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Dean C. Jessee

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The Writing of Joseph Smith's History

DEAN C. JESSEE*

On April 6, 1830, the day the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, Joseph Smith conveyed a revelation to the Church which began, "behold there shall be a record kept among you. . . ." From that time Joseph Smith and his associates regarded record keeping as a "duty imperative."1

That this 1830 revelation motivated Joseph Smith's history-writing and record-keeping efforts is evident from the amount and nature of the records he created after that date. The writing of his history was a subject of intense concern during the remaining years of his life. In June 1840 he memorialized the High Council in Nauvoo to "relieve him from the anxiety and trouble necessarily attendant on business transactions," and urged them to appropriate sufficient means "for a clerk or clerks . . . to aid him in his important work."2 In 1843 when his scribes Willard Richards and William W. Phelps reported that noise from a nearby school class distracted them "in the progress of writing the history," Joseph immediately ordered Mr. Cole, the caretaker of the school, to "look out for another place as the history must continue and not be disturbed." The Prophet added: "There are but few subjects that I have felt

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1The revelation is published in the Doctrine and Covenants 21:1. Franklin D. Richards, in answer to a question of Hubert H. Bancroft, how the Mormons came to have an Historian's and Recorder's Office when other people generally neglected such things, replied that the precedent was set in the 1830 revelation and from that time record-keeping became a "duty imperative." Franklin D. Richards, "Bibliography of Utah," (Church Historian's Office), July 1880, pp. 3-4.

2Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, 1948), Vol. 4, pp. 136-137. (Cited hereafter as DHC.)
a greater anxiety about than my history which has been a very difficult task."³ On another occasion he told William Phelps that "the history must go ahead before anything else."⁴ The records created as a result of this concern for history constitute the prime sources for the life of Joseph Smith and for early Mormon history.

Since figures of the past are observed mainly through documents, the accuracy of the view is highly dependent upon the integrity of the sources. In determining the authenticity of early Mormon sources pertaining to Joseph Smith, the student is faced with two problems: (1) the identity of the scribes who wrote the source material, and (2) the method of compiling the history. The second of these is dependent for its solution upon the first.

Joseph Smith did little of the actual writing of his history. According to his journal, he seldom used the pen himself, dictating all of his communications to a scribe.⁵ Shortly before his death he wrote: "For the last three years I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said."⁶

The number of scribes engaged in writing for Joseph Smith during the final fourteen years of his life reflect his continued concern for his history. A list of these men, the identification of their handwriting, and a brief summary of their clerical service establishes their writing tenure and lays the groundwork for understanding the nature of early Mormon source material. Furthermore, it permits a reconstruction of the method of compilation of Joseph Smith's History of the Church.

OLIVER COWDERY (1806-1850)
Scribe: 1829-1838

Oliver Cowdery began writing for Joseph Smith on April 5, 1829, and was the chief scribe of the Book of Mormon manu-

³Ibid., 6, p. 66.
⁴Ibid., 5, p. 394.
⁵Ibid., 4, p. 1. "Wednesday July 3rd [1839] . . . Afternoon dictating History— Thursday & Friday (assisted by Br Newel Knight) dictating History . . . ." The Joseph Smith Diary that records this entry was written by James Mulholland.
⁶Ibid., 6, p. 409.
### THE COMPILATION OF JOSEPH SMITH'S "HISTORY OF THE CHURCH"

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script. He served as Church Recorder from April 1830 to March 1831 and again from September 1835 to 1837. He wrote a history of the Church covering the period from "the time of the finding of the plates up to June 12th, 1831." In June 1831 he was appointed to "select and write" books for the Church schools; and on May 1, 1832, he, along with W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer, was called to "review and prepare" revelations to be printed in the Book of Commandments. When John Whitmer was appointed to write the Church history in November 1831, Oliver was assigned to give him "counsel and assistance." Following the purchase of Egyptian mummies by the Church at Kirtland in July 1835, Oliver assisted Joseph Smith in the "translation of some of the hieroglyphics" and later, the Egyptian alphabet. At Far West, Missouri, on December 6, 1837, he was appointed recording clerk, standing clerk of the Council, and recorder of patriarchal blessings. Cowdery's service as a scribe had ended by April 12, 1838, when he was "considered no longer a member of the Church," at a trial in Missouri. His handwriting appears extensively in the Book of Mormon manuscript, Joseph Smith diaries, the 1832-1835 Letter book, and patriarchal records.

JOHN WHITMER (1802-1878)
Scribe: 1829-1838

John Whitmer was baptized in June 1829. He assisted Joseph Smith with the translation of the Book of Mormon, and in arranging and copying Church revelations in July 1830. In June 1831, he replaced Oliver Cowdery as Church Recorder, a job that he accepted with reluctance:

I was appointed by the voice of the Elders to keep the Church record. Joseph Smith Jr. said unto me You must also keep the Church history. I would rather not do it but observed that the will of the Lord be done, and if he desires it, I desire that he would manifest it through Joseph the Seer. And thus came the word of the Lord: 'Behold it is expedient in me that my servant John Whitmer should write and keep a regular

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2Doctrine and Covenants 69:2-4. (Cited hereafter as D&C.)
4Ibid., 2, p. 527.
5Ibid., 3, p. 17.
6Ibid., 1, p. 104.
history, and assist you my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you, . . . And again, . . . it shall be appointed unto him to keep the church record and history continually, for Oliver Cowdery I have appointed unto another office.'13

In July 1832, Joseph Smith exhorted Whitmer "to remember the commandment to keep a history of the church & the gathering and be sure to shew himself approved whereunto he hath been called."14 His efforts were officially discontinued at a Church trial in Far West, Missouri on March 10, 1838, when he was excommunicated from the Church. One of the charges made against him was "withholding the records of the Church . . . when called for by the clerk."15 His history has since been recovered and published.16 Although not extensive, Whitmer's other writing is found in copies of revelations and Joseph Smith's correspondence.

SIDNEY RIGDON (1793-1876)
Scribe: 1830-1838

Sidney Rigdon joined the Church on November 14, 1830. He met Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York in December 1830, and later that month was called to "write for him; and the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect."17 In October 1831, when Joseph Smith renewed work on his revision of the scriptures, he was assisted by Sidney, who had moved to Hiram, "to act in his office as scribe to me."18 On September 24, 1834, Rigdon was appointed one of a committee "to arrange the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ."19 At Kirtland he served as trustee and conductor of the "Kirtland School," where penmanship, arithmetic, and English grammar were taught. In 1838 he taught grammar to the Church Presidency and assisted Joseph

13John Whitmer, "Book of John Whitmer," p. 25. See also D&C 47:1, 3.
14Letter of Joseph Smith to Hyrum Smith, July 31, 1832 (Church Historian's Office. Cited hereafter as CHO).
17D&C 35:20.
19Ibid., 2, p. 165.
Smith in compiling the history that was begun on April 27 of that year.\textsuperscript{20} After the Church left Missouri there is no evidence that Sidney Rigdon continued as a scribe to the Prophet.

