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Fact, Fiction and Family Tradition: The Life of Edward Partridge (1793-1840),
The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Sherilyn Farnes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Fact, Fiction and Family Tradition: The Life of Edward Partridge (1793-1840),
The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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Edward Partridge (1793-1840) became the first bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1831, two months after joining the church. He served in this capacity until his death in 1840. The first chapter examines his preparation for his role as bishop. Having no precedent to follow, he drew extensively upon his background and experiences in civic leadership, business management, and property ownership in order to succeed in his assignment. Partridge moved to Missouri in 1831 at the forefront of Mormon settlement in the state, where on behalf of the church he ultimately purchased hundreds of acres, which he then distributed to the gathering saints as part of the law of consecration. In addition, he prepared consecration affidavits and oversaw each family's contributions and stewardships. The second chapter examines Partridge's ability to succeed in his assignment, and the tensions that he felt between seeing the vision of Zion and administering the practical details. Forty years after his death, his children began to write extensively about their father. The third chapter of this thesis examines their writings, focusing on how their memories of their father illuminate their own lives as well as their father's. The final chapter finds that the three published descendants' modern attempts to chronicle the life of Edward Partridge each fall short in at least one of the following: the field of history, literature, or a faithful representation of his life.

Keywords: Edward Partridge, bishop, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Missouri, biography

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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapters	
1. “SEASONABLY CAUGHT HATTING AND SHIPPING FURS”: PARTRIDGE AS BUSINESSMAN, CIVIC LEADER AND LANDOWNER IN PAINESVILLE, OHIO.....	13
2. “ALL HIS TIME IN THE LABOURS OF THE CHURCH”: PARTRIDGE AS FIRST BISHOP	31
3. “I WILL HAVE TO BOTTLE MY THOUGHTS”: THE WRITINGS OF PARTRIDGE’S CHILDREN.....	67
4. “A MODICUM OF THE RECOGNITION HE DESERVED”: MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF PARTRIDGE BY HIS DESCENDANTS.....	104
CONCLUSION.....	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	130

INTRODUCTION

“WHAT YOU SEE AND HEAR”:

DIFFERING VIEWS OF EDWARD PARTRIDGE

It was a “pleasant afternoon” in Independence, Missouri, on July 20, 1833.¹ Lydia Partridge, “quite feeble” after having given birth three weeks previously, was at home with her husband, Edward Partridge, and infant son.² The first surviving son after five daughters and an infant son that died at birth, their newborn had been proudly named Edward Partridge, Jr. One-half mile away, a group of three to five hundred men was gathering with the intent of violently persuading the newly arrived Mormon settlers to leave the county.³ As a leader of the Mormon settlers, Edward Partridge was a highly visible target. About fifty of the armed men soon arrived at and surrounded the Partridge home. One of the group, George Simpson, came inside, took Partridge by the arm, and compelled him to come along.

Partridge described the events of July 20, 1833, in an affidavit written six years later, listing his indictments against the state of Missouri. He was told by Russell Hicks, who appeared to be the leader of the mob, “that [he] must agree to leave the county or suffer the consequences,” to which Partridge answered “that if I must suffer for my religion it was no more than others had done before me.” He explained, “I was not conscious of having injured any one

¹ Edward Partridge, Jr., “Genealogical Record,” Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT, 12.

² Edward Partridge, Affidavit, May 15, 1839, folder 18, Edward Partridge Papers, Church History Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter EPP).

³ Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., ed. Brigham Henry Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), 1:390-93.

in the county therefore I could not consent to leave it.”⁴ Such courage is admirable, especially since Partridge later wrote: “I knew not what they intended to do with me, whether to kill me, to whip me, or what else I knew not.”⁵ One can only imagine Partridge’s feelings as he stood there. The mob stripped off his clothes down to his “shirt and pantaloons,” spread hot tar over his body and covered him with feathers.⁶ Many of the mob could not hear his comments, but according to Partridge they were apparently affected by the manner in which he received the treatment.

