entries in Joseph Smith's

2. For decades, *History of the Church*, edited and published by B. H. Roberts beginning in 1902, has been a standard source for references to Joseph Smith. In recent years, the Joseph Smith Papers has published the original source

journals are often short and terse, sometimes leaving the reader with questions about what was happening. In most cases the manuscript history helps round out these journal entries with considerable additional information based on other sources. In a few instances, dates are skipped in Smith's journals. However, the great value of the Journals series is not always in the daily entries themselves but in the outstanding work of the editors, who provide extensive additional information about what was going on. Frequently, at least half of any given page is filled with footnotes, in small type, expanding on what is said in the journal entry. The entry for May 10 (see 3:247) illustrates the point:

Friday May 10 1844 At hom[e]
 rode out after Breakfast
 in the course of th[e] day went on the prairie with some breth[r]en to
 sell them some Land
 9. A M a cou[r]t ma[r]tial was held at the Mayor offic[e] on R[obert] D.
 Foster.— For ungentlema[n]ly conduct &c [7 lines blank]

In the manuscript history, this entry was edited and expanded, as follows:

Friday, 10 — Rode out after breakfast to the pra[i]rie to sell some land to some brethren.

The Court Martial was held in the Mayor's Office on the charge against Robert D. Foster, Surgeon General, for unbecoming and unficer like conduct &c. Brigadier General George Miller, presiding. The charges were sustained.

A Prospectus of the Nauvoo Expositor was distributed among the people by the apostates.

The Jury of Lee County, Illinois, awarded \$40 damages and the costs against Joseph H. Reynolds and Harmon T. Wilson for illegal imprisonment and abuse which I suffered from them last June in that county.³

for that publication, the Manuscript History of the Church, which is readily available online at <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers/histories/jspph3>. The references that follow are to the manuscript history as opposed to the later published version. See "Introduction to History, 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church)," The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/introduction-to-history-1838-1856-manuscript-history-of-the-church>.

3. "History, 1838–1856, Volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844]," 16 (May 10, 1844), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/22>.

The last two paragraphs of the manuscript history entry clearly came from sources other than Smith's original journal and are therefore not included in the journal entry, but in both instances the reader is left wondering what Robert D. Foster's court-martial was all about. In footnote 118 on page 247 of volume 3, the editors clarify the matter and identify the sources for their information:

Foster was accused of publicly making "ungentlemanly and unofficer like observations" about JS and others, including allegations that JS "kept a gang of Robbers and plunderers about his house," received "half the spoils" of their activities, and has asked him, Foster, to kill former Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs. After hearing the evidence, the court voted unanimously that Foster "be cashiered & disqualified to hold any office in the Nauvoo Legion." (Aaron Johnson, Statement, 2 May 1844; Court-Martial Proceedings, Nauvoo, IL, 10 May 1844, Nauvoo Legion Records, CHL [Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City].)

The entries for May 11 in the manuscript history and Smith's journal are similar, but in volume 3's transcription of the journal entry, the editors have provided some historically valuable information. Both sources say that Joseph talked with Thomas Lyne that day about the theater, but the average reader would have no idea who Lyne was. The editors explain that he was a well-known tragedian who had joined the Church in April 1844 and helped produce at least one play in Nauvoo to help Joseph Smith pay off a debt. Joseph attended that play on April 26, something not even alluded to in the entries in either the manuscript history or the journals, and he also attended several other plays produced by Lyne (3:248 n. 1121). Both sources also indicate that Joseph Smith attended a prayer meeting on May 11 and that Sidney Rigdon and John P. Greene were there. The history says that the two men were "present," while the journal says "were admitted," which has a different implication and illustrates the value of original sources as opposed to edited sources such as the manuscript history.⁴

This and other prayer meetings were special meetings in which the temple ordinances were being introduced and only specially selected individuals were allowed to attend. As the editors explain in footnote 1122 on page 3:248:

Five months later, in October 1844, Wilford Woodruff reported hearing JS say before his death that Rigdon had been admitted to these prayer meetings "without his [JS's] wish or invitation, as he had no confidence

4. See "History, 1838–1856, Volume F-1," 16 (May 11, 1844).

in him.” In addition, William W. Phelps reported that Rigdon received “only a small part” of the temple ordinances in the meetings he attended. At the time Woodruff and Phelps made their reports, however, Rigdon was claiming to be JS’s proper successor—a claim they disputed and that may have influenced their accounts.

Finally, the journal entry for May 11 notes an event not even alluded to in the manuscript history. It indicates that John P. Greene complained about James Blakeslee and Francis M. Higbee “abusing” Joseph and the Twelve in the Quincy, Illinois, courthouse. Footnote 1123 on page 3:248 explains:

This passage probably refers to the meeting reported eleven days later in the *Quincy Whig*, in which Blakeslee and either Chauncy or Francis M. Higbee, “representing the dissenters” in Nauvoo, addressed a “large number” of citizens in Quincy. Higbee and Blakeslee “made out that Joe Smith was pretty much of a rough customer” and “painted Smith, as any thing but the Saint he claims to be.” Greene defended JS two days later when he told “a crowded house” that “such doctrines as were ascribed to Smith by his enemies, had never been taught to him” and “strongly insinuated, that the characters of the individuals, who had assailed Smith on the second evening previous, were none of the best.”

Such editorial comments comprise the bulk of both volumes and, together with the ability to see exact transcriptions of the original journals, make these volumes of exceptional value to students of history, whether professional or otherwise.

Though most daily entries in Joseph Smith’s journals do not provide all the information found in Joseph Smith’s manuscript history, in some cases the journal entries provide interesting additional information that, for some reason, the compilers of the history chose not to include. On January 4, 1842, for example, Joseph Smith made a harsh “prophecy” concerning Warsaw, Illinois, and Thomas Sharp, editor of the bitterly anti-Mormon *Warsaw Signal*, in which he threatened to bring in “capitalists” from the eastern states who would do what he said and drive his enemies out of business (2:23–24). On January 1, 1843, Joseph and other Church leaders were in Springfield, Illinois, and were allowed to use the hall of the Illinois House of Representatives for a Sunday meeting. This is noted in both the journal and the history, but the journal entry includes an interesting summary of a long address by Orson Hyde that was not recorded in the manuscript history (2:206–9).⁵

5. See “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” 1433 (January 1, 1843), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www>

As another example, in the entries for March 2 and 3, 1843, the manuscript history makes only brief reference to a court trial, *Dana v. Brink*, over which Joseph Smith presided. The compilers of that history chose not to include the full journal entries for that day and thus provided no indication of what the trial was about. It was summarized only by a March 3 statement that it “was a very tedious suit.”⁶ The journal entries, however, are full and extensive, covering forty pages in the original manuscript. Only here do we discover that the trial concerned a medical malpractice suit. The details have little to do with Church history, which is probably why they were eliminated from the manuscript history, but at least they help us understand why the history says the trial was “very tedious.” Interestingly, the Journals series editors speculate that Willard Richards (who was writing Smith’s journal at the time) included all this information because, like the defendant William Brink, he was a Thomsonian physician and therefore had a professional interest in the medical details.

