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*Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* by H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters

Paul H. Peterson

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## Book Reviews

H. MICHAEL MARQUARDT and WESLEY P. WALTERS. *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record*. Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1994; distributed by Signature Books. xx; 244 pp. Maps, appendixes, bibliographical essay, bibliography, index. \$28.95.

Reviewed by Paul H. Peterson, Associate Professor, Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University.

It had to come! Two well-known sleuths of early Mormon history have written what might be called their final testament—the end result of two-and-one-half decades’ tedious research into Mormon origins. Presbyterian pastor Wesley Walters had been researching early Mormon history since the late 1960s. Lapsed-Mormon Michael Marquardt’s interest in Mormon beginnings and Joseph Smith stretches back at least half that long. When Walters died in 1990, Marquardt finished the book and dedicated it to him.

Regardless of what agenda motivated this volume, it merits a careful reading by students of Latter-day Saint history. The text is comparatively brief but highly detailed (almost tediously so in places). The accompanying notes and appendixes are useful, and the bibliographical essay is especially helpful. It is apparent the authors have paid their research dues, having painstakingly combed through sundry archives, searching for obscure tax and assessment records and censuses to supplement the often familiar statements by contemporaries who remembered the Joseph Smith family. Much of the authors’ information and many of their arguments are familiar, some dating as far back as the late 1960s. But in this culminating study, they have added some new wrinkles, tightened their prose, and, in their minds, further buttressed their basic arguments.

They have also made every effort to defuse the polemics. Walters and Marquardt, deservedly or not, are sometimes categorized as anti-Mormon writers. Their earlier monographs and articles on

Latter-day Saint history sought to expose and disprove Mormonism, but *Inventing Mormonism* has a slightly different ring to it. The authors (possibly this is the influence of Marquardt) at least make a pretense of extricating themselves from their formerly rigid and dogmatic methodology and strive to approach their subject with more historical sophistication. I was both surprised and pleased when I read the following among the authors' conclusions: little is to be gained from promoting a "prophet-fraud dichotomy" (197), Joseph honestly believed he spoke with supernatural beings, and the young prophet was an important figure in the development of western religious history.

This book can be divided into three parts. The first part (and potentially the one most challenging to orthodox conceptions), consisting of chapters one and two, maintains that the familiar chronology of the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is flawed, that the Smiths did not move to Manchester from Palmyra until after 1820, that there was no major revival that could have motivated Joseph in 1820 in Palmyra, and therefore, that Joseph could not have had the vision he claimed he had in 1820. The second section, chapters three through six and chapter eight, examines the social, cultural, and religious milieu in which the Smiths functioned and endeavors to assign them their proper role in Palmyra-Manchester society. The third part, chapter seven, maintains that the Church was organized in Manchester, not Fayette, and postulates that the change of location sites in 1834 was part of a larger strategy by Church leaders to evade creditors.

### **When Did the Smiths Move to Manchester?**

The authors begin by dissecting a fundamental text in Mormonism—Joseph Smith's 1838 account of the First Vision. The chronological challenges in this account are obvious to any careful reader. Joseph talks of the move to Palmyra, presumably around 1816, notes that the Smiths moved to Manchester "in about four years" (JS-H 1:3), and then dates the revival which led to the First Vision "in the second year after our removal to Manchester" (JS-H 1:5). Yet traditional accounts maintain that the First Vision occurred in 1820. Marquardt and Walters propose a new chronological scheme to solve this apparent contradiction. First, they



maintain the Smiths likely moved to Manchester as late as 1822. Second, they claim that there was no major revival in Palmyra in 1820 and that the revival which Joseph describes in his 1838 account could refer only to the great revival of 1824–25.

Historians have typically (and admittedly somewhat superficially), dealt with the apparent Palmyra-Manchester discrepancy by suggesting that the Smiths moved to Manchester in 1818, not 1820. But Marquardt and Walters claim that the relocation to Manchester can be “establish[ed] with reasonable certainty” (2) by examining certain contemporary documents including road-tax records and assessment rolls. Such documents, they maintain, do not support an 1818 move to the Manchester farm but rather compel a date of 1822.

