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THE MORMON HIVE:
A STUDY OF THE BEE AND BEEHIVE SYMBOLS
IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MORMON CULTURE

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University Dominguez Hills

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Humanities

by
J. Michael Hunter

Fall 2004

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THESIS: THE MORMAN HIVE: A STUDY OF THE BEE AND BEEHIVE
SYMBOLS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MORMAN CULTURE

AUTHOR: J. MICHAEL HUNTER

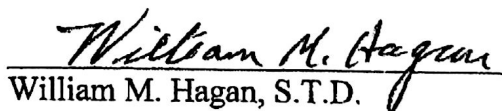
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ABSTRACT

From antiquity to the middle of the eighteenth century, humans used the bee and beehive symbols to represent monarchy. Political and social changes resulted in a reinterpretation of the bee and beehive symbols during the eighteenth century. Republicans ignored the royalist associations of bees and beehives, and used them to represent values of the new republicanism. In nineteenth-century America, the Mormons encountered the bee and beehive symbols while participating in the rites of Freemasonry. In the nineteenth century, Mormons used the bee and beehive symbols to represent the Kingdom of God on the earth in the form of the Mormon theocracy in territorial Utah. This study focuses on interpreting the bee and beehive symbols in nineteenth-century Mormon culture through a study of Mormon sermons, hymns, and folk art. This study of these symbols opens a window on the ideological differences between a democratic culture and a theocratic subculture.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Existing historical records fail to state exactly when the Mormons* conceived of adopting the beehive symbol as their “communal coat of arms.”¹ Neither do the records provide a firm reason for why the Mormons chose the beehive over other possible symbols. However, the idea had made its way into Mormon thought by July 24, 1848. On that day, Brigham Young was leading a second company across the plains from Nebraska to the Rocky Mountains. The company stopped somewhere in what is now Wyoming to celebrate the first anniversary of the arrival of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley. In his journal, Richard Ballantyne wrote that it was a celebration “of independence in the Great Valley of the Great Salt Lake and on which occasion this the victory was declared and the dependant state entitled the ‘State of Deseret.’”

During the celebration, Ballantyne presented Young with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. This was followed by the company cheering three times, “Long live the governor of the State of Deseret.” Young was then ceremoniously escorted by twenty-four young men “draped in white, with a white coronet on their heads and a white sash on their left shoulders tied under the right arm and carrying a sword and sheath in their left hands and a copy of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution in their right.”²

* The popular term *Mormons* will be used in this thesis to refer to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Occasionally quotations will refer to this same group as *Latter-day Saints*. The term *LDS Church* will be used to refer to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Sometime between the day Brigham Young had first entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847 and the day of this celebration a year later, there had apparently been some discussion among the Mormons about the creation of a new state in the Salt Lake Valley to be called the “State of Deseret.” The term *deseret* was from a story in Book of Mormon* about a group of people who “did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees.”³

By July 1849, Mormon leaders had organized a provisional government in the Salt Lake Valley, which they called the “State of Deseret.” This government functioned without recognition from the United States. Reporting on the provisional government, the Arkansas State Democrat, October 19, 1849, stated that the new state’s name was “significant of *Industry* and the kindred virtues.”⁴ In 1881, the Mormon-owned Deseret News stated that the bee and beehive symbols were “a significant representation of the industry, harmony, order and frugality of the [Mormon] people.”⁵ In the Mormon General Conference of October 1905, Benjamin F. Goddard said the bee and beehive were meant to “attract attention to the industrious features of the ‘Mormon’ people.”⁶ In 1934, Mormon Apostle, Anthony W. Ivins, wrote, “It [the beehive symbol] is simply an emblem of industry and thrift. To the Latter-day Saint it has just this meaning, no other.”⁷ In 1996, Church president, Gordon B. Hinckley stated that the bee and beehive were symbols of industry among the pioneers. He expressed his hope that these symbols

* For convenience in finding quoted references, all Book of Mormon quotes in this thesis are taken from the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Book of Mormon citations will include the chapter and verse referred to. Numerous editions of the Book of Mormon have been published over the past 170 years, some without verse designations. Minor changes have also occurred in various editions. All quotes taken from the 1981 edition have been checked against contemporary editions to certify that no significant changes exist. When significant changes have been discovered, they are so noted.

would “continue to be the very essence of the culture of the future.”⁸ In 2002, the LDS Church Web site stated that the beehive was a symbol that “gave expression to values that helped early Mormon pioneers survive on the American frontier: industry and cooperation.”⁹

The bee and beehive symbols were used extensively by the Mormons in the nineteenth century. They could be found in quilts, furniture, sculptures, paintings, architectural designs, poetry, music, and sermons. To study such broadly used symbols requires crossing disciplines. The symbols’ broad use crosses into the fields of religion, philosophy, art, music, literature, and history. The use of the symbols in Mormon literature—sermons, poetry, and music—is mainly through the literary convention known as the metaphor or simile. The use of the bee and beehive in art is mainly iconographic. Simply put, this thesis is a study of something—in this case a bee and beehive—that stands for or represents something else. What meaning these symbols had for nineteenth-century Mormons and how that meaning affected their use of the symbols is the problem being addressed. The thesis of this study is as follows: The bee and beehive have been used to represent social order since ancient times. For the most part, the social order represented by the bee and beehive has been a monarchical order. However, post-Revolutionary Americans found the monarchical implications of the bee and beehive incompatible with democratic ideals. Americans, therefore, associated the bee and beehive symbols with the democratic ideals of unity, cooperation, and industry. These values were perfectly compatible with Mormon community values. However, rather than

incorporate these values into a democratic framework, the Mormons incorporated them into a radical theocratic structure.

The Mormon use of the bee and beehive symbols harkened back to old world monarchical associations that were incompatible with contemporary American values. A surface study of Mormon uses of the bee and beehive symbols reveals something comparable to the general American uses, representing unity, cooperation, and industry. However, a deeper study of nineteenth-century Mormon sources reveals a radical use of the bee and beehive symbols by Mormons to represent the Kingdom of God, more specifically the infant stages of the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth in the form of the Mormon theocracy in territorial Utah.

The study of the bee and beehive symbols is, in effect, the study of ideological differences between a democratic culture and a theocratic subculture. These fundamental differences brought the two parties close to war in the nineteenth century. With tensions rising between these two competing ideologies, something had to give. In the end, it would be the LDS Church, and this is evidenced by the decline in the significance of the bee and beehive symbols for members of that church.

Contrary to what is often said by post-nineteenth-century Mormons, the bee and beehive symbols had deep religious significance for Mormons of the nineteenth century. The bee and beehive represented the sum total of all the LDS Church was trying to achieve—the building of the Kingdom of God on the earth. In representing God's kingdom, the bee and beehive symbols encompassed all aspects of Mormon life and culture. The bee and beehive symbols, in effect, encompassed all other symbols used by

the Mormons. The symbols' religious significance is evidenced by their common use in the most sacred of Mormon buildings, the temples. They were also commonly used in chapels, on caskets, and on tombstones.

The bee and beehive as symbols have been studied by many others: Ransome traced human use of these symbols from prehistoric times through the Renaissance. Her work focused particularly on the folklore of bees and beehives.¹⁰ Fife studied the concept of the sacredness of bees, honey, and wax in the Christian popular tradition.¹¹ Ioyrish, More, and Free produced very similar studies, describing the natural history of the bees of the world and the part they have played in the history of man.¹² Davies provided a compendium of information known to the ancient Greeks about insects, including bees. Particularly interesting in this work are the essays on bees in Greek literature and art.¹³ Merrick investigated how bees were used as an example of the ideal monarchy from antiquity to the time of Napoleon and how this symbolism had to be adjusted after it was discovered that the sovereign was female.¹⁴ Withington explored how American allegorists after the American Revolution transformed the royalist associations of bees to represent republican values.¹⁵ Beavis provided a comprehensive survey of insects referred to by Greek and Roman authors from the earliest times to 600 CE. He discussed the role of each animal type in classical life, including popular superstitions.¹⁶ Ramírez discussed the association of bees and beehives with the virtues of an ideal society as background to his study of the beehive metaphor in the art and architecture of the Modern movement.¹⁷ Crane provided an exhaustive and detailed study of beekeeping from prehistoric times to the present. She traced the probable route of transmission of hives

within the Mediterranean region, northern Europe, eastern and western Asia, and the Americas. She discussed the history of bee products and the symbolic importance of bees, hives, honey, and wax in literature and religion.¹⁸ Hollingsworth traced the insect metaphor as it moved across the entire history of Western literature.¹⁹

All of these studies provided valuable background on the uses of the bee and beehive symbols leading up to the Mormon use of the symbol. However, only a few of these works even mentioned the Mormon uses of the bee and beehive symbols. While Crane mentioned that Mormons took domesticated bees west as early as 1851, she concluded that the “Mormons probably used straw skeps, or at least knew them, since the Great Seal of Utah featured a notional one.”²⁰ While Crane’s tome is probably the most detailed and comprehensive work ever written on bees and the symbolism associated with bees, she failed to fully understand the origins and significance of the straw skep, the traditional European bee house, in Mormon iconography. She mentioned Mormon symbolic use of the bee and beehive in one terse sentence: “The bee used in hives had a special place of honor in Islam, and among the Maya in Mesoamerica and, much later, the Mormons.”²¹

Like Crane, Ramírez suggested that the Mormon use of the beehive symbol resulted from involvement in practical beekeeping: “The Mormons were deeply involved with apiculture: the organization of the North American state of Utah is modeled on the social structure of the beehive, and the polygamous leader Brigham Young (just like the queen bee and her many suitors) set himself up in Salt Lake City in a house that to this

day is known as The Beehive.”²² Beekeeping was actually a minor occupation of the Mormons and had little or nothing to do with their adoption of the beehive symbol.

Hollingsworth mentioned the Mormon use of the skep in his book. In a discussion on the use of the skep in art, Hollingsworth mentioned that the “Skep graces the Deseret Alphabet, 2nd Reader.” This book, published in 1868, was a primer for the Mormon phonetic alphabet. Hollingsworth does not bother to explain the significance of the use of this symbol on the primer’s cover.²³ In an endnote, Hollingsworth adds: “Perhaps to no other religion are the symbols of the honeybee and the beehive as important as they are to Mormonism. Unfortunately, I have not had time to research and report on this fascinating use of the insect metaphor.”²⁴

A few Mormon scholars have attempted to explain the use of the bee and beehive symbols in Mormon culture. Roberts traced the origin, use, and decline of early Mormon symbols, including the beehive symbol. Roberts accurately traced the Mormon beehive symbol to the Freemasons, demonstrated its use as a symbol of industry, but ignored the symbol’s monarchical implications.²⁵ Hal Cannon and David Pendell devoted the Grand Beehive Exhibition to exploring the beehive image in Utah folk art. The exhibit was presented at both the Salt Lake Art Center and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. In the exhibit’s catalog, Cannon in his introductory essay, linked the beehive image to a Mormon political ideal. “The beehive,” Cannon wrote, “of course, was built upon the symbols of the earlier church, but it surely represented Brigham Young’s kingdom.”²⁶ In another essay, Oman and Oman explained how nineteenth-century Mormon leaders consciously used the beehive and other symbols “to

buttress theology, ethics, and the economic kingdom-building of the Latter-day Saints.”²⁷ They also explored why the beehive icon managed to survive while most other images faded into the past. For his article on the beehive symbol in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Oman focused on the symbol’s representation of “an integrated and well-planned community.”²⁸ Cramer attempted to link Mormon use of the bee and beehive symbol with the symbols as used by the ancient Egyptians and Israelites.²⁹

While most of the Mormon studies listed above focus on interpreting visual images, my methodology in this study will be to locate metaphoric uses of the bee and beehive images in nineteenth-century Mormon sermons and hymns as well as iconographic representations in Mormon folk art. I will then interpret these symbolic uses of the bee and beehive symbols in the context of the extraordinary cultural movement of nineteenth-century Mormonism.

CHAPTER 2

THE OLD WORLD HIVE

In prehistoric times, the highly complex social order of bees was perhaps more complex than the social order of primitive humans. The complexity of the bee's world provoked curiosity, admiration, and even adoration in humans. The ability of a group of bees to produce useful products like wax and honey convinced the ancients of the bees' divine origins. The earliest civilizations associated the social order of bees with kingship. From antiquity humans have used the bee and beehive symbols to represent the ideal monarchy, the unquestioned king who refrained from stinging his industrious, obedient subjects. Since the king himself was associated with divinity, the divine nature and social order of the bee made an ideal symbol of kingship. Nineteenth-century Mormon uses of the bee and beehive symbols harkened back to these Old World associations. In order to more fully understand these divine and royal associations, it is useful to review a summary of Old World uses of the symbols.

The Prehistoric Hive

About 100 million years ago, in the Cretaceous evolutionary period, flowering plants and the social insects that fed on them appeared on earth. By the Tertiary period, some 50 million years ago, these social insects had evolved into the highly social honey-storing bees classified as *Apis*.³⁰

Honeybees form intricate communities called colonies. About 50,000 bees form a colony and each bee has a specific job. There is one queen bee in every colony. She is

the largest and her only job is to lay eggs. There are about one hundred male bees in a colony called drones. Their job is to mate with the queen bee and then die after performing the task. The rest of the colony is made up of female worker bees. They begin their work after they change from larvae into bees.

Much like a butterfly, a bee goes through a metamorphosis. Larvae hatch from eggs and grow inside brood cells. Nurse bees feed the larvae bee milk and bee bread. A larva spins a cocoon and changes into an adult bee. During the bee's first three days of life, she becomes a house bee. Her job is to clean and polish the cells of the hive. She then becomes a nurse bee for ten days. After that she is a wax-making bee and is in charge of making new cells for the hive and repairing old ones. Next, she becomes a guard bee. Outside of the hive, she uses her stinger on enemies and often dies protecting the hive. At three weeks old, she becomes a forager bee. She collects nectar from flowers to make into honey. Forager bees take the nectar back to the hive and pass it to the wax-making bees that put it into a cell. House bees fan the watery nectar until it becomes thick. When foraging is difficult during winter months and during bad weather, the worker bees drive the drones out of the hive, leaving them to die of cold and hunger.

There are also worker bees whose sole job is to feed and groom the queen bee. Each colony has only one queen. When a colony becomes too large, the worker bees prepare to split the hive. A new queen has to be born. The egg which becomes a queen is exactly the same as the egg which becomes a worker. The treatment given to the larva which hatches from it alter its development. The nurses feed the queen-to-be with special

milk-white brood-food, also called royal jelly. Once the new queen is born, the old queen swarms or flies away with half the hive to find a new home.³¹

Honeybees build their nests in various locations, including in hollow trees, under rocks, in rock cavities, and in the ground. Here they construct the honeycomb, which has hexagon cells made of wax excreted from the bees. These cells are used to store nectar, honey, and larvae. As early as the Paleolithic period, hunter-gatherers practiced opportunistic honey hunting, the most primitive stage of harvesting honey from the cavity nests of *Apis mellifera*. The earliest representations by hunter-gatherers that clearly depict honey hunting date from the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age period over 10,000 years ago. Excellent examples of Mesolithic rock art relating to bees (see figure 1) have been found at hundreds of sites around the world.³²

Whereas most insects harmed humans, destroying crops and carrying diseases, the bee was a blessing to prehistoric peoples, providing them with sweet honey and useful wax. The San people (Bushmen) who lived in hot dry areas of Southern Africa made many rock paintings, including paintings of bees and their nests. While the San often superimposed one rock painting on an earlier painting, they never painted over subjects that had magico-religious significance.³³ In 1974 Pager studied several thousand

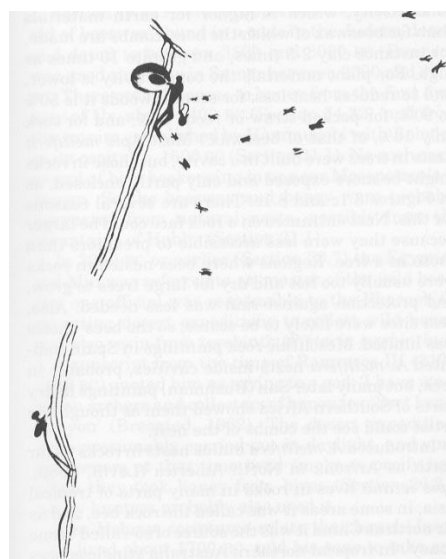


Figure 1. Rock painting in Bicorp, Valencia, Spain. Human gathering honey from rock cavity. Drawing by E. Hernández-Pacheco, 1924 (Permission granted for use by the National Museum of Natural Sciences, Madrid, Spain).

paintings in Ndedema Gorge, and found that the San took care not to paint over paintings of bees and allied subjects, thus strongly suggesting that bees and their honey were sacred to prehistoric peoples.³⁴

Sometime between 2000 and 1000 BCE in the mid-Volga region of Europe, Neolithic peoples were tending the nests of bees. These peoples are often referred to as tree beekeepers. The practice of tree beekeeping continued into the eighteenth century (see figure 2).³⁵ They would care for the natural nests of the bees, often adapting the nests in some way. This involved closing an enlargement of a hole made when honeycombs were harvested, keeping the flight entrance clear, and protecting the nest against animals. These early tree beekeepers prayed to a god of bees.³⁶

Other Neolithic cultures also associated bees with their gods. An artifact from the Ukraine depicts the goddess of regeneration in the shape of a bee.³⁷ In the Caucasus, the Ossetens worshipped a bee goddess called Meritta or Merissa. In her study of the myths, legends and cult images of ancient European civilizations existing between 7000 and 3500 BCE, Gimbutas found that bees took second place only to snakes among sacred objects.³⁸



Figure 2. Tree beekeeping was practiced by Neolithic peoples. This drawing shows an eighteenth-century tree beekeeper on a ladder removing the door and cutting out honeycombs. The beekeeper on the left sits in a climber while smoking the bees.

The Ancient Hive

The ancients believed that their gods were as fond of honey as they themselves were. In religions that required offerings, honey was commonly sacrificed all over the ancient world. According to cuneiforms, Gudea, ruler of Sumer, constructed a temple for the god Ningirsu about 2450 BCE. Gudea made offerings of honey when the foundations were laid and again when the image of Ningirsu was finally put in place.³⁹

The Egyptians were some of the earliest ancient peoples to create purpose-made hives for bees. Some scholars believe that the Egyptians created man-made hives from as early as 5000 BCE. These were cylindrical hives of sun-dried mud (see figure 3). Easy access to honey was important to the Egyptians who sacrificed much honey in religious ceremonies.⁴⁰ An Egyptian tomb painting from about 1450 BCE shows a dish of honey being offered to the Pharaoh, who was regarded as a god-king. Egyptians believed the bee had been created from a tear of Ra, the sun god.⁴¹



Figure 3. This picture from the tomb of Pabasa illustrates Egyptian cylindrical hives made of clay (Kenneth J. Stein © 2004 All Rights Reserved. Permission granted for use).

According to Ransome, the earliest known use of the bee as a symbol occurred in Egypt about 3500 BCE. At this time Upper and Lower Egypt united under one ruler, and the bee symbol denoted the king of Lower Egypt while the reed represented the king of Upper Egypt (see figure 4). The Kahun papyrus stated: “He hath united the two lands; He hath joined the Reed to the Bee.”⁴² The bee symbol of Lower Egypt is used on

inscriptions from the First Dynasty to the Roman Empire, a period of some four thousand years (see figure 5).

Many ancient peoples, including the Egyptians, believed that souls took the forms of bees and that bees were of divine origin.⁴³

Certainly, the Egyptian belief in the

sacredness of the bee made it a suitable symbol for their god-king, the Pharaoh. Yet, many scholars believe the social order of the bee played a part in its selection as a royal symbol. Ransome states: “It is not known when the [Egyptians] began to keep the wild bees in hives, but already in pre-dynastic times they must have known a good deal about bee life, hav[ing] observed the communal life of the bee-state, and the one large bee among the crowd, before they chose it to denote their king.”⁴⁴

Like most ancient peoples, the Egyptians believed that the queen bee was a male. Merrick

states that this misconception “reflected patriarchal assumptions about the natural order of things which persisted into the eighteenth century.”⁴⁵ An Egyptian magus, Horapollo Niliacus, reputedly wrote The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo in the fourth century CE. The



Figure 5. The sedge and the bee, symbols for Upper and Lower Egypt (Kenneth J. Stein © 2004 All Rights Reserved. Permission granted for use).

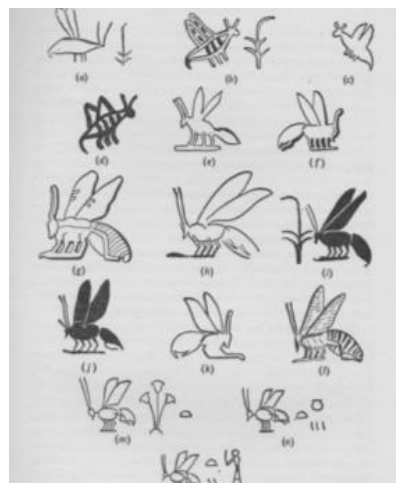


Figure 4. Stylized bees were used to symbolize Egyptian royalty for four thousand years beginning with the First Dynasty (Ransome 25. Illustrator unknown; used without objection from Allen & Unwin Ltd., a division of HarperCollins Ltd., London, England).

Hieroglyphics contained an anthology of nearly two hundred allegorical emblems said to have been used by the Pharaonic scribes in describing natural and moral aspects of the world. The Hieroglyphics explained: “To show the people obedient to the king, they draw a bee. For alone of the animals, the bees have a king, whom the rest of the bees follow in a body, just as men obey their king.”⁴⁶ The Roman historian Marcelinus wrote that “by the figure of a bee making honey they [the Egyptians] indicate a king; showing by such a sign that stings as well as sweetness are the characteristics of a ruler.”⁴⁷ In the seventeenth century, the English clergyman, Samuel Purchas, wrote, “The Egyptians perhaps by the hieroglyphic of a bee signified a king, because it becomes a commander of a people to mingle with the sting of justice the honey of clemency.”⁴⁸

Egypt influenced the Minoan civilization of Crete (2600 to 1450 BCE) from pre-dynastic times. The Minoans apparently borrowed some Egyptian hieroglyphs. Among these borrowed signs are the bee and the palace (see figure

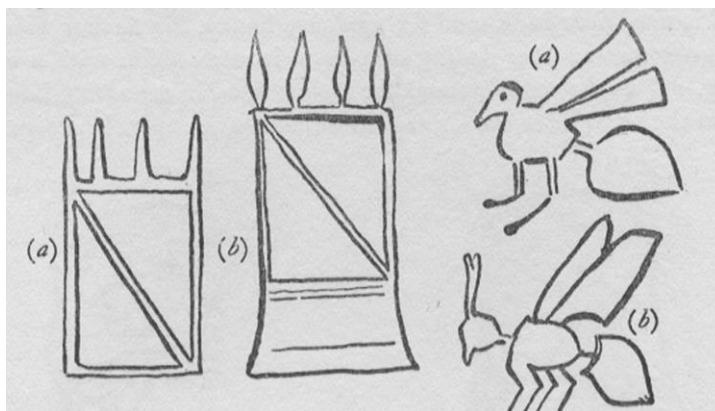


Figure 6. Some scholars, like Sir Arthur Evans, believed the bee and the palace denoted Minoan royalty. This image is from Evans' *Scripta Minoa*, 1909.

