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Martin H. Raish

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**Title** Encounters with Cumorah: A Selective, Personal Bibliography

**Author(s)** Martin H. Raish

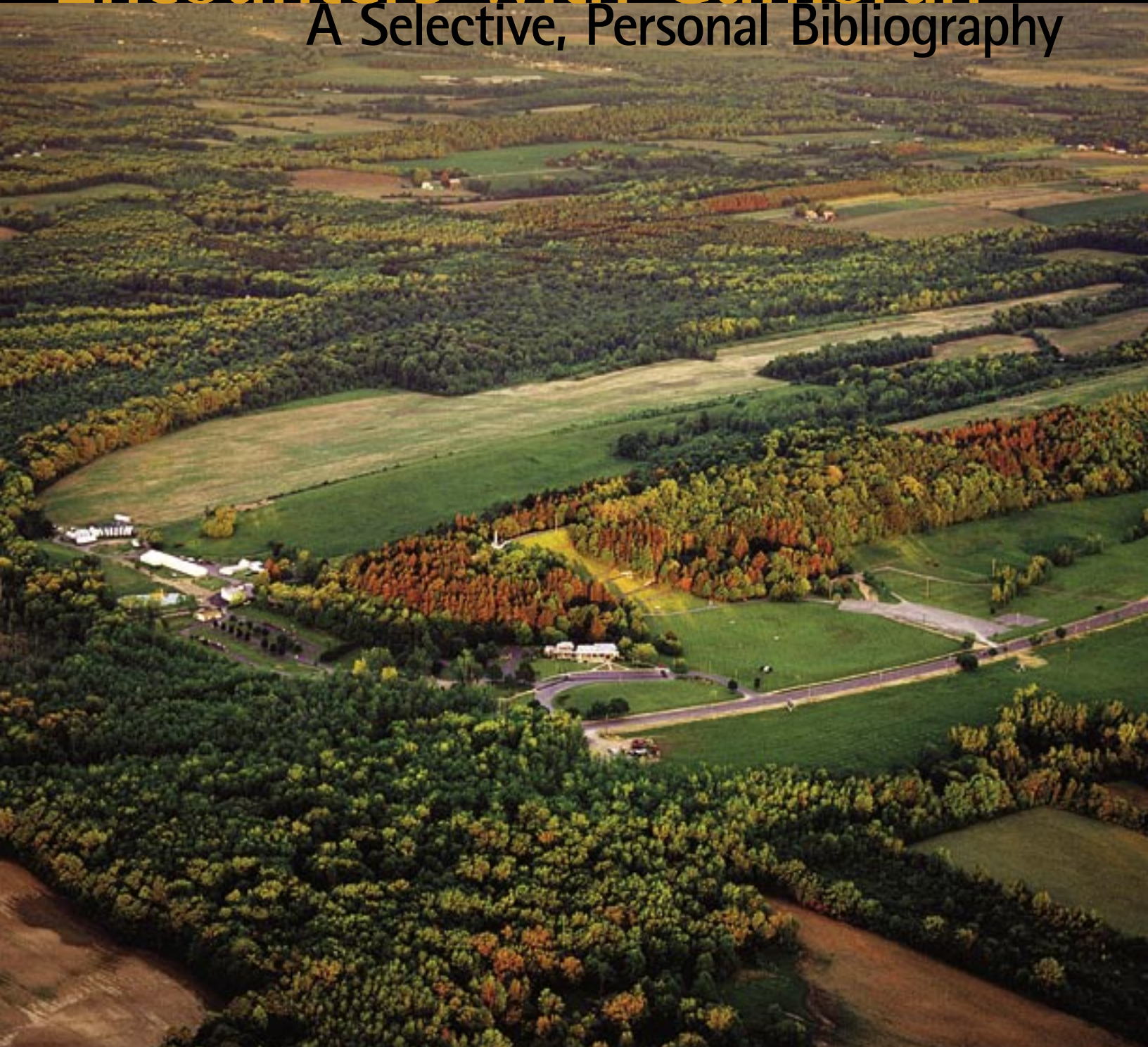
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**Abstract** This bibliographic article identifies descriptions of the Hill Cumorah that go beyond Joseph Smith's account. The author includes firsthand reports of the hill's appearance at the time the sacred events took place and accounts by visitors who focus on emotional, spiritual, poetic, or nostalgic aspects of their experience. Some of the featured descriptions are written by James Gordon Bennett, Oliver Cowdery, Orson Pratt, George Q. Cannon, Susa Young Gates, photographer George E. Anderson, and Anthony W. Ivins. Taken together, the accounts enrich our understanding and appreciation of the Hill Cumorah and the role it played in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. This article includes recommendations for post-World War II studies on the hill and a sidebar that discusses a clue to the history of the name *Cumorah* being associated with the hill near Palmyra.

# Encounters with Cumorah

A Selective, Personal Bibliography



**THE HILL CUMORAH** is probably mentioned in every book ever written about Joseph Smith or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Any narrative concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon must make at least passing reference to the circumstances of recovering the gold plates. However, finding accounts that go beyond simply reporting the basic facts can be a challenge. In many well-known works, regardless of whether the author is a faithful Latter-day Saint or not, the events that took place on and around the hill are reviewed by doing little more than paraphrasing Joseph's straightforward narrative.<sup>1</sup>

My intent in this discursive bibliography is to identify accounts of the Hill Cumorah that go beyond Joseph's basic account. Some are firsthand descriptions of the hill's appearance at the time when the sacred events took place. Others focus more on the emotional or spiritual aspect of the hill, while still others are poetic or nostalgic. They range in date from the 1830s to the beginning of the 21st century and come from a wide spectrum of observers with diverse backgrounds and intents. Each account is informative, uplifting, or intriguing in its own way, and taken together they enrich our understanding and appreciation of this remarkable place and the role it played in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.<sup>2</sup>

What we today universally refer to as the Hill Cumorah was apparently unnamed when the Smith family moved to upstate New York in 1816. Local farmers recognized it as one of the largest of the dozens of similar prominences in the area but otherwise paid it little heed. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had been introduced to *Cumorah* as

a place-name in late May or early June 1829 while translating the Book of Mormon (see accompanying sidebar), yet it apparently did not become part of common usage, even among Latter-day Saints, until many years later. Throughout the 1830s and '40s, the mount, if named at all, was called "Mormon Hill," "Bible Hill," or "Golden Bible Hill."