The date of the revival that motivated Joseph to seek God has been controversial since Walters first raised the issue in 1967. Marquardt and Walters insist that only the revival of 1824–25, a tumultuous and well-documented season of religious fervor in Palmyra and adjoining communities, satisfies Joseph’s 1838 description of “unusual excitement” when “great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties” (JS–H 1:5). They point out that mainline churches in Palmyra all showed significant growth in 1824–25 but that contemporary records reveal no appreciable church growth resulting from a presumed revival in Palmyra in 1820. Indeed, they claim there is no indication of any 1820 revival in Palmyra, deflecting or blunting historian Milton Backman’s argument that Joseph’s reference to religious excitement encompassed a larger regional area than just Palmyra.<sup>1</sup> The authors suggest that Joseph could have referred to only Palmyra when he mentioned excitement in “the place where we lived”; that Pastors Lane and Stockton, who supposedly played a role in the revival, were not around in 1820; and that both Joseph and his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, made statements that imply a close-to-home location.

While the chronological framework established by the authors, both with regard to the move to Manchester and the dating of the revival, is based on solid research and cannot be arbitrarily dismissed, there are alternative ways of interpreting the evidence. Neither of the two basic accounts—Joseph Smith’s nor his mother’s—precisely identify when the Smiths first moved to western

New York and when they moved from Palmyra to Manchester. Joseph said in his 1838 history that his family went to the Palmyra region in his “tenth year, or thereabouts” (JS-H 1:3). That could have been when he was nine years old, which would have been in 1815. He added that they moved to Manchester in *about* four years. That could place the move in or about 1819. Moreover, Lucy Mack Smith noted in her history that the family moved to Manchester two years after their arrival in Palmyra.<sup>2</sup> We know that Lucy and the children arrived in Palmyra some months after Joseph Sr. Assuming that Joseph Sr. came in late summer or early fall of 1816 (an assessment held by many historians), Lucy probably arrived in late 1816 or possibly early 1817. If, indeed, she did arrive in Palmyra in 1817, and the family moved to Manchester about two years later, as indicated in her account, that move could have taken place in 1819. Thus one can argue—admittedly somewhat tentatively but contrary to the Marquardt-Walters thesis—that both Joseph’s and Lucy’s accounts allow for a move to Manchester by at least 1819.

One can augment this 1819 thesis with additional sources. The federal census record of 1820 places the Smiths in Farmington (Manchester), and various statements of contemporaries indicate that they moved to Manchester well before 1820. For example, Pomeroy Tucker—local historian, editor of the *Wayne Sentinel*, and Mormon critic—claimed to be “well acquainted with ‘Joe Smith,’ the first Mormon prophet, and with his father and all the Smith family, since their removal to Palmyra from Vermont in 1816, and during their continuance there and in the adjoining town of Manchester.” Tucker maintained that the Smiths lived in Palmyra for “two and a half years” before moving to Manchester in 1818. There, he added, they “remained . . . some twelve years, occupying as their dwelling-place, . . . a small, one-story, smoky log-house, which they had built prior to removing there.”<sup>3</sup> Another contemporary critic of Joseph Smith, Manchester resident Orsamus Turner, recalled that the Smiths occupied their “rude log house” as early as 1819.<sup>4</sup>

And finally, one can further supplement the early-move-to-Manchester thesis by putting a different twist on Lucy’s statement regarding the “third harvest.” In her narrative, Lucy mentioned that the Smiths “enjoyed their third harvest on the farm.”<sup>5</sup> By tying in



Lucy's statements with events in 1823, Marquardt and Walters correctly conclude Lucy had reference to the harvest of 1823. Therefore, they insist, the first harvest could not have been earlier than 1821. But Lucy's statement could also be used to argue for an earlier move. Don Enders, a student of Mormon origins in New York, told me that many farmers in western New York in the early nineteenth century planted winter wheat.<sup>6</sup> If, indeed, the Smiths planted winter wheat, that would push planting to the fall of 1820. In addition, they would have needed a year to clear the land before they planted—possibly moving the timetable to 1819. Indeed, Enders has argued cogently that, of necessity, the burning of trees would predate any tilling and that clearing the land would predate tree burning and therefore the Smiths “could not have moved to the Palmyra-Manchester town line any later than mid-1819 if they were to have a ‘third harvest’ on the farm in the fall of 1823.”<sup>7</sup>

