



*The John Whitmer
Historical Association
Journal*



Mark Hill Forscutt, circa 1890

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Historical Association
Journal**



John Whitmer, circa 1870, courtesy Community of Christ Archives, D991.3

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Cover photo of Mark Hill Forscutt, circa 1890, courtesy Community of Christ Archives, H276.2. Forscutt (1834-1903) was an appointee minister for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. See the article by Eric Paul Rogers in this volume for more information.

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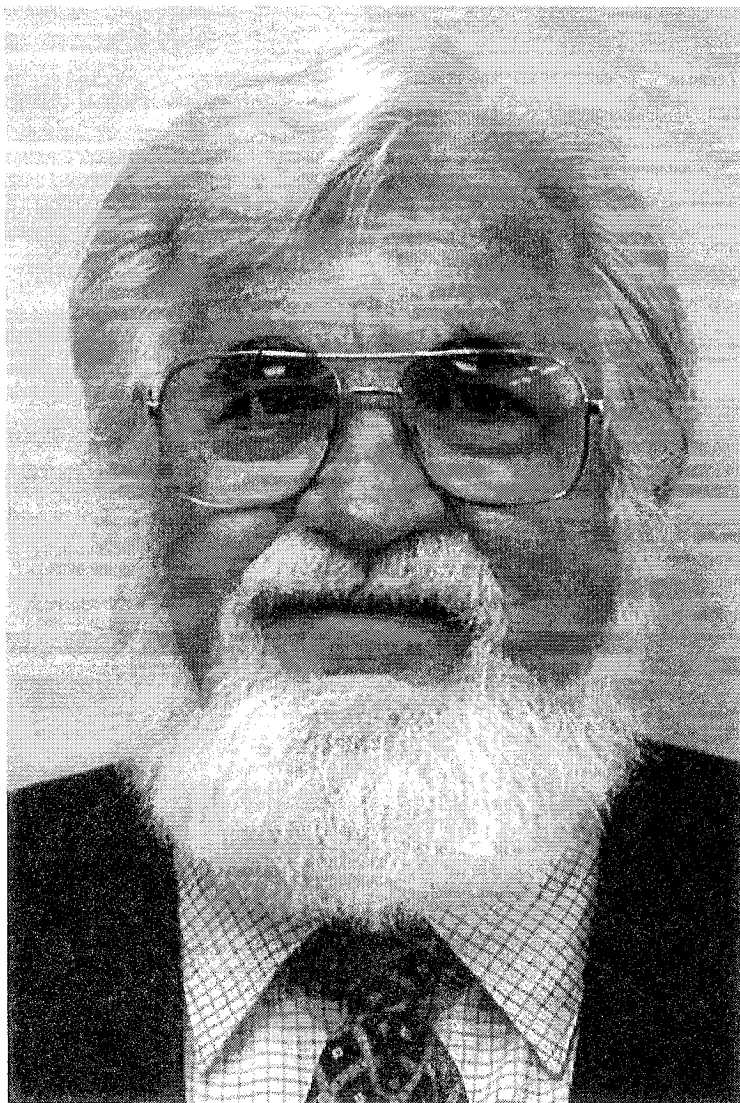
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Edward A. Warner
JWHA president, 1999-2000
Photo courtesy of the author.

From “Sacred Fudge” to “Christ-Centered Boredom” and Other JWHA Historical Interpretations

Edward A. Warner¹

Introduction (and Refrain)

I am the father of Aaron (and Christa). I am not a son of Melchisedek. I was born and raised in the RLDS Church (southern Kirtland District), a fourth-generation RLDS on my mother's, Carlisle, Scottish side of the family, and a fifth-generation RLDS on my father's, Warner, German side. Both were hard-working Calvinists, both laboring coal miners. The RLDS mother church was a great womb from which to be birthed, but as an epistemological sanctuary I could not live my whole life there. I am a sojourner in a foreign land, dispersed from the “chosen people,” living among alien people with diverse gods and goddesses. “I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5 NRSV). That is, on the whole of it, I am a fairly healthy guy!

I don't have a recipe for “sacred fudge,” but I have had the pleasure of tasting such fudge many times. There is a wide variety of recipes among the people of the world religions who have learned to share food with each other and with such a diversity of recipes I have never been bored. I've heard that one of the keys to achieving good sacred fudge is in the stirring—the slow, constant, gentle, ever-so-patient stirring—over a low flame. It requires persistence and patience, but it is never boring. It is neither “Christ-centered boredom”—nor even Buddha-centered boredom—for that matter. It is ultimately interesting and fascinating, and no amount of patience, persistence, preparation, anticipation, exploration, or even waiting is ever lost! A lifetime of “thinking, waiting, fasting,”² and patient stirring is involved in “sacred fudge.” I was graced and enlightened by pleasant years spent at Graceland—but I never met Elvis there—not once! I attended Bruce Jenner College, and

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² Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, Hilda Rosner, translator (New York: New Directions, 1951), 46.

I teach at Larry Bird University.

Why Study History?

We study history. We study history to know who we are. We study history because we are historical creatures. We study history because we want to know ourselves coming to know ourselves! We examine the past because it is still happening! The past isn't simply "behind us," it is in, around, and through us. It is the before I am, it is the where I am born and where I grow, it is the how and where I live, it is the where I will die, and it constitutes the legacy I will pass on to those who may wish to remember me.

We examine history because it endures within and wells up from our deepest psyches (individual and collective), our cultural institutions, our religious heritages, and our axiological foundations and commitments. To be sure, history persists whether we want it to or not, whether we remember it or not, whether we interpret it properly and document it soundly or not. Ultimately history survives and transcends us, but we do not outlive history. History is forecast in our hopes and dreams; it is projected in both our prophecies and our curses.

My major professor, Sidney E. Mead, with whom I studied at both the Universities of Chicago and Iowa, would remind us time and again that history is the story and interpretation of "how we got this present out of that past," and he would often qualify this by adding, "or how we 'think' we got it!" He was always sensitive to and conscionable about the all-important interpretive process.³ Or he would quote Abraham Lincoln (from his first debate with Stephen Douglas) in saying it was the story of the "where we are and whither we are tending." We seek, tell, and write history because we are self-conscious about our identities and our historical natures. "We are storytelling animals," wrote Sam Keen. "To be a person is to have a story to tell."⁴ Lincoln cautioned us, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history." I would hasten to add that I don't know why we should even want to try! It is in our very historical nature and cannot be extricated from us. If there happens to be somewhere beyond "where"—a timeless, spaceless, historyless eternity—then human beings do not belong there. The human animal is a creature thoroughly formed by and fitted for temporal, spatial, historical

³ Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). This is Mead's principal and foundational work.

⁴ Sam Keen and Anne Valley-Fox, *Your Mythic Journey: Finding Meaning in Your Life through Writing and Storytelling* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1989), 1.

realms of pragmatic events and experiences. As H. Richard Niebuhr said so poetically and prophetically (decades before any of the current postmodernists appeared on the scene), humanity "is not only in time but time [and space are] in [humanity]."⁵ They relativize, finitize, temporalize, and ultimately humanize him thoroughly as Robert Frost affirmed so appropriately that "Earth's the right place for love: I don't know where it's likely to go better."⁶

To be sure, the study of history is not as easily done as commonly thought. It is difficult and arduous trying to assess the past, and we never know it—or anything about it—fully or perfectly. As "through a glass darkly," we know history only in part and not in its completeness. And we most assuredly cannot know or predict the future! That's a fairly futile effort—even though lots of people in lots of guises have made, and still make, a lot of money at pretending they can! But, of course, we are reminded that all millenarian predictions through which we have lived—100 percent of them—have been wrong, including the ones by Jesus, Paul, Joseph Smith Jr., and Ann Lee. But we can still learn and know a good deal about (of and from) the past, and there is no reason to become fatalistic, on the one hand, or overconfident, on the other. Peering carefully, thoughtfully, and critically into our pasts will do more to shape the future than all the astrological and/or apocalyptic crystal ball gazing in the world. Our future is not in the stars, in heaven, or even in future life on other planets. Our future is in ourselves. Our future is in our pasts, since we are such historical selves, and we are so influenced and shaped from and by those pasts. The best and proper study of the future is in the past.

It is not only what we remember from the past, but also how we remember that past that shapes who we are. The thesis sentence, repeated again and again, of the Torah and the Hebrew Bible begins with the call and injunction from Yahweh to "remember": Remember Leviticus 25:38 NRSV "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." And in his Thursday evening Last Supper, the historical and Jewish Jesus of Nazareth asked his disciples/apostles to break bread and drink wine in "remembrance of me." Out of our Hebrew and Jewish heritage to the Western world we have learned that the function of "remembering" becomes

⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 13.

⁶ Robert Frost, in one of his most popular poems, "Birches." See also "The Gift Outright" written for the inauguration of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, in Robert Frost, *In the Clearing* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 28-31.

a faithful, committed, and sacred act. The past and what we remember is not only an inheritance and cultural reservoir, it is our identity, it is our calling, and it is, in many cases, our destiny.

What Is History?

Our pasts do not come to us uninterpreted. History is interpretation—conscious or unconscious, good or bad, supported or unsupported—but interpretation nonetheless. Jacques Barzun defined history as interpretation and reinterpretation, retrospection, “re-creation,” modification, and appropriation. It is a serious and critical intellectual pursuit. As such it is unfortunate, judged Barzun, that “*reading history* is a lost avocation.”⁷ Such loss I find all the more regrettable in a democracy where we supposedly depend on enlightened citizens and a somewhat historically informed electorate. Historian Carl Becker reminded us over forty-five years ago that most of the history and historical interpretations we carry around in our minds are poor and/or wrong. Empirically, they are un-researched, undocumented, and not critically examined. But if we carry them around in our minds and we believe them, said Becker, they shape and influence us nonetheless.⁸ Expanding from my indebtedness to Mead, Barzun, Becker, Charles Beard, and others, let me suggest that good history consists of interpretations of events in the past that are supported by available and relevant data carefully selected and critically examined by a historical observer committed to fairness, objectivity, balance, and truthfulness. Poor or bad history is also an interpretation of events in the past but not researched carefully, not documented by available and relevant data, or not done with objectivity, fairness, and balance. Poor or bad history is often done from subjective, biased, and prejudged perspectives. The historian doing sound history often cannot write the history of a given event or phenomenon precisely because real, sound, and relevant data are simply not extant to be examined. He or she must be respectfully silent about that event or phenomenon.

Historians, being human, will interpret events and data differently, but good historians will not deliberately and willfully distort and deceive. They

⁷ Jacques Barzun, *The Culture We Deserve*, Arthur Krystal, editor (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 55.

⁸ Carl L. Becker, “What Are Historical Facts?” *The Western Political Quarterly* 8 (September 1955): 327-340. Reprinted in Hans Meyerhoff, editor *The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959), 120-137.

must seek to be truth tellers and reliable interpreters with as much discipline, discrimination, integrity, and insight as they can muster. In response to Paul M. Edwards's Mormon History Association address at Snowbird, Utah (after a masterful and generous introduction by Mario de Pillis), Western gunfighters and prostitutes may or may not lie, as the case may be, but Mormon historians most assuredly do, of necessity.⁹ Not intentionally but of necessity, in the nature of the enterprise! In their necessary construction of interpretations, historians have to simplify the facts in order to clarify the truth. And yes that is always somewhat subjective deriving from the space-time-culture-bound perspectives of the individual minds doing the interpreting. As Carl Becker concurred, at its inception the interpretation or "historical fact is in someone's mind or it is nowhere."¹⁰ In the same vein, Alfred North Whitehead reminded us that all generalizations are lies particularly when brought down to the level of, and tested by all the tidbits of, tangible data. But such generalizations, done by gifted and discriminating historians, are not wholly arbitrary or random by any means. These interpretations must come from a fair, careful, and balanced sampling of available and relevant data. We generalize and simplify the facts not intending to distort or deceive, but to feature the thesis of the truth and the mythology of meaning.

But we are human in the end. At our best we historians do deceive, even if we don't set out to lie. Our best historians write humanistic works of art, and while works of art and historical sophistication are balanced and lasting, Norman Maclean reminded us in *A River Runs through It* so poetically and autobiographically that life as lived is not a work of art and the great moments, no matter how great, are not balanced and do not last. No matter how clear and well-preserved our histories and our arts, the lives and events we live are shot through with unrelieved complexity and ambiguity. Whatever insightful clarity and simplicity our great histories and works of art achieve are actually deceptions. Human lives are not clear and never simple, and life as lived is not a work of art.¹¹

But we mortal, flawed historians plod ahead anyway. The apostle Paul asked, "Should we continue in sin in order that grace [and truth] may

⁹ Paul M. Edwards, "Gunfighters, Prostitutes, and Mormon Historians: The Historian and the Memory Maker," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 20 (2000): 59-75.

¹⁰ Becker, 125.

¹¹ Norman Maclean, *A River Runs through It, and Other Stories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 2-8, 102-104.

abound? (Romans 6:1 NRSV). Jan Harold Brunvand consoled us by assuring that “the truth never stands in the way of a good story.”¹² In the words of Edward Albee: “Good writers define reality; bad ones merely restate it. A good writer turns fact into truth; a bad writer will, more often than not, accomplish the opposite.”¹³ In the process of writing that reality and telling our story, Aristotle suggested that “the greatest thing in style is to have a command of metaphor.”¹⁴ If I might continue in that vein, fact is a truth without metaphor; but truth is a story form of memory told with myth and metaphor to bring the dry and inert bones of fact to life, to make those bones live again with prepositional sinews. “Memory is the crux of our humanity,” wrote feminist Erica Jong. “Without memory we have no identities. That is really why I am committing an autobiography.”¹⁵ Historians are those of us with social memory who commit our collective biographies in public without embarrassment or remorse.

C. Robert Mesle 1987 JWHHA Presidential Address¹⁶

In the JWHHA presidential address (1987, Stone Church, Independence, Missouri) Robert Mesle taught us that what we literally say is not always what we actually mean. In the talk, titled “Sacred Fudge,” he demonstrated that historical recipes we talk about, document, and describe are not what they seem to be. And this double-speak is not accidental but purposeful and intentional. “Divinity” is not about the beyond “high” up or in the “sky,” nor is it even some sweet and sticky substance in a cooking pot. The historical recipes of the histories we live are not fudge, culinary instructions, or even the carefully described and skillful stirring to boil without burning. Our histories are about gathered families grouped in ceremonial occasions rehearsing the mystic bonds that connect them in warmth, relatedness, and love. Mesle’s “Sacred Fudge” was not about a culinary recipe, a tasty sweet, a kitchen locale, or even an ecclesiastical Eucharist, but really and symbolically about the ultimate bonding of lives and events in basic familial settings that

¹² Harold Brunvand, *The Truth Never Stands in the Way of a Good Story* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

¹³ Edward Albee, *Saturday Review* (4 May 1966), as found at www.bartleby.com/63/97/8997.html.

¹⁴ Aristotle as found at www.carlhose.com/famouswords.htm.

¹⁵ Erica Jong as quoted in *The Quotable Book Lover*, Ben Jacobs and Helena Hjalmarsson, editors (New York: The Lyons Press, 1999), 43.

¹⁶ C. Robert Mesle, “Sacred Fudge: Does God Hide from Us?” *John Whitmer Historical Journal* 8 (1988): 3-12.

genuinely and existentially affirm identity, mediate meaning, rehearse celebration, and share spiritual intimacy in immediate, lived historical settings. Sinai and Cumorah, Smith and Rigdon, Book of Mormon and bundles of "revelations" are symbolic (not literal) just like "Sacred Fudge" or the recipe is symbolic. Sound history in the present or the future depends on how well we learn to read—really read—and properly interpret those historical recipes from former ceremonial occasions. My guess is that while everyone enjoyed Mesle on that evening, only a handful in that friendly Stone Church audience were fully and accurately interpreting the wide range of meanings Bob was suggesting to us. His was a historical interpretation done by a process theologian speaking highly poetically on multiple, simultaneous levels.

Mesle's insightful knowledge and use of the poetic and symbolic nature of language was a relevant and powerful antidote for so much wooden literalism about religious language in the early church (1827-1846), the early Reorganization, and it still plagues much of contemporary Latter-day Saint (LDS) language and belief. In a relativistic and postmodern era, a fundamentalistic insistence on linguistic literalism is simply no longer intellectually respectable. While the LDS have many fine contributions to make in the familial, social, educational, and organizational/managerial spheres, they will never make any major or distinguished contributions to modern theological and/or philosophical discussions so long as they maintain their rigid, restrictive, literalistic use of religious language. Among the many reasons why Professor Sterling McMurrin deserves to be remembered and honored (which is what JWHA is endeavoring to do) is his courage and insight in transcending the old literalistic, theological, and philosophical constraints of traditional LDS thought and language.

Robert Mesle was the JWHA president when he delivered "Sacred Fudge." He is not a historian; he's a theologian. But he made a most insightful and subtle contribution to JWHA and to the church's historical task: he challenged us to a richer, more complex, and more symbolic understanding of language, and especially language in rehearsing our history and religious history.

In Danny Jorgensen's 1997 JWHA presidential address and at the Saturday morning plenary panel on historiography, he reminded us that Latter-day Saint-ism has misused its language and its stories. "Both RLDS conservatives and liberals suffer from the modern tendency to see our sacred

myths as history, rather than as powerful ways of symbolically envisioning ourselves as part of a sacred cosmos.”¹⁷

Danny Jorgensen, Paul Edwards, and I have all called for a re-telling and re-writing of our myths and our stories as relevant contemporary testimonies about our identities and our perceived relation to the sacred. That suggestion requires sensitive, personal, and poetic uses of language. But it is symbolic language and is quite different from doing history and religious history. Since its inception, the Latter-day Saints have had a pronounced tendency to want to literalize their myths, their scriptures, and their testimonies—reducing them to historicisms, empiricisms, dogmas, and spiritual irrelevance. We need the wisdom of letting history be history, and myths, stories, and testimonies be some other personal, poetic, and subjective vehicle.

But LDS and RLDS aren’t alone in misunderstanding different religious languages and imposing false literalisms and historicisms on their traditions and beliefs. My unscientific but not uninformed guess would be that over half of America’s church-going public are far too literal and not brightly literate, religiously speaking. However the LDS have out-literalized most of the fundamentalistic evangelicals by contending, with Joseph Smith Jr., that God actually has “body parts and passions.” Most conservative Protestant bodies don’t go quite that far. This is a statement that, in a scientific, technological, electronic, postmodern age, is empirically and absolutely nonsensical. It has no sense or data to support it. Therefore, render it in a story or poetic realm or drop it. And let’s not let Joseph Jr. off the hook by making him out as some sort of earlier Whiteheadian process thinker or Jamesian pragmatist or Wittgensteinian postmodernist. He wasn’t any of those things. Forward-looking, perhaps, but he wasn’t in any of the mentioned modern or postmodern modes. Neither was he an earlier Barthian, which is what RLDS theologian-in-residence Tony Chvala-Smith would have liked.

Language is metaphorical, symbolic, and paradigmatic: certainly scriptural language at the very least. If Genesis 1:1—2:4 and Genesis 2:5 and following are to be understood literally and scientifically, then one has to be thrown out. Their two orders of creation are chronologically inconsistent. If they are understood as two Hebrew and Jewish myths that speak a story form of truth (not literal, empirical “fact”) then there is no problem of chronological consistency. In “Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart” (Deuteronomy 10:16 NRSV), a sixth-century B.C.E. Jewish prophet without modern

¹⁷ Danny Jorgensen, “Beyond Modernity: The Future of the RLDS Church,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 18 (1998): 16.

education or empirical science was speaking a powerful Jewish metaphor about the existential life of faith. As I read him, he clearly knew he was referring to the symbolic excising of the foreskin of the phallus, and he was not suggesting heart surgery! If a non-theologically educated, pre-scientific Jewish prophet over 2,500 years ago was this self-conscious about the imaginative and symbolic use of religious and theological language, how can we possibly excuse, forgive, and tolerate the simplistic, unsophisticated literalization of scriptural and religious concepts in an age when our junior and senior high students openly entertain electronic and "virtual" realities quite outside the ken of literal, mechanical, technical, "common sense" realism of a former day? Electronic and "virtual realities" are not literal and virtually non-finite ("infinite") in not having spatially measurable quanta, that is, not having feet and inches, pounds and ounces, quarts and gallons, square inches and cubic yards. Relevant and pervasive electronic communication and "virtual realities" themselves compel us all even on the most popular levels to think of "God" and spirituality on a non-tangible, non-spatial level of "non-finity" and non-anthropomorphism.

Mesle was right to challenge us on our use of language. His "sacred fudge" had no specific recipe, no real sugar content to threaten diabetics, no cocoa bean stimulants, and no cholesterol! "Sacred Fudge" could be tasted and enjoyed by all. Mesle was such a carefully gifted poet and storyteller when he spoke to us on a variety of levels of meaning and virtually *all* of them were *non-literal*.

Paul M. Edwards's 1997 Sterling McMurrin Lecture

In the inaugural Sterling McMurrin Lecture, Paul Madison Edwards focused on what he referred to as "Christ-centered boredom," which had bothered him when he thought about "the RLDS approach to its historical task, both institutionally and professionally."¹⁸ In my own words, it amounted to the loss of a convicting common religious experience and the subsequent loss of a convincing story, myth, or testimony among the RLDS. His position was this: "The RLDS Church has become increasingly boring to even the most faithful. The reason is that the story told by the church does not match the experience of the members."¹⁹

It is a loss of spirituality and historicity as well, because it relates to the

¹⁸ Paul M. Edwards, "Christ-centered Boredom: History and Historians," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 18 (1998): 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

church's "historical approach" in that history as the church uses and presents it "reflects a posture which promotes the value of organizational security over spirituality."²⁰ Mystics, visionaries, pilgrims, monks, and nuns, those with successful religious and spiritual quests, perennially stress and testify to humility, finitude, and insecurity. They do not deny nor flee from it but affirm and embrace it. They faithfully and courageously accept their vulnerabilities and limitations. Is there a contradiction here between saints who embraces their insecurity and the institutional church that strives for security? What about: "those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it?" (Luke 9:24 NRSV). If Edwards is right in overtly seeking "institutional security," is the RLDS Church losing its spiritual life and soul? Does it need a new name—and perhaps a new soul—because it has lost its former one and has yet to discover (or re-discover) a new spiritual vision and religious identity? You answer this for yourself. I cannot answer it for you. But it certainly makes one wonder!

If accurate, Edwards's interpretation is qualitatively different from and superior to one based on (like Launius's and Walton's) sheer loss of numbers in membership and contributions, as important as those are to denominational survival in voluntaristic America. Edwards's thesis is poignant and serious in that it strikes home to the heart of the RLDS identity—religious and spiritual—or the lack thereof. Edwards's lecture, coupled with Danny Jorgensen's presidential address, has haunted me since the 1997 JWHA in Kirtland, Ohio. It troubled and perplexed me all the more to hear the president of the RLDS Church say at a JWHA meeting at Camp Doniphan in Missouri last fall that he didn't know what "Christ-centered boredom" meant. What a moment! History is not only interpretation, it is also *dialogue*. We who do historical study stand on the shoulders of others who have preceded us, and we are forever in their debt. History is a dialogue with former historians and other living colleagues in the present who critique us and assist us in our efforts for more and improved historical studies. It was telling, to me at least, that in the arena of RLDS historical interpretation and dialogue, the president of the RLDS Church didn't understand the interpretive thesis and concept of the director of Temple School working one floor below him in the same building, and somehow couldn't or didn't make a phone call down to him, or, better still, ask for an office visit to discuss and

²⁰ Edwards, 22.

get clear the meaning of this important perception, however accurate or inaccurate it might be. In my fifteen years of activity with the JWHA, I can now say with absolute confidence, that for improved historical interpretation and productivity there needs to be more and better critical dialogue in the RLDS headquarters itself, and there needs to be *more and better dialogue* in the JWHA, and that requires the efforts of a lot of us, not just a small and courageous handful. For RLDS survival, there needs to be more young men and women who have dynamic religious experiences and find new ways of telling fresh stories and inventing new myths, and they need the ecclesiastical freedom and inspiration to tell these testimonies in their own ways. For the health and survival of RLDS identity and also for the JWHA, there needs to be more critical and more far-reaching historical interpretation. One of my aims is to draw attention to and participate in this on-going historical interpretation, historiographical dialogue, and open critical inquiry.

Mario S. de Pillis's 1966 *Dialogue* Article

Mario de Pillis declared and documented with clarity and discrimination that the search for religious authority—the recovery of lost authority for present identity and future paradise (and success)—was the central thrust and issue of early Mormonism (although it was central to a mix and variety of complex concepts and concerns of early LDSism to be sure).

Indeed, the origin and whole doctrinal development of Mormonism under the Prophet may be characterized as a pragmatically successful quest for religious authority, a quest that he shared with many other anxious rural Americans of his time, class, and place. Historians who do not take this quest seriously enough to examine it do not take Mormonism seriously enough for rigorous historical inquiry.²¹

De Pillis's perception is so primal and foundational for an understanding of early Mormonism that it will never be displaced or overturned by subsequent revisionist historiography.

A very substantial measure—and perhaps the most telling measure—of contemporary Mormonism is to compare and contrast what has become of this “quest for religious authority” of the early period with the current LDS and RLDS denominations in the year 2000. Both have outgrown much of their strident evangelistic exclusivism and sectarian authoritarianism and have really become American denominations. The RLDS denominationalized earlier and has done it more thoroughly than the LDS, but the present LDS

²¹ Mario de Pillis, “The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Spring 1966): 88.

are doing it as well. Both have transcended what de Pillis referred to as a fierce “contempt for sectarianism”²² and pluralism that appeared as early as the Book of Mormon. Both the LDS and RLDS have diminished domestic evangelical growth (even the LDS) and any real evangelical growth is now international, which would suggest and will result in continued and even greater religious change and cultural diversity.

At the 1993 MHA meeting, several JWHA members (Dick Howard, Bill Russell, Bill Morain, and I) delivered papers addressing and describing fast-moving changes in the RLDS institution, which were visibly threatening and disturbing to many LDS historians visiting from “the West.” They were openly speculating about what similar alterations and challenges might do to the LDS “out West,” and I was taken back by their puzzled reactions. However since that time considerable change has occurred in the LDS Church. My Terre Haute friend, neighbor, and Indiana State University colleague in theater, Gary Stewart, gave a historical memoir of his British mission in 1957-1959 and documented it using winsome and graphic personal accounts of the beginning of an era of tremendous shift in the LDS belief, practice, and evangelism. He presented this later that summer (August 2000) at the Sunstone Conference in Salt Lake City (and I’m assuming it will be eventually published). Whether self-conscious about those changes, or willing to admit them or not, the LDS have been de-sectarianized to a great degree and are becoming denominationalized as well.

My neighbors Gary and Diana Stewart have aided me in coming to a rich insight about the LDS, in contrast to the RLDS. I noticed in Gary and Diana’s plays and lives that they had, and lived out of, an LDS and Great Basin subculture. Even after the loss of theological affirmation, religious conviction, and congregational affiliation, there is a Mormon subculture to assume, live out of, and fall back on, very much like Judaism and Jewish subcultures. In contrast, the RLDS do not and never did have one. Following doctrinal disenchantment and religious skepticism, all there is to keep former RLDS members in some way associated is through the basic, existential, brotherly or sisterly bonds of friendship. Perhaps the RLDS should have re-named themselves the “Friendship of Former and Future Saints” rather than the nondescript “Community of Christ.”

²² de Pillis, 88.