6) which are grouped together in such a way as to denote royalty.⁴⁹ The ancient people of Crete also shared the Egyptian use of honey as an offering to the gods.⁵⁰

The Classical Hive

Ancient traditions concerning the sacred nature of the bee passed to the classical Greeks. Honey was sacrificed, dedicated or devoted to a god. According to one Greek myth, when Zeus was an infant, his mother Rhea concealed him in a cave in Crete, where he was fed on honey from sacred bees. Four men protected with armor entered the cave one day to steal honey. The men began to take the honey, but when they saw Zeus, their armor fell off (see figure 7), leaving them unprotected against the bees.⁵¹

Homer (850-800 BCE) referred to honey offerings to the gods in both the Iliad and the Odyssey. In his Generation of Animals, Aristotle stated that wasps “contain no divine ingredient as the tribe of bees does.”⁵² This notion of bees as divine recurs throughout the classical period, and Zeus, the king of the gods, held the title *Melissaios*, the Bee-man.⁵³



Figure 7. Vase from the Etruscan city of Volci, dated around 540 BCE, showing mythical honey hunters in a cave on Mount Dikte, Crete (Permission granted for use by the British Museum, London, England).

The concept of a bee’s divine nature was closely linked to the concept of a bee’s purity. In his Generation of Animals, Aristotle taught that bees reproduced asexually.⁵⁴ This belief in the asexuality of bees resulted in the bee being used as a symbol of purity and chastity.⁵⁵ In the priestly hierarchy at Ephesus, officials connected with the worship

of Artemis were called *Essenes*, a word meaning *King Bee*. Essenes were bound to observe chastity for a year.⁵⁶

While the Romans valued the bee's purity and divinity—they had a goddess of bees, Mellona or Mellonia—they were particularly intrigued with the bee's royal associations. Merrick writes, "All of the Romans agreed that these insects provided a natural model of chastity, cleanliness, cooperation, industry, authority, and obedience. They called attention to the clemency of the king, who refrained from using his sting, but also emphasized his sovereignty over the hive."⁵⁷

This idea of kingly clemency went back to Aristotle who wrote in the History of Animals that "the kings are the least disposed to show anger or inflict a sting."⁵⁸ Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE), the Roman naturalist and scholar, wrote, "Whether the king bee alone has no sting and is armed only with the grandeur of his office, or whether nature had indeed bestowed one upon him, but has merely denied him the use of it, it is a well established fact that the ruler does not use a sting." Pliny was wrong on two counts here. The idea that the king bee did not use his sting was very popular from ancient times to the eighteenth century. However, it was erroneous since the queen bee did actually use her sting. Yet, Pliny's views on kingly clemency are clear enough: "The commons surround him with marvelous obedience. When he goes in procession, the whole swarm accompanies him and is massed around him to encircle and protect him, not allowing him to be seen."⁵⁹

In Roman folklore, swarms of bees were said to announce the attainment of sovereignty. Cicero (106-43 BCE) relates the story of Dionysius of Syracuse who one

day rode through a river where his horse got stuck in the mire. When Dionysius started off on foot, he heard his horse neighing. Looking back, Dionysius saw his horse galloping toward him with a swarm of bees clinging to its mane. A few days afterwards, Dionysius became king of Syracuse.⁶⁰ Seneca (5 BCE-65 CE), the tutor and counselor of Nero, clearly wrote of the similarity between bees and the monarchial system of government in De Clementia:

It is really nature who invented the monarchy, as can be seen among social animals, especially bees. The king is here lodged in the most spacious cell, he is placed in the centre, the most secure spot; then he, freed from all work himself, surveys the labor of the others, and if anything happens to him, the whole hive is disorganized; the unity of power is the absolute rule, and in case of competition, a fight serves to discover the most worthy. Besides this, the exterior aspect of the king attracts the eye, he differs from the others in his body, as well as in the brightness of his colorings. But this is what distinguished him above all; the other bees are very fiery, and in comparison to their size, excessively combative, and they leave their stings in the wound; but the king himself has no sting. Nature did not wish him to be cruel, nor exercise a vengeance which might be dearly paid for, she deprived him of his sting and left his anger unarmed.⁶¹

For the Romans, the social life of bees set a natural, and perhaps divinely orchestrated, example for human social order. A single leader, divinely established, was

to rule over the entire human hive. Certainly, the Romans attempted to establish the entire world, as they knew it, into a well-ordered society directed from the top down. Important to this social order was the king who had no sting. The peace and prosperity of such a society depended on the human ruler following the example of clemency set by the king bee. This idea of a king that ruled by justice and mercy continued into the Middle Ages and took on added meaning for Christians who were attempting to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth.

The Medieval Hive

The period in European history from the collapse of Roman political control in the West—traditionally set in the fifth century—to about the fifteenth century is known commonly as the Middle Ages or the Medieval period. During this period, the Roman Catholic Church, organized into an elaborate hierarchy with the pope as its unequivocal head, was the most sophisticated governing institution in Western Europe. Not only did the papacy exercise direct political control over the domain lands of central and northern Italy, but through diplomacy and the administration of justice in the extensive system of ecclesiastical courts it also exercised a directive power throughout Europe.

Secular and religious lives were highly combined with secular heads of state often maintaining power through the approval of the pope in Rome. Many Christians supported the establishment of a worldwide church with the pope as its earthly king and Jesus Christ as its ultimate leader, the Heavenly King.

In 830 CE, Bishop Jonas of Orléans wrote in his “On the Institution of Kingship” that, “All the faithful must know that the Universal Church is the Body of Christ, that the

same Christ is its head and that there are in it mainly two exalted persons, the priestly and the kingly.” In this sense, kingship was an office in the Christian Church. The most important function of this office, according to Ladner, was “the protection of the Universal Church, and especially of the Roman Church, that is to say, of the Papacy.”⁶² For this reason, European royalty in official attributes and titles frequently used the terms “King and Priest,” “Vicar of God,” and “Vicar of Christ.” Ladner explained: “Empire as the apex of kingship coordinated with the Papacy as the apex of priesthood, but—and this is most important for the history of political theory and reality—Empires and kingdoms were *in* the Church, not *beside* the Church.”⁶³

For Medieval Christians, bees became a rich source of symbolism, which clergy used to help adherents understand abstract concepts like the political theories mentioned above. Early Christian leaders believed that God had imbued nature with didactic designs, and like Christ, these leaders used nature to teach object lessons to a mostly illiterate flock. About 370 CE, a Syrian monk wrote in reference to wasps, “For this had not been ordered foolishly by the Creator, but has been ordained for our instruction—all this, the great and the small, so that, when we consider the things visible to us, we are undertaking the knowledge of the invisible.”⁶⁴ The early Church Father, Origen, wrote in the fourth century, that God had imbued “irrational animals” with the capacity to imitate “rational beings.” He stated that humans could learn from these natural teachers. For example, by studying ants, humans could learn to be “more industrious and more thrifty in the management of their goods,” and while observing bees, humans might learn

to “place themselves in subjection to their Ruler, and take their respective parts in those constitutional duties which are of use in ensuring the safety of cities.”⁶⁵

In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas also looked to bees for a lesson on kingship. He stated that humans should study nature to learn how to act for “in all things nature does what is best.” He explained that “if artificial things are an imitation of natural things and a work of art is better according as it attains a closer likeness to what is in nature, it follows that it is best for a human multitude to be ruled by one person.” He went on to explain were he had observed this lesson in nature: “Among the bees there is one king bee and in the whole universe there is One God, Maker and Ruler of all things. And there is a reason for this. Every multitude is derived from unity.”⁶⁶

So that there was no misunderstanding about the functionary role of earthly kings, Aquinas added. “I order that spiritual things might be distinguished from earthly things, the ministry of this kingdom has been entrusted not to earthly kings but to priests, and most of all to the chief priest, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff.” Aquinas believed that all humans should subject themselves to the ultimate king, Jesus Christ, through his earthly intermediary. He wrote, “All the kings of the Christian People are to be subjects as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For those to whom pertains the care of intermediate ends should be subject to him to whom pertains the care of the ultimate end, and be directed by his rule.”⁶⁷

This analogy between the Kingdom of God and a colony of bees had been used regularly since early Christian times. As early as the fourth century, St. Ambrose compared the Church to a beehive, and the Christian to the bee, “working ardently and

forever true to the hive.”⁶⁸ Interestingly, the bee later became a symbol for St. Ambrose because his eloquence was said to be “as sweet as honey.”⁶⁹ A painting on the high altar of St. Ambrose’s church in Milan shows him as an infant in his cradle with bees flying around his head.⁷⁰

The ancient idea that the king bee did not use his sting was also used by early Christians as a model of the ideal monarch. In the fourth century, St. Basil wrote about the government of bees: “Their dwelling is common, their flight is shared by all, and the activity of all is the same; but, the most significant point is that they engage in their work subject to a king and to a sort of commander, not taking it upon themselves to go to the meadows until they see that the king is leading the flight.” St. Basil was critical of non-monarchical forms of government and used bees to explain why. “In their case,” he wrote of bees, “the king is not elected; in fact, the lack of judgment on the part of the people has frequently placed the worst man in office. Their king does not hold a power acquired by lot; the chances of lot, which frequently confer the power on the worst of all, are absurd.” St. Basil, like so many of his age, believed that the king bee did not use a sting. He wrote, “The king has a sting, but he does not use it for vengeance. There is this positive unwritten law of nature, that they who are placed in the highest positions of power should be lenient in punishing.” Yet St. Basil made it clear that dire consequences would come to those who disobeyed their absolute ruler: “Those bees, however, which do not follow the example of the king, quickly repent of the indiscretion, because they die after giving a prick with their sting. Let the Christians heed, who have received the command to

‘render to no man evil for evil,’ but to ‘overcome evil with good.’ Imitate the character of the bee.”⁷¹

About 1259, Thomas of Cantimpré, a Dominican monk, also compared the life of the bees with the life and duties of the Christian. He wrote that there was but one king bee in the hive, which proved that there should be only one king or pope in the universal Christian church. Falling back on the idea that the king bee did not use his sting, Thomas preached that Christian priesthood leaders should be mild. Thomas found the beehive to be an ideal object lesson for monks. Many other early Christian leaders also used the beehive as the ideal model of a unified, orderly community.⁷²

Medieval Christians found other great lessons among the bees. For example, the early Christians adopted the bee as a symbol of purity and chastity. Eventually the bees came to represent Christ himself, and the use of candles made of beeswax in religious ceremonies took on added meaning. St. Augustine wrote in De civitate Dei between 413 and 426 CE: “Among bees there is neither male nor female. [. . .] The wax of the candle produced by the virgin bee from the flowers of the earth is as a symbol of the Redeemer born of a Virgin Mother.”⁷³

All candles used on the altar at every mass had to be made of beeswax. The church of Wittenburg before the Reformation used thirty-five thousand pounds of beeswax. Every monastery and abbey, therefore, had apiaries to produce the enormous amounts of wax required in Roman Catholic services. Monasteries often had to pay a yearly rent in the form of wax. Presents or legacies of wax were also very common in medieval times.⁷⁴

The bee was also a symbol of immortality to the early Christians. Peter of Capua refers to the resurrected Jesus Christ as *apis ætherea* (the heavenly bee). The bee can be found carved on tombs in the catacombs as a symbol of immortality.⁷⁵

Earthly kings, those medieval functionaries of the universal church, also utilized the bee symbol. For example, the Merovingians were a dynasty of kings that ruled the Franks, a Germanic tribe, from 481 to 751 CE. The kings were descendants of the chief of the Salian Franks, Merovech or Merowig, who ruled from 448 to 458 and from whom the dynasty's name was derived. His son, Childeric, ruled from 458 to 482 and worked to enlarge his kingdom until it included most of present-day France.

On May 27, 1653, a mason, Adrien Quinquin, working on the reconstruction of the church of Saint-Brice in Tournai in what is today Belgium, discovered the tomb of Childeric. The tomb contained hundreds of gold objects, including three hundred gold bees. Jean-Jacques Chifflet was put in charge of studying and publishing the finds. In 1655 he published his report, which included drawings of the bees (see figure 8). The treasure was taken to

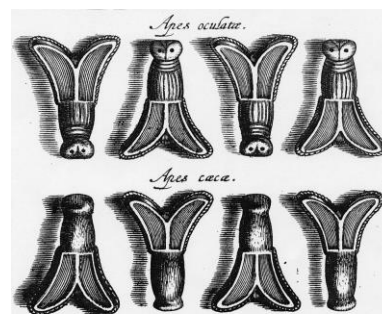


Figure 8. Chifflet's 1655 drawing of Childeric's bees (322).

Vienna in 1656 and eventually became the property of Leopold I, Emperor of Austria. In 1665 the Austrians gave the treasure to Louis XIV as a gift in recognition of the help of the French against the Turks. The treasure went from the Louvre to the Bibliothèque Royale where they were stolen in 1831. The French Police apprehended the thieves, but

they had already melted down most of the gold, and only two of the bees (see figure 9) were recovered.⁷⁶

Napoleon tried to legitimize his regime by iconographically linking it to the Medieval French past. Bees decorated the Notre Dame cathedral for the imperial coronation of 1804. Bees were also found in Napoleon's royal attire worn on the day of coronation. He used the bee symbol in his family's royal crests, and when he was in Elba from May 1814 to March 1815, he used a flag with three bees in the design.⁷⁷



Figure 9. Surviving bees from Childeric's tomb (Permission granted for use by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

Others also used the beehive metaphor to support medieval kingship. The Englishman Bartholomew used the beehive metaphor in his book De proprietatibus rerum, written in Paris possibly as early as 1230. The work was copied both in England and on the continent during the following centuries. John de Trevisa, chaplain to Sir Thomas Berkley, translated it into English in 1397.⁷⁸ Bartholomew wrote, "Bees make among them a king, and ordain among them common people. And though they be put and set under a king, yet they are free and love their king that they make, by kind love, and defend him with full great defense, and hold it honor and worship to perish and be spoilt for their kings. [. . .]" Bartholomew believed that it was the fine personal qualities of the king bee that resulted in his selection. He wrote, "And bees choose to their king him that is most worthy and noble in highness and fairness, and most clear in mildness, for that is the chief virtue in a king." Like so many others, Bartholomew was a firm believer in royal clemency. "For," he wrote, "though their king have a sting, yet he useth it not in

wreck. And also bees that are disobedient to the king, they deem themselves by their own doom for to die by the wound of their own sting.” For Bartholomew, the world was a well-ordered kingdom where everyone had their place: “And of a swarm of bees none is idle. Some fight, as it were in battle, in the field against other bees, some are busy about meat, and some watch the coming of showers. [. . .] And only he (the king) is not bound to travail. And all about him are certain bees with stings, as it were champions, and continued wardens of the king’s body.”⁷⁹

Perhaps the bestiary is the most significant evidence we have to show that the medieval mind associated bees with monarchy. A bestiary is a collection of short descriptions about all sorts of animals, real and imaginary, birds and even rocks, accompanied by a moralizing explanation. The bestiary combined art with literature in a powerful way. A twelfth-century bestiary contains the following moral lesson in Latin: “A King Bee [. . .] is formed with clear natural signs, so that he can be distinguished by the size of his body and by his appearance. What is more, the peculiarity of a king is the clemency of his character, for even if he has a sting he does not use it in punishment—since there are unwritten laws in Nature, not laid down but customary, to the effect that those who have the greatest power should be the most lenient.”⁸⁰

The moral lesson of this bestiary goes on to explain that obedience to the king is a great virtue and that bees that are disobedient punish themselves by death just as the people of Persia carry out “the sentence of death upon themselves” for disobeying their king. The moral’s text is accompanied by the image of a beehive in the form of a skep. During the Middle Ages, the people of central Europe used an inverted basket made of

woven plant stems (wicker) to house their bees. This inverted basket hive is known as a *skep* (see figure 10). Coiled-straw skeps gradually replaced wicker skeps and became the most widespread method of housing bees until the nineteenth century. While the skep was not common outside of Europe, it became a worldwide symbol of industry and thrift as exemplified by bees.⁸¹

In the nineteenth century, the Mormons would adopt the traditional skep as their communal symbol. During the Renaissance the bee and the beehive (in the form of the skep) continued to represent monarchy.



Figure 8. Woodcut showing traditional European straw skeps from 1510 edition of the 1495 book by Petrus de Crescentiis.

The Renaissance Hive

Renaissance thinkers rejected many of the attitudes and ideas of the Middle Ages. For example, European thinkers in medieval times believed that people's chief responsibility was to pray to God and concentrate on saving their souls. Renaissance thinkers, on the other hand, emphasized people's responsibilities and duties to the society in which they lived. Some religious and political leaders felt threatened by new Renaissance ideas, as did many others. In a defensive stance, some Renaissance writers tried to prove the natural order of the monarchy by comparing it to a beehive.

When Louis XII of France restrained the insubordinate Genoese in 1507, he showed his kingly mercy by entering the city with his sword sheathed in gold bees and beehives embroidered on his tunic. Engraved on the commemorative medal for this

occasion was an orderly swarm of bees surrounded by the words, “The king whom we serve does not use his sting.”⁸²

The motto “The king does not sting” appears in numerous Renaissance emblem books. Popular from the mid-sixteenth century under the title of Iconologia or Emblemata, the pages of the emblem book usually consisted of an allegorical figure accompanied by a phrase. The phrase could be a motto, a moral or more likely a passage from the Psalms. The illustrations often resembled those found on tarot cards (see figure 11).



Figure 11. The royal bee from Bosch's emblem book.

In the collection A Century of Emblems: An Introductory Anthology, Charles Moseley connects the emblem book back to medieval thought as illustrated in bestiaries. Moseley explained that the medieval worldview saw the world “like a book or mirror of our life and death. [. . .] Polysemousness--one thing carrying several meanings--is both accepted and admired” In other words, everything had moral meaning, including nature. Moseley writes that “the real or imaginary animals of the medieval Book of Beasts (the bestiaries) had all been given a moral significance over the centuries, and these animals with all their overtones descend unchanged to Renaissance imagery and decoration and picture.”⁸³

Andrea Alciati's emblem book used bees and their hive (see figure 12) to illustrate the quality of "princeps clementia" (royal clemency). Alciati's book of emblems is the most re-printed emblem book in history. It appeared in over two hundred editions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and various editions of his emblem book have been reproduced in the twentieth century in microfilm,



Figure 12. Principis Clementia.
From the 1621 Padua edition of Alciato's emblem book.

microfiche, and printed facsimile form. The text that accompanied his 1550 Lyons editions stated, "The king of the [bees] will never implant any sting and will be twice as big as the rest. This will be a sign of mild dominion, a disciplined kingdom, and inviolable law entrusted to good judges."⁸⁴

Jacob Bosch in his 1701 emblem book has over twenty emblems featuring royal bees (see one such illustration in figure 13). The bees in Bosch's book loved, protected and followed their king. The king loved and protected his subjects. Bosch used the bee emblems to teach the doctrine of absolute monarchy as the natural order of human society.⁸⁵



Figure 13. The natural order of things as illustrated in Bosch's emblem book.

In 1609, Charles Butler, an English rector, published in Oxford a book on bees in which he identifies the queen bee as a female. The Feminine Monarchie states, "We must not call the Queen 'Rex,' the Bee-state is an

Amazonian or feminine kingdom.” Yet, coming at the end of Queen Elizabeth’s long reign, this did not detract from the monarchical implications of the bee symbol: “Bees abhor as well poliarchy as anarchy, God having showed in them unto men an express pattern of a perfect monarchie, the most natural and absolute form of government.”⁸⁶

Other Englishmen used the bee to support absolute monarchy. In a 1637 publication entitled A Theatre of Politicall Flying Insects, Samuel Purchase wrote:

The Queen Bee (for it is an Amazonian Commonwealth), transcends in greatness and beauty of body, but which is more praiseworthy in a commander, in mildness and gentleness—therefore though they have stings, they never use them. The laws by which the Commonwealth is ordered are natural, not written, but graven in their manners; and so studious are they of peace, that neither willingly nor unwillingly do they offer injury to any of their subjects.⁸⁷

In 1744, John Thorley published his Female Monarchy in which he describes the monarchy of bees (contrasted with the democracy of the ants) as a divinely ordered example of “the most natural and absolute form of government.”⁸⁸

Saint-Simon used the bee symbol to support the doctrine of the “divine right of kings” when he stated that the stature, looks, bearing, voice, and graces of Louis XIV distinguished him “like the king of the bees.” The Sun King was born with a crown on his head, just as the king bee had distinctive markings that set him apart from the average bee. When Louis XIV recovered from a serious illness in 1648, his councilors proposed

commemorating his recovery with a medal bearing the figure of the king bee and the motto, “With the King safe, they are of one mind.”⁸⁹

It is perhaps appropriate to end the Renaissance section with a quote from Shakespeare:

Obedience: for so work the honey bees;
 Creatures that, by a rule in Nature, teach
 The art of order to a peopled kingdom.
 They have a king, and officers of sorts;
 Where some, like magistrates, correct at home;
 Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad;
 Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
 Make boot upon the summer’s velvet buds;
 Which pillage they with merry march bring home
 To the royal tent of their emperor;
 Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
 The singing masons building roofs of gold;
 The poor mechanic porters crowding in
 Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate;
 The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,
 Delivering o’er to executor pale
 The lazy yawning drone.⁹⁰

The Enlightenment Hive

The trends in thought and letters in Europe and the American colonies during the eighteenth century prior to the French Revolution are known as the *Age of Enlightenment*. The phrase was often used by writers of the period itself, certain that they were emerging from centuries of darkness and ignorance into an age enlightened by reason, science, and a respect for humanity. Thinkers in this period saw the absolute monarchy and the church—especially the Roman Catholic Church—as the principal forces that had enslaved the human mind in the past. Satirists used the bee and beehive symbols to attack both the Roman Catholic Church and the absolute monarchy.



Figure 14. The title page of The Beehive of the Romishe Church, 1581.