**FREDERICK GRANGER WILLIAMS (1787-1842)**

Scribe: 1832-1839

Frederick G. Williams was converted to Mormonism in October 1830. He first met Joseph Smith in Missouri in August 1831. His tenure as scribe began on July 20, 1832, "from which time up to the commencement of the Hebrew school in Kirtland I was constantly in said Smith's employ."\textsuperscript{21} In addition to writing he served as counselor in the Presidency of the Church beginning in 1833. That same year he established a printing firm in Kirtland. He assisted in gathering and arranging the revelations of the Church in 1834; and a year later he became the editor of the *Northern Times*. Williams was excommunicated from the Church in March 1839; he returned in April 1840, and died at Quincy, Illinois on October 10, 1842. His clerical service apparently ended at the time of his excommunication.\textsuperscript{22} Williams' handwriting appears in Joseph Smith's 1832 history, diary, 1832-1835 Letterbook, and numerous revelations.

**ORSON HYDE (1805-1878)**

Scribe: 1833-1836

Orson Hyde joined the Church in October 1831. His clerical activity dates between June 6, 1833, when he was appointed clerk to the Presidency, and January 21, 1836, when he was replaced by Warren Parrish.\textsuperscript{23} His handwriting in manuscript copies of revelations, and the Kirtland High Council record attest to his clerical efforts.

\textsuperscript{20}George W. Robinson, "Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith...", p. 34 (CHO).

\textsuperscript{21}Frederick G. Williams, undated manuscript, F.G. Williams Papers (CHO). A revelation of March 8, 1933, refers to Williams as "counselor and scribe" to Joseph Smith. D&C 90:19.

\textsuperscript{22}Joseph Smith referred to Williams as a man "in whom I place the greatest confidence and trust." Joseph Smith, "Diary," 1832-1834, Nov. 19, 1833. This esteem was shown in the naming of Joseph's second son—Frederick G.

Two pages of Willard Richards' Diary showing his method of recording his writing progress in the manuscript of Joseph Smith's History. These pages indicate that between July 29 and August 13, 1843, Richards wrote pp. 489 to 526 of the manuscript. His reference on August 7 to a "new plan on the history," refers to the commencement on that date of a slight change in the format of the History, which continues from p. 509 of the manuscript, wherein dates and brief summary notations from the text were written in the margin of each page as a finding aid.
WILLIAM WINES PHELPS (1792-1872)

Scribe: 1831-1844

William W. Phelps arrived in Kirtland, Ohio in June 1831 where he was employed in the "work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools" in the Church with Oliver Cowdery. A month later he was called "as a printer unto the Church," to establish a printing press in Jackson County, Missouri, where he became editor of the *Evening and Morning Star* in June 1832. A specific date for the beginning of his clerical activity is not known, but he assisted in writing early revelations. He also wrote for Joseph during the study of the Egyptian records. In May 1832 he was appointed with Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer to prepare revelations for publication, and in 1835, assisted the committee in compiling the Doctrine and Covenants. Phelps was excommunicated from the Church in March 1839, but returned again in 1841, having "trembled at the gulf I have passed." In 1843 he was assisting Willard Richards on Joseph Smith's History. His clerical efforts are evident in early manuscript revelations, the Egyptian alphabet, a manuscript of the Book of Abraham, patriarchal records, and the 1839 Joseph Smith History.

WARREN PARRISH

Scribe: 1835-1837

Warren Parrish was appointed scribe to Joseph Smith on October 29, 1835, "at $15.00 per month," and began writing in the Prophet's 1835-36 History. Parrish's calling was announced in a revelation on November 14, 1835:

... he shall see much of my ancient records, and shall know of hidden things, and shall be endowed with a knowledge of

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31 Joseph Smith recorded on October 29, 1835: "...went to Dr. Williams' after my large journal... returned home, and my scribe commenced writing in my journal a history of my life; concluded President Cowdery's second letter to W.W. Phelps, which President Williams had begun." *DHC*, Vol. 2, p. 293. The "large" diary referred to here is the book that was later re-labeled as "A-1" which became the first Volume of Joseph's History of the Church.
apparition of the world, more honored born upon him, his
words were abundantly supplied, and men anticipated
she, was respected by the entire community;
and his name was a tower of strength. His counsel was
sought for, respected and listened. But it
should unite with the chieftain of Christ. His poverty
of misfortune and position would vanish, his family
abandoned upon him for support must necessarily
share his humbleness and poverty. She was aware
that his character and his reputation must suffer in
the estimation of the community.

Among all these things, there must have
been feelings of much regret to him at that particular crisis, but yet they did not let
him from the path of duty. He had formerly made
a sacrifice for truth and conscientious act and had
been treated; consecutively to fell great affliction
in the Lord, believing that if he pursued the path
of duty No. 506 of his great service held from
them.

Although he fell great confidence in the Lord,
as he fell to a time of some magnitude, when he desired
his determination to his beloved companion who was
before this in his poverty and who had always
struggled through it without measuring its price.

He informed her what the consequences would
undoubtedly be respecting their mildly circumstant,
if they obeyed the gospel and if the Lord had told her, "My child,
if you have ever followed me into poverty, and you again
willing to do the same," she answered, "I hear many
the matter, I have contended that the accomplishment,
in which we may be placed, is hard energy,
and I am perfectly satisfied to follow you;
yes, it is my desire to be the will of God come what
or come death. Accordingly they were both baptized into
the church of Jesus Christ, and together with those who had been
previously admitted to baptism, made a little branch on the
other

Joseph Smith's History of the Church, Vol. A-1, p. 75 showing the end of
Robert B. Thompson's handwriting and the beginning of William W. Phelps'
hidden languages; and if he desire and shall seek it at my hands, he shall be privileged with writing much of my word, as a scribe unto me for the benefit of my people; therefore this shall be his calling . . . and it shall be said of him in time to come, Behold Warren, the Lord's scribe for the Lord's Seer, whom He hath appointed in Israel. . . .

When illness deprived Joseph Smith of Warren's services in December 1835, the Prophet wrote: "O may God heal him, and for his kindness to me, O my soul, be thou grateful to him, and bless him. And he shall be blessed of God forever, for I believe him to be a faithful friend to me, therefore my soul delighteth in him." On December 30 Joseph "... spent the day reading Hebrew . . . in company with my scribe, who is recovering his health, which gives me much satisfaction, for I delight in his company." However, when the illness continued into January, Warren wrote to Joseph: "I have a violent cough . . . and writing has a particular tendency to injure my lungs, . . . I therefore, with reluctance, send your journal to you, until my health improves." On February 8, 1836, Joseph reported that "Elder Parrish, my scribe, received my journal again. His health is so much improved, that he thinks he will be able, with the blessing of God, to perform his duty."

Parrish's clerical "performance" can be followed during this illness in the handwriting of the 1835-36 History, and the Prophet's smaller journal covering the same period. Parrish wrote pages 57-104 and 134-189 of the History—the break apparently coinciding with the illness—and 160 pages of Joseph's 1835-36 diary. On January 21, 1836, Warren Parrish succeeded Orson Hyde as "scribe for the Presidency."