W. Grant McMurray's 1999 JWHA Address

When W. Grant McMurray addressed the JWHA, I thought he picked a most appropriate topic—"History and Mission in Tension: A View from Both Sides"—and presented it with a respectable degree of balance and perception.²³ Certainly the assessment of history was granted a significant role to play in an ecclesiastical institution's identity and mission. However, when I watched, albeit from afar, the president's leadership and World Conference action, it appeared to me to be the most far-reaching and symbolic action to date of the RLDS Church actually endeavoring to change, escape, and forget its own history, not just a re-telling, re-visioning, or creative re-interpretation. As an American religious historian, I was saddened. To me, the church was choosing deliberately to shed its own history, historical experience, its name and even concepts that once gave it identity and distinction. To a historian this dramatic and perhaps even dangerous move was far more than the ordination of women or its departure from genetic leadership of Smith blood. This threatens the identity, future, and mission of the movement far more than quantitative changes like the loss of membership and loss of revenue that Launius and Walton pointed to. This was qualitative change. One can be a small movement and still have solid and distinctive identity, like the Unitarian-Universalists, the Shakers, or the Quakers. But to me the whole-scale departure from and loss of one's institutional history is more akin to the demise (call it suicide, murder, or euthanasia) of an institution. Loss of history is a loss of identity. Even if possible, it is not totally desirable. Watching that action, I have now joined the ranks of those who conceive that the RLDS historical existence, meaning, identity, and viability are being jeopardized, certainly in the long run if not the short run. Whether the church leaders made a deliberate decision to do so or not, in Danny Jorgensen's terms, the RLDS Church has left the creeping secularization of modernity and is marching backward into postmodernity with no real guideposts from its generative past.²⁴ And so now the real question and challenge come: Do RLDS members really know how to courageously and creatively deal with postmodernity, ready or not? I don't think anyone knows. I certainly don't. But I think the pressure and test have certainly been hastened by the April 2000 Conference action.

If a clerical leader desires to be a corporation president and chief

²³ W. Grant McMurray, "History and Mission in Tension: A View from Both Sides," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 20 (2000): 34-47.

²⁴ Jorgensen, 15.

executive officer, then he/she should study the stock market, consult with lawyers and investors, hire fundraisers, and confer with public relations experts. But if he/she wishes to be a prophetic leader, he/she needs to study history, consult religion, and perhaps hire more church history staff. It concerned me a great deal that when the current RLDS leader became president, he stopped attending JWHA and MHA meetings, reading research papers, participating on panels, and other activities. I thought last year might signal a change in this regard. If the RLDS wish to be a prophetic church and people, they should re-appropriate their history, much the way W. Paul Jones suggested, for example, with the concept of "restoration." History should be de-literalized, de-historicized, re-created; it should not be expunged or repressed.

W. Paul Jones's 1996 address JWHA Spring Banquet (and the MHA/JWHA joint meeting in Kingston, Ontario, June 1995)

While he is not a JWHA, MHA, or RLDS historian, I cannot resist recalling the insightful address of W. Paul Jones at the MHA/JWHA in Kingston, at the JWHA spring banquet, and printed in the *JWHA Journal*. He appreciated, reinterpreted, and re-envisioned RLDS history without trying to re-pristinate or reproduce it on the one hand or endeavoring to expunge or repress it on the other. He divined the concepts of the past that could be re-envisioned and re-projected for the future. He called for a re-telling of the church's stories, he called for a "re-symbolization as an imaginative re-appropriation"²⁵ of the sagas, testimonies, and shared experiences of Smith and the Saints, without wasting any more time trying to discover the "real" Joseph, the "real" Moroni, or the "real" golden plates that are will-o'-the-wisps at this point anyway. We need the renewal of myth, story, religious experience, testimony, and history all at the same time, and there is no problem or contradiction in doing so with each and all of them. "Life without myth is likely to be dead and sterile, while religion without myth is a flat, rational substitute for the real thing."²⁶

Professor Jones exhibited more real faith in the RLDS possibilities of re-mythologization, re-sacralization, and historical re-interpretation than the institutional church itself seems to have demonstrated in the last decade of

²⁵ W. Paul Jones, "Theological Re-Symbolization of the RLDS Tradition: The Call to a Stage beyond De-Mythologizing," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 16 (1996): 9.

²⁶ Morton T. Kelsey, *Myth, History, and Faith: The Remythologizing of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 180.

the twentieth century. I commend a re-reading of Professor Jones to JWHA and RLDS audiences; he certainly deserves such re-consideration. It will be a good tonic for the present amnesia that seems to be fogging the institutional denomination.

Richard P. Howard's 1999 Sterling McMurrin Lecture²⁷

In the third Sterling McMurrin Lecture, Richard Howard pointed out what he interpreted as the "peace gene" in the LDS and RLDS traditions. He did so with imagination, poetry, passion, and even music. Those who heard him saluted his aspiration, his enviable ethical imperative, and his cleverly crafted textual achievement. In fact, he succeeded in documenting his case better than I thought he could. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted outright for historical clarity and accuracy, whatever "peace gene" Howard is recognizing and explicating in very recent RLDS denominationalism was an extremely "recessive" one, at the very best, back in the early nineteenth-century origins of the movement. In its first generation, the Latter-day Saint movement was characterized by evangelical assertiveness and theological aggression, deriving from Old Testament imagery, Calvinism, millenarianism, sectarianism, and American "nativism" and expansionism (with its twin notions of "manifest destiny" and "destiny under God"). Much of the evangelical and religious rhetoric of Joseph Smith, Sidney Ridgon, Parley Pratt, and Brigham Young was stridently assertive and extroverted. It could have been said of these men what Martin Luther suggested about Thomas Müntzer: that they "swallowed the Holy Spirit, feathers and all!"²⁸ They felt themselves to be religious "giants" announcing the only authentic "gospel" and truth to men and women on Earth and helping to roll the "stone [of the true church that] was cut from the mountain not by hands" (Daniel 2:45 NRSV) through the entire globe. I cannot recall ever reading any of the rhetoric of this first generation of Mormon leadership that suggested to me a "peace gene."

Being a historian and speaking in the presence of other historians in a historical society, while I acknowledge Howard's total intellectual freedom to offer any sort of historical revision he wishes, I think intellectual honesty behooves him to admit just how "recessive" the "peace gene" really is and just how relatively recent and under what new circumstances it has emerged.

²⁷ "Quest for Traces of the 'Peace Gene'," audiocassette available from JWHA, 427 West 70th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64113-2022.

²⁸ Martin Luther as found at www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=55671.

I realize his time was limited for doing this, but without this larger historical context it presents a faulty and an ahistorical perspective of the interplay between peace and war, submission and aggression, and sectarianism and denominationalism in the full history and identity of the Latter-day Saint movement. The more valuable and illuminating historical view is one that provides proper balance and perspective even when one is treating small, minor, overlooked, or “recessive” elements in a much greater overall picture. Improper overemphasis of one small corner of the picture can offer just as much distortion as absolute and factual inaccuracies. Good historical interpretation is one that provides a proper and balanced interpretive perspective.

That said, I want to say I profited from the nuance and creativity provided by Howard’s historical revisionism. Clearly his major data and best references were from quite recent RLDS experience. In that light, he missed an important datum, to my thinking, when he failed to employ and explicate the design, the symbolism, the aesthetics, and the naturalness of the RLDS Temple. It would strengthen Howard’s case considerably, and I was waiting for him to use it before he concluded. The Temple is an architectural and empirical “Exhibit A” for the new hope and aspiration of Community of Christ identity. I encourage Howard to extend that part of his interpretation and case in the future.

Isleta L. Pement’s 1994 JWHA Presidential Address²⁹

In the JWHA presidential address in Nauvoo, Illinois, Lee Pement actually preceded and pre-empted Paul Edwards’s employment of the diagnosis of “boredom,” not just in and with the RLDS, but in the JWHA and the doing of Mormon history. Apparently, and to her credit, she was quite a ways ahead of many of the rest of us in sensing and reacting to this “deep malaise” and despondency. I can now acknowledge and entertain her insight in retrospect with greater historical experience and deeper appreciation.

Barbara Hands Bernauer’s 1999 JWHA Presidential Address³⁰

In the JWHA presidential address at Camp Doniphan, Missouri, Barbara

²⁹ Isleta L. Pement, “The Boring of Mormonism,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 15 (1995): 3-8.

³⁰ Barbara J. Bernauer, “Gathering the Remnants: Establishing the RLDS Church in Southwestern Iowa,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 20 (2000): 5-33.

Bernauer gave a warm, tasteful, and appreciative example of combining personal history, family history, regional history, and church history in her search for identity, affirmation, and heritage. History and identity are always intertwined at the deepest levels and Barbara offered us a gentle, calm, well-reasoned demonstration of this being done in our presence. What a fuller, richer, deeper heritage the RLDS Church would have *if all members* had that kind of ready grasp and understanding of their history and place within the context of the movement. What a church with a powerful identity!

The Historiographical Challenge

I have been flattered that a couple of JWHA members have called me the "historiographical president" of JWHA because I made that one of the major aims and goals of my time in office. I knew I could not have a very large effect on the overall association, but I wanted to have a few specific targets in mind. I want to thank the people who helped me with this historiographical venture, such as Barbara Bernauer, Norman Bernauer, Mike Riggs, Danny Jorgensen, Paul Edwards, Mario de Pillis, Val Avery, and many more. Right or wrong, it has been my mounting perception that in both the MHA and the JWHA, among LDS historians and RLDS historians, one of the two or three challenges for the next decade or two is serious, intensified, radical, and fresh historiographical interpretations of Mormon and Saint history, inclusively understood. Too many of the previous historiographical perspectives have been too narrow, too "loyal," too institutional, too ingrown, too "self-referential" (to borrow Mario de Pillis's apt phrase), too "Great-Basin oriented" for the LDS, and too "Jacksocentric" for the RLDS/Community of Christ. I have tried to exhibit some of the re-interpretation in my own addresses and articles, including this one, and I have tried to lift up some of the re-interpretations of others I think deserve some attention. I hope and trust all of us will continue.

JWHA historians, presidents, presenters, and interpreters have been at work offering us a variety of interesting and relevant contributions to JWHA's continued historiographical interpretations and approaches. They are legion, often at different ends of various spectra: from "sacred fudge" to "Christ-centered boredom"; from sectarian "restorationism" to rather non-descript denominationalism and ecumenicity; from decades of literalist historicism (literalizing our myths as a substitute for solid history) all the way to historylessness; from evangelical assertiveness/aggressiveness (an occasional "holy war") to the detection or perhaps "implantation" of a "peace gene"; from an architecture of authority (here and hereafter) to an

architecture of peace and universality; from a “chosen people to “righteous remnant” to “restored” people and church, to a “reorganized” institution, to a denominationalized RLDS, to a non-national, ahistorical, ecumenical “Community of Christ”; from a patriarchal hierarchy and theocracy of the “restored true priesthood” to the democratization of the priesthood, and even the “feminization” of leadership and the church itself. We have been at work, as this brief list constitutes quite a broad array of different and imaginative interpretations. There is no sameness or simplicity here. It will be interesting and fun—intellectually and historically—to see where the JWHA interpretive motifs and orientations are in ten to twenty years, certainly somewhere quite different from where we are at the moment.

Random Suggestions for Future Research

I wish to offer some suggestions or “bait” for some future research and investigation by JWHA members and other historians. I will offer them in the form of proposed assertions or suggested historiographical interpretations to invite, lead, and guide research. Perhaps they have merit, and perhaps not, but they constitute “grist” for the mill.

1. Perhaps the ordination of women (and so many women at that) to the priesthood in the RLDS Church is not an indication of the democratization of the RLDS, but in the light of so many male priesthood members growing older, becoming inactive and/or less effective, being superannuated or retiring, and not being replaced by other males, what we are witnessing is something more like the feminization of the RLDS Church and the priesthood. (This was actually first suggested to me by Paul M. Edwards in response to my own earlier historiographical claim that it constituted “democratization.” Now, about five to ten years later, I am not so certain. Hence, my challenge for re-interpretation and investigation.)
2. Rather than re-interpreting, re-visioning, and re-appropriating its history, the RLDS is actually giving up and abandoning its history, becoming historyless, and therefore, bereft of identity. Is this so?
3. The newly enacted nomenclature, “Community of Christ,” is in fact a name assisting in the loss of a distinctive religious and historical identity of the RLDS community of faith and actually lends empirical support to the thesis of Roger D. Launius and George Walton from the 1997 JWHA conference meeting in Kirtland, Ohio, in fact it lends more support than simply the numerical count of membership (in this case loss of membership).

4. While the numerical and evangelistic growth of both the LDS and RLDS churches are now no longer domestic but international in scope, the basic characters of these denominational institutions still seem to be American and Western in content, structure, values, and existentialist symbolism. If the LDS and/or RLDS members were truly "de-Americanized" and shorn of their telltale "American," parochial, cultural trappings and features, would there be anything universal, non-parochial left, ultimately? We wonder!
5. At some future point we need a thorough, balanced, and integrated intellectual history of Mormonism identifying and describing the tremendous variety of strands of thought and belief, religion and culture that went into the variegated make-up of the early Latter-day Saint mind and movement. It was anything but simple, and no potential assessment of its real complexity, that I have seen, has even begun to do it justice. It will require a truly broadly educated and disciplined thinker to make this contribution. The early movement was so complex that is not surprising that some of its parts came flying apart after the Nauvoo period and this "axis period" of martyrdom, leadership disputes, and loss of prophetic oracle. De Pillis has agreed that we need to re-assess this early period as well.
6. Consequently and relatedly, we need a truly pluralistic history of the Reorganization. It was not simple, singular, or united in agreement over a host of matters. No RLDS history has plumbed and articulated this cacophony of different Reorganite possibilities, which were eventually muffled by prophetic theocracy, very much like pluralism, democracy, and diversity of the early church were suppressed, cut off, or silenced, like Hiram Page. We need a truly multi-faceted history of the RLDS/Community of Christ.

These are a few suggestions, challenges, or topics I offer to eager, ambitious, and willing historical students and interpreters. Bon chance, bon voyage!

The Ecstatic "Movement of Truth" for the Historian

One of the most powerful, memorable, and satisfying senses of the historian is that tremendous state of mind—fullness of mind—when we've discovered and are reading a primary document for the first time for ourselves, perhaps the first time for anyone in the past decade, the past generation, the past century, or for the first time! There we are in musty, dark stacks or in an attic with a trunk or box of random letters, or at our desks at

2:30 a.m., reading/meeting the mind of someone long deceased. Suddenly real data prompts sparks, fire, and light to our living minds and hearts! Our breasts are bursting with excitement, and our entire beings thirst for knowledge and truth. And we actually ache and yearn to communicate this insight and these data to our colleagues, the sooner the better! This is the moment of the historian's "eureka," and that kind of movement and experience will fuel the researching, re-thinking, re-visioning, and re-writing history for a lifetime! That is the moment of illumination and enlightenment that unites us in our historical enterprises and confederation. That is the pivotal moment for which we work, strive, and hope. It is a moment that not only has an epistemology and rationality to it; it has an aesthetic and an ethicality as well! That is the moment for which historians long and yearn, and from which all good and sound historical hermeneutics are born. I wish us all more of those good and enduring moments.

Conclusion (and Refrain)

I am the father of Aaron (and Christa), and I have never been a son of Melchisedek. I was birthed from an RLDS mother's womb, but I sojourned my life in a foreign land, dispersed from the "chosen people," living among alien people with different gods and goddesses, but they have shared their stories, sanctuaries, food, and fudge with me. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5 NRSV), but we have forgiven one another's sins, shared our sufferings, and shared our fellowship just as if we might have been in the company of "the chosen." Like Dr. Rieux in *The Plague* said: "I feel more fellowship with the defeated than with saints. Heroism and sanctity don't really appeal to me, I imagine. What interests me is being a man."³¹ We can become like Camus' existential Sisyphus, ever chained to his rock, but he learns to accept and live with the rock and struggles of life, and "one must imagine Sisyphus happy."³² I am the father of Aaron (and Christa), I have never been the son of Melchisedek and my grandchildren are "Gentiles." But I have become historically content with who I am and have come to imagine myself "happy." Life is not really a leaving somewhere and a going somewhere: life is the traveling, the

³¹ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, Stuart Gilbert, translator (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 231.

³² Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, Justin O'Brien, translator (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 123.

sojourning, the pilgriming, the journeying itself,³³ and with the company of family, friends, and companions it's never boring!



"Papa-Bear" Edward A. Warner with (l. to r.) grandson William Warner, 4½; grandson Journey Warner, 1½; and granddaughter Emily Cruz, 1½. Photo courtesy of author.

³³ Sheldon B. Kopp, *If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Kill Him! The Pilgrimage of Psychotherapy Patients* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 3-65.

First Mother of Mormonism: Lucy Mack Smith and Gendered Politics, 1844–1845

Lavina Fielding Anderson¹

Lucy Mack Smith was the first mother of Mormonism, not only because of the fame of Joseph Jr., her third surviving son, but because her personal values, her self-identification as a mother, and her religious yearnings linked her to an exalted cultural role for women in eighteenth-century America that survived virtually unchanged through the Victorian era. It is as a mother that Lucy finds the fullest expression of her identity, that identity which she most frequently claims, and that identity which she used as a weapon—virtually her only weapon—in a canny and quite competent campaign of concealed politics with Brigham Young in the traumatic year and a half following the martyrdom.

Lucy as Mother

According to Preston Nibley, one of her many editors:

Mrs. Smith experienced supreme pride and joy in the knowledge and realization that she was the mother of the Prophet of God. It was her pleasure to declare on numerous occasions, “I am the mother of the Prophet.” No one except herself could have known the satisfaction she derived from this knowledge. And yet, she was called upon to pay the full price for this glorious privilege; poverty, persecution, trials, troubles and sorrows of the bitterest kind were to be her lot in this world.²

¹ Lavina Fielding Anderson, president of Editing, Inc., lives in Salt Lake City with her husband, Paul Lawrence Anderson, a museum designer. Their son, Christian, is currently serving in the Texas Houston South (Spanish-speaking) Mission. She is editor of the *Journal of Mormon History*, a member of the Board of Editors of Signature Books, a trustee of the Mormon Alliance, contemporary issues editor for the *Mormon Women's Forum Quarterly*, and, with Janice M. Allred, co-editor of the *Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance*. She is former associate editor of the *Ensign*, former associate editor and coassociate editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and past president of the Association for Mormon Letters. She is the editor of *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001) and is currently preparing a biography of Lucy Mack Smith.

² Preston Nibley, editor, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith, with Notes and Comments by Preston Nibley* (1945; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958 printing), ix.

Nibley's evaluation is amply borne out by Lucy's account, which gives many vignettes of her motherly feelings and commitments. When Joseph Sr. praises Lucy on his deathbed in September 1842, it is not because she was an exemplary housewife or even that she was a devoted and loving wife, but because she was an exceptional mother, praise that Lucy obviously cherished. She quotes two separate statements he made, singling out her ability as a mother:

"Mother, do you not know, that you are the mother of as great a family as ever lived upon the earth? . . . Mother, do you not know, that you are one of the most singular women in the world? . . . You have brought up my children for me by the fireside, and . . . could always comfort them when I could not. We have often wished that we might both die at the same time, but you must not desire to die when I do, for you must stay to comfort the children when I am gone."³

Lucy identifies herself proudly and publicly as the "mother of the Prophet"—to a minister who calls Joseph a "poor deluded boy," to a woman from whom she was seeking shelter for the women and children she was leading to Kirtland, and to the crowd of armed Missourians who are taking Joseph and Hyrum away with every intention of shooting them.

Her motherly tenderness during the typhus epidemic when Sophronia is at the point of death and Joseph's leg is being operated on are well known.⁴ Speaking to the Saints at the October 1845 general conference, Lucy delivered a homily on child-rearing practices that gives an appealing little vignette of her own hearthside:

I raised them in the fear of God[.] When they were two or three years old I told them I wanted them to love God with all their hearts I told them to do good . . . I want you to teach them about Joseph in Egypt & such things - when they are four years old they will love to read their bible - I presume there never was a family more obedient than mine - I did not have to speak to them only once.⁵

³ Lucy [Mack] Smith, Mother of the Prophet, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853); reprinted in Lavina Fielding Anderson, editor, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 715, 722. Further quotations from Lucy's writing are taken from this edition.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 300-309.

⁵ Lucy Mack Smith, Minutes of Address, uncatalogued, General Conference, 8 October 1845, holograph of fair copy apparently by Curtis E. Bolton, 7-8, Access no. 211325-ARCH-94, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

In contrast, she is harshly critical of mothers who do not take their responsibilities seriously. Leading a party of fifty from New York to Ohio, she expresses consistent disgust at the general improvidence, passivity, and dependence of both men and women. But she is particularly irritated by the slovenly, whining, and careless women who make no effort to safeguard their children, who are apparently rampaging over the canalboat without paying any heed to the low-lying bridges. She calls the women together and sermonizes:

God has given you children to be a blessing to you and it is your duty to take care of them to keep them out of every possible danger . . . and I warn you now to attend better to your duty in this respect or your children will by some unforeseen accident be taken from you. . . . I thought that what I had said and [an accident in which a child was killed] would rouse the sisters to greater attention but in this I was mistaken for they took no thought of either and their excuse for their neglecting their children was that they could not make them mind[.] I told them that I could make them mind me easy enough and as they would not controll them I should[.]⁶

And she does. The children, including teenagers, are so obedient to her throughout the voyage that Orrin Porter Rockwell's mother implores her to intervene because "he won't mind any body but you."⁷

Another revelation of Lucy as mother comes in a lengthy passage in the 1844-1845 rough draft, much condensed in the 1845 Coray fair copy, and the 1853 published version. Lucy conceals the printer's manuscript under her bed. Then pillowing her head above the spot where it lies, she embarks on an all-night reminiscence of her spiritual quest for religious certainty. She recalls her brother Jason's sermons as a seeker; the pious and exemplary deaths of her sisters, Lovina and Lovisa, and her own "anxiety ~~and~~ distress and fear least I shoul by any means fail of that preparation which was needful in order meet ~~again~~ my sisters." When she married, since Joseph Sr. was a Universalist and unaffiliated with any religion, she became a lone and lonely seeker. "[F]or days and months and years," she wrote, "I continued asking God continually to reveal to me the hidden treasures of his will—~~but~~ although I was always trenghtened [*sic*] from time still I did not receive a direct [answer] to my prayers for the space [of] 20 years." Then, her desire for religious assurance is fully met within her own family circle: "But what was my joy and astonishment to hear my own son though a boy of 14 <years of age> declare

⁶ *Lucy's Book*, 516-517.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 527.

that he had been visited by an angel from Heaven.”

Her meditation ends with a paean of religious joy and spiritual rapture that, tellingly, finds its final expression in the words of Mary’s Magnificat:

my Soul swelled with joy that could scarcely heightened except by the reflection that the record which had cost so much labor and suffering and anxiety were now <in reality> lying beneath my own head . . . Prophets of ancient days and angels even the Great God had <had> his eye upon it. . . . [A]m I indeed the mother of a prophet of the God of Heaven—the honored instrument in performing so great work—I felt ~~th~~ I was in the purview of angels and my [heart] bounded at the thought . . . thus I spent the night surrounded by enemies and yet in an extacy of happiness and truly I can say that “My soul did magnify and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior.”⁸

In addition to her private role as mother of the prophet, Lucy also had a public role as mother of the church. Beginning with Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Jr.’s followers called her “mother” as early as 1828-1829.⁹ When Joseph Smith ordained his father church patriarch, he obviously saw a parallel role for Lucy in the blessing he pronounced on her: “She is a mother in Israel, and shall be a partaker with my father in all his patriarchal blessings. . . . Blessed is my mother, for her soul is ever filled with benevolence and philanthropy; and notwithstanding her age, she shall yet receive strength and be comforted in the midst of her house: and thus saith the Lord. She shall have eternal life.”¹⁰

Lucy was thus not only the biological mother of the prophet, but also the literal mother of other martyrs whose blood nourished the church. Even more broadly, she defined herself as the mother of the faithful who joined that church. “Mother” was, to her, a sacred title, but it was also a political one and she used it not only to establish a relationship of affection and mutually shared belief with other members—and especially with the leaders who succeeded Joseph—but also as a reminder of the support that children owed their mothers.

Negotiations with Brigham Young

Lucy had a number of encounters with Brigham Young and the Twelve

⁸ *Lucy’s Book*, 464-466.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 437, 513.

¹⁰ Joseph Fielding Smith, editor, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 39. Joseph Jr. ordained Joseph Sr. church patriarch on 18 December 1833.

in the months following the martyrdom, most of them warmly positive and almost certainly sincere, although the Twelve also had strongly political motives in appearing to be solicitous and Lucy had an equally strong motive in appearing to be compliant. These encounters included blessings, private meetings between individual apostles and Lucy, meetings of Lucy with the quorum itself, honors, temple ordinances, and addresses at various gatherings. The most complex interactions were Lucy's announcement of her vision about William—a manifestation of her private motherhood—and a public assertion of her identity as the Church's mother at the three-day October 1845 general conference.

Revelation about William

William quite literally had been someone only a mother could love. He was in the East at the time of the martyrdom and stayed there, as counseled, to avoid those who might want to add another Smith scalp to their belts. About six months later, in November, he wrote to W. W. Phelps, feeling out his welcome among the Twelve. He appealed to the memory of “an aged and martyred father, . . . and four brothers, two of whom in my vision appear with mangled bodies, and garments red. . . . Their blood is still unavenged, and the cruel murderers are lounging about seeking for more; what have others to expect? . . . My poor old mother, almost worn out with years and trouble, and three sisters that remain, with myself, are all of that family, who were the founders of Mormonism.” He asked Phelps to “see my mother, and give her a word of consolation from me” as well as his sisters “and the martyrs’ widows. . . . Will you pray for us, dear brethren at Nauvoo?”¹¹ There is no indication that he attempted to write to any of his relatives, including Lucy—and in fact, as later events showed, he tried to make political capital out of his mother's poverty and widowhood in a rather unappealing way.

Phelps responded warmly on Christmas Day, 1844, vowing that he and William “have been one in faith, one in love, and one in friendship” and praising the Twelve as “good men; the best the Lord can find; they do the will of God, and the saints know it,”¹² an assertion that would become a sore point with William as soon as he returned to Nauvoo. Phelps had visited

¹¹ William Smith letter to W. W. Phelps, Bordentown, New Jersey, 10 November 1844, printed first in *The Prophet* (New York) and reprinted in the *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1844): 755-757.

¹² *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1844): 761.

Lucy, "and she cried for joy over your letter. Though in her 69th year, her heart was big with hope for her 'darling son, William:'—and she blessed you in the name of the Lord."¹³ Encouraged by this warm greeting, William made preparations to return to Nauvoo.

Lucy followed up Phelps's assurances with a letter of her own in January 1845: "The 12 are very anxious to see you and the church are all waiting to receive you with open arms," she wrote.¹⁴ William returned to Nauvoo on 4 May 1845, bringing his wife, who was dying of kidney failure. She expired on 22 May.

Exactly a month later on 22 June, William married the first of nine subsequent wives, five of them polygamously. At this point, Lucy's manuscript was either finished or within a few days of being completed, since she applied for the copyright on 18 July. On 27 June 1845, the anniversary of the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum, Lucy summoned her family and a few friends to tell them about a triple vision she had had the night before.¹⁵

All three center on the role of Lucy's family. These visions link her family's sacrifices very closely to the rise of the church and include a role, although a vague one, for her usually invisible daughters:

Brothers and Children, I was much troubled and felt as if I had the sins of the whole world to bear, and the burthen of the Church; and I felt that there was something wrong. I called on the Lord to show me what was wrong, and if it was me. I called upon him until I slept. I then heard a voice calling on me saying awake, wake, awake, for thy only son that thou hast living, they for his life have laid a snare. My aged servant Joseph who was the first patriarch of this Church, and my servant Hyrum who was the second patriarch, my servant Joseph who was Prophet and Seer, and my servants Samuel, William, and Don Carlos they were the first founders, fathers, and heads of this Church, raised up in these last days, and thou art the mother, and thy daughters have helped, and they are the daughters in Israel, and have helped raise up this Church. . . . (I saw William in a room full of armed men and he having no weapons. They would have crushed him down, if it had not been for the power of God. . . . Two amongst

¹³ *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1844): 759.