Much was written about the new Mormon religious movement in newspapers throughout the young United States in the 1830s. One influential account appeared first in a New York paper in the fall of 1831 and was subsequently reprinted or paraphrased in various forms in at least a dozen other publications over the next few months. This was a two-part report by James Gordon Bennett about "one of the strangest pieces of fanaticism to which the ill-advised and the worst regulated ambition and folly of certain portions of the clergy of Western New York ever gave birth."<sup>3</sup>

Bennett's "brief view of the rise and progress of the *Mormon Religion*," based on notes taken during a short visit to the Palmyra area in August

## Early Encounter with the Name *Cumorah*?

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery probably first encountered the name Cumorah in late May or early June 1829 during the process of translating the plates of the Book of Mormon (see Mormon 6:2–11; 8:2). How and when did this name subsequently come to be applied to the hill near Palmyra where the plates were recovered? Although existing historical data cannot answer this question definitively, an account by David Whitmer provides an interesting clue.

David related an event that happened in “late June” 1829, shortly after he was privileged to be one of the three special witnesses to the Book of Mormon. He was asked to go to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to pick up Joseph and Oliver and transport them back to his father’s house in Fayette. He related:

When I was returning to Fayette with Joseph and Oliver all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an old-fashioned wooden spring seat and Joseph behind us, while traveling along in a clear open place, a very pleasant, nice-looking old man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon who saluted us with, “good morning, it is very warm,” at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and by a sign from Joseph I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, “No, I am going to Cumorah.” This name was something new to me, I did not know what Cumorah meant. We all gazed at him and at each other, and as I looked round enquiringly of Joseph the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again.

David described the gentleman as being “about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall and heavy set . . . dressed in a suit of brown woolen clothes, his hair and beard were white.” He then added, “I also remember that he had on his back a sort of knapsack with something in, shaped like a book. It was the messenger who had the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony.”

David related his story during an interview with Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith in Richmond, Missouri, in early September 1878. It was recorded in Smith’s journal and included in a lengthy letter from New York City dated 17 September 1878. The letter was published as “Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith” in the *Deseret Evening News*, 16 November 1878, and in the *Deseret News*, 27 November 1878, 673–88 (the portion quoted above is found on page 677).

Unfortunately, the accuracy of David’s story is uncertain. For one thing, this recollection came 49 years later, when he was in his seventies. Moreover, it is not corroborated by any other early account. For example, neither Oliver Cowdery’s 1835 description of the hill nor Joseph Smith’s 1838 history of the church refers to the site by the name Cumorah (see Joseph Smith—History 1:51). For these reasons, some scholars do not accept the account as historically reliable.

1831, includes several errors and provides much misinformation, such as identifying Sidney Rigdon as “Henry Rangdon or Ringdon” and reporting that the gold plates were found in an iron chest. It also exhibits (and certainly helped disseminate) the attitudes of mistrust and suspicion that haunted the church for years to come. Yet it also offers a fine description of Cumorah as it appeared 170 years ago:

About the same time that this person [Sidney Rigdon] appeared among them, a splendid excavation was begun in a long narrow hill, between Manchester and Palmyra. This hill has since been called by some, the *Golden Bible Hill*. The road from Canandaigua to Palmyra, runs along its western base. At the northern extremity the hill is quite abrupt and narrow. It runs to the south for a half mile and then spreads out into a piece of broad table land, covered with beautiful orchards and wheat fields. On the east, the Canandaigua outlet runs past it on its way to the beautiful village of Vienna in Phelps. It is profusely covered to the top with Beech, Maple, Bass, and White-wood—the northern extremity is quite bare of trees.<sup>4</sup>

After this benign paragraph, Bennett embarks on a lengthy tirade against “a most powerful and ambitious religious party of zealots, and their dupes” that had long plagued western New York State and that had sown the seeds of Mormonism, a religion “run into madness by zealots and hypocrites.” He then describes how the plates were found and what happened to them:

It was during this state of public feeling in which the money diggers of Ontario county, by the suggestions of the Ex-Precacher from Ohio [Sidney Rigdon], thought of turning their digging concern into a religious plot, and thereby have a better chance of working upon the credulity and ignorance of the[i]r associates and the neighborhood. Money and a good living might be got in this way. It was given out that visions had appeared to Joe Smith—that a set of golden plates on which was engraved the “Book of Mormon,” enclosed in an iron chest, was deposited somewhere in the hill I have mentioned. People laughed at the first intimation of the story, but the Smiths and Rangdon persisted in its truth. . . . They treated their own invention with the utmost religious respect. By the spe-

cial interposition of God, the golden plates, on which was engraved the Book of Mormon, and other works, had been buried for ages in the hill by a wandering tribe of the children of Israel, who had found their way to western New York, before the birth of [C]hristianity itself. . . .

In relation to the finding of the plates and the taking the engraving, a number of ridiculous stories are told.—Some unsanctified fellow looked out the other side of the hill. They had to follow it with humility and found it embedded beneath a beautiful grove of maples. Smith’s wife, who had a little of the curiosity of her sex, peeped into the large chest in which he kept the engravings taken from the golden plates, and straightway one half the new Bible vanished, and has not been recovered to this day.<sup>5</sup>

After such descriptions it is encouraging to read a more sympathetic commentary on the Hill Cumorah and its role in early church history. In 1835 Oliver Cowdery penned a series of lengthy letters titled “The Rise of the Church” that appeared in the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* and were later reprinted in *Times and Seasons* and in pamphlet form.<sup>6</sup> In Letters VII and VIII he describes his visit to Cumorah in 1830:

You are acquainted with the mail road from Palmyra, Wayne Co. to Canandaigua, Ontario Co. N.Y. and also, as you pass from the former to the latter place, before arriving at the little village of Manchester, say from three to four, or about four miles from Palmyra, you pass a large hill on the east side of the road. Why I say large, is, because it is as large perhaps, as any in that country. To a person acquainted with this road, a description would be unnecessary, as it is the largest and rises the highest of any on that route. The north end rises quite sudden until it assumes a level with the more southerly extremity, and I think I may say an elevation higher than at the south a short distance, say half or three fourths of a mile. As you pass toward Canandaigua it lessens gradually until the surface assumes its common level, or is broken by other smaller hills or ridges, water courses and ravines. I think I am justified in saying that this is the highest hill for some distance round. . . .