By December 1837 Warren Parrish's tenure as scribe had ended. Returning to Kirtland on about the tenth of the month, Joseph Smith reported:

During my absence in Missouri Warren Parrish . . . and some others united together for the overthrow of the Church. Soon after my return this dissenting band openly and publicly renounced the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints and claimed themselves to be the old standard, calling themselves the Church

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22DHC, Vol. 2, pp. 311-312.
24Ibid., 2, p. 345.
25Ibid., 2, p. 385.
26Ibid., 2, p. 393.
of Christ, excluding the word 'Saints,' and set me at naught, and the whole Church, denouncing us as heretics. 39

SYLVESTER SMITH
Scribe: 1834-1836

Sylvester Smith was baptized shortly after the organization of the Church. He was appointed a member of the first High Council organized at Kirtland, and is listed as a clerk of the Council in meetings of August and September 1835. He was one of three clerks of the general assembly of the Church held at Kirtland in August 1835. He was appointed by Joseph Smith on January 25, 1836, as "acting scribe for the time being, or, till Elder Parrish shall recover his health." 40

WARREN A. COWDERY (1788-1851)
Scribe: 1836-1838

Warren A. Cowdery was appointed presiding high priest over the branch of the Church at Freedom, New York in November 1834, and did not arrive in Kirtland until February 25, 1836. When the firm, Oliver Cowdery and Company, was dissolved in 1837 and the management transferred to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, Warren A. Cowdery became their agent in the printing office and book bindery. He also served as editor of the Messenger and Advocate. Church records indicate that he wrote more extensively than reference to his name, which appears over the title, "Assistant Recorder," would indicate. 41 He kept Kirtland Council minutes, wrote in Joseph Smith's diary, and 1835-36 History, and patriarchal records. Warren did not continue with the Church after the Kirtland difficulties in 1838.

GEORGE W. ROBINSON (1814- )
Scribe: 1836-1840

George W. Robinson's name appears as "Clerk and Recorder" on minutes of the Kirtland High Council between January 1836 and November 27, 1837. 42 He was elected Gen-

42See "Kirtland Council Minutes," 1832-1837 (CHO).
eral Church Recorder on September 17, 1837, in place of Oliver Cowdery who had gone to Missouri;43 and at the general conference in Far West, Missouri on April 6, 1838, he was sustained as "general Church recorder and clerk to the First Presidency."44 In April 1838 he assisted with the writing of the History that was begun that year.45

Intending to move to Iowa, George Robinson was released from his clerical calling on October 3, 1840. He later left the Church.

JAMES MULHOLLAND (1804-1839)
Scribe: 1838-1839

James Mulholland commenced writing for Joseph Smith on Monday, September 3, 1838.46 His writing was interrupted by the Missouri imprisonment of the Prophet, but resumed again on April 22, 1839.47 Mulholland wrote, at Joseph Smith’s dictation, the beginning pages of the 1839 History incorporating the history written in 1838.48

While the Prophet was enroute to Washington, D.C. in November 1839, James Mulholland died. He was regarded by his employer as "a man of fine education, a faithful scribe. . ."49

ROBERT BLASHEL THOMPSON (1811-1841)
Scribe: 1839-1841

Robert B. Thompson joined the Church in May 1836. After the expulsion of the saints from Missouri in 1839, he began writing for the Quincy Argus and was also engaged as a clerk in the courthouse there. In May 1839 he was selected as one

44Ibid., 3, pp. 13-14.
45"This day was chiefly spent in writing a history of this Church from the earliest period of its existence up to this date, By Presidents, Joseph Smith Jr & Sidney Rigdon, myself also engaged in keeping this record." George W. Robinson, "Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith . . . ." pp. 34, 37, 38. Robinson makes further reference to the History on succeeding days: "Monday, the 50th This day was spent by the first Presidency, in writing the history of the Church; . . . Tuesday 1st May 1838. This day was also spent in writing Church History, by the first Presidency Wednesday 2nd This day was also spent in writing history . . . Friday 4th. This day also was spent in studying & writing history, by the presidency, . . ." Ibid. See also DHC, Vol. 3, pp. 25-26.
46James Mulholland, "Diary" (CHO).
47Ibid.
48See footnote 83.
49DHC, Vol. 4, p. 89.
of a committee to gather historical data for the Church. He succeeded George W. Robinson as general Church clerk on October 3, 1840. In the following month he assisted Elias Higbee in writing a petition to Congress for redress of Mormon grievances in Missouri. On February 3, 1841, he was elected Nauvoo City recorder, and also served as associate editor of the Times and Seasons.

Thompson died on August 27, 1841. At the time of his death Joseph Smith noted that he had done "much writing for myself and the Church." His clerical contribution is seen in pages of the 1839 History, Joseph's 1838-43 Letter book, patriarchal records, and private correspondence.

HOWARD CORAY (1817-1908)
Scribe: 1840-1841

Howard Coray's clerical association with Joseph Smith is explained in Coray's autobiography:

... On the 3d or 4th day of April, 1840 I set out with a few others for Nauvoo, for the purpose of attending conference, and to gratify a curiosity that I had to see the Prophet. Some time during the Conference I took occasion to visit him, in company with Joseph Wood. He introduced me to brother Joseph with something of a flourish, telling him that I was a collegiate from Jacksonville college. This was not true and was not authorized by me. The Prophet, after looking at me a little and asking me some questions, wished to know whether it would be convenient for me to come to Nauvoo, and assist, or rather clerk for him. As this was what I desired, I engaged at once to do so; and, in about 2 weeks thereafter, I was busily employed in his office, copying a huge pile of letters into a book—correspondence with the Elders as well as other persons, that had been accumulating for some time. ... I finished the job of copying letters. I was then requested by bro. Joseph to undertake, in connection with E.D. Woolley, the compilation of the Church History. This I felt to decline, as writing books was something, in which I

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50Ibid., p. 204.
51Ibid., p. 237.
52Ibid., p. 411. A letter of Joseph and Hyrum Smith to Oliver Granger on August 30, 1841, reports Thompson's death: "All things prosper in this place except the loss we have sustained in the death of two of our most valuable men Brother D.C. Smith & Robert B. Thompson. Both have recently died of what I call a quick Consumption thyr diseas was upon thyrr lungs theyr wasted a way in one week & spit up thyrr verry vitals—they are gone, thyrr loss is irrapparable, but we must be submissive to the will of God." Original in Huntington Library.
53Joseph ... ordered Bro. Thompson to write a few lines to Bishop Ripley in his name. ..." William Clayton, "Diary," March 26, 1841.
had had no experience. But bro. Joseph insisted on my undertaking it, saying, if I would do so, it would prove a blessing to me as long as I should live. His persuasive arguments prevailed; and accordingly in a short time, bro. Woolley and myself, were busily engaged in compiling the Church history. The Prophet was to furnish all the materials; and our business, was not only to combine, and arrange in chronological order, but to spread out or amplify not a little, in as good historical style as may be. Bro. Woolley's education not being equal to mine, he was to get the matter furnished him in as good shape as he could; and my part was to go after him, and fix his up as well as I could, making such improvement and such corrections in his grammar and style as I might deem necessary. On seeing his work, I at once discovered, that I had no small job on my hands, as he knew nothing whatever of grammar; however, I concluded to make the best I could of a bad job, and thus went to work upsetting and recasting; as well as casting out not a little. Seeing how his work was handled, he became considerably discouraged; and rather took offence at the way and manner in which I was doing things, and consequently soon withdrew from the business. Immediately after bro. Woolley left, I succeeded in obtaining the services of Dr. Miller; who had written for the press, and he was considerably accustomed to this kind of business. Now I got on much better, I continued until we used up all the historical matter furnished us by the Prophet. And as peculiar circumstances prevented his giving attention to his part of the business we of necessity discontinued our labors, and never resumed this kind of business again.  