The Journals series often includes the original transcriptions of various Joseph Smith sermons. Perhaps the most important was the famous King Follett sermon, given on April 7, 1844, part of which suggested that God was once a man and that man could become like God (3:216–22). Willard Richards’s transcription of the sermon in the journal is very rough and sometimes not entirely clear. However, Wilford Woodruff, Thomas Bullock, and William Clayton also recorded the sermon, and the slightly differing accounts were later amalgamated for inclusion in the manuscript history. In several footnotes the editors have clarified parts of the sermon by quoting from the other transcriptions (see, for example, 3:217 nn. 956–57; 218 nn. 964–66; 220 nn. 969–71; 221 nn. 974, 977–78; and 222 nn. 979, 984).

If the editors of these journals had gone no further than providing great transcriptions along with exceptional editorial work, these would be valuable and worthwhile publications. But they have gone further by adding important reference material that is of inestimable value to scholars and others seeking to know more about the Prophet and his experiences. Each volume includes a chronology for the period covered, a geographical directory describing most of the places that were mentioned in Smith’s journals, a series of maps showing the location of nearly every town mentioned along with other information about

josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/76.

6. “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1,” 1487 (March 2–3, 1843).

geographic features of the time, a Joseph Smith pedigree chart, and an extensive biographical directory containing biographical sketches of nearly everyone mentioned in the journal entries found in the volume. The volumes also feature organizational charts showing the ecclesiastical officers, Church appointees, Nauvoo city officers, and the officers of the Nauvoo Legion during the period covered. The volumes also contain a glossary of terms appearing in the volume.

Scholars will also be grateful for the essay on sources and the list of works cited that appear in each volume, as well as a valuable section identifying corresponding section numbers in the Book of Commandments and various editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. Finally, volume 3 concludes with a 118-page index covering all three volumes. A minor problem with this index, and perhaps most indexes, is that the indexer might not always have the same idea as the reader on how to refer to a particular topic. Someone looking for something on the infamous Kinderhook plates, for example, would not find that term in the index. Instead, the location of that information is listed under “Brass plates dug out of mound near Quincy, Ill.” (3:532).

Only the highest commendation and sincerest thanks must be given to the editors and staff of the Joseph Smith Papers Project for these and all the other volumes issued from the Church Historian’s Press and to Church leaders for allowing it all to happen in this marvelous new era of historical transparency.

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The Power of Godliness: Mormon Liturgy and Cosmology

By Jonathan A. Stapley

New York: Oxford University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Dan Belnap

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the ritual behavior of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹ The latest volume to address that subject is Jonathan Stapley's *The Power of Godliness: Mormon Liturgy and Cosmology*, published by Oxford University Press. Grounded in his extensive studies concerning individual healing rites and Latter-day Saint sealings, Stapley explores the concept of priesthood and authority. He does so through five chapters, each one focusing on a specific practice: chapter 1 concerns priesthood ordination; chapter 2, sealing; chapter 3, infant blessings; chapter 4, a number of ritual behaviors outside of temple settings; and chapter 5, the presence of the "cunning-folk" tradition within nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint culture.

Though a relatively slim volume (the text is only 128 pages), Stapley does an excellent job of noting some of the theological and historical challenges that arise from Latter-day Saint ritual praxis, including the participation of women and blacks, a subject that remains a historical concern for many Church members. Moreover, Stapley adds to the ongoing dialogue on Latter-day Saint praxis by discussing ritual behavior that is often unaddressed, such as those rituals often considered to

1. Two recent examples would be Terryl L. Givens, *Feeding the Flock: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Church and Praxis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols: Finding Meaning in Rites, Rituals, and Ordinances* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Press, 2011). The latter is particularly addressed to the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One could also include Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), which also addresses Latter-day Saint ritual praxis, though that is not the overall purpose of the study.

be “nonsalvific” (that is, not necessary for salvation). Discussions on Church praxis usually focus on what may be termed “high ritual” or “high liturgy,” which refers to formal rituals engaged in during official, communal worship (for example, the sacrament, temple rites, baptism, and so forth). But with Stapley’s observations on healing ritual in particular, he places these “nonsalvific” rites within the continuum of the “salvific” rites, thus providing a more complete and comprehensive understanding of Latter-day Saint ritual praxis. Similarly, his chapter on “cunning folk” introduces the reader to ritual practices and authority of other nineteenth-century traditions in European and American communities and explains how those traditions intersect with Latter-day Saint history.² Yet perhaps the most significant contribution of Stapley’s study is his exploration of the nature and function of the priesthood.

Central to his volume is his separation of the priesthood into two conceptual categories: “cosmological priesthood” and “ecclesiastical priesthood.” Stapley defines cosmological priesthood as the “material network of heaven,” or the social network of both those on earth and those in heaven who are connected to one another through the rituals associated with the temple (he refers later to this network as “the organizational fabric of heaven” [22]). This priesthood is not an authorization of divine power but designates the relationship between the participants of the ritual themselves; thus, those who participated in the temple rituals inaugurated in Nauvoo, Illinois, could be designated as “the priesthood,” which included the female as well as the male participants. Ecclesiastical priesthood, on the other hand, is the power (the power of God) distinct from the individual that must therefore be received via those who have the authority to give the priesthood to another. This conception of priesthood includes “offices” and channels the “power of God” into the specific venue of the priesthood holder, or more importantly, the priesthood authority—that is, one who possesses priesthood “keys.” Those who have engaged with this priesthood have historically been white males. The tension between these two

2. And still do. A personal conversation with a Church friend notes the ongoing tension. While the concept of using a peep stone was difficult for this individual to accept, they readily noted the efficacy of “dowsing,” or looking for water using a Y-shaped rod that would “dip” in one’s hand when passing over an underground water source.

conceptions of priesthood, Stapley suggests, in his introduction and conclusion, may be at the root of Latter-day Saint questions regarding the role of priesthood in our ritual praxis, both historically and contemporarily:

