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## Natural History Museums of Early Utah Settlement

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**Natural History Museums of Early Utah Settlement**  
**By Leslie Evens: July 30, 2013**

*“From Nauvoo to Winter Quarters to Salt Lake City, notions about the whys and hows of museums contained a mix of secular and sacred worldviews to serve the purposes of education and faith.”<sup>1</sup>*

During the early days of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter the LDS Church) a culture of collecting antiques and specimens was fostered. Collecting began with the Egyptian mummies given to Joseph Smith, the acting president of the LDS Church, by Michael Chandler in Kirkland, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> Despite an early precedent of collecting antiquities, the establishment and development of museum like institutions have not been fully researched. To correct this shortcoming this paper looks specifically at natural history museums established between 1847, when the LDS Church settled in Utah, until 1906, when James E. Talmage became one of the founding members of the American Association of Museums. The three natural history museums that began during this time frame were the Deseret Museum, the Brigham Young Academy Museum and Laboratory, and the Natural History Museum at the University of Utah. Though a lot of private collecting took place during this time, private collections will not be generally discussed.

It is important to consider proclamations made by leaders of the LDS Church during their settlement in the East in order to understand why collecting was important to the Saints in Utah. These proclamations are significant because they were never revoked, leaving mandates to

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<sup>1</sup> Glen M. Leonard, “Antiquities, Curiosities, and Latter-day Saint Museums,” in *The Disciple as Witness : Essays on Latter-Day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Richard Lloyd Anderson, Stephen David Ricks, Donald W. Parry, Andrew H. Hedges, (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University, 2000), 292.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard, “Antiquities,” 291.

collect antiquities and specimens in effect even after the Saints (members of the LDS Church) settled in Utah.

In his article titled *Antiquities, Curiosities, and Latter-day Saint Museums*, Glen M. Leonard pinpointed the first call to the Saints to collect antiquities and specimens in a notice published in Nauvoo's *Times and Season* in May of 1843. This notice expressed that collecting these items for the purpose of establishing a museum was to be an important aspect of the religious responsibility of the Latter-day Saints.<sup>3</sup> The notice was followed by a clarifying declaration, written by assistant editor John Taylor, defining the scope of items to be collected. At the time, Taylor was an apostle of the LDS Church. All members of the Church were to help, though most specifically the Quorum of the Seventy (men working under the direction of the General Presidency of the LDS Church) was to gather "items of every kind" from their journeys in all parts of the earth.<sup>4</sup> The announcement was published as follows:

According to a Revelation, received not long since, it appears to be the duty of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to bring to Nauvoo, their precious things, such as antiquities, and we may say, curiosities, whether animal, vegetable or metal[li]c: yea, petrification as well as inscriptions and hieroglyphics, for the purpose of establishing a Museum of the great things of God, and the inventions of men, at Nauvoo. We have just received the first donation at the office of President Joseph Smith. Who will come and do likewise?<sup>5</sup>

The first donation consisted of items collected by Addison Pratt during his time as a whaler. Included in the donation were the tooth of a whale and the tooth of a south sea seal, bones from an albatross' wing and skin from its foot, and coral.<sup>6</sup> Other donations were sure to have been received in addition to Addison Pratt's contribution. However, clear records of such have yet to be located.

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<sup>3</sup>Leonard, "Antiquities," 293.

<sup>4</sup> B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church*, vol 7, *The Seventies' Library and Institute* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Published for the Church by Deseret Book Company, 1980), 339.

<sup>5</sup> John Taylor, "To the Saints Among All Nations," *Times and Seasons*, May 15, 1843, 201.

<sup>6</sup> Leonard, "Antiquities," 300.

Leonard's expresses his opinion on the educational influence of museums, saying, "Their words and ideas set the pattern of discourse for half a century. Nauvoo discussions defined the educational purposes of museum, establish a way to build a collection, and identified the church as an appropriate sponsor."<sup>7</sup> While it remains unclear how well established this idea truly was during this period, it is true that the museums founded among the LDS Community in Utah were often linked to educational institutions.

The idea of a museum and the mentality that the Latter-day Saints were to gather together a collection remained with the Saints when they were driven from their homes in Nauvoo, travelled west to Winter Quarters, and eventually made it to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. The leaders of the LDS Church were desirous to firmly establish their people in a place from which they wouldn't be driven out. As the Saints flowed into the Salt Lake Valley they were given instructions to go out and establish settlements along the valleys of Utah, as well as in a few other locations in what are known today as Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, California, Arizona, and Mexico.<sup>8</sup> Inadvertently, by sending the Saints to settle these areas, the scope of specimens donated was broadened, improving and expanding the museum.