¹⁴ Lucy Mack Smith letter to William Smith, 23 January 1845, Nauvoo, Illinois, holograph, MS 15550. LDS Church Archives.

¹⁵ Lucy was then living with daughter Lucy and husband Arthur Millikin; into their home also came William, daughter Katharine and her husband Wilkins Jenkins Salisbury, daughter Sophronia and her husband William McCleary, nephew Elias Smith, and eight more individuals, including John Taylor's wife, Leonora.

them had blacker hearts than the rest, and I know who they were, and I will tell them if they will come to me. Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball know it is so, and dare not deny it.) [The voice continued:] Call upon the Twelve, let all things be set in order. . . . Thou art the mother in Israel, and tell thy children all to walk uprightly. Thy son William he shall have power over the Churches, he is father in Israel over the patriarchs and the whole of the Church. . . . He is President over all the Church, they cannot take his apostleship away from him. The Presidency of the Church belongs to William, he being the last of the heads of the Church, according to the lineage, he having inherited it from the family from before the foundation of the world. Thou art a mother in Israel. Thy spirit arose and said in eternity, that it would take a body to be a mother to [the] Prophet who should be raised up to save the last dispensation. And the spirit said unto me be faithful (and that I had been faithful.) And tell the Church to be faithful. . . .

2nd Vision. Joseph came to me and said "that day is coming when I shall wave the sceptre of power over my enemies. Be patient my brothers and sisters, the day is coming when you shall have eternal life and be rewarded for all your troubles."

3rd Vision. Father [Joseph Sr.] came to me and . . . said "I have . . . come . . . to tell you one thing certain, which I have told you many times before. It is my prayers and the prayers of our sons that you live to take care of William and my daughters, and see that they have their rights and standing where they ought to have it."¹⁶

It is significant that Lucy's "authority," identified in this revelation is that of a mother instructing "all" of the children, an identification affirmed twice. The most significant point is that William owned the presidency of the Church by right of "lineage," having "inherited it from the family." Once again, Lucy almost compares herself to Mary, the mother of Jesus, in offering her body by premortal covenant as the vessel through which the chosen prophet would come, thus reaching back into the past. The visit from Joseph Sr., coming as he does from the post-mortal world, reaches into the future, but he reinforces the same message: his family must have its "rights and standing."

Needless to say, this revelation caused a ripple in the community. The next day, Saturday, Bishop George Miller made arrangements for Lucy to meet with Brigham Young and other general authorities on Sunday and to

¹⁶ Dean C. Jessee, editor, *John Taylor: Nauvoo Journal* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Press, 1996), 73-75.

have her revelation read in the Sunday meeting. However, before the meeting, Lucy requested that the revelation not be read because it “was only for her own children and not for the Priesthood or Church.” Besides, she said, “it was not written down correctly.” Brigham Young, during the preaching service “discussed the vision but did not read the text.”¹⁷ According to William’s indignant but admittedly self-serving account, Young “had the *refinement of feeling and consideration* to ridicule on the stand the whole matter, and marvelled that the church could entertain for a moment the crazy manifestations of an old woman.”¹⁸

On Monday, 30 June, a delegation called on Lucy at her home. William was not there. He had been in a belligerent mood the day before when his Uncle John Smith and cousin George A. Smith had tried to persuade him to deny any claim to the Church presidency. However, he sent a letter expressing complete willingness to acknowledge Brigham Young as president as long as Brigham Young acknowledged his (William’s) right to the patriarchy.

Seven apostles and both of Nauvoo’s bishops crowded into the Millikin home. Brigham Young tackled the main point without hesitation: William “was aiming at power, and authority, and priesthood that did not belong to him; . . . that he would sustain William in his office and calling [as patriarch]; but would not allow him to tread upon his neck or any other man’s.”

Lucy capitulated on Brigham Young’s point: “he [William] did not want [the presidency],” but then retreated to an unassailable position: “she did not profess to be a revelator only for herself and family, that she wanted peace, union, and harmony. The twelve all expressed the same feeling and manifested the greatest kindness to Mother Smith together with the Bishops.”¹⁹

Before the meeting broke up, the group read William’s letter and answered it on the spot, affirming his position subject only to the Twelve and adding that “Mother Smith, Catherine, Lucy, and Arthur . . . express their

¹⁷ Jessee, *John Taylor*, 77, note 225.

¹⁸ William Smith, “A Proclamation and Faithful Warning to All the Saints . . .” *Warsaw Signal* 2 (29 October 1845): 1. My thanks to William Shepard for calling this source to my attention.

¹⁹ Jesse, *John Taylor*, 77. *The History of the Church* (7:433) says only, “Visited Mother Smith in company with the Twelve and Bishops Whitney and Miller. William Smith was invited but did not attend. Mother Smith expressed herself satisfied with the Twelve and the course they were pursuing.”

satisfaction with it.”²⁰ Obviously, no one would remain satisfied for very long, but this dramatic confrontation shows Lucy acting as a mother, both to defend her family and also to defend herself against possible ecclesiastical punishment.

About six weeks later on 17 August 1845, William Smith in a public sermon made a “full declaration of his belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives.” William later said that, in fear for his life, he was trying to placate Brigham Young and show that he was one with the other apostles.²¹ If his effort was sincere, it was singularly ineffective. This announcement was not only so shocking to his listeners that many walked out but was also a breach of fellowship with the other apostles, since the official position up to that point had been denial and secrecy.²²

William promptly and prudently left Nauvoo after giving this reckless speech, and the apostles smoothed things over with the Smith family during the next couple of months.

Conference Address, October 1845

Then in October 1845 at the general conference where the chief business was organizing the Saints, Lucy asked permission to speak on the morning of the third day. It was the first time a Mormon woman spoke at general conference—and in the LDS tradition, it was the last time until 1988.²³

According to the clerk, she “spoke at considerable length, and in an audible manner.” She probably had several motivations. One of them was announcing that her book about her family and the Church was completed, but another was almost certainly to defend her family, speaking as a mother. Two days earlier, Apostle Parley P. Pratt had publicly protested against sustaining William Smith as an apostle, claiming that William was not only

²⁰ Jesse, *John Taylor*, 77.

²¹ William Smith, “A Proclamation,” 1.

²² Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 91.

²³ While general conference sessions were being held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, women leaders as well as general authorities addressed the overflow crowds in the visitors bureau or on the grounds in the early twentieth century before public address systems were available. General auxiliary presidents who were being released or sustained usually spoke for a few minutes before 1988 but did not give gospel addresses comparable to those of the general authorities.

“an aspiring man” but also that he had misbehaved himself in the East.²⁴ William was dropped both from the quorum and his office as patriarch. It was in this context that Lucy rose to speak.

Much time in the earlier sessions had been devoted to instructions about preparing to leave for the West, and she complimented Brigham Young for having “fixed it completely.” Then she launched into her main topic:

She was the mother of eleven children, seven of whom were boys. She raised them in the fear and love of God, and never was there a more obedient family. She warned parents that they were accountable for their children’s conduct; advised them to give them books and work to keep them from idleness; warned all to be full of love, goodness and kindness, and never to do in secret, what they would not do in the presence of millions. She wished to know of the congregation, whether they considered her a mother in Israel—(upon which President B. Young said; all who consider Mother Smith as a mother in Israel, signify it by saying yes!—One universal “yes” rang throughout.)²⁵

²⁴ William Clayton and Thomas Bullock, clerks, “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 November 1845): 1008. The official history attributes the protest to Orson Pratt, but he was then in the East. Joseph Smith Jr., et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, six volumes published 1902-1912, volume 7 published 1932; reprinted by Deseret Book Company, 1976, paperback issue, 1978), 7:458-459. Both Willard Richards’s and Orson’s diaries attribute the protest to Parley. As for the charges, Irene Bates, “William Smith, 1811-93: Problematic Patriarch,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Summer 1983): 15, argues persuasively that William’s reputation for “licentiousness” seems to have been created mostly by LDS officers after his excommunication and that his not-undeserved reputation for violence must be taken in the frontier context of the times. For instance, Joseph Smith, insulted by a note-collector while riding in a carriage with Ira Spaulding, wordlessly handed the reins to Spaulding, stepped out of the carriage, “knocked him down as flat as a beef,” and climbed back in the carriage and drove off, still without speaking.

²⁵ Clayton and Bullock, “Conference Minutes,” 1013. See also *History of the Church* 7:470-473. There is an unconscious and painful irony in Lucy’s claiming of the title and in the congregation’s conferring it upon her by vote under Brigham Young’s direction. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Mothers in Israel: Sarah’s Legacy,” in *Women of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Marie Cornwall and Susan Howe, editors (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 179-201, explains the title’s Old Testament and Puritan antecedents, then its applicability to some Mormon women, including Lucy, Mercy Fielding Thompson, Bathsheba B. Smith, and Eliza R. Snow, who received this title at her funeral from John Taylor. In addition to its usual meanings, “mother in Israel” was also the title used specifically for such women as Patty Sessions and Elizabeth Davis Goldsmith Brackenbury Durfee Smith Lott in Nauvoo who were polyandrous wives of Joseph Smith and who helped him “communicate and meet with prospective plural wives.” Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 179, 254.

In this context of public validation for the motherly identity she claimed, a validation in which Brigham Young participated, Lucy then launched into her family history:

She . . . related over the most prominent points in the early history of her family; their hardships, trials, privations, persecutions, sufferings, &c; some parts of which melted those who heard her to tears, more especially the part relating to a scene in Missouri, when her beloved son Joseph was condemned to be shot in fifteen minutes, and she by prodigious efforts was enabled to press through the crowd to where he was, and to give him her hand; but could not see his face; he took her hand and kissed it; she said, let me hear your voice once more my son; he said God bless you my dear mother!²⁶

This episode shows Lucy as competent, lucid, and unquestionably skillful, both in communicating with great emotional impact to a large audience and also in positioning herself relative to Brigham Young. If she was acting unconsciously, then it is easy to see where Joseph Smith's considerable gifts of charm and charisma came from; and if she was acting strategically and consciously, then we can only wonder what the results might have been had she chosen to exercise her gifts in a circle larger than that of her own family.

By her opening compliment, she had defused any lingering hostilities from the summer, her June revelation about William as president, and any personal hard feelings that might naturally result from William's being dropped from the Twelve. By her request for a voice vote on whether she was a "Mother in Israel," she had both reminded the congregation of her family and put them in a position of formally acknowledging it. Brigham Young's alert rising to call for the vote shows his own skill at reminding both Lucy and the Saints that his will imposed order on the proceedings. Lucy gave what amounted to an alluring summary of her book, punctuated by moving highlights, a tactic designed to arouse interest in the finished product and perhaps find a sponsor for its publication. Then she played a major card: the possibility of going west with them, an event that would be a vote of legitimation for the Quorum of the Twelve.²⁷

²⁶ Clayton and Bullock, "Conference Minutes," 1013-1014.

²⁷ The *Millennial Star* obviously interpreted it in just this way in a one-paragraph summary of the conference. After reporting the unanimous vote of the Saints to leave Nauvoo, it added: "Our old mother in Israel—mother Smith arose and said she wanted to go with the Saints, and wanted her children to go too. Elder Young replied that she should go." Only Lucy and Brigham are named in this conference report. "From a Private Source." *Millennial Star* 6 (1 December 1845): 202.

Her voice apparently became weaker at this point, but Brigham Young arose, repeated what she had just said, expressed joy at her sentiments, pledged the Church's aid, and announced that the church had already given Lucy the "best carriage in the city." This carriage is important, as we will see. In her address, Lucy made two references to William, first when she said that all of her sons were dead ("They are all gone but poor William & he is gone I don't know where"), and second when she said William saw in a vision in Missouri the arrival of the mob that would dispossess them and threaten their lives.²⁸

Pointedly Brigham added that the church had also furnished William with "a span of horses, and a carriage and a house. . . . He has run away in a time of trouble; but I suppose will come back when it is peace, and we mean to have him with us yet." At this slur on William's courage, Lucy "interrupted President Young, but [was] inaudible to the reporters."²⁹ Young hastily continued, renewing his pledge of support and promising, as she had asked, to return her bones to Nauvoo to be buried beside Joseph Sr.³⁰ The conference closed, an undoubted triumph for Lucy that Brigham Young had, with equal skill, managed to contain and co-opt.

But Young's mention of the carriage is significant and so is the flurry over William. Although Young obviously cites the example of the carriage to show the Saints the generosity of the Twelve toward Lucy in particular and toward the Smith family in general, privately he had very different feelings

²⁸ Lucy Mack Smith, *Minutes of Address*, Bolton fair copy, 10.

²⁹ The rough draft of this portion (probably in William Clayton's handwriting) notes the interruption but does not say that she was inaudible. However, it does not report what she said. Lucy Mack Smith, *Minutes of Address*, uncatalogued, General Conference, 8 October 1845, holograph of rough minutes apparently by William Clayton, Access no. 211325-ARCH-94, LDS Church Archives.

³⁰ Clayton and Bullock, "Conference Minutes," 1014. Nauvoo resident Wandle Mace recorded Lucy as saying: "Here, in this city, lay my dead; my husband, and children; and if so be the rest of my children go with you,—and I would to God they may all go—they will not go without me; and if I go, I want my bones brought back in case I die away, and deposited with my husband and children." The closing remarks of mother Smith was not heard by all but President Young arose and related them to the congregation and then said, 'Mother Smith proposes a thing which rejoices my heart: she will go with us. I can answer for the authorities of the church; we want her and her children to go with us; and I pledge myself in behalf of the authorities of the church, that while we have anything, they shall share with us.' Wandle Mace, *Autobiography*, in *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1998), 192-193.

about it. On 2 August 1845, Brigham Young says he “rode out in the new church carriage” to inspect two lots that Emma was selling to the church, then brought Lucy to choose one for herself and her daughters. Obviously striking while the iron was hot, she not only selected one of the lots but also asked for a house like Heber’s large two-story brick home, “for the carriage we rode in, a horse and a double carriage harness. We gave her the use of the carriage during her lifetime.”³¹ According to William Clayton, Lucy claimed that Brigham Young had promised her a carriage but he had only promised to “ride her round in it.” Clayton thinks that Arthur Millikin or William put her up to the request “out of ill feelings and jealousy,” but that the general authorities were willing to indulge her because “she is [old] and childish.” Clayton specified that they had “lent,” not given her, the carriage.³²

Twelve years later when Brigham Young was boiling over once again to Wilford Woodruff about William Smith, he exclaimed, “Wm. Smith is the most wicked man I ever saw in my life” and again brings up the carriage: “When I was in Nauvoo,” said Brigham Young, “I Commenced to build me a Carriage. William got up a rumor that I was Finishing a Carriage for my own use which Joseph had Commenced for his mother. Then Mother Smith soon reported that I was building her a Carriage and the first time she got me in Company [meaning, the first place he could not refuse without looking bad in public] she asked me for that Carriage.”³³

Nor was that the end of it. The carriage rankled sufficiently that Young returned to it on another public occasion: “I recollect very well that I had a nice carriage built in 1845,” he told an audience in the tabernacle. “About the time it was done, Mother Smith said, ‘How rejoiced I am that that carriage which Joseph promised to me is done.’ I sent her the carriage, and I do not know but that I would have taken off my shirt and given it to any of the Smith family and run the risk of getting another.”³⁴ Significantly, at this point, the carriage which had been “church” property in Nauvoo had now become his personal property.

In short, I think it is reasonable to read Brigham Young’s mention of the carriage during the October 1845 conference as a short outburst on his part,

³¹ *History of the Church* 7:434.

³² George D. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 176.

³³ Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833-1898*, typescript, Scott G. Kenny, editor, nine volumes (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-1985), 5:287-288.

³⁴ *The Essential Brigham Young*, foreword by Eugene E. Campbell, Classics in Mormon Thought Series No. 3 (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 191.

recognizing that he had been outmaneuvered by Lucy and resented it privately but positioned himself to benefit publicly from it.

William was excommunicated within the month, and Lucy also won the next encounter. The next spring, in March 1846, Almon Babbitt and Joseph Heywood refused to surrender the deed to Joseph Noble's house, which Brigham Young had promised Lucy, unless one of two conditions was met: either William must support the Twelve or Lucy must forbid him entrance into the house. She responded with an outraged and highly emotional outpouring that repeated her identity and claims as a mother. She not only appealed to the sentiments natural to all mothers for their children, but also to the special claims that her family had on the church, and, more, *her* special claims as the mother to the church:

You restrict my conscience, put limits to my affections, threaten me with poverty, if I do not drive my children from my door because they resent insult and abuse. . . . No, although my children have been the Fathers and Founders of the Church, and spent their all in its service, yea have not withheld their lives, but have been sacrificed on the altar of Mobocracy and at the feet of wicked men, have been torn from their widowed Mother. This is not enough but I am called upon to banish from my home the few of my family who are left as my only solace. . . . You would have me forsake my children in order that you may give me a living, but let it not be said that in the Church . . . a mother has to forfeit all natures ties, to cut asunder the cords of affection that bind her to her children, or she shall not have a subsistence. . . . As to the head of the Church I am Mother and ask obedience to the Law of God, and all will be right and none that feel as Joseph did will wrong his Mother, his Brother, or his Sisters. . . . Let this be a sufficient rebuke from your Mother in Israel, Amen.³⁵

She got the deed. After Orson Pratt published her book in England in 1853 and after Lucy herself died in 1856, Brigham Young excoriated her as so "old and forgetful" that she "could scarcely recollect anything correctly," attacked her book as "a tissue of falsehoods," and insisted that the Saints turn in their copies so they could be destroyed.³⁶ His reaction does not show him in the best light where Lucy was concerned. But there is no reason to question his sincere affection for and interest in Lucy, even though he was

³⁵ William Shepard and James Hajicek, *Smith Family Testimony* (Burlington, Wisconsin: Wingfield Watson Trust, 16 October 1994), 7-9; Lucy Mack Smith, Letter to "Messrs Babbitt, Heywood and Hulmer," 22 March 1846, *Voree Herald* 1 (August 1846): 3.

³⁶ "Remarks Made by President Brigham Young [in] Wellsville, Cache Valley, Monday, May 8, 1868, Reported by E. S. Sloan," holograph, Ms/f/219 #83. LDS Church Archives.

clearly exasperated by Lucy's unwillingness to sacrifice what she saw as family interests to those of the kingdom.

Against his harshness should be balanced a moment of generosity and affection that came on 4 April 1847 when he signed a touching letter to Lucy, literally on the eve of the vanguard company's departure. Speaking for the Council of the Twelve to "beloved mother in Israel," this man, whose own childhood had been motherless, wrote tenderly:

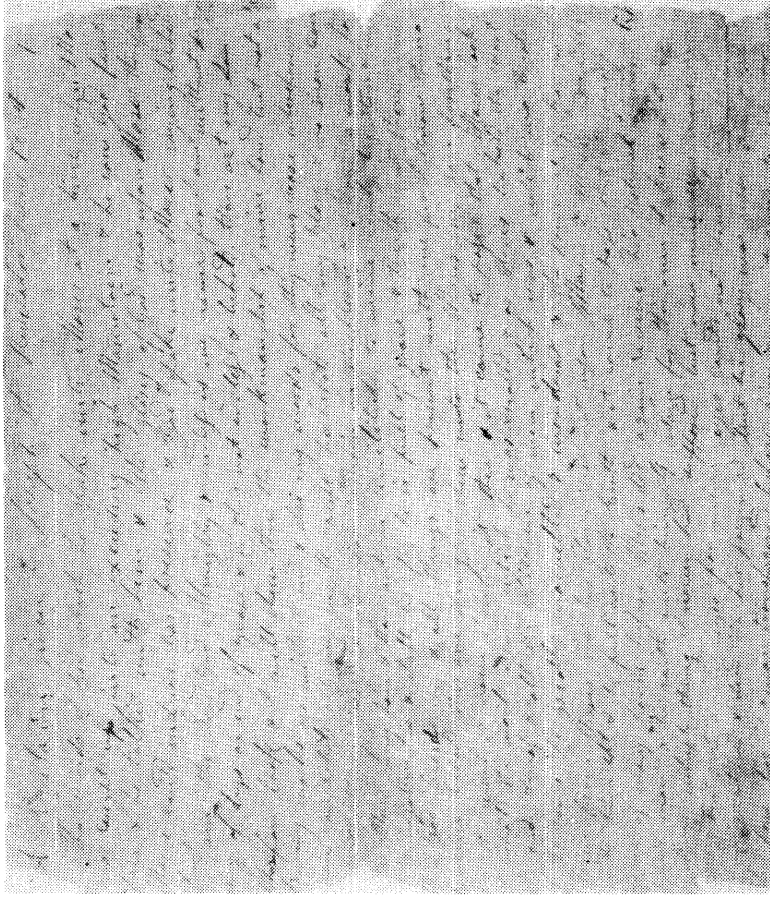
We are constantly reminded of their [the martyrs'] aged mother, whom we feel free to call our mother, knowing the many privations, hardships, toils, fatigues, weariness, which she has been called to endure. . . .

. . . [H]er children in the Gospel have not forgotten her.

Your memory, and that of your dear husband, our Father in Israel, is sweet unto us, and ever will be, and that of all your household, whom the Lord has given unto you, for He has given you a family to increase without number, . . . the household of faith . . .

He closed with a blessing: "Peace be to Mother Smith, may her last days be her best days, may her heart be satisfied, is the prayer of your beloved children . . ." ³⁷ It is the salute of a son in spirit and, perhaps also, of a fighter who recognizes someone worthy of his steel.

³⁷ James R. Clark, editor, *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, six volumes (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1975), 1:319-321.



John Whitmer's personal handwritten copy of the June 1830 revelation received prior to the revision of Genesis.
See RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 22:1-8 or LDS Moses 1:1-12.
Courtesy Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.

John Whitmer and the Revelations of Joseph Smith

H. Michael Marquardt¹

Born in Pennsylvania on 27 August 1802, John Whitmer was the third son of four brothers and three sisters born to Peter Whitmer and Mary Whitmer. His family moved to Fayette Township, Seneca County, New York. John attended Zion's Church at the age of nineteen as did his brothers, Christian, Jacob, and Peter. John Whitmer's life would change in a few years with a newfound friend, a religious prophet named Joseph Smith Jr. Smith was twenty-three years old when he arrived in early June 1829 at the Peter Whitmer Sr. home. Joseph Smith had been dictating a religious work for nearly two months and came to Fayette with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, John's brother, to complete the Book of Mormon manuscript. John, at the age of twenty-six, became a scribe to Joseph Smith writing about sixty pages of the original manuscript.² It was reported that Whitmer said that he helped "as the words fell from Joseph's lips, by supernatural or almighty power."³ It is probable that John was baptized in Seneca Lake when his brothers David and Peter received that ordinance. These three brothers received revelations for themselves through Joseph Smith. In the latter part of June John gave his name, along with his brothers, Christian, Jacob, and Peter, to a religious testimony as having "seen and hefted [lifted]" the plates of the Book of Mormon, becoming one of the Eight Witnesses.

John was one of the six elders who met at the first church conference at Fayette on 9 June 1830. He received his elder's license that originally designated him as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ an Elder of this Church of Christ."⁴ The next month Joseph Smith and John Whitmer "began to arrange

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² Zenas H. Gurley, "Synopsis of a Discourse," *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 December 1879): 370. John Whitmer died on 11 July 1878.

³ Myron H. Bond to Henry A. Stebbins, 2 August 1878, *Saints' Herald* 25 (15 August 1878): 253.

⁴ John Whitmer elder's license, 9 June 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. The words "Apostle of Jesus Christ" were crossed through at an unknown time.

& copy the revelations and commandments which we had received from time to time.”⁵

An associate of John was his brother-in-law Hiram Page. Page found a stone through which he claimed to obtain revelatory messages. Page received revelations “concerning the upbuilding of Zion[,] the order of the Church and so forth.”⁶ These revelations were perceived as being at variance with the scriptures and Joseph Smith’s revelations. The three elders who at first accepted Page’s revelations were Book of Mormon witnesses, Oliver Cowdery, David, Peter, and John Whitmer. Joseph Smith was able to convince them of their error. In four revelations, the longest one for second elder Oliver Cowdery, it was revealed, “those things which he [Page] hath written from that stone are not of me, and satan deceiveth him.”⁷ In another message for David Whitmer it stated that he had “been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded.”⁸ To John Whitmer a revelation said, “thou should commence from this time forth to proclaim my gospel . . . until I command you to go from hence.”⁹

With Cowdery on the Lamanite mission John Whitmer served as Joseph Smith’s scribe and confidant. On 21 October 1830 at the Whitmer home Joseph Smith recommenced his revision and additions to the Old Testament book of Genesis.¹⁰ John was the original scribe for the revelation given for

⁵ See Manuscript History, Book A-1:50, written in 1839, Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter LDS Archives; Dean C. Jessee, editor, *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 1:259, 319 and Dan Vogel, editor, *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:127. The revelations would include what became Book of Commandments chapters 2-27.

⁶ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:263, 323.

⁷ A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ (Zion [Independence, Missouri]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), chapter 30, verse 11, cited hereafter as Book of Commandments; also in *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1981), Section 28, verse 11, cited hereafter as LDS D&C; and Book of Doctrine and Covenants (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1990), Community of Christ Section 27:4 (cited hereafter as RLDS D&C). Subparagraph letters of RLDS Doctrine and Covenants not included. Newel Knight recalled “Even Oliver Cowdery and [members of] the Whitmer family had given heed to them” (“Newel Knight’s Journal,” in *Scraps of Biography* [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883], 64).

⁸ Book of Commandments 31:2; LDS D&C 30:2; RLDS D&C 29:1.

⁹ Book of Commandments 33:1, 3; LDS D&C 30:9-10; RLDS D&C 29:3.

¹⁰ Whitmer took dictation from Joseph Smith for Genesis 4:18-26; 5:1-11 (KJV); LDS Moses 5:43-59; 6:1-18, 52-67 (in Pearl of Great Price). See *The Holy Scriptures* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1991) Genesis 5:29-45; 6:1-16, 53-70, dictated on 21 October and 30 November 1830. Manuscripts of revision of Old and New Testament in Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.

Orson Pratt through Joseph Smith's small stone:

at Peter Whitmer Sr.'s residence he [Orson Pratt] asked Joseph whether he could ascertain what his mission was, and Joseph answered him that he would see, & asked Pratt and John Whitmer to go upstairs with him, and on arriving there Joseph produced a small stone called a seer stone, and putting it into a Hat soon commenced speaking and asked Elder P[ratt]. to write as he would speak, but being too young and timid and feeling his unworthiness he asked whether Bro. John W[hitmer]. could not write it, and the Prophet said that he could: Then came the revelation to the Three named given Nov. 4th 1830.¹¹

After the January 1831 conference John was commanded to go to Kirtland, Ohio, to preside over church members in the area. He copied more of Joseph Smith's revelations including all of the revision of Genesis completed in New York.¹² Sidney Rigdon, an Ohio convert, wrote a letter of introduction for Whitmer: "I send you this letter by John Whitmer. Receive him, for he is a brother greatly beloved, and an Apostle of this church. With him we send all the revelations which we have received." Rigdon further explained,

You are living on the land of promise, and that there is the place of gathering, and from that place to the Pacific Ocean, God has dedicated to himself, not only in time, but through eternity, and he has given it to us and our children, not only while time lasts, but we shall have it again in eternity, as you will see by one of the commandments, received day before yesterday.¹³

The Painesville, Ohio, *Telegraph* mentioned Whitmer's arrival stating:

A young gentleman by the name of *Whitmer*, arrived here last week . . . with a new batch of revelations from God, as he pretended, which have just been communicated to Joseph Smith. As far as we have been able to learn their contents, they are a more particular description of the creation of the world, and a history of Adam and his family, and othey [other] sketches of the anti-deluvian world, which Moses neglected to record. But the more important part of the mission, was to inform the brethren that the boundaries of the promised land, or the New Jerusalem, had just been

¹¹ James R. B. Vancleave to Joseph Smith III, 29 September 1878, "Miscellaneous Letters and Papers," Community of Christ Archives. See H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 188.