At about one mile west rises another ridge of less height, running parallel with the former,



Oliver Cowdery visited the Hill Cumorah in 1830 and later penned detailed descriptions of it. Courtesy of the Community of Christ.

leaving a beautiful vale between. The soil is of the first quality for the country, and under a state of cultivation, which gives a prospect at once imposing, when one reflects on the fact, that here, between these hills, the entire power and national strength of both the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

Oliver devotes the remainder of this letter to reviewing the final battles that he believed took place in that valley, a place where “once sunk to nought the pride and strength of two mighty nations” and where “lie commingled, in one mass of ruin, the ashes of thousands . . . blood mixed with blood, flesh with flesh, bones with bones, and dust with dust!”<sup>8</sup> He continues the narrative in his next letter:

The hill of which I have been speaking, at the time mentioned, presented a varied appearance: the north end rose suddenly from the plain, forming a promontory without timber, but

covered with grass. As you passed to the south you soon came to scattering timber, the surface having been cleared by art or by wind; and a short distance further left, you are surrounded with the common forest of the country. It is necessary to observe, that even the part cleared was only occupied for pasturage, its steep ascent and narrow summit not admitting the plow of the husbandman, with any degree of ease or profit. It was at the second mentioned place where the record was found to be deposited, on the west side of the hill, not far from the top down its side; and when myself visited the place in the year 1830, there were several trees standing; enough to cause a shade in summer, but not so much as to prevent the surface being covered with grass—which was also the case when the record was first found.<sup>9</sup>



At last the time came for Joseph Smith to retrieve the gold plates. *The Hours Before the Sunrise*, by Lois Kerr. Oil on canvas.

He describes with similar enthusiasm and sympathy the manner in which the plates were deposited and the events of their unearthing by Joseph Smith.

While Oliver admitted that he occasionally “indulged too freely in reflections”<sup>10</sup> and lost himself in poetic rhapsody, his writings hold but a faint candle to the extravagant prose of Orson Pratt. In 1866 Pratt expressed his feelings for this “hill of ancient Seers and Prophets” in an article in the *Millennial Star*.<sup>11</sup> Three excerpts capture well his passion for the sacred place:

And all the ancient plates, Mormon deposited in Cumorah, about three hundred and eighty-four years after Christ. When Moroni, about thirty-six years after, made the deposit of the book entrusted to him, he was, without doubt, inspired to select a department of the hill separate from the great sacred depository of the numerous volumes hid up by his father. The particular place in the hill, where Moroni secreted the book, was revealed, by the angel, to the Prophet Joseph Smith, to whom the volume was delivered in September, A.D. 1827. But the grand repository of all the numerous records of the ancient nations of the western continent, was located in another department of the hill, and its contents under the charge of holy angels, until the day should come for them to be transferred to the sacred temple of Zion.<sup>12</sup>

There is no spot on this wide world of ours, which is calculated to excite more vivid reflections, than the wonderful hill of Cumorah. There the history of one-half of our globe, reposed, for fourteen centuries, in profound unbroken silence: there, “the everlasting Gospel,” engraved, not on tablets of stone, but on plates of gold, awaited the voice of the heavenly angel to reveal the priceless treasure: there, buried in the holy archives of Cumorah’s sacred hill, are plates of brass, plates of gold, undimmed by time; sacredly guarded as the temple of heaven: there shines the Urim and Thummim, the stones of light, the gems of immortality: there, reposes in words of light, the hidden knowledge of ages past, the prophetic history of ages to come: there wisdom has selected her palace, and understanding her dwelling place, until “the spirit is poured out from on high,” and “the skies pour down righ-

teousness;" then, "the earth opens and brings forth salvation."<sup>13</sup>

All the wealth of ages is valueless, compared with the records of eternal wisdom, the inexhaustible fountain of understanding, hidden in the secret recesses of the wonderful—the beautiful—the lovely hill Cumorah! O, Cumorah! the hill of ancient Seers and Prophets! the hill of God! Sanctified by holy angels' feet! From thy bowels is heard a voice, low, sweet, mild, of heavenly tones! yet it thrills through every fibre of the heart! It speaks of man—of God—of earth—of heaven—of hell! It speaks of the past—of the future—of the destiny of nations—the reign of Messiah—the resurrection—the final judgment! O holy, lovely mount! the sacred resting place of Zion's law! In thy chambers dwell eternal riches! In thy lovely bosom are fountains that never dry! Speak! O speak again! Let Zion hear thy voice! for thy voice is not the voice of feeble helpless man! but the voice of the Eternal One, speaking from the ground.<sup>14</sup>

During the latter half of the 19th century, many Latter-day Saints traveled eastward to visit important church history sites. One such group consisted of Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black. They penned a series of letters that were published in the *Deseret News* in September and October 1888 and later republished in a pamphlet that was used by later travelers as a guidebook to the sites.<sup>15</sup> The elders felt a special reverence for the Hill Cumorah as they contemplated the great battles that they believed had taken place there many generations in the past, as well as the glorious events of the century in which they were living:

Sitting on this holy and historical ground the scene of some of the greatest events which have ever transpired in the history of men upon the earth—it is but natural that our minds should be deeply impressed, and that we should give way to unusual and solemn meditation; for it was here, more than twenty-four centuries ago, that the descendants of Jared and his brother fought their last exterminating battle. . . .

It was also in this land that Mormon in his old age and his son Moroni led their Nephite armies against their brethren the Lamanites—the last time—to that dreadful massacre that forever swept a once of God highly favored race



Aerial view of Hill Cumorah looking north. Photo by Craig Dimond. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

out of existence as a nation. . . . Moroni and a few others were the only ones who escaped with their lives from that terrible battle field. This took place more than fourteen hundred years ago, but looking over this hilly country to-day—the topographical or general character of which has perhaps not changed very much since that time—our imagination can easily conceive how the exile Moroni, the custodian of the records of his fathers, was hunted by the blood-thirsty Lamanites while writing the closing paragraphs of the Nephite history, and how he finally, no doubt in the shades of night, emerged from his hiding place, and deposited the sacred treasure in this hill, where it lay 1,407 years.

We pass over that long and dreary night and again conceive of Moroni as an angel of glory, still in charge of the same records, instructing the humble farmer's boy, and preparing his mind for a great and noble work, in which tens of thousands were to rejoice. Yonder stands the house still in which that ancient Prophet of God first called upon the youth, who afterwards became the translator of the Book of Mormon, and the next day showed him the plates on the very spot where we now stand. And fifty-nine years and six days ago to-day Joseph Smith received the records of the Nephites from the hands of Moroni. O, how sublime the thought!



What emotions fill our hearts when we think of it! We feel that we, indeed, stand on holy ground, and, as if by instinct, we silently renew our covenants that we will be faithful and true in keeping the commandments of God.<sup>16</sup>

Their physical description of the hill differs little from what had been given by previous visitors, but it does add a few details of how the hill's appearance had changed.