In 1848 paintings by Philo Dibble depicting the migration of the Saints were displayed in Pottawattamie County, Iowa. Dibble was a strong supporter of the proposed museum. He was invited to continue his paintings of the Saints and events surrounding the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, but he most likely would have continued his paintings even if he had not been invited to continue. Dibble worked to have his artwork displayed in Salt Lake City as well. Dibble was enthusiastic that not only art, but all kinds of specimens, would be collected and displayed for the

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<sup>7</sup> Leonard, "Antiquities," 292.

<sup>8</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, "Brigham Young," *Living Planet*, accessed August 1, 2013.  
[http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/people/brigham\\_young.html](http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/people/brigham_young.html)

benefit of the saints.<sup>9</sup> From this time in 1848 until the founding of the first natural history museum in 1869 there are no found records referencing the establishment of institutional collections or exhibits. It is strongly suspected that despite the lack of written records, the collecting of antiquities and specimens was taking place at this time.

The beginning of the institution that would come to be known as the Deseret Museum was established in 1869. The proprietor of the Museum was John W. Young, acting under the patronage and by direction of his father, LDS Church President, Brigham Young. The Deseret Museum started as a private institution. It is unclear where the initial collection for the museum came from. It is likely that much of the collection was supplemented by private donors. Joseph L. Barfoot, who would later become Curator of the Deseret Museum, reported that:

The opening of the mines in 1865 by General P. E. Connor, and the stimulus given to mining industry in 1870-71 and subsequently, led to a large influx of strangers who contributed handsomely to the newly-opened museum [Saints before had contributed the majority], evidence of which are seen and permanently remain as a testimony of the liberality of the miners and prospectors of those days. Besides these advantages, the patronage of wealthy residents greatly aided in the extension of the Museum<sup>10</sup>

From its beginning the Museum was a mixture of a menagerie and museum. The collection contained objects ranging from geological minerals and ethnographic items to live animals. Proposed names for the exhibit followed along the lines of “Utah at a glance” because the collection was intended to show tourists “what we have and what we are doing.”<sup>11</sup> The first official name taken by the establishment was the “Salt Lake City Museum and Menagerie.”<sup>12</sup> Guglielmo Giosue Rossetti Sangiovani, who was born in London and had acted as John W. Young’s interpreter on a trip to Europe, was brought in as Curator. As a private establishment,

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<sup>9</sup> Leonard, “Antiquities,” 304-7.

<sup>10</sup> James E. Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” *Deseret Museum Bulletin* no. 1 (1911): 18.

<sup>11</sup> Talmage, “Deseret Museum,” 4.

<sup>12</sup> Talmage, “Deseret Museum,” 5.

the Museum was “first operated and maintained for the public good rather than for purposes of private gain.”<sup>13</sup> The museum continued to remain a private institution through the first few transitions it faced. As late as 1874 labels for the Museum read “The Salt Lake City Museum, J. W. Young, Proprietor.”<sup>14</sup> Originally in 1869 the Museum was housed in a small, two room adobe house located on the south side of South Temple Street, between west and east temple streets.<sup>15</sup> At the time, this building was known to be one of the more “prestigious” buildings in Salt Lake City, and it had enough outdoor space to house the extensive live animal exhibit.

During its early years, the live animal exhibit excelled all of the other collections and served as the main attraction. Sangiovani was a well-suited choice to act as Curator during this stage of the Museum’s existence. John Q. Cannon once said that during this time it was believed that Sangiovani possessed the gift of speaking to each animal in their own language. Sangiovani was a natural animal trainer. John Q. Cannon in the same letter said that “the animals knew him and seemed to like him, he easily could have entered into a line of work training animals.”<sup>16</sup>

The adobe building in which the museum was housed was eventually needed for use by the Deseret Telegraph Company. The museum was relocated to the upper floor of a “historic building” nearly opposite the south gate of the temple block. This new location was unable to accommodate the large “zoo” collection and only a few small caged animals were kept as part of the Museum’s collection.<sup>17</sup>

Joseph L. Barfoot became the superintendent at the Salt Lake City Museum and Menagerie before it moved from its first location. It is unclear at which point he became Curator.

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<sup>13</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 3.

<sup>14</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 14.

<sup>15</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 5.

<sup>16</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 9.

<sup>17</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 9.