¹² The text worked on in New York that Whitmer copied included introductory revelation of June 1830, RLDS D&C 22; LDS Moses 1 and Genesis 1:1-5:32 (KJV); LDS Moses 2:1-8:12; RLDS Holy Scriptures, Genesis 1:1-7:85.

¹³ E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville [Ohio]: Printed and Published by the Author, 1834), 110-111; Book of Commandments 40:15-16; LDS D&C 38:18-20; RLDS D&C 38:4 (2 January 1831). See also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 99.

made known to Smith from God—the township of Kirtland, a few miles west of this [Painesville], is the eastern line and the Pacific Ocean the western line.¹⁴

On 8 March 1831 a month after Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland, Smith, through a revelatory message, called John Whitmer as the first church historian, though Oliver Cowdery had written a brief history. The revelation asked John to “write and keep a regular history” and assist Joseph Smith in transcribing what was revealed to the prophet. Whitmer copied the Bible revision of Genesis and most of the Gospel according to Matthew.¹⁵ John Whitmer was to “keep the Church record & History” as Oliver Cowdery was on a church mission to Native American Indians.¹⁶ Whitmer wrote that Cowdery’s church history commenced “at the time of the finding of the plates, up to June 12, 1831.”¹⁷ Cowdery’s record probably included some church events in New York, the missionary work in Kirtland, his reception on the border of the Lamanites and work among the white population.

John Whitmer’s extant history in the Community of Christ Archives appears not to be his original 1831 manuscript but a copy and continuation of Cowdery’s church history. Chapter one of “The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment” starts with the following wording:

I shall proceed to continue this record, being commanded of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to write the things that transpire in this church, (inasmuch as they come to my knowledge,) in these last days. It is now

¹⁴ *Telegraph* 2 (18 January 1831), Painesville, Ohio. Whitmer arrived during the week of 9-15 January.

¹⁵ In Ohio John Whitmer copied the June 1830 introductory revelation, Genesis 1:1-24:41 (KJV); RLDS Holy Scriptures, Genesis 1:1-24:42; and Matthew 1:1-26:71. Whitmer wrote another revision of Matthew 26:1-71. Whitmer was a scribe for Joseph Smith’s dictation of Matthew 26:71-75 (KJV); Matthew 27-28 and Mark 1-8 before leaving for Independence, Missouri, in November 1831.

¹⁶ “The Conference Minutes and Record Book of Christ’s Church of Latter Day Saints,” (known as the “Far West Record”), 3, manuscript in possession of LDS Church. See Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, editors, *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 5.

¹⁷ “The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment,” chapter 6, 25, Community of Christ Archives. See Bruce N. Westergren, editor, *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 56. Whitmer’s history in its present form contains twenty-two chapters. Manuscript material that had been in the possession of Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, and David Whitmer was obtained by the RLDS Church in 1903. Ebenezer Robinson wrote in 1889 that he and Levi Richards made a copy of Whitmer’s church history at Far West, Missouri. See “Items of Personal History of the Editor,” *The Return* 1 (September 1889): 133, Davis City, Iowa. It is not known if this copy presently exists. The eight pages of the Book of Commandments manuscript were reported to have been found inside the cover of Whitmer’s history.

June the twelfth one thousand eight hundred and thirty one years since the coming of our Lord and Savior, in the flesh.¹⁸

Whitmer tells of his brethren taking their journey to preach the gospel to the Lamanites and organizing a branch of about one hundred thirty members in Geauga County, Ohio. The next event mentioned in the church history was the conversion of Sidney Rigdon. Rigdon was ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdery. John wrote that Rigdon and Edward Partridge desired to see Joseph Smith Jr. in New York. Thereafter three of Joseph Smith's revelations were written out in the manuscript.

In chapters two and three are recorded four revelations received at Kirtland in February 1831. At the end of chapter three, on page twenty-two of the manuscript, is recorded the words, "The word of the Lord came to the Seer as follows: 'published in the edition of book of doctrine and covenants published at Kirtland[,] Ohio, 1835. Page 128. Insert the Revelation.'" Also another five places give instructions (as though for publication) to include the printed text of certain revelations for the proposed history. In Whitmer's history there are written ten revelations of Joseph Smith. Before examining the text recorded by John Whitmer some background is needed.

In the early church many of Joseph Smith's revelations were given as private instruction for those involved with the work. This was the case with individual inquiries both before and after church organization. Instructions for the young church were considered sacred and to be kept within the confines of church membership.

The importance of heeding Joseph Smith's words as they were given to him by God is stated in a document given on 6 April 1830 at Manchester, New York, in a revelation regarding Joseph Smith Jr. and the Church of Christ: "Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his [Joseph Smith's] words, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me."¹⁹

In April 1831 the Painesville *Telegraph* published three 1830 church documents that were reportedly obtained from Martin Harris. They were the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ, the commandment regarding rebaptism and the commandment concerning the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.²⁰ The February 1831 Law of the Church was published four-

¹⁸ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 1, 1; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 3.

¹⁹ Book of Commandments 22:4; LDS D&C 21:4; RLDS D&C 19:2.

²⁰ *Telegraph* 2 (19 April 1831). See Book of Commandments 24, 23, and 28; LDS D&C 20, 22, and 27; RLDS D&C 17, 20, and 26.

and-one-half months later in the September issue.²¹

During the first half of November 1831 in Hiram, Ohio, a series of church conferences were held. Three of these dealt with printing Joseph Smith's revelations. On 1 November it was voted that 10,000 copies of the revelations should be published in a book known as the Book of Commandments. As stated in the minutes: "[B]r[other] Oliver Cowdery made a request desiring the mind of the Lord through this conference of Elders to know how many copies of the Book of commandments it was the will of the Lord should be published in the first edition of that work. Voted that there be ten thousand copies struck."²² The preface to the manuscript was then received that began: "Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my Preface unto the Book of my Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth."²³

During the 8 November conference Sidney Rigdon mentioned "the errors or mistakes which are in commandments and revelations, made either by the ~~scribe~~ translation²⁴ in consequence of the slow way of the scribe at the time of receiving or by the scribes themselves." It was "Resolved by this conference that Br Joseph Smith jr correct those errors or mistakes which he may discover by the holy Spirit while ~~receiving the revelations~~ reviewing the revelations & commandments & also the fulness of the scriptures."²⁵ Resolved by this conference that br Oliver Cowdery shall [²⁶] all the writings which go forth to the world ~~which go~~ through the Printing press²⁷ except the revelations and commandments, by the Spirit of the Lord and this according to the commandment given in Missouri July 20, 1831."²⁸

²¹ *Telegraph* 3 (13 September 1831). See Book of Commandments 44:1-53 with revised text in 1835 D&C 13:1-18, Kirtland, Ohio; LDS D&C 42:1-69; RLDS D&C 42:1-18.

²² Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 27.

²³ Book of Commandments 1:2; LDS D&C 1:6; RLDS D&C 1:2.

²⁴ Probably should be transcription.

²⁵ The phrase "fulness of the scriptures" meant Joseph Smith's revision of the King James Version of the Bible.

²⁶ Possible wording in the text is evidently reflected in the revelation of 20 July 1831 that said that Cowdery is to assist William W. Phelps "to copy and to correct and select" material for the *Evening and the Morning Star*. See Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 143; LDS D&C 57:13; RLDS D&C 57:5. This revelation was not included in Book of Commandments. Andrew Jenson added the words "copy correct and select" in the space (Cannon and Cook, eds., *Far West Record*, 29 note 2). The *Journal History of the Church* in LDS Archives has "shall revise all the writings."

²⁷ Meaning published in the forthcoming church paper: *Evening and the Morning Star*.

²⁸ Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 29.

A revelation to Joseph Smith gave instructions for John Whitmer to accompany Oliver Cowdery to the land of Zion. Whitmer was told to "continue in writing and making a history of all the important things which he shall observe and know, concerning my church."²⁹

At the last conference held on 12 November, it was "Voted that Joseph Smith jr. be appointed to dedicate & consecrate these brethren [Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer] & the sacred writings & all they have entrusted to their care, to the Lord; done accordingly."³⁰ Eight days later Cowdery and Whitmer left Hiram for Independence, Missouri. The manuscript that they carried contained about one hundred twenty-one pages. The extant pages of the November 1831 manuscript appear in the handwriting of John Whitmer.

At a council of the Literary Firm held on 30 April 1832, it was "Ordered by the Council that three thousand copies of the book of Commandments be printed the first edition." Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer were "appointed to review the Book of Commandments & select for printing such as shall be deemed by them proper, as dictated by the Spirit & make all necessary verbal corrections."³¹ Copies of revelations received since November 1831 were brought to Independence by the presidency of the high priesthood. These included the vision of the three degrees of glory and a revelation to Jesse Gause as Smith's counselor that were copied by Whitmer as additional material to the original manuscript of the Book of Commandments.

William W. Phelps commenced printing the first church periodical at Independence. The paper called the *Evening and the Morning Star* appeared in print for the first time in June 1832.³² On the first page, under the title "Revelations," appeared "The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ." In the July issue Smith and Rigdon's vision of the three degrees of glory was published. Each issue from June 1832 to July 1833 contained either a complete revelation or a portion of a revelation, most of which were subsequently published in the Book of Commandments. In Kirtland, Ohio,

²⁹ 1835 D&C 28:1; LDS D&C 69:3; RLDS D&C 69:1.

³⁰ Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

³² Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 477-478; also Affidavit of W. W. Phelps, 28 September 1832 and Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, "First Impressions: The Independence, Missouri, Printing Operation, 1832-33," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 10 (1990): 51-66. On this same press the *Upper Missouri Advertiser*, a weekly newspaper, was published. It is possible that John Whitmer was preparing for the press an early draft of his church history as he recorded "Paid for paper for history" (John Whitmer Account Book, LDS Archives).

Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith were recording various revelations into what is known as the Kirtland Revelations Book. All but the last thirteen manuscript pages were recorded by 18 August 1834 in that book.

On 10 February 1833 John Whitmer, now thirty years old, married Sarah Jackson, age twenty-three, the ceremony being performed by William W. Phelps.³³ The printing of "A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ" commenced, but was a slow project.³⁴ On 20 July 1833 citizens of Jackson County met at the courthouse in Independence and formed a committee to ask the Mormons to shut down the printing office and leave the county.³⁵ When the latter proved unwilling to do so, the non-Mormon community voted to demolish the printing office. About four hundred people went to the residence and printing house of W. W. Phelps and Company, threw the press from the upper story, scattered the type, and destroyed most of the building.³⁶

Sheets of the unfinished book were salvaged from the wreckage of the office and collected as they blew about the streets of Independence. From these sheets a small number of copies of the book were assembled, though the five printed sheets (160 pages) represented only a part of the anticipated final work.³⁷ The few copies thus assembled were used by church members in reading and studying Smith's revelations.³⁸ Though the books had different

³³ Annette W. Curtis, "Whitmer Family," *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter*, 21/22 (August 1999): 11.

³⁴ *Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (December 1832): 8 [56] and 1 (May 1833): 1 [89]. On 1 December 1832 Joseph Smith recorded in his diary: "wrote and corrected revelations &c." (Joseph Smith 1832-34 Diary, 3, LDS Archives; Dean C. Jessee, editor, *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Journal, 1832-1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 2:4.

³⁵ Warren A. Jennings, "Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1967): 57-76.

³⁶ Petition dated 28 September 1833 in the *Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (December 1833): 114, Kirtland, Ohio; in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, editor (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959), 1:412; and *Times and Seasons* 1 (December 1839): 18, Commerce, Illinois in *History of the Church* 1:390, footnote.

³⁷ Peter Crawley and Chad J. Flake, *Notable Mormon Books 1830-1857* (Provo, Utah: Friends of the Brigham Young University Library, 1974), 6. See also Peter Crawley, "Joseph Smith and a Book of Commandments," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 42 (Autumn 1980): 18-32 and Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church: Volume One 1830-1847* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997 [1998]), 37-42.

³⁸ Elden J. Watson, compiler, *The Orson Pratt Journals* (Salt Lake City: 1975), 38, entry for 2 April 1834; *Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (August 1834): 184, Kirtland, Ohio, an Appeal dated July 1834; also Lectures on Theology, "Lecture Third," 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, pages 36 and 42. See also John Whitmer Account Book, LDS Archives.

title pages and bindings, they constituted “the first book printed in the immense territory between St. Louis and the Pacific coast.”³⁹ Almost two years later in May 1835, John Whitmer arrived at church headquarters at Kirtland, Ohio. This was during the typesetting of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Although only a few Book of Commandments manuscript pages survived, the five printed sheets were an invaluable primary source used in preparing the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The “Kirtland Revelations” book was also a source. Textual revisions were made to some of the revelations as early as January 1835. These alterations first appeared in the *Evening and Morning Star* Kirtland reprint and later in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

On 17 August 1835, a General Assembly was called in Kirtland. In this period of church history, the term “General Assembly” meant a gathering “of the several [priesthood] quorums which constitute the spiritual authorities of the church.”⁴⁰ One of the purposes was to determine if the Doctrine and Covenants then in press would be approved by church authorities. John Whitmer testified “that he was well acquainted with the work & knew it to be true and from God.”⁴¹ The assembly voted on the book as a whole, thereby canonizing the Doctrine and Covenants.

There is no indication that anyone realized that the text of some of the revelations had been revised, deleted, or enlarged. The revelations were accepted in their altered form without comment, apparently in the belief that they were identical to those originally given to the Saints. There was no explanation made by the committee, either in the preface or within the text of the revelations, as to why alterations had been made.

An examination of the text of the handwritten revelations recorded in John Whitmer’s history shows us the following. The manuscript account written by John Whitmer is a retrospective history. It is not a contemporary record. It incorporates notes, revelations, and letters. Chapters one through three were written in a neat hand by Whitmer. The first twenty-two pages may have been a copy of an earlier draft. But it is clear from the revelatory documents copied into chapters one through three that the earliest the text could have been recorded in this manuscript would have been after the 1835

³⁹ “Missouri History Not Found in Textbooks,” *Missouri Historical Review* 44 (October 1949): 94; extract from the *Kansas City Star*, 1 July 1949, by John Edward Hicks.

⁴⁰ 1835 Doctrine and Covenants 3:11; LDS D&C 107:32; RLDS D&C 104:11 ([28-30] April 1835).

⁴¹ Kirtland Council Minute Book [3 December 1832—27 November 1837], LDS Archives, typescript, 103.

Doctrine and Covenants came from the bindery in September 1835. The John Whitmer history appears to have been recorded in the manuscript book closer to 1836-1838 with additions commencing about 1846-1847.⁴²

Chapter 1 contains the text of LDS D&C 35, 37, 38 and RLDS D&C 34, 37, 38. Two of these revelations of Joseph Smith were received in December 1830 and the other at the third church conference in January 1831. The text of the three revelations follow the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants.

Chapter 2 contains LDS and RLDS D&C 41, the first recorded revelation received at Kirtland, Ohio. The Whitmer wording includes some revisions that first appear in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants such as the added words "inasmuch as he keepeth my commandments."⁴³ Included in the copying in this chapter is the revision of LDS D&C 42:1-72 and RLDS D&C 42:1-19.⁴⁴ Whitmer's record contains copying errors such as words skipped when being transcribed. For Section 42 the copy includes some additional 1835 wording. For example, the John Whitmer text includes LDS D&C 42:29-32 and RLDS D&C 42:8 containing the 1835 revision to that portion of the document.⁴⁵ LDS D&C 42:73 and the ending of RLDS D&C 42:19 did not appear in the Book of Commandments. This small addition was printed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and included in the history prepared by Whitmer.⁴⁶

Chapter 3 contains what is now LDS and RLDS D&C 43 and 44. Seven revelations that Joseph Smith received before John Whitmer was appointed to keep the church history are recorded in the manuscript. On page twenty-two is the first notation to insert from the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants a March 1831 revelation, what is now Section 45, into the history. This is the first of six places where instructions were given to insert revelations received in March, May, and June 1831.

In chapters five, six, and eight, one revelatory message was copied into

⁴² See Charles A. Davies, *Question Time* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1967), 2:169 and Richard P. Howard, "John Whitmer: Scribe, Preacher, Leader, Historian . . . and Historical Association," *Saints Herald* 129 (1 March 1982): 28.

⁴³ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 2, 12, RLDS; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 28. See 1835 D&C 61:3; LDS D&C 41:8; RLDS D&C 41:3. Compare with Book of Commandments 43:10.

⁴⁴ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 2, 12-17; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 28-34.

⁴⁵ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 2, 14; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 31. See 1835 D&C 13:8. For early text see Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 108 and Book of Commandments 44:26-27.

⁴⁶ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 2, 17; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 34. See 1835 D&C 13:19.

each chapter. One of the revelations (LDS and RLDS D&C 48) is evidently a copy of a March 1831 revelation that Whitmer had in his possession.⁴⁷

Of the total number of documents written or noted in John Whitmer's history all except one were received by Joseph Smith prior to 12 June 1831 when Whitmer said that Cowdery stopped his history.⁴⁸ Oliver Cowdery's history was probably fragmented since John Whitmer covers the time period when Cowdery and associates left New York on their mission to the Native American Indians. Whitmer included a copy of Oliver Cowdery's description of the consecration of the land of Zion, Sidney Rigdon's dedication of "the ground where the city [of New Jerusalem] is to stand" and the spot of ground for the contemplated Temple.⁴⁹ Whitmer's history covers in chapters two through eight events at Kirtland, Ohio, from February to June 1831.

Joseph Smith's revelations are best understood by having the earliest possible texts. It is essential to uncover the original intentions and meanings of the revelations and of the historical circumstances surrounding them. John Whitmer as a scribe, clerk, and historian preserved copies of Smith's pronouncements during the formative period of the church. While Whitmer's history does not help in recovering the early text, it does give us an appreciation of how one early Latter-day Saint preserved a record for future generations. This is one step further in our appreciation of the early Restoration movement.

⁴⁷ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 5, 24; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 51-52. The words "by the Bishop and elders of the church" in John Whitmer's history are a close reading at this point to Book of Commandments 51:6 rather than 1835 D&C 64:2 that reads "by the presidency and the bishop of the church"; LDS D&C 48:6; RLDS D&C 48:2.

⁴⁸ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 1, 25; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 3, 56.

⁴⁹ "The Book of John Whitmer," chapter 9, 31-32; Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 85-87.

The LDS Church and Iran: The Dilemmas of an American Church

Jessie L. Embry¹

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and Community of Christ (formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) are growing in developing countries. The Community of Christ *Herald* and the LDS *Ensign*, *New Era*, and *Church News* carry faith-prompting stories of members throughout the world. But transporting an American church to other countries is not easy. This article will look at Iran where both churches do not operate (in 2001) but where some LDS members lived during the 1950s and 1960s and where the LDS Church operated a mission from 1975 to 1979.

Besides mainland China, countries in the Muslim world are areas where the LDS and RLDS churches have not been recognized because of strict rules prohibiting proselyting, restricting religious meetings, and requiring government employees to be Muslims. How the LDS Church “cracked” those boundaries for a short time provides some interesting lessons of what to do and what not to do in transferring an American church to another culture.

LDS members’ first contacts with Iranians came through professional organizations. In 1912 John A. Widstoe, a Mormon apostle and president of Utah State University (USU),² met Mirza Ali Gholi Khan, the Iranian consul general at an irrigation conference in Canada. The two developed a friendship, and in 1915 Widstoe invited the Iranian leader to speak at a baccalaureate service. At the same time Iranian students came to USU to study agricultural and irrigation methods. Many graduated and returned home, serving as leaders in the Iranian ministries.³

In 1939 Reza Shah Pahlavi asked the U.S. State Department to recommend an agricultural advisor. Because of the established Utah

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² While the Utah State University was officially Utah State Agricultural College at the time, I will refer to it as USU throughout this paper since the change in name is not important for this paper.

³ Gwen H. Haws, editor, *Iran and Utah State University: Half a Century of Friendship and a Decade of Contracts* (Logan: Utah State University, 1963), 7.

connections, the U.S. government recommended Franklin S. Harris, an agriculturist and then president of Brigham Young University. Harris spent a year examining the agricultural practices and making recommendations. When he left in 1940, he encouraged the Iranian government to hire USU professors L. M. Winsor in irrigation and Don W. Pittman in agronomy.⁴ Pittman stayed for about two years and was then able to leave, despite the conflicts of World War II. Winsor arrived in Iran on 1 December 1941, just before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and stayed in Iran throughout World War II.

With this beginning, Mormons were in a good position to work in Iran when the U.S. government established a technical assistance program known as Point Four, the fourth point in President Harry S. Truman's inaugural address. Harris, then president of Utah State University, retired and directed the first program in Iran. Initially Harris was the only Mormon, so he and his wife attended Protestant services.⁵ But Harris had plans for bringing other Mormons to Iran. Point Four needed to hire many technicians and one way was through university contracts. Because of the previous contact between Utah and Iran, Harris suggested contracts with USU to provide agricultural technicians, the University of Utah to assist with health, and Brigham Young University (BYU) to work in education. Within a short time, all three universities agreed and recruited faculty members, graduate students, and community people.⁶

Nearly all the recruits were Mormons. While they felt that their contracts prohibited them from preaching, they felt that by setting a good example, they would be able to introduce their religious beliefs. BYU technician J. Richard Brown recalled asking Mormon apostle and U.S. Agricultural Secretary Ezra Taft Benson, "There's one thing that bothers me just a little bit, and I don't know quite how to approach it. We know that we have our

⁴ Haws, 7-8; Franklin S. Harris, *Journal, 1939-1940*, LDS Church Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (Hereinafter cited as LDS Church Archives); L. M. Winsor, *Autobiography*, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah (Hereafter referred to as USU).

⁵ Harris, *Journal*, 1950.

⁶ Haws, 9-10; Harris, *Journal*, 1950; Helen Milligan, Oral History interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1998, Utah Universities in Iran Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (all oral histories of part of this project); Lula Anderson Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1999; Max Berryessa Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1998.

responsibility to spread the gospel, but we've been told by our instructors at the foreign language institute that we'd better forget those kinds of things." Brown continued, "Benson looked at me and said, 'You can always call them to repentance.' I found out he was serious. He wasn't joshing with me."⁷

Even if the Mormons were not allowed to preach, they wanted to be able to worship together. As soon as they arrived in Iran, they started holding meetings in a hotel with Harris. Following Harris's instructions from Mormon Church leaders, the Utahns in Tehran set up regular meeting services in their homes. They held Sunday school, sacrament meeting, and programs for children and teenagers. They also held study groups, often studying the Old Testament because the Mormons saw a remarkable comparison between the lifestyle described there and the Iranian people. Helen Milligan recalled, however, "For a while they had a policeman at the door to be sure that there weren't any Persians that came."⁸

Many Utahns were sent to the oostans (states) to work, and where there were several Mormon families, they organized branches. Bruce Anderson, for example, became the branch president in Shiraz. Mormons Jay Hall (Utah State University), James Wood (Utah State University), Glen Gagon (Brigham Young University), and L. M. O. Stobbe (University of Utah) came regularly to the meetings. But so did other Point Four employees who were not Mormons. The group initially tried to meet on Sunday, but since that was a regular workday, they started holding meetings on Friday, the Muslim Sabbath.⁹

In Ahwaz the two Mormon families held meetings with other Point Four employees. Richard Brown recalled, "Somehow or other, I didn't bring it up, but [other Americans] did. They said, 'We need to have some Bible study. Would you help us?' We accepted the challenge. We were careful not to throw too many things at them that they would be dismayed at or offended by. We were pretty straightforward. We went through parts of the Old Testament, almost line by line."¹⁰

The technicians who followed continued holding meetings. Boyd McAfee was delighted to find the Mormon Church so well organized when he arrived in Iran in 1953. "It was really good to meet in these services with

⁷ J. Richard Brown Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1998, 16.

⁸ Milligan, 12.

⁹ Anderson, 13. Information also from family histories compiled by Lula Anderson and loaned to the author.

¹⁰ Brown, 11.

our own people. The services were conducted as completely as if we were at home." McAfee, Gagon, and Hall, along with non-Mormons Dennis, Patty, and Skip Renshaw and Sam Fuhr held LDS services in Shiraz. Every time McAfee went to Tehran on business he attended the services there. McAfee declared, "No doubt we are all better LDS members now than ever before in our lives and have been since reaching this land far from our native land." For McAfee, who was often frustrated by his work in Iran, the church meetings were helpful. "Our LDS services in Shiraz and Tehran have made us appreciate our blessings even more," he wrote and at another meeting after an especially bad week, "It did me good to regain a spirit of brotherly love. I almost lost it last week." He continued, "These weekly meetings do much to keep us united and spiritually geared to the huge task at hand: That of helping other people."¹¹

While the Mormons did not preach, their religious food code was apparent. At nearly every occasion—social or business—the Iranians offered them tea. When they explained they did not drink tea for religious reasons, the technicians felt the Iranians were very respectful since they understood religious taboos. Instead the Mormons asked for hot water (they feared drinking unboiled water) with lemon. Later many Iranian hosts provided fruit juices. When an occasional non-Mormon Utahn would visit where there were Mormons, the Iranians really stared when they accepted tea or cocktails.¹²

The Utahns felt the Iranians noticed the differences between the Mormons and the other technicians. According to Brown, the Iranians "didn't know about Mormons. But they knew we were different. On many occasions, people said, 'I like all of these Americans, but you people are different. Why?' We had to be very careful in explaining. Those Iranians who worked directly with us knew quite a bit before we got through." Grace Farnsworth, whose husband Dean was a BYU technician from 1959 to 1961, said that her landlord especially respected her religion. "He said, 'Really, you're sort of Muslims' because of the fact that we didn't drink. They weren't supposed to drink, but they did. He felt that we were ideal tenants because of our living habits."¹³ Lula Anderson, who lived in Iran with her husband,

¹¹ Boyd McAfee Journal, 11 October 1953, 33; 3 January 1954, 101; 18 April 1954, 162; 13 June 1954, 188; 5 September 1954, 251; 1 October 1954, 265; 28 January 1955, 343. LDS Church Archives.

¹² Grace Farnsworth Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1998, 9; Dean Farnsworth Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1998, 13; Anderson, 17-18.

¹³ Brown, 13; Grace Farnsworth, 9.