Partridge described their reaction:

I bore my abuse with so much resignation and meekness, that it appeared to astound the multitude, who permitted me to retire in silence, many looking very solemn, their sympathies having been touched as I thought; and as to myself, I was so filled with the Spirit and love of God, that I had no hatred towards my persecutors or anyone else.⁷

While the tarring and feathering itself was not intended to kill him, obviously it was meant to express local hostility toward the Mormon newcomers. Partridge soon returned home, covered in tar and feathers. His family members and friends did their best to scrape off the caustic substance which “seemed to have been prepared with lime, pearl-ash, acid, or some flesh-eating substance, to destroy him.”⁸

Such treatment was a marked change from the esteem in which Partridge had been held by his community in Painesville, Ohio, only three years previously. He had been a prosperous,

⁴ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP.

⁵ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 1:391.

⁶ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP.

⁷ Smith, et al., *History of the Church* 1:390-91. Ironically, the mob action took place next to the courthouse.

⁸ Smith, et al., *History of the Church* 1:393.

well-respected merchant with a successful hatting business and several pieces of land. His choice to become a Mormon led him to Missouri and made him subject to violence from his neighbors.

At the end of 1830, Partridge and his wife Lydia had been baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (“Mormons”). A few short months later, on Feb. 4, 1831, Partridge received the assignment to become the first bishop of the church. Lacking precedents to follow, Partridge drew upon his experience in business, land dealings, and civic leadership in carrying out the duties of his assignment as bishop. While these experiences had made him respected in Painesville, they also led to his selection as bishop and to his becoming a target of mob violence.

To understand Partridge, we must understand not only how he was prepared for his calling as bishop, but also how he was able to succeed in it. Partridge’s experiences as businessman, landowner and civic leader are well documented in early nineteenth-century records from Painesville, Ohio, the town in which he lived for fourteen years before being called as bishop. Surprisingly, these records of Partridge’s life have been only minimally studied, and mentioned only briefly in articles or books about him. This is the first time that some of this information is in print.

Local history sources provide valuable evidence. Local newspapers refer to his hatting practice, including his hat store in the center of town. Land records document his several purchases, including lots both in and out of the town, and in a neighboring county as well. Poll books indicate that he was not only elected to town positions more than once, but that he actively participated in community politics over a period of several years.

As the first bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he played a role unlike later bishops in buying land, distributing it and administering the law of consecration. This alone makes a biography of him worthwhile. I will examine the extent of his land purchases in Jackson County, Missouri. Sources include letters from this time period, official church records, newspapers, government land records, and other primary sources. A thorough list of the properties Bishop Edward Partridge purchased in Missouri helps us better understand why his career in business was valuable to his calling as bishop.

These sources illuminate the appropriateness of Partridge's selection as first bishop. The position of bishop required a man with a strong financial sense, competency in large land dealings, managerial skills, and significant leadership abilities. The first part of this chapter will illustrate Partridge's preparation for the call as bishop. The second part of the chapter will examine the application of these skills in fulfilling his assignment as bishop. Despite the lack of resources available to him, Partridge succeeded to a remarkable degree in his responsibilities to purchase land, care for the poor, and administer the law of consecration.

Yet, despite his success under the most unfavorable circumstances, as descendant Hartt Wixom wrote in the preface to his 1998 biography: "Edward Partridge, for whatever reason, has only recently begun to receive a modicum of the recognition he deserved during his life span of 46 years."⁹ Since Partridge's death, several of his descendants have taken an interest in recording the life of their esteemed but largely forgotten ancestor. Their accounts do not always agree, however.

⁹ Hartt Wixom, *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, Inc., 1998), ix.

As C.S. Lewis once wrote, “what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing: it also depends on what sort of person you are.”¹⁰ Any great historical figure remembered for years after his or her death by a large number of people is perhaps remembered differently from the way he or she was viewed during his or her lifetime. Memory often has a way of softening the image of a person, and causing us to consider only their virtues and strengths. Any historical study of a person would do well to examine the primary sources surrounding that individual during his or her lifetime to understand the historical context.¹¹

Edward Partridge (1793-1840), the first Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is no exception. Though no full-length scholarly biographies have been published about him, many people have written about him from the time of his death until the present day. This thesis attempts to analyze the sources about Edward Partridge from three distinct viewpoints: those who knew him personally during his lifetime; his children in the remembrances they recorded within the first two generations after his death; and his twentieth-century descendants. In so doing, we will be able to understand what C.S. Lewis meant by standing in different places and times to take the measure of a man. In the process of resolving the multiple views of Edward Partridge, we will learn about the way in which memory shapes history. Our memories often reflect what we are experiencing in the moment as well as what

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1955), 136.