A key issue, of course, has to do with when the Smiths actually started to work the land. Enders, referring to the research of early-nineteenth-century, western-New York historian William Siles, remarked that in this era verbal arrangements and agreements were sometimes entered into months before actual contracts were signed.<sup>8</sup> Marquardt and Walters observe that until July 1820, land agent Zachariah Seymour did not have power of attorney to grant permission for the Smiths to work the land. However, in an age when contractual agreements were often casual, it is possible that Seymour (or whoever the agent might have been), knowing that his clients were desirous of selling their land, might have worked out a verbal agreement with the Smiths that granted them permission to work the land as early as 1818 or 1819.

And is the revival of 1824–25 the only one that could satisfy the requirements of Joseph's account? Not quite. Opponents of the Marquardt-Walters thesis note that the 1838 account does not mention the word “revival” but rather religious “excitement” (JS-H 1:5, 21). Various meetings associated with the annual Methodist Genesee Conference of 1819 or 1820 could have sparked Joseph's religious interest. Orsamus Turner remembered that Joseph caught “a spark of Methodism in the camp meeting” somewhere along “the Vienna road.”<sup>9</sup> Or quite possibly, Methodist stirrings in the spring of 1820 around Palmyra itself could have motivated him. Walter

Norton's doctoral dissertation on contemporary newspaper coverage of early Mormonism and other religions notes that Palmyra newspaperman Timothy C. Strong "reported in the spring of 1820 that there was a Methodist camp ground near Palmyra where 'Camp Meetings' were frequently held."<sup>10</sup> It is important to understand, as both Backman and especially Norton have observed, that often local revivals did not receive newspaper coverage. I am satisfied that the actual revival or rush of religious excitement that stirred Joseph indeed could have taken place sometime in 1820.

But I am also persuaded that Marquardt and Walters have a strong case in claiming that the 1824-25 revival satisfies *all* of the elements of Joseph's 1838 history more adequately than any other account. Certainly the effects of the revival fit more comfortably into an 1824-25 context. Historian Marvin Hill some years ago reconciled the seemingly contradictory evidence presented by Walters. To some, however, Hill's reconciliation and accommodation required giving up some sacred space. Hill noted that the earlier 1832 account of Joseph's religious experience is likely more accurate than the "streamlined" 1838 account. A revival in 1824, he noted, causes problems for the 1838 account but not for the earlier one. Hill allows that Joseph, writing so many years after the event, could have unintentionally ascribed elements of the later revival into an earlier time frame when he fashioned his history in 1838.<sup>11</sup> Most historians, aware of the perils of memory lapses, have little difficulty with this notion. Even Walters and Marquardt admit that "memory at times conflates events" (32).

But what are the implications of all of this? The authors claim that the issues they introduce are fundamental. If the move to Manchester was as late as 1822 and if the revival motivating Joseph Smith took place in 1824, how does one deal, they ask, with the annual visits Joseph claimed he had with Moroni at the Hill Cumorah? Luke Wilson of Gospel Truths Ministries goes a step further, concluding that the issues raised in *Inventing Mormonism* could affect the faith of some Mormons as it allegedly provides "airtight and inescapable evidence' of Smith's dishonesty."<sup>12</sup> Clearly, such confidence on the part of all three is unwarranted, and Wilson's statement can only be regarded as so much twaddle. The interesting and even plausible claims of Marquardt and Walters have little potential for wave making. Ultimately, the only real issue



for most Church members is whether or not Joseph did indeed see God. As Larry Foster noted some years ago, “whether or not an error was made in dating precisely when a vision occurred has no necessary connection with whether it occurred . . . or what specifically occurred.”<sup>13</sup>

### **What Was the Social and Cultural Standing of the Smiths in the 1820s?**

The second division of *Inventing Mormonism*, comprising those chapters that deal with the social, cultural, and religious world of the Smiths, requires less comment. From Fawn Brodie’s time on, apologists and opponents have debated the poverty of the Smiths, their progressive nature or lack thereof, their penchant for treasure hunting, and so on. Marquardt and Walters note or imply that the Smiths had limited educations, generally hired themselves out to others as laborers, and by and large were never able to make a decent living. They provide evidence that the family was poor, that they sometimes ran into financial complications and occasionally had problems paying off debts (especially Joseph Sr. and Hyrum), that at least some members of the family drank cider, and that perhaps Joseph Smith Sr. had a drinking problem.