It rises abruptly from the more level country north of it to the height of about 150 feet. Climbing it from the north end, the highest point, on which stands the stump of a large tree, is soon reached; south of this the hill gradually recedes until it is lost in the level about one mile distant.

There is a number of other hills in this part of the country, and they all extend north and south like so many summits or ridges. A number of them are several miles long, but only a few hundred yards across from east to west. The hill Cumorah is no exception from this rule. Besides the north end its eastern and western slopes are quite steep, and the top consists of a narrow ridge somewhat rocky. Both sides of the north end of the hill have been plowed by the present owner clear to the top, and only a very few trees have been suffered to remain. About 200 yards south from the north end of the hill on the west side, however, is a beautiful beech grove containing, we should judge, about six acres of land; most of



The angel Moroni instructed Joseph Smith a fourth time and told him to tell his father of the vision and commandments he had received. *The Fourth Appearance of Moroni to Joseph Smith*, by Gary E. Smith. Oil on canvas.

the trees are small, but stand very close together. Into the shade of this little grove we retired in solemn prayer and rejoiced exceedingly in being permitted to be here.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time that these men were visiting Cumorah, George Q. Cannon was working on a biography of Joseph Smith, whom he had personally known and loved.<sup>18</sup> He reworked his tale into a shorter version for children in 1900. The information is essentially the same, but the children's adaptation has a delightful charm of its own, as evidenced by the telling of events that happened in

1823. President Cannon describes Joseph's night-long interview with Moroni, his resulting weakness when he tried to work with his father in the fields the next morning, and his fourth heavenly vision. He then tells his young readers how Joseph's father reacted to his son's tale and what happened to Joseph as the day went on:

The father was probably much surprised to hear of the angel's visits and of his message. He had little dreamed that at the surface of the high hill within his sight were hidden sacred objects of priceless value, that among them were writings which the wisest men could but imperfectly understand, and that his unlearned son should be the guardian of these and by the power of God was to bring forth a perfect translation of them. But the father knew his boy and believed him. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit rested upon him and he told Joseph that the vision was of God and that he should go and do as the angel had commanded him.

Joseph's strength returned somewhat and he set out for the hill to find the sacred record. The distance was only two and a half miles, so that the walk was not very long, but on the way he was sorely tempted to take the plates and use them for himself. The promptings of the Holy Spirit were still with him, however, and he overcame this evil thought.

On the west side of the hill, near the summit, he found the rounded top of a stone above the ground, and when he dug away the earth he saw that it was the cover of the box. This stone was somewhat in the shape of a shield with the outside upward, and when the earth covered the edges it looked like the top of an ordinary boulder. Joseph had seen this exact spot in his vision and did not doubt that he would find the plates below, but his heart beat fast when he put his lever under and began to pry up the cover. He raised it without great difficulty and worked it off, and then within his reach he beheld the hidden treasure of gold.

Perhaps this boy had never read of the wondrous caves of Aladdin and Ali Baba, or of the secret treasures of Monte Cristo Island, but every boy has dreams of treasure-trove and of becoming rich and powerful. Whether Joseph was dazzled by the rich prize before him and for the moment thought this was just a dream

come true, or whether he merely wished to examine these beautiful, strange things, we do not know, but he reached forth to draw them out. Immediately their guardian appeared and prevented him. The angel told him the time had not yet come for him to receive them. . . .

Moroni told Joseph that he had hidden up the records four centuries after the birth of Jesus, while he was living on the earth. He said that the Nephites, the people to whom he belonged, called the hill where they stood Cumorah, and that a still earlier people, the Jaredites, called it Ramah. This was a very important hill in the history of both these peoples.

Joseph learned many other things that were new to him, and how strange he must have felt when he realized that he was the only person on earth to know them! . . .

When the vision was ended Joseph replaced the stone, covered it as before and returned home. That night when he retired to bed, he thanked the Lord for what He had taught him, and prayed humbly that he might keep himself pure and faithful. During the last twenty-four hours he had been visited five times by an angel of light, he had seen a great golden book, the history of the peoples that had passed away, and with the book, the holy seerstone and the breastplate of gold. Besides all this his life-work had been shown him, and he now knew something of what he must suffer and what he must do.<sup>19</sup>

In the same year that this children's book was published (1900), Susa Young Gates made a short trip to the Palmyra area, including visits to the Whitmer and Smith farms and to the Hill Cumorah. She and Elder Claude Taylor, a friend who lived in a nearby city, took pleasure in hearing the kind words spoken by an elderly gentleman who had known the Whitmers, felt the stinging rebuff of the man who owned the farm that encompassed the Hill Cumorah, and enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the family that lived in the old Smith home. Their greatest thrill, however, came from their two short visits to the hill. She reported her experiences in an article in the *Young Woman's Journal* in January 1901.<sup>20</sup>

Gates describes the country as consisting of "undulating, rolling hills; none of them high, or very precipitous; but all covered either with grain



Susa Young Gates visited the Hill Cumorah in 1900 and published an account of the experience. Photo used by permission, Utah State Historical Society, all rights reserved.

fields or sightly forests of trees.” After learning that Cumorah was still some three or four miles away, and feeling that this “was too much of walk for a woman,” they hired a carriage to take them farther.<sup>21</sup>

They had read Oliver Cowdery’s description of the area, and as they “drove slowly over the excellent country road,” they wondered “where [their] own particular point of interest lay.”

We were watching for the highest hill in the neighborhood, but forgot we were approaching it from the south side.

“Where is the Hill?” we asked our driver.

“There it is,” he said, pointing to a low hill gradually rising at its summit to the northward. It was only one of many hills; not a series of foot hills tied or held together with slight elevations, but rising, most of them from the plain, in varied and graceful lines.

We looked eagerly about the country, and

fancy went out to the two terrible conflicts that took place in this neighborhood.

The sun was hanging low in the west, and we were anxious to reach a friendly shelter for the night.

Our driver stopped at a farm house on the western side of the Hill but we soon found there was no chance of lodgings there.

The drive around the north end of the Hill repaid us for coming; the mighty sentinel rises with a strength and majesty when you face him which impresses you with all the dignity and force of which an inanimate custodian is capable.

What a rush of emotions filled my heart!<sup>22</sup>

After an unpleasant visit with the farmer who owned the surrounding land, and as the day was drawing to a close, they walked over “rough plowed ground, covered with stubble,” to the hill.