More broadly, this book uses liturgy to elucidate the cosmologies and authorities that order and structure Mormon life and opens new possibilities for understanding the lived experiences of women and men in the Mormon past and Mormon present. . . . By tracing the development of the rituals and attempting to ascertain the work they have accomplished, the Mormon universe, with its complex priesthoods, authorities, and powers, becomes comprehensible. . . . The gender-exclusive priesthood language of the Nauvoo Temple contradicted the exclusively male ecclesiastical priesthood language that developed in the church; ultimately the latter held sway. After the decline of the cosmological priesthood as an active internal framework, Mormons spent the last one hundred years working to understand how women fit into an increasingly vast priesthood authority structure. . . . Any analysis of authority throughout Mormon history is consequently challenged by the changing lexical terrain. Over time, church leaders and members have used the term “priesthood” in reference to various aspects of liturgical, ecclesiastical, and priestly (temple) authorities. This framework is key to understanding how Mormons have tamed the chaotic heaven opened by an angel and a golden book. (2, 125–26)

While the two conceptual approaches may be a productive model to explore the nature of authority within the Latter-day Saint faith, suggesting that the “cosmological” priesthood has been overshadowed by an increasing emphasis on “ecclesiastical” interpretations of priesthood ignores the role that ecclesiastical priesthood played in the establishment of the Nauvoo temple rites, including sealing, or even the role of ecclesiastical priesthood within the rites themselves. This may be because the individuals involved in the introduction of these rites—namely, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other early Church leaders—do not appear to have conceived of the priesthood through these lenses of “cosmological” and “ecclesiastical” priesthood. Thus, even as Stapley notes that those who participated in the temple rites were “the priesthood” (that is, the cosmological priesthood), he includes Brigham Young’s statement that they received “the keys of the Priesthood” (17); the cosmological was also ecclesiastical. This may be best understood through the early Church’s practice of adoption sealings. Though Stapley states that ritual adoption sealings made the “material heaven on earth,” since all living

Saints could now theoretically be bound to one another, those to whom Latter-day Saints were sealed were always male members of Church leadership—the ecclesiastical priesthood authority. Being sealed to Church leaders was efficacious because of their priesthood authority. The material heaven was not just for eternal families but also for families led by kings and priests, two positions with ecclesiastical meaning. This holds true even for the female performance of healing rituals, understood by Stapley as operating under the cosmological priesthood. Even though these rites were associated with female participation and authority experienced within the temple liturgy, the authority that women received via the temple liturgy still came through the ecclesiastical priesthood authority of the temple president and ultimately through the ecclesiastical office of Apostle. In all of these cases, the “cosmology” of the priesthood was created or engaged through the ecclesiastical authority of the priesthood.

The focus on these conceptual distinctions can, at times, lead to lacuna in the analysis. For instance, on pages 92–93, the reader is told that the term *ordinance*, as used by Joseph, reflected the greater Protestant meaning: “Moreover, Smith’s revelations, sermons, and letters employed the term ‘ordinance’ in the broader sense used by the early reforms—that is, in the context of commandments and laws. . . . Smith’s successors grew to employ the term ‘ordinance’ in a manner similar to the way some Roman Catholics employ the term ‘sacraments.’ Mormons grew to see ordinances as a category of venerable rituals to be performed by priesthood officers.” While it is true that the term may have been used that way at times by Joseph, even a cursory review of the term in the Doctrine and Covenants reveals that Joseph was also using the term to refer to ritual practices early on (see D&C 88:139–40; 107:20; and 124:30, 33). This oversight may seem trivial, but it reflects the challenge of allowing a conceptual approach to determine the historical analysis, rather than using history to determine a conceptual approach. A more serious absence is the lack of analysis of the other temple rites introduced at the same time as the sealing rites. While Stapley explores the ramifications of the sealing rite, the other temple rites, such as the washing and anointing and the endowment, which were often experienced at the same time as the sealing of the husband and wife, are not discussed at all. Why is not clear, though perhaps it is because the role of ecclesiastical authority in the performance of these other rites may run counter to the thesis of his study. In any case, by isolating the sealing rite from the rest of the temple praxis and ignoring the other rites

associated directly with the sealing, Stapley limits what he means by liturgy, a limitation that makes it possible to engage with his conceptual divisions concerning the priesthood.³

In a similar manner, by starting the discussion of Latter-day Saint cosmology as if it emerged from selective rites of the late Nauvoo period, Stapley makes a very specific, and limiting, definition of cosmology. While the social network that defines his cosmological priesthood is certainly a part of Latter-day Saint cosmology, earlier revelations, such as Doctrine and Covenants 76, 83, 88, 93, and 107, had introduced the Saints to “kingdoms” and “glories,” to the beginning of all things and to the time when all things ended. Time and space, which are not aspects explored in Stapley’s cosmology, were as important to the early Saints’ understanding of the cosmos as was the awareness of the eternal, social relationships that could be created. Moreover, the priesthood defined how time and space were experienced and engaged with as much as it defined the social structure of the cosmos, including in the ritual praxis of the Latter-day Saint.

Significantly, these cosmological elements emerge in earlier revelatory material, yet the Doctrine and Covenants is rarely cited in Stapley’s volume.⁴ Joseph’s theology of ritual and priesthood, as outlined in section 84:19–25 does not appear in Stapley’s historical analysis, even though it is alluded to in the title.⁵ Yet these earlier revelations were foundational to the form and structure of the later temple rites and the subsequent cosmology described within those rites. As with the

3. Though Stapley never discusses how he conceived of his conceptual distinctions in this volume, his earlier phenomenal work on early Mormon healing rites suggests that this particular rite is the kernel from which he developed the model. Similarly, his belief that the ecclesiastical priesthood has “overshadowed” the cosmological priesthood appears to stem from the gradual cessation of female healing in the early twentieth century. Yet the end of adoption sealings and the normalization of sealings to family members instead of ecclesiastical leadership suggests that his assertion that the cosmological approach to the priesthood has been overshadowed over the past century may not reflect actual experience, since both of these examples suggest an expansion of the “cosmological” priesthood during the same period Stapley suggests it was being overshadowed.

4. Both sections 76 and 107 are alluded to briefly, though the content of both is not engaged in the text.

5. Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21 is cited once in the conclusion but is not referenced elsewhere in the body of the volume.

limitation on the liturgy noted above, basing the cosmology on selective ritual and late theology means that an understanding of both praxis and theology is limited at best. As to why earlier Latter-day Saint theology is ignored is not clear, though again, perhaps it is because the earlier cosmological revelations did not distinguish, in terms of function or understanding, between "cosmological" and "ecclesiastical" priesthood.

These challenges aside, Stapley's work is a welcome addition to the growing library on Latter-day Saint ritual praxis. His conceptual division of the priesthood, while perhaps not reflecting an actual division in the priesthood, is nevertheless a useful model for exploring some of the complexities of the priesthood and, in light of recent teachings concerning the priesthood from Latter-day Saint Church leadership, a tool that can be used to further expand our understanding of how priesthood may be engaged. Though the study is limited in what it defines as cosmology, it does reflect the important role that social relationships have within Latter-day Saint cosmology and the role that ritual, both salvific and nonsalvific, plays in the understanding and creation of that cosmos. Stapley ought to be congratulated on producing a study that provokes even as it leaves space for further discussion.