USU technician Bruce Anderson during the 1950s, agreed, "A lot of [the Iranians] were very happy with us because Moslems are forbidden to smoke and take alcohol beverages. When they found a group of people who had beliefs like them, they were very happy with us. They trusted us and took to our programs."¹⁴

Myrtus Evans, a Mormon living in Riverside, California, recalled learning of this respect from Mohammad Bahmanbegui, an Iranian in charge of the educational programs for the tribes in his country. When he visited Evans in California in 1959, he asked Evans if he was a Mormon, and when Evans said yes, Bahmanbegui responded, "Of all the thousands of foreigners in my country, the ones we respect and like the most are the Mormon people." Evans explained to Mormon leader A. Theodore Tuttle, "It is my firm belief that if the Church ever considers sending missionaries to Iran, they can count on the help and influence of this fine man."¹⁵

George Stewart, who directed the Utah universities' contracts in Iran, also described the positive reactions of the Iranians. He explained that he had been in meetings with Iranian ministers who "have taken the trouble to explain" to U.S. officials "that they are particularly pleased with the way that the Utah people live and the attempt that they make to be of sincere service to the Iranians. They mentioned repeatedly that many of the other American people haven't any interest except for the amount of the salaries that they get."¹⁶

In fall 1962 an earthquake shook Iran, and Gordon Van Epps, a USU technician and branch president of the Mormon group, wrote to the LDS Church First Presidency and asked for assistance. After some effort, the Church arranged to send clothing through CARE, Inc. Van Epps said the Church's willingness to help improved his work in Iran. Before he had found it very hard to get the students at the Karadj Agricultural College to pay attention. After the relief efforts, they were more willing to listen. The Utahns along with Point Four had attempted to form farm cooperatives, a concept very new to Iranians. After the earthquake when the LDS Church gave supplies freely without any expectations, an Iranian told Clark Ballard, the head of the USU group, "Now I understand what you have been trying

¹⁴ Anderson, 19.

¹⁵ Myrtus W. Evans to A. Theodore Tuttle, 20 January 1959, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁶ George Stewart to Ernest L. Wilkinson, 6 April 1955, Dean Peterson Collection, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

to teach us.”¹⁷

The USU and BYU contracts officially ended in the early 1960s.¹⁸ Mormon business leaders and military personnel continued to work in Iran and to hold church meetings. USU became a training center for Peace Corps volunteers going to Iran. Iranian students continued to come to Utah. With these connections, the Iranian government established a mission in Iran during the 1970s. Dean Farnsworth was called to be the mission president. Grace recalled the situation was so sensitive that when they were first called the *Church News* did not list where they were going.¹⁹

LDS Historical Department employees have conducted interviews with Dean Farnsworth and some of the missionaries. Because of continued sensitive issues, the records of the mission are closed. While I was allowed to read the part of Farnsworth’s interview that dealt with his Point Four work, I could not see most of the interview that explained his experiences as mission president. When I interviewed Dean Farnsworth, he assured me that he could not discuss the mission. Grace talked a little bit about the mission because she blended her experiences in Iran.²⁰

Dean and Grace Farnsworth both told me that they tried to learn Farsi while they were in Iran as part of Point Four. The BYU director, Golden Woolf, held classes for a while, but since Woolf was older and had trouble learning languages and since the technicians had translators, he discontinued the classes. While the Farnsworths took language classes on their own, they only learned a few words. They wished they had learned more when they returned to direct the mission. Grace was impressed with how quickly the young elders picked up the language and worked with the Iranians.²¹

The elders were not allowed to tract and proselyte in the same ways Mormons do in other countries. Most of President Farnsworth’s time was spent trying to have the Iranian government recognize the Mormon Church. Grace Farnsworth recalled, “It was disappointing that it was so difficult to make converts. First we had to convert them to Christianity. Most of the people who did join were Armenians [who were already Christians].”²²

¹⁷ Gordon Van Epps Oral History, interviewed by Jessie Embry, 1999, 17; Clark Ballard to Daryl Chase, Presidential Papers, USU.

¹⁸ The BYU contract ended in 1962, and the USU contract ended in 1964.

¹⁹ Grace Farnsworth, 9-10; *Church News*, 21 June 1975, 12.

²⁰ Dean Farnsworth conversation with author; Grace Farnsworth.

²¹ Grace Farnsworth, 9-12.

²² *Ibid.*, 11.

At first the Church rented buildings in Tehran, but the Farnsworths told church leaders that the Church needed to own a building to be accepted. The Church bought a large home and converted it to the mission offices, mission president home, and meeting place. Whenever members came to Iran or to Tehran from the outlying areas of the country, they came to the mission home, and Grace never knew how many would be at the dinner table.²³

The Farnsworths finished their three-year assignment to Iran and returned home. Six months later the mission was closed because of the Iranian revolution. The Mormons got out before the Iranians took over the American embassy. With the return of an ultraconservative form of Islam to Iran, foreign religions were not allowed in the country and have not returned since. Recently some Iranian officials have contacted some of the Utahns who worked in the country under Point Four, requesting aid.²⁴

Why were the Mormons allowed to establish a mission in Iran? I can only guess, but I assume that the Utah Mormons who were there during the 1950s and 1960s and the Iranians who attended USU and BYU and then returned to work for the government had an impact. The Utahns met Mohammed Reza Shah, Reza Shah Pahlavi's son who took over in 1941, on several occasions and the Shah was impressed with their work. In addition the Utahns were impressed with changes the Shah was trying to make. They were delighted with the Shah's plans for land reform and giving royal and other lands to the peasants. While they knew that the Shah was killing some of his opponents, they still saw him as benevolent dictator. Frequently when I asked the former technicians and their wives what they felt they accomplished in Iran, they lamented that any successes were lost with the revolution and praised the Shah.²⁵

The LDS Church's experiences in Iran provide some positive and negative examples of working with other cultures. First, the Mormons did some positive things. Some Mormon beliefs matched the Muslims'. Other Americans went to cocktail parties and sometimes had to be warned or disciplined for "living it up." The Iranians did not always follow their own religious taboos, but they appreciated a group of people who did.

The LDS Church members also learned to adapt. When the day off work was Friday, many recognized that worshiping was the important element

²³ Grace Farnsworth, 11.

²⁴ Copies of letters in possession of author.

²⁵ Lula Anderson, Grace Farnsworth, and Dean Farnsworth oral histories. All the oral histories told similar stories.

more so than the day of the week. Even when some had meetings on Sunday, they adjusted the meetings to the work schedule.

The LDS people came with a sense of mission, not necessarily of preaching but of helping people. George Stewart wrote to BYU President Ernest Wilkinson, "I would like to express to you also the general feeling among the executive officials of the staff here that the Utah institutions have a record of much higher service on the average than are the records of the other institutions. The Iranian people respond in a very kindly and friendly way to the missionary spirit in which Utah people attack their technical problems. As a purely personal feeling, I think that is one way in which Iran and other parts of the Middle East might properly be opened up to the religious missionary work, in which I know that BYU is highly interested."²⁶ This sense of mission seemed to be appreciated by the Iranians. The earthquake experience also added to the positive experience.

The downside of the Mormon experience was similar to that of the United States government. The LDS Church, like the U.S. government, was closely allied to the Shah. The Mormons refused to see the Shah as a ruthless murderer as many Iranians did. While the Mormons were not as closely tied to the Shah as the U.S. government, their support left no way to work with the opposition government. Anthropologist David Knowlton has shown how the LDS Church has faced similar problems in Latin American countries. The American Mormon Church's hate of communism has led to misunderstandings of socialist movements in these countries and the support of dictators. Mormon missionaries are often confused as Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents, partially because some CIA agents are Mormons and associate with the missionaries.²⁷ While it is difficult to do, churches need to remember that they are preaching the gospel and not tie themselves too closely to the government. Their message needs to be Christ and not the American government.

Given the situation with the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Mormon Church's mission to Iran had to be closed. What is amazing is that the mission was even allowed. The Mormon experience in Iran shows that a small group of people living their religion and being respectful of another culture can impress government officials. But being too closely tied to one government can also lead to problems.

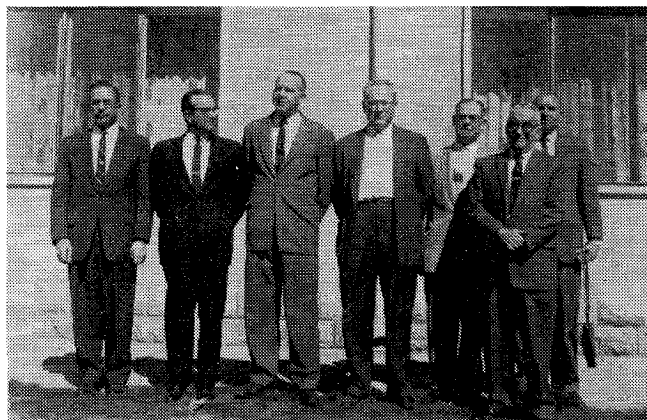
²⁶ Stewart to Wilkinson, 8 January 1955, Peterson Papers.

²⁷ David Knowlton, "Thoughts on Mormonism in Latin America," *Dialogue: Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (Summer 1992): 141-153.

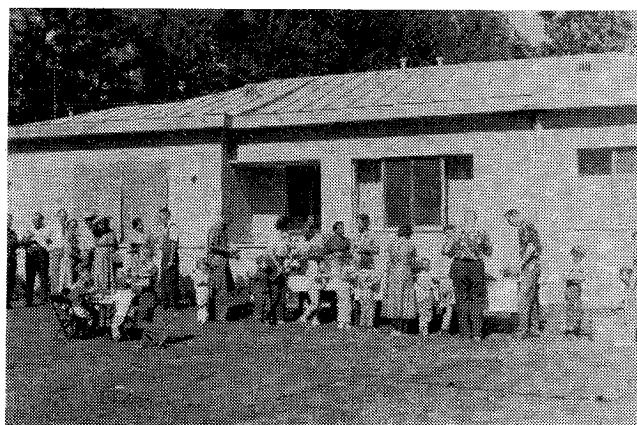
Jessie L. Embry lived with her family in Karadj, Iran, from 1960 to 1962. Her father, Bertis L. Embry, an agricultural and electrical engineering professor from Utah State University, worked with the farm machinery, the electrical plant, and the farm at Karadj Agricultural College. He enjoyed taking pictures and, unless identified otherwise, the photographs in this article are from his extensive slide collection and used by permission of his daughter.



The Embry family visiting sites in Iran. Jessie is the youngest girl.
Jessie L. Embry photo.



Utah State University technicians in Karadj, Iran.
Bertis L. Embry is on the back row (partly hidden).
Jessie L. Embry photo.



LDS Tehran Branch social. Jessie L. Embry photo.



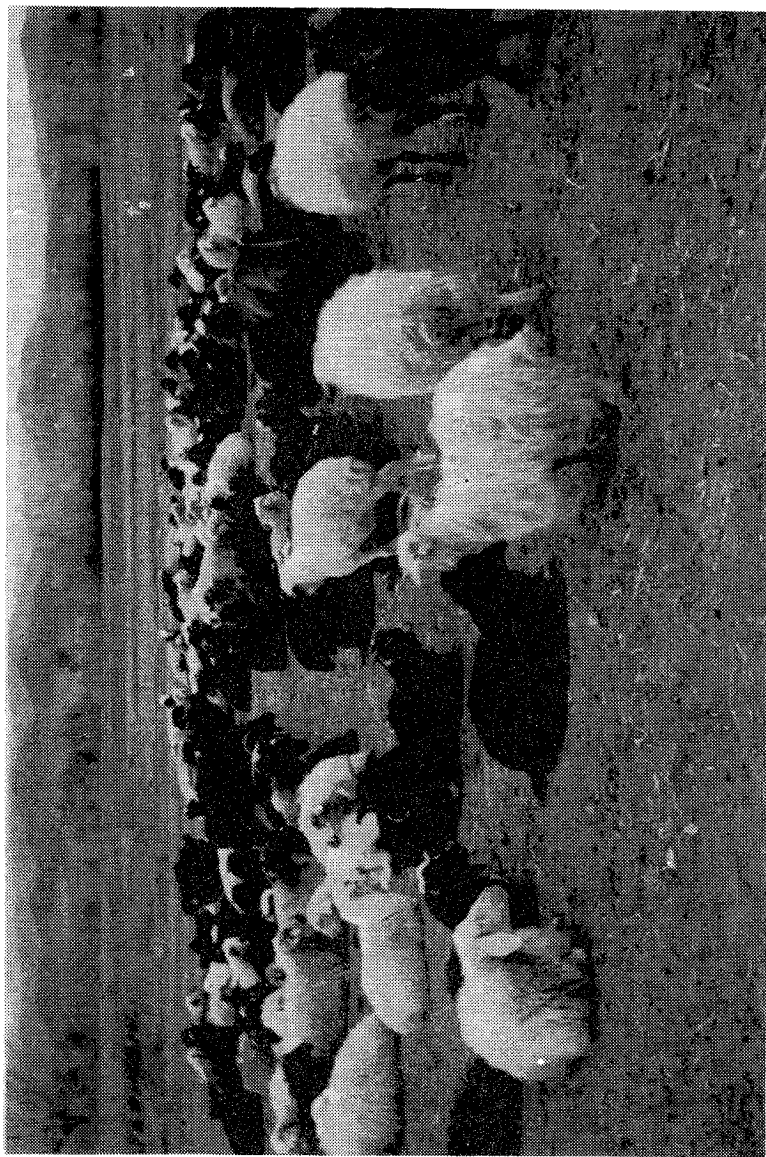
Iranians and Utahns share a meal on the Karadj River, 1962.
Jessie L. Embry photo.



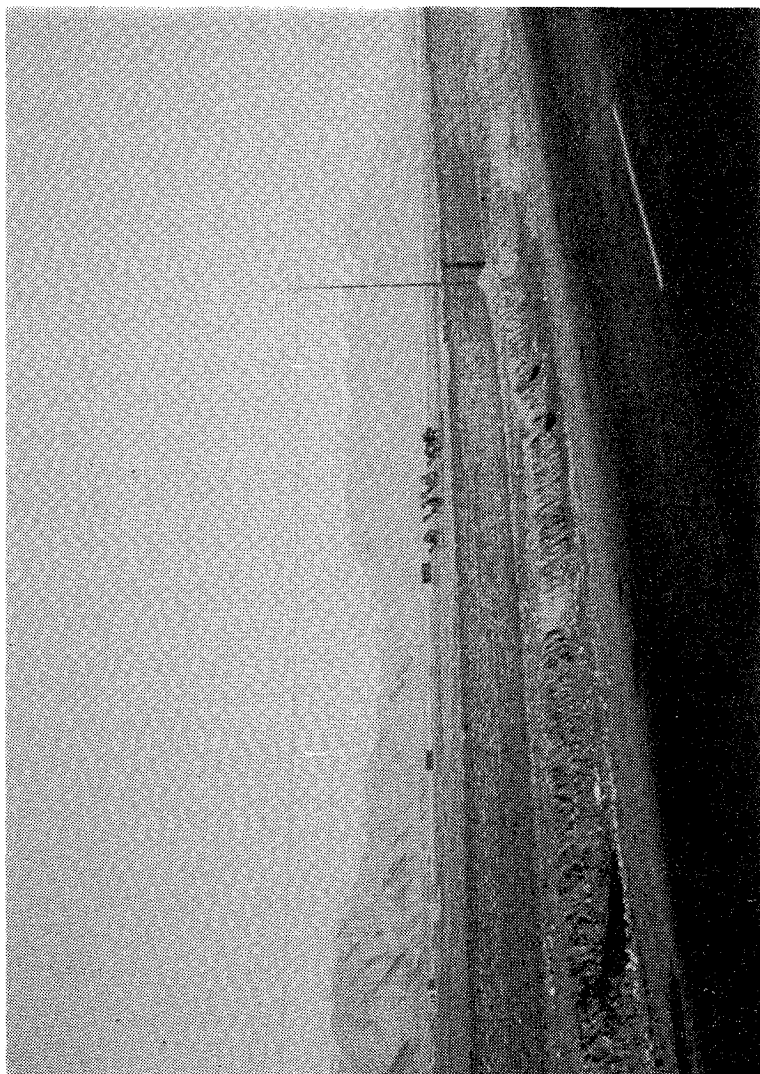
Bertis L. Embry enjoyed photographing people. While many merchants set up shops in large bazaars, others had small family stores like this shoe shop along the side of the road.



The Mullah (Muslim priest) had great influence over people and government affairs.



The Mormons from Utah enjoyed studying the Old Testament because they felt the Iranian landscape (shown here with sheep) was very similar to that described in the Bible.



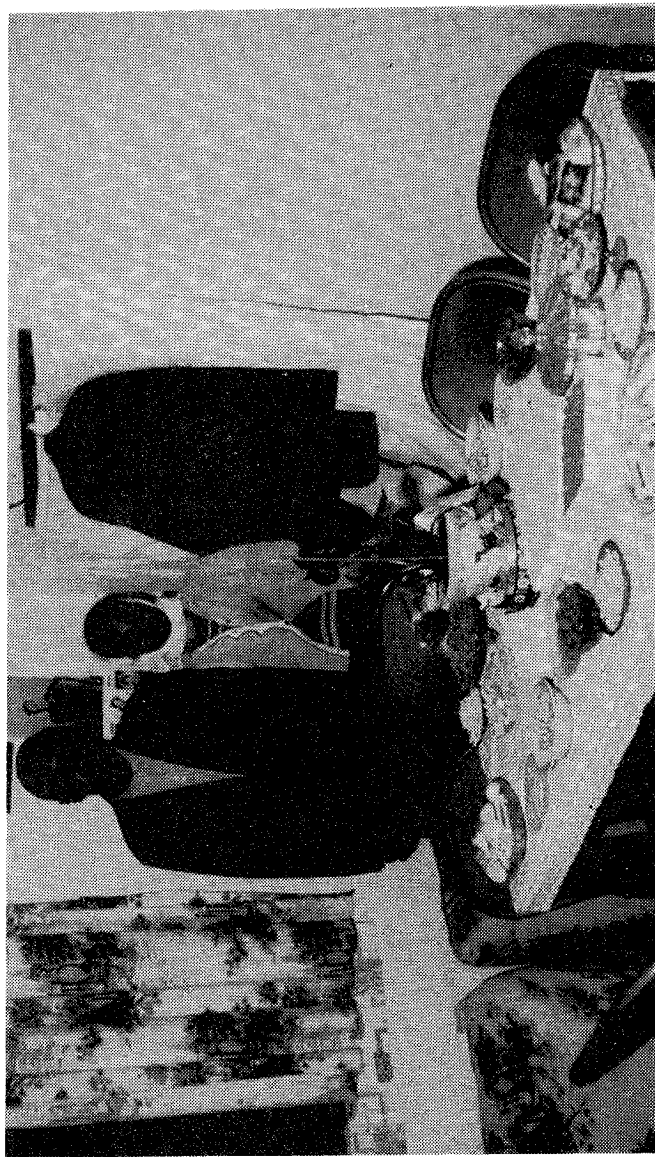
Camels near the capital city of Tehran were a typical sight.



A visit from the Shah was always a special occasion, and often required waiting for his arrival. Utah State University technicians and professors from Karadj Agricultural College expect a visit from the Shah to the campus in 1960.



Gordon Van Epps posed with some of the students and workers at the college farm in 1961.
The men were planting potatoes.



The Utah Mormons were not allowed to proselyte, but they became friends with servants and workers around their homes. Nossrat was the gardener for the American homes at Karadj Agricultural College. He posed with his family during No-Ros, a Muslim holiday. The Mormons loaned Nossrat the table and chairs; the family did not own any. Nossrat kindly invited the Utah Mormons to his home for his No-Ros celebration. In Iranian society, everyone visited friends and families and the hosts and hostesses provided sweets. (As a child, I was surprised by the rose-flavored and other candies.)

Mark Hill Forscutt: Mormon Missionary, Morrisite Apostle, RLDS Minister

Eric Paul Rogers¹

In spite of the interest of church members in biographical studies, Roger Launius has noted that “no one has published a fully adequate biography of any nineteenth-century Reorganized Church leader.”² Among the many candidates for a comprehensive and detailed biographical study, few have contributed to the Reorganization in the nineteenth century as did Mark Hill Forscutt. Yet missing from the pages of early Restoration movement history is an adequate portrayal of Forscutt’s life and influence. Although treated minimally in various regional and general church histories³ and in writings about Joseph Smith III,⁴ the influence of Forscutt on the Reorganization has not been articulated in a comprehensive way. Perhaps the most comprehensive study of Forscutt’s contributions to the Reorganization is an excellent, but cursory five-page article.⁵ Among the reasons for this neglect is not a dearth of data. Forscutt was a prolific diarist. Excerpts published by his daughter, Ruby Celeste Faunce, in the *Saints’ Herald* in 1934 are evidence of

¹ Eric Paul Rogers earned a B.A. from Brigham Young University (BYU) and an M.A. from The University of Texas at Austin in Germanic Language and Literature. He is a doctoral candidate in Instructional Psychology and Technology at BYU. An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the John Whitmer Historical Association in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, on 26 September 1999.

² Roger D. Launius, “The Reorganized Church in the Nineteenth Century: A Bibliographical Review,” in *Restoration Studies IV* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1988), 171-188. Since Launius wrote this, there has been one excellent biography of a nineteenth-century RLDS leader: Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

³ Inez Davis, *The Story of the Church* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1943); Pearl Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri* (Independence, Missouri: np, 1974); Pearl Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois* (Independence, Missouri: np, 1984); and Pearl Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa* (Independence, Missouri: np, 1989).

⁴ Richard Howard, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832-1914)* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1979); Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

⁵ Wayne Ham, “The Musical Legacy of Mark Hill Forscutt,” in *Restoration Studies IV* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1988).

this. The *Saints' Herald* articles, in concert with other published materials, identify many of Forscutt's contributions and provide a foundation for examining Forscutt's impact on the Reorganization. This paper, though not "fully adequate," moves beyond previous efforts and lays the foundation for a comprehensive biographical study. It is the author's intent to create greater awareness of Forscutt among historians of Mormonism and to identify and document his numerous contributions to three early Restoration movements. While Forscutt's life possesses much of deep human interest, the scope of this paper will be limited primarily to his public ministries, hence the title "Mark Hill Forscutt: Mormon Missionary, Morrisite Apostle, RLDS Minister."

Mormon Missionary

Forscutt was born 19 June 1834 in Godmanchester, England. He was the son of Robert and Amy Hill Forscutt. Although trained as a dry-goods merchant, Forscutt wanted to attend Cambridge University and therefore saved for two years. Just prior to leaving for Cambridge, however, he was invited by friends to "have some fun" with Mormon missionaries preaching at the home of a man named Williamson. After hearing only four of their sermons, Forscutt decided to be baptized. This he did against the will of his parents. After he announced to them his baptism, his father said: "Take your things and get out of my house, and never step your foot in again until you give up that religion."⁶ Although Forscutt would later leave the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), he would never give up his belief in the basic tenets of Mormonism that initially drew him to the church.

Forscutt received the priesthood and began serving in the church. In 1855, about two years after being baptized, Mark was called as a missionary to serve in England. His apprehension and faith are expressed in these words: "I feel too weak to undertake such a task, but am clay in the hands of the potter, willing to work and give my mite to aid in the work or cast myself entirely into the work of the Lord and go forth and spread the gospel."⁷ Forscutt was a very successful missionary. He baptized many and was well liked by the church members. He traveled and preached extensively in the areas of Norwich, Shipdlam, and eventually in Manchester, having been assigned to that field of labor by Orson Pratt in December 1856.

Forscutt suffered much persecution, poverty, and illness while he served.

⁶ Ruby C. Faunce, "Biography of Mark Hill Forscutt," *Saints' Herald* 81 (16 January 1934): 75.

⁷ Ibid.

He received clothing and small amounts of money from church members to meet his needs. In September 1857 he received a letter permitting him to go home until his health improved. After regaining his health in December 1857, he was called to serve as the president of the Preston Conference. Forscutt witnessed many miracles. During a very serious illness it was believed that he had died. Mark explained that he had crossed “the veil” and was shown his “heavenly home.” He was told, however, that his work was not done, that he had only begun to earn that home.⁸

In 1858 Forscutt traveled to Liverpool to write for the church publication the *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*. While attending a conference in Birmingham he was called to preside over the Wiltshire District of the LDS Church and in 1859 he presided over the entire Wiltshire Conference, his assignment until the spring of 1860, when he immigrated to Utah. Ruby Faunce, Forscutt’s younger daughter, noted that at the time of his immigration he had traveled 10,832 miles, of which he walked “7,986 1/2 miles.”⁹

On 25 March 1860, just two days prior to immigrating to the United States, Mark married longtime acquaintance Elizabeth Unsworth at the register office in Bolton.¹⁰ That night Mark and Elizabeth were married by Elder Jacob Gates “according to ritual contained in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.”¹¹

Leaving Liverpool, England, on 27 March 1860, Mark and Elizabeth embarked on a thirty-day ocean crossing. The ship *Underwriter* cleared port on Wednesday, 28 March, and sailed for New York on Friday, 30 March. According to the *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* of Saturday 7 April 1860, there were on board the *Underwriter* “594 souls of the Saints, under the presidency of Elder James D. Ross, assisted by his Counselors, James Taylor and John Croft.” Forscutt’s musical talents, which later became such a significant part of his contribution to the Reorganization, are apparent as Forscutt sang a solo during the marriage ceremony of John L. Bear, a future fellow servant in the Reorganization, and his intended while aboard the *Underwriter*.¹²

The Forscutts took a steamer up the Hudson and then traveled cross-

⁸ Faunce, 112.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Certificate of Marriage, Mark Hill Forscutt and Elizabeth Unsworth. Original in Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.

¹¹ Faunce, 112.

¹² Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 42.

country to Florence, Nebraska, the point of departure for pioneers headed West at that time. After arriving in Florence the Forscutts met Brother Holt who had served as a missionary in Bolton.¹³ Elizabeth Forscutt wrote: "Mr. and Mrs. Holt [former Utah Mormons] told us their experiences [in Salt Lake City] and urged and begged us not to go farther. Their appeals were useless. Our paths were marked to the end of our journey and we followed them cheerfully."¹⁴ A company of wagons and handcarts was formed and in early June 1860 the Forscutts departed Florence. Their names and ages, Mark (twenty-six) and Elizabeth (twenty-five), appear on the roster of the Ninth Handcart Company captained by Daniel Robison. They reached Florence, Nebraska, on 12 May and then spent three weeks in preparation for their westward journey. Interestingly, their names and ages also appear in the 1860 Nebraska Territory Census. The company "comprised 233 persons, with 43 handcarts, and 10 tents. Six wagons, with 38 oxen, accompanied the train."¹⁵ One source places the departure date on 4 June.¹⁶ Hafen, however, cites 1 June as a departure date and Henry Harrison's diary, *Journal History* of 27 August 1870, indicates that the baggage was "weighted out" on 5 June. Therefore the exact date of departure is in question, but appears to have taken place during the first week in June. Mark and Elizabeth arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 27 August 1860.¹⁷

After their arrival, Mark was appointed as a secretary to President Brigham Young. He was also ordained into the Quorum of Seventies and appointed president of the 62nd Quorum on 16 February 1861 by Joseph Young.¹⁸ Pressure upon him to enter into plural marriage, however, led to his break with the prophet and the church.¹⁹ Regarding plural marriage, Anderson notes:

It was especially troublesome for foreign converts who may not have been apprised of the practice before reaching Utah. Many of them were

¹³ Faunce, 112.

¹⁴ Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The Flight of the Doves from Utah Mormonism to California Morrisitism: The Saga of James and George Dove," in *Differing Visions*, Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher, editors (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 198.

¹⁵ LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856-1860* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1960), 181, 309.

¹⁶ Amy Parr's death announcement, *Lamoni Iowa Chronicle* (Thursday, 22 March 1951). Typescript in LDS Church Archives, LDS Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Hereinafter cited as LDS Archives.)

¹⁷ Hafen, 184.

¹⁸ Certificate of ordination to seventy for M. H. Forscutt by Joseph Young, original in Community of Christ Archives.