Coray's reference to copying letters in a book is confirmed by his handwriting in Joseph Smith's 1838-43 Letter Book. He also copied extensively in the patriarchal records. However, existing manuscripts do not indicate that either Coray or Woolley worked on the History, a fact that may be explained by the loss of Church records.

**James Sloan (1792- )**

Scribe: 1840-1843

James Sloan's clerical talents were divided between Church and municipal assignments. On February 3, 1841, he was elected Nauvoo City Recorder, and at a Church conference on October 2 was appointed general Church clerk to replace Robert

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54 Howard Coray, "Autobiography" (CHO), pp. 17, 19-20.

55 Coray's last Letter Book entry is one of October 19, 1840, which may suggest a terminal date for his letter-copying.
B. Thompson. In July 1841, he was appointed secretary to the Nauvoo House Association, in which appointment he was in charge of recording stock certificates, and account books. A year later he was serving as secretary of the Nauvoo Legion.

As a Church clerk Sloan recorded patriarchal blessings and ordinances for the dead. In 1843 he was called on a mission to Ireland, which terminated his clerical career. Prior to his departure he brought "the desk containing city and Church books and papers to the mayor's office." Later, on July 30, 1843, Richards was appointed General Church Recorder to replace James Sloan. He was present in the Carthage Jail at the time Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed in 1844. Under his direction two years later Church records were packed and transported across the plains from Nauvoo to Salt Lake Valley.

He contributed significantly to Nauvoo municipal affairs: On October 30, 1841, he was elected to the city council, and a month later he became editor of the Times and Seasons. He was appointed city recorder in August 1843, and also served as clerk of the municipal court.

Joseph Smith's daily journal for the years 1842-1844, portions of the 1838-43 Letter Book, and Nauvoo municipal records—all prime sources behind the Prophet's History—were written by Willard Richards. He wrote extensively in the fin-
November 1831

To the Saints, of my church, which the voice of him who sits on high, and whose eyes are upon men; yea, unto you; hearken ye people from afar, and ye shall hear upon the distances of the sky, listen together, for surely the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape, and there is no eye that shall not see; meathe ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated; until the rebellious shall be几何 with much sorrow, for their iniquities shall be spoken upon them, and to their household, and to their secret acts shall be revealed, and the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days, and they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

D— Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, even my people unto the hosts of my commandments, which I have given unto you, O inhabitants of the earth, therefore fear and tremble, O ye rebellious, for what I the Lord have decreed, even them shall be fulfilled. And verily, I say unto you, that they who go forth bearing precious tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious; yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure; unto the day when the Lord shall come to assemble unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to me.

Therefore, the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all who will may hear; prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh; and the anger of the Lord is kinder, and the cause of all is past, and this day is the day of salvation, and the day when salvation is brought unto the sons of men. Therefore, the Lord has laid his hand upon you, and has said unto me, Joseph, write and write, and the Lord will walk with you. Amen.
ished manuscript of the History and took a leading role in its compilation both before and after the death of the Prophet. Joseph regarded him as "a man in whom I have the most implicit confidence and trust... He has done me great good and taken a great burthen off my shoulders since his arrival in Nauvoo...".

WILLIAM CLAYTON (1814-1879)
Scribe: 1842-1844

William Clayton arrived in Nauvoo from England in December, 1840. He began writing for Joseph Smith on February 10, 1842: "Bro. Kimball came in the morning to say that I must go to Joseph Smith's office and assist Bro. Richards," Clayton wrote in his diary. "I accordingly got ready and went to the office and commenced entering tithing for the temple." When Willard Richards temporarily left Nauvoo in June 1842, the entire clerical responsibility of Joseph Smith's office was given to Clayton. Upon Richards's return in October, Clayton continued as a clerk until Joseph Smith's death in 1844.

Clayton wrote extensively in the record book of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, recorded Joseph Smith sermons, and assisted with his correspondence.

THOMAS BULLOCK (1816-1885)
Scribe: 1843?-1856

Thomas Bullock immigrated to Nauvoo from England in 1843. He is first mentioned as a scribe to Joseph Smith in November 1843. On May 13, 1844 he was appointed clerk of the ship, "Maid of Iowa," and on June 16 was transferred to Joseph Smith's office. Bullock became the chief scribe under Willard Richards when work resumed on the Joseph Smith History in 1845. He was also chief clerk of the Pioneer Company in 1847, and was employed in the same capacity in the

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60 Letter of Joseph Smith to Jennetta Richards, June 25, 1842 (CHO).
62 DHC, Vol. 5, p. 49. On July 2, 1842, the day Richards left Nauvoo, Joseph "rode out in the city with my clerk, Mr. Clayton." Ibid., p. 52.
63 A letter of Joseph Smith to "Judge Thomas," dated June 26, 1844, is signed by "Wm. Clayton Clerk for Joseph Smith."
64 Although Bullock continued writing until his death, the terminal date of 1856 given here indicates the completion of work on Joseph's History.
Joseph Smith's History of the Church, Vol. B-1, p. 812. The single line written by Willard Richards at the top of the page indicates the point to which this final draft of the manuscript had been written at the time of Joseph Smith's death. The remainder of the page is in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock.
Historian’s Office in Salt Lake City under Willard Richards and George A. Smith.

Bullock’s main contribution consisted of writing nearly 700 pages of the manuscript of Joseph Smith’s History; and he wrote extensively in Nauvoo municipal council and court records, and in the papers of Joseph Smith.

GEORGE A. SMITH (1817-1875)

Although George A. Smith did not personally write for Joseph Smith, he was closely associated with the Prophet and assisted Willard Richards on the History in Nauvoo. Under his direction, the compilation of the History was completed in Salt Lake City in 1856. Franklin D. Richards said of George A. Smith that he possessed “a very tenacious and powerfully retentive memory—any person, or thing, he ever saw, or heard, once committed to memory, or even carefully read, he seemed never to forget. He was a man of great versatility of thought, and idea, and seemed peculiarly adapted to that labor and responsibility.”

WILFORD WOODRUFF (1807-1898)

Wilford Woodruff was not a personal scribe to Joseph Smith. His literary contribution consists of his diary record of events in the Prophet’s life and the assistance he gave George A. Smith during the final stages of the History compilation. On February 12, 1855, he spent part of the day at the Historian’s Office “examining my Journals containing Joseph’s sermons preparatory for publication in the Church History.”