A sixteenth-century satire entitled The Beehive of the Romishe Church (see figure 14) drew on the Roman Church's long history of utilizing the beehive:

Our dear and loving mother, the holie church of Rome, ought not to scorn or disdain that we do compare her customs and orders to a *Bee-Hive*, considering that shee herself doth compare the incomprehensible generation of the Sonne of God from his Father, together with his birth out of the pure and undefiled Virgine Marie unto the *Bees*; which were in verie deede a great blasphemie, if the bees were not of so great virtue, that

by them wee might liken and compare the holie church of Rome. And, seeing, she saith, that God is delighted with the giftes and presentes of the bees, why should not shee herself exceedingly rejoyce with our Bee-Hive.⁹¹

The book was followed in 1652 by John Gage's The Christian sodality, or Catholick hive of bees sucking the hony of the Churches prayers from the blossomes of the Word of God, blowne out of the Epistles and Gospels of the Divine Service throughout the yeare.⁹²

In 1641, John Daye published The Parliament of Bees: A Beehive furnisht with twelve Honycombes as pleasant as Profitable, being an Allegoricall Description of the Actions of Good and Bad Men in these our daies. This satirical play of

English political life had characters who were all bees, and "Mister Bee" acting as Pro-rex in the Parliament under Oberon.⁹³ The illustration in the front of this publication shows the king bee wearing a crown and surrounded by his subject bees (see figure 15).

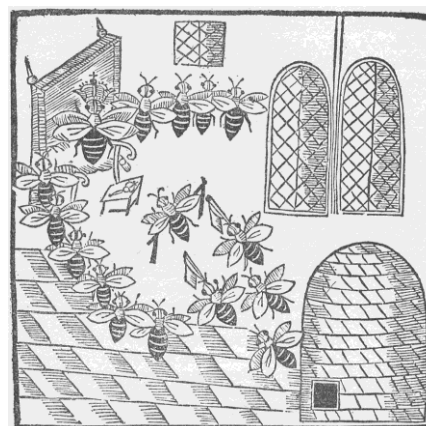


Figure 15. The Parliament of bees with "Mister Bee" as Pro-rex from John Daye's *The Parliament of Bees*, London.

In 1705, an anonymously published book authored by Bernard Mandeville appeared with the title The Grumbling Hive or Knaves turn'd Honest. This satire of the life of the people and their rulers in the time of Queen Anne was given a new title in

1714: The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits.⁹⁴ This work by Mandeville became one of the most influential political and moral treatises of the western world. It exerted a special influence on liberal thinking and the creators of the economic doctrine of laissez-faire.⁹⁵ The imaginary beehive in Mandeville's satire was a kind of constitutional monarchy. According to Ramírez, the concept behind the work "is one of 'transition' which explains how this typical *ancien régime* view of the life of bees is about to be translated, at the end of the eighteenth century, into republican terms."⁹⁶

From ancient times to the eighteenth century, the bee and beehive symbols were used extensively to promote what was believed to be the ideal form of government—monarchy. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the bee and beehive were being used by satirists to criticize the monarchical form of government. By the eighteenth century, these symbols were being transformed and used by supporters of democratic and republican forms of government.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW WORLD HIVE

Political and social changes resulted in a reinterpretation of the bee and beehive symbols during the eighteenth century. Revolutions in America and France introduced republicanism, which transformed the world's political stage. Republicans ignored the royalist associations of bees and beehives, and used them to represent values of the new republicanism. Bees and beehives signified peace, prosperity, and harmony. The industry of bees was interpreted as effort for the good of the community rather than individual acquisitiveness. Federalism required a united, hard-working community.

Transformation of the Hive

In the eighteenth century, satirist Bernard Mandeville argued that the true causes of social welfare, social progress, riches and benefits were that these are all based on the human vices of greed, self-interest, and cowardice. Liberal thinkers used Mandeville's poem in support of the doctrine of laissez-faire. Mandeville related historical changes in an imaginary beehive. The opening lines of the poem described an ideal society:

A Spacious Hive well stock'd with Bees,
That lived in Luxury and Ease;
And yet as fam'd for Laws and Arms,
As yielding large and early Swarms;
Was counted the great Nursery
Of Sciences and Industry.

No Bees had better Government,
 More Fickleness, or less Content.
 They were not Slave to Tyranny,
 Nor ruled by wild Democracy;
 But Kings, that could not wrong, because
 Their Power was circumscrib'd by Laws.⁹⁷

Mandeville's beehive of royal power "circumscrib'd by Laws" was a kind of constitutional monarchy in which the law ruled supreme. The idea that law ruled over the king was advocated by thinkers during the period of the Enlightenment and influenced revolutionaries in America and France. Of Mandeville's poem, Ramírez wrote, "The concept behind it is one of 'transition' which explains how this typical *ancien regime* view of life of bees is about to be translated, at the end of the eighteenth century, into republican terms."⁹⁸

Republicanism was the concept that sovereignty resides in the people, who delegate the power to rule in their behalf to elected representatives and officials. It was, of course, not a new idea. It had ancient roots going back to Aristotle and Plato. However, in the Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, republicanism was a revolutionary idea that threatened the established monarchical order of things.

In 1690, John Locke published his Two Treatises on Government in which he attacked the theory of divine right of kings and the nature of the state as conceived by the English philosopher and political theorist Thomas Hobbes. In brief, Locke argued that sovereignty did not reside in the state but with the people, and that the state is supreme,

but only if it is bound by civil and what he called “natural” law. Locke held that revolution was not only a right but also an obligation, and he advocated a system of checks and balances in government, which was to comprise three branches, of which the legislative is more powerful than the executive or the judicial. He also believed in religious freedom and in the separation of church and state. Many of Locke’s political ideas, such as those relating to natural rights, property rights, the duty of the government to protect these rights, and the rule of the majority, were later embodied in the U.S. Constitution.⁹⁹

The era of modern republicanism began with the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. Elements of republican government were present in the administrative institutions of the English New World colonies, but republicanism did not become dominant in American political thinking until the colonists declared their independence. The establishment of the United States as a federal republic with a government made up of three coordinate branches, each independent of the others, created a precedent that was subsequently widely emulated in the western hemisphere and elsewhere.

In his study of rhetorical iconology of the American Revolution, Lester C. Olson wrote that throughout the Revolutionary era, “image makers in Britain and America used statues, paintings, illustrations, flags, housewares, illuminated displays and medals to influence public attitudes and beliefs.”¹⁰⁰ According to Olson, these images were used for numerous political purposes, including “the creation of the body politic by inculcating a revolutionary mentality.”¹⁰¹ Locke had emphasized that the body politic could only be

sustained through the individual's compliance with the will of the majority because a united community was vital for military defense and resource regulation. If a large number of individuals fought over basic beliefs within the community, the body politic would be destroyed. Among several images, the beehive came to represent the American body politic, which was fundamentally republican. This was a dramatic change from its traditional role of representing absolute monarchy.

Killing the King

The leaders of the American Revolution understood well the power of visual images. On July 9, 1776, the text of the Declaration of Independence reached New York City. General George Washington had the document read to a gathering of soldiers and private citizens. The crowd worked themselves into frenzy as they listened to the twenty-six indictments against George III. The Sons of Liberty led a crowd to the nearby bowling green where they gathered around the gilded equestrian statue of George III. Members of the crowd climbed the tall protective fence around the sculpture, and with ropes the statue, as the New-England Chronicle reported, "was taken down, broken into pieces, and its honor leveled with the dust" (see figure 16). A Philadelphia newspaper reported: "The equestrian statue of George III which Tory pride and folly raised the year 1770, was by the sons of freedom, laid prostrate in the dirt the just desert of an ungrateful tyrant! The lead wherewith this monument was made, is to be run into bullets, to assimilate with the brain of our infatuated adversaries, who, to gain a peppercorn, have lost an empire."¹⁰²



Figure 16.. Pulling Down The Statue of George III by Johannes Adam Oertel. 1848. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Elsewhere in New York City and throughout the colonies, crowds destroyed royal arms from signs in churches and taverns. In Boston, crowds tore down any sign that carried a royal connotation such as crowns and royal lions. Mobs tossed the signs into a great bonfire on King Street. In many colonies the crowds burned the king in effigy or buried his portrait.¹⁰³ Jordan argues that these symbolic acts were a means of vicariously killing the king, the Father of His People, and that they were acts of “regicide and patricide.” In Jordan’s view, the destroying of the equestrian statue of George III was a ceremony rooted deep in the human psyche going back to prehistoric times “in the days when men sometimes not only killed their father, the leader of the horde, but ate him in

order magically to acquire his power.” This was the “symbolic transfer of sovereign power from the king to the people of the American republic.”¹⁰⁴ As Marks explained it, the question was no longer the suitability of George III to rule the American colonies; the issue was now the appropriateness of kingship in general as a form of governance. The new American current was to replace the monarchy with a republic.¹⁰⁵

This aspiration to replace the monarchy with a republic was a major paradigm shift in Western political thought. For many years, radical political thinkers and writers, influenced by Enlightenment thought, had been preparing the American colonial psyche for such a paradigm shift. These writers slowly chipped away at the concept of monarchy through their sharp words. In his controversial Common Sense, Thomas Paine’s words cut deeply when he wrote that George III is “the Royal Brute of Great Britain.”¹⁰⁶ He stated, “Government by Kings was first introduced into the World by the Heathens,” that the Jews had been living in “a kind of Republic” before they “under a national delusion requested a King.” He explained that God warned the Jews that monarchy was evil before he allowed them to establish a kingdom. “Monarchy,” wrote Paine, “is ranked in scripture as one of the sins of the Jews.”¹⁰⁷

Paine went on to explain that kings have no real “business” to conduct and they were always “sauntering away their lives.” In countries like England where kings were not absolute, “a man would be puzzled to know what *is* his business.” Paine summed up his argument by stating, “The nearer any government approaches to a Republic, the less business there is for a King.”¹⁰⁸

The verbal assault on the monarchy went hand in hand with the physical assault on monarchical images. In 1769, during the controversy surrounding the Townsend Duties, three merchants in the Massachusetts council demanded that the portraits of Charles I and James II be removed from the council house walls. While Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson objected, the portraits were removed. Perhaps Hutchinson sensed the danger of such seemingly benign actions. In 1774, a revolutionary mob broke into Hutchinson's house in Milton where they found a portrait of Hutchinson and "stabbed it with bayonets and tore out one of the eyes."¹⁰⁹

Radical writers like Paine made good headway into Colonial American thought in the years just preceding the American Revolution. George Washington observed, "by private letters, which I have lately received from Virginia, I find 'Common Sense' is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men."¹¹⁰ John Adams wrote that while Paine's arguments against monarchy made "a great deal of good sense," his "notions, and plans of a continental government are not much applauded." Adams noted that Paine had "a better hand at pulling down than building."¹¹¹

With Paine and others pulling down the monarchy, it would be left to the Republican leaders of the American Revolution to build up a true Republic. It would require that some general political consensus be established in the American colonies. A republic could be sustained only through the individual's submission to the will of the majority, because it was vital that the community be enabled to act decisively for its own military defense and the internal regulation of resources. If significant numbers of

individuals fought over fundamental issues within the community, the dream of an American republic would die.

Iconography would play an important part in garnering support for such an undertaking. Daniel Leonard, a Loyalist in Massachusetts wrote in 1774:

The eloquence of the bar, the [pulpit] and the senate, the charms of poetry, the expressions of painting, sculpture and statuary have conspired to fix and rivet ideas of independence upon the mind of colonists. The overwhelming torrent supplied from so many fountains rolled on with increasing rapidity and violence, till it became superior to all restraint. It was the reign of passion; the small, still voice of reason was refused audience.¹¹²

The transition was a little awkward at first. Many early Americans saw George Washington as the American successor to George III. In 1783, the Continental Congress passed a resolution to erect a statue of Washington at whatever site was eventually chose as the nation's capital. The resolution called for the new statue to be a mirror image of Wilton's monument to George III (the one that had been destroyed). Washington was to be shown in ancient dress, with a truncheon in his extended hand and with a laurel wreath about his head. As Marks aptly surmised, "one suspects . . . an inability on the part of Congress to provide a visual language appropriate to an entirely different and unprecedented political situation."¹¹³

Eventually, the new republic developed unique icons to teach its unique principals of self-government. Olson wrote, "More helpful than portraits and statues in creating the

belief that the colonies constituted a body politic were political prints, with their extensive reliance upon metaphor and allegory, the principal devices that enabled image makers to depict the distinct colonies in America as a unified community.”¹¹⁴ Harking back to the classical Greek republic, the prints contained classical women who lived in temples surrounded by “iconographic clutter” such as anchors, telescopes, ploughs, hoes, compasses, books, scales, and liberty caps on poles.¹¹⁵ All of these images bolstered republican values of industry, frugality, and charity. They promoted the activities upon which the republic rested: agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing. Ironically, among all the “iconographic clutter” found in these republican prints could be found the beehive (see figure 17). “All in all,” writes Withington, “bees do not seem particularly suitable inhabitants of republican allegories. Bees paid tribute to a monarch to whom they owed absolute obedience.”¹¹⁶ Honeybees were not even native to America. How then, did American allegorists allow a European alien, the bee, to slip into their American allegories?

The Republican Hive

While a monarch may have ruled the beehive, Americans found its other virtues important enough to ignore the royalist association of the hive. Americans saw in the beehive just the virtues needed to ensure the success of their new republican enterprise. The success of the republican community depended on the industry of the workers who willingly sacrificed their private interest to the good of society.



Figure 17. Benjamin Tanner (1775-1848) engraving of the John James Barralet painting. **America Guided By Wisdom: An Allegorical Representation of the United States, Denoting Their Independence and Prosperity.** A woman in Grecian dress symbolizes America. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, is instructing her. The beehive and horn of plenty represent industry and economic well-being. Published in 1820, this widely distributed print can be found in many repositories, including The Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Boston Athenaeum, and Yale University.

A hive symbolized a society working together for the good of the whole, whatever the nature of the whole might be. Thus a hive could stand for the industry, selflessness, order, and the social control that guaranteed that order no matter what the political structure of that social order. In other words, Americans chose to have the hive represent an independent community in nature that served as a symbol for human societies in general. The beehive symbol could thus represent a formal church institution (as the

Roman Catholic Church used it) or a religious community (as the Shakers used it) or a fraternity (as the Freemasons used it) or an absolute monarchy (as many European monarchs used it) or as a republic (as both the United States and France used it).¹¹⁷

In investigating early American allegories, Withington found the beehive used in paintings, on certificates of membership for various societies and on the covers of many agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing publications. The scenes were all very similar: women dressed in classical dress sitting among the objects of the new republic that represented prosperity and a land of plenty. Often the scenes depicted cornucopias, ploughs, ships, and scientific instruments. The beehive would be sitting in the midst of the allegorical objects representing the hard work and unity that brought such prosperity about. Often the American eagle would be perched on or near the beehive, making it clear that the hive represented the new republic (see figure 18).

Besides their industry and selflessness, the worker bees also bore arms. One eighteenth-

century publication stated: “To bear arms is not intended for the slothful and voluptuous: They would be of no service, but to dishonour them; therefore they have them not. They wear no sting.” The workers, however, protected life and property with their sting. As the same eighteenth-century publication put it: “Every working Bee is not only an Artisan; he is likewise a soldier, always arm’d for defence.”¹¹⁸

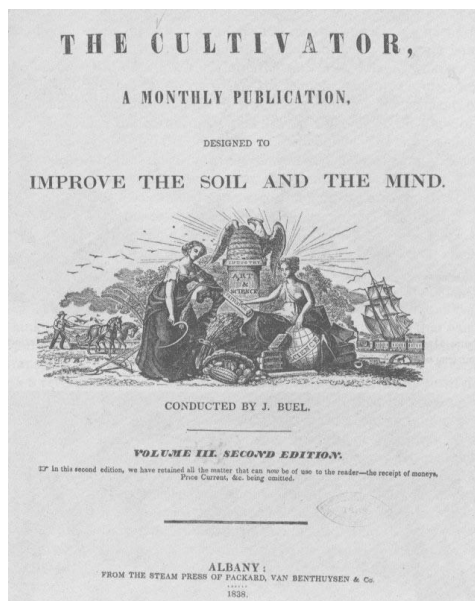


Figure 18. Agriculture, commerce, art, and science come together under the unifying symbol of industry—the beehive. Cover of The Cultivator, an 1838 periodical.

American allegorists chose to emphasize civilization over wilderness. America was a morally progressive nation that was leading the way in the civilized world. Except for the eagle and the beehive, wildlife was not usually depicted in the allegories. Both of these symbols represented the republic, and the beehive was associated with civilization. According to Thomas Jefferson, bees advanced into the wilderness just a little before the white man. “The Indians therefore call them the white man’s fly, and consider their approach as indicating the approach of the settlements of whites.”¹¹⁹

The beehive was found on one other important form in early America—paper currency. Olson explained that after 1775 paper currency rivalled the newspaper as a medium of “pictorial communication.” Paper currency was produced and circulated in large quantities by each of the colonies and by the Continental Congress. Most of this currency was elaborately decorated with symbols and Latin mottos.¹²⁰

Paper currency often highlighted the number of colonies in the union: a thirteen-string harp, a thirteen-step pyramid, and a circle consisting of thirteen hearts. Important to this study is the frequent use of thirteen bees hovering near the same hive (see figure 19).¹²¹

The beehive appeared on several political prints published in 1789. In one print, France is represented as a crowned globe marked with fleurs-de-lis and supported by a peasant with the

help of a noble and a bishop. A beehive in the background signifies cooperation among the three orders of French society (see figure 20). In their four-volume compendium on

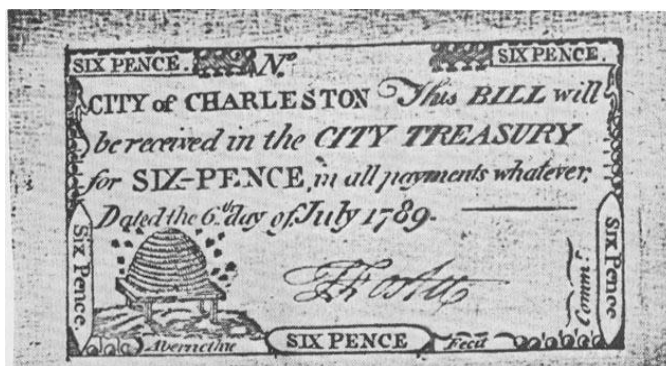


Figure 19. Beehive surrounded by thirteen bees on City of Charleston, South Carolina bank note, July 6, 1789.

iconography published in 1791, Gravelot and Cochin included the hive among the symbols of society but nowhere associated it with monarchy.¹²² In 1795, the Convention of the French Republic proposed the hive as a symbol of the new republic. The proposal specified that the national seal and all national buildings should bear the emblem of a hive surrounded by bees. Jean-François Barailon, a doctor with an interest in medieval history, objected on the grounds that bees were in the arms of several French kings. “Besides,” he said, “bees can not be the emblem of a republic: don’t you know that they have a queen, whom they all court?”¹²³

The Convention rejected the proposal. According to Merrick the Convention, which had executed the king and queen and suppressed the political activism of women, rejected the bees because of their association with monarchy and matriarchy.¹²⁴ Nonetheless the symbol of the beehive was used to

represent republicanism in France. The new interpretation of the hive can be detected in the debate between the pupil Laperruque and Professor Daubenton, taken down in shorthand in the Ecole Normale set up by the Revolution:

Laperruque: Last time you said that the lion was not the king of the animals because in nature there is no king. We applauded this idea, taken from nature, certainly, but nevertheless, citizen, as I look around me [. . .] I see in nature something worse than a king; that is to say, I see a queen. And what is even more extraordinary, a queen in a Republic! In order to be king, citizen, you said that it is necessary to have courtiers, favourites



Figure 20. French print, 1789. Used without objection from Reaktion Books, London, England.

and favours to dispense, and you added that the lion is not a king because he had none of these [. . .] As for what I am talking about I see around you courtiers, protectors, body-guards, defenders; you see, citizen, that I am speaking of the queen bee. I should therefore wish that natural history should take another step towards republican principals or that it should modify the characters which, according to you, belong to royalty.

Daubenton: The worker bees are the most numerous and most powerful in the hive: they do everything apart from fertilize the female and her eggs. Earlier, when it was believed that this female was male, it was called the king, which proves that its actions were understood no better than its sex. Since the discovery of this king pretender was female, she has been called queen. I use this as an example of how an initial error can have its consequences. It is obvious that in Nature there can be neither king nor queen.¹²⁵

One illustration from the time of the French Revolution shows a beehive next to the door of the Prytane, just to the right of the tablets containing the Rights of Man and the Citizen (see figure 21). Located in La Fleche, a town of western France, the Prytane was a famous school for the sons of officers. The hexagon of the French nation on a shield of the “Section of Friends



Figure 21. The beehive of the Republic next door to the Prytane. Eighteenth-century print. Used without objection from Reaktion Books, London, England.

of Wisdom” in Bordeaux, 1793 had a beehive crowned by a Phrygian helmet in allusion to the Republic united and armed. Dominique Papety’s painting Allegory of the Republic, 1848, contains a beehive.¹²⁶

By the end of the eighteenth century, the new world of republicanism and democracy emerging from the ruins of overthrown monarchies had successfully transformed the symbol of the beehive from a symbol of the monarchy to a symbol of republicanism. It was well ingrained in the American psyche by the eighteenth century. As early as 1782, Crèvecoeur, an emigrant French aristocrat turned American Farmer, published Letters from an American Farmer in which he refers to colonies of bees as “republics.”¹²⁷ Crèvecoeur left some of his “letters” unpublished. In one of these, later published in the twentieth century, Crèvecoeur writes about a scene he came upon of ants stealing honey from a beehive. He writes, “I therefore concluded that these were a Republic of thieves, Living on the Industrious Labours of the other republic.”¹²⁸

When the Mormons came along in the nineteenth century with radical ideas that seemed to directly conflict with republicanism, they were perceived as a threat. Their ideas appeared to threaten the national consensus so necessary to the maintenance of order and the public good. Their use of the beehive harkened back to the old world uses and symbolized the differences between Mormon thought and the general thought of the American Republic. Most Americans did not welcome going back to a former time in political thought.

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORMON CONCEPT OF KINGDOM

Born in Sharon, Vermont on December 23, 1805, Joseph Smith (see figure 22) was the son of an itinerant laborer and farmer. He moved with his family to western New York state in 1816, and four years later, when he was fourteen, he said he experienced an epiphany. The religious awakening that occurred in the New York frontier where Joseph Smith lived had intensified his interest in organized religion. "In the second year after our removal to Manchester [1820]," he explained, "there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people."¹²⁹



Figure 22. Joseph Smith. Courtesy the LDS Church, Salt Lake City, Utah

The ever-expanding New England frontier of the nineteenth century created an environment ripe for dissension from the old Puritan establishment on the coast. Expanding into the frontier, most inhabitants lived on isolated farms and found it difficult to attend church with any degree of regularity. Many frontiersmen gradually lost their identity with organized religion. Proselyting religious groups like the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians made many converts on the American frontier through

revivals and camp meetings. The religious environment in which fifteen-year-old Joseph Smith found himself was highly pluralistic. It was this intense pluralism that disturbed the young man.¹³⁰ As a revelation Smith later recorded stated, “Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.”¹³¹

Smith wrote that between 1820 and 1830 he received a series of revelations and visitations in which he obtained the authority to establish “the kingdom of God in the latter days, never again to be destroyed nor given to other people.”¹³² Smith explained

that it was the same kingdom spoken of by Daniel in the Old Testament when Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in which a stone was cut out of a mountain and rolled forth destroying the kingdoms of the earth until it [the stone] “filled the whole earth.”¹³³ In

March 1830, the Book of Mormon appeared in bookstores.