Regardless, when the Museum moved from its original adobe building to its second location, Barfoot acted as curator. Barfoot was a well-respected man within the community. Of him it was once said:

His patience, his erudition and his unfailing willingness to devote his time and talents free to the public, gave the museum the character of a veritable mine of information. His capacity for work was prodigious, and his knowledge was vast and inexhaustible. He contributed regularly and voluminously to all the periodicals of the day, and did incalculable good in awakening an interest in and popularizing hitherto dry scientific subjects by his luminous treatment of them<sup>18</sup>

On the lower floor of the historic building housing the Museum, there was a school. The School and museum soon began working together, which helped the collection grow rapidly in extent as well as in educational value through thorough and accurate classification.<sup>19</sup> Along with this change the museum also adopted a new name. The name “Deseret Museum and Menagerie” had already been adopted and used in print before the move. However, this did not stop the changing of the name to the “Salt Lake City Museum.”<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, in Provo, Utah, the Brigham Young Academy had been collecting their own natural history specimens. The earliest known mention of the Brigham Young Academy Museum comes from the personal journals of James E. Talmage in 1879. Talmage began at the academy after his family immigrated to America. He received today’s equivalent of a high school diploma at age 16 and promptly began teaching a number of classes at the Academy at age 17.<sup>21</sup> Even as a professor Talmage continued his own education in the sciences.

Along with his new teaching position, Talmage also accepted the title as Curator of the Brigham Young Academy Museum and Laboratory in 1879. On August 30, 1880, Talmage also

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<sup>18</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 11.

<sup>19</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 11.

<sup>20</sup> Talmage, “Deseret Museum,” 14.

<sup>21</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 21 Aug. 1879, *James E. Talmage Papers*, Brigham Young University Special Collections (Provo, Utah).

accepted the duty of sleeping in the academy building as guardian.<sup>22</sup> On February 29, 1881 Talmage continued to show his interest in combining the sciences with museums when he delivered a lecture entitled “Science and Art” before the Philosophy Society.<sup>23</sup>

Talmage had previously taken to going out in the regions around Provo to collect natural history specimens, including geological and biological, for his own collection. After his second year of teaching at Brigham Young Academy Talmage set out with Professor Karl G. Maeser, principal of the Academy, to tour surrounding cities. During their visits, members of the LDS Church donated from private collections of natural specimens to Talmage for use in building the Brigham Young Academy Museum collection.<sup>24</sup>

The earliest record found of the Deseret Museum and the Brigham Young Academy Museum and Laboratory working together was in 1881. That year Talmage visited the “Deseret Museum” with a note of introduction to Professor Barfoot.

“Was warmly received by the professor who promised to assist me in any point wherein I needed help in classifying and arranging the specimens in the B. Y. Academy cabinet. The professor kindly requested me to communicate with him, which of course I am exceedingly pleased to be allowed to do”.<sup>25</sup>

In Talmage’s journals, the Academy Museum was almost always referenced in conjunction with the school’s laboratory. As far as can be determined, the Museum did not have its own room within the Academy building and was sometimes referred to as a “Cabinet.” This is not all too unexpected. In the 1890s the museums found in rural areas were referred to as Cabinets of Curiosity. These were small displays of uncategorized objects typically used for teaching purposes.

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<sup>22</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 30 Aug. 1880, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>23</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 29 February 1881, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>24</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 19 June 1881, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>25</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 8 February 1881, James E. Talmage Papers.



In 1882 with the express permission of the LDS Church's General Presidency, Talmage went East in order to further his education in the sciences. Before he left he "spent the whole day overhauling the B.Y.A laboratory, and closing the record of the same, preparatory to handing over the same."<sup>26</sup>

Eventually when everything was finally prepared, Talmage headed East to study the Sciences at Lehigh University and John Hopkins University. While back East Talmage developed a hobby of visiting museums and laboratories, which remained a part of him for the rest of his life. He met and boarded for a time with H.W. Werner, the Curator of the Lehigh University Museum.