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Mountain Meadows Massacre: Collected Legal Papers
Edited by Richard E. Turley Jr., Janiece L. Johnson, and
LaJean Purcell Carruth

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017

Reviewed by Iantha Haight

In his review of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*, Jared Farmer concluded by stating, “While Mormon history is markedly better because of their work, it will be much better still when historians put the massacre to rest and move on.”¹ Farmer has a point. Current scholarship has discovered as much of the truth of the events leading up to the massacre as we are likely to learn. The appearance of an eyewitness account from a dusty trunk in someone’s attic may someday add to our understanding, but the limit of new accounts appears to have been reached for the time being. But that does not mean we are ready to “put the massacre to rest.” Many questions remain, particularly surrounding the aftermath of the massacre. For example, what efforts were made to bring criminal charges against the perpetrators?

The monumental new publication *Mountain Meadows Massacre: Collected Legal Papers* lays a foundation for future legal scholarship related to the investigation and prosecution of the massacre participants. Editors Richard E. Turley Jr., Janiece L. Johnson, and LaJean Purcell Carruth spent thousands of hours gathering hard-to-find and, in some cases, previously unknown primary legal documents. It is amazing how records of an 1857 event that occurred in an obscure meadow of sparsely settled southern Utah came to be dispersed in repositories across the United States, ranging from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and College Park, Maryland, to the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The transcribed legal documents were published in *Collected Legal Papers*, which consists of almost one thousand pages of material in

1. Jared Farmer, review of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*, by Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *BYU Studies* 47, no. 3 (2008): 178.

two volumes. The first volume features documents related to the investigations, the failed 1859 efforts to indict the perpetrators, and the successful 1874 indictments. The second volume focuses on the documents related to the trials and subsequent appeal. Supplementary material at the conclusion of the second volume contains biographical sketches of important figures and a glossary of legal terms. The result is a publication that is accessible to scholars and interested readers alike, a coherent and suspenseful story of the legal action following the massacre, beginning with the early investigations of the crime and culminating in the execution of John D. Lee.

Turley, former managing director of the Church History Department and Assistant Church Historian for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, graduated from law school at Brigham Young University, where he was executive editor of the law review and member of the Order of the Coif honor society. His legal training is evident in the thoughtful organization of the material into legal actions (investigations, indictments, and so forth) and in the summaries introducing each chapter, which provide background information and highlight key points. Johnson joined the project as a graduate student and used her work on the documents as the basis for her PhD dissertation at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom.

The gems of the collection are the new trial transcripts created from the original shorthand notes from Lee's two criminal trials: "combined, they provide by far the most complete and most accurate record of the John D. Lee trials available" (717). Carruth, a rare expert in transcribing Pitman shorthand, transcribed the notes taken by court reporters Adam Patterson and Josiah Rogerson² and compared her transcripts with several contemporary transcripts. Carruth discovered that the previous transcripts had many errors, including missing content, incorrect words, and additions not contained in the originals. The transcript published in Lee's book *Mormonism Unveiled* and edited by Lee's attorney William W. Bishop is particularly problematic; Carruth's work revealed that testimony damaging to Lee had been altered or deleted.³ The editors

2. Adam Patterson and Josiah Rogerson took shorthand notes independently during the first Lee trial. Patterson took full notes of the proceedings of the second trial, but Rogerson's notes for only one plea in the second trial have survived. It is not known if he created a complete transcript for the second trial that has since been lost.

3. See John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand, 1887). According to

tabulated the two new transcripts with two of the other contemporary transcripts (the Boreman transcript and the Rogerson transcript) into a comparison text, or matrix. The matrix provides line-by-line comparisons, in a multicolumn format, of the several transcripts of Lee's trial and comprises approximately four thousand pages. The comparison matrix is available for free on the book's companion website, <https://mountainmeadowsmassacre.com>.

The editors meticulously describe the location and condition of the original documents. Carruth is also careful to note when words may have been crossed out or added at a later date; attorneys who understand the importance of a correct trial transcript will appreciate her attention to detail. Ideally, however, digital images of the original documents would have been posted to the book's website along with the trial matrix. The original documents have intrinsic value as historical artifacts apart from their substantive content. Despite the fact that few people can read the shorthand, images of these documents would be worthwhile and, at the very least, interesting for many readers. For example, some may be interested in viewing the page that has "a profile of a man with stubble smoking a pipe" (45 n. 36).

Letters and reports in the first volume show how the U.S. Army and the Bureau of Indian Affairs investigated the massacre. During the frontier days of the American West, the military frequently provided police support to local governments and, along with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, managed relations with Indian tribes. Some initial reports of the massacre, circulated by John D. Lee and probably others, blamed the incident entirely on the Indians. Geographical isolation, conflicts between federal and local leaders, and the onset of winter slowed the inquiry. Jacob Forney, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah Territory, was charged with collecting and returning the surviving children to their relatives in Arkansas.

The investigation languished after a grand jury summoned in Provo, Utah, in 1859 failed to secure indictments against the perpetrators. Renewed efforts in 1874 led to indictments against John D. Lee, Samuel Jewkes, William H. Dame, Elliot Willden, Isaac C. Haight, George Adair, Philip Klingensmith, John M. Higbee, and William C. Stewart. The editors present the indictments in a matrix for comparison (414–39).

Collected Legal Papers, "Unable to pay his legal fees, on September 30, 1876, Lee gave Bishop the rights to publish his yet-to-be-written autobiography, which he worked on while in prison and then sent to his attorney" (784).

A separate chapter is devoted to the legal proceedings against each defendant. Five of the nine men indicted were arrested (Lee, Dame, Willden, Adair, and Klingensmith), although only Lee was tried. The trials for Dame, Willden, and Adair were continued multiple times, and their indictments were eventually dismissed. Higbee, Haight, Jewkes, and Stewart successfully evaded arrest. The indictments against Higbee and Haight were eventually dismissed, Haight's after his death. The indictments against Jewkes and Stewart were never dismissed. Ironically, Jewkes later became a probate judge in Emery County, Utah.

Lee's two trials differed greatly from each other, with the most obvious difference being their length. The first trial lasted fourteen days and comprises 3,400 pages of the trial matrix, while the second trial lasted only five days and comprises about 600 pages. The prosecution called fewer than half of the number of witnesses for the second trial than it did for the first. The defense chose to call no witnesses at all during the second trial, relying on the argument that the prosecution had failed to meet its burden of proof.