Two years later he wrote:

I have never spent any of my time more profitably for the benefit of mankind than in my Journal writing for a great portion of the Church History has been compiled from my Journals and some of the most glorious gospel sermons, truths, and revelations that were given from God to this people through the mouth of the Prophets Joseph and Brigham, Heber and the Twelve could not be found upon the Earth on record only in my Journals, and they are compiled in the Church history and transmitted to the Saints of God in all future generations.

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65Franklin D. Richards, “Bibliography of Utah,” p. 3.
67Ibid., March 17, 1857.
March 1

This morning I read and wrote in German; went to my office and received my ordination letter in Italian and Spanish. In settling, I went to the office of the Mayor and the Recorder to determine some matters for Thomas Morgan and Robert Taylor, the proponents of the inhabitants of the City. I had directed that work should be done in the highways of the City.

Elder C. Hyde called on me this afternoon to renew a hope. I instructed my clerk to put the Senate General's saddle on my horse "Jo. Duncan" and let Elder Hyde ride the Governor, in the Senate General's saddle.

Signed a paper of Attorney dated Feb. 25 to Amasa Lyman, to sell all the lands in Salt Lake County, decided to me by Mr. H. Dunn.

The Mississippi froze up on the 13th of Nov. last, and still continues so, which keeps people from going on the ice to cross.

I am constantly receiving applications from abroad for Elders; which were referred to in the Times and Seasons of this day that the Conference in Salt Lake will attend to as many of them as possible.

The Council of the Twelve Apostles wrote to Romans, Lydia, and other branches, as follows:—

The Twelve to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in and about Rome.

Beloved brethren, As we believe,
ROBERT LANG CAMPBELL (1825-1874)
Scribe: 1845-1850, 1854-1856

Robert L. Campbell arrived in Nauvoo from Scotland in April 1845 and on May 3 commenced writing in the Historian's Office. He was a scribe for the Patriarch John Smith. After his arrival in Salt Lake Valley in 1848 he went to England as a missionary, and did not return to his employment in the Historian's Office until November 20, 1854. He copied an extensive portion of Joseph Smith's History into volumes D-1 and E-1.

LEO HAWKINS (1834-1859)
Scribe: 1853-1856

Leo Hawkins, an English convert to the Church, arrived in Salt Lake City in 1850 and was engaged as a clerk in the Historian's Office on Sept. 20, 1853. His writing on the History is seen on more than 200 pages in volumes D-1 and F-1, and in the compilation of Joseph Smith's sermons. In 1859, at the age of 25, he died of tuberculosis.

JONATHAN GRIMSHAW
Scribe: 1853-1856

Little is known of Jonathan Grimshaw except that he was employed in the Historian's Office as a clerk between June 7, 1853 and September 1856, when he left Utah Territory for the East. He was the penman for the first 150 pages of Volume F-1 of the Joseph Smith History, and he assisted in compiling the Prophet's sermons from existing manuscripts.

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO WRITE A HISTORY

While this is not a definitive list, the foregoing men wrote or assisted in compiling the bulk of early Mormon Church

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68 These dates indicate Campbell's years of employment in the Historian's Office prior to completion of the Joseph Smith History.
69 These dates indicate the years of Hawkins' clerical work during the compilation of Joseph Smith's History.
70 "Historian's Office Journal," date indicated.
71 On June 7, 1853, Grimshaw wrote: "This morning Dr. Richards sent for me, and introduced me into his new office as a clerk." "President's Office Journal."
72 A complete listing of those who wrote for Joseph Smith or were engaged in clerical work for the Church prior to 1846 would include the following: John Corrill, Elias Higbee, Almon Babbitt, Erastus Snow, Ebenezer Robinson,
JOSEPH SMITH'S HISTORY

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history sources between 1829 and 1856. Identification of their handwriting establishes with relative accuracy the nearness of these sources to Joseph Smith, and lays the groundwork for reconstructing the Prophet's effort to write a history.\[^23\]

Evidence substantiates Joseph's repeated concern to write a history that would do "justice to the cause."\[^24\] The picture that emerges is one of repeated beginnings due to frustrating circumstances that he explained after early efforts to write had ended in failure.\[^25\] Available sources show that seven attempts were made to write the History prior to 1839:

1. The history written by Oliver Cowdery covering the period "from the time of the finding of the plates up to June 1831."\[^26\]

2. The John Whitmer history covering the post-1831 years after Oliver Cowdery's history left off. This record was retained by Whitmer after he left the Church.\[^27\]


\[^23\]See charts on pp. 441, 463.

\[^24\]DHC, Vol. 4, p. 470.

\[^25\]Several factors hindered the writing of the History: "...long imprisonment, vexatious and long-continued law-suits, the treachery of some... clerks, the death of others, and... poverty... from continued plunder and driving..." DHC, Vol. 4, p. 470. So far as the clerical difficulties were concerned, of the men listed above, who wrote during Joseph Smith's lifetime, nine apostatized from the Church, two died at critical points in writing the History, and one retained Church records entrusted to him.

\[^26\]This history has not been found. It may have been the manuscript referred to in a letter of Andrew Jenson to Franklin D. Richards, during Jenson's search for historical records in Missouri in 1893: "You speak of the Oliver Cowdery manuscript, which is supposed to have contained the record of the restoration of the Melchisedek Priesthood. You may be sure that that was the first I looked for and inquired after; but there is nothing in Whitmers book about it; and Mr. Schweich said he did not think there was anything in the papers left after the late David Whitmer bearing on this point, although he admitted that there was a whole box full of old documents which had not been examined since David Whitmer died. Mr. Schweich rather conveyed the idea that the Oliver Cowdery heirs, in Southwest City, Mo., had Oliver Cowdery's old papers; but he did not know... If Mr. Schweich admits to you that they are in possession of the Oliver Cowdery record he denies it to me..." Jenson to Richards, September 14, 1893.

\[^27\]It was not until Andrew Jenson visited George Schweich, brother-in-law to the deceased David Whitmer, in Missouri in September 1893 that the Church obtained a copy of the Whitmer history: "I boarded another train which brought me 5 miles to Richmond, where I went to work immediately copying John Whitmer's old record, in the store of Geo. Schweich, who assisted me some in reading proof. Mr. Schweich did not think that the little old book with faded writing was the very book that I had been hunting for, but as I perused it, I came to the conclusion, without telling him so, that it contained all that John..."
3. An unfinished 1832 history in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith.  

4. An 1834 fragment of history in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. 

5. The 1834-35 history published in the *Messenger and Advocate*. 


7. The 1838 history that was started by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and George A. Robinson on April 27 of that year. 

The difficulties surrounding these early efforts to write an official history did not diminish after it was resumed in 1839. The writing of this final version—usually known as Joseph Smith’s documentary History—constitutes an exercise in perseverance that was begun in Nauvoo in 1839 and completed in Salt Lake City in 1856. Detail provides answers to some of the questions of authorship and methodology that have shrouded the study of the History.