Despite the seemingly neutral tone of these chapters, I detected what I felt was a not-so-subtle agenda. There were, after all, Palmyra and Manchester neighbors who actually had good things to say about the family of Joseph and Lucy. Why were they not quoted? Don Enders has argued, persuasively I think, that the Smiths were thrifty, industrious, and at the middle of their socioeconomic scale.<sup>14</sup> The impression one gathers from *Inventing Mormonism* is of a dull, shiftless family, never able to cut a swath in respectable society.

Not surprisingly, the major focus of these middle chapters is on the involvement of the Smiths in the religious-magical world that existed among certain social classes in upstate New York. The authors conclude that all of this world of treasure hunting and magic—a world in which the Smiths were involved—was played down by Joseph in his official history. Informed students of Mormon history will likely find little new here. Clearly, the Smiths did hunt treasure when Joseph was in his teens and early twenties;



Joseph did use a seerstone; his initial interest in the gold plates was at least in part motivated by material concerns; and, quite possibly, loyal friends like the Knights were first drawn to Joseph because of their interest in money digging. Marquardt and Walters overplay their hand, however, exaggerating both Lucy Mack Smith's and Joseph Knight's fascination with treasure hunting. I also remain unconvinced by the authors' claims that Joseph was preoccupied with treasure hunting without a seerstone after 1827.

### **Was the Church Organized in Fayette or in Manchester?**

I personally found the third section of the book to be the most engaging, perhaps because the arguments are of more recent vintage. Here Marquardt claims that the bulk of early evidence indicates that the Church was actually organized in the Smith log home in Manchester, New York.<sup>15</sup> His corollary is that the shift to the Fayette location (25 miles east of Manchester) was somehow part of a concerted attempt in 1834 to confuse creditors and thereby avoid paying off debts.

Undeniably, there is fair evidence for a Manchester location (see the accompanying chart, pages 222–25 below, prepared by the staff at *BYU Studies*). Marquardt notes that the six revelations in the Book of Commandments given to six individuals who were in attendance at the organization meetings on April 6, 1830, were received, according to their headings, at Manchester. He points out that all references in the *Evening and the Morning Star* before 1834 refer to Manchester as the location. He suggests the likelihood, based on circumstantial evidence, that Hyrum Smith was in the vicinity of Manchester on April 6 and notes that the description of the site of an early baptism associated with the organization meeting fits Hathaway Creek in Manchester. To soften the fact that David Whitmer, who was present at the organization meeting on April 6, later located it at Fayette, Marquardt gives at least plausible evidence that Whitmer, who made the observation at least three times but over forty years removed from the actual event, could have confused organizational details with later Church conferences held at Fayette in June and September 1830.

Unfortunately, there is little likelihood this issue will ever be settled to the satisfaction of most historians. No New York certificate

of incorporation for the Church exists, and we must largely rely on memoirs and remembrances. With the advantage of hindsight, we can understand the pivotal importance of the meeting to organize the Church. Likely, Saints in New York in 1830 did not view the event in watershed terms; they clearly saw little need to document it. Regrettably, in those early years, Mormons were not in the habit of documenting most events. But from the records that do exist, we can assume that something of importance occurred at Manchester on the same day the Church was organized. Seemingly, Elder John Carmack recognized Manchester's importance when he suggested that "the reference to Manchester as a place of birth for the Church may have merely been a recognition that Manchester played a key role as a meeting place where details for the formal Church organization were worked out."<sup>16</sup>