Both the prosecution and the defense struggled to produce compelling witness testimony—unsurprising for an event that occurred almost two decades earlier and that most, if not all, witnesses wanted to forget. The prosecution was successful in the second trial because they were able to call witnesses who had firsthand knowledge of the events but were probably not involved in the actual killing—men such as the wagon drivers. The prosecution also focused their efforts in the second trial on Lee's personal guilt and abandoned their attempts to implicate leaders such as Brigham Young. Statements such as “I arraign Brigham Young, first as an accessory of this murder, because considering the power he had over this people, . . . no man, bishop, nor any other person . . . would have dared to have taken such an important step to do such an heinous act, if he hadn't a direct or implied sanction of the head of the church” and “[t]he whole evidence goes to show that the Mormon community down there were nothing but dumb cattle” were prominent in the first trial but absent from the second.⁴

Lee's defense was that he went to Mountain Meadows to rescue the emigrants; he could not, however, testify in his own defense. His

4. Richard E. Turley Jr., “John D. Lee, First Trial: Robert N. Baskin Closing Argument,” 3208, 3061 (Boreman Transcript), Mountain Meadows Massacre, 2016, <https://mountainmeadowsmassacre.com/wp-content/transcripts/trial1/22-Robert-N-Baskin-Closing-Argument.pdf>.

testimony would have been impeached by a statement he had signed prior to trial admitting his involvement in the massacre. Lee had submitted the statement to the prosecution in hopes of obtaining a deal. The deal did not materialize, however, supposedly because he failed to implicate Church authorities like Brigham Young.

A particularly interesting section of the book is the chapter in volume 2 devoted to the several different published versions of Lee's statement. This chapter provides a brief, helpful background for the various statements, and having the statements in one location gives the careful reader the opportunity to determine where Lee's attorney Bishop likely made edits. Lee's voice appears authentically in much of the text, and some of the details he provides question his veracity. For example, if Lee was the only man present to vocally object to the decoy plan, why was he asked to negotiate the details of the surrender with the Arkansas emigrants?

History speaks most compellingly when it speaks in the words of the people who were there. *Mountain Meadows Massacre: Collected Legal Papers* provides lucid access to some of history's long-dead voices, refining our understanding of postmassacre events and making the path ahead easier for scholars. The documents collected in the two volumes and the online trial matrix provide a basis for examining such issues as settler-Indian relations, relations between governments and minority religious groups, mass killings, frontier justice, and frontier trial practice. From the massacre itself to the investigations, manhunts, and trials; from the absence of Indian voices in the legal process to Lee's execution at the massacre site, the fallout of the Mountain Meadows Massacre is emblematic of the Wild West.

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Voice of the Saints in Taiwan
By Po Nien (Felipe) Chou and Mei Wah Sin (Petra) Chou
Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2017

Reviewed by Richard B. Stamps

In writing this book, the Chous had no ax to grind, no theory to prove or defend. Their purpose was simply to create a record of the history of the Church in Taiwan by collecting information from the people who lived it. Their book comprises a timeline of events concerning the Church in Taiwan, centered on the faith-promoting experiences of the Latter-day Saints who live there.

The book begins with a quick review of early Church efforts to penetrate the Chinese realm, from the work of Hosea Stout, one of the first missionaries to China in 1853, to the apostolic visit of David O. McKay in 1921, to the establishment of missions in China and Southeast Asia in 1955. The main focus of the Chous' work, however, starts with the arrival of the first four missionaries to Taiwan in 1956 (25). At the time, Taiwan was part of the Southern Far East Mission, which extended south from Okinawa, Japan, and included Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, all of Southeast Asia, India, and Pakistan, in addition to all of mainland China. The book includes the stories of the first waves of missionaries and their successes and details the expansion of Church branches and districts (25). Between 1959 and 1965, the Church in Taiwan matured, with Apostle Mark E. Petersen dedicating the land for the preaching of the gospel and the Book of Mormon being translated into Chinese. In their discussion of the Book of Mormon translation, the authors do a comprehensive job of detailing the challenges and controversies, especially the disagreements that arose between the Chinese translator and the American working on the translation—a subject not frequently addressed publicly (77–95). The book then walks through the Church's purchase of property in Taiwan, the official registration of the Church, and the building of Taiwan's first chapels—all told through the words of people who were personally involved in the events.

The 1970s saw several more milestones in the Church's growth, the most notable perhaps being the creation of the Taiwan Mission in 1971. Between 1970 and 1975, regional Church representatives provided more training to local leaders, service missionaries were called to teach community members about hygiene and health, and the Church Educational System was introduced in Taiwan. Efforts were made to aid missionaries in their service by teaching them the local culture and customs. A key event during this time was the translation of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price into Chinese. As the Church matured, more and more Church leaders from Salt Lake City visited Taiwan. Most notably, Church President Spencer W. Kimball and his wife, Camilla, came in August 1975. *Voice of the Saints in Taiwan* includes touching memories of Church members' experiences as they planned for and hosted these visitors from Church headquarters (180–86).

During the period from 1975 to 1985, stakes and wards were organized. Membership increased, which justified the building of a temple for the Latter-day Saints. As reported by the interviews in the book, this event was a spiritual boost for all involved. Around the same time, the Church acquired a building across from the temple and another building that became the Chin Hua Chieh Stake Center chapel. This seven-story structure became the Church Administrative Building, which housed the translation office and the mission office and served as a residence for the mission and temple presidents and their families. Consolidating these spaces into one location created a sense of community and convenience for the Church members there—they could go to one location to have meetings, attend the temple, and buy Church-related materials. At the end of the decade, in 1989, a joint project between the Church and local libraries to microfilm family histories was completed. This expanding of genealogical research and resource gathering was critical in supporting future genealogical work in Taiwan and mainland China.

In 1996, a celebration was held to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of missionaries coming to Taiwan. This was the first celebration of its kind in the area, and events included firesides, poetry and art contests, a large exhibit in the Taipei Stake Center, and the publication of a book called *The Taiwan Saints*. The book was the first of its kind in the Church; instead of being a translation from English, it was written in Chinese, by Chinese, and for the Chinese. This celebration set the stage for later fiftieth and sixtieth anniversary celebrations. Another important event was a major earthquake that hit Taiwan on September 21, 1999, after which members and missionaries teamed up in the

rescue efforts. Just months before the earthquake, Church leaders had emphasized self-reliance and instructed Church members to prepare seventy-two-hour kits. According to the Chous' research, many saw the timing of the leaders' instruction as being divinely inspired, which strengthened many testimonies and resulted in a doubling of baptisms in the Taichung Mission (303–5).