Whitmer ever wrote on Church history; hence I was anxious to copy every word contained in it. Mr. Schweich reluctantly allowed me to take it to my hotel where I spent all night copying, and in the morning returned the original to him. I was very pleased indeed to obtain a copy of this old Whitmer record; it is well known that John Whitmer was appointed the first historian of the Church, and it was also known that he, when he apostatized, refused to give up this record to the Church authorities. And now when found, we discovered that it contained only a little of historical value. Yet John Whitmer recorded events which are not recorded elsewhere.” Andrew Jenson, *Autobiography*, p. 209. John Whitmer’s history has since been published twice. See footnote 16.

*This six-page account is the only history containing the actual handwriting of Joseph Smith, a fact that was not detected when this account was previously analyzed. The pages containing this record were originally part of Joseph Smith’s 1832-35 Letter Book, and contain his account of the First Vision and the visits of Moroni. See Dean C. Jessee, “Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” *BYU Studies*, Vol. 9 (Spring, 1969), pp. 277-278.*

*Located in Volume A-1 of the 1839 history, this fragment consists of pages labeled for a “Genealogy” of the Presidents of the Church, and daily entries for December 5, 6, 1834, under the heading of “Chapter 1.” It is recorded on the first twenty pages of the volume, following which, the page numbering continues on blank pages.*

*This “history” was written in the form of a series of letters between Oliver Cowdery and W.W. Phelps that were published during the year beginning October 1835. It contains random Church history events beginning with the priesthood restoration and terminating with the visit of Moroni.*

*This record is located on pages 46-134 of Volume A-1 following the 1834 history. This account consists of a recopying of the *Messenger and Advocate*—Cowdery, Phelps letters, followed by daily third-person diary entries of events in Joseph Smith’s life covering the dates between September 22, 1835, and January 18, 1836.*

*This document has not been found.*
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THE HISTORY COMPILATION IN NAUVOO

Joseph Smith began dictating the History, in its present form, to his clerk, James Mulholland on June 11, 1839, apparently using the 1838 History as a basis. According to George A. Smith the format and style of the History was determined by Joseph:

The plan of compiling the history of Joseph Smith from the Journals kept by his clerks, Willard Richards, William Clayton, Wilford Woodruff, and Thomas Bullock, was commenced by himself, extracting items of necessary information in regard to general and particular movements from the Times and Seasons, Millennial Star, Wasp, Neighbor, and other publications, extracts from City Councils, Municipal Courts, and Mayors Dockets, and Legion Records, which were all kept under his direction; also the movements of the Church as found in Conference minutes, High Council records, and the records of the several quorums, together with letters and copies preserved on file; also noted remarkable occurrences throughout the world, and compiled them under date of transaction, according to the above plan. . . .

James Mulholland wrote the initial fifty-nine pages of the History, at least part of which was copied from the history begun the previous year. These pages cover events from Joseph Smith's birth to September 30, 1830. However, Mulholland's untimely death on November 3, 1839, temporarily terminated work on the History. Robert B. Thompson, who was appointed Church clerk in October 1840, replaced Mulholland, but wrote even less than his predecessor before he, too, died on August

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Joseph Smith's 1839 diary kept by James Mulholland records the beginning of the History: "Monday 10th [June] began to study & prepare to dictate history—Tuesday commenced to dictate and I to write history Wednesday Thursday & Friday generally so employed. . . ." Mulholland also recorded his writing activity in his own diary: "Commenced again to write for the Church on Monday the 22nd April, 1839. May 9. All this time busy for Church. Monday 27 Writing all day for Church. Thursday - writing and examining papers &c. Friday & Saturday writing—Monday 3rd June & Tuesday writing for Church. Monday 10, Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday 13th & writing &c. for Church history. Monday 17th and Tuesday writing history. Wednesday forenoon unwell, afternoon writing history. Thursday forenoon studying for history. Saturday copying in Letter book. Monday 24th All this week copying letters. Wednesday—afternoon writing history. [absent in Quincy, Illinois] Monday 22 [July] commenced again to write Friday writing & recording history." The "letters" he mentions copying were very probably those he wrote in Joseph Smith's 1838-43 Letter Book, seventy-three pages of which are in his hand.

Evidence that the History was rewritten in 1839, incorporating the 1838 effort is elaborated in Jessee, "Early Accounts," pp. 286-287.

Letter of George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, April 21, 1856 (CHO).
JOSEPH SMITH'S HISTORY

1843

In the evening I had an interview with a doctor on Metamora and a
pharmacist, objecting to his performing in the city. I had an interview with a physician
Drake, and consented to his not interfering with patients.

At 6 o'clock I went to the bridge, and with the band and about a
dozen ladies, led by Mrs. Drake, proceeded to the general store. In front of the stores
Sage, and of any place on the bridge. The bridge looked well, but there were many
more men, and they respected their visitors in unobtrusive style.

The officer did know to the bridge, many of these were agitated, and many
stomach. The men were in great spirits, but made good improvements, both in uniform
and discipline, and we felt proud to be associated with a body of men skilled in point of
discipline, majesty, in the knowledge of military tactics, the pride of States,
even though defeated, and a great body of the Eastern army.

In the course of my remarks on the bridge, I told the strangers that we had
judged these men in peace, for themselves, they have always told to my face, no power to
help us, damn such d---l---- where they go, and make it feel the moment. I will never
say I can do nothing for their good, I will never have peace. At the
close of the address, the Stranger wanted to the city and performed in their State.

The bridge was nearly wind and very cold. There were two United States
officials, a general charge of love, peace, and respect and recognition of our appearance
and recibus.

In the evening, attended a St. Louis performance of The Council, Department
Drake Co.,

A conference was held at Tilden, Black creek, among, 3 members of their
Pratts at Rochester, 2 Council and 15 members were represented. A band, and
been recently organized at St. Louis, Drake county, New York consisting of 2 Council, and
1 Rochester and 25 members.

Sunday, In the evening I was asked by several gentlemen concerning
the plate, which was dug out near Kinderhook.

The Council of the First Presidency met
October 13. Young preached at La Grange.

I called at the office at 1 a.m., with a superintend to stay out in Applemo.

Dixon.

John Bell was unwilling to give Peter Bellmore one fourth of the
lot as directed by me.

In company with my wife, mother, and my adult family, Sidney Rigdon,
J. B. Ford, John Taylor, W. Woodruff and several hundred gentlemen and ladies,
arrived at 10 min. after 3 a.m. from the Virginia state, under a estate of Cane's hung
on board a fine band of music. We had an excellent address from our eminent friend
John Bell. The band performed its part well, much good humor and kindly sentiments.
The Captains and officers on board did all they could to make us comfortable, and we had a very
agreeable and pleasant trip. We started with the intention of visiting Augustus, but in
consequence of the length of church time, it was impractical, so therefore allowed our

handwriting begins with the entry of May 7, 1843.
27, 1841. Following Robert Thompson, W.W. Phelps wrote the manuscript to November 1, 1831.