Proponents of Fayette as the site of the formal organization of the Church, of course, have reliable witnesses and sources of their own. Joseph Smith and David Whitmer, two principals who were there, ultimately identify Fayette as the location. Possibly, Joseph, in Kirtland, was not in a position to correct the proofs of the early revelations listing Manchester as they came from W. W. Phelps's press in Independence in 1833; and Fayette was listed as the organization location in the minutes of a meeting held in May 1834 as recorded in the *Evening and Morning Star*. In the various editions of *Remarkable Visions*, Orson Pratt eventually shifted the organization site from Manchester to Fayette (see Marquardt and Walters, 159–60). Elder Carmack is quite correct that the trend in both official and unofficial sources has been to accept Fayette as the official location.<sup>17</sup>

Seeking for an explanation of this confusion between Manchester and Fayette, Marquardt suggests that Joseph and possibly other leaders shifted locations in 1834 as part of a strategy to frustrate creditors. Marquardt sees implications in the May 1834 meeting at which Fayette for the first time was listed as the site of the Church's organization. In attendance at the meeting were leading elders including all members of the United Firm. Just weeks previous, the bankrupt United Firm had dissolved and separated into two firms. At this May meeting, the elders decided to change the name of the Church from the Church of Christ to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. By obscuring the identities of United Firm members, by changing both the name of the Church and the location of its



organization, Church leaders hoped to somehow, according to Marquardt, frustrate the efforts of creditors to collect monies owed them. It is not clear, however, how such an open and public change of name would deter, or if it ever did impede, the efforts of any creditors to collect their money. Until Marquardt can come up with more evidence, a need he himself readily acknowledges, the notion must be regarded as an essentially dubious speculation.

I say dubious for good reasons. While I agree with Marquardt that the burden of debt was an ominous one, I am not persuaded that at this point, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were as desperate as the author would have one believe. Moreover, Joseph's divine marching orders in regard to debt were quite clear—pay them. Doctrine and Covenants 104, received in April 1834, counseled Joseph to “pay all your debts” (D&C 104:78) and promised deliverance from bondage if he were faithful. If, indeed, Joseph deviously schemed to avoid paying debtors, he was pursuing a course contrary to revealed instruction. There is also the distinct possibility that practical considerations, more particularly the commonality of the name “Church of Christ,” played a role in the name change.

Perhaps an even more compelling reason for the name change has to do with Sidney Rigdon's influence in the early Church. Richard Van Wagoner suggests that Sidney persuaded Joseph Smith and the high council to change the name of the Church in order to place greater emphasis on the nearness of the Millennium.<sup>18</sup> Finally, I am curious how the debt-creditor problem escaped being picked up by at least some of the dissidents who left the Church in the 1830s, and more especially, how it escaped the critical eye of E. D. Howe, whose *Mormonism Unveiled*<sup>19</sup> included every possible designing and devilish charge against Joseph in particular and Mormonism in general. In short, we must take Marquardt at his word that at present “the evidence is too sketchy to reach a decisive conclusion” (165).

Of all of Marquardt's arguments, his contention that Manchester played a primary role as the actual organization site merits most consideration. As indicated, Elder Carmack modestly allows for the possibility that Manchester could have been the location of an organizational planning meeting. But it could well have played a more significant role. Manchester could have served as one part of

a two-part organizational scheme. Or, even more likely, the organization could have taken place in one location in the morning and been repeated later in the day at the other.

Clearly, Manchester cannot be routinely dismissed as a possible organizational site. In my estimation, key points in Marquardt's argument have to do with the likelihood that a baptismal service was held the same day the Church was organized, that the service might well have taken place in Manchester, and that some who participated in or witnessed the baptism were also in attendance at the organization. Lucy Mack Smith indicates the baptismal service was held in the morning, but Joseph Smith and Joseph Knight suggest it took place after the organizational meeting, which would make it late afternoon or evening. As Marquardt points out, Manchester neighbors C. R. Stafford and Benjamin Saunders recalled seeing Joseph Sr. and others baptized into the Church. Granted, it is possible a small group of believers could have held a baptismal service in the morning in Manchester (assuming that Lucy was correct) and then either walked or traveled by wagon the twenty-five miles to Fayette for the organizational meeting, but that is hardly the most likely scenario. Of those who later penned an account of the organization, none mentioned a trip from Manchester to New York.