Smith said he had translated the 600-page history of pre-

Columbian America from gold plates that had been buried in a hillside near Palmyra, New York (see figure 23). He

said an angel named Moroni led him to the plates.¹³⁴ The

Church of Jesus Christ, later renamed the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, was organized on April 6, 1830 with Joseph Smith as “First Elder.”¹³⁵ Smith believed the church was the first step in establishing the Kingdom of

God on the earth, a kingdom in which all members were to be of one mind and one heart, “united in all things.”¹³⁶

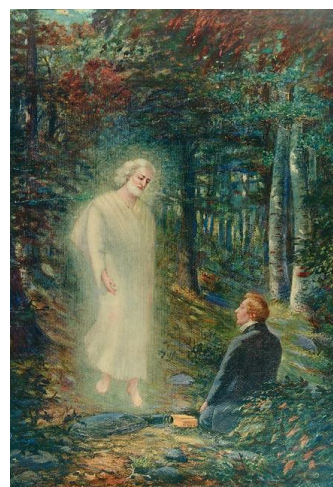


Figure 23. Joseph Smith receives the gold plates from the Angel Moroni. Painting by Lewis A. Ramsey, 1920. Courtesy Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Smith and his followers, popularly called Mormons, were millennialists. They believed that Jesus Christ would soon return and that the millennial kingdom was at hand. They expressed their hopes with a real literalness and immediacy.¹³⁷ For them, Joseph Smith was a latter-day prophet through whom God revealed his will. Mormons believed in a literal and spiritual gathering from out of the world. As an elect people, Mormons believed God wanted them to gather out of a sinful world to a place called “Zion,” and the “New Jerusalem” where they would build the Kingdom of God on Earth. They saw the nucleus of their gathering to be the infant stages of the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. The Kingdom of God was on the earth in the form of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Kingdom of Heaven was the spiritual and political kingdom that Christ would bring with him when he returned to the earth. The Kingdom of God or the church was a necessary prerequisite to the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” said a revelation Smith recorded in 1831.¹³⁸ Also in 1831, Smith recorded a revelation that stated, “Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen.”¹³⁹

When persecution drove Smith and his followers from New York to the Ohio frontier town of Kirtland in 1831, Smith arrived to find new converts disputing doctrines with some converts claiming revelations for the entire church. Smith set the converts straight with a revelation that declared, “For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have

appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand. And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is none other appointed unto you to receive revelations.”¹⁴⁰ A later revelation explained, “And from this time forth I appoint unto him [Joseph Smith] that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church.”¹⁴¹ Another revelation assured the members in Ohio that “by the prayer of your faith ye shall receive my law, that ye may know how to govern my church and have all things right before me. And I will be your ruler when I come.”¹⁴²

The revelations came one after another in the early 1830s on the Ohio frontier. On February 9, 1831, ten months after Joseph Smith organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Fayette, New York, he received a revelation with instructions for transforming the highly individualistic order of Jacksonian America into a communal society that promoted group self-sufficiency. The basic revelation instructed members to turn over their property to the bishop of the Church who would then redistribute the property according to the circumstances and needs of each family. The system was designed to put all members on equal economic footing and to keep them there by having them give their yearly surplus to the bishop for annual redistribution. There were to be no poor among them. Everyone had a place in the community of saints.¹⁴³

While the revelation appeared somewhat temporal in nature, it was the first of many revelations that had underlying spiritual principles that emphasized unity, cooperation and mutual assistance above individual needs. The Latter-day Saints were to “live together in love”¹⁴⁴ and be “determined in one mind, and in one heart united in all things [. . .].”¹⁴⁵ A religious impulse infused every activity. Mormons drew no line

between the religious and the secular. For Mormons every secular activity was governed by a spiritual principle.

Many of the Kirtland revelations of Joseph Smith pertained to the ecclesiastical organization of the church. A First Presidency was organized with Joseph Smith as president and prophet of the Church and two counselors to lead with him. Under the First Presidency was the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Quorum of the Seventy. Other priesthood offices included elder, priest, teacher, and deacon.¹⁴⁶

By 1831, the Mormons were building up their Zion in two locations—Kirtland, Ohio and Independence, Missouri. On July 20, 1831, Joseph Smith received a revelation, declaring Independence as the place for the “city of Zion,” a place where the Saints would build a temple to their God.¹⁴⁷ On June 1, 1833, Joseph Smith received a revelation to build a temple at Kirtland.¹⁴⁸ Temple building was to become a central activity uniting the community of saints with a common purpose (see figure 24).

“In the building of the Temple at Kirtland,” said Mormon leader, Franklin D. Richards, “[. . .] every man went to work on that House after the manner of bees returning to their hive, and each bringing in the necessary material to enable them to carry on the work.”¹⁴⁹



Figure 24. The Kirtland Temple. Photo by Kenneth R. Mays, 2001. Courtesy Religious Education Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Eventually, it was this Mormon propensity to unite like bees in a hive that threatened their neighbors. While their neighbors were inclined to ignore, or even overlook, the small beginnings of the hive, they began to feel threatened by the hive's growing size and the number of bees working to enlarge it. They feared getting stung.

On August 2, 1833, the Western Monitor, a newspaper printed at Fayette, Missouri, published a news item, which stated that the citizens of Jackson County, Missouri had held a meeting to determine how they could “rid themselves of the sect of fanatics called Mormons. Held on July 20, 1833, the meeting had between four and five hundred people from all parts of the county.”¹⁵⁰

In the resolutions drawn up by the meeting, the old settlers of Independence expressed their fear: “But little more than two years ago, some two or three of this people made their appearance in the Upper Missouri, and they now number some twelve hundred souls in this county; and each successive autumn and spring pours forth its swarm among us [. . .].”¹⁵¹

Eventually there were mobs, violence and killings (see figure 25). Mormon settlements were set ablaze in much the way one would rid oneself of a pesky hive of bees. In fact, Ebenezer Robinson described the response of his fellow Mormons to an attack on their village in October 1838 in the following manner: “The sound that came

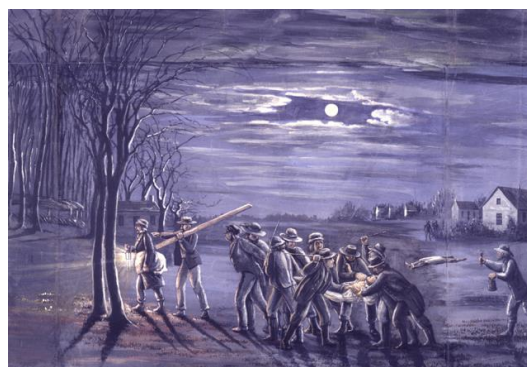


Figure 25. A Missouri mob tars and feathers Joseph Smith. Painting by folk artist C.C.A. Christensen, ca. 1865. Courtesy Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

from the camp, after the call ‘to arms,’ resembled more the buzzing of a large swarm of bees when the hive is disturbed, than anything else [I] can compare it to.”¹⁵² After repeated attacks, the Mormons abandoned their settlements in Ohio and Missouri and migrated to a bend of the Mississippi River in Illinois in 1839. Joseph F. Smith, nephew to the Prophet Joseph Smith, described it this way:

Yes, they drove the Saints from their homes, deprived them of their rights as citizens and freemen, murdered many of them in cold blood, while others they confined in dungeons feeding them on the flesh, (as those heartless wretches themselves boasted) of their own brethren; and they dispersed the people, as they supposed, to the four winds of heaven, rejoicing in the belief that they had finally consummated the destruction of the “Mormons.” But like the phoenix rising from the ashes of its supposed destruction, they gathered like swarms of bees in Illinois, founded a city, and built another Temple, which cost a million dollars—the most beautiful structure in the Western States at that time; and they continued to thrive.¹⁵³

The Mormons built quite a hive in Nauvoo. By 1845, Nauvoo and its environs had an estimated population of 15,000, almost equal to Chicago. The city landscape included impressive two-story brick structures, including retail stores, a cultural hall, and the beginnings of a hotel. Two newspapers were published, and a library and university were established.¹⁵⁴

Fifteen months after settling in Nauvoo, the First Presidency announced that the time had come “to erect a house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of

our God, where the ordinances can be attended to agreeable to His divine will.”¹⁵⁵ More than one thousand Mormon men donated every tenth day in labor. Other Mormons gave horses, wagons, cows, pork, and grain to aid in the temple’s construction (see figure 26). Brigham Young, an apostle at the time, later recalled, “We did much hard labor on the Nauvoo temple, during which time it was difficult to get bread and other provisions for the workmen to eat.”¹⁵⁶ Of the building of the temple, Joseph Smith said,



Figure 26. An 1840s photograph of the Nauvoo Temple. Courtesy the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah

The Saints seem to be influenced by a kind and indulgent providence in their dispositions and blessed with means to rear the Temple of the Most High God, anxiously looking forth to the completion thereof as an event of the greatest importance to the Church and the world, making the Saints in Zion to rejoice, and the hypocrite and sinner to tremble. Truly this is a day long to be remembered by the Saints of the last days—a day in which the God of heaven has begun to restore the ancient order of His kingdom unto His servants and His people—a day in which all things are concurring to bring about the completion of the fullness of the Gospel, a fullness of the dispensation of dispensations, even the fullness of times; a day in which God has begun to make manifest and set in order in His Church those things which have been, and those things which the ancient prophets and

wise men desired to see but died without beholding them; a day in which those things begin to be made manifest, which have been hid from before the foundation of the world, and which Jehovah has promised should be made known in His own due time unto His servants, to prepare the earth for the return of His glory, even a celestial glory, and a kingdom of Priests and kings to God and the Lamb, forever, on Mount Zion.¹⁵⁷

The temple would become the center of Mormon society (see figure 27).

Standing in the midst of the community, the temple was a physical symbol where heaven would touch earth and where Mormons would enter in order to “divine the meaning of existence and to put themselves in touch with the holy.”¹⁵⁸ Standing in contrast to the market society of America, Nauvoo was a “temple society” where a particular world view dominated, a world view radically different from the predominant nineteenth-century American world view. The temple helped to anchor this unique view. While the Kirtland, Ohio Temple was a very plain structure reminiscent of the New England meeting house, the Nauvoo Temple contained elaborate images and symbols that marked a new interest among Mormons in iconography. This new interest was apparently connected to the Mormon interest in Freemasonry (this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter).



Figure 27. The Nauvoo Temple, rebuilt in 2002. Photo by Kenneth R. Mays, 2002. Courtesy Religious Education Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

It was in Nauvoo that the Church first systematized its revenues and collections by establishing a Tithing Office. This office, which would become a familiar sight in the Utah territory, replaced the bishops' storehouses, which had existed in Kirtland and Missouri. Instead of donating all their goods, members were now expected to contribute one-tenth of their possessions and one-tenth of their annual increase "for the good of themselves and the whole society." The old stewardship principle was replaced with a joint-stock system of ownership. The principle of group solidarity in social and economic matters was now firmly ingrained in the Mormon mind and would play a part in the development of Nauvoo and later in the development of the United Order System in Utah.¹⁵⁹

But once again, the hive got big and threatened its neighbors. In 1843, the New York Sun expressed the fear:

Should the inherent corruption of Mormonism fail to develop [. . .] sufficiently to convince its followers of their error, where will the thing end? A great military despotism is growing up in the fertile West, increasing faster, in proportion, than the surrounding population, spreading its influence around, and marshaling multitudes under its banner, causing serious alarm to every patriot.¹⁶⁰

The powerful emotions of the words say a great deal: *corruption*, *error*, *despotism*, and *patriot*. In the eyes of non-Mormons, there was something not quite right about the Mormon way of doing things. It was corrupting the republican values that patriots had sacrificed their lives for. Mormons were gathering to their own banner, and

it looked nothing like the republican stars and stripes. In essence, people recognized the Mormon community on the Mississippi as a theocracy.

In Nauvoo, all affairs—not just religious, but also political, social, and cultural—were under the direction of religious leaders. “Except I am one with my good brethren,” Brigham Young said, “do not say that I am a Latter-day Saint. We must be one. Our faith must be concentrated in one great work: the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, and our works must aim to the accomplishment of that great purpose.”¹⁶¹ The Kingdom had a strong centralized organization where members submitted themselves to the direction of God’s leaders. The emphasis of the Kingdom was on cooperation rather than the individual. Brigham Young explained the order:

I have looked upon the community of Latter-day Saints in vision and beheld them organized as one great family of heaven, each person performing his several duties in his line of industry, working for the good of the whole more than for individual aggrandizement; and in this I have beheld the most beautiful order that the mind of man can contemplate, and the grandest results for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God and the spread of righteousness upon the earth.¹⁶²

During the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith worked to put more of the political framework of the Kingdom in place in preparation for the political Kingdom of Heaven whose imminent arrival Mormons anticipated. As early as 1837, Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt wrote:

Now, when we speak of the Kingdom of God, we wish it to be understood that we mean his organized government on the earth [. . .]. Four things are required in order to organize any kingdom in heaven or on the earth: namely, first, a king; secondly, commissioned officers duly qualified to execute his ordinances and laws; thirdly, a code of laws by which the subjects are governed; and fourthly, subjects who are governed. Where these exist in their proper and regular authority there is a kingdom [. . .]. In this respect the Kingdom of God is like other kingdoms [. . .].¹⁶³

Apostle John Taylor added, “The Lord is that king; his people are his subjects, his revealed will is the law of the kingdom; the Mormon priesthood is the administrator of those laws.”¹⁶⁴ Taylor was stating what Joseph Smith had taught when Smith said, “The Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our King; and he shall reign over us.”¹⁶⁵ A twentieth-century Mormon apostle, Bruce R. McConkie, in his popular Mormon Doctrine, explained this concept clearly:

The Church (or kingdom) is not a democracy; legislation is not enacted by the body of people composing the organization; they do not make the laws governing themselves. The Church is a kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal King, and the President of the Church, the mouthpiece of God on earth, is the earthly king. All things come to the Church from the King of the kingdom in heaven, through the king of the kingdom on earth.

There is, of course, the democratic principle of common consent

whereunder the people may accept or reject what the Lord offers to them.

Acceptance brings salvation; rejection leads to damnation.¹⁶⁶

Joseph Smith organized a “special council” on March 11, 1844,¹⁶⁷ which was usually called the “General Council of the Council of the Fifty.”¹⁶⁸ However, some Mormon leaders called it “The Kingdom of God,” “The Kingdom,” “The K,” “The Council of the Kingdom,” “The Grand Council of the Kingdom of God,” “The Grand Council of Heaven,” “Legislative Council,” “Municipal department of the Kingdom of God,” and various other titles.¹⁶⁹ Whatever it was called, it was designed to be a political arm of the church, the beginning infrastructure for the coming Kingdom of Heaven. Council member John D. Lee later wrote that the council was the “municipal department” of the Kingdom of God and that it would produce laws for “all Nations, Kingdoms and tongues and People.” Lee stated that the Council of Fifty was created specifically for the “upbuilding of the Kingdom of God on the Earth.”¹⁷⁰

Brigham Young explained that while traditional Christianity spoke of the Kingdom of God as a spiritual kingdom, Mormons believed in the temporal and political reality of God’s kingdom. He said, “It requires the labor of every part of our organization, whether it be mental, physical, or spiritual, and that is the only way to build up the kingdom of God.”¹⁷¹

In his testimony before congress in the trial of Joseph Smith for high treason, George M. Hinckle said, “the general teachings of the presidency were, that the kingdom they were setting up was a temporal as well as a spiritual kingdom; that it was the little stone spoken of by Daniel.”¹⁷²

Charges of treason were very serious. Nineteenth century Americans believed that the Mormons were planning to take over the nation. Wilson Law, after his excommunication from the church, even attempted to obtain a warrant against Joseph Smith for treason on the grounds that on one occasion, while listening to the Prophet preaching from Daniel 1.44, he heard him declare “That the kingdom referred to was already set up, and that he was the king over it.”¹⁷³ However, there is no evidence that the Mormons planned an armed insurrection. They were simply preparing themselves for the time when Jesus Christ would return to the earth and establish his kingdom, and they firmly believed that the foundation of this kingdom would be the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

William Clayton, a member of the Council of Fifty who was present at its organization on April 11, 1844, recorded in his journal that in that initial meeting in Nauvoo “was prest. Joseph chosen as our prophet Priest, & King by Hosannas.”¹⁷⁴ William Marks, who was also present, later stated that the Council of Fifty conducted this as an ordinance “in which Joseph suffered himself to be ordained king, to reign over the house of Israel forever.”¹⁷⁵

As for the Council of Fifty’s role, Brigham Young explained that Joseph Smith started the organization to obtain governmental redress for the destruction of Mormon property and to help plan a westward migration of the Mormon people from Illinois. Young explained that Smith wanted to move the Mormons to an “unoccupied territory” where Mormons could enjoy civil and religious rights “without being subject to constant

oppression and mobocracy.” Smith believed that the Mormons could live in a theocratic community under the protection of the United States Constitution.¹⁷⁶

Brigham Young would later fulfill this plan of taking the Mormon people further west on the fringes of the United States where they could establish a community of their own unique design. The Mormon concept that the Republic of the United States should protect a religious community, even a theocratic religious community, was an odd concept to non-Mormons. However, Mormons believed that the U.S. Constitution gave them the right to establish a non-democratic religious community under its protection. Joseph Smith said that the “Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner; it is to all those who are privileged with the sweets of its liberty, like the cooling shades and refreshing waters of a great rock in a thirsty and weary land. It is like a great tree under whose branches men from every clime can be shielded from the burning rays of the sun.”¹⁷⁷ Smith went on to say:

As the “*world is governed too much*” and as there is not a nation or dynasty, now occupying the earth, which acknowledges Almighty God as their law giver, and as “crowns won by blood, by blood must be maintained,” I go emphatically, virtuously, and humanely, for a THEODEMOCRACY, where God and the people hold the power to conduct the affairs of men in righteousness. And where liberty, free trade, and sailor's rights, and the protection of life and property shall be maintained inviolate, for the benefit of ALL [. . .].¹⁷⁸

This concept of a “theodemocracy” would find fuller expression in Utah where the Mormons would attempt to create a theocracy within the framework of a republican state. The antecedents for this can be found in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith said, “The City Charter of Nauvoo is of my own plan and device. I concocted it for the salvation of the Church, and on principles so broad, that every honest man might dwell secure under its protective influence without distinction of sect or party.”¹⁷⁹ Of the Nauvoo Charter, historian Robert Flanders wrote, “The Nauvoo City Charter, a typical charter intrinsically, was manipulated in practice to produce a quasi-independent municipal government that seemed to rival the sovereignty of the state itself.”¹⁸⁰ Smith firmly believed that a theocratic community could and should find protection and a degree of independence from the Republican state within which it existed. He said that government should “meddle not with any man for his religion: all governments ought to permit every man to enjoy his religion unmolested [. . .]. Every man has a natural, and, in our country, a constitutional right to be a false prophet, as well as a true prophet.”¹⁸¹

Yet, as historian Flanders explained, “Although Mormonism was a product of a pluralistic society where religious freedom was possible, it seemed to threaten such a society and so the society denied the Mormons the right to participate in it.”¹⁸²

In June 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered by a mob at Carthage, Illinois (see figure 28). Fearing that enemies of the Church would desecrate the bodies, the Saints held a mock funeral in the cemetery while burying the bodies in the cellar of the Nauvoo House, a partially completed hotel. Several months

later, the bodies were re-buried near Joseph Smith's "Mansion House" with the "Bee House" placed to conceal the fresh graves.¹⁸³

Brigham Young took over leadership. Once again the Saints had to migrate. This time they crossed the Mississippi and headed toward the Rocky

Mountains (see figure 29). Joseph F. Smith, whose father, Hyrum, had just been murdered with Joseph Smith, later recalled the events on the day that mobs besieged

Nauvoo. His mother had taken her children from the city a few days previous to the attack by ferrying them in an open flat boat across the Mississippi to the Iowa side of the river. They had left their home and all of their possessions behind. Smith said he was rather surprised at his feelings that day. He wrote, "They were not feelings of regret, sorrow or disappointment, but of gratitude to God, that we had the shelter of

even the trees and the broad bosom of the 'father of waters' to protect us from those who sought our lives; I felt to thank God that we still possessed our lives and freedom, and that there was at least some prospect of the homeless widow and her family of little ones,



Figure 28. The martyrdom of Joseph Smith. Painting by folk artist C.C.A. Christensen, ca. 1865. Courtesy Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah



Figure 29. The Mormons leave Nauvoo by crossing the frozen Mississippi. Painting by folk artist C.C.A. Christensen, ca. 1865. Courtesy Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

helpless as they were, to hide themselves somewhere in the wilderness from those who sought their destruction.”¹⁸⁴

Brigham Young led the homeless Mormons across the plains to the Rocky Mountains. When the Mormons migrated to the shores of the Great Salt Lake in 1847, the idea was to find an inhospitable place that no one else would want where they could build their hive. Young told his people, “We are far from our oppressors, far from those who seek to destroy us solely on account of our faith, and are secured in the midst of these sterile, inhospitable mountains and valleys.”¹⁸⁵

In the Great Basin of the American West, the Latter-day Saints faced their most daunting challenge—conquering the desert and making it “blossom as the rose.”¹⁸⁶ After all, bees needed blossoms to prosper. It would take unity and devotion to a common purpose to accomplish the task. “We are raising up a little party by ourselves,” Brigham Young said. “We are actually getting a people here not of the world. We are gathering out of the world, and assembling together, and we have the right [. . .].”¹⁸⁷

Benjamin F. Johnson, a member of the Council of Fifty, noted that the Council directed “all general movements relating to our exodus as a people from Nauvoo.”¹⁸⁸ Apostle Ezra T. Benson considered the departing Saints “a distinct nation.”¹⁸⁹ When the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, the area was not part of the United States. However, by 1848 the area was conquered from Mexico by the United States. Finding themselves again within U.S. territory, the Mormons attempted to establish what they had established in Nauvoo, a semi-independent theocracy where they were allowed

to practice their religion as they wanted. In Utah, however, the scale was enlarged from a city charter to a state constitution.