Not until Willard Richards was appointed secretary to Joseph Smith in December 1842 was any significant progress made on the History. At the time he began writing, not more than 157 pages had been completed, covering events up to November 1, 1831. By May 8, 1843, he had written 114 pages beyond W.W. Phelps' last entry. At the time of Joseph Smith's death, the narrative was written to August 5, 1838. Richards described his efforts in a March 1844 letter:

> It is now seven years since I have laid my head one night in my own house during that time I have been in England, near four years and the remainder of the time have spent in writing the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which, of course will afford no income until it is completed and printed which cannot possibly be done for one or two years. It is a great work and all important to the Church and world.

Besides writing the main History, Willard Richards by 1844 had created or collected for the Prophet much of the source material upon which the remainder of the compilation of the History depended.

Writing of the History resumed in February 1845 under the direction of the Council of the Twelve. It was to be compiled "according to the . . . plan which [Joseph Smith] while in prison just previous to his murder requested Elder Willard Richards to continue. . . ." With the entry of August 6, 1838, begins Thomas Bullock's handwriting in the text. In his diary Bullock chronicled the progress of the work:

> Dec. 9, 1844, at daylight went to Phelps for books &c then to Dr. Richards. I was sworn in Deputy Recorder. . . .
> 10 . . . at the Drs. all day writing in Record Books &c.
> 18 examining Church papers—endorsing same—according to date. . . .

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86See chart on p. 441.
87Progress in the writing of the History between May 8, 1843, and March 2, 1844, can be followed in Willard Richards' diary where he lists the pages written for each day. August 24, 1843, "554.5. commenced on the 2d vol of the history [B-1]." is an example. A page from the diary is reproduced on p. 445.
88Letter of Willard Richards to "Mr. Moffatt." Augusta, Illinois, March 27, 1844 (CHO).
89Smith to Woodruff, April 21, 1856. That the History following Joseph Smith's death was based upon sources created during his life— as stated in this letter—is verified by comparing the sources with the History.

For a partial listing of these see the chart on p. 463.
19 Going through Church Records—making a list of places not copied—also of papers.
24 went to Dr R. then to the old office searching out the old Church papers afterwards endorsing same.
Christmas 25 very dirty—went to Dr R’s indorsing papers and filing in proper bundles—gathering the leaves of Record Books in proper place—saw a bee in the window . . . dined with Dr. R. & supped.

Jan. 14, 1845 . . . recording Church History
16 . . . Dr & I preparing for history all day.
17 . . . Dr. & I preparing Church History
18 . . . G.A. Smith called in the afternoon about the history of the Church. staid some time . . . Dr. & I on the Church History.

March 15 . . . finished the year 1839—wrote 56 pages last week.

Saturday 22 Writing history all day . . . finished the year 1840.
April 4 Copying history till noon—finished 1841 . . . 
Monday 14 Office writing history—commenced at February 1. 1842 went home at 7 tired.

Friday 18 Writing history finished June 1842 . . . 

May 3 Saturday Office—writing history finished July 1842 being the end of Vol 3.99
Monday 5. got up mp 4 [morning prayer]—started for office 20 min to 6 called upon bro Wandell & went to office writing in Book 3 and commenced in new Book at 11 a.m.—and wrote till ep [evening prayer] 5.91

Thursday 3 [July] Writing history finished Vol 3 containing about 343,000 words . . . 

99 Vol. 3 corresponds to Volume C-1 as later labeled. See chart on p. 441. 
91 The "new book" would be Volume D-1.
Friday 4 Writing history in 4th vol... [D-1]

Friday 25... writing history till 7. at ep 3 had a hunt in office, caught 11 mice...\textsuperscript{92}

Although Bullock’s personal diary ends on August 5, 1845, an office journal kept concurrently by him indicates the continued progress on the History:

Monday 4 [August 1845] TB [Thomas Bullock]... commenced history 1422 3/4 page and writing till 3...

Wednesday 20 TB writing history in 4 vol in P. M. commenced the year 1843...

Tuesday 6 [Jan. 1846] Dr. [Willard Richards] dictating history while TB wrote it...

Saturday 10 TB writing history in Book D till 12 when Dr returned from Temple - after dinner he dictated & I wrote history until Sunset wrote up to Feby. 21/43...

Thursday 15 TB writing book D (finished Feb 28)...\textsuperscript{93}

In the months immediately preceding the departure of the Saints from Nauvoo, every effort was made to collect historical data. On November 16, 1845, Willard Richards wrote an epistle to the saints:

All those who have letters, or documents of any kind in their possession, which in any way relate to the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, are requested to leave them with the Historian before tomorrow evening.

Every individual who may be in possession of any fact, circumstance incident, event, or transaction which they wish recorded in the General History of the Church will report it in writing before tomorrow evening.

The Historian wants all books, maps, charts, papers, documents, of every kind name and nature, and all information that may relate to, or have a bearing in any wise upon the History of the Church, before him, in his office, within twenty four hours.

Important items of History have frequently been presented at too late an hour to gain an insertion. Therefore I would say,

\textsuperscript{92}Thomas Bullock, "Diary," Feb. 11, 1844-Aug. 5, 1845.

\textsuperscript{93}"Historian's Office Journal," April 3, 1845-February 6, 1846.
that the documents now wanting, are for the years 43-4 and 5, but if any of the brethren have any items of valuable history of any date, they may hand them in, and they will be filed away for future use.  

THE HISTORY COMPILATION AFTER NAUVOO

By February 4, 1846, the day the books were packed for the journey west, the History had been completed to March 1, 1843. Thomas Bullock had written 674 pages of the History. A notation following the entry of February 28 establishes the terminal point of the History compilation in Nauvoo: "end of W. Richards compiling the books packed Feb. 4, 1846 in Nauvoo. Miles Romney present. T Bullock—clerk."  

A one-page inventory written by Thomas Bullock shows that the Church records including the History were packed into two boxes for the trip west: a "small box," which contained the duplicate handwritten copy of the History, listed on the inventory as "new books A-2, B-2, C-2, D-2" and a "large box," which contained the original manuscript, entered as "old book A-1, C-1, D-1, B-1."  

A reference to the transportation of the Church records across the plains was made by Willard Richards at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa on May 29, 1846: "Bro. Joseph Horns team—Henry Fairbanks driver, received of Willard Richards to carry on the journey over the mountains 1 Box records 381 [lbs.] 1 Box records 205 [lbs.]." Fairbanks took the records to Winter Quarters from which place Thomas Bullock transported them to the Great Salt Lake Valley.  