But even if Marquardt is right or partly right about Manchester, the implications are far from life threatening. Except for those who are inextricably bound to tradition, the adjustment could be made with little anguish. Both sites are significant to the LDS tradition, and if Manchester played a role, however large or small, in Church organization—so be it.

I conclude with two very different observations.<sup>20</sup> First, I recall years ago hearing the late T. Edgar Lyon lament that the dart-throwing of Reverend Walters and others was required to move Mormon students and scholars (with some notable exceptions) out of their easy chairs and into the archives to learn of their own origins. While clearly much has been done during the past twenty-five years to deepen our knowledge of the New York period in Church history, we may still have done more talking than walking. Whatever the motivation of Marquardt and Walters, we must admit they have searched and scoured through obscure, but occasionally



important, records in musty basements and nondescript courthouses with more diligence and thoroughness than most of our own LDS historians.

Second, I like to think I could take many of the evidences contained in this volume but come up with different conclusions. I would not title the volume *Inventing Mormonism*, an unfortunate title because it implies that Joseph literally manufactured his religious experiences—a notion that most serious historians reject. Instead, I would portray Joseph as a developing, growing human being who in his lifetime spent as much time on earth as he did in heaven and who throughout his life had occasion to modify his behavior and repent (sometimes the Lord even dictated that he do so). I would allow for the fact that he grew up in a poor family, that some members of his family and maybe Joseph himself occasionally drank cider (what person did not drink cider in upstate New York in the 1820s?), and that in his early years, along with other family members, he did pursue treasure with the use of seerstones. I would allow for the possibility that when he walked out of the Sacred Grove as a mere youth his knowledge of the precise nature of the Godhead was incomplete. I would allow for Joseph to move beyond some aspects of his culture, to realize in his mature years that some of his activities fifteen or twenty years earlier, while not malicious, were frivolous and less than ennobling, and then, realizing their insignificance, to underplay them in his official history written over a decade later. In short, I would allow Joseph Smith the luxury of personal growth and development and the opportunity for doctrinal expansion. For those willing to allow Joseph such accommodation, this volume will not only be informative but will cause little discomfiture.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Milton V. Backman Jr., “Awakenings in the Burned-Over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision,” *BYU Studies* 9 (spring 1969): 303, 309–10, 320.

<sup>2</sup>Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 65.

<sup>3</sup>Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867), 4, 12-13.

<sup>4</sup>Orsamus Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris' Reserve* (Rochester: William Alling, 1851), 213. Palmyra historian Thomas Cook, a generation removed from Tucker and Turner (who admittedly could have relied on Tucker for his information), wrote of the Smiths moving to their Manchester farm in 1818 and erecting a cabin where they "made their home for a dozen years." Thomas L. Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity* (Palmyra, N.Y.: Palmyra Courier-Journal, 1930), 219.

<sup>5</sup>Donald L. Enders, "The Joseph Smith, Sr., Family: Farmers of the Genesee," in Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993), 215.

<sup>6</sup>Donald L. Enders, conversation with author, Salt Lake City, November 1994.

<sup>7</sup>Enders, "The Joseph Smith, Sr., Family," 215-16.

<sup>8</sup>Enders, conversation with author.

<sup>9</sup>Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement*, 214.

<sup>10</sup>Walter A. Norton, "Comparative Images: Mormonism and Contemporary Religions as Seen by Village Newspapermen in Western New York and North-eastern Ohio, 1820-1833" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1991), 92.

<sup>11</sup>Marvin S. Hill, "The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (summer 1982): 39-42.

<sup>12</sup>Mark A. Kellner, "Mormon History under Scrutiny," *Christianity Today*, October 3, 1994, 68.

<sup>13</sup>Lawrence Foster, "First Visions: Personal Observations on Joseph Smith's Religious Experience," *Sunstone* 8 (September-October 1983): 40.

<sup>14</sup>Enders, "The Joseph Smith, Sr., Family," 213-14, 218-23.