Back in Utah, Barfoot continued work at the Deseret Museum and Menagerie until his death on April 25, 1882. Barfoot had recently been suffering from bronchitis and passed away in his room on the upper floor of the Museum with his wife in company who had just sent for the doctor. Barfoot was a man to be admired, especially by James E. Talmage. Barfoot had dedicated his life to studying science. When John W. Young was founding the nucleus of the Museum, he brought Barfoot in to help classify and label specimens because of Barfoot's reputation of having vast scientific knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

After Professor Barfoot's death, the Museum went into a period of inactivity. Financially, the Museum was in poor shape and wasn't in a position to offer or use its resources in order to lift itself out of this slump. Because of this unfortunate situation the Museum was unable to hire anyone to assume the full responsibilities Barfoot had left behind. Instead, temporary Curators, acting more as caretakers, looked over the institution. For the next three years after Barfoot's death, the caretakers of the Museum were Messrs. Ford and Schofield. These first two caretakers

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<sup>26</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 20 August 1882, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>27</sup> "The Death of Professor J. L. Barfoot" *The Deseret News*, April 26, 1882, 9.

did not claim scientific qualifications or technical training for the position. For a time, George Reynolds also had his literary “Den” in one of the corners of the Museum, acting as a caretaker and doing some of his more enduring work.<sup>28</sup> While George Reynolds was in charge he also had the help of Don Carlos Young, son of Brigham Young, who was an officer of the Salt Lake Literary and Science Association. It was the combined efforts of these four men that kept the Museum in a state of suspended activity rather than slipping away into dissolution during these years.

The Deseret Museum was not the only one going through trials. While at Lehigh University in 1884 Talmage received the horrifying news that the Brigham Young Academy had burnt to the ground. The most Talmage wrote regarding the fate of the Museum and Laboratory was that “the laboratory instruments etc. were greatly damaged...the young men who occupy my old position sleeping there as guardians were away from their post – and the fire started.”<sup>29</sup>

In 1885 the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association acquired possession of the Deseret Museum and the land the small museum was housed on. In 1890 the Association sold the land, which caused another relocation of the collections. “A partial instillation was made in a large room on the ground floor of the Templeton building,”<sup>30</sup> remaining there until James Talmage took over as Curator.

Talmage’s time spent out East benefited and shaped him greatly when it came to his career as a Professor and Curator. He was exposed to a number of well-established museums and spent much of his free time visiting them while in school. He had planned to establish a

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<sup>28</sup> Talmage, “The Deseret Museum,” 12.

<sup>29</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 4 February 1884, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>30</sup> Talmage, “Deseret Museum,” 22.

laboratory once back in Utah with a fellow Latter-day Saint, George Q. Coray, who was studying out east.<sup>31</sup>

When Talmage returned to Provo he once again taught at the Brigham Young Academy. However, since a new structure had not been built to house the school, the Academy was temporarily housed in another location. This temporary location was only able to facilitate a small laboratory. No mention of a museum is found in Talmage's journals from this time.

In 1991 the University of Deseret began its own collection of specimens. The collection began with the donation by Henry Montgomery, which had been acquired over the course of a number of field trips between 1891-1895. Montgomery was a Professor of Natural History at the University of Deseret. Much like the Brigham Young Academy Museum and the Deseret Museum, donations from local collectors added value and support to the collection. In order to supplement these donations, the school also purchased a number of ethnographic items such as pottery, baskets, weapons, etc. from Native American tribes in Utah and the surrounding states.

The University of Deseret's collections continued to be supported in the coming years. One of the greatest contributors was Byron Cummings, a professor of Latin and Greek at the University. Soon after the Museum was founded Cummings became interested and invested in the archeological side of the collections. From 1895 to 1914 Cummings conducted expeditions to the four corners area of the U.S. in order to collect new items for the Museum. His interest in archeology implies that this included fieldwork and archeological digs, though it could also have included collection of ethnographic items from the Native American tribes living in the area.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> James E. Talmage journal, Decemer 1883, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Glenna Neilson-Grimm, "History of the Utah Museum of Natural History's Anthropological Collection" *Utah Archeology* 24, no. 1 (2011), 1-3.

In 1891 Talmage became the Curator of the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City. By this time he had accepted a position as President of the Latter-day Saint University. Though he had previously dreamed of this opportunity, he wrote in his journal that:

Spent the remainder of the day in the museum. I have been installed as curator to the museum; and though my time is very fully occupied otherwise, yet I hope to be enabled to devote sufficient attention to affect the rearrangement, and classification of the specimens. For many years the Deseret museum has been deprived of a Scientific director; and the value of the collections has materially lessened. Because of loss or displacement of labels, and lack of classification. The Deseret museum is the possession of the literary and scientific association, of which I am a member. Sometime ago it was proposed by president Woodruff to transfer the whole collection to the college, but a difficulty was found in the conditions of the charter governing the association. I well remember years ago, a former curator, the venerable J. L. Barfoot; and how then I felt, that, could I but be privileged with ever so humble a post in the museum, how fully would my ambition be gratified. Now the position of chief office is given to me and I accept it reluctantly because of other pressing duties. It is my desire that the museum shall grow. Such an institution if devoid of growth is dead<sup>33</sup>