¹⁹ Faunce, 143.

completely unprepared to accept spiritual leaders who practiced a form of marriage seeming to be nothing short of immoral. Perhaps the issue of polygamy produced more converts to the Morris faction than any other factor, for a very large proportion of Morris's followers were recently arrived emigrants, especially from the Scandinavian countries.²⁰

Within six months of coming to the valley, both Mark and Elizabeth left the church and joined a splinter movement led by Joseph Morris.²¹

Morrisite Apostle

Mark was well received by the Morrisites. He was trusted with important positions of leadership. On 12 June 1861, Joseph Morris received the following revelation:

You shall ordain my servant, Mark Hill Forscutt, to the office of an apostle, and I will be with him; for his heart is upright before me. I have seen his affliction, and I have prepared him for a mighty work. And he shall see no more distress; for I will abundantly supply him with that which is necessary for his support in every respect.²²

During this period of denominational shift, the Forscutt's first child, Amy, was born on 27 June 1861.²³ Two months later, on 23 August 1861, another revelation gave Forscutt responsibility for printing Morris's prolific revelations:

And behold, I speak unto you concerning my servants Mark Hill Forscutt and John Parson. They are often troubled with sickness; but I will heal them in the day of my power. Let them take care of themselves much as possible until that day arrives. I am compelled to work according to the law by which I am governed, which law they do not understand. And as far as their health will permit, let them prepare for the press as many as possible of those revelations, explanations and articles which I have given. They have but a short time in which to do their work before I show my power, and shortly after that event, which will open the way, I shall send those revelations and explanations to the world. Therefore, my servants will now know my will concerning them, and let them work accordingly.²⁴

Often treated poorly by their "Brighamite" neighbors, the Morrisites struggled to provide the necessities of life. This was exacerbated by Morris's prophecies of the imminent coming of Jesus Christ, which led his followers to neglect sowing their fields and making other routine preparations for

²⁰ C. LeRoy Anderson, *For Christ Will Come Tomorrow: The Saga of the Morrisites* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1981), 73.

²¹ Holzapfel, 198.

²² Joseph Morris, *The Spirit Prevails* (San Francisco: Geo. S. Dove & Co., 1886).

²³ Amy Parr's death announcement.

²⁴ Morris, 128-129.

winter. The Morrisites suffered severely through the winter and the predicted day of Christ's coming, New Year's Day 1862, came and went without the much anticipated advent. Anderson describes the impact of the failed prophecy: "This bitter and crushing disappointment was almost more than the people could bear. The fervor, the fear, the heightened expectations . . . combined with their want and misery to produce a situation that strained the very limits of human endurance."²⁵

A number of Morris's followers were disillusioned and attempted to leave. Some were unlawfully imprisoned by Morris and other church leaders. Chief Justice John F. Kinney of the Third District Court at Salt Lake City, a non-Mormon, issued a writ of *habeas corpus* to Joseph Morris, Richard Cook, John Banks, and Peter Klemgaard commanding them to free the prisoners.²⁶ Refusal to respond to this and subsequent court orders led to an armed conflict with a territorial militia in June 1862. Morris and several others were killed and Morris's followers scattered. General Conner of the U.S. military at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City announced his intentions of establishing a military post at Soda Springs (about one hundred and seventy-five miles north of Salt Lake City) and offered protection and support to any willing to go. Approximately eighty families (over two hundred people), almost all Morrisites, joined the expedition. The remaining Morrisites gathered primarily to California and to Montana, while those who remained in Utah generally gave up their adherence to Morris's teachings.²⁷ Although Forscutt left the Morrisite community, he did not give up his belief in the central doctrines of the early church. Perhaps it was the following experience that set the stage for Forscutt's final denominational transition.

Prior to Morris's death, Forscutt reports presenting to Morris an article written in the *True Saints Herald*, the official publication of the Reorganization. The article was directed against "false prophets" including Morris.²⁸ Forscutt describes Morris's reaction to the article: "Mr. Morris listened and instead of denouncing the attack, quietly smiled and withdrew. In a short time he returned and handed me a revelation in which Joseph Smith, the leader of the Reorganization was declared to be a prophet of God and rightful heir to the presidency of the church."²⁹

²⁵ Anderson, 96-97.

²⁶ Ibid., 106-107.

²⁷ John Banks, "A Document History of the Morrisites in Utah" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1909).

²⁸ Faunce, 143.

²⁹ Ibid., 143.

While this event would explain Forscutt's later baptism into the Reorganization, it raises more questions than it answers. Why would Forscutt wait three years to join the RLDS Church? Why would Morris's position carry any validity after repeatedly failed prophecies? Why did Morris persist in his prophetic role if it had been revealed to him that Joseph Smith III was the rightful heir to the presidency of the church? Whatever the answers to these questions, the reported experience with Morris was Forscutt's way of explaining his new allegiance. It would be an allegiance with a significant impact both on Forscutt himself and on the membership of the Reorganization who would learn to fondly call him "Uncle Mark."

In October 1862 Forscutt joined the California Volunteers, a U.S. military unit with permanent headquarters at Fort Douglas. During his tour of duty Forscutt served as a secretary and edited the *Salt Lake Vedette*, a paper published by officers and enlisted men of the California and Nevada Territory Volunteers. According to the *Vedette's* prospectus the purpose of the paper was "to afford a medium for the representation of 'Gentile' as distinguished from 'Mormon' opinion; and for combating 'Mormon' misapprehension, and 'misrepresentation.'"³⁰

Instead of being sent East to fight in the Civil War as expected, Forscutt's unit was ordered to Ruby Valley, in present-day Nevada, to protect the overland route to California. It was here that Mark and Elizabeth's second child, Ruby, was born. This period of military service is a source of many interesting stories handed down from Amy and Ruby to their children and grandchildren. In 1864 they returned to Fort Douglas. Forscutt was discharged from the army in 1865 and opened a small eating establishment in Salt Lake City.³¹

After the Morrisite affair, Elizabeth told Mark: "If you have any more religion, keep it to yourself and never bring it to me; I've suffered and had all I ever want."³² Although he kept it from Elizabeth at first, Mark joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City on 1 January 1865. Forscutt was baptized by J. M. Putney and confirmed by Putney and Atwood.³³

³⁰ Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, volume IV (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 54, note 30.

³¹ Faunce, 144.

³² Ibid.

³³ Susan Easton Black, *Early Members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, volume II (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1993), 810.

RLDS Minister

On 31 August 1866 a note left in his home is reported to have read: "If not out of this Territory in one week, you will die the death of a miserable apostate dog."³⁴ In a letter dated 21 September 1866 Forscutt wrote from Salt Lake describing events that occurred the Sunday following receipt of the threat:

The following Sabbath several of the saints, Bros. Gillen, Anderson, and my own family took supper at my house, and all excepting the two brethren and myself, and my eldest daughter, (five years old,) were immediately taken sick. They vomited most fearfully, and experienced a very peculiar sensation, accompanied by spasms in the stomach, and numbness of the hands and feet. One of the sisters, Jane Maloney, wife of Bro. Maloney, (on whose life an attempt was made nearly a year and a half since, as reported in Herald,) resides at camp. She and her son were very sick, and in conversation with the army surgeon, her husband was informed there was every indication of strychnine. My wife cooked down in the cellar, to which there is a separate entrance, and a neighbor's boy, on hearing of the circumstance, the day following, said he saw two men, whom he described, standing near the stove on the day in question, during the temporary absence of Sister Forscutt with her company. They doubtless did the execrable work, but thanks be to God, who gave us the victory, they were foiled considerably in their nefarious design. All are again restored whom the murderous preparation affected, excepting Sister Maloney, and she experiences a deadening sensation in her toes only. Those whom they most designed to destroy were totally unharmed.³⁵

With this letter Forscutt's experiences in Utah began to be told to the members of the Reorganization outside of Utah. Despite the threats, Forscutt remained a short time in Salt Lake City and assisted the RLDS missionaries. The nature of Mark's service to the Reorganization in Utah is demonstrated in the minutes of the Annual Conference of the Utah District on 6–7 April 1865. Brother Forscutt was appointed clerk of the Conference; secretary, general church recorder, and book agent for the Utah District; and was to succeed Elder David Putney in the presidency of the Great Salt Lake City Branch. A statistical report of the Utah branches was not available for the conference. Forscutt, however, was reported to have been "getting up some books for the branches, with which they have not heretofore been supplied, it is hoped that a full report will be presented at our next Quarterly

³⁴ The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—1844-1872*, volume 3 (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1896), 448-449. (Hereinafter cited as *History of the RLDS*.)

³⁵ Ibid.

Conference.”³⁶

In September 1866, Mark hired a hall in Salt Lake City for the missionaries at a cost of five dollars “paid from his own pocket.”³⁷ However, at the insistence of his wife, who feared for his life, Mark left Salt Lake City and went East. He did so with high praise from Alexander H. Smith who wrote his brother, Joseph Smith III, from the Great Salt Lake City on 29 August 1866. Forscutt’s was the third house that Alexander entered in the Salt Lake Valley. Alexander wrote of Forscutt: “Bro. Mark is a diamond of the first water, keen, shrewd, and intelligent, one of God’s zealous and fearless servants, fearless, energetic, active and capable, he works for the Lord.”³⁸ On November 6, Forscutt wrote from Columbus, Nebraska:

I wrote you on leaving Great Salt Lake City, and merely drop you a line to state that I spent Sabbath here, and had a truly soul-refreshing time. I leave here tonight for Omaha, and will be in Plano as soon as I can manage my affairs enroute. Times are lively in Utah. Dr. Robinson, next door but one neighbor to me, and a personal friend, was murdered two days after I left. I also learned from a gentleman who left there the day after the doctor’s murder, that General Connor and eight others were under orders from the Danite fraternity to leave or die.³⁹

Forscutt’s early letters to the Reorganization depicted Utah church membership as both treasonous and murderous. Reference to the “Danite fraternity” tied the alleged villainy to the organized church or, more specifically, to its leadership. Of Forscutt’s connection with the Reorganization Wilcox wrote: “He was hungry for the church he had known in England. He came into a firsthand knowledge of the reorganization in December 1864, and on New Year’s day 1865 he united with it.”⁴⁰

Forscutt’s missionary and leadership experiences, his contributions to the *Star* and the *Vedette*, and his leadership among the Morrisites had prepared him for varied service in the Reorganization. Although the separation from his family was most difficult, it freed Forscutt to give his full attention to church labors.

That Joseph Smith III and others recognized the talents of the young man is evident in the responsibilities given him from the beginning. At the Annual Conference convened 6 April 1867 at Keokuk, Mark served as a clerk

³⁶ Minutes of an annual conference of the Utah District of the RLDS Church, held at the Mission House, on the 6–7 April 1865, Community of Christ Archives.

³⁷ Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 464.

³⁸ Correspondence from Alexander H. Smith to Joseph Smith III, 29 August 1866, Community of Christ Archives.

³⁹ *History of the RLDS*, 1896, 455.

⁴⁰ Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 44.

of the conference⁴¹ and was named shortly thereafter to a committee on “forms for representation.”⁴² Prior to the fall conference that year, Forscutt joined Joseph Smith III on an extended trip.⁴³ Then, at the Semiannual Conference of 1867 Forscutt was appointed to labor “under special direction of President Joseph Smith” and was appointed with others by President Smith to administer to the sick attending the conference.⁴⁴ These associations kindled a close and abiding friendship between Mark and Joseph. The assignments given to Forscutt by President Smith throughout Forscutt’s life demonstrate Smith’s enduring confidence in the skills and talents of his friend.

As a trusted associate of President Smith, Mark served him as a troubleshooter, “investigating problems in local congregations, resolving gross doctrinal differences, and generally enforcing the policies that he and the church administration had formulated.”⁴⁵ In his memoirs Joseph Smith III wrote of Forscutt:

Brother Forscutt, or “Uncle Mark” as he was generally called, was one of the ablest and most polished of the churchmen of his day. Well educated, cultured, of distinguished bearing and courtly manners, an interesting and able orator—to all this he added marked musical ability. Thus he served ably in the missionary field, in the musical work of the church, and in later years as Dean of Graceland College.⁴⁶

Prior to being reunited with his family in December 1869, Forscutt was given numerous opportunities to travel, preach the gospel, and organize new branches of the church. In a letter of 25 November 1867, Forscutt wrote from Council Bluffs, Iowa, regarding the missionary travels of his colleagues as well as his own participation in a local conference at Union.⁴⁷ As district president in the same year, Elder Forscutt wrote “a cheering letter telling of baptizing twenty and organizing the third branch in Wayne County.”⁴⁸ Additionally, Forscutt participated in a two-day meeting in Amboy where “the work of the ministry was ably done. Two witnessed the profession of their faith and were received by baptism.”⁴⁹ While in Nodaway County, Forscutt organized the branch of the Guilford Danish Saints at the home of

⁴¹ *History of the RLDS*, 1896, 465.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 477.

⁴³ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 484.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 482-484.

⁴⁵ Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*, 158.

⁴⁶ Howard, 130.

⁴⁷ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 484-485.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 544.

Christian Anderson.⁵⁰

Forscutt served again as clerk of the conference at the Annual Conference of 1868 at Plano, Illinois. During the conference he was appointed to labor under the special direction of President Joseph Smith.⁵¹ However, at the Semiannual Conference of 1868 Forscutt was released from this position. Instead, Mark was ordained to the office of high priest and appointed to preside over the Southern States Mission "including Missouri and those portions of Illinois and Indiana south of the line parallel with the northern limits of the State of Kentucky."⁵² This appointment, given only three years after his baptism into the Reorganization carried heavy responsibility and demonstrated the confidence of the church leadership in Elder Forscutt. By 1869 Forscutt was well known to the church membership. His extensive travels, prolific preaching, high profile assignments, ordination to high priest, and closeness to Joseph Smith certainly gave church members reason to trust and revere Forscutt.

In addition to his official church activities, Mark was also active in the affairs of the town of Plano, Illinois:

At a celebration July 4, 1869, people began to arrive in Plano in farm wagons, spring wagons, buckboards, buggies, and sulkies. They came from Oswego, Bristol, Kendall, Fox, Big Grove, Little Rock, and Aurora. Flags flew, guns boomed and crackers set off by small and large boys caused a general nuisance. Soda water, lemonade, beer, and peanuts found ready sales. "From the stand Elder Mark H. Forscutt read the Declaration of Independence in a distinct sonorous voice that pleased the hearers." He was credited with being one of the ablest and most polished speakers of the day, well educated, cultured, and an able orator, as reported by the local paper.⁵³

In spite of the rewards of community and church service, Forscutt certainly longed to be with his wife and daughters. By the fall of 1869 Forscutt was again given missionary responsibilities under the direction of Joseph Smith III.⁵⁴ But the most joyous event of the year must have been his reunion with his family in St. Louis on 13 December 1869. On 27 December 1869 Forscutt had his daughters blessed in the RLDS Church although they were older than was customary. During the blessing of his youngest daughter he felt "led by the Spirit" to say "thy name is no longer Lulu Sarah, but Ruby Celeste." Elizabeth's reaction to this unusual event was explained by

⁵⁰ Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 56.

⁵¹ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 492-494.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 509-510.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 546.

Forscutt: "My wife was rather indignant till I told her I had no intention to change till led by the Spirit."⁵⁵ Within a year of the family's reunion a son was born to the Forscutts named Mark Zenas.⁵⁶

Although joined by his family, Forscutt's contributions to the growth and administration of the church did not diminish. Rather, his tireless labors as a missionary throughout the Midwest would continue and would even be extended for a time to England and the South Pacific. The remarkable sacrifices made by Mark and his family are convincing evidence of their abiding belief in God and in the church to which Forscutt had dedicated his life.

Contacts with Members of the Early Organization

Forscutt's missionary travels brought him into contact with individuals who had played significant roles in various Restoration groups. Among the most well known was William E. McLellin, whom Forscutt visited on his first visit to Independence. McLellin proved an accommodating host taking Mark to church services at the Church of Christ on the Temple Lot and to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Naturally, these settings provided opportunities for discussion of personal religious beliefs. Wilcox noted: "McLellin was firm in the advocacy of the divinity of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Commandments, as far as he thought the revelations in the latter book had been correctly printed." However, McLellin rejected the Book of Doctrine and Covenants with its attendant changes to the Book of Commandments.⁵⁷

Desiring to visit members of the Reorganization in the Independence area, Forscutt was again the beneficiary of McLellin's generosity. Acquiring two horses at his own expense, McLellin accompanied Forscutt to the homes of Joseph Lee, whom Forscutt had baptized in Utah, Frederick and Idelia Campbell, and others including some who had aligned themselves with the Hedrickites. Forscutt's response to these visits was elation over "the evidence of the Lord's blessing being manifested in regard to those gathering in the 'Center Place.'"⁵⁸ In addition to his brief association with William E. McLellin, Forscutt had written contact with both David and John Whitmer, prominent members of the early organization. In a letter addressed to Mark H. Forscutt from Richmond, Missouri, on 2 March 1875, David Whitmer

⁵⁵ Faunce, 208.

⁵⁶ Amy Parr's death announcement.

⁵⁷ Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 228.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

wrote:

My testimony to the world is written concerning the Book of Mormon, and it is the same I gave at first and it is the same as shall stand to my latest hour in life, linger with me in death and shine as gospel truth beyond the limits of life, among the tribunals of heaven, and the nations of the earth will have known too late the divine truth written on the pages of that book is the only sorrow of this servant of the Almighty Father.⁵⁹

A year later, on 5 March 1876, John Whitmer wrote similarly to Forscutt regarding Oliver Cowdery's testimony of the Book of Mormon:

Oliver Cowdery lived in Richmond, Missouri, some forty miles from here at the time of his death. I went to see him, and I was with him for some days previous to his demise. I never heard him deny the truth of his testimony of the Book of Mormon under any circumstances whatever.⁶⁰

McLellin had been critical of Joseph Smith Jr. but affirmed the divinity of the Book of Mormon. Likewise those who were special witnesses of the Book of Mormon were unmistakably clear regarding their witness of the divine origins of the Book of Mormon. These contacts with members of the early organization strongly affirmed Forscutt's faith in the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

Forscutt also had limited contact with leaders of the Utah Church. While serving in Birmingham, England, in the spring of 1873, Forscutt learned that Elder Snow and others of the Utah church were in town. In response Mark advertised that his associate John S. Patterson would speak on the subject: "Polygamy not original Mormonism" and invited Mr. Snow and his associates to attend. Although there was no response from the Utah contingent, it was reported that, "Bro. Patterson's discourse was a good one, and was very fairly reported in one of the Birmingham papers, where it will more than likely 'be read by thirty thousand people.'"⁶¹

Forscutt's closest relationship with early members of the church was with Joseph Smith III, president of the RLDS Church and son of the founder of Mormonism. In July 1870 Mark moved his family to Plano, Illinois. Plano was the chief RLDS community of the day. After a miscarriage and long confinement, Joseph's wife, Emmeline, died. This was devastating for Joseph, and members of the community tried to console him with little effect. The solution, however, was found in the Forscutt family. They lived with Joseph during this painful and difficult time.⁶² Forscutt was also

⁵⁹ Davis, 65.

⁶⁰ Wilcox, *Saints of the Reorganization in Missouri*, 375.

⁶¹ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 16.

⁶² Faunce, 208.

personally associated with Joseph's mother, Emma Bidamon, whom he had visited in her home on a number of occasions.

Missionary Labors

In the 1872 RLDS General Conference Mark was called on a mission to England. It was decided that Amy, his elder daughter, would go with him and stay with an aunt while Mark did missionary work in Leicester. Being apart from his family, particularly during a time of financial distress, was a great hardship but one which was faced with great faith. Receiving money and gifts from church members, Mark and Amy left on 21 June. Of his departure Mark wrote: "Felt very badly at the station where leaving my wife she, dear soul, seemed broken hearted. God bless and comfort her. Father above, I leave my loved one to preach the gospel of thy Son. Oh! be though their stay, comforter, and helper."⁶³

On 9 April 1872 Forscutt was released as general church secretary and Henry Goodcell Jr., of San Bernardino, California, was appointed to succeed him. Forscutt was blessed and set apart for his mission under the hands of President Smith and Apostles Blair and Ells.⁶⁴ Prior to his departure for England, Forscutt made an appeal for help in the English Mission, as authorized by the action of the General Conference. Then, Mark, Amy, and J. S. Patterson left Plano on 20 June 1872 for Europe.⁶⁵ Writing from Brooklyn on 8 July 1872, Mark indicated that neither Elder Avondet nor Elder Davies, whom he had anticipated meeting, had arrived. Nevertheless, Forscutt secured passage on the steamship *Australia*, which was scheduled to sail on 13 July.⁶⁶ J. S. Patterson described his transatlantic voyage with Forscutt in a letter dated 11 September 1872, written from Painston, Scotland, and related Forscutt's departure from Glasgow.⁶⁷ Once in Birmingham, England, Forscutt wrote providing an overview of the European Mission.⁶⁸

At the semiannual European conference held in London, England, 5–6 October 1872 Forscutt served as president and J. S. Patterson as secretary. President Forscutt recommended the "establishment of a publishing department for the church in Great Britain." Thomas Taylor, C. D. Norton,

⁶³ Faunce, 303.

⁶⁴ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 693, 696.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 702.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 703.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 708.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 707.

John Owen, J. Rook, and J. S. Patterson were appointed to draft a plan of organization for that purpose. There was also a committee appointed, consisting of Elders M. H. Forscutt, Thomas Taylor, and J. S. Patterson, to write an appeal on behalf of the proposed publishing department.⁶⁹

Forscutt also presided at the European Mission conference held in Birmingham, England, 5–7 April 1873.⁷⁰ However, at the General Conference of 1873, Forscutt was released as president of the mission because the Quorum of the Twelve feared the failure of Forscutt's proposed publishing department in England. The report of the General Conference reads:

The Quorum of the Twelve, after full consideration, have unanimously disapproved of the European publishing scheme, proposed in the minutes of the October General Conference of said mission. Also that in view of all the circumstances, we unanimously recommend the release of Bro. Forscutt from that mission; and that Bro. J. S. Patterson be appointed and sustained as president of said mission. . . . Resolved, That in view of the probable failure of establishing the proposed publishing department in England, and the representations and requests of Brn. M. H. Forscutt and John S. Patterson, as specified in their reports, it is hereby declared to be the opinion of this conference that Bro. M. H. Forscutt should be honorably released from said mission, and he be appointed to labor under the direction of the First Presidency of the church. . . . Resolved, That when Bro. M. H. Forscutt returns to America, pursuant to resolution of this conference, that Bro. J. S. Patterson be appointed to succeed him in the charge of the European Mission, until otherwise provided.⁷¹

This pronouncement came as a crushing blow to Forscutt. Nevertheless, he continued his missionary labors. On Sunday, 11 May 1873, Mark was at New Tredegar, Wales, where he is reported to have “preached three sermons that day, and was about to return to America.”⁷²

Returned from the European Mission, Forscutt was described as having “gained in flesh and rugged appearance by his over-the-ocean trip.” Mark returned to his home at Kewanee on 18 July 1873.⁷³ Although disappointed at the manner in which he was released from his labors in England, Forscutt's dedication to missionary work was not lessened. Reporting his labors in 1874 in Canton, Illinois, Forscutt wrote:

We had a glorious time here on Sunday last. Three were baptized, one of them a Mr. Seqard, of Peoria, for several years elder; that is, presiding

⁶⁹ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 714.

⁷⁰ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21.

elder of the Disciple Church of that place, and as such recognized and honored by the congregation up to Sunday last, both on account of his ability and Christian uprightness. His conviction is due to the private endeavors of our excellent Bro. and Sr. Robinson, of Peoria; his conversion to the power of God in our glorious social meeting of Sunday afternoon last. God be praised, the ice is breaking, and the sunshine of truth again cheering us, not only by its lovely rays, but also by its causing the truth sown in the winter of barrenness to spring forth in the verdant foliage of the new life of the coming harvest.⁷⁴

Regarding the church at Canton, one observer noted:

Bro. Mark H. Forscutt had charge of the public services, morning and evening. The singing was good and cheering; of the preaching we have nothing to say; an excellent spirit seemed to prevail among the Saints. The citizens of Canton are quite interested in our people and very respectful and attentive during worship.⁷⁵

Forscutt's fields of missionary labor were expansive. Though sometimes laboring "as circumstances permit,"⁷⁶ or "under the jurisdiction of the local authorities,"⁷⁷ he continued to travel as well. In January 1875 Forscutt was preaching at Belleville, Illinois, and was expecting to go into Wayne County.⁷⁸ The 1875 annual conference instructed Forscutt "to extend his former mission into Iowa and Missouri."⁷⁹ His labors were not without success. On 12 September 1875 he baptized twelve including Elisha Goode, Olive M. Smith, Samuel Orton, Louisa Orton, F. L. Hitchcock, Emma M. Rhodes, Georgiana Chapman, Elizabeth Runkles, Cynthia Savage, E. T. Kester, E. L. Kester, and S. P. Yuhl.⁸⁰ Forscutt labored in Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois.⁸¹ In the spring of 1880 a new impetus was given to missionary work in Chicago: "A hall was rented and dedicated at 619 West Lake Street, Elder M. H. Forscutt being engaged there as missionary."⁸² At the annual conference of 1884 held at Stewartsville, Missouri, Mark was appointed to labor in Michigan, Northern Indiana, Northern Ohio, Western New York, and Western Pennsylvania.⁸³ Forscutt was later appointed to Pittsburgh and

⁷⁴ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 58.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 63, 265, 258.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 117, 130, 240, 288, 305.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 312.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 445.



Mark Hill Forscutt, circa 1880.
Courtesy Community of Christ Archives, H276.1.

“other parts of W. H. Kelley’s field”⁸⁴ and in 1890 to St. Joseph, Missouri.⁸⁵

Perhaps the most trying missionary assignment, however, came at the General Conference of April 1893. Prior to the conference the Australian mission encompassed the Society Islands, or Tahiti. However, changes were in the making, and at that conference the Society Islands were divided from the Australian Mission. With the creation of a new mission a new “missionary in charge” was needed. Experienced, tried, and tested, Mark Hill Forscutt was given the assignment. Although well supplied with ministers, the Society Islands presented difficult challenges for Elder Forscutt. Particularly difficult was travel from island to island, acquiring the native tongue, and finding officers from among the native members.⁸⁶ It was also difficult for missionaries to become accustomed to the climate, food, and lifestyle of the natives. Unfortunately, Forscutt’s time in the Society Islands was cut short due to poor health. “He was very sick in the tropics, being unable to adjust himself to the food, exposure, and living habits of the native people. He lost weight and became practically incapacitated.”⁸⁷ Before Mark left the Society Islands, he wrote to Bishop E. L. Kelley of the urgent needs of the mission for a ship. In one of his letters he suggested the name that was later used for the gospel ship. He wrote: “If the Honolulu vessel be purchased, my choice of names to have painted on it, would be ‘Te pahi Evanelia,’ in English, ‘The Gospel Ship.’” He returned to San Francisco by February 1894 and labored in California for a time, where he regained the lost weight, health, and strength.⁸⁸ On 13 September 1894, the *Evanelia* was launched. In a dedicatory service on 23 September 1894, Elder J. C. Clapp gave the dedicatory address and Mark offered the dedicatory prayer. “The final hymn of the service was composed for the occasion by Brother Forscutt.”⁸⁹

General Church Government

From early in his association with the Reorganized Church, Forscutt played an active role in general church government. Not only did he serve as clerk of numerous general conferences, as previously noted, he also served on committees and in appointments that shaped church policy.

⁸⁴ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 482.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 652.

⁸⁶ *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 280.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 273.