As the world entered a new millennium, the Church in Taiwan continued to grow and develop. In the years between 2000 and 2004, early-morning seminary and *Preach My Gospel* were introduced. The name of the Church in the Chinese language was also retranslated. This had been a subject of discussion among Church members and leaders for many years. The former translation for “Latter-day Saints,” *moshi shengtu*, had a heavy apocalyptic and doomsday feel that frightened people. Indeed, the term *moshi* in some dictionaries meant “doomsday.” The new translation replaced the term with *houqi*—creating *houqi shengtu*, or “latter times” (228–40). The period from 2004 to 2016 was period of great expansion and activity. A large, multipurpose Church office building was built and dedicated in 2005, which gave the Church more of a physical presence in Taiwan. In 2016, the fiftieth anniversary was celebrated, and the translation of scriptures and key Church terminology were updated. As the Church was growing in strength, leaders could see the need and benefit of having leaders who were from local Taiwanese communities, and several Taiwanese were called to be Seventies and to other leadership positions to move the Church forward.

The book concludes with an upbeat, positive, and optimistic view of the future. An epilogue, titled “Hastening the Work of Salvation and Facing the Future with Faith,” reflects that strength gained from past generations can help members look forward to a bright future for Taiwan (429–52).

Although this book was not written by professional historians, every effort was made to document the source of each entry. The story told in this book is well documented and supported by data and personal interviews, yet it would not be classified as strictly academic. The authors, who have spent much of their lives serving in Church education roles, are active members of the Church and do not hide their faithful perspective. The book is written for members of the Church and is largely meant to be faith promoting. As such, the book may overlook some of the more challenging issues the Church in Taiwan faced over the years. For instance, the book does not address the issue of low Church activity rates among members, which, based on my experience in Taiwan as a mission president,

was especially common among the second generation, whose convert parents had spent so much time at Church and Church-related activities that the children were not as well grounded in the gospel. Another issue I observed was a number of converts joining the Church, not out of deep personal conviction, but as a stepping stone to immigrate to America. There is also the complicated issue of American Church members marrying Taiwanese Latter-day Saints (as a result of interactions on missions or at Church schools, like BYU–Hawaii), which removed many strong Taiwanese Saints from their homeland. The book is also lacking a comprehensive bibliography of all sources.

While these omissions may bother an academic researcher, most Church members will find this an inspirational read. This book is a personal labor of love for the authors, which is seen in their romanticizing language and use of Chinese characters for people's names. The reader benefits from the inclusion of tidbits that only true insiders would know—like the discussion of “stems and branches” used to record days and years in Chinese culture (429) and the fact that some Taiwan missionaries attended the MTC in the Philippines. The book features several historical photos, many of which were previously unpublished. The twelve appendices—which include a chronology of Church events, the text of dedicatory prayers given in the area, and lists of Taiwanese Church units, seminaries and institutes, Church leaders, and more—will become a one-stop shop of data for years to come (455–516).

This book will be of great interest to those with a connection to Taiwan, including current, past, and future missionaries. Those who are interested in the history of missionary work throughout the globe, and particularly its successes, may also find the book valuable. Although the focus of this book is on Taiwan, the book at times provides a larger picture of the Church in the East and thus may also appeal to a broader audience interested in the history of the Church in the Chinese realm. I highly recommend the read for people looking for an overview of the story of the Church in Taiwan.

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Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)

At first glance, the title of this work may imply it is a documentary history project, but in fact, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft have not compiled a collection of documents, but rather a series of essays by other scholars (with the exception of Howcroft who includes her own entry in the volume) *about* these foundational documents. The editors lay out the purpose of the book, which “insists on the importance of taking a closer look at the essential texts that historians use to reconstruct the founding era of the Church” (1). They further state that since these major sources have been used and will continue to be used extensively by writers, these texts need to be understood and viewed with a more critical eye.

The editors begin their introduction crediting Dean C. Jessee’s landmark work in the 1970s as the start of the present compilation. Jessee (to whom the volume itself is dedicated) discovered that the *History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself*, was actually largely compiled by scribes and assistants and was not, in fact, written by Joseph at all, though the project was certainly under his direction. Ashurst-McGee, Jensen, and Howcroft then appropriately recognize that “while the complex production of Joseph Smith’s history may make it the archetypical example of the need to understand how and when and by whom a document was created, there are several other foundational sources, used frequently by those researching and writing in early Mormon history, that are not what they appear to be on their face” (4). Their volume reviews

these “other foundational sources” and offers greater context to their creation and subsequent publication and reception (4).

After the introduction, the book includes twelve essays by various scholars in the field. The shortest two essays are twenty-three pages long, and the longest is an impressive forty pages. Additionally, there are illustrations, maps, and facsimiles of some of the documents discussed. Beginning with Richard Lyman Bushman’s “The Gold Plates as Foundational Text,” these essays proceed more or less in chronological order. Bushman reminds his readers that the entire project of the Book of Mormon, like the project of the early Saints, was a human one. Though the Book of Mormon prophets claimed divine inspiration, ultimately it was their imperfect fingers that inscribed the text, just as it was the determined but flawed hands and hearts of the early Saints who carried the fledgling faith past the martyrdom and into the twentieth century.

Next in line, Grant Hardy builds on Royal Skousen’s textual work of the Book of Mormon in “Textual Criticism and the Book of Mormon,” followed by Thomas A. Wayment’s “Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible,” in which Wayment posits the possibility that the Book of Moses was the catalyst for the New Testament translation, which led to Smith’s Christianization of the Old Testament and a comprehensive harmonization of the Bible with his developing theology. Grant Underwood then moves away from translation to oral tradition in his “The Dictation, Compilation, and Canonization of Joseph Smith’s Revelations.” Underwood focuses his essay on Joseph Smith’s dictation of revelations that were later canonized as sections in the Doctrine and Covenants. Underwood demonstrates that Joseph considered these

revelations to be works in progress, based on the imperfect nature of dictation and the work of mortal scribes, which necessitated corrections. "The texts of his [Joseph's] revelations," Underwood notes, "were not understood as infallible texts written in stone by the finger of God; they came instead through a finite and fallible prophet who, along with his associates, was not shorn of his humanity in exercising his prophetic office" (122). David W. Grua, Jennifer Reeder, and William V. Smith then each have a piece reviewing Joseph's letters from Liberty Jail, the Female Relief Society minute book, and the difficulties documenting Joseph's sermons, respectively. Alex D. Smith and Andrew H. Hedges include a section, "Joseph Smith's Nauvoo Journals," further exploring the challenges of reading a work of history not written by the subject.

The final four essays begin with Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's "The Early Diaries of Wilford Woodruff, 1835–1839," in which she discusses the earliest entries of Woodruff's journal and how they reflected not only his sensibilities but also the diarist conventions widely employed by his contemporaries. Howcroft maintains in her chapter, "A Textual and Archival Reexamination of Lucy Mack Smith's History," that the same careful examination of Joseph Smith's published history (as demonstrated by Jessee) should be applied to Lucy Mack Smith's history of Joseph Smith. The creation and production of Lucy's history is just as complex and varied and her son's. Jeffrey G. Cannon then offers a discussion on an understudied format in Latter-day Saint textual criticism: the image. Cannon specifically shows how Latter-day Saint leaders used images to support their succession claims in opposition to the RLDS movement. Ronald O. Barney concludes the collection with a portrait of Joseph Smith

himself and his personality, which may have influenced why he recorded so little of his own thoughts and speeches.