Under his care, exhibits were reopened to the public on February 2, 1891. From 1892-1893 the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association used the money from the sale of the Museum's land to build a three-story building on the Ellerbeck property on First North Street. "The Deseret Museum collections were installed on the top floor, the remaining portions of the building being fitted up as laboratories and lecture rooms and used for instruction work in connection with the Church University."<sup>34</sup>

From 1891-1903 Talmage had the help of J. Reuben Clark Jr., who deserves much of the credit for the successful operation of the newly reopened museum. During this time Mr. Clark was a student at The Latter-day Saints College which would later become the LDS Business College.<sup>35</sup> The collections were housed and exhibited in the Church University Building from March 17, 1893 to July 30, 1903. Under Talmage's stewardship the Deseret Museum's

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<sup>33</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 31 January 1891, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Talmage, "Deseret Museum," 22.

<sup>35</sup> Talmage, "Deseret Museum," 22.

collections began to be improved in standard of storage and labeling. At long last, Talmage had the support and space to establish a fully functional laboratory alongside the Museum.

While the Museum was housed in the Church University Building the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association was unable to provide funding for the upkeep of the museum. Thus, in November 1899, the LDS Church gained possession of the Deseret Museum. With this transition the Museum officially changed its name to the Deseret Museum. The name had, by popular consent, been used for the Museum for some time prior to its official change, but it wasn't until the LDS Church took charge of the collections that the name became fixed.

In line with its principle of fostering and promoting public education, the church acquired possession of the museum collections with the purpose of developing the institution as a means of increasing and diffusing knowledge among the people. However, in those days but little money could be spared for other than necessities, and the bare maintenance of the museum involved sacrifice and devotion. During this period of its history the Museum had as its executive head the highest official of the "Mormon" church, viz., the president, who was known as the Proprietor –in-trust<sup>36</sup>

In 1893 Talmage attended the Museum Association conference in Britain. From that year forth until 1919, the Deseret Museum was affiliated with the association. Enough research has been done in order to know that Talmage served on the council for a time. Council terms were only set for one year, with Talmage's first election occurring in 1893, though it is unclear if this was for the 1893-1894 term or the 1894-1895.<sup>37</sup>

Returning to Provo, as early as 1892, Walter M. Wolfe took up the position as the new Museum Curator at Brigham Young Academy. Professor Wolfe taught Latin and History at the Academy. He encouraged students to help the Department of Natural Science by "collecting specimens of mineralogy, flora, and fauna throughout the Utah Territory" as well as "archaeological and ethnological specimens" such as "old pottery, hieroglyphics, picture

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<sup>36</sup> Talmage, "Deseret Museum," 18.

<sup>37</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation: A Centenary History of the Museums Association* (London: Quiller Press 1989), 11.

writings, implements, weapons and relics” in order to increase the value and completeness of the BYA Museum. Much of the collecting which occurred at this time was spurred on by an excitement for the upcoming World’s Fair to be held in Chicago the following year in 1893. It only took a few months for the Museum to receive donations of fossils, petrified animals, snake skins and archaeological specimens. Even Karl G. Maeser, headmaster of the Academy, made a donation of “several beautiful specimens” from Mexico.<sup>38</sup>

In 1893 Benjamin Cluff became President of Brigham Young Academy. He had long dreamed of conducting a scientific expedition to South America. Eventually in 1900 President Cluff, along with Professor Wolfe and 22 others, set off with a threefold plan to travel through Central America to South America. The three goals the group set out to accomplish were as follows: “First, to find archaeological evidences bearing upon the claims of the Book of Mormon; second, to collect scientific specimens for the Academy’s museum; and third, to assemble information of use for LDS proselyting and colonizing activities.”<sup>39</sup>

The expedition did not turn out quite as planned. Official Church support for the expedition was called off at the U.S. and Mexico border, yet some members of the party chose to continue on. One goal that was accomplished is explained in the following: “At various points along the expedition, members sent boxes of specimens back to the Academy with the goal in mind to strengthen the Academy Museum.”<sup>40</sup>

In 1897 the state of Utah and the LDS Church celebrated the 50 year anniversary of the Saints arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. As part of the celebration, a temporary structure based on

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<sup>38</sup> Rebekah Monahan and Paul Stavast, “Artifact Collecting at Brigham Young University 1875 -1968” *Utah Archeology* 24, no. 1 (2011), 52.