At the annual conference of 1870 Forscutt presented a resolution that a “memorial” to Congress be drafted that outlined the church’s position on “government, church polity, and polygamy.” Seeking to distinguish the church from its Utah counterpart the conference appointed a committee consisting of Forscutt, President Joseph Smith, W. W. Blair, Josiah Ells, and A. H. Smith. The memorial to Congress was reported and after some amendments was adopted. It was subsequently presented to the U.S. Senate by Senator Trumbull of Illinois on 5 May 1870.⁹⁰

During the April conference of 1870 another resolution involving Mark was adopted. The resolution dictated:

that the President and Secretary of the church be authorized to issue licenses to the general officers of the church; that there be appointed a Secretary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, whose duty it shall be to sign all documents authorized by general provisions of General Conference, to sign licenses and certificates issued by the First Presidency, and to perform any and all other duties coming properly within the province of an organized government.⁹¹

Mark was then appointed to the position of secretary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Forscutt served at times as both the secretary of the general conferences and the general secretary of the church.⁹² Forscutt was also sustained as secretary of the high priests’ quorum with Charles Derry, president, and William Redfield and D. M. Gamet, counselors, at the semiannual conference of 1877 and later served as first counselor to the president of the high priests’ quorum.⁹³ Even after his release as general church secretary he was often called upon to function as conference secretary.⁹⁴ On one occasion Forscutt assisted President W. W. Blair who presided over the annual conference for 1889 at St. Joseph, Missouri, in the absence of Joseph Smith III.⁹⁵

A man of Forscutt’s many and diverse talents was in a position to contribute much. He led out in repealing a resolution of the 1869 annual conference that gave the Twelve control over funds of the church in the hands of the bishop. The resolution carried.⁹⁶ Forscutt also presided over local or regional conferences and annual church reunions.⁹⁷ The minutes of

⁹⁰ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 564-577.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 612, 615.

⁹³ Ibid., 194.

⁹⁴ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 190.

⁹⁵ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 620.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 629-632.

⁹⁷ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 611, 665.

an annual reunion held at Garners Grove, Iowa, on 5 October 1889 at which Forscutt presided reads:

Thus closed one of the most profitable and spiritually blessed meetings of reunion held in the West. The audience was large and orderly throughout. Every one seemed in good humor and all things passed off pleasantly. The weather was delightful, all that could be desired. There were over two hundred tents on the grounds. The baptisms numbered fifty-five, the majority being adults. The Holy Spirit attended them and also the confirmations. Many children were blessed, and a number of sick benefited through administrations. The preaching was attended by the Holy Spirit's presence and power.⁹⁸

Plagued at times by sickness, however, he wasn't always able to serve as he desired. At the historic annual conference of 1897 held at Lamoni, Iowa, in which the quorum of the Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve were filled for the first time since 1844, Mark was temporarily released because of ill health.⁹⁹

Forscutt's experience in organizational affairs shaped the way in which church legislative assemblies functioned. Mark was appointed a member of the committee to review a book on business and parliamentary usages and rules for use in the church that had been compiled and prepared by President Joseph Smith III. The task of the committee was to examine the work and to approve it for publication.¹⁰⁰ At the annual conference at Plano, Illinois, 6 April 1876 the committee on the publication of a book of parliamentary rules reported:

We, your committee on "Book on Business and Parliamentary Usages and Rules," appointed at the April session of conference in 1875, do report that said book has been compiled and duly examined by us, and is adopted as a manual of practice and rules of order and debate to govern the legislative assemblies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. We further think that credit is due to the compilers for the neat and compact manual they have furnished. W. W. Blair, M. H. Forscutt, John S. Patterson.¹⁰¹

Forscutt's influence can also be seen in the role he played in church disciplinary actions. Mark served on the committee formed at the semiannual conference of 1877 that outlined the reasons for not sustaining Jason W. Briggs as president of the Quorum of the Twelve. The reasons given had to do with the teaching of doctrines contrary to those generally accepted in the church. Briggs questioned the doctrine of preexistence, "the prophecies and

⁹⁸ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 634.

⁹⁹ *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 400.

¹⁰⁰ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 101.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

historical testimony of the Bible,” zionic gathering, and the “reliability of the testimony of God’s Spirit.”¹⁰² This official action widened the breach between Briggs and Joseph Smith III and the more conservative elements of the church.¹⁰³ Ultimately the church would withdraw its fellowship from Briggs and Briggs’s ally, Zenas Gurley Jr., in 1885. Forscutt again served on the committee at the annual conference of 1885 that drafted and presented reasons for not sustaining Briggs and Gurley at the previous General Conference.¹⁰⁴ The two influential leaders would withdraw from the church in 1886. Of these events surrounding Briggs and Gurley, in which Forscutt was intimately involved, Launius wrote: “Joseph Smith and his movement weathered their most serious internal crisis of the nineteenth century.”¹⁰⁵

At the annual conference of 1879 at Plano, Illinois, Forscutt was appointed to a committee with the responsibility of reviewing a number of objections raised against the church Board of Publication upon which the resignation of all board members was requested.¹⁰⁶ The report of the committee, constituted of Forscutt, J. S. Patterson, and J. W. Gillen, indicated “that the demand for the resignation of the board is unwarranted, as far as the facts before us could justify such a demand.” As a result of the report the following resolution was adopted by the conference: “Whereas, Some fault has been found with the present salaries paid to persons in the Herald Office, therefore be it Resolved, That the Board of Publication be requested to take the matter under advisement and, if practicable, reduce the wages of employees therein.”¹⁰⁷ At the semiannual conference of 1880 Forscutt and three others, H. A. Stebbins, E. L. Kelley, and J. R. Lambert, were appointed by President Smith to labor with him in preparing a system of delegate representation for general conferences of the church.¹⁰⁸

The *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* notes the effects of organizational changes, such as those discussed above, on the notoriety of church leaders:

In earlier periods almost all of the noteworthy leaders of the church were members of the presiding quorums. With the growth of branches, districts, stakes, and departments, and the consequent emergence of the high priesthood, other leaders came to the fore. The names of Charles

¹⁰² *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 196.

¹⁰³ Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*, 279-280.

¹⁰⁴ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 523.

¹⁰⁵ Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*, 286.

¹⁰⁶ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 263.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.

Derry (who had been a member of the Twelve from 1865 to 1870), David Dancer, Frederick G. Pitt, *Mark H. Forscutt*, J. J. Cornish, Joseph Burton, R. M. Elvin, John Smith, George H. Humes, R. S. Salyards, J. A. Gunsolley, Henry A. Stebbins, and others became almost as widely known as the names of the apostles or Presidents of Seventy. So too were the names of Marietta Walker ("Frances"), Anna Salyards, Emma Burton, Martha E. Kearney ("Elanor"), and others."¹⁰⁹

Church Buildings/Dedicatory Prayers

Forscutt is likely best known among historians of Mormonism for his association with the Kirtland Temple.¹¹⁰ In 1880 action was taken to clear title to the temple, which had previously been deeded by Russell Huntley to Joseph Smith and Mark H. Forscutt.¹¹¹ The RLDS Church sued Smith and Forscutt to get a legal judgment against any who might have claim to ownership of the property. On 23 February 1880 Judge L. S. Sherman of the Court of Common Pleas, in Lake County, Ohio, issued a judgment that the title of the Kirtland Temple was in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.¹¹² Sherman's decision was significant because it not only established the RLDS Church as legal owners of the property, but also as legal successor to the church established by Joseph Smith Jr. Robison noted that:

The timing of the suit coincided with the uproar concerning the LDS practice of polygamy and virtually ensured a judgment in favor of the RLDS Church, which repudiated the practice. Even if the RLDS Church had not obtained clear title in the 1880 decision, the passage of the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862, which required the LDS Church to forfeit all property in excess of fifty thousand dollars, and the subsequent Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887, which called on the attorney general to execute the 1862 act, would likely have resulted in the title being transferred to the RLDS Church.¹¹³

In addition to Forscutt's association with the acquisition of the Kirtland Temple, Mark played a direct role in the acquisition and dedication of numerous houses of worship. Mark sometimes officiated at dedications with other church leaders. The dedication of the Magnolia building was performed

¹⁰⁹ *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 612-613 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁰ For a detailed treatment of the issues surrounding the Kirtland Temple lawsuit, see Roger D. Launius, "Joseph Smith III and the Kirtland Temple Suit," *BYU Studies* 25 (Summer 1985): 110-116.

¹¹¹ Davis, 495.

¹¹² *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 304.

¹¹³ Elwin C. Robison, *The First Mormon Temple* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 105.

by Forscutt and President Smith.¹¹⁴ Years later Mark and his friend Joseph also dedicated the Plum Creek church building (later called the Thurman Branch) at the request of branch president William Leeka.¹¹⁵ On other occasions Forscutt officiated independently. In July 1876, the Saints in Keokuk, Iowa, dedicated their building with Elder Forscutt officiating in their behalf.¹¹⁶ In Nebraska City, Nebraska, and at the Union Branch of Jefferson County, Indiana, Mark simply participated in the festivities while local leaders performed the dedication.¹¹⁷

Near the end of his life, Mark became associated with Graceland College. The opening day activities, 7 September 1895, began with a long prayer by Forscutt about which J. A. Gunsolley remarked “that morning Forscutt prayed, and oh, how he did pray for Graceland as it was then, and as it was going to be.” This started daily chapel exercises at the college.¹¹⁸ Two years later the new Graceland College building was dedicated with ceremonies on Friday, 1 January 1897:

The city band led a procession from the temporary quarters in downtown Lamoni to the newly completed structure where Bishop E. L. Kelley served as master of ceremonies for the day’s exercises. Prayer was offered by the Reverend George Mitchell of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Davis City. The dedicatory address was by President Joseph Smith, with supplementary addresses by the Honorable H. M. Towner, judge of the Third Judicial District, and Elder Joseph R. Lambert of the Council of Twelve. The dedicatory prayer was by Elder Mark H. Forscutt of the Quorum of High Priests, who was Dean of the Faculty. The benediction was by Elder Columbus Scott of the Council of Presidents of Seventy. The Lamoni orchestra furnished music.”¹¹⁹

Always a missionary, Forscutt didn’t wait for the dedication of a building to perform his ministerial labors. On one occasion Forscutt “baptized 9 in the new font before the building was completed.”¹²⁰ His musical talents were also evident at the dedication of new buildings. At the aforementioned Keokuk, Iowa, building dedication, the congregation opened the meeting by singing one of Forscutt’s own compositions.¹²¹ While he played a role in the building and dedication of many church houses, most of which have been

¹¹⁴ Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa*, 139.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹¹⁶ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 141.

¹¹⁷ Robison, 434; *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 465.

¹¹⁸ Wilcox, 1989, 384.

¹¹⁹ *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 378.

¹²⁰ Wilcox, 1974, 48.

¹²¹ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 141.

swept away by the winds of time, Mark left a more lasting legacy of music and verse.

Music

Music was a central feature of Mark Hill Forscutt's ministerial life. From his early missionary labors in England, to his solo aboard the *Underwriter* at the wedding of John Bear, to his final years as president of the Nebraska City branch of the RLDS Church, Mark's musical talents manifested themselves. He wrote, directed, performed, and composed hymns of praise to that God to whom he had dedicated his life in service.¹²²

In 1869 Mark was appointed by Joseph Smith III to compile a church hymnal. With a borrowed organ and desk Forscutt began his new assignment with fervent prayer: "Lord, give me ability to write, to preach, to compose music in which the Saints shall delight and let thy wondrous love permeate my soul so I'll be an influence always for good."¹²³ Forscutt produced *The Saints' Harp*, which appeared in 1870. Eighty-eight of the selections in the *Harp* contained poetic verse from the hand of Mark Forscutt.¹²⁴

In 1871 Forscutt was appointed to compile a second hymnal that would be called *The Saints' Harmony*. However, changes in Forscutt's own church assignments, and changes to other members of the music committee, forestalled completion of the project for twenty years. An unwillingness to publish Forscutt's musical compilations by the church, perhaps due to financial concerns, also appear to have hindered the process. Mark reported to the annual conference of 1880 "his readiness to furnish music for 'The Harmony' when called for."¹²⁵ Again in 1881 Forscutt told the conference at Plano, Illinois, that "the work would be ready when the church was prepared to publish."¹²⁶ Forscutt was appointed to the music committee as "Musical Editor" only to be released for a time before being re-appointed. The *History of the Church* documents the roller coaster ride experienced by Forscutt in the publication of the hymnal.

In 1871 M. H. Forscutt, Norman W. Smith, David H. Smith, J. A. Scott,

¹²² For a detailed analysis of Forscutt's musical contributions to the RLDS Church, see Wayne Ham, "The Musical Legacy of Mark Hill Forscutt," *Restoration Studies IV* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1988) and Roger D. Launius, "Mark H. Forscutt: Forgotten Poet of the Reorganization," *Restoration Witness*, (September 1980): 18-23.

¹²³ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 289-290.

¹²⁴ Launius, "Forgotten Poet of the Reorganization," 20.

¹²⁵ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 306.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 351.

John T. Kinneman, William Roberts, and Phineas Cadwell were appointed a committee on music. In 1873 M. H. Forscutt was released on account of being on a mission in Europe, and James McKiernan was added. In 1874 James McKiernan was released on his request and J. V. Roberts appointed to fill the vacancy. In 1875 M. H. Forscutt was again added to the committee. This whole committee was released in 1876 and a new committee appointed consisting of M. H. Forscutt, N. W. Smith, and J. T. Kinneman. At the spring conference of 1878 the work of this committee was turned over to the bishop. At the fall conference of the same year a committee consisting of D. H. Bays, T. W. Chatburn, and C. M. Wilder was appointed to examine the music that had been collated. The report was referred to the Board of Publication. Sherman I. Smith was added to the committee. Subsequently M. H. Forscutt was appointed music editor, and the music was prepared for publication. It was finally published and placed on sale in the summer of 1889.¹²⁷

The Saints' Harmony was an unusual work in which the words of *The Saints' Harp* were bound together in the same volume with a modern compilation of music. Forscutt's personal contribution to *The Saints' Harmony* consisted of some seventy-two hymns. In comparison David H. Smith provided forty, Joseph Smith twenty-four, Charles Derry fourteen, Thomas W. Smith twenty-two, and H. S. Dillie four. The majority of the other hymns chosen for inclusion were composed by Parley P. Pratt, Charles Wesley, and W. W. Phelps.¹²⁸ One commentator noted the "cosmopolitan spirit" of Forscutt's work, "remarkable in so small an organization."¹²⁹

Forscutt composed under several pseudonyms including: A. Unicorn, Hillsire, Mareschal, Mu Phi, M. Ostracis, and Wetteri.¹³⁰ Of Mark's musical status in the church it was written: "'Uncle Mark,' as the Saints delighted to call him, was certainly the most able and honored musician of the church in his time."¹³¹ Because of his renown as a musician Forscutt was frequently asked to serve as chorister at general conferences.¹³² Unfortunately, most of Forscutt's compositions have not been retained in *Hymns of the Saints*, the

¹²⁷ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 621-622.

¹²⁸ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 289-290.

¹²⁹ *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 62-64.

¹³⁰ Inter-Office and Departmental Correspondence, Music Department, memo from F. S. Weddle to S. A. Burgess, 6 July 1945, Community of Christ Archives.

¹³¹ Carlyle F. Kueffer, editor, *Stories of Our Hymns: Latter Day Saint Hymns and Their Composers* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1938), 89.

¹³² *Ibid.*, *History of the RLDS*, 1969, 193.

exceptions being numbers 24, 151, and 436.¹³³

Forscutt's prolific compositions reflected the full spectrum of Restoration beliefs and revealed "a natural talent for expressing the ideals of the movement in verse."¹³⁴ This talent for verbal expression manifested itself in other ways as well, particularly in the sermons, lectures, and debates in which Forscutt engaged.

Sermons/Lectures/Debates

Mark was renowned for his speaking ability in and out of the church. Wayne Ham notes a tribute given Forscutt by the *Riverton Advocate*:

Mr. Forscutt has but few peers as an orator and scholar. He talks so rapidly, forcibly and eloquently that one listening never gets weary. There seems to be nothing in literature or science beyond the scope of his mind. He is a severe and pitiless critic. Some find it hard to believe that he can be sincere in professing a belief in anything so absurd as the Mormon religion. He looks more fit to grace the bar than the pulpit.¹³⁵

A series of thirty doctrinal lectures was given in January 1871 in Plano, Illinois. Among the topics addressed by Forscutt were the "Being and Attributes of God" and "Repentance and Confession."¹³⁶ In 1873 the *Canton Register* reported: "Elder Mark H. Forscutt preached in Union Hall . . . and an abler discourse was never delivered in this city. It was a thorough Christian sermon."¹³⁷ During a series of lectures in western Iowa it was reported that Forscutt was "the first and only active incumbent of the office of secretary that the church has had . . . [and that] Bro. Forscutt saw much of Western life, during some years spent in Utah, and is by conviction and choice a defender of the truth; and as such he is second to but few in ability."¹³⁸ Forscutt's lectures often resulted in the baptism of his listeners. On one occasion ten were baptized during a week of Mark's lectures.¹³⁹

According to Brother R. M. Elvin of Nebraska City, Nebraska, Forscutt delivered some fifteen lectures between December 1876 and early 1877. Brother Elvin reported that "the first two were given on Sunday, December 31, and the attendance was large and the attention good."¹⁴⁰ Similarly, Brother J. R. Badham wrote from Shenandoah, Iowa, on 14 January 1878

¹³³ *Hymns of the Saints* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1981).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³⁵ Ham, 158.

¹³⁶ Wilcox, *Regathering of Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 608-609.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹³⁸ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 78.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

that “Bro. Forscutt was delivering a course of lectures there on the Book of Mormon, and bringing forth to the world’s people strong proof of its divinity.”¹⁴¹ Forscutt’s labors in the Shenandoah, Iowa, branch were reported in the *Shenandoah Reporter* in 1879:

We attended their services in Williams Hall, and were not a little surprised to find so many assembled. Their appearance would not impress a stranger with the idea that they differed very materially, either morally, socially, spiritually or intellectually, from the saints and sinners to be found in other churches. . . . We sincerely trust that Mr. Forscutt will always have such a large congregation and that he may be the means of soundly converting them and making them good citizens and Christians, and if he does so his labors will not be in vain.¹⁴²

In August 1875 Forscutt debated J. L. Shinn, a Universalist preacher. The contents of the debate was recorded and later published in pamphlet form by the church.¹⁴³ Within a year Forscutt also met in public discussion with W. B. F. Treat of the Christian Church¹⁴⁴ and on 15 June 1879 he delivered a commemorative discourse on the death of “Sister Emma,” at Plano, Illinois.¹⁴⁵

Mark’s ability to express himself, however, was not always stellar. Addressing a congregation in Sandwich, Illinois, early in his ministry Forscutt encountered some difficulty. Speaking of a case in which husband and wife constantly fought and quarreled he said, “They constantly farled and quat.” Realizing his mistake he sought to correct himself and declared, “I beg your pardon, they quat and farled.” Not wanting to risk another attempt he left it at that with his audience smiling.¹⁴⁶

Publications/Writings

Mark’s literary acumen led to his involvement in the production of a variety of publications for the Reorganization. His experience in England as contributor to the *Star* and in Utah as editor of the *Vedette* had prepared him very well for such labors.

At the April 1866 annual conference a committee was appointed to confer with Emma Smith to determine if she would relinquish the manuscript of the Inspired Translation of the Bible. To this Emma agreed. The committee, which had secured the manuscript began preparing it for

¹⁴¹ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 209.

¹⁴² Wilcox, *Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Iowa*, 220.

¹⁴³ *History of the RLDS*, 1951, 111.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁴⁶ Elbert A. Smith, “Ministerial Anecdotes,” *Autumn Leaves* 17 (July 1904): 316.



Mark Hill Forscutt, circa 1890
Courtesy Community of Christ Archives, H276.2

publication, however the “copying and engrossing” of the manuscript was entrusted to Marietta Faulconer (Walker) and Mark H. Forscutt, “both accomplished penmen, who worked faithfully and well.”¹⁴⁷ A typescript note attached to the Publication Committee Manuscript of 1866-1867 also makes mention of Forscutt’s contribution to the preparation of the manuscript. It reads in part: “Since the original MS contains two writings of II Pet. 3:4-6, the 1866 scribe (Forscutt) copied both writings into this MS, pp. 234 and 236, and on line 6 of p. 236 he left a note to that effect for the Publication Committee.”¹⁴⁸

In addition to his involvement in the publication of the Inspired Translation of the Bible, Forscutt was also engaged in another publishing effort. By 1869 the church was publishing a Sunday school paper by the name of *Zion’s Hope*. Regarding the editorship of *Zion’s Hope*, Davis wrote: “Joseph Smith, was its first editor, though much of the work devolved upon Marietta Walker (Frances) and Mark H. Forscutt (Uncle Mark).”¹⁴⁹

In 1870 Elder Forscutt was appointed assistant editor of the *Saints’ Herald*. His name first appears on the May 15th issue. Mark served in the capacity of assistant editor for about two years ending with the June 15, 1872 issue at which time President Joseph Smith III resumed sole editorial responsibilities.¹⁵⁰

Perhaps it was the sheer quantity of writing that developed in Forscutt the beautiful handwriting that elicits a response from all who encounter it. An unpublished manuscript written by Forscutt titled “Sketch of Joseph Morris” documents, in part, the experiences of the Morrisite community in South Weber, Utah. The manuscript is housed in the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It consists of fifty-four handwritten pages. On the first binder’s leaf it reads: “No 3101 1875/Received from the bindery June 17-1903./ This manuscript was purchased from Mark H. Forscutt in June 1902; it is his own hand writing.”¹⁵¹ A page from the “Sketch” provides an illustration of Forscutt’s beautiful script and also the detailed nature of his self-editing.

Conclusion

Forscutt kept a careful account of his ministerial activities in his diaries. One summary of his labors reflects the faith and commitment of the man:

¹⁴⁷ Wilcox, *Regathering of the Scattered Saints in Wisconsin and Illinois*, 279-280; Launius, 150.

¹⁴⁸ Typescript note, 1866-1867, LDS Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Davis, 513.

¹⁵⁰ *History of the RLDS*, 1896, 239.

¹⁵¹ Mark Hill Forscutt, “Sketch of Joseph Morris” (unpublished), LDS Archives.

Services 194; sermons 85; administrations 33; marriages 3; children blest 18; funerals 5; confirmations 5; ordinations 1. No baptisms owing to physical inability. During 1899 I preached and conducted services in and around Nebraska City and sent my report to J. Caffel: services 220; sermons 106; administrations 44; marriages 6; children blessed 7; funerals 7.¹⁵²

Forscutt's intense commitment is apparent in these figures, which were achieved just a few years prior to his death. He served as branch president at Nebraska City from 1898 until his death in 1903.¹⁵³

Suddenly becoming ill, Mark's wife Elizabeth died 5 October 1903. Mark continued with prior plans to move to California but became ill as well. He passed away on Sunday, 18 October 1903. Two days later President Joseph Smith III delivered the funeral sermon. Ruby wrote regarding the funeral service:

Bro. Joseph said "Mark and he" had agreed, many years ago, that whichever went first, the other would perform this office. It was a wonderful tribute he paid and tears dropped on the desk from his dear eyes often, as he spoke. We laid him beside his beloved wife, and our dear mother, in beautiful Wyuka to await the glorious resurrection morning.¹⁵⁴

Forscutt's allegiance was chronologically LDS, Morrisite, and RLDS, but he was always "true to the faith." From his youth in England to his deathbed in Nebraska, Mark Hill Forscutt was a devout adherent and diligent proponent of the cause. Although he never studied at Cambridge, a fact he sometimes lamented, Forscutt lectured throughout the world, debated with many learned men, published music and text, served as dean of a college, and dedicated his life to the service of God and others.

However, Mark's allegiance to the Reorganization, in particular, and to broader Mormonism, in general, was not without its costs. He lost the approbation of much of his family in England. He suffered deprivation, illness, loneliness, and persecution while serving as a missionary. Immigration was long and difficult. The hopes and dreams of a Great Basin Zion were shattered. Life in the Rocky Mountains was demanding, even threatening, and long separations were a hallmark of the Forscutt marriage.

Although not the focus of the present paper, a detailed account of Elizabeth Forscutt's life is equally warranted. Certainly the burdens she bore were equal to, if not greater than, those suffered by Mark. Apparently responding to a plea for financial assistance from Elizabeth, Joseph III wrote:

¹⁵² Faunce, 555.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 556.

I only wish I had the means to help Mark and you, out of all difficulty on this horrible . . . money question; but I am as helpless and useless as a bear in a trap, except for advice, and advice isn't worth a cent a bushel in the market. . . Oh! It is a hard fight; a woman, all but single handed against a thousand difficulties, whether Mark is at home, or abroad, seems to make but little difference in the getting ahead. His society, and the home joys and comforts with him at home, are worth a great deal; but his faculty for getting on is like mine, not so good as some.¹⁵⁵

Mark's absence to perform his ecclesiastical labors, as well as his failure in business affairs, frequently left his wife and children without means. It may well have been Mark's ineptitude in business matters that raised concerns over his publishing plans during his tenure as European mission president. Elizabeth was more resourceful and successful in business than Mark, but running a business essentially single-handedly was not easy. Between his family's financial distresses and their extended absences from one another, the pressures on the Forscutt marriage must have been tremendous. Nevertheless the marriage survived the ministry. In a letter to E. L. Kelley, who was asking Mark to take new assignments, Forscutt replied:

I must be home, ready for the 24th. On March 24th, I will have been married 25 years, and have never kept an anniversary of our wedding. I have promised to be home this time, and my promise is my law. My son-in-law and daughter, and other friends will be there to commemorate our silver wedding. And I certainly think, as Mrs. Forscutt has given me up sixteen years of that time to ministerial work, it would be a sin against her . . . for me to slight her this time.¹⁵⁶

Throughout Mark's nearly four decades in the Reorganization his influence was widely felt. He composed music and verse and compiled hymnals. He edited a variety of church publications. Serving as a missionary in Utah territory, the Midwest, the British Isles, and the South Pacific, Mark taught and baptized hundreds. He labored as secretary of numerous conferences, as general church secretary, as a member and counselor to the Quorum of High Priests and as a local minister in numerous congregations. He articulated church policy and worked to maintain doctrinal purity. Known for his outstanding speaking ability, he lectured, debated, and delivered countless sermons. His experiences in the West, which constituted the content of many of his lectures, shaped RLDS views of the Utah church. He built and dedicated houses of worship and played a role in the acquisition of

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Smith III to Elizabeth Forscutt, 24 January 1881, Community of Christ Archives.

¹⁵⁶ Mark H. Forscutt to E. L. Kelley letter, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 20 February 1885, Community of Christ Archives.

the Kirtland Temple. Absolute dedication and untiring service, paid with great personal sacrifice, were hallmarks that led to Forscutt's status throughout the Reorganization and to the loving title, Uncle Mark.

Book Reviews

Madison Edwards, *Termination Dust* (Kansas City, Missouri: Pelsmith-Monroe, 2000, 356 pages). ISBN 0970174500 \$14.00 paperback.

REVIEWED BY SHELBY BARNES, KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

For those readers who have never been able to grasp the understanding and connection of Paul Madison Edwards when he wrote, this book will offer rare insight into the mind through this work of fiction written by Paul M. Edwards and his son, Gregg Edwards (under the pen name of Madison Edwards). Both authors share a middle name of Madison, as their forebear, Frederick Madison Smith.

This esoterical, existential, philosophical-ridden relating of two parallel stories will amaze, educate, humor, and mystify the reader. In alternating chapters the characters of Tom Abercrombie and Joseph Darby tell their stories of living life through the educational lens of the world. Their journey takes intercontinental twists and turns into places that exist not only in their minds but in reality.