The extreme northern part is not under cultivation, nor is the upper western slope, except for the grove of small trees and the wild grasses which cover the brown soil. But the whole of the eastern and southern sides is planted out to corn; and along the very summit, which is quite narrow—at the north stood great shocks of corn, looking like stacked guns in the red sunset.

When we reached the top, we turned and looked to the northward at the rich landscape spread out before us; hills, forests, farms, homes, and villages, gave delightful change to the prospect. . . .

In the east the great silver moon was just rising above a distant hill top; in the west, the red sun was dipping behind a forest-crowned hill.

We hurried down again, filled with the beauty of our surroundings.<sup>23</sup>

The next day, which was Sunday, they once more ascended to the top of the hill.

[A]fter locating, somewhat to our own satisfaction, the place where we thought the sacred box once rested, we walked on to the small grove of young timber.

Here we seated ourselves on a fallen log, took out our hymn book, and Book of Mormon, and held a quiet informal service, suited to the time and place.

What our thoughts and hopes were as we lingered on the sacred spot, where so much of the history of this continent had its center and focus, only those who have been there could understand and appreciate.

Once more we climbed to the northern summit, and filled eye and memory with the beautiful scene before us.

Then we returned by the quiet drive to Palmyra.<sup>24</sup>

Another church member who visited the Hill Cumorah about this same time was George E. Anderson. What set him apart from other travelers was his camera. He was a professional photographer whose dream was to compile a pictorial record of the rise of the church. In April 1907 he left Utah to begin a mission in England, taking several months on his way east to photograph dozens of important church history sites. Among the hundreds of photographs he made were several of the area in and around Palmyra, New York.

Although some of Anderson's images were published, they remained largely unknown to the general public.<sup>25</sup> Not until 1995 did they receive greater attention when 153 of them, along with a transcription of the diary he kept throughout most of his journey, were published as *Church History in Black and White: George Edward Anderson's Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites, 1907 Diary, 1907–8 Photographs*.<sup>26</sup>

Anderson's journal entry for 14 August 1907 mentions his visit to "Mormon Hill":

Rose before sunup, and by the time the rays lit up the landscape, I had my camera from the other side of the hill (where I left it last night) and ready to make pictures. Made several negatives from different points. . . .

One or two more negatives of the hill and visited the top and Mr. Clemon's boy took me to the place where it [is] said the plates were found—the "Gold Bible." Highest hill in this part. Commences to rise away south and is highest near the north end. Here it ends rather abruptly, and the descent on the northwest and east is quite steep and, being covered with grass, slippery. About a block from the north end, trees are found and form quite a grove farther south and a little below ridge. Very few trees near and around the north end. See photos. Years ago, I

am told by Mr. Elton, photographer, the hill had considerable timber on, and for many years a long, scraggly tree stood near the top. Oaks are being cut near the north and west side.<sup>27</sup>

In February 1928 the church purchased the Hill Cumorah along with much of the neighboring acreage, and in the following general conference President Anthony W. Ivins, first counselor in the church's First Presidency, delivered a sermon about this event that he described as being "of more than ordinary importance to the membership of the church." He stated:

The memories of the remote past which cluster round this sacred spot, its close association with the opening of the present gospel dispensation, which has resulted in bringing together this congregation of people, for without it this tabernacle would not have been erected, nor would we have been gathered here in worship today, and the thought which we entertain of the possibilities which its bosom may unfold, make the acquisition of this hill almost an epochal accomplishment in the history of the Church.<sup>28</sup>

President Ivins reviewed the manner in which the sacred records were handed down through time until they were deposited in Cumorah and noted that they "still lie in their repository, awaiting the time when the Lord shall see fit to bring them forth, that they may be published to the world":

Whether they have been removed from the spot where Mormon deposited them we cannot tell, but this we know, that they are safe under the guardianship of the Lord, and that they will be brought forth at the proper time, as the Lord has declared they should be, for the benefit and blessing of the people of the world, for his word never fails. . . .

These people [from the Book of Mormon] were human, as we are; they carried with them their most precious possessions until the last, and when the end of the mighty struggle came and the result was in doubt, they hid them away in order that they might not fall into the hands of their enemies.

Without doubt, these treasures lie concealed today, some of them, at least, to be brought forth in the not-distant future. How soon this will be we do not know, but this is certain, we

are more than a century nearer that time than we were at the time when Joseph Smith took from their resting place, in the hill Cumorah, the plates from which he translated the contents of the Book of Mormon.

All of these incidents to which I have referred, my brethren and sisters, are very closely associated with this particular spot in the state of New York. Therefore I feel, as I said in the beginning of my remarks, that the acquisition of that spot of ground is more than an incident in the history of the Church; it is an epoch—an epoch which in my opinion is fraught with that which may become of greater interest to the Latter-day Saints than that which has already occurred.<sup>29</sup>

The next two publications I will describe are different from any of the preceding ones and at the same time are opposite in approach from each other. The first is a historical account with a captivating lyrical quality, while the second is a work of fiction that reads as if it were fact. What unites them is their reverence for Cumorah.

In his 1936 book *Listen for a Lonesome Drum: A York State Chronicle*, Carl Carmer tries to interpret the land of upstate New York, “a country that engages the spirit, summoning strange images.” He writes of “miraculous voices and the beat of the invisible drum” that are part of a mystical quality forming a background for “the spiritual exaltations that have come to dwellers in this country.”<sup>30</sup>

In a chapter devoted to “The Magic Hill,” Carmer summarizes, with only a hint of disparagement, the story of Joseph Smith, including his first vision, his visits with Moroni, and his translation of the Book of Mormon. The tale is set “in the country around the quiet town of Palmyra [where] many drumlins rise steeply to their rounded tops. Like formal cones in a cubist drawing they give the land a curiously geometric appearance, at the same time artificial and mysterious.”<sup>31</sup> He then describes the early summer day when he visited the hill and spoke with a missionary. The chapter closes with an account of the “pitilessly hot” day two weeks later when he returned to watch the dedication of the Angel Moroni Monument:

As I sat down four white-clad figures appeared at the foot of the towering canvas far above us. They raised long gleaming trumpets and stood silent for a moment in sharp relief

against the blue sky. Then they began to play.

When they had finished a bearded, largely proportioned man who had somehow the look of a prophet stood up on the platform before us. In a deep resonant voice he announced a hymn and as the audience sang it I saw that beside him stood other big men of strong features and dignified bearing. I thought—these people have come back here to a country I have known a long time, in whose little towns I played ball games when I was a boy, a country I have always taken as a matter of course, an ordinary, folksy section. I thought of Mecca and Bethlehem and I suddenly realized that the minds and emotions of a million people over the world were turned at this moment to this hillside just out of Palmyra in [New] York State. . . .