CHAPTER 5

THE MORMON HIVE

In Nauvoo, Illinois the Mormons came into contact with Freemasonry, which seemingly influenced their interest in iconography. In sharp contrast to the simple features of the Kirtland Temple, the Nauvoo Temple contained sunstones, moonstones, star stones, and the all-seeing eye. The Mormons carried their interest in iconography with them to the Salt Lake Valley where again they incorporated elaborate icons into the Salt Lake Temple. In nineteenth-century Utah, Mormon iconography reached its full expression with images of clasped hands, squares, compasses, all-seeing eyes, moons, suns, and stars appearing on buildings, publications, furniture, quilts, and figurines throughout the territory. Enamored with the beehive, Brigham Young made it the symbol for the State of Deseret, which in turn represented the Mormon concept of the Kingdom of God on the earth in the form of a theocratic state.

Settling the Salt Lake Valley

The idea to seek asylum in the western regions of the American frontier had apparently been Joseph Smith's idea. Smith stated that he organized the Council of Fifty "to take into consideration the [. . .] best policy for this people to adopt to obtain their rights from the nation and insure protection for themselves and children; and to secure a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed us by the Constitution of our country."¹⁹⁰ Smith's history states that on August 6, 1842 he prophesied, "that the Saints would continue to

suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains.”¹⁹¹ Apostle George Albert Smith stated, “Previous to the death of Joseph Smith, he had selected twenty-five men [. . .] to explore the Rocky Mountains, with the view of finding a place where they could make a location that would be out of the range and beyond the influence of mobs, where they could enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution of our common country.”¹⁹² However, Joseph Smith died before he could dispatch this exploring party. Numerous accounts exist which indicate that before his death Joseph Smith spoke of moving the Mormons to the Rocky Mountains or some point west.¹⁹³

Brigham Young was apparently following through on migration plans discussed when Joseph Smith was alive. “We are raising up a little party by ourselves,” Young said. “We are actually getting a people here not of the world. We are gathering out of the world, and assembling together, and we have the right.”¹⁹⁴ To the Mormons gathering to the Salt Lake Valley, Young explained, “Let me say to you, just what the Lord requires of you, if you would only do it. He requires at our hands, each and every one of us, to begin and sustain the Kingdom of God, and to withdraw from the world and the business of the world.”¹⁹⁵

Apostle George Albert Smith stated that after the death of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young fasted and prayed daily to know where he should lead the Mormons, and while in this state, Young “had a vision of Joseph Smith, who showed him the mountain that we now call Ensign Peak, immediately north of Salt Lake City, and there was an ensign fell upon that peak, and Joseph said, ‘Build under the point where the colors fall and you will prosper and have peace.’”¹⁹⁶

In his journal, John D. Lee stated that as the Mormons were preparing to abandon Nauvoo on January 13, 1846, Brigham Young declared that the Mormons must build a temple in the “tops of the mountains” and that “the Proud Banner of Liberty wave over the valleys that are within the Mountains.” The banner was apparently something other than the American flag. According to Lee, Young said, “I know where the spot is & I know how to make this Flag. Jos[eph] sent the colors and Said where the colors settled there would be the spot.”¹⁹⁷

Young believed himself to be a modern-day Moses, leading the Latter-day tribes of Israel to the Promised Land. He organized his followers into companies with captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, and captains of tens. They called themselves the “Camp of Israel.”¹⁹⁸ In the Old Testament, the Lord speaks through Moses to the homeless Israelites, saying, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”¹⁹⁹ Apostle Wilford Woodruff said, “The Lord has raised up a kingdom of priests here in the last days to establish his Church and kingdom, and to prepare the way for the second coming of the Son of Man, and the God of heaven has put into the hands of his servants the keys of the kingdom.”²⁰⁰

The Mormons were headed to the Rocky Mountains to establish a Mormon nation in the form of a kingdom. While the Mormons were settled on the Missouri River in their Winter Quarters before continuing to the Rocky Mountains, Apostle Ezra T. Benson referred to them as “a distinct nation.”²⁰¹ Indeed, the Salt Lake Valley, the Mormon’s destination, was outside the boundaries of the United States. Their flag was to be a

unique banner representing the Kingdom of God on the earth, a standard around which the people of the earth would gather.

Brigham Young led the first group of Mormons from Winter Quarters toward the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of 1847. During that trip he preached a sermon on May 29, 1847. Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded this event in his journal: “President Young then spoke of those who was [sic] not in the Church as there were some present that they would be protected in their rights but they must not introduce wickedness in the camp for it would not be suffered. He then spoke of the standard & ensign that would be reared in Zion, to govern the Kingdom of God and the nations of the earth.” Woodruff goes on to explain that Young was not just talking solely of the ecclesiastical organization of the church. He wrote, “But they [non-Mormons] would not be under the necessity of being baptized or embracing the gospel of Christ, but they must acknowledge the right & reign of Christ [apparently through the Mormon ecclesiastical leaders]. Then if they felt disposed to reject the gospel & be damned they had a right to & the Saints or inhabitants of Zion had no right to take from them their religion or persecute them on account of it or trample upon their rights any way.”²⁰²

Woodruff then drew in his journal what was apparently an imaginative version of the flag of the Kingdom of God. The flag contained the emblems of the sun, moon, and stars. These emblems had been prominent on the Nauvoo Temple. Twelve scallops on the edge of the flag were likely symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve apostles. Ascending lines at the bottom left were perhaps symbols for the Godhead or the Mormon Church presidency. The unique line symbols on the bottom half of the flag are

similar to symbols found among the Freemasons.²⁰³ As historian D. Michael Quinn stated, “The provisional ensigns of the nineteenth century indicate the seriousness with which the Latter-day Saints accepted the call to establish a literal Kingdom of God in the tops of the mountains.”²⁰⁴

On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young and the rear company of pioneers made their way along a road freshly cleared of underbrush to the mouth of Emigration Canyon. In his carriage, Wilford Woodruff drove an ailing Brigham Young to a point where they could view the entire Salt Lake Valley. Woodruff said, “While gazing upon the scene before us, he [Young] was enraptured in vision for several minutes. He had seen the valley before in vision and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of these mountains.”²⁰⁵ In his journal under that date, Wilford Woodruff wrote, “Thoughts of pleasing meditations ran in rapid succession through our minds while we contemplated that [in] not many years that the House of GOD would stand upon the top of the mountains while the valleys would be converted into orchard, vineyard, gardens and fields by the inhabitants of Zion and the standard be unfurled for the nations to gather there to.”²⁰⁶ When the vision had passed, Brigham Young said, “It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on.”²⁰⁷

Brigham Young and the members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles present in the valley convened within the first few days. Young selected a spot between two forks of City Creek, and designated a forty-acre site for a new temple. The city was then laid out from that religious center in a grid of ten-acre blocks with eight lots per block. Streets were to measure eight rods wide with twenty-foot sidewalks along each side. Houses

were to rest twenty feet back from the sidewalk. Eventually canals would run along the streets, providing water for gardens and orchards. Young was apparently following the “Plat for the City of Zion” designed by Joseph Smith.²⁰⁸ The temple, once again, would become the focus of the community.

By August 1847, Young and the other apostles were on their way back to the Missouri River to prepare more groups for the move from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley. Before leaving, they organized a municipal high council in the Salt Lake Valley, which presided for the next fifteen months. The high council was an ecclesiastical unit that had been organized earlier in Ohio and Illinois to govern local affairs under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The high council was made up of a three-member presidency and twelve high councilors. John Smith, uncle of Joseph Smith, was put in charge of the council in Salt Lake City. The council drafted laws, collected taxes, regulated prices, and conducted other public business.²⁰⁹

In 1847, the Mormons were apparently planning to establish an independent colony on the fringes of United States. However, the dynamics changed when the United States annexed the Salt Lake Valley at the end of the Mexican American War in early 1848. Suddenly, the Mormons again found themselves under the jurisdiction of the U.S. federal government. The Mormon concept of a “theodemocracy” would be revised as the church leadership tried to fit their unique theocratic subculture into the larger republican culture. At some point, Mormon leaders on the Missouri River decided they

would have to petition the federal government to admit them to the union as either an American territory or state.

On July 24, 1848, Brigham Young was returning to the Salt Lake Valley with a group of Mormons. He stopped the group somewhere in what is now Wyoming to celebrate the first anniversary of the arrival of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley. In his journal, Richard Ballantyne described an elaborate celebration in which the group cheered three times: “Long live the governor of the State of Deseret.”²¹⁰

Sometime between the day Brigham Young had first entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847 and the day of this celebration a year later, there had apparently been some discussion among the Mormons about the creation of a new state in the Salt Lake Valley to be called the “State of Deseret,” the unique term originating from the Book of Mormon term for “swarms of bees.”²¹¹

When Brigham Young returned to the Salt Lake Valley in September 1848, the civil responsibilities began to pass from the high council to the Council of Fifty. On January 6, 1849, the high council was formally relieved of its municipal duties, and the Council of Fifty began to take over the civil government. Lee’s journal made it clear that the Council of Fifty was subordinate to the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve Apostles. Some Mormon historians have regarded the Council of Fifty as the most vital policy-making body within the Mormon theocracy from the 1840s to the 1880s.²¹² One historian even stated, “The Council of fifty was as important, if not more so, in building the temporal Kingdom than the Council of the Twelve Apostles.”²¹³ However, a later historian wrote, “Those conclusions can no longer be supported now that current research

demonstrates that the Council of Fifty was most often not functioning and was only a symbolic formality when it was functioning.”²¹⁴ Another historian has stated that “the Apostles were far and away the most influential members of the council especially Brigham Young, whose presence dominated the meetings.”²¹⁵ It seems clear from the sources that the theocracy in the Salt Lake Valley was clearly under the control of the traditional Mormon ecclesiastical structure of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

In his journal, John D. Lee stated that the Council of Fifty met in December 1848 to consider what to do about the civil government in the Salt Lake Valley. They took into “consideration the propriety of petitioning Congress for a Territorial Government, giving them to understand at the same time that we wanted officers of our own nomination.” Lee also wrote that the “Territory [was] to be called Desarett [sic].”²¹⁶

Meanwhile the Council of Fifty established a provisional government in the Salt Lake Valley, which they called the “State of Deseret.” The government’s leadership followed the Mormon ecclesiastical hierarchy. Brigham Young was governor. His first counselor was chief justice, and his second counselor was secretary of state. This government functioned without recognition from the United States and was meant to be a temporary government while they waited for federal approval to organize a territorial government. Reporting on the provisional government, the American Quarterly Register, September 1849, reported: “They have chosen as the title of their state, the State of Deseret, a Mormon epithet for the ‘Honeybee,’ significant of industry and its kindred virtues.”²¹⁷

Between January and May 1849, the council prepared a petition for a territorial government. However, when John M. Bernhisel, the Mormons' representative, arrived in Washington, Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a friendly non-Mormon, told him: "You are better off without any government from the hands of Congress than with a territorial government." Kane warned Bernhisel that territorial officials are appointed in Washington and not elected by the local people. Kane indicated that federal politicians would most likely work against the Mormons by appointing unfriendly outsiders rather than selecting officials from among the Mormons. Kane also understood the Mormons enough to know that the Mormon people would follow the commands of their ecclesiastical leaders over territorial officials from Washington. "You do not want two governments," Kane said. "You have a government now [alluding to the provisional state government of Deseret], which is firm and powerful, and you are under no obligations to the United States."²¹⁸

In July 1849, the Mormons quickly made up some statehood documents, and petitioned for a state government rather than a territorial government. As Crawley states, "Bernhisel's correspondence makes it clear that the particular form of government was not important to the Mormons; a continuation of the provisional state of Deseret, statehood, or even a territorial government was acceptable if the officials were chosen from among the leaders of the Church."²¹⁹ It did not matter to the Mormons because they could impose the theocratic structure of the Kingdom of God onto any form of government so long as they were allowed to follow their ecclesiastical hierarchy up

through the prophet and then to Jesus Christ in both spiritual and temporal-political matters.

Few people were surprised when the Mormons failed to obtain statehood. However, eyebrows were raised when in September 1850, President Millard Fillmore appointed Brigham Young as governor of the “Territory of Utah.” Perhaps Fillmore felt that this one concession would keep the peace in this far-flung territory. Not only were Mormons not happy about obtaining territorial status, they were also discontent that their unique name of *Deseret* had been thrown by the wayside. Mormon leaders would continue efforts to obtain statehood under the name *Deseret* until 1872.²²⁰ In the meantime, the territorial government seemed to operate like any other arm of a federal system. The local government organized counties, granted rights to natural resources, regulated trade and commerce, established a local militia, and fulfilled all functions of regular government.

The Mormons had planned to use the beehive as the symbol of the State of Deseret. When territorial status was granted, they maintained the beehive as the territorial emblem. The seal of the Territory of Utah, a beehive on a stand with bees flying around it, was painted on the ceiling of the House of Representatives Chamber in Washington, D.C. It also made its way into one of Constantino Brumidi’s wall paintings in the President’s Room of the United States Capitol where it can be seen today (see figure 30). Like the territory itself, on the surface



Figure 30. The seal of the Territory of Utah in the President’s Room, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. Courtesy Architect of the Capitol.

there was nothing terribly suspect about the beehive image. It had been a symbol of republican virtues since the American Revolution. The Mormons clearly associated it with “industry and its kindred virtues.” Yet, underneath the territory’s republican trappings, a theocracy existed, and likewise, underneath this simple symbol of industry, a theocratic symbol with strong monarchial implications also existed. In spite of territorial status, the Mormons clung to their dream of an independent theocracy under the protection of the federal government. They kept this dream alive in the form of the State of Deseret. This theocratic state represented the Kingdom of God on the earth, the precursor to the coming Kingdom of Heaven.

The State of Deseret

Brigham Young accepted the governorship of the Territory of Utah, but it was clear that he planned to run the new territory as a theocratic state. “When Mr. Fillmore appointed me Governor of Utah,” said Brigham Young, “I proclaimed openly that my Priesthood should govern and control that office.”²²¹ Young explained, “In the Government affairs of States and Territories and kingdoms by right God should govern. He should rule over nations, and control kings. If we suffer the devil to rule over us we shall not accomplish any good. I want the Lord to rule, and be our Governor and dictator, and we are the [people] to execute it.”²²² Young boldly proclaimed what his priorities were: “I think more of the things that pertain to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the kingdom of God, than I do of these little petty territorial matters.”²²³ In his popular pamphlet entitled The Kingdom of God, Apostle Orson Pratt clearly delineated the Mormon worldview of the early 1850s: “The Kingdom of God [. . .] is the only legal

government that can exist in any part of the universe. All other governments are illegal and unauthorized. God, having made all beings and worlds, has the supreme right to govern them by His own laws, and by officers of his own appointment.” Pratt stated frankly the Mormon view of non-Mormon governments: “Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the Kingdom of God.” That the Mormons viewed their theocratic state in the Rocky Mountains as the only legal government on earth is clearly stated by Pratt when he wrote, “The Kingdom of God is a theocracy. [. . .] The various officers, called of God to administer the affairs of His government, are apostles, prophets, bishops, evangelists, elders, pastors, teachers, and deacons.”²²⁴

Brigham Young maintained the belief that a theocratic community could exist and had a right to exist within the American Republic and that the federal government should allow for and protect such a community. Young said, “We believe that the Lord has been preparing that when he should bring forth his work, that, when the set time should fully come, there might be a place upon his footstool where sufficient liberty of conscience should exist, that his Saints might dwell in peace under the broad panoply of constitutional law and equal rights.”²²⁵

Accusations of being un-American rankled Young who saw no conflict between his theocracy and the federal government: “To accuse us of being unfriendly to the Government is to accuse us of hostility to our religion, for no item of inspiration is held more sacred with us than the Constitution under which she acts.” Young went on to explain that the Constitution was created to protect religious societies such as the

Mormons. Young repeatedly said that if the federal government would leave the Mormons alone, the Mormons would leave the federal government alone. Young wanted to be left in peace to build the Kingdom of God as he envisioned it. He explained, “To serve God, and keep His commandments, are first and foremost with me. If this is higher law, so be it. As it is with me, so should it be with every department of the Government.” While he admitted that the Mormons had “peculiarly a religious establishment,” he saw no reason why that should be such a concern to American citizens in general. “If the people of the United States do not like our religious institutions, they are not compelled to mix in our society, or associate with us, or with our children.”²²⁶

Brigham Young firmly believed that God was in charge of the territorial government: “I have no fears whatever of Franklin Pierce excusing me from office, and saying that another man shall be the Governor of this territory. He said, ‘We have got a Territorial Government, and I am and will be Governor, and no power can hinder it, until the Lord Almighty says, ‘Brigham, you need not be Governor any longer;’ and then I am willing to yield to another Governor.”²²⁷

Young failed to mention here that the Mormons had indeed failed to obtain statehood. Yet, he knew that territorial status meant that the federal government dealt a heavy hand in the affairs of the local government and that the president of the United States could mess up the ordered theocracy of Utah simply by appointing new officers. For the LDS Church leadership, the ideal situation was still to have a sovereign state where local elections would guarantee that Mormon leaders stayed in control. Young said: “Circumstances have planted the Saints in the midst of the mountains, have given

them a Territory and a Territorial Government, and will, ere long, give them a free and independent State, and justly make them a sovereign people.”²²⁸

While the Territory of Utah was clearly theocratic, the dream of establishing the Kingdom of God in both spiritual as

well as temporal affairs was kept alive in the form of the State of Deseret. In

1852, the Washington Monument was

being built, and many states were

sending memorial stones for the inner

walls. Brigham Young had assigned

local folk artist William Ward to

create a memorial stone to represent



Figure 31. Utah’s gift to the Washington Monument, a memorial stone representing the State of Deseret. Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the Utah Territory. Ward described the 3' x 2' x 6' limestone block as follows: “In the center stands the Bee-hive, the emblem of industry; over it is the motto ‘Holiness to the Lord.’ Above this is the all-seeing eye with rays. Beneath the hive is the word, ‘Deseret’”²²⁹ (see figure 31). When Mormon missionaries hauled Utah’s contribution to the Washington Monument back to Washington, D.C. in 1853, it appeared to be a gift from the State of Deseret and not from the Territory of Utah.²³⁰

Those familiar with the iconography of Freemasonry will recognize the Masonic symbols in this stone: the beehive, the clasped hands, the all-seeing eye with rays, and the phrase “Holiness to the Lord.” Other icons that seemed to originate with the Freemasons would appear in abundance on buildings, signs, and publications in the

Territory of Utah. These common icons included the compass, the square, the moon, and stars.²³¹

Freemasonry and Masonry were common names for the practices of the order of Free and Accepted Masons, one of the world's largest and oldest fraternal organizations. Modern Masonry emerged with the Grand Lodge of England, founded in 1717, though historians trace Masonic origins to the craft guilds of medieval stonemasons. The Freemasons themselves trace their origins back to the masons of Solomon's Temple, and members participate in elaborate and secret rituals in buildings they call *temples*. Members progress through various degrees or grades as they participate in the rituals. Masons promote brotherhood and morality. Some form of religious belief is required for membership. Masonry has an elaborate iconography, which includes symbols associated with Old Testament Christianity and ancient Jewish temple worship.²³²

Mormon iconography first appeared on the Nauvoo Temple in the early 1840s in the form of the sunstones, moonstones, star stones, and the all-seeing eye.²³³ The sunstones of the Nauvoo Temple were similar to the Masonic sun emblems found on nineteenth-century Masonic aprons (see figures 32 and 33). McGavin argues that the persistent Mormon use of the square, compass, all-seeing eye, hand, apron, sun,



Figure 32. Sunstone from the original Nauvoo Temple. Courtesy Religious Education Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.



Figure 33. The sun emblem on a 19th century Masonic apron. Used without objection from the Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington, Mass.

moon, stars, and beehive demonstrates a definite connection between Mormon iconography and Masonic iconography.²³⁴ Mormon iconography would reach its full expression under Brigham Young's leadership during the later half of the nineteenth century in Territorial Utah. While its origins do seem to reach into Freemasonry, the Mormons took the Masonic emblems that had some relevance for them, and made them uniquely their own.

On March 15, 1842, the Nauvoo Lodge of the Freemasons was installed, and within a short time, eleven of the twelve apostles had joined, including Brigham Young. Joseph Smith passed the first and second degrees of Masonry in one day and passed the third degree the next day, a feat practically unheard of among the Freemasons. Eventually five Mormon lodges were formed, claiming 1,366 members. A three-story Masonic Hall (Figure 34) was dedicated in Nauvoo on April 5, 1844.²³⁵

An interesting aspect of this is that Brigham Young had apparently rejected formal Masonry by the time the Mormons arrived in Utah. Many Mormons believed that Masonry was in part responsible for the death of Joseph Smith and in the subsequent persecutions and expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo.²³⁶ In Utah, Mormon pioneer Helen Mar Whitney wrote: "Joseph and Hyrum



Figure 34. Nauvoo Masonic Lodge still standing in 2001. Courtesy Religious Education Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Smith were Master Masons, yet they were massacred through the instrumentality of some

of the leading men of that fraternity through the states. Although bound under the strongest obligations to be true and faithful to each other in every case and under every circumstance, the commission of crime excepted.”²³⁷

In Utah, Brigham Young refused to seek Masonic charters despite the fact that some Church leaders wanted them. However, photographs taken of Brigham Young in the early territorial period show him wearing the Masonic compass and square (see figure 35). While some historians believe Young wore these emblems in the hopes that the U.S. president and other prominent politicians in Washington who were Freemasons might see them, there is the possibility that these emblems had religious significance to Young independent of their Masonic associations.²³⁸

Young believed that the Masons had no exclusive rights to symbols that were ancient and universal in nature. He believed the Masons themselves had borrowed symbols that they claimed as their own.²³⁹ As he said in 1867, “Who was the founder of Freemasonry? They can go back as far as Solomon, and there they stop. There is the king who established this high and holy order.”²⁴⁰

Young believed that Freemasonry originated with the masons of Solomon’s Temple. Since the

Mormons associated their temple building with the temples of ancient Israel, they found meaning in symbols that were associated through Freemasonry with these ancient



Figure 35. Brigham Young wearing the emblems of the square and compass, ca. 1853-54. Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

temples. Young also recognized that the Freemasons themselves had borrowed many of their symbols from other cultures.