¹¹ See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005); Sheri Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: the Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996); David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). While not a strict biography, Fischer presents mini-biographies on all the major historical figures involved. See also Edward L. Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball, Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977).

actually occurred in the past. In addition, what we remember often indicates what's most important to us.

Such a compelling life as his has drawn both scholarly and popular attention throughout the years. The best scholarly work on Edward Partridge is "In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed Through the Life of Edward Partridge," a master's thesis by D. Brent Collette.¹² However, instead of a straightforward biography of Edward Partridge, the thesis focuses on early Mormon millennial utopianism, using incidents from Edward Partridge's life to illustrate those main points. My thesis will focus on the life of Edward Partridge himself, and the interpretation of his life over the course of time. To do so I will examine the motives that each person had in writing about Edward Partridge. My thesis will include – indeed, focus on – the "personal insights" into the life of Partridge that come from his family members and close associates, something that Collette's thesis understandably relegates only to appendices.

One of the most recent studies of Edward Partridge is Scott Partridge's article "Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio." In this article, Scott Partridge points out that although Edward Partridge sacrificed a great deal monetarily to follow the command to go to Missouri and live the law of consecration, it appears that shortly before he joined the Church he was actually looking for an opportunity to sell his business and property and leave the area. In January 1828 and September 1829, Partridge posted advertisements in the local newspaper offering his properties

¹² D. Brent Collette, "In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed Through the Life of Edward Partridge" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977).

for sale and describing his intent “to quit the Hatting business and leave Painesville.”¹³ No available records indicate his reasons for wanting to leave a prosperous business and a community in which he was well respected. Scott Partridge is not the first to bring these advertisements to light, but he is the first to do so in a widely available medium. Outside of a few sources, there is a paucity of widely available scholarly works about Partridge’s life.

In addition to scholarly works, the life of Edward Partridge has been the subject of popular literature, both historical and fictional, in the twentieth century. The only published full-length work is *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, by descendant Hartt Wixom.¹⁴ While it draws upon many primary sources, it does not represent a full scholarly investigation of the available sources. It will be discussed in chapter four.

Perhaps most interesting in this review of literature is the fact that there is not just one, but two novels that deal with the family of Edward and Lydia Partridge – one each about Edward and Lydia. Unfortunately, unlike more recent historical novels that cite sources and draw upon historical materials, these two novels cite no sources throughout their entire content. The first is *Other Drums*, by Ruth Louise Partridge.¹⁵ The other novel is *Lydia: Partridge Family Saga*, by Melvin A. Lyman.¹⁶ Both were written by descendants of the Partridges. They hint at the drama of the life of the Partridge clan and their importance to the history of the Church.

¹³ Scott H. Partridge, “Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 42 no. 1 (2003): 54.

¹⁴ Wixom, *Edward Partridge*.

¹⁵ Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums* (Provo, Utah: R.L. Partridge, 1974).

¹⁶ Melvin A. Lyman, *Lydia: Partridge Family Saga* (Roswell, GA: Old Rugged Cross Press, 1993).

Nineteenth-century publications are worthy of mention. In 1884, an article about Partridge by Orson F. Whitney appeared in the *Contributor*, and later reappeared in the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*.¹⁷ In its first volume, in 1908, the RLDS *Journal of History* included an article in which Heman Hale Smith presented a nice summary of Partridge's life.¹⁸ Although some of the most obvious facts are inaccurate (e.g. Partridge was survived by five, not three, children), the article nonetheless draws upon many primary sources. It gives in many considerations a truthful, personal view of Partridge, including the fact that he was at times reprimanded by Joseph Smith, the organizer and president of the church that Partridge joined.¹⁹ Because of his importance as the first bishop, short entries about Edward Partridge also appear in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* and *A Book of Mormons*.²⁰

Much of the material for the twentieth-century works is drawn from the writings of Partridge's children, written decades after Partridge's death. Since those documents were created in an unusually short space of time over thirty years after Partridge's death, curiosity prompts investigation. Why would three of the surviving children all suddenly start writing about their father decades after his death? What can we learn from studying their memoirs as a source of history?