After the last chord crashed out there was a hush and suddenly the canvas fluttered down and flattened out on the ground, and high in the air above us stood a gleaming bronze Moroni clasping a book to his breast with his left hand and pointing heavenward with his right.

Then the big bearded man who had announced the hymn stepped forward and spoke: “We stand on holy ground,” he said.<sup>32</sup>

E. Cecil McGavin, in his 1940 book *Cumorah’s “Gold Bible,”* offers a treatment that is “purely fictitious, except as historical and factual information is introduced.”<sup>33</sup> He creates a week in July 1939 when all the missionaries in the Eastern States Mission gathered in Palmyra for extensive study of the Book of Mormon. He presents lengthy “quotations” from the guide at the bureau of information and the mission president, in which it is impossible to know where fact and fiction separate. Extracts from actual early-19th-century books mingle with tidbits from “the ‘scrapbook’ of Brother Willard Bean” and “facts” that are given no attribution at all.<sup>34</sup> While McGavin’s goal is to prove that Cumorah was “the heart of an ancient battlefield” as “verified by scientists,” the lasting impression is more of uncertainty than of confidence. He puts the following words in the mouth of the fictitious mission president:

This sacred hill . . . became the repository of the record about the people who perished in this region. Enough people here believed that report that they spent much time digging into this the king of the drumlins in search of gold

plates. Many small groups sought for treasure in this place after the Book of Mormon had been published. A large engineering company from Rochester was employed to dig deep trenches and bore long tunnels into this graceful hill in an effort to find plates of metal such as Joseph Smith said he found.

My father visited this place in 1880 and found the surface of the hill scarred with deep ditches, holes and tunnels. The tall grass concealed the smaller holes. He fell into one and nearly broke his leg as he was climbing toward the top of this hill. Many years passed before all the marks of treasure-seeking had been obliterated.<sup>35</sup>


After the end of the Second World War, scholarly interest in the Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints increased, and several excellent studies were published over the ensuing decades. As older reports were reviewed and forgotten documents brought to light, increasingly accurate and detailed accounts were written. Examples of those that focus at least in part on the events that took place on and around the Hill Cumorah include the following. Each provides excellent scholarship and thorough documentation of sources.

- Larry C. Porter. "A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania." PhD dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1971. Reprint, Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, Brigham Young University, 2000. See pages 24–25 (reprint pagination).
- Richard L. Bushman. *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984. See pages 63–64, 80–84.
- H. Donl Peterson. "Moroni: Joseph Smith's Teacher." In *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, edited by Larry

C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Easton Black, 49–70. Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1992. See especially pages 53–54.

- Rex C. Reeve Jr. and Richard O. Cowan. "The Hill Called Cumorah." In *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, edited by Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Easton Black, 71–91. Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1992. See especially pages 71–74.

As the restored gospel shines ever brighter and more broadly in the modern world, the Hill Cumorah and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon receive increasing attention. I will conclude with references to three recent works that are somewhat less scholarly than those just mentioned but that offer fine summaries of the facts and stories relating to the Hill Cumorah.<sup>36</sup>

- Richard H. Jackson. "Hill Cumorah." In *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, edited by S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard H. Jackson, 8–9. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Richard Neitzel Holzapfel. "Historical Sites: 'Golden Bible Hill.'" *Mormon Heritage Magazine* 2/2 (July/August 1995): 44–46. He offers another of George Anderson's photographs of the hill as well as excerpts from several of the accounts already mentioned here.
- Paul E. Gilbert and Douglas L. Powell. *Near Cumorah's Hill: Images of the Restoration*. American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2000. See especially chapter 4, "Cumorah's Hill," pages 38–49. The text, which nicely weaves information from many of the sources cited in this essay, is accompanied by beautiful color photographs of the hill. 