Many Masonic symbols were borrowed from ancient Egyptian symbols, and the Mormons were not the first to borrow them from the Masons. The Continental Congress used the Masonic symbols of the all-seeing-eye and the topless pyramid on the reverse side of the great seal of the United States which now appears on the back of the dollar bill (see figure 36). However, some scholars argue that the designers of the seal and the Freemasons borrowed their symbols from “parallel sources,” denying that the seal designers “consciously copied Masonic symbols with the intention of

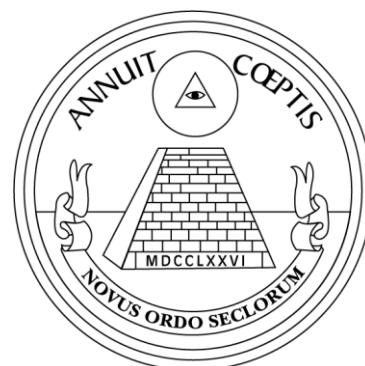


Figure 36. The reverse side of Great Seal of the United States of America. Courtesy U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs.

incorporating Masonic symbolism into the national coat of arms.”²⁴¹ While these historians concede that Francis Hopkinson, who influenced the pyramid design, was possibly a Freemason, they stated, “And even if Francis Hopkinson intended his pyramid as a Masonic symbol (which is by no means certain), his design was filtered through the non-Masonic eyes and pens of Barton and Thomson [the seal designers].”²⁴²

McGavin gives the same argument for the Mormon use of Masonic symbols. Referring to the “universality” of Masonic emblems, McGavin argues that Masonic symbols and Mormon symbols “come from the same source.”²⁴³ While the coincidental appearance of Masonic symbols in Nauvoo with the establishment of Masonic lodges in Nauvoo points to a more direct relationship between Mormon iconography and Masonic

iconography, it appears that the Mormons filtered Masonic symbols through Mormon eyes that saw the world in a unique way. When Apostle Franklin Richards questioned Truman O. Angell, the architect of the Salt Lake Temple, about the Masonic symbols on the temple, Angell responded that the symbols had nothing to do with Masons but were derived by Brigham Young after an intensive study of scripture, particularly the Old Testament.²⁴⁴ While Brigham Young found relevance and meaning in the emblems of Freemasonry, it seems clear that he used these emblems in a very unique way to express the beliefs and spirituality of Mormonism (Figures 37-38).

More than any other Masonic icon, Brigham Young found meaning in the beehive and utilized it to express concepts that were unique to the Mormon experience on the frontier of nineteenth-century America. Young would have received the beehive—“a hieroglyphic emblem”—as a candidate for the third degree of Freemasonry.²⁴⁵ In his *The Craft and Its Symbols*, Allen Roberts explained the meaning the bee and beehive had for Masons: “The bee definitely is industrious. He works hard and tirelessly, not for



Figure 37. Masonic symbols on a 19th century Masonic apron, including square, compass, beehive, sun, moon and stars. Used without objection from the Museum of Our National Heritage, Lexington, Mass.



Figure 38. The all-seeing eye on the Salt Lake Temple is unique in that it is depicted looking out beneath a pleated veil rather than an eyebrow. This is symbolic of the veil that Mormons believe separates humans from God. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.

himself, but for the swarm. [. . .] He works in complete cooperation, and without dissention, with his fellow bees. He protects the Queen, refuses admittance to enemies, builds, makes honey, and lives in a society ruled by law.”²⁴⁶

To Brigham Young, the beehive represented the well-ordered community where members followed their leader in unity. Being of one mind, the bees wasted nothing and produced much. Associating the beehive icon with the word “deseret” from the Book of Mormon gave the icon a peculiarly Mormon flavor that reached back into the ancient world as described in the American scripture known as the Book of Mormon. Such a connection to the Book of Mormon took the beehive to a new level of meaning for Mormons, making it an ideal symbol for the spiritual and temporal community they were building—the Kingdom of God.

Brigham Young used the beehive in his sermons to describe how an ideal society should operate. When things were not going as they should in Deseret, Young looked to the hive for answers in how to solve the problem. “But it seems,” Brigham Young said, “that there are many drones in the hive, who are determined to tie up the hands of those who rule the affairs of this kingdom, and the quicker they are thrown out the better.”²⁴⁷

Other Mormon leaders picked up the theme. Young’s first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, said, “May the Lord our God bless the bees in the hive of Deseret, and root out the drones; for they only eat out the honey, while the bees go out and gather it in.”²⁴⁸ In his toast on July 24, 1852 at the Pioneer Day celebration, Edward Stevenson declared, “Deseret: A Beehive. May her inmates never cease their toil until the world is filled with honey, and her enemies with stings.”²⁴⁹

Apostle George A. Smith declared that the building of the Kingdom of God on the earth would undermine the earth's "rotten dynasties" and cause them to "crumble to dust." This was being accomplished through the Mormon's vigorous missionary effort. Mormons were gaining converts in all parts of the world and then gathering them to their Rocky Mountain kingdom. Smith explained it this way: "You notice a bee, it carries a little honey to the hive, and continues to do so from week to week and from month to month, and lays up a store of the most delicious of earthly substance and the choicest of earth's sweets, and this is the result of the little busy bee. So it is, and so it should be with the Elders in Zion."²⁵⁰ Speaking in this same vein, Mormon Apostle Erastus Snow said, "There seems to be a necessity for the Latter-day Saints to gather together, and then to scatter a little, and so on; in other words, something after the fashion of the bees: they go out of the hive empty and return with their legs and wings laden with honey and bee bread." Snow was here speaking of the converts that the "Elders of Zion" or the missionaries were bringing into the Salt Lake Valley. Once in the Valley, Brigham Young would organize converts into groups and send them out to colonize a new region of the intermountain west. The building of the Mormon population was viewed a vital to survival. As Snow continued, "Now, if all can do this [continue to gather], we shall continue to thrive in the hive of Deseret; but if, on the other hand, we scatter and waste and destroy the good we have, we had better remain in the hive until we shall have learned our duty better."²⁵¹

Brigham Young taught many lessons using the metaphoric hive. When Indians became a problem in Mormon colonization, Brigham Young directed the Saints as follows: “Ten Indians could kill every woman and child here, and break you up. Is this good policy? No. I will give you my counsel: build good stockades. Move your families and wagons close together; then, if you are disturbed, you are like a hive of bees, and every one is ready, and knows at once what to do.”²⁵²

So ingrained was the beehive metaphor in the minds of Mormons that when Brigham Young sent Charles Card to start a Mormon colony in Canada, Card was satisfied with the selected site only after having a dream in which “bees were seen arriving at a hive.” The dream settled Card’s mind on the matter, and the pioneers established Cardston, Alberta.²⁵³

As President of the LDS Church and Governor of the Territory of Utah, Brigham Young needed a house large enough to receive and confer with Church officials, state and federal dignitaries, and prominent guests. Truman O. Angell,



Figure 39. Brigham Young’s Beehive House in 2001 capped by beehive sculpture. Courtesy Religious Education Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Young’s brother-in-law and an architect, began drawing up plans for an official residence in 1852. The house was built of adobe bricks, later faced with stucco, and was constructed with a tower surmounted with a gilded beehive (see figure 39). When the house was completed in 1854, Brigham Young named it the “Beehive House.” The

interior contained elaborate ornamentation, including carvings of beehives in the furniture; interior woodwork and brass work (see figures 40-42).

The Beehive House stood on Young's property, comprising some fifty acres east of Temple Square enclosed by a great stone wall. The entrance to the property stood just east of the Beehive House and was known as the "Eagle Gate" because the gate's arch was topped with a wood carving of a great eagle perched on a beehive (see figures 43-44). Brigham Young occupied the Beehive House until his death in 1877. During that time, the Beehive House hosted guests such as

William T. Sherman, James A. Garfield, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, Tom Thumb, and Mark Twain.²⁵⁴ Of his visit, Mark Twain wrote, "But the Mormon crest was easy. And it was simple, unostentatious, and fitted like a glove. It was a representation of a Golden Beehive, with the bees all at work!"²⁵⁵

Also in 1852, the Mormons were building a new capital city for the territory of Utah. In 1851 the territorial legislature had called for the area located near Chalk Creek on the east side of the Pauvant Valley to be colonized and established as the territorial capital. The settlement was named Fillmore after U.S.

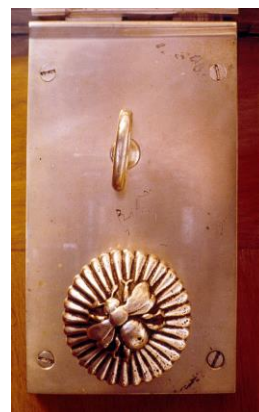


Figure 40.
Doorknob at the
Beehive House.
Courtesy Religious
Education
Archives, Harold
B. Lee Library,
Brigham Young
University, Provo,
Utah.



Figure 41. Beehive carving on
Brigham Young's mirror frame
which was made in France.
Daughters of Utah Pioneers
Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Photo by J. Michael Hunter,
2002.

president Millard Fillmore, who had appointed Brigham Young as territorial governor. The county was named Millard. In 1852 construction of the territorial statehouse began. Speaking in the church's general conference in 1852, Brigham Young's first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, spoke of this enterprise*: "Millard County we wish to make strong and powerful, for there is the centre or the government of the State of Deseret, and where the governor and his associates, some time in the future, will dwell part of the year." Speaking to those asked to colonize the new settlement, Kimball said, "We want you to go where you are sent, for you cannot get your endowments [LDS temple ordinances] until you have proved yourselves—that is what we intend; it is the mind of brother Brigham, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Prophet of God, who holds the keys of life and salvation pertaining to you, and me, and all the world—not a soul is excepted, neither man, woman, nor child; they all belong to him; for he is the Prophet, he is our Priest, our Governor, even the Governor of the State of Deseret."²⁵⁶ As far as the leaders of the LDS Church were concerned, the State

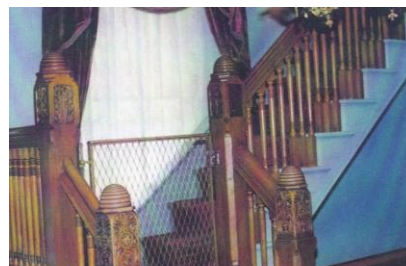


Figure 42. Beehives ornament the banister at the Beehive House. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002.

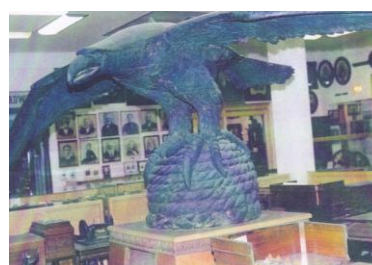


Figure 43. Original Eagle Gate woodcarving by Ralph Ramsay. The eagle representing the federal government protecting the Hive of Deseret. Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002.

* Fillmore was selected as the first capital of the territory of Utah in 1851 because of its central location. One wing of the territorial statehouse was completed by 1855. In December 1855, the territorial legislature met at Fillmore for the first time. By December 1856, they decided to move the capital back to Salt Lake City.

of Deseret was a reality under the control of the priesthood in spite of the territorial status granted in 1850.

It did not take long, however, for non-Mormons to figure out what was going on in Deseret, and they were disturbed by the theocratic nature of the Mormon enterprise. They felt

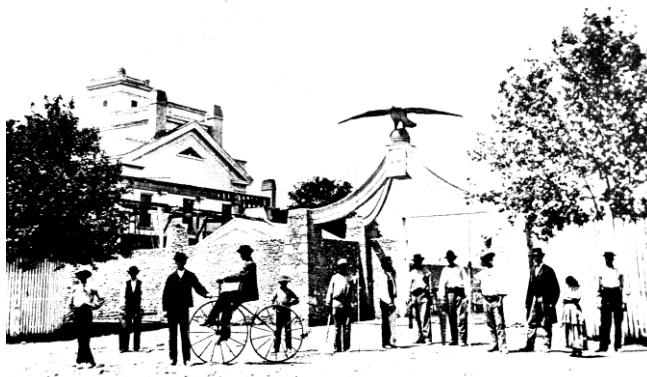


Figure 44. A 19th century photograph of the Eagle Gate Entrance to Brigham Young's Salt Lake City estate. An eagle and beehive are sitting on a five-pointed star. The beehive atop Brigham Young's Beehive House can be seen in the left background. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

there was something decidedly un-American about it. John W. Gunnison learned of the peculiarity of the Mormons first hand while serving as second in command with the Stansbury Expedition surveying the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake in 1849. He started his 1852 book entitled The Mormons by stating, "Among the teeming events of the present era, one of the most remarkable is the formation of a state by a peculiar people, in the far interior of America, which has assumed the name of Des-er-ét,—a mystic word, taken from the Book of Mormon, signifying, the land of the Honey-Bee" He went on to describe their government: "We found them, in 1849, organized into a state with all the order of legislative, judicial, and executive offices regularly filled, under a constitution eminently republican in sentiment, and tolerant in religion; and though the authority of Congress has not yet sanctioned this form of government, presented and petitioned for, they proceed quietly." Yet, Gunnison believed that Utah's outward trappings were a

charade. He wrote, “While professing a complete divorce of church and state, their political character and administration is made subservient to the theocratical or religious element. They delight to call their system of government, a ‘Theo-Democracy;’ and that, in a civil capacity, they stand as the Israelites of old under Moses.”²⁵⁷

Gunnison’s leader, Howard Stansbury, was a captain in the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. His orders in leading the expedition to the Great Salt Lake in 1849 were to survey and map the Great Salt Lake Valley and Utah Valley to the south. He was also told to examine and report on the capability of the Mormons to provide food and supplies for overland travelers. When Stansbury published his report in 1852, he could not resist commenting on the peculiar nature of the Mormons: “While there are all the external evidences of a government strictly temporal, it cannot be concealed that it is so intimately blended with the Church that it would be impossible to separate one from the other. This intimate connection of the church and state seems to pervade everything that is done.” Stansbury was disturbed by the lack of distinction between ecclesiastical and political leaders: “The supreme power in both being lodged in the hands of the same individuals, it is difficult to separate their two official characters and to determine whether in any one instance they act as spiritual or merely temporal officers.” Yet Stansbury understood that the nature of the Mormon social structure made such a political arrangement inevitable: “In the organization of civil government, nothing could be more natural than that the whole people being of one faith, should choose for functionaries to carry it into execution, those to whom they had been in the habit of

referring as their inspired guides, and by whom they had been led from a land of persecution.”²⁵⁸

William Smith, the brother of Joseph Smith, had stayed back east, refusing to support Brigham Young as Joseph’s successor. When the Mormons petitioned Congress for a state government in 1849, William petitioned against the admission of the state on the grounds of its theocratic nature: “Know most assuredly that Salt Lake Mormonism is diametrically in opposition to the pure principles of virtue, liberty, and equality, and that the rulers of the Salt Lake Church are bitter and inveterate enemies of our government.” Smith, who had no first-hand knowledge of Utah affairs, then made a serious charge against the Mormons: “They entertain treasonable designs against the liberties of American freeborn sons and daughters of freedom. They have elected Brigham Young, (who is the president of their church) to be the Governor of the proposed State of Deseret.” Smith was one of the first to compare Brigham Young’s Mormon establishment to the Roman Catholic Church: “Their intention is to unite church and state and whilst the political power of the Roman pontiff is passing away, the American tyrant is endeavoring to establish a new order of political popery in the recesses of the mountains of America.” This comparison to the Roman Pope would continue well into the twentieth century.²⁵⁹

Gunnison and Stansbury provided the world with their first official reports concerning the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley. The press would note the Mormon theocracy, but it seemed to get pushed aside for the more fascinating subject of polygamy. The Mormons announced to the world in 1852 that they were practicing

polygamy, a not so well kept secret. The Mormons had been publicly accused of such since the early 1840s. Yet, those who visited Salt Lake City seemed to be more struck by its similarities with the medieval world in which the Pope was the earthly king, answering only to the Heavenly King, Jesus Christ. In her book My Summer in a Mormon Village, Florence A. Merriam wrote that the Mormon establishment in the Utah was “a drop of sluggish mediæval blood in the heart of the United States.”²⁶⁰

Captain Richard F. Burton arrived in Salt Lake City on August 24, 1860. He was a scholar, a world traveler, and an enthusiastic, in-depth observer of human nature and social and religious groups. In his book entitled The City of the Saints he described Brigham Young and then commented, “Such is his Excellency, President Brigham Young, prophet, revelator, translator and seer—the man who is revered as king or kaiser, pope or pontiff never was; who, governing as well as reigning, long stood up to fight with the sword of the Lord.” Remarking on Young’s house, Burton wrote, “Westward of the public office is the Bee House, so named from the sculptured bee-hive in front of it. The Hymenopter is the Mormon symbol of industry; moreover, Deserét [. . .] is, in ‘reformed Egyptian,’ the honey-bee; the term is applied with a certain violence to Utah, where, as yet, that industrious insect is an utter stranger.”²⁶¹

Federal officials in 1850 had not felt comfortable admitting the State of Deseret to the Union. The theocratic nature of the establishment likely scared them. In his “open letter” addressed to the committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, Joseph Nimmo wrote:

Had Deseret been admitted as a state of the Union, the States would [have] been confronted not only by polygamy, a foul blot upon civilization, but by a state dominated by an autocratic hierarchy, whose cardinal principle it is that the so called “Kingdom of God on Earth”, i.e., the Mormon Church-State is the only legitimate government on earth, and that all other states and nations must eventually acknowledge its sway. The expurgation of this incubus upon the nation would undoubtedly have involved a civil war.²⁶²

Soon after territorial status was declared, the federal government sent in judges and other representatives to help manage the new territory. The decision to replace Governor Young was inevitable, given the national reaction to the Church’s 1852 announcement of polygamy and Republican charges in the campaign of 1856 that the Democrats favored the “twin relics of barbarism”—polygamy and slavery. As soon as Democrat James Buchanan took office, he made plans to get rid of Young. The placement of a new governor for the Territory of Utah became a hot issue when disgruntled federal officials left Utah in 1857, accusing the Mormons of treason. In his resignation letter, Judge W. W. Drummond charged that the Mormons looked to Brigham Young and to him alone, for the law by which they should be governed, and they considered no law of Congress binding. Further, he charged, there was a secret, oath-bound organization among all male Mormons created to resist the laws of the land and acknowledge no law except the priesthood. He further charged the Church with murder, destruction of federal records, harassment of federal officers, and slandering the federal

government. He concluded his letter by urging President Buchanan to appoint a governor who was not a member of the Church and to send with him sufficient military aid to enforce his rule.

Many of Drummond's charges were exaggerated, and he was writing as a disgruntled official who had come into open conflict with the Mormons from the start. It was well known that Drummond had deserted his wife and children and had taken with him to Utah a prostitute who occasionally sat beside him in court. Even territorial chief justice John F. Kinney, another federal appointee, urged Drummond's removal from office because he was immoral and "entirely unworthy of a place upon the bench." Nonetheless, Buchanan took the charges of treason seriously, and without any form of investigation, sent 2,500 troops to Utah to put down the "rebellion." With the troops, Buchanan sent his newly appointed governor, Alfred Cumming of Georgia.²⁶³

Ironically, news that troops were headed to Utah with a new governor reached the Mormon leaders on July 24, 1857 as they were assembled with twenty-five hundred Latter-day Saints in Big Cottonwood Canyon to celebrate Pioneer Day. A bugle summoned the crowd, and their leaders broke the news. According to Salt Lake City's Deseret News, a "scene of the maddest confusion" followed. Young told the crowd, "they constituted henceforth a free and independent state, to be known no longer as Utah, but by their own Mormon name of Deseret." Heber C. Kimball "called on the people to adhere to Brigham, as their prophet, seer, and revelator, priest, governor, and king."²⁶⁴

In the weeks following, Young and his counselors took to the pulpit. The fiery Heber C. Kimball blasted the federal government: "We are the people of Deseret, and it

is for us to say whether we will have brother Brigham for our Governor, or those poor, miserable devils they are reported to be trying to bring here.” He went on to declare his belief that the State of Deseret should govern itself with a high degree of independence: “The reason that I talk as I do is because I don't hold any office in the United States; but this people, some time ago, appointed me Chief-Justice of the State of Deseret. [. . .] You also appointed me Lieutenant-Governor.” Kimball was boldly defiant of any attempt by the federal government to appoint outsiders as territorial officials. He said, “I have a right to say, also, that we shall never be ruled over by them from this day forth, while grass grows or water runs; never, no, never.” Finally, Kimball made it very clear that for him the Kingdom of God and the State of Deseret were one in the same. “We are the Kingdom of God; we are STATE OF DESERET; and we will have you, brother Brigham, as our Governor just so long as you live. We will not have any other Governor.”²⁶⁵

Brigham Young was just as direct: “The time must come when there will be a separation between this kingdom and the kingdoms of the world. Even in every point of view, the time must come when this kingdom must be free and independent of all other kingdoms.”²⁶⁶

In spite of the rhetoric, the Mormons—thanks to their old friend Thomas L. Kane—were able to work out a peaceful agreement with the United States Army. This agreement came after Brigham Young declared martial law in Deseret and deployed the Nauvoo Legion (territorial militia) to delay the troops with “scorched earth” tactics. Harassing actions, including burning three supply trains and capturing hundreds of government cattle, forced the army and the accompanying civil officials into winter

quarters near the burned-out (by the Mormons) Fort Bridger in the mountains of Wyoming one hundred miles from Salt Lake City. This agreement was a remarkable feat considering the attitude of its commanding officer, General Albert Sidney Johnson. “They have with mediation,” concluded Johnston, “placed themselves in rebellion against the Union, and entertained the insane design of establishing a form of government thoroughly despotic, and utterly repugnant to our institutions . . . I have ordered that wherever they are met in arms, they be treated as enemies.”²⁶⁷

When Johnston and his army arrived in Salt Lake City in the spring of 1858, they found the city deserted. Brigham Young had announced on March 23, 1858, that all settlements in northern Utah must be abandoned and prepared for burning if the army came in. Kane, however, had worked out an agreement in which he escorted Cumming ahead of the army to Salt Lake City. Young surrendered his political title and soon formed an amiable relationship with his successor.