<sup>15</sup>I assume this is largely Marquardt's contribution because of his earlier article, "An Appraisal of Manchester as Location for the Organization of the Church," *Sunstone* 16 (February 1992): 49-57.

<sup>16</sup>John K. Carmack, "Fayette: The Place the Church Was Organized," *Ensign* 19 (February 1989): 18.

<sup>17</sup>Carmack, "Fayette: The Place the Church Was Organized," 19.

<sup>18</sup>Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 149.

<sup>19</sup>E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled, or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834).

<sup>20</sup>See also the following reviews of *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* by H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters: Richard L. Bushman, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 2 (1994): 122-33; Larry C. Porter, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7, no. 2 (1995): 123-43; Scott H. Faulring, *Journal of Mormon History* 21 (1995): 203-7; and Donald R. Shaffer, *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 15 (1995): 88-91.



# Accounts of the Organization of the Church

	1	2	3
<b>source and date</b>	<i>Book of Commandments</i> , 1833	<i>Evening and Morning Star</i> , March/April 1833	<i>Evening and Morning Star</i> , May 1834, published minutes of May 3, 1834, conference
<b>where meeting was held</b>	Manchester [revised to Fayette in 1835 ed. of D&C]	Manchester <sup>1</sup>	Fayette, Seneca County
<b>who was present</b>	Oliver Cowdery Joseph Knight Hyrum Smith Joseph Smith Jr. Joseph Smith Sr. Samuel Smith [revelations given to these men on April 6, 1830]	six members	
<b>date and time of meeting</b>	April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830
<b>events of meeting</b>			
<b>name attributed to the Church</b>			Church of Christ
<b>who was baptized</b>			
<b>when and where baptisms were performed</b>			
<b>who performed baptisms</b>			

4	5	6
Joseph Smith, 1838 (draft)	Joseph Smith, 1838 (published version)	Joseph Knight, after September 1835 and before February 1847
house of Mr. Whitmer [Fayette]	house of Mr. Whitmer [Fayette]	
six in number	six in number	six members
April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. prayer</li> <li>b. sustaining vote</li> <li>c. O. Cowdery ordained elder</li> <li>d. J. Smith ordained elder</li> <li>e. sacrament passed</li> <li>f. all members confirmed</li> <li>h. outpouring of Holy Ghost, prophesying</li> <li>j. some called and ordained to priesthood offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. prayer</li> <li>b. sustaining vote</li> <li>c. O. Cowdery ordained elder</li> <li>d. J. Smith ordained elder</li> <li>e. sacrament passed</li> <li>f. all members confirmed</li> <li>g. all given Holy Ghost</li> <li>h. outpouring of Holy Ghost, prophesying</li> <li>i. revelations received</li> <li>j. some called and ordained to priesthood offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. prayer</li> <li>k. instructions to build up Church, exhorted to be faithful in all things</li> </ul>
The Church of Jesus Christ	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Church of Christ The Church of Jesus Christ	
Father Smith Martin Harris Mother Smith <sup>2</sup>	Father Smith Mother Smith/Martin Harris Orrin Porter Rockwell	Old Mr. Smith (Joseph Smith Sr.) Martin Harris
shortly after meeting	shortly after meeting/about the same time	evening, small stream



	7	8	9
<b>source and date</b>	<i>Times and Seasons</i> , March 1, 1842, Wentworth letter	Lucy Mack Smith, 1845, pub. 1853	David Whitmer, December 1877
<b>where meeting was held</b>	Manchester		
<b>who was present</b>			Oliver Cowdery Hyrum Smith Joseph Smith Jr. Christian Whitmer David Whitmer John Whitmer about 40-50 present
<b>date and time of meeting</b>	April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830	April 6, 1830, about noon
<b>events of meeting</b>	j. some were ordained k. some preached l. many repented and were baptized i. had visions h. prophesied o. cast out devils p. healed the sick		
<b>name attributed to the Church</b>	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints		
<b>who was baptized</b>		Mr. Smith Martin Harris	
<b>when and where baptisms were performed</b>		morning	
<b>who performed baptisms</b>		Joseph stood on shore while his father was baptized	