Foundational Texts of Mormonism presents for the scholar and the casual reader added context and understanding to the various receptions of these texts over time. The individual essays are valuable to any study of the texts they examine while also being fine examples of several different types of textual criticism in their own right.

—Gerrit van Dyk

Abinadi: He Came among Them in Disguise, edited by Shon D. Hopkin (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018)

This volume, which examines the Book of Mormon story of Abinadi, is the first volume generated by the Book of Mormon Academy, "an academic think tank and research group begun . . . to promote scholarship and teaching on the Book of Mormon" (vi). Scholars in this group "primarily pursue their own research agendas," but sometimes they produce studies "that can be combined into one volume" such as this one (vi).

The chapters are organized into four groups, each bringing different "lenses" to bear on the text. The first group applies "literary lenses" to the Abinadi story. Jared W. Ludlow, Daniel L. Belnap, and Frank F. Judd Jr., in their respective chapters, analyze narrative features of the text that bring to light subtle ideological tensions over Nephite identity and the interpretation of Isaiah. These papers largely build on previous works about the Abinadi account by scholars such as Dana M. Pike, John W. Welch, and Joseph M. Spencer.

The second group utilizes "inter-textual and intratextual lenses" to add

insight to Abinadi's words and their impact among later Nephite prophets. Here John Hilton III traces connections between Abinadi's words and those of King Benjamin, Amulek, Alma, and Mormon, while Nicholas J. Frederick examines New Testament language that shows up in Abinadi's discourse. Shon D. Hopkin looks closely at Abinadi's quotations from Exodus 20 and Isaiah 53, analyzing the textual variants found here and in other ancient textual witnesses. In his chapter, Hopkin engages with past studies of the Isaiah variants by David P. Wright and John A. Tvedtnes. For another study relevant to such language studies, readers may want to reference David Larsen's article on death being "swallowed up" ("Death Being Swallowed Up in Netzach in the Bible and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 4 [2016]: 123–34).

The third section features two papers examining the Abinadi narrative through "cultural-historical lenses." Kerry Hull discusses the connotations of a disastrous "east wind" in biblical and ancient Near Eastern traditions as well as in Mesoamerica. Mark Alan Wright, cowriting with Hull, compares the killing of Abinadi to numerous accounts of torturing and killing captives from both pre- and post-Columbian sources in Meso- and North America. Wright and Hull significantly expand on past works by Robert J. Matthews and Brant A. Gardner. Generally speaking, however, possible Mesoamerican connections to the Abinadi story remain an area for further exploration.

In the fourth section, the story of Abinadi is looked at through "theological lenses." Amy Easton-Flake considers the issue of infant salvation in the Book of Mormon, first (chronologically) mentioned by Abinadi, and also in light of nineteenth-century debates about infant salvation and baptism.

Finally, following similar efforts in Pauline scholarship, Joseph M. Spencer provides a philosophical and theological analysis of Abinadi's "as though" statements in Mosiah 16:5–6.

The volume concludes with two appendices. A "critical text" of Mosiah 11–17, compiled by all the members of the Book of Mormon Academy, uses the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon as the base text and provides over seven hundred footnotes highlighting textual variants, intertextual relationships, and unique phrases. A true testament to the diligent work of the contributors, this resource will prove useful to students and scholars alike. The second appendix provides a bibliography of much of the previous Abinadi scholarship that many of the papers build on.

Overall, this book provides a close look at the narrative about the prophet Abinadi from a variety of angles, building on and engaging with past scholarship and forging ahead into uncharted territory. Informed Latter-day Saints interested in deeper study of the Book of Mormon, as well as academics of all kinds who are interested in serious engagement with the Book of Mormon, should be interested in this volume.

—Neal Rappleye

Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism, by Newell G. Bringhurst, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018)

Saints, Slaves, and Blacks draws on historical and scriptural sources to examine the history of Latter-day Saint thought regarding blacks. Author Newell Bringhurst notes that when the first edition of the book was published in 1981, "it attracted limited notice both within and outside the Mormon community." Bringhurst chalks the oversight

up to bad timing—it was published just three years after the 1978 revelation lifting the priesthood ban, when “Mormons of all stripes” were “anxious to move on, focused on embracing their black brethren and sisters as ecclesiastical equals while ignoring the Church’s recently abandoned practice of black priesthood denial and prohibition on African-American entry into the temple” (xvi). Because of the book’s relatively limited circulation, this second edition is intended to make Bringhurst’s groundbreaking work available to wider audiences and introduce it to a new generation of readers.

The book is divided into nine chapters, which trace chronologically the place of blacks within the Church and its culture from 1820 to 1980, covering such topics as slavery, abolition, the priesthood denial, and civil rights. This new edition is largely unchanged from the first, with only minor adjustments made such as spelling corrections, repagination, reformatting, and an updated bibliographic essay. The book also includes a new preface from the author outlining the history of his creation of the book and its role within contemporary studies of race and the Latter-day Saint religion. Also added is a new foreword by Edward J. Blum and two postscripts by, respectively, Paul Reeve and Darron T. Smith—two scholars of race and Latter-day Saint religion.

Given the timing of the first edition and the book’s own focus (at least four of the nine chapters, plus an epilogue, deal directly with the priesthood denial), those who read the book in 1981 “primarily viewed it in terms of the 1978 ending of the priesthood ban on black men” (ix). It is fitting then that the book was reissued in the same year as the fortieth anniversary of the revelation that lifted the ban.

In addition to commemorating the anniversary of this historic moment, the new edition of this book is relevant for other reasons. Despite the passing of almost forty years, issues of race in America and religion are as salient and relevant today as they were then. As one of the first book-length studies of blacks in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this study, according to Blum, was “ahead of its time” (ix). With this book, for example, and “its central thesis that the ban emerged largely as the byproduct of Mormon ethnic whiteness” (xvi), Bringhurst articulates a theory of “whiteness,” a topic and analytical approach that has since become a major focus in critical race studies. And Bringhurst’s commentary holds particular currency within contemporary academic conversations of blacks within the Latter-day Saint faith. Indeed, its thesis of a “Mormon whiteness” has been reiterated in several studies of the last decades, including in the recent publications *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* by W. Paul Reeve and *Race and the Making of the Mormon People* by Max Perry Mueller.