While Young surrendered his title as governor of the Territory of Utah, he did not surrender his title that he felt he held by right as the Governor of the State of Deseret. Even with a new territorial governor, things in Utah ran pretty much as usual with everyone looking to Brigham Young for direction. Mark Twain visited Salt Lake City after this

transfer of power. In his book Roughing It, he wrote: “There is a batch of governors, and judges, and other officials here, shipped from Washington, and they maintain the



Figure 45. The Mormon Hive as illustrated in Mark Twain’s 1872 edition of Roughing It.

semblance of a republican form of government—but petrified truth is that Utah is an absolute monarchy and Brigham Young is king!” (see figure 45).²⁶⁸

Harper's Weekly, the most popular weekly news magazine of the nineteenth century sent a correspondent to Utah in 1858 to follow the exciting happenings there. Harper's correspondent reported on the celebration that took place in Salt Lake City on July 4, 1858. He said that the “national banner” waved from buildings throughout the city. “By their national banner,” he wrote, “I do not mean [. . .] our national banner, for it differs from ours in having a bee-hive and bees upon it instead of being ‘star spangled.’” He went on to explain, “The Mormons have adopted the bee-hive as emblematical of Utah. It is engraven upon their territorial seal; a model bee-hive surmounts Brigham's mansion-house, while hives are painted upon the tithing-house and other principal buildings in the city.” The correspondent found the Mormon use of the beehive emblem odd “since there is not a bee in all Utah. But, he concluded, “The Saints are ever ready to overcome incongruities that would master other people.”²⁶⁹

The flag for the State of Deseret apparently became a standard feature of the Mormon's July Fourth celebrations. A non-Mormon emigrant to California, William Henry Knight, attended the July 4, 1859 celebration in the Salt Lake Valley. In a letter to his mother on July 7, 1859, Knight wrote, “The Mormons were celebrating the day with a flag of their own, firing cannon and marching about to Yankee music.”²⁷⁰

The Mormons had toyed with various patterns for their flags since the days of Nauvoo. In September 1849, when Almon W. Babbitt was on his way back to Washington after the Mormons had petitioned for the State of Deseret, he stopped among

fellow Mormons in Kaneshville, Iowa where they celebrated Deseret's future prospects. Included in the celebration was a new flag with "the stars and stripes" for a background "but with a rising star represented in the center, also a Bee Hive, the emblem of the proposed state, and in the white stripes of the flag were the words: 'The Constitution of the United States: May it Live Forever; Liberty and Truth Will Prevail.'"²⁷¹

When the Mormons had set the foundation stones of the Salt Lake Temple on April 6, 1853, they had also unfurled the "Deseret National Flag." This was likely the 1851 design created by the territorial government showing fourteen stars surrounding an eagle sitting on a beehive. The thirteen stars were reminiscent of the original thirteen colonies with Deseret being the fourteenth. The eagle represented the federal government protecting the hive of Deseret. The Nauvoo Legion (Utah Territorial Militia) had a similar flag with thirteen stars surrounding a single beehive. The Mormons also experimented with flags for the Kingdom of God that were blue and white with stars representing the twelve apostles and the prophet and Jesus Christ.²⁷² These latter flags will be discussed further in this thesis.

Hannah Keziah Clapp, educator and advocate for the rights of women, traveled through Salt Lake City in July 1859 on her way to California. She wrote a letter from Salt Lake City to a friend in Lansing, Michigan. She was critical of the way Governor Cummings was handling things in Utah. She said the governor, whom she called "a superannuated, brandy-soaked, Buchanan Democrat," believed in "the Territories controlling their own peculiar institutions in their own peculiar way." The governor told Clapp and her traveling companions that they "had nothing to fear of the Mormons while

passing [through] *their* territory, if [they] would not talk their religion with them; pass through quietly, not argue with them at all, or meddle with their religious views.”

Furious, Clapp vented, “Oh! I know we are in a foreign land; not American soil here! This is the ‘Independent State of Deseret.’ To be sure the United States has a Consul here, in the person of the Governor, as you would have known on the glorious Fourth; for you would have seen the American flag waving over his private dwelling, while at other places you see the Mormon flag hoisted.”²⁷³

The largest military force in the nation was stationed in Utah to keep an eye on the Mormons, but when the Civil War broke out in the east in 1861, the troops were called home. To the Mormons, the Civil War was God’s punishment on the United States for the way the country had treated God’s covenant people. They saw the events of the early 1860s as the beginning of the fulfillment of prophecy. They had long held that the United States would one day face destruction, and that the Mormons would be the ones to step in and save it.

Brigham Young said, “Will the Constitution be destroyed? No: it will be held inviolate by this people; and, as Joseph Smith said, ‘The time will come when the destiny of the nation will hang upon a single thread. At that critical juncture, this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction.’ It will be so.”²⁷⁴ Apostle Orson Hyde said, “I believe [Joseph Smith] said something like this—that the time would come when the Constitution and the country would be in danger of an overthrow; and said he, If the Constitution be saved at all, it will be by the Elders of this Church.”²⁷⁵ Young’s first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, said, “We shall never secede from the Constitution of the

United States. We shall not stop on the way of progress, but we shall make preparations for future events . [. .] God will make the people free as fast as we are able to bear it.”²⁷⁶ In his journal, Apostle Wilford Woodruff predicted the Civil War would destroy both sides, leaving the Saints to see “the Kingdom of God Esstablished upon their ruins.”²⁷⁷

The Mormons prepared themselves to take over when other earthly governments would crumble. Beginning in 1862, the Mormons revived the State of Deseret by holding public elections and electing their spiritual leaders as the leaders of the state. Following each annual session of the General Assembly of the Territory of Utah from January 1862 to January 1870, the legislature of the State of Deseret met to formally ratify the decisions made in the Territorial Legislature in the name of Deseret with Governor Young having final approval.²⁷⁸ Speaking to the Legislature of the State of Deseret in 1863, Brigham Young said:

Many may not be able to tell why we are in this capacity. I do not think that you see this thing as it is. Our organization will be kept up. We may not do much at present in this capacity, yet what we have done or shall do will have its effect . [. .] This body of men will give laws to the nations of the earth. We meet here In our Second Annual Legislature, and I do not care whether you pass any laws this Session or not, but I do not want you to lose one inch of ground you have gained in your organization, but hold fast to it, for this is the Kingdom of God. [. .] We are called the State Legislature, but when the time comes, we shall be called the Kingdom of

God. Our government is going to pieces, and it will be like water that is spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered . [. . .] I do not care whether you sit one day or not. But I do not want you to lose any part of this Government which you have organized. For the time will come when we will give laws to the nations of the earth. Joseph Smith organized this government before, in Nauvoo, and he said if we did our duty, we should prevail over all our enemies. We should get all things ready, and when the time comes, we should let the water onto the wheel and start the machine in motion.²⁷⁹

The existence of this shadow government in Utah was referred to in a letter from Utah Governor James Duane Doty to William H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, on January 28, 1865. Doty began by explaining the political situation in Utah: “There are three distinct governments in this Territory: The Church, the Military, and the civil.” Doty saw the inauguration of this unusual organization as yet another distinct government: “But the leaders of ‘the church’ [. . .] in 1861 formed an independent government called the State of Deseret [. . .] by which it will be perceived this fourth government is now fully inaugurated.”²⁸⁰

Historians have referred to the State of Deseret in the 1860s as a “ghost government” or a “Shadow Government.”²⁸¹ In his 1873 work entitled The Rocky Mountain Saints, historian T. B. H. Stenhouse wrote:

On the 5th of April [1851], Deseret merged into Utah officially, but the State organization was continued and exists today as much as ever it did.

Nominally the civil authority is Utah: *de facto*, it is Deseret. The government pays the Territorial legislators their *per diem* for making the laws of Utah and hands them their mileage at the end of the session. On the day succeeding the close, Brigham as governor of Deseret, convenes them as a State legislature, reads his message to them, and some one proposes that the laws of the legislature of Utah be adopted by the State of Deseret. In this manner, Brigham is continued governor *de facto* and hence the tenacity with which the name “Deseret” is preserved.²⁸²

This is true only in the sense that the LDS Church wielded great power in Territorial Utah and that most of the inhabitants of Utah looked first to Brigham Young for leadership. The formal meetings of the State of Deseret in the 1860s really simply recreated what had taken place in the Territorial Legislature using LDS Church officials in place of the territorial officials. The Mormons were readying themselves for the time when they would indeed take over the reigns of government. Yet all of this, like the flags and other trappings of government, shows how seriously the Mormons accepted their role in establishing a literal kingdom.

The Civil War ended, the United States survived, and the Mormons still maintained their theocracy in the Rocky Mountains. Yet outside forces were still threatening to disrupt the kingdom. Young had hoped that Deseret’s “valley cells be filled with the honey of her own production, and the bees seek from the flowers of the Valley that which makes them independent.”²⁸³ Yet, in 1869, this dream of economic isolationism was threatened with the coming of the railroad. When the first

transcontinental railroad was completed, the Union Pacific, starting at Omaha and building westward one thousand miles, and the Central Pacific, building nearly nine hundred miles east from San Francisco, met in Utah at a little spot over one hundred miles north of Salt Lake City called Promontory.²⁸⁴

Young accepted the inevitable and embraced the new railroad by making plans to build another railroad connecting Salt Lake City with the main line to the north. The Utah Central Railroad Company was organized in March 1869 with Young as president. The building of the Utah Central was another example of the way in which the pioneers cooperated and persevered in striving for the achievement of some common goal. The celebration for the completion of the Utah Central occurred 10 January 1870. It was a bitter cold day, but people came from all over the territory to watch Brigham Young drive the last spike with a steel mallet, both made of Utah iron and bearing an engraved beehive and the inscription “Holiness to the Lord.”²⁸⁵

As Young expected, the completion of the railroad led to an influx of non-Mormons into the Salt Lake Valley. The accompanying individualist and competitive attitudes of nineteenth-century American capitalism seriously threatened to erode the LDS social fabric. In an effort to both combat these eroding forces and to reinstate the utopian principles envisioned by Joseph Smith in the 1830s (but discontinued by the 1840s), Brigham Young instituted a program of “united orders” based on consecration and stewardship.²⁸⁶

United orders were organized as voluntary producer cooperatives where members shared the net income of the enterprise rather than working for fixed wages. Between

1874 and 1893, more than 200 united orders were organized in LDS communities. In March 1868, Brigham Young established Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) in Salt Lake City to officially launch his economic boycott of non-Mormon businesses in Utah Territory. In line with Young's belief in self-sufficiency and home manufacture, ZCMI cooperatives were established during the next few years in hundreds of Latter-day Saint communities, creating a network centered in the Salt Lake City ZCMI wholesale warehouse. Goods sold ranged from clothing, fabric, homemade brooms, and hats to wagons, machinery, sewing machines, overalls, and boots made in ZCMI-owned and operated factories. The united order movement brought the Latter-day Saints closer to the ideal embodied in the beehive emblem. During this time of united orders, Salt Lake City's Deseret News stated: "The hive and honey bees form our communal coat of arms. The symbol is adopted extensively in our local institutions. It is a significant representation of the industry, harmony, order and frugality of the people, and of the sweet results of their toil, union and intelligent cooperation."²⁸⁷

Speaking of the united order system in the Mormon General Conference, Erastus Snow said, "These are no new principles before the Latter-day Saints. Our motto is 'The Hive of Deseret,' and here is the place for the working bees, the place where they sting the drones [. . .]."²⁸⁸

The beehive symbol became a standard emblem on the tithing houses and cooperative stores being built to accommodate the United Order throughout the intermountain west (see figure 46). By the time Brigham Young died in 1877, most of the united orders had failed, but never ones to give up easily, the Mormons continued to

organize united orders until the Territory of Utah began to change due to outside pressure in the 1890s.

During the latter-half of the nineteenth century, the beehive permeated Utah culture. It could be found in furniture,

paintings, sculptures, chapel windows, quilts, glass works, jewelry, buttons, coins, clothing, signs, architectural features, and publications (see figures 47-52). The emblem of the University of Utah, founded as the University of Deseret in 1850, bears the beehive, as does the emblem of Brigham Young University, founded by the Latter-day Saints in 1875. The beehive was also found in the seals of many Utah cities (see figures 53-55).

Twentieth-century Mormons looking back on their nineteenth-century heritage would conclude that the beehive had no religious meaning for nineteenth-century Mormons.²⁸⁹ This thesis contends that the beehive *did* have religious significance which is why it was the symbol most closely linked with the phrase “Holiness to the Lord.”

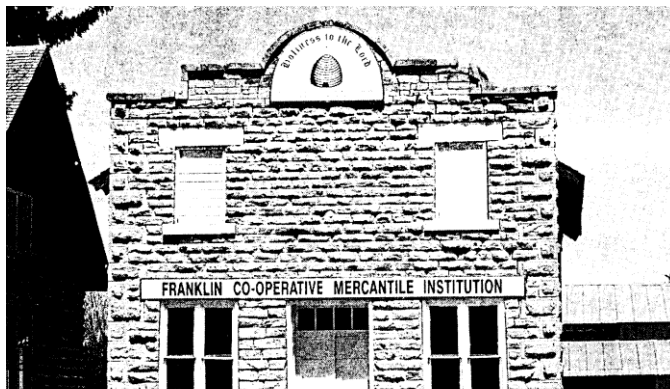


Figure 46. Beehive emblem and phrase “Holiness to the Lord” on the Franklin, Idaho branch of the ZCMI Cooperative in the 1860s. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.



Figure 47. 19th Century stained glass window from a Mormon chapel. Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002



Figure 48. 19th Century Mormon Quilt with the all-seeing eye and the beehive. Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.



Figure 51. 19th Century bed with beehives on posts and footboard. Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002.



Figure 49. An engraved sterling silver plate on a Mormon bishop's records chest, ca. 1889. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.



Figure 52. 1860s Deseret gold coin with beehive and eagle.



Figure 53. Lehi City, like many Utah cities, used the beehive in its official seal.



Figure 50. Beehive on a Pioneer Day parade float, July 24, 1897 in Salt Lake City. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.



Figure 54. Founded in 1875, Brigham Young University, the LDS Church's flagship educational institution has the beehive in its official seal.



Figure 55. Founded as the University of Deseret in 1850, the University of Utah still maintains the beehive emblem in its official seal.

Of the phrase “Holiness to the Lord,” Joseph Smith said:

In speaking of the gathering, we mean to be understood as speaking of it according to scripture, the gathering of the elect of the Lord out of every nation on earth, and bringing them to the place of the Lord of Hosts, when the city of righteousness shall be built, and where the people shall be of one heart and one mind, when the Savior comes; yea, where the people shall walk with God like Enoch, and be free from sin. The word of the Lord is precious; and when we read that the veil spread over all nations will be destroyed, and the pure in heart see God, and reign with him a thousand years on earth, we want all honest men to have a chance to gather and build up a city of righteousness, where even [upon] the bells of the horses shall be written *Holiness to the Lord*.²⁹⁰

Smith was alluding to the biblical passage in Zechariah 14.20 that speaks of this phrase. Brigham Young said, “Thirty years’ experience has taught me that every moment of my life must be holiness to the Lord, resulting from equity, justice, mercy, and uprightness in all my actions, which is the only course by which I can preserve the Spirit of the Almighty myself.”²⁹¹ Young also said, “I will do my best to break down everything that divides. I will not have disunion and contention, and I mean that there shall not be a fiddle in the church, but what has ‘Holiness to the Lord’ upon it, not a flute, nor a trumpet, nor any other instrument of music.”²⁹²

Brigham Young was reaching for unity in all things. The society he was envisioning was one of unity and harmony whether it was called *Zion*, the *New*

Jerusalem, or the Kingdom of God. The beehive symbolized this unified society for Young (see figure 56). Besides the eight beehive medallions that grace the doors of the Salt Lake Temple, the brass doorknobs of the temple's front doors bear beehives with the phrase "Holiness to the Lord" (see figures 57-58). The newel-posts on the steps of the St. George Temple are in the form of beehives (see figure 59). The stairs leading up to the baptismal font of the Logan Temple bear the beehive imprint on each step (see figure 60).

What all of these things have in common are that they are entryways. Mormons believe that through temple ordinances they can obtain access to the

highest degrees of glory in the Kingdom of God.²⁹³ Baptismal fonts in temples are for doing vicarious baptism for the dead. Mormons believe that baptism is the only way to enter the Kingdom of God. Brigham Young said, "Let me say to you, if it is true that no man can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of the water and of the Spirit, God must provide a plan by which those who have died ignorant of the Gospel may have the privilege of doing so, or he would appear to be a partial being."²⁹⁴



Figure 56. In 1871, Brigham Young poses against a column bearing the emblem of the ideal society, the Kingdom of God. Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah

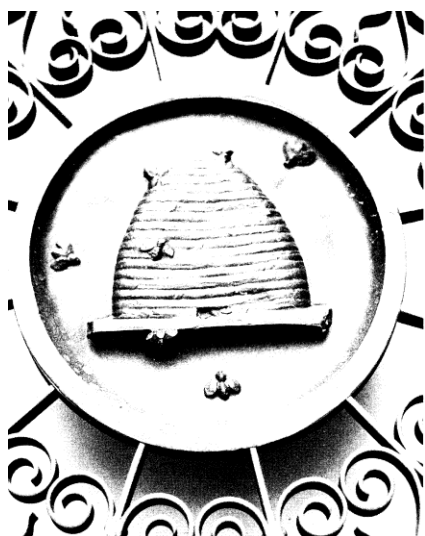


Figure 57. Eight beehive medallions like the one above grace the front doors of the Salt Lake Temple. Courtesy Museum of Church History and



Figure 58. Brass doorknob of the Salt Lake Temple. Courtesy Church Museum of History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.



Figure 59. Beehives at the entrance to the St. George, Utah Temple, Courtesy LDS Church.

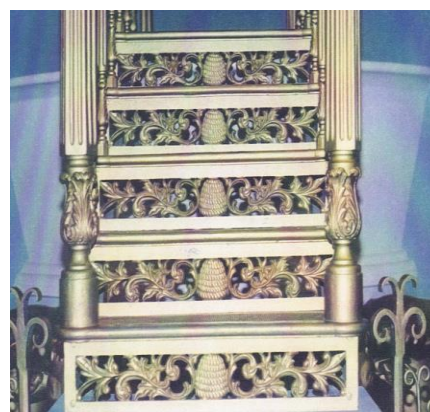


Figure 60. Beehives on the stairs of the former baptismal font of the Logan, Utah Temple. Now located in the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City. Photo by I. Michael Hunter. 2002.

The bee and beehive emblems also appeared on other sacred objects such as tombstones, which traditionally have held religious symbolism for Christians (see figure 61).²⁹⁵ In the

Grand Beehive Exhibition held in the Salt Lake Art Center and the Smithsonian Institution in 1980 and 1981, a zinc coffin plate from the 1860s was on display. The plate to “Our Darling” contained the all-seeing eye, the beehive, and the phrase “Holiness to the Lord.”²⁹⁶ In his journal in 1893, Charles Peter Anderson gives a detailed account of the burial and funeral preparations for his son in Grantsville, Utah.



Figure 61. Tombstone with beehive symbol in Ephraim, Utah.

Anderson specifically describes the beehives carved on the casket.²⁹⁷

Bees and beehives also made their way into Mormon songs and hymns. In a revelation recorded by Joseph Smith in July 1830, the Lord states, “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.”²⁹⁸ A hymn that appeared in an 1868 Mormon songbook was entitled “The Bees of Deseret.” The hymn explained, “the hive is on the mountain tops,” to which “more bees are homeward gathering fast.” The hymn lyrics continued: “The busy bees of Deseret/ Are still around their hive/ Though honey-hunters in the world/ Don’t wish these bees to thrive [. . .] hum, hum, ye bees, build up the hive [. . .] We bees are nearly filling/ The hive of Deseret/ If hurt we’ll sting

together/And gather all we get.”²⁹⁹ Eliza R. Snow, one of Brigham Young’s wives wrote a hymn entitled “In Our Lovely Deseret” in which she describes an ideal society. In this society children are “beautiful and strong” and despise tea, coffee, and tobacco. These children watch and guard their tongues and train their tempers. They bind their “evil passions” and are always polite.³⁰⁰ Mormon congregations are still singing this song in 2004.

The examples above demonstrate that the beehive had some religious significance to nineteenth-century Mormons. The examples of its use given in this thesis demonstrate that it represented the sum total of all the Mormons were working toward—the building of the Kingdom of God on the earth. In this sense, it was a monarchical symbol in that it represented a society that looked to one individual as their leader. For Mormons that leader was Jesus Christ. As an 1851 Pioneer Day toast put it, “The great Bee-hive. When the king of the Bees leads the way, all the Bees follow, and all are sure to obtain honey.”³⁰¹

Christ spoke to the Mormons through a prophet, who was also an earthly king. The Book of Mormon is full of examples of communities ruled by prophet-kings. Nephi the first great Book of Mormon prophet on the American continent was looked upon by his people “as a king or a protector” as well as a spiritual leader.³⁰² Nephi’s reign marked the beginning of a political dynasty, and his brother Jacob wrote at his death: “Wherefore, the people were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings.”³⁰³

Another Book of Mormon figure named Mosiah “was made king over the land of Zarahemla.”³⁰⁴ He was also a translator “by the gift and power of god.”³⁰⁵ His people considered him a “seer,” “a revelator,” and “a prophet.”³⁰⁶ After the death of Mosiah, his son Benjamin reigned as a “holy man” who did “reign over his people in righteousness.”³⁰⁷ Before dying, Benjamin anointed his son Mosiah to be a prophet and a king over the people.³⁰⁸ At the end of Mosiah’s reign he suggested that the monarchy be abolished and that a system of judges be established. Mosiah made it clear that he was not condemning monarchial rule; rather he was concerned that his people could not maintain a theocratic monarchy as they had maintained to that point. He said, “Therefore, if it were possible that you could have just men to be your kings, who would establish the laws of God, and judge this people according to his commandments, yea, if you could have men for your kings who would do even as my father Benjamin did for this people—I say unto you, if this could always be the case then it would be expedient that ye should always have kings to rule over you.”³⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Mosiah expressed his concern that an “iniquitous king” would come to the throne that could not be dethroned except by “much contention and the shedding of much blood.”³¹⁰

Mosiah established a system of judges with his son Alma as the “first chief judge, he being also the high priest, his father having conferred the office upon him, and having given him the charge concerning all the affairs of the church.”³¹¹

In nineteenth-century America, Mormons looked to Joseph Smith and his successors as prophet-kings. After Joseph Smith’s death, there was a “succession crisis.”³¹² Some Mormons believed that Joseph Smith’s son, Joseph Smith III, had a right

to his father's position. Later, believers in the succession of Joseph Smith III would organize the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS) in Independence, Missouri. Joseph Smith III became prophet for this congregation. In 1892 James Whitehead, a member of the RLDS Church, testified that as a private secretary to Joseph Smith, Jr., in Nauvoo, he had personal knowledge of the rights of Joseph Smith III. He wrote: "I recollect a meeting that was held in the winter of 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois, prior to Joseph Smith's death, at which the appointment was made by him, Joseph Smith, of his successor. His son Joseph was selected as his successor."

Whitehead described the elaborate ceremony as follows: "He was ordained and anointed at that meeting. Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, anointed him, and Joseph his father blessed him and ordained him, and Newel K. Whitney poured the oil on his head, and he was set apart to be his father's successor in office, holding all the powers his father held."³¹³

Whitehead later admitted that his information about this meeting was based on hearsay. However, the rumors about the matter were widespread enough to be included in an 1844 published history of Illinois: "The Prophet, it is said, has left a will or revelation, appointing a successor; and, among other things, it is stated that his son, a lad of twelve years, is named therein as his successor. Of this, however, there is no certainty."³¹⁴

That succession through blood lineage was an issue for some Mormons in deciding whom to support after Joseph Smith's death is apparent in a letter of June 14, 1845 by George J. Adams: "I have suffered much persecution since I left Boston and much abuse because I cant support the twelve as the first presidency I cant do it when I

know that it belongs to Joseph's Son—Young Joseph who was ordained by his father before his Death.”³¹⁵ Joseph's brother, William Smith did not support Brigham Young as Joseph's successor. He wrote, “this Brigham Young was pampering the church with the idea that although little Joseph was the rightful heir to the priesthood and office of his father as a prophet, seer, and revelator, that it was not prudent to mention this for fear of the little child's life.”³¹⁶

It is not surprising that many Mormons would consider patriarchal lineage to be an appropriate way to settle the succession issue since Mormons looked to Joseph Smith as a king on earth representing Jesus Christ. Earthly thrones have traditionally passed to the oldest son.