<sup>39</sup> Monahan and Stavast, “Artifact Collecting”, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Monahan and Stavast, “Artifact Collecting”, 55.

the design of the pantheon in Rome was placed on the Southwest corner on the intersection of Main and South Temple Streets. The building was referred to as the Hall of Relics and housed a number of items donated or loaned by institutions for the event. These items represented the Pioneers, Church leaders, Utah history and other topics related to the history of the people. Three cabinets housed items on loan from the Deseret Museum. One cabinet contained mineral specimens from Utah, and the other two were representative of the Cliff dwellers and modern Indian tribes of the time.<sup>41</sup>

In 1903 the Church University Building was handed over to the University of Utah. This change caused the Deseret Museum to need to relocate once again. However, this time, the museum and its collections found itself without anywhere to go. The collections were boxed up and placed in storage from July 1903 until July 1910. Talmage and George Reynolds had been asked to coordinate appropriate storage for the Deseret Museum's collection in 1902 for the pending removal from the Church University Building. Talmage and Reynolds proposed that the best storage location would be in the Salt Lake City Temple. It is said, "It was decided to remove the museum to the upper room of the temple for the present, and to box the minerals and put them in the basement of the temple."<sup>42</sup>

In 1906, Talmage attended the first ever annual meeting of the American Association of Museums. It had been determined that a museum association should be formed, and requests were sent out inviting museums across the United States to participate. Despite his pressing responsibilities back home, Talmage was given permission to attend the conference in New

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<sup>41</sup> "Case No. 1–Case No. 3," *Catalogue of the Relics, Souvenirs and Curios*, July 24 1897, accessed August 1, 2013, <http://www.dupinternational.org/jubilee/reliccatalog.htm>

<sup>42</sup>"October 16, 1902," *Historians Office Journal History of the Church* 410 (1902): Image 125, accessed August 1, 2013, <http://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/viewer?pid=IE466269>

York. When the conference began the first order of business was to form a temporary organization and a committee to begin drafting the governing constitution for the organization. Along with representatives from large museums in Pittsburg, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington D. C., Talmage was asked to be a part of this committee. They quickly set to work and by the following afternoon presented their committee report which was adopted.<sup>43</sup>

After agreeing on the offices provided for by the constitution it was time to elect officers. Talmage referred to the elections as being “Spirited- hotly contested in fact.” With surprise he learned that he had been nominated to be one of the two vice-presidents on the council. “This I had to decline, as the welfare of the association demands that the principle executive officers shall be within reasonably easy reach from the centers of museum activity.”<sup>44</sup> Talmage had not attended the conference with the intent to seek personal recognition or prominence among the organization. He was from a small, little known museum, and felt that since representation in the council was so hotly contested that he was in no way a candidate. He was, however, nominated again, but only as a member of the council. “I realized that I represented an institution, and that its recognition would be an honor to our people. Therefore I did not decline when nominated for membership in the council”.<sup>45</sup> Like always, Talmage did not accept the council position for himself, but for the honor it would bring those back in Utah. He was elected to this position for a two year term and remained a member of the board until 1919.

Though the history of museums in Utah is a not a well-known story, it contains significant events in the history of museums in Europe and the United States. Collecting natural

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<sup>43</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 15-16 May 1906, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>44</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 16 May 1906, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>45</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 16 May 1906, James E. Talmage Papers.



history specimens was advocated by the LDS Church and carried out by a wide range of members. These collections were an invaluable resource to the surrounding communities and learning institutions. Though many admirable men were involved with the natural history museums of Utah, James E. Talmage's role as an advocate was an example to all. His support reflected not only his own but the Church's involvement and interest in museums. He participated in councils for the leading Museum Associations in both Great Britain and the United States. Talmage and the others left a legacy of dedication that is to be exemplified in the work we do today. The collections cared for by today's museum community need to be cared for and provided the opportunity to grow. For as Talmage said: "Such an institution if devoid of growth is dead."<sup>46</sup>

*"As I look over the old records and go through the time stained papers that were once in Barfoot's custody, many of them written by his own hand, I read a story of devotion to the cause of scientific investigation which to me is an ever-present inspiration and encouragement. Whatever the foreground of our museum picture may yet come to be, one of its principal charms will be found in the background of faithful service incidental to the efforts of its promoters and supporters in the early years of its checkered history."<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> James E. Talmage journal, 31 January 1891, James E. Talmage Papers.

<sup>47</sup> Talmage, "Deseret Museum," 16. James E. Talmage writing about Joseph L. Barfoot.

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