10	11	12	13
David Whitmer, June 1881	Ben Saunders (Manchester resident), 1884	David Whitmer, January 1887	C. R. Stafford, (Manchester resident), January 1888
Seneca County [Fayette]		Peter Whitmer's [Fayette]	
Oliver Cowdery Martin Harris Hyrum Smith Joseph Smith Jr. David Whitmer John Whitmer Peter Whitmer 70 members		Oliver Cowdery Hyrum Smith Joseph Smith Jr. David Whitmer John Whitmer Peter Whitmer plus about 50 other members (about 20 from Colesville, 15 from Manchester, about 20 from Fayette)	
April 6, 1830		April 6, 1830	
k. exhorted to teach nothing except the Old and New Testaments and the Book of Mormon		q. believed Martin Harris was ordained an elder	
The Church of Christ			
	old Brother Smith old Mrs. Rockwell		old Jo Smith his wife Mrs. Rockwell
	Oliver Cowdery		Joseph Smith



## Source Data for Table

Note: Numbers 1-13 correspond to columns 1-13.

<sup>1</sup>*A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized according to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830* (Zion [Independence, Mo.]: W. W. Phelps, 1833), chapters 17-22.

<sup>2</sup>*Evening and Morning Star* 1 (March 1833): 76, and (April 1833): 84.

<sup>3</sup>*Evening and Morning Star* 2 (May 1834): 160.

<sup>4</sup>Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989-92), 1:241-44.

<sup>5</sup>Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:302-4. This history was first published in *Times and Seasons* 3 (October 15, 1842): 944-45; and then in Joseph Smith Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:76-80.

<sup>6</sup>Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17 (autumn 1976): 37. See also William G. Hartley, *"They Are My Friends": A History of the Joseph Knight Family, 1825-1850* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1986), 43. Original in Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).

<sup>7</sup>*Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842): 708.

<sup>8</sup>Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 151.

<sup>9</sup>David Whitmer, interview by Edward Stevenson, December 22-23, 1877, Richmond, Mo., Journal History, LDS Church Archives, in *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness*, ed. Lyndon W. Cook (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 16-17.

<sup>10</sup>David Whitmer, interview by *Kansas City Journal* reporter, June 1, 1881, Richmond, Mo., *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 65. See also David Whitmer, interview by Zenas H. Gurley, January 14, 1885, Richmond, Mo., Gurley Collection, LDS Church Archives, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 154-55 (information not included on chart—April 6, 1830, six elders, 50-60 members).

<sup>11</sup>Interview of Benjamin Saunders, 1884, p. 19, Library and Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo., quoted in H. Michael Marquardt, "An Appraisal of Manchester as Location for the Organization of the Church," *Sunstone* 16 (February 1992): 50.

<sup>12</sup>David Whitmer, interview by Edward Stevenson, January 2, 1887, Richmond, Mo., diary of Edward Stevenson, LDS Church Archives, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 214. See also David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo.: David Whitmer, 1887), 33.

<sup>13</sup>"Highly Important Facts about Mormonism," *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (January 1888): 3, original publication in the Yale University Library.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Another instance of revising the site occurred in a pamphlet by Orson Pratt. The 1840 edition of the pamphlet designated Manchester as the place where the Church was organized. Orson Pratt, *Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840), 23–24. The 1848 edition of the pamphlet listed Fayette as the place of organization. Orson Pratt, “Remarkable Visions,” in *Writings of an Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Mormon Heritage Publishers, 1976), 12. In addition, William E. McLellin in 1847 recounted the events of the organization and noted Manchester as the place where the meeting was held:

The Church of Christ was organized on the 6th day of April, 1830, in the township of Manchester, and the State of New York; with only six members, viz. Joseph Smith, sen., Lucy Smith his wife, Joseph Smith, jr., Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. (*The Ensign of Liberty of the Church of Christ* 1 [March 1847]: 2)

<sup>2</sup>A marginal note by James Mulholland says, “Father Smith Martin Harris baptized this evening 6th April. Mother Smith and Sister Rockwell 2 or 3 days afterward.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 243.