Nonetheless, the majority of Mormons accepted Brigham Young, the highest-ranking apostle, as Joseph's successor. Mormons viewed Smith's successors as they had viewed Smith. The prophet symbolically represented Jesus Christ. As his earthly spokesperson, the head of the LDS Church was a prophet, priest, and king. In 1856, Heber C. Kimball alluded to Brigham Young's role as the earthly King:

The Church and kingdom to which we belong will become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, and brother Brigham Young will become President of the United States. [Voices responded, "Amen."] And I tell you he will be something more; but we do not now want to give him the name: but he is called and ordained to a far greater station than that, and he is foreordained to take that station, and he has got it . [. . .] You may think that I am joking; but I am perfectly willing that brother Long [the

clerk] should write every word of it; for I can see it just as naturally as I see the earth and the productions thereof.³¹⁷

Brigham Young died in 1877, and during his funeral the flag of the Kingdom of God was hung from a second story window of Heber C. Kimball's residence. The flag was said to have blue and white stripes, "having in its upper left hand corner a blue field with a circle of twelve stars and in the center a large white star."³¹⁸ The twelve stars represented the twelve apostles; the large white star represented both Jesus Christ and his earthly representative, the Mormon prophet who served as "King, Priest and Ruler over Israel on Earth."³¹⁹ This was the title and calling that Brigham Young's successor, John Taylor, said Joseph Smith had handed down to the modern-day prophets. Taylor recorded a revelation which stated: "He was called by me," the Lord said of Joseph Smith, "and empowered by me, and sustained by me to introduce and establish my Church and Kingdom upon the earth; and to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my Church and Kingdom; and to be a King and Ruler over Israel."³²⁰

In Apostle Franklin D. Richards's personal papers, he states that John Taylor, Brigham Young successor, was "anointed & set apart as a King Priest and Ruler over Israel on the Earth—over Zion & the Kingdom of Christ our King of Kings."³²¹ At the time, the Salt Lake Tribune reported that Apostle George Q. Cannon had "assisted at the coronation of JOHN TAYLOR as king of the government. [. . .] We are not speaking now of a spiritual kingdom, but of a *bona fide* temporal kingdom, a government within the government of the United States."³²²

Of the ordination of John Taylor as king, historian D. Michael Quinn wrote, “The 1885 theocratic ordinance was really a magnificent gesture of resignation, similar to the orchestra on the *Titantic* playing “Nearer My God to Thee” as the ship plunged into the icy Atlantic.” Quinn explained that when John Taylor was anointed a theocratic King, it “was obvious that Mormon theocracy in Utah was in its death throes.”³²³

Indeed things were changing in Deseret. Fed up with the idiosyncrasies of the Mormon subculture, federal officials in Washington worked hard to bring the Mormons in line with the rest of the nation. A persistent Mormon legend has it that when asked, after his election as president, how he intended to deal with the Mormon problem, Abraham Lincoln answered: "I intend to treat it as a farmer on the frontier would treat an old water-soaked elm log lying upon his land—too heavy to move, too knotty to split, and too wet to burn. I'm going to plow around it."³²⁴ Whether true or not, the story does basically describe Lincoln’s policy toward the Mormons. He had more pressing matters to attend to. After the Civil War, the federal government was ready to root the old stump out. Congress passed vigorous anti-polygamy legislation, which landed many of the highest-ranking Mormon leaders in jail, and sent President John Taylor into hiding. In 1890, the Mormons abandoned polygamy,³²⁵ and in order to receive statehood (which was finally granted in 1896), the Mormons had to give up their theocratic practices in Utah and join the mainstream of American political life, including adopting the national parties in their local politics.³²⁶

There were those who still clung to the old theocratic ways. John W. Taylor, the son of John Taylor and one of the last members admitted to the Council of Fifty before it

stopped functioning in the 1880s, wanted the Council of Fifty to direct Utah's drive for statehood in the 1890s. However, the council was obsolete by this time, and Mormon leaders ignored John W. Taylor's desires. Taylor continued to push the issue for many years. He wrote to LDS Church president Joseph F. Smith in 1911. Taylor's father had convened the Council of Fifty in the 1880s and had been crowned king by its members. Taylor's father had also died while hiding from federal officials who wanted to prosecute him for polygamy. Taylor desperately petitioned Joseph F. Smith to convene the Council of Fifty. President Smith stated flatly, "I think the demand most absurd."³²⁷ Taylor was excommunicated that same year for practicing polygamy after the LDS Church had abandoned the practice."³²⁸

Dramatic changes came to the Mormon subculture in the 1890s. As the idiosyncratic ways of the Mormons changed, the Mormons were acculturated into the larger American culture, leaving behind united orders and adopting capitalism, giving up the theocracy of the State of Deseret and accepting the two-party system for the State of Utah in 1896. Since symbols represent the cultural beliefs of a society, it was natural for the symbols to change with the society that created them. The beehive took on new meaning for the Mormons. Always a flexible and useful symbol, the State of Utah and the LDS Church both continued to use the symbol. Its use by both groups represented the new division of church and state that had taken place in Utah by the beginning of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 6

TRANSFORMATION OF THE BEE AND BEEHIVE SYMBOLS

Mormons entered the twentieth century having abandoned polygamy and their hopes of establishing a theocratic state in the Rocky Mountains. The Kingdom of God in Mormon thought and practice during the nineteenth century exceeded the confines of religion alone. The Kingdom of God in Mormon thought and practice during the twentieth century was confined to the ecclesiastical church. The theocratic State of Deseret became something of the distant past. Yet semblances of it could be found in the twentieth-century in both the new State of Utah and the “transformed” LDS Church. It was clear, however, that for the Mormons, church and state had parted ways in the very late years of the nineteenth century, and the two would never come together again as they had in the extraordinary experience that was nineteenth-century Mormonism.

As a State Symbol of Industry

The United States finally felt safe enough to allow Utah to join the Union on its seventh try (attempts were made in 1849, 1856, 1862, 1876, 1882, 1887, and 1894). The Territory of Utah became the State of Utah on January 4, 1896. The state legislature appointed a committee to secure a design for an official state seal. The committee, made up of Aquilla Nebeker, Harwood M. Cushing, and E.B. Critchlow, invited a number of Utah artists to submit designs. The committee chose a design submitted by Harry Edwards, “an artist who never attained any degree of fame,” but who had a design that was “more emblematic of the times and occasion than any of the others.”³²⁹

Edwards' design included a center shield bearing a beehive surrounded by segolilies and the year "1847" under the hive. An American eagle with outstretched wings sat on top of the shield. The shield was pierced with six arrows. The draped flag of the United States was on both sides of the shield (see figure 62). The boarder of the seal stated: "The Great Seal of the State of Utah 1896." Governor Heber M. Wells took the design and asked John Caine Murphy of J.C. Murphy & Company to produce the stamp of the design. The stamp was in the form of a lion's head and when the jaws were closed the seal was impressed.³³⁰



Figure 62. Utah State Seal.
Courtesy State of Utah.

On April 16, 1903, the Daughters of the Revolution met in the home of Mary E.R. Webber to discuss the making of the first Utah state flag. Governor Wells had conferred the honor on that patriotic women's organization. The women took some blue fabric made of Utah silk and worked in outline stitch of white silk the pattern of the state seal.³³¹

A second flag was made through the efforts of the Sons and Daughters of Utah Pioneers to be presented to the battleship Utah in 1912. The design was altered somewhat from the 1903 flag. A gold circle was placed around the design, and the words "Industry" and "Utah" were placed in the shield above and below the beehive (see figure 63). On March 10, 1911, Henry Gardner introduced a joint resolution adopting the state flag. The resolution read:

“That the state flag of Utah be and the same is hereby declared to be a flag of blue field fringed with gold borders.” In the center was to be “a shield and perched thereon an American eagle with outstretched wings.” The top of the shield was to be “pierced by six arrows crosswise; under the arrows the motto “Industry;” beneath the motto a beehive; on each side growing sego lilies; below the



Figure 63. Utah State Flag. Courtesy State of Utah.

beehive the word “Utah,” and beneath the word “Utah” the figures “1847”; on each side of the shield the American flag encircling all.” At the base of the design was to be the year “1896.”³³²

The beehive and the motto “Industry” became inseparable at this point in Utah’s history. The beehive became the official state emblem and “Industry” became the official state motto on March 4, 1959 when Governor George D. Clyde signed House Bill 24.³³³ Beneath the bronze beehives at the state capitol in Salt Lake City, a plaque reads: “The Beehive: Symbol of industry, the motto of the citizens of Utah.” The Utah State Capitol Building in Salt Lake City has the beehive emblem on its carpet, draperies, windows, doors and walls (see figure 64). The honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) became the official state insect in 1983.³³⁴

Today visitors to the state of Utah don’t have to look very hard to find the beehive image. It appears on highway signs, sidewalk carvings, commercial signs, and on Utah

Highway Patrol badges and cars (see figures 65 and 66). An online directory of Salt Lake City lists over fifty businesses with *beehive* in the title, including Beehive Brick, Beehive Credit Union, Beehive Fireworks, Beehive Glass, Beehive Insurance, Beehive Parking, Beehive Pizza, Beehive Printing, and Beehive Welding. This same directory lists

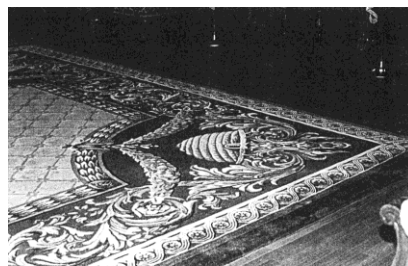


Figure 64. Beehive rug at the Utah State Capitol, Salt Lake City. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002.

over seventy businesses with *Deseret* in the title, including Deseret Apartments, Deseret Bakery, Deseret Book, Deseret Coal Yard, Deseret Dairy, Deseret First Credit Union, Deseret Gym Barber Shop, Deseret Heating, Deseret Jewlery, Deseret Lounge, Deseret Medical, and Deseret Motuary.³³⁵

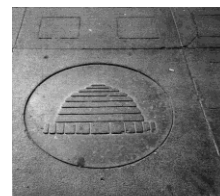


Figure 65. Salt Lake City walk. Photo by J. Michael Hunter, 2002.

As a Church Symbol of Industry

By the 1890s, the meaning of the beehive began to change for the Mormons. The Mormon group isolation that was once implied in the image, gave way to assimilation into a broader group. The LDS Church gave a much more simplistic meaning to the beehive, one that conformed to the state's secular emblem. This meaning is apparent from what Apostle Joseph F. Smith said in the October 1898 General Conference: "This country, in



Figure 66. Utah Highway Patrol uniform patch. Courtesy State of Utah.

the beginning, was called Deseret, the honey bee signifying industry; Utah, in the early days, was likened to the hive of bees, in which every bee was busy and was supposed to be able to do something toward building up and strengthening the entire colony.”³³⁶

In the October 1904 General Conference, Apostle Reed Smoot said, “This state had for its emblem the beehive, which means industry, frugality, gathering for future need. Would that we all might incorporate its meaning into our lives.”³³⁷ In the General Conference of October 1905, Elder Benjamin F. Goddard explained that the bee and beehive emblems were used to “attract attention to the industrious features of the ‘Mormon’ people.”³³⁸

In the General Conference of April 1916, Elder John L. Herrick, quoting Thomas M. Bicknell, President of the National Education Association, said, “Beyond and above all in perfection of system and in the realization of grand results, are the industry, frugality and temperance of the people. The beehive properly symbolizes the spirit and practice of the Mormons.”³³⁹

A visible symbol that the Mormon people were trying to open the hive to outsiders came with the building of the Hotel Utah in 1911 (see figure 67). The LDS Church had a hand in building the ten-story glittering white palace right across the street from Temple Square. President William Howard Taft stayed there a few weeks after its completion and declared, “It is a hotel that ranks with any in



Figure 67. Hotel Utah 1911. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

the world” He was to be followed by kings, presidents, rulers, potentates, actors, musicians, tycoons and tourists from all walks of life. Every U.S. president beginning with Taft stayed in the hotel until it closed in 1987. The Hotel Utah was topped with a twenty-two foot high beehive that was sixty feet in circumference. At night, the beehive was illuminated with 6,400 tungsten lights. The beehive symbol appeared throughout the hotel from gold-leafed emblems around the ceilings to woven patterns in the carpet. The Hotel Utah became a symbol of Utah’s new twentieth-century hospitality.³⁴⁰

As a Symbol of the Church Welfare Program

The Great Depression of the 1930s drew the Latter-day Saint mind once again to principles of unity, service, work and group self-sufficiency. For Latter-day Saints disoriented by the century’s rapid social and cultural changes, these principles offered a firm anchor. The Church had to develop a sense of group self-sufficiency in a broader context of an open, growing Church. Isolationism was not the answer.

The Church’s answer was a welfare system in which it purchased farmlands with the intent to give unemployed people an opportunity to work and to produce commodities to help the poor and needy. The Church eventually owned nearly 200 farms, some of which carried the name *Deseret*. The produce from the farms was canned in local Church canneries and transferred to the bishops’ storehouses for distribution to the poor and needy. An arm of the welfare program was

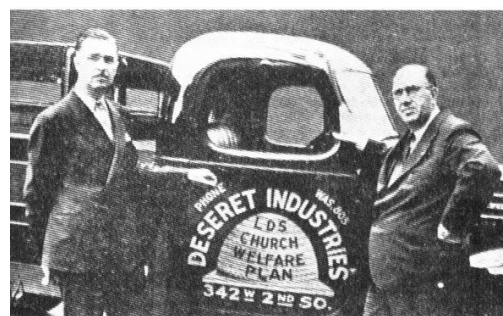


Figure 68. The first Deseret Industries truck in 1938. Courtesy Deseret News.

Deseret Industries, a workshop and thrift store operation used to provide employment for those with special needs. The symbol of Deseret Industries was (and is) the beehive (see figures 68-69).³⁴¹

Speaking of the Church's welfare program in October 1935, Apostle Sylvester Q. Cannon said, "Everyone who is a member, or who is interested in the Gospel, should be encouraged to exemplify the spirit of the beehive. The combined efforts—both spiritual and financial—of all Church members are needed in order that this work may best fulfill its destiny."³⁴²

The welfare program and the system of paying tithes and offerings replaced the utopian ideas of the united orders but still provided Mormons with a group security system that allowed them to work toward a common goal like bees in a hive. Mormons voluntarily worked on welfare farms and in Church canneries in an effort to stock the shelves of the bishops' storehouses with food (see figure 70). Mormons worked in Deseret Industries to provide clothing and other kinds of commodities. Mormons in need



Figure 69. The bee and beehive emblems in the Deseret Industries logo in 2004. Courtesy LDS Church.



Figure 70. Gordon B. Hinckley of the LDS First Presidency introduces U.S. President Ronald Reagan to a worker in the Ogden Utah Bishop's Storehouse. Behind them can be seen Deseret brand flour with the beehive emblem. Courtesy Deseret News.

went to their bishop for assistance. The welfare program has become so successful that the busy bees of Deseret are able to extend aid to needy people outside of the hive.

And so, for the Latter-day Saints of today, the beehive has become a symbol of industry and thrift associated with the Church preparedness, welfare and humanitarian programs worldwide. As Elder Joseph L. Wirthlin said in 1944, “There stands to [the Mormon pioneer’s] memory an everlasting monument in the form of the restored Church of Christ a great state, the emblem of which is the beehive—a symbol of industry, thrift, and no place for the idler but an attitude of helpfulness to the aged, the widowed, and the fatherless.”³⁴³

The beehive is still used as a symbol among the Latter-day Saints and is still referred to from time to time by General Authorities. In 1996, President Gordon B. Hinckley pointed out that the beehive was a symbol of industry among the pioneers. He expressed his hope that the beehive symbol would “continue to be of the very essence of the culture of the future.”³⁴⁴

On April 1, 2000, as members of the world-wide LDS Church watched President Hinckley, via a satellite, speak from the new 20,000-seat LDS Conference Center in Salt Lake City, they saw him speak from behind a new walnut podium carved from a tree from his own lawn. The podium had seven beehives carved in its base, a visible sign that the beehive was still an important



Figure 71. Podium with beehive emblems in LDS Conference Center, Salt Lake City. Courtesy LDS Church.

symbol to the Latter-day Saints (see figure 71). The beehive emblem could also be found in the windows of the new conference center. The Mormons pushed to have the new conference center operational for the first LDS conference to be held in the twenty-first century. It was a visible sign that the church was strong and growing. Conference would no longer be held in the old Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square. It would now be held in one of the world's largest assembly halls devoted specifically to religious gatherings. In having every speaker speak from behind a podium bearing beehives, the Mormons were certainly carrying the bee and beehive emblems with them into the twenty-first century.³⁴⁵

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

From prehistoric times to the eighteenth century, the bee and beehive symbols were commonly used to symbolize monarchy. In the eighteenth century, republicanism came of age, and advocates of the republican form of government transformed the bee and beehive emblems into symbols of republican virtues. In the nineteenth century, Mormons used the beehive as a symbol of their belief in a theocratic state representing the Kingdom of God on the earth. By the twentieth century, Mormons had abandoned practical theocracy and accepted republicanism. The bee and beehive became symbols of industry for both the State of Utah and the LDS Church. With respect to the LDS Church, these emblems were particularly important with reference to industry in regard to welfare work.

Perhaps more than anything, this thesis has demonstrated the fluent aspects of symbols. Over the centuries, groups and individuals have attempted to invest material objects with a symbolic character. These symbols represented meanings, principles, or ideas not inherent in the objects themselves, but existing only in the minds of people to whom they have meaning. Symbols are, therefore, seldom one-dimensional but express a complex range of cultural values. Symbolic meanings change as groups and individuals change. Thus symbols provide a window on an entire culture. The bee and beehive symbols of nineteenth-century Mormonism provided the opportunity to explore the cultural values of the unique Mormon subculture, which valued hierarchical authority and

obedience to ecclesiastical authority above all other authority. This study of symbols also revealed the cultural values of the larger American culture, which valued republican government, and the separation of church and state above an individual religious group's right to form a theocratic community.

This study has also demonstrated the difficulty of determining symbolic origins. The question of which symbols were created by which groups is likely indeterminable. Symbolic origin is often nothing more than speculation. Symbols disappear from a culture over time because they often represent outdated attitudes and behaviors, which no longer meet the needs of the group or individual. The beehive is the most enduring of nineteenth-century Utah symbols because the groups that have maintained it (Utahans and the Mormons) have adapted it to meet present needs. The value of "Industry" is still highly regarded among these modern groups.

This fluent nature of symbols often leads to misunderstandings. For example, in 1980 rumors began to spread about the Proctor & Gamble logo of a bearded man, a moon and thirteen stars. According to the rumor, the logo was a sign of devil worship. By 1982, Proctor & Gamble was receiving over 15,000 queries a month about the company's relationship to the devil. Some religious groups got caught up in the idea that the symbols used by Proctor & Gamble were satanic symbols. Many churches started a "Christian boycott" of Proctor & Gamble products. Proctor & Gamble set up a toll free number with a recording that said, "We are not connected to the Satanic Church or organization whatsoever." They informed the public that they had used the logo for over one hundred years and that the thirteen stars represented the original thirteen American colonies. The rumors persisted, however, and the company was finally forced to stop using the logo in 1985. The company also filed many libel suits against individuals and

companies for “false and malicious rumors.” The company’s sales were hurt by the rumors, which demonstrated the power of symbols and the meanings assigned to them.³⁴⁶

Proctor & Gamble took the position that no one had exclusive rights to symbols that were ancient and universal in nature. The company was open to the use of symbols and did not believe that they were borrowing from Satanism. The same types of assumptions about symbols have been made as a result of symbols used in Utah and Mormon history. The LDS Church, for example, has been accused of using satanic symbols on the stones of the Salt Lake Temple in the form of moons, stars and planets. A publication entitled Why is the Salt Lake Temple Decorated With Satanic Symbols? was published in California in 1989.³⁴⁷ Like Proctor & Gamble, Mormons denied that these symbols had any satanic meanings and asserted that no one group had an exclusive right to certain symbols.³⁴⁸

In July 2000, an article appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune entitled, “With Beehive Out, Contenders for Utah Quarters Line Up.” The article was about the U.S. Mint’s “50 State Quarters” program, commemorating each of the United States with state-specified images on the reverse of George Washington’s bust. Congress passed a law in 1997 that set down criteria for the use of symbols on the quarters. By law, the design “shall have broad appeal to the citizens of the state and avoid controversial subjects.” The criteria specify that “inappropriate design concepts” include depictions of religious events, icons or figures.

Christopher Smith, the author of the Tribune article, stated that the beehive symbol and the official Utah slogan, “The Beehive State,” should be rejected because they are “a traditional symbol of Mormonism’s virtue of collective action.” In other words, the beehive symbol was out because the Mormons had made use of it. Smith’s argument was that despite the fact that the beehive symbol (as seen in the official state

seal, flag, emblem, and slogan) officially represented “Industry” (the official state motto) to the people of Utah, it couldn’t be used because it once meant something more to the Mormons. In other words, the State of Utah may have borrowed the symbol as a civil, non-religious emblem, but the symbol is somehow tainted by its former use.³⁴⁹

While some symbols such as the swastika may have a certain meaning so indelibly imprinted upon the human psyche that its future adaptation is limited, it seems rash of Smith to assume such a condition for the beehive emblem. After all, it is a symbol that has endured thousands of years of adaptation. It is a symbol that seems uniquely enduring in its adaptability. It is likely that most people in the State of Utah and most members of the LDS Church are not even aware of the meanings the bee and beehive had for nineteenth century Mormons. They are mainly aware of what meanings these symbols have to them today. One explanation of a symbol that has been given should not preclude someone else seeing beyond that. Symbols can expand the human freedom of expression and feelings, rather than limit them.

Humans use symbols to express the invisible or intangible by means of visible or sensuous representations. Since the immaterial, ideal or intangible truths or states exists only in the minds of the group or individuals and not in the objects themselves, it is very difficult—some would say impossible—to really know what meaning a particular symbol has for a particular individual or group since that meaning can only exist in abstraction. However, if we are to gain any understanding at all of a symbol’s meaning to a particular individual or group, it is necessary to obtain an understanding of the cultural context in which the symbol under investigation thrived. This thesis has attempted to place the symbols of the bee and beehive in the cultural context of nineteenth-century Mormonism in order to at least approach some semblance of an understanding of meaning. This thesis

does not claim to be the final word on the meaning of the bee and beehive symbols in nineteenth-century Mormon culture. Finality robs symbols of their meanings.

ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

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