¹⁷ Orson F. Whitney, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Contributor* 6 (Oct. 1884): 3-9; Orson F. Whitney, "Edward Partridge," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 7 (July 1916): 105-109.

¹⁸ H.H. Smith, "Edward Partridge," *Journal of History* 1, no. 4 (1908): 413-22.

¹⁹ H.H. Smith, "Edward Partridge," 421.

²⁰ Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901); Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1982).

Since many of the so-called primary sources for Partridge and Lydia's life actually come from writings of their children half a century later, we must take into account the motives of the Partridge children in their portraits of their parents. Only by so doing can we present a nuanced view of how Edward Partridge has been remembered in the two centuries since his birth. Thus not just his life, but also how he has been remembered are the twin goals of my thesis.

The study of memory is a fascinating one. In 1973, Jean Piaget and B. Inhelder stated, "If we changed the way we think about the world, we automatically update memories to reflect our new understanding."²¹ Since Partridge's children were twenty years old or younger at his death in 1840, their understanding must have substantially changed between then and when they wrote their accounts. Edward particularly would have changed the way that he thought of the world, since he was not quite seven years old when his father died. This is not to say that their memories are inherently inaccurate; the purpose of this thesis is to examine the way in which elapsed time and a desire to perhaps "clear" the name of their father or ancestor influenced what they emphasized in their narratives.

Historian David Thelen points out, "In a study of memory the important question is not how accurately a recollection fitted some piece of a past reality, but why historical actors constructed their memories in a particular way at a particular time."²² The task at hand is to examine not only Partridge's life, but our own and others' perceptions of it, organized primarily by the nature of the sources into three different eras. The first era includes surviving documents

²¹ Edmund Blair Bolles, *Remembering and Forgetting: An Inquiry into the Nature of Memory* (New York, 1988), 17, as cited in David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 4 (March 1989): 1120.

²² Thelen, 1125.

from his lifetime, the second includes what his children wrote during the second half of the 19th century, and the third will examine documents written in modern times by descendants.

What can we learn from this approach to history? First, although it seems obvious it is usually overlooked that all history is written in response to a need. Edward Partridge, Jr. wrote his father's biography in order to clear his father's name. Even supposedly objective history comes as the result of a need, or a perceived need. Historians would do well to remember the motive for which the history they are citing was written.

Secondly and more specifically, this approach can tell us more about the nature of familial remembrances of a church or civic leader. Does a family remember and write primarily about their father or mother's church service or about their home life? What if the family is trying to clear the name of their ancestor? Often, the civic institution or church associated with a particular individual will write the history of the individual. However, in Partridge's case, the family wrote the majority of the history once he had passed away. The church failed to recognize his prominence, causing us to question the roles of institutional memory.

Third, association with "failed events" often leads to less of a desire to preserve a memory. Less than six months after Partridge began serving as bishop, he moved to Missouri. He served the majority of his time as bishop in Missouri, and died shortly after the saints arrived in Nauvoo. Since Partridge was almost exclusively associated with the Missouri time period, it may have been too painful to remember him, since doing so brought up still tender and hurtful memories of collective failure. Perhaps while remembering the wrongs of the mobs and how they had been driven from their homes, the saints preferred to remember only the oppression, and not their own faults that had led to the inability to fully live the law of consecration at that

time. As chief organizer of living the law of consecration, perhaps Partridge, though a good man, provoked a memory of shortcomings and failures that many saints preferred to forget.

Finally, though scholars have criticized at times the use of memoirs in the writing of history, such memoirs can actually be amazingly accurate when the memories are associated with strong emotions. The fear of physical assault in Missouri and sorrow over the passing of both their sister Harriet and their father could actually have served to engrave those memories in great detail in the minds of his surviving children despite their young ages.