The reader is mesmerized by the words and unveiling of “truths” that Abercrombie and Darby are enlightened enough to share. The book is fiction, and yet the reader wants to attach real people to the characters because it just sounds too much like reality. The portrayal of these lives could be close to home.

If Paul M. Edwards was not clearly understood while he was writing non-fiction, this new voice of fiction allows him (with the assistance of his son) to make concepts and ideas more comprehensible through another expression. The reader will wonder anew at the various journeys of life that all must travel.

Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church, Volume One 1830-1847* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997). ISBN 1570083959.

REVIEWED BY CURT BENCH, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Perhaps I should first confess some personal biases before I begin. As a bookseller and bibliophile, I love to read (and own) books about books.

Bibliographies are not only crucial in my business of out-of-print and rare books but are a joy to refer to or read in depth. I have always been drawn to the "reference" section of a bookstore or catalog. I thrive on lists and discussions of the "best" books and the "definitive" works. History, particularly Mormon history, also occupies a special place in my heart and on my bookshelves. I am convinced that many others feel as I do.

With this first of a projected three-volume set on the first twenty-seven years of Mormon printed works, one gets all of the above. It is the best and definitive work because it is the most comprehensive book on the subject. Not only will this book appeal to reference book aficionados but also to book collectors and dealers and serious readers of Mormon history generally. *JWHA Journal* readers, RLDS, LDS, Restoration groups, or anyone interested in this period will find the book worthwhile and fascinating.

"Peter Crawley is professor of mathematics at Brigham Young University" constitutes the entire text on the inside flaps of the dust jacket. I have kidded the author about having such a shamelessly self-aggrandizing "blurb." Arranged chronologically, this handsomely bound and printed volume gives detailed descriptions of books, fleshing out their content, historical context, and even physical characteristics (size, type of binding, et cetera). Author/title, biographical, and subject indexes ensure ease in finding information. Crawley defines "book" as "any printed piece with one or more pages having text bearing on some Church issue . . . produced by Mormons in support of the [LDS] Church." (Exclusions include such things as newspaper articles, maps, and prints.)

The author presupposes a "basic knowledge of Mormon history." I would add that a knowledge of bibliographic and book jargon, or an appendix, would be helpful. Many readers may not be familiar with *state, issue, verso and recto, signature, blind stamped, and wrappers* and other terms. However, such language is used minimally and does not interfere with understanding or enjoying the book. Though he defines "Church" as specifically LDS, most of the 345 entries in this first volume (covering 1830-1847) are common to all Restoration churches. Some will undoubtedly wish the book covered all works, both pro and con, but such is not within its scope, and bibliographies by their very nature are often exclusive.

Besides well-known entries such as the Book of Mormon and *A Voice of Warning*, Crawley also includes little-known items ranging from the quaint *The Young Bachelor's Wish, or Maid's Desire* to the inflammatory *Oration Delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon on the 4th of July, 1838*. Often only one or no copy is extant.

One learns something new from nearly every page about *our* history and the books produced. *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church* is an important book and an essential reference work for researchers and readers alike. It is not likely to be supplanted in the foreseeable future unless by the author himself.

H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Texts and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999, xxvi, 410 pages, illustrations, index, bibliographical references). ISBN 1560851260 \$45.00 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY JEFF COOL, INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

H. Michael Marquardt, an independent researcher, has done a near perfect job of presenting the original text from many of the manuscripts that were used as sources for printing the 1833 Book of Commandments.

The popular topic of the “revelation revisions of 1835” is Marquardt’s focus. He argues that church leaders altered early revelations between 1833 and 1835 for less-than-honest reasons. He includes a short but thorough survey of the historical facts surrounding the two committees appointed to publish the Book of Commandments in 1833 and the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. Marquardt invokes the well-established principle of textual criticism that in order to uncover the *original* text, one must follow “the earliest and best manuscripts available.” He presents the oldest known copy (often from personal journals) of each revelation now considered canonical by either the LDS or RLDS Churches.

His use of this principle of textual criticism is flawed because it relies on the “earliest manuscripts” having been faithful copies of the originals as first recorded, which most originals Marquardt admitted he couldn’t find. In 1834 Oliver Cowdery reported that he was reprinting the revelations and that the previous printing had “errors, typographical, and others, occasioned by transcribing manuscript; but as we shall have access to originals, we shall endeavor to make proper corrections” (10). Some earlier manuscripts support this statement; for example, documents 2 and 5 (25, 33) both contain “&c,” (meaning “and so on”) in places where Cowdery’s later printing inserted many words, indicating that the manuscript could be a copy of an original in which the copyist replaced certain phrases with “&c” for brevity.

Marquardt assumes Cowdery’s statement to be untrue and pins the blame on Joseph Smith for the discrepancies between the earlier manuscripts and

the 1835 printing, theorizing that Joseph changed the revelations after the first printing and drawing many conclusions as to why, most of which imply Smith's deceptive purposes. For example, Marquardt asserts that Joseph added words to Book of Commandments chapters 30 and 32 to explain the failure of the mission to the Lamanites and to weaken the promise that had been made to Cowdery to build up the church among the Lamanites. However, if Joseph had wanted to weaken the initial prophetic promises in order to account for a failed mission, he would not have allowed document 35 (RLDS D&C 31), which promised the missionaries that "nothing shall prevail" against them, to have ever appeared in print (which it did for the first time in 1835). Marquardt asserts after document 15 that Joseph added the phrase "by means of the Urim and Thummim" to Book of Commandments chapter 9 in relation to translation of the Book of Mormon and that he apparently didn't understand the nature of biblical Urim and Thummim, which he says were only used to receive "yes" or "no" answers, similar to casting lots (49-50). Marquardt apparently is unaware of current research that affirms that biblical Urim and Thummim were used to receive revelation in the form of "light" and "letters"—exactly what early witnesses to Book of Mormon translation reported (Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim: A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel*, Eisenbrauns, 2000).

Documents 166 and 169 relate to plural marriage (315, 323), which Marquardt blames on Joseph Smith, notwithstanding abundant testimony to the contrary (Smith and Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Herald House, 1896, 3:351-360; 4:248-249). Document 169, an alleged revelation commanding plural marriage, is presented partly on Joseph C. Kingsbury's testimony given in 1886. Marquardt fails to mention that Kingsbury contradicted the details of this testimony four years later in court (*Ibid.*, 3:349-51). These two documents, and the others like them involving Joseph Smith with plural marriage which also surfaced in Utah after 1852, would make a voluminous study on additions and revisions in their own right.

Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, Richard O. Cowan, *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000, viii, 1454 pages, illustrations, index, bibliographical references). ISBN 1573458228 \$49.95 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY JESSIE L. EMBRY, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

A book review editor usually does not write a book review, especially one in which she is a contributor, but I am going to review the *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* because I have things to say (or did I just want a copy of the book?). My involvement was very small; I wrote two entries on blacks and Green Flake. I also served on a committee that produced a Utah encyclopedia, so I understand the problems the editors faced determining who to include or not to include, who should write the articles, and what to do if the essays are not submitted in time.

Given all the potential problems, the editors have done a remarkable job producing this general reference book. As expected, the focus is on the LDS Church and not the RLDS Church, but there is a small attempt to be inclusive. Ron Romig, Barbara Bernauer, Roger Launius, Mark Scherer, and Lachland Mackay are examples of JWHA members who contributed essays. RLDS members will find essays by them and others that deal with Joseph Smith's time period most useful.

I am impressed with how many scholars contributed to the study. Many are from the LDS Church educational system, but often they are the best in the field: Richard Bennett on Winter Quarters and Dale LeBaron on Africa. But others also wrote on their special fields: Thomas G. Alexander on Salt Lake City, Richard Oman on art, Michael Hicks on music, and Lanier Britsch on the LDS Church in Asia and the South Pacific. I was surprised with some entries. Newell Bringhurst wrote about Thomas Kane but not Fawn McKay Brodie; Buddy Youngreen wrote about David Hyrum Smith with not even a reference to Valeen Tippetts Avery's work.

Other entries worried me. Headings like "Dead," "Redeeming," and "Encyclopedias" are not where I would look for the information. While there is an attempt to include nineteenth- and twentieth-century individuals (such as Colleen Hutchins—Miss America 1952—and Stephen R. Covey), most of the focus seems to be in the nineteenth century, listing individuals barely mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants. I expected an entry on handcarts, a unique Mormon transportation, but if one on ships, why not wagons?

But these complaints are only minor. The *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saints History* will be a valuable reference guide for those with Latter-day Saint background and might even be helpful to others.

Margaret K. Brady, *Mormon Healer and Folk Poet: Mary Susannah Fowler's Life of "Unselfish Usefulness"* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000, xii, 222 pages, illustrations, maps, index, bibliographical references). ISBN 0874212995 \$49.95 hardcover ISBN 0874214009 \$19.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD A. GEARY, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Mary Susannah Sumner Fackrell was born in 1862 and grew up in Orderville, Utah, the most intensive Mormon experiment in communal living. In 1880 she married Henry Ammon Fowler, who took a second wife in 1886. Two years later the family relocated to Huntington where she lived most of her life. She died at fifty-eight, having reared eight children (from eleven live births) in impoverished circumstances, living many years in a two-room log house with a dirt roof that leaked streams of muddy water when it rained. She was little known outside of her community and at her death left writings and personal artifacts that her descendants preserved.

This obscure existence at "home with our families, near home with our friends," seems unpromising for a biographical study. An almost accidental discovery led to a remarkable connection between two women across a wide divide of time and intellectual and cultural differences. Margaret Brady, a folklorist at the University of Utah, found a fragment of Fowler's diary and discovered "a woman whose own values and sense of connection with her community were voiced so strongly that I was immediately swept up in what life must have been like for her a century ago" (13). She found other writings preserved by Fowler's grandchildren, memoirs and personal histories written by Fowler's children and other family members, and Orderville histories and Huntington Relief Society minutes.

An overview of Fowler's life is followed by chapters on the family religious context and community values central to her existence; folk healer activities; role as a writer, teacher, and cultural leader; and identity as a folk poet. The conclusion analyzes the entire "matrix of discourses" (161), drawing upon life-writing theories and employing the lens of "reciprocal ethnography" (197), a methodology that "emphasizes the involvement of the researcher with the materials he or she examines" (4). Conceiving of the

"self" not as a fixed identity but as a social construction developed and revealed through a complex of "texts," Brady acknowledges that her own self-construction as "a woman, a folklorist, a non-Mormon, an academic, a family friend" (198) has "both helped and constrained" her in re-constructing from fragmentary evidence the life of a woman from another era who had only a rudimentary formal education and whose entire existence was shaped by a religious faith that enabled her to deal with poverty and personal loss while functioning confidently in the roles she found, or created, within a close-knit rural community. What binds author and subject together most closely is a shared commitment to an ideal of "connectedness" and a shared urge to construct themselves and their world through the medium of the written language. The book reflects a folklorist's commitment to an informed and non-judgmental presentation of individual values and cultural contexts. I cannot think of a work by a non-Mormon that treats Latter-day Saint doctrine and religious experience more sympathetically. The author acknowledges that in her "desire to represent Mormonism in a fair and measured light" she may "err by withholding judgment about issues that in other situations I would be more willing to critique" (198). Err is usually in the other direction.

Brady's concept of reciprocal ethnography extends to the idea that the reader will become involved in the collaborative process of social construction, creating "a different world, a different story of the Mary Fowler you meet in the juxtaposition of my reading of her life with the primary texts in which that reading is grounded" (5). This expectation is certainly borne out to me, a Huntington native who passed where Fowler had lived on the way to school. Her daughter Laura was my first Sunday school teacher. Brady's insightful study has enriched my own sense of connectedness with the community of my birth.

Newell G. Bringhurst, *Fawn McKay Brodie: A Biographer's Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, xviii, 350 pages, illustrations, index, and bibliographical references). ISBN 0806131810 \$29.95 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY HENRY H. GOLDMAN, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

This prize-winning biography of Fawn Brodie by Professor Bringhurst of the College of the Sequoias in Visalia, California, is an outstanding example of how to write biographical history.

This book reads more like a novel than a standard historical biography. There is a much greater emphasis on feelings rather than her life's events. Bringhurst appears to have had intimate knowledge of his subject. It is, as he mentions in his Preface, almost as if he had lived with her for the thirteen years that it took for him to complete this work.

He quickly moves through the important and, in some cases, unimportant elements of Fawn Brodie's life, from childhood in a small Utah Mormon village to the posthumous publication of her biography of President Richard Nixon.

Bringhurst does not shy away from dealing with the difficult pieces in her life. His clear understanding of the Mormon culture under which she was brought up allows him to provide critical insights into her excommunication from the Latter-day Saints Church following the publication of *No Man Knows My History* in 1945. That work has become a staple in the libraries of historians of the American Trans-Mississippi West.

He portrays her as a political liberal, an espouser of causes, including the struggles against the Vietnam War and the ecological battles over the Santa Monica Mountains in Southern California. Much of these kinds of work were done when she was on the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles. His almost tender comments about her bouts with depression and sexual repression are news to those of us who know Fawn Brodie as a historian, a true professional seeking after the truth, regardless of where that journey would take her. These elements are dealt with in exquisite detail and in an easy-to-read writing style. On a personal note, I wish that the book's Index had been a bit more topical; I found it difficult to navigate through.

Bringhurst's research is exemplary. It represents the best of the historian's art. The use of privately held unpublished material is well documented, particularly as he provides the location of the papers. Too often, unpublished documents are hidden away in private or family collections, obscure libraries, and/or in closed-to-the-public special collections.

In short, this biography of a biographer is a welcome addition to the literature of Western American History and should be required reading for graduate students desiring to follow in Fawn Brodie's footsteps. Bringhurst's work clearly deserved to be awarded the Best Book Prize granted by the John Whitmer Historical Association for the year 2000.

Leland Homer Gentry, *A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saints History and *BYU Studies*, 2000).

Alexander L. Baugh, *A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saints History and *BYU Studies*, 2000).

REVIEWED BY ROGER D. LAUNIUS, NASA CHIEF HISTORIAN

The Joseph Fielding Institute for Latter-day Saints History and *BYU Studies*, both at Brigham Young University, have recently joined together to reprint classic dissertations in paper form relating to the history of the Latter-day Saints. Leland Gentry's 1965 dissertation, "A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839," and Alex Baugh's 1996 dissertation, "A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri" are among the first in this series.

In theory, reprinting these works sounds like a great idea. After all, there are many unpublished dissertations in Mormon history and virtually all of them contain useful information. On further reflection, however, there are probably good reasons why those that remain unpublished as books after several years remain in that category, and those reasons invariably relate to the undigested and unrefined nature of their historical analysis. Despite the very real significance of both the Gentry and Baugh dissertations, they are both works of young scholars just beginning their professional careers. The works have not gone through the sometime taxing process of revision that is nearly always required to turn a dissertation into a book, and they show it. Both suffer from "dissertationese," a uniquely debilitating affliction rampant in graduate schools wherein minutiae of research, obscurity of language, and subtle debates over historiography replace clarity of narrative, coherence of argument, and forcefulness of thesis. The telltale signs are present throughout these works—long quotations, stilted phrasing, weak paragraphing, slavish cross references, and excessive footnotes.

Despite the very real contribution of both the Gentry and Baugh dissertations to the body of knowledge about the Mormon experience in Missouri, that contribution was neither easy to locate nor extract. I felt a little like a rescue worker carefully sifting through a collapsed building at an earthquake site searching for people trapped under the rubble. I found some precious life, certainly, but it was a slow, tedious, exacting process to free it from the wreckage all about it. All of this is to say that these dissertations are

just that, dissertations, and they were not publishable when accepted by the dissertation committee as the final step in earning a Ph.D. degree. Indeed, almost no dissertation in history is publishable without considerable revision. And these works should have been revised and published as books rather than in this form.

I must also question the rationale for undertaking this series. Every dissertation prepared in the United States is registered with University Microfilms, Inc., (UMI) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and virtually all are available for sale from that organization. Both Gentry and Baugh's dissertations are in this category and have been, therefore, available for anyone to purchase since they were first written. Indeed, when I was working on my M.A. thesis at Louisiana State University in 1977, I purchased a copy of Leland Gentry's dissertation. Either of them may still be obtained from UMI for \$28.45 each. While the cost of this reproduction is less expensive to a purchaser, and therefore obtaining the dissertations from this new source might be viewed as a boon, I must question the necessity of going to the trouble of creating a secondary source for them, especially since I see no "value added" in this reproduction. The series overseers did not even prepare an index to each volume. Had the Smith Institute and *BYU Studies* placed these works on-line or into a CD-ROM, where they would have been fully searchable, I would have applauded that effort, but to omit an index from a hardcopy work of nonfiction is unforgivable.

Finally, what about the state of history concerning the Mormons in Missouri? Do these two dissertations add to our body of knowledge? The answers to these questions are "grim" and "somewhat." While the earliest period of Mormon history, the Kirtland era, and the Nauvoo experience have enjoyed exceptional investigations by a wide range of fine historians, and there is a fine shelf of publications treating these subjects, Missouri has not received the same level of attention. Despite articles on the subject, no one has yet undertaken a full-fledged history of the Latter-day Saints in Jackson County. This is a huge hole in the literature of Mormon history, especially when one considers the immensely significant place that the county held for the early Mormons and the roundly important events that took place there between 1831 and 1833. The best work on the subject remains Warren A. Jennings, "Zion Is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Florida, 1962), despite both its age and very significant shortcomings. Perhaps it, too, will be included in this "Dissertations in LDS History" series.

Historical knowledge about the Mormon experience in Missouri after the

Mormon expulsion from Jackson County is in somewhat better shape, in no small measure because of the contributions of these two dissertations, but published books on the subject are both few and exceedingly limited in focus. Stephen C. LeSueur's *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987) is a solid if perhaps circumscribed work. I like to think that my biography of A. W. Doniphan, *Alexander William Doniphan: Portrait of a Missouri Moderate* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), also makes a contribution, despite its emphasis on his Mexican-American War experience.

For the Mormon experience in Missouri, where are the studies comparable to Richard Bushman on the Mormons in New York, Milton V. Backman Jr. on the Kirtland experience, and Robert Bruce Flanders on Nauvoo Mormonism? Nothing relating to the Mormon sojourn in Missouri is comparable and, to use a uniquely Mormon turn of phrase, "the field is white already to harvest." Where are the historians who will step up to this challenge? Should they come forward, they will find these two dissertations good reference works for their historical investigations.

Ronald W. Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998, xix, 399 pages, illustrations, index, bibliographical references). ISBN 0252067053 \$49.95 hardcover, ISBN 0252023781 \$25.00 paperback.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM D. RUSSELL, GRACELAND UNIVERSITY

Mormonism has had schisms galore in its brief 170-year history. Joseph Smith was plagued with internal schism during his reign as prophet. After his death, some declined to follow Brigham Young; the largest number of dissenters coalesced around the prophet's eldest son in 1860. Utah Mormonism and the Reorganized Church have had their share of schisms since that time, but the dissenting church—the RLDS—has far exceeded their Utah cousins for dissent.

Mormons are more "Catholic" than Protestant in some respects, as I argued in an article in *Restoration Studies I* (Herald House, 1980). What accounts for the high level of schism in a religious tradition that practically threatens hell-fire and brimstone to those who leave the denomination? Mormonism's ahistorical conception of religion may be part of the explanation. If there is a "true" religion, with set doctrines and practices that, if changed, amount to apostasy, then religious truth is not conditioned by the

particular culture, and change is dangerous. Link that with the central affirmative of original Mormonism—God speaks to us today—and we give potential prophets a platform on which to stand. Since religion is conditioned by history, any particular church will change. The RLDS Church that I knew as a child in the 1940s and 1950s is not the same church as the church my parents grew up in during the first two decades of this century. That church was not the same church my grandparents experienced in the 1860s and 1870s. And the early Reorganization was quite different from the church at Nauvoo. The Nauvoo church, with its significant innovations (all of which the Reorganization ultimately rejected), was quite different from pre-Nauvoo Mormonism. Thus, a Saint committed to the tradition might well be concerned when he or she sees changes occurring in the church. And when the changes are central doctrines or practices, one might imagine a concerned Saint feeling a call to set the church in order. Someone needs to lead the Saints back to the right path, they would feel, “So why not me?” The RLDS Church has seen many volunteer for this mission since 1984.

Add to the mix the individualistic tradition in American religion, and it is not surprising that Mormonism has experienced a lot of schism. Utah Mormonism is centered in the American West, where American individualism is probably at its height. So schismatic groups such as the fundamentalists insist that God would not take back the 1843 revelation to Joseph Smith with a “manifesto” to Wilford Woodruff. If polygamy was truth in 1843, it is true in 1890 and in 2001.

Perhaps the Utah Mormon schism that is closest to recent RLDS fragmentation is that of the Godbeites. When William Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison were cut off from the church and “handed over to the buffetings of Satan” (166), they joined with their friends in what had been called “The New Movement” and organized the Church of Zion. They created quite a stir for awhile, before fading away. The Godbeites had unusual learning and culture, and several leaders were entrepreneurs. They wanted Mormonism to look forward and embrace the best of the arts and intellectual pursuits that America had to offer. And they wanted to participate in mining and private business endeavors that Brigham Young opposed. The Godbeites also embraced spiritualism and reported seances with Joseph Smith, Jesus, and others. The messages from beyond the veil were amazingly consistent with the Godbeites’ views.

The Godbeite schism was short-lived. In contrast, the liberal dissenters in the RLDS Church in the 1960s and 1970s ultimately triumphed, and those who believed in the church they were raised in or were converted to were

driven to depart from the institution that they thought was “the only true Church of Jesus Christ on the face of the earth.”

Ronald Walker, a professor of history at Brigham Young University, tells the story of the New Movement in a thorough and interesting way. In addition to Godbe and Harrison, we meet Edward Tullidge, Thomas and Fanny Stenhouse, Edward Tullidge, and others. RLDS readers will be especially interested in the Godbeite attempt to convince Joseph Smith III into leading their church of Zion, as well as Edward Tullidge’s flirtation with the RLDS Church, including brief membership in it. Walker rarely lets his own Mormonism show as he writes this story, and he writes it well.

Larry C. Porter, *A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816-1831*, A Dissertation Presented to the Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1971 (Produced by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day History and *BYU Studies*, 2000).

REVIEWED BY PAT SPILLMAN, INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

Larry C. Porter completed his doctoral dissertation on the background and early history of the Restoration movement in 1971. With this reprint, the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and *BYU Studies* inaugurated a series of “Dissertations in Latter-day Saint History” in 2000 to make them more available to general audiences. With the exception of a few minor corrections and the addition of some updated endnotes, the dissertation appears as the author’s committee accepted it. Porter is now “Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding” at BYU and associate editor of *BYU Studies*.

At the time Porter wrote, his was the most comprehensive and scholarly investigation of church origins to date. Of course, others have delved into various aspects of that subject in the generation to follow, but his work remains important as both a detailed overview of the seminal events of the faith and for the voluminous resources he documents.

Porter began with a brief review of the background of the Smith family in Vermont and New York. He then proceeded, mainly chronologically, through the events that shaped Joseph Smith Jr. and the religious movement he founded. His chapters are organized geographically around developments in various counties in New York and Pennsylvania where Smith was active. He spent significant time on other important figures in early church history,

too, including Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, the Whitmers and several other families in the Colesville Branch who later played an important part in the church's Missouri experience.

Because doctoral dissertations are written for a small audience (the candidate's committee) and to "prove" that the student is capable of making a scholarly contribution to the literature in the field, most dissertations are not particularly well suited for general reading. Often organized according to a "formula," they can be rather dull. But Porter's work keeps the reader engaged with interesting narrative and quotes from period sources.

The book concentrated on the historical evolution of the church organization rather than on doctrine or theology. Porter spent a lot of ink documenting who was baptized when and by whom, and who lived where in what house. A few good maps and photos added to the clarity of his descriptions. While his research was scholarly and his tone even, Porter's bias was clear as an LDS author writing to an LDS audience. For example, while dealing with the development of the Book of Mormon he matter-of-factly wrote, "Joseph had the plates taken from his care for a season." Later, they "were restored to his possession for translation." No explanation of who took them or why, or how they were taken or restored was offered. For his audience, none was needed.

Occasionally, a doctoral dissertation plows new ground in a spectacular way and becomes a standard in the literature. Robert Flanders' *Nauvoo, Kingdom on the Mississippi* comes to mind. Porter's work will probably never achieve the fame (or notoriety) of Flanders' work, but it is a worthwhile read and will remain an important step in understanding the origins of the church.

Craig James Hazen, *The Village Enlightenment in America: Popular Religion and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, 194 pages, illustrations, index, bibliographical references). ISBN 025205121 \$34.95 hardcover, ISBN 0252068289 \$19.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD WARNER, INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Just as a variety of American religious and intellectual historians a couple of generations ago wrote about late nineteenth-century American culture by looking at the role of the "village atheist" (like Robert Ingersoll and Thomas Huxley), Craig James Hazen has done the same thing here for antebellum America by examining the "village Enlightenment" in the guises of three

representative thinkers from three major movements—Orson Pratt (a prolific and influential Mormon), Robert Hare (a prominent convert to and spokesperson for spiritualism), and Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (initiator of the American mind-cure movement). Each of these figures “used traditional Enlightenment ideas in new contexts and in new combinations to construct or validate new religious world-views” (6) that integrated popular religion, science, Enlightenment philosophy, and concepts in an atmosphere of the “democratization of knowledge” (5) and the “pervasiveness of Baconianism” (9). This review will concentrate on Pratt since he is the lead and major figure of the three to Hazen, and readers of the *JWHA Journal* will undoubtedly have far more familiarity with and interest in the Mormon “Baconian” philosopher.

At the panel discussion on Mormon historiography of the JWHA annual conference 2000, Mario de Pillis, Robert Bruce Flanders, and Val Tippetts Avery agreed that so much of LDS and RLDS writings and historiography were “self-referential” to a fault. Hazen overcomes this weakness and tunnel vision handily by placing the analysis of Orson Pratt’s contribution to Mormonism as part of the far larger and encompassing “village Enlightenment” in America that was a “new and popular religious movement” consistent with “the authority of Baconian science to justify the ideas.” Pratt felt called to lift up the prophetic utterances of Joseph Smith Jr., divine the cosmological essences, rationally and philosophically order them, and articulate their logical conclusions based on his understanding of science, physics, and natural philosophy. “In doing so, he constructed what he thought was a logically consistent, scientifically sound, and most of all materialist cosmology, one in which universal law and the perfect mechanism of cause and effect revealed the power and glory of nature and nature’s God” (16).

Assuming Smith to have been the prophetic and charismatic leader, with Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt (among others) as the literary and homilectical leaders, and Brigham Young as the pragmatic administrator, it fell to Orson Pratt to be the systematic theologian and theoretical scientist of early Mormonism. Not just another apostle, leader of missionaries and wagons, Orson Pratt was distinguished as an “important spiritual leader, theologian, apologist and scientist” whose “love for both science and the church” were “conjoined and integrated into a single, inclusive intellectual picture of reality” (15). Borrowing from Edward Tullidge and David J. Whitaker, Hazen once again referred to Orson Pratt as the stellar “Paul of Mormonism” (16) in his distinctive, self-conscious, self-

appointed role of making a systematic explication of the principles and cosmology of Mormonism. "For Pratt, the authority of Mormonism lay in its unique ability to rise above opinion and deliver absolute certainty with absolute certainty." The system of thought Pratt worked out was, to his thinking, not simply superior but "infallible" (62).

Hazen understands Pratt thoroughly, explicated him fairly, and places him in a larger intellectual and cultural context beyond Mormonism. He has made a notable contribution in providing an enriched view of nineteenth-century Mormon thought. All subsequent treatments of Pratt will have to be cross-referenced through Craig Hazen's fine work.