3. Rebecca Bean, fireside address, Salt Lake City, 5 February 1966 (transcript of audiotape in author's possession), 2. There is a lingering question of exactly which General Authority was visiting the stake conference in Richfield. Newspapers, stake records, and other sources name President Joseph F. Smith or apostle George Albert Smith, but a few of those sources identify them both. These men had been instrumental in acquiring Latter-day Saint church history sites, were cousins, and were involved in arranging for Bean to be sent on his special mission to New York, any of which could have caused the confusion.
4. Vicki Bean Topliff, *Willard Bean, The Fighting Parson: The Rebirth of Mormonism in Palmyra* (Orem, UT: n.p., 1981), 62.
5. Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, August 1971), 358.
6. Willard W. Bean was the middle-weight boxing champion of the United States. His skills earned him the title "The Fighting Parson," given to him while in New York. In the ring he was called "Kid Bean." Willard's stature as a champion was established before such national boxing honors were bestowed and was assumed by virtue of his beating the former champion in St. Louis, Missouri, soon after the turn of the century. Karen Hoag, "Provo Woman Born and Raised in Joseph Smith's Home," *Daily Herald* (Provo, UT), 10 May 1999, sec. C-1. Information also obtained through a telephone interview with Palmyra Bean Packer, 28 June 1999. See Vicki Bean Zimmerman, "Willard Bean: Palmyra's Fighting Parson," *Ensign*, June 1985, 26–29.
7. Willard W. Bean, "Epitome of Activities in Palmyra, N.Y." (unpublished document in the author's possession). A similar reminiscence by Bean titled "An Epitome of Our Activities in Cumorah Land" reads, "I was told, while in the office of [the] First Presidency, that Palmyra was possibly the most prejudiced spot in the world" (unpublished document in author's possession), 1. Subsequent references will be to the latter document, with its title shortened to "Activities in Cumorah Land" to distinguish it from a third reminiscence of Bean's titled "Cumorah Land."
8. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 1.
9. Milton V. Backman, "Early Moves of the Smith Family, Vermont and New Hampshire" (curriculum packet prepared for a Church History 341 [1805–1844] course at Brigham Young University), 3.
10. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 1. See John 4:44.
11. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 1.
12. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 1.
13. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:47.
14. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:47.
15. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:47.
16. Rebecca Bean fireside, 3.
17. Rebecca Bean, "Brief History of Willard Bean" (unpublished manuscript in author's possession), 3.
18. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 62.
19. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 68–69.
20. Bean, *Autobiography*, 1:336.
21. Palmyra Bean Packer, "Living with History," *Daily Herald* (Provo, UT), 10 May 1999, sec. C-1.
22. Rebecca had numerous experiences that seem to have strengthened her and prepared her for the antagonism that she and her family experienced. Several of these experiences appear in a paper by Boone, "Palmyra Revisited," 125–53.
23. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 73.
24. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 73.
25. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 73.
26. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 7.
27. Rand H. Packer, "History of Four Mormon Landmarks in Western New York: The Joseph Smith Farm, Hill Cumorah, The Martin Harris Farm, and the Peter Whitmer, Sr. Farm" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 56.
28. Packer, "Four Mormon Landmarks," 57.
29. Packer, "Four Mormon Landmarks," 58.
30. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 8.
31. George Albert Smith to Willard Bean, 23 January 1922; quoted in Glen R. Stubbs, "A Biography of George Albert Smith: 1870 to 1951" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 252.
32. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 8.
33. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 8.
34. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 8.
35. Interment record from the Palmyra Cemetery, Village of Palmyra.
36. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 9.
37. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 9.
38. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 10.
39. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 10.
40. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 10.
41. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 10.
42. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, 6 April 1928, 8.
43. An interesting perspective provided by Willard's son Alvin was that despite public statements that the Prophet Joseph's claims about treasures, plates, or angels relative to his reception of the gold plates were untrue and made up, on many nights one could see lights on the hill because people were digging there, trying to find a treasure that they were certain, at least publicly, did not exist. Alvin P. Bean, fireside address, Huntington Beach, California, 5 November 1978 (transcript in author's possession), 8–9.
44. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:36.
45. Virginius Bean, known by family members as Virg, moved to upstate New York with his family from Las Vegas and became a major contributor to the beautification process as well as to the growing Latter-day Saint congregation. He remained in the Cumorah area for more than four years.
46. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:36.
47. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:36.
48. Bean, *Autobiography*, 2:37.
49. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Religious Prejudice Allayed by Friendly Utah Mormon," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 5 June 1949, sec. 10-C.
50. Hinckley, "Religious Prejudice Allayed."
51. Willard Bean, untitled manuscript, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Church Archives), MS 5617.
52. Bean, "Activities in Cumorah Land," 13.
53. While living in New York, the Bean family was instrumental in helping a number of people join the church. In addition to Harold Jay Stoner (baptized in 1928 at the Joseph Smith Sr. farm), Charles and Maude Collins were converted about 1921. The Collinses were very close to the Bean family and were referred to by the Bean children as Uncle Charles and Aunt Maude. William E. and Sarah Morgan and two of their children were likewise converted about 1923. Their daughter, Genevieve, was scheduled to be baptized at the same time as her family, but she became frightened at the prospect of being immersed in water and ran and hid until the service was over. Two years later she overcame her fear and joined the church through baptism by immersion.
54. Alvin Pliny Bean, "A Modern Mecca," English composition for a class at Utah State University, October 1937 (copy in the author's possession), 2.
55. A biographical file on Willard W. Bean in the Church Archives indicates 1 April 1939 as the release date and further states that the Beans were "Transferred to Temple Square Mission, April 1939." Transcript in the author's possession.
56. Telephone interview with Glenn J. Ellis, 14 June 1999.
57. Willard's granddaughter Vicki Bean Topliff suggests that Willard and Rebecca knew of their impending release but were trying to keep it a secret. See Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 96.
58. Glenn J. Ellis, "Palmyra Revisited" (unpublished reminiscence in the author's possession), 5.
59. Despite the fact that Willard received only minimal formal education as a child, in later life he was not given to incorrect English usage. In this instance he was merely attempting a cute play on words.
60. Rebecca Bean fireside, 4.
61. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 61–62.
62. Topliff, *The Fighting Parson*, 96.
63. Bean, "Brief History," 3.
64. Bean, "Brief History," 5.
65. Rebecca Bean, "Fireside Talk Given by Rebecca Rosetta Peterson Bean" (typescript of a fireside address given in Salt Lake City, fall 1964; copy in the author's possession), 12.
66. Bean, "Brief History," 2.

**Encounters with Cumorah: A Selective, Personal Bibliography**  
Martin H. Raish

1. For example, Donna Hill, in *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), provides a careful account of the events but focuses on the plates and says very little about Cumorah; see pp. 58, 69, 70–71. In a different vein, Fawn Brodie, in *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (Knopf, 1945; 2nd ed., New York: Vintage, 1995), does not even use the word *Cumorah* when describing the recovery of the Book of Mormon, instead saying only that a rumor was spread through Palmyra that Joseph had "unearthed an extraordinary treasure from the big hill on the turnpike just outside Manchester" (p. 37). She uses *Cumorah* in its modern setting only once (and inside quotation marks) when reporting Heber C. Kimball's description of the cave (p. 41).
2. As the subtitle indicates, this bibliography is both selective and personal. Additional accounts,

- longer quotations, and more comprehensive citations to the many reprints of the early documents could have been included, but space constraints did not allow it. I chose many of the accounts not only because they will interest readers of this journal but also because they have become meaningful and memorable to me, since I visited the Hill Cumorah many times during the decade that my family and I lived in upstate New York.
3. James Gordon Bennett, "Mormonism—Religious Fanaticism—Church and State Party," *New York Morning Courier and Enquirer*, 31 August and 1 September 1831. His original article was reprinted, summarized, paraphrased, or embellished by many newspapers. A partial list includes the following: *Vermont Gazette*, 13 September 1831 (adapted and paraphrased); *Cleveland (OH) Herald*, 15 September 1831 (reprinted); *Boston Christian Register*, 24 September 1831 (reprinted); *St. Johnsbury (OH) Farmer's Herald*, 23 October 1831 (paraphrased, with additional material from other sources) and 18 January 1832 (reprinted, with corrections); and *New York Churchman*, 4 February 1832 (paraphrased, with corrections). It also appeared in the *Salem (MA) Gazette* in late 1831 or early 1832 and the *Philadelphia U.S. Gazette* in January 1832. I have not been able to track down all the precise dates.
 

A modern reprint can be found in Leonard J. Arrington, "James Gordon Bennett's 1831 Report on 'The Mormonites,'" *BYU Studies* 10/3 (Spring 1970): 353–64. Arrington also provides additional glimpses from entries in Bennett's diary. For 7 August 1831, Bennett noted "the Golden Bible Hill where there is a hole 30 or forty feet deep into the side—6 feet diameter—dug among and the chest fled his approach." He also added to his description that the hill had "several fine orchards on the east—and fine farms on the west."
  4. Arrington, "Bennett's 1831 Report," 359.
  5. Arrington, "Bennett's 1831 Report," 360; see 360–63.
  6. Letter VII appeared in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1/10 (July 1835): 155–59 and *Times and Seasons* 2/12 (15 April 1841): 377–80. Letter VIII appeared in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2/11 (October 1835): 195–202 and *Times and Seasons* 2/13 (1 May 1841): 391–97. These letters, or lengthy portions of them, were reprinted in several other publications as well, including the early church magazine *The Gospel Reflector* and even some non-LDS newspapers. Extracts appeared in a pamphlet by Orson Pratt titled *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh: 1840), beginning on page 8.
 