As Blum notes, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks* “is a book to mind and to mine” (ix), and it will be of value to any person interested in such broad topics as American religious history and the history of race in America and in religious thought. But the book will be of most interest to Latter-day Saints who wish for a deep dive into the changing status of blacks in the Church and the culture surrounding the religion.

—Alison Palmer

The Worldwide Church: Mormonism as a Global Religion, edited by Michael A. Goodman and Mauro Properzi (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham

Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016)

Since 1981, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has experienced a dramatic increase in membership outside of the United States and Canada (vii–xii). As a result, in March 2014, Brigham Young University and the Church History Department sponsored a Church history symposium titled *The Worldwide Church: The Global Reach of Mormonism*. The symposium invited scholars to address subjects related to the increasingly global nature of the Church.

After the symposium, Michael A. Goodman and Mauro Properzi, associate professors of Church history at Brigham Young University, edited nineteen of the presentations and published them in the compilation *The Worldwide Church: Mormonism as a Global Religion*. The compilation is bookended by the keynote addresses of Apostle Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Terryl L. Givens, and in between are papers by several prominent scholars. The editors conveniently organized the articles into five sections, each dedicated to a specific region in the world: Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, and South and Central America. Another article, along with Givens's speech, appears in a sixth section titled "Worldwide."

The included articles address a wide range of topics related to the global Church, from the development of Latter-day Saint humanitarian aid to country-specific studies. Some articles provide a history of the establishment and growth of the Church in a specific area (such as Afghanistan, Taiwan, and Latin America), while others discuss significant moments in Church history (such as the era of "the freeze" in Ghana). And others analyze some of the cultural problems Church members have faced (such as cultural challenges

in Europe and language obstacles in Russia). All of the articles work together to provide a greater understanding of global Latter-day Saint topics.

Anyone who is interested in Church history and the growing global nature of the Church will enjoy reading this compilation. Scholarship such as this will only become more relevant and important as the Church continues to expand throughout the world.

—Emily Cook

Pioneer Women of Arizona, by Roberta Flake Clayton, Catherine H. Ellis, and David F. Boone, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017)

Roberta Flake Clayton self-published *Pioneer Women of Arizona* in 1969 after spending thirty-three years conducting numerous interviews and cataloguing over two hundred biographical sketches of the pioneer women, both old and young, who, beginning in the nineteenth century, came to Arizona by wagon or train and settled communities such as Phoenix, Mesa, Snowflake, Flagstaff, and Prescott.

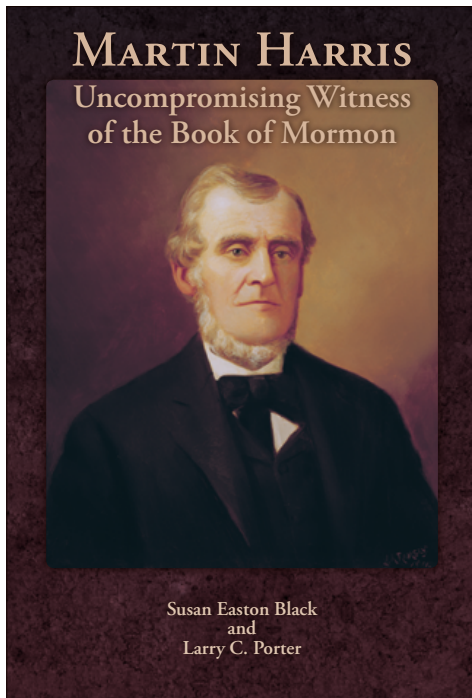
Her work fell by the wayside until Catherine H. Ellis (a fifth-generation Arizonian and BYU graduate) and David F. Boone (an educator and historian) revived the work, creating a second edition with added footnotes, maps, a biography of Roberta Clayton, a history of Latter-day Saint migration to Arizona, and hundreds of photographs.

The 207 biographical sketches featured in *Pioneer Women of Arizona* are very detailed and comprehensive. In creating these sketches, Clayton's goal was to preserve their stories, including the stories of women Clayton knew personally, and to give younger generations role models to look up to.

The fact that she decided to specifically focus on women adds to the value of this work, since women have often been underrepresented in mainstream historical narratives. Although she was encouraged to make the scope of her work “more universal,” Clayton decided to focus on women because of their great faith and resourcefulness in obeying their Church leaders and settling an area far from civilization (29).

Clayton originally dedicated this work to “the descendants of the noble women who pioneered the West” (iii), but this work is more than a genealogist’s gold mine—it is a treasure for all those interested in the history of Arizona, the history of the Latter-day Saints, women’s studies, and stories of faith.

—Hannah Charlesworth



*Martin Harris:
Uncompromising Witness
of the Book of Mormon*

by Susan Easton Black
and Larry C. Porter



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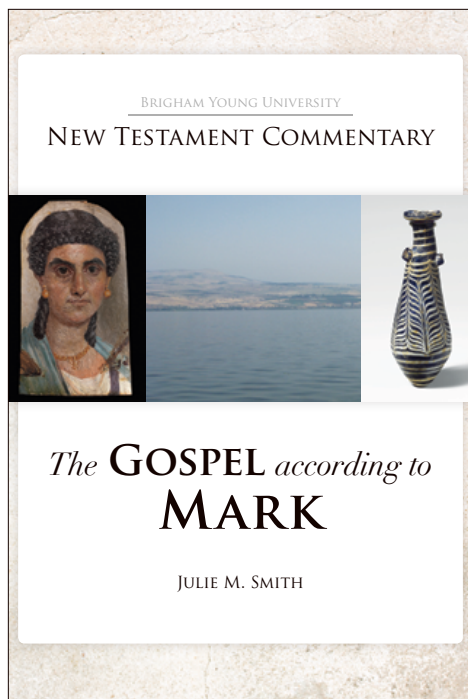
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*The Gospel
according to Mark*

by Julie M. Smith



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The Gospel of Mark is usually read through the lenses of the other Gospels, but the Jesus presented in Mark's Gospel is worthy of study. He is witty, warm, and wise. He's also the Son of God. He has power which leaves people in awe, and he uses that power to help the people most people don't like. His disciples usually misunderstand him, but he teaches them continually and patiently. This Jesus is betrayed and abandoned and alone and humiliated, but he still chooses God's will over his own, even though he didn't want to. Mark tells an amazing story.

The goal of Julie Smith's commentary is to recover Mark's unique voice. Special attention is given to five areas: An examination of the differences in ancient texts of Mark is used to make conjectures about how the text read in its earliest versions. Basic cultural knowledge is supplied to help the modern reader bridge the gap between the modern and ancient worlds. Biblical allusions in Mark's text are explored and explained. Literary structures, both large and small, are considered. The traditional neglect of women's stories is corrected. The result is a commentary that answers the question, "What would Mark's story of Jesus have meant to its first audiences?" in a way that informs and inspires.