The rigors of establishing a new commonwealth in the mountains precluded even the unboxing of the historical records of the Church until June 7, 1853. Immediately following Thomas Bullock's note in the History, giving the date the books were

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94Brigham Young, "Manuscript History," November 16, 1845.  
96The "duplicate" mentioned here was apparently written as an insurance measure against loss of the original. It was begun in April 1845 and discontinued on August 6, 1856, upon the request of Brigham Young. At this time the History had been duplicated to July 18, 1843. The scribes who wrote this copy were: Charles Wesley Wandell, Wilmer Benjamin Benson, Franklin Dewey Richards, Leo Hawkins, Robert Lang Campbell, Jonathan Grimshaw, and Thomas Bullock.  
98Willard Richards, "Diary." The weight of the boxes of records noted here corresponds to the "large" and "small" boxes mentioned in the Bullock inventory.  
packed at Nauvoo, the same writer made the following notation: "The books were unpacked in GSL City by Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock, June 7, 1853 . . . ." 100 Another note at the same place in the manuscript indicates that resumption of work on the History occurred on "Dec. 1, 1853 [when] Dr. Willard Richards wrote one line of History being sick at the time—and was never able to do any more." 101 The "single line" dictated by Richards is the last sentence written by Thomas Bullock in the History, and marks the end of Willard Richards's contribution to the History. He died on March 11, 1854.

At the general conference of the Church in April 1854, George A. Smith was appointed Church Historian to succeed Willard Richards. George A. brought impressive qualifications to the task of continuing the History. He had been closely associated with Joseph Smith and in Nauvoo had assisted Richards "during about 70 days in revising and collecting matter for the History . . . which made me acquainted with the plan of compilation . . ." 102

The remainder of Joseph Smith's History of the Church from March 1, 1843 to August 8, 1844, was completed under the direction of George A. Smith. This consisted of 844 pages in Volumes D-1, E-1 and F-1, written by Leo Hawkins, Robert L. Campbell, and Jonathan Grimshaw, Historian's Office clerks.

George A. Smith summarized his contribution to the History:

On the 10th April 1854, I commenced to perform the duties of Historian by taking up the History of Joseph Smith where Dr. Willard Richards had left it when driven from Nauvoo on the 4th day of February 1846. I had to revise and compare two years of back history which he had compiled, filling up numerous spaces which had been marked as omissions on memoranda by Dr. Richards.

I commenced compiling the History of Joseph Smith from April 1st 1840103 to his death on June 27th 1844. I have filled

100Ibid., Vol. D-1, p. 1486. The Historian's Office Journal of this date reports: "About 9 am. T[obias] B[ullock] commenced removing heavy boxes of records down to W[illard] R[ichard]'s office & unpacked 2 of them they not having been seen since TB assisted to fasten them down on 4 Feb. 1846. . . ."

101Ibid.

102Smith to Woodruff, April 21, 1856.

103The reference to April 1, 1840, appears to contradict the beginning date of March 1, 1843, given above. However, the early date represents the point from which George A. "revised and compared." His actual compilation of the text started with the latter entry.
February 28

Joseph Smith's History

Published by BYU ScholarsArchive, 1971

Joseph Smith's History of the Church, Vol. D-1, p. 1485 showing the point to which the History had been written prior to the exodus from Nauvoo. Note Thomas Bullock's concluding reference to the books being packed on Feb. 4, 1846.
up all the reports of sermons by Prest. Joseph Smith and others from minutes or sketches taken at the time in long hand by Dr. Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff, Thomas Bullock, William Clayton, Miss Eliza R. Snow &c., which was an immense labor, requiring the deepest thought and the closest application, as there were mostly only two or three words (about half written) to a sentence. The greatest care has been taken to convey the ideas in the prophet's style as near as possible; and in no case has the sentiment been varied that I know of; as I heard the most of his discourses myself, was on the most intimate terms with him, have retained a most vivid recollection of his teachings, and was well acquainted with his principles and motives.

... .The severe application of thought to the principles of the History, the exercise of memory &c., have caused me to suffer much from a nervous headache or inflammation of the brain; and my application of mind being in exercise both day and night, deprived me of a great portion of necessary sleep.104

The Joseph Smith History was finished in August 1856, seventeen years after it was begun. Wilford Woodruff recorded on the 13th that it was "finished up to the death of Joseph in Carthage jail,"105 and five days later, on the 18th, the First Presidency met in the Historian's Office where they "... finished up the History of Joseph Smith."106 Copying the History from the preliminary draft continued until November 6, 1856.107 Upon publication of the History, George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff appended the following statement:

The History of Joseph Smith is now before the world, and we are satisfied that a history more correct in its details than this was never published. To have it strictly correct, the greatest possible pains have been taken by the historians and clerks en-

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104Smith to Woodruff, April 21, 1856.
105Wilford Woodruff, "Diary." August 13, 1856.
106Ibid., August 18, 1856. The six-volume manuscript of Joseph Smith's History (labeled A-1 to F-1) covers events recorded in the first six volumes of the printed DHC to the entry of June 28, 1844, which concludes page 189 of Vol. F-1 of the manuscript and page 629 of the DHC, Vol. 6. Following this, seventeen pages of the manuscript contain an excerpt from Thomas Ford's History of Illinois, which is recorded on the first 31 pages of DHC, Vol. 7. Pages 228 to 304 of the manuscript contain the "compilation of History, from June 22 to August 8, 1844... compiled from the Journals of... Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff and others; and from the documents on file," which was written by George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff, and which is recorded on pages 129-242 of the DHC, Vol. 7. The remaining contents of DHC, Vol. 7 were not recorded as part of the initial compilation of the History as found in Vols. A-1 to F-1 of the manuscript.

A comparison of the manuscript of the History with the printed versions in the Times and Seasons, Deseret News, Millennial Star, and the DHC as edited by B. H. Roberts, is the subject of another study.

107Entries in the "Historian's Office Journal" indicate the progress of the writing by Campbell, Hawkins and Grimshaw. See chart on p. 441.
gaged in the work. They were eye and ear witnesses of nearly all the transactions recorded in this history, most of which were reported as they transpired, and, where they were not personally present, they have had access to those who were.

Moreover, since the death of the Prophet Joseph, the history has been carefully revised under the strict inspection of President Brigham Young, and approved of by him.

We, therefore, hereby bear our testimony to all the world, unto whom these words shall come, that the History of Joseph Smith is true, and it is one of the most authentic histories ever written.

The work of "revision" mentioned here began on April 1, 1845, as described by Brigham Young: "I commenced revising the History of Joseph Smith at bro. Richards' office; Elder Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith were with me. Pres. Joseph Smith had corrected forty two pages before his massacre. It afforded us great satisfaction to hear Brother Richards read the History of the infancy of the church. Adjourned at eleven p.m., having read one hundred and forty pages in book A [-1]." (Brigham Young, "Manuscript History.") Heber C. Kimball reported progress on the "revision" on May 16: "Thomas Bullock and G.A. Smith came in, Bullock read history for us commenced with the first Book A, page 304, 16 line. . . We read till sunset page 378. On May 17 they "began to read at 10 o clock. Present T. Bullock, B. Young W. Richards, G.A. Smith. . . We read history till five in the afternoon to page 5 hundred and 11. We were weary. We read 132 pages. . ." (Heber C. Kimball, "Journal.") By May 10, 1845, more than 800 pages of the History had been "read and revised." George A. Smith in his summary of the work noted that "it has been revised by the Council of the First Presidency almost without any alteration." (Smith to Woodruff, April 21, 1856.)