All the letters were reprinted in Liverpool in 1844 in a pamphlet titled *Letters by Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps on the Origin of the Book of Mormon and the Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Cowdery's description of the Hill Cumorah begins on page 34. The pamphlet is available in digital form via the catalog of Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee Library in Provo, as are most of the other printings.
  7. Cowdery, "Rise of the Church," Letter VII, 158.
  8. Cowdery, "Rise of the Church," Letter VII, 159.
  9. Cowdery, "Rise of the Church," Letter VIII, 195–96.
  10. Cowdery, "Rise of the Church," Letter VIII, 197.
  11. Orson Pratt, "The Hill Cumorah; or the Sacred Depository of Wisdom and Understanding," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 28/27 (7 July 1866): 417–19.
  12. Pratt, "Hill Cumorah," 417.
  13. Pratt, "Hill Cumorah," 418.
  14. Pratt, "Hill Cumorah," 419.
  15. Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, *Infancy of the Church: An Elaborate and Detailed Description of Persons, Places and Incidents connected with the Early Rise and Progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1889).
  16. Jenson and Stevenson, *Infancy of the Church*, 36–37.
  17. Jenson and Stevenson, *Infancy of the Church*, 39.
  18. George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888). A second edition was published by the *Deseret News* in 1907, with reprintings in 1958, 1964, 1972, and 1986 by *Deseret Book Company*.
  19. George Q. Cannon, *The Latter-Day Prophet: History of Joseph Smith Written for Young People* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1900). This book was reprinted as *A History of the Prophet Joseph Smith for Young People* (Salt Lake City: *Deseret Book*, 1957), with different pagination. The quoted passages are from chapter 4, pages 20–23 in the 1900 edition and pages 21–24 in the 1957 edition.
  20. Susa Gates Young, "A Visit to the Hill Cumorah," *Young Woman's Journal* 12 (January 1901): 18–26. The article includes a C. R. Savage photograph of the hill showing it almost totally cleared of trees.
  21. Young, "Visit to the Hill Cumorah," 20.
  22. Young, "Visit to the Hill Cumorah," 21–22.
  23. Young, "Visit to the Hill Cumorah," 22–23.
  24. Young, "Visit to the Hill Cumorah," 26.
  25. About 40 photographs, including one of the Hill Cumorah, appeared in *Birth of Mormonism in Picture: Scenes and Incidents in Early Church History* (Salt Lake City: *Deseret Sunday School Union*, 1909), with narrative and notes by John Henry Evans. The caption for the photograph of the hill on page 36 reads, "This is the Hill Cumorah, called 'Mormon Hill' by those who live in the neighborhood. The photograph shown in the cut is without doubt the best ever taken of this historic spot. It shows the road which Joseph must have traveled many times on his visits to the hill. The plates of the Book of Mormon [sic], deposited in a stone box under a stone of considerable size, were found on the west side not far from the top."
  26. Richard Neitzel Holzappel, T. Jeffrey Cottle, and Ted D. Stoddard, *Church History in Black and White: George Edward Anderson's Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites, 1907 Diary, 1907–8 Photographs* (Provo, UT: *Religious Studies Center*, Brigham Young University, 1995).
  27. Quoted in Holzappel, Cottle, and Stoddard, *Church History in Black and White*, 167. Three views of the hill from the north, showing it almost devoid of trees, plus one taken from its summit, are reproduced in the book.
  28. President Ivins's address was reprinted in *Improvement Era*, June 1928, 674–81. The quotation is on page 675. This publication includes a photograph of the Hill Cumorah taken in 1920.
  29. Ivins, "Hill Cumorah," 680–81.
  30. Carl Carmer, *Listen for a Lonesome Drum: A York State Chronicle* (New York: Farrar & Reinhard, 1936), xv, xvii. This book was reprinted, with illustrations by a different artist and with different pagination, by William Sloane Associates in 1950.
  31. Carmer, *Lonesome Drum*, 176.
  32. Carmer, *Lonesome Drum*, 186–87.
  33. E. Cecil McGavin, *Cumorah's "Gold Bible"* (Salt Lake City: *Deseret News Press*, 1940), iii.
  34. McGavin offers a brief bibliography that does not include any works by the "prominent students of the subject" from which his "facts" apparently derive. It is impossible to know if his extracts are accurately quoted or even if they derive from authentic sources.
  35. McGavin, *Cumorah's "Gold Bible"*, 48–49.
  36. I am certain that other noteworthy items could be added to this bibliography and welcome suggestions from readers. I can be reached via the FARMS office.

#### Cumorah's Cave Cameron J. Packer

1. The 10 cave accounts presented in this paper are found in William Horne Dame, *Journal of the Southern Exploring Company, 1854–1858, Iron County, UT*, 14 January 1855, Della Edwards Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah; Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 4:105; Brigham Young, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 5 May 1867, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter Church Archives); Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Wilford Woodruff*, 11 December 1869, 6:508–9; Elizabeth Kane, *A Gentle Account of Life in Utah's Dixie, 1872–73: Elizabeth Kane's St. George Journal* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Tanner Trust Fund, 1995), 75–76; Jesse Nathaniel Smith, *The Journal of Jesse Nathaniel Smith: Six Decades in the Early West; Diaries and Papers of a Mormon Pioneer, 1834–1906*, ed. Oliver R. Smith (Provo, UT: Jesse N. Smith Family Association, 1970), 217, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University (hereafter BYU Special Collections); Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:37–39; Edward Stevenson, *Reminiscences of Joseph, the Prophet, and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Edward Stevenson, 1893), 14–15, BYU Special Collections; David Whitmer, found in P. Wilhelm Poulson, "Interview with David Whitmer," *Deseret Evening News*, 16 August 1878, 2; Orson Pratt, "Cumorah," *The Contributor* 3/12 (September 1882): 357. Orson Pratt often referred to the cave in Cumorah but not with specific reference to Joseph Smith and others entering to return the plates. One of Pratt's accounts is cited in this article. Several of the other references to the cave that are not included in this article are found in *Journal of*