Aside from the study of memory, a scholarly biography of Edward Partridge such as this one can be a valuable contribution to historical scholarship. Because he set the precedent for the office of bishop in the church under the tutelage of Joseph Smith himself, an understanding of Partridge's life leads to an understanding of the calling of presiding bishop. His difficult position as leader in Missouri produced a variety of letters over the years from Church headquarters in Kirtland. The need at times to take decisive action without waiting for Joseph Smith's direction helps us appreciate his skill and judgment as bishop in a church scattered throughout the heartland.

Finally, as the local leader of one of the communities of believers in that time period who attempted to live a lifestyle similar to communalism, Partridge's life gives us a window into the lives of other individuals who led such communities. Partridge set the example of living the law of consecration from the moment he arrived in Missouri. Ultimately, Partridge was willing to give his life to save the people that he had come to love. In the summer of 1833, he and six other men offered themselves to the leaders of a delegation of citizens from Jackson County to be beaten or killed if only the citizens would leave the saints alone. Any person willing to lay down

his life to save others invites investigation into that person's motives, personality and character.

This thesis will provide such an investigation from three different angles in attempt to understand one man's life, Edward Partridge, first bishop of the Church. C. S. Lewis said that what we see and hear depends a great deal upon where we are standing. Each of these three views combines with the others in an attempt to obtain the elusive view for which the historian strives; what kind of a man was Edward Partridge?

CHAPTER ONE

“SEASONABLY CAUGHT HATTING AND SHIPPING FURS”:

PARTRIDGE AS BUSINESSMAN, CIVIC LEADER

AND LANDOWNER IN PAINESVILLE, OHIO

Edward Partridge was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on 27 August 1793, to William and Jemima Partridge.¹ He was the fourth child in a family that would ultimately grow to number twelve children. Not only did Partridge come from a rich heritage of ministers, but two of his sisters later married ministers.² Partridge’s father, however, was a prosperous New England farmer. Notations in the diaries that he kept in the margins of his almanacs for over fifty years reflect the rhythm of life in a prosperous New England farm setting. In some entries he wrote of family and friends: “my third son [Edward] born,” “Edward and Wife came here with 2 children,” “Samuel was married to Sophia Chase,” and “Sister Williams of Stockbridge Died Aged 84.” In others, he commented on aspects of farm life, such as crops, animals, and weather: “Sow’d oats,” “the first Merino lamb came,” and “Very Cold N East Storm.”³ Partridge was

¹ Edward Partridge notebook, folder 4, Edward Partridge Papers, Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter EPP).

² Later family records indicate that there were preachers amongst the Partridge ancestors at least by the late seventeenth century. Emily married the Reverend J.W. Dow, and Mercy married Samuel Whitney. Edward Partridge, Junior, “Genealogical Record,” Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 61-63. The “Genealogical Record” is a notebook containing a biography of Edward Partridge, Senior, as well as names and dates of Partridge family births, marriages, deaths, mostly in the handwriting of Edward Partridge, Junior. His preface to the record states that he began writing in 1878.

³ William Partridge, diaries, August 27, 1793; Sept. 22, 1827; Oct. 19 & 25, 1830; May 2 & 9, 1810; June 8&9, 1810, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (hereafter HBLL).

probably influenced by his father's record keeping – a habit and skill that would later prove beneficial in both his professional and religious pursuits.⁴

The third of his parents' eight sons, Partridge was sent out at the age of sixteen to learn a trade. In February 1810, he was apprenticed to a hatter by the name of Vine Grosvenor in Lanesborough, about six miles from home.⁵ Four years later, at the age of twenty, Partridge went to the state of New York where he became a journeyman hatter to Asa Marvin, with whom he later formed a hatting partnership in Clinton, near Albany. Within a few years of his move to New York, Partridge moved to a town nearly five hundred miles away, Painesville, Ohio, to open a branch of their hatting business.

Settled about 1812, Painesville, Ohio, was a logical place to open a hatting business. The town was located three miles inland from Lake Erie on the Grand River, and was easily accessible to the water trade routes so important to the fur trade.⁶ The 1826 *Ohio Gazetteer* boasted that Fairport Harbor, at the mouth of the Grand River, was so deep that a ship could come unload simply by placing a plank from the ship to the shore.⁷ Painesville's access to easy

⁴ William Partridge's writings were on farmer's almanacs – the most important document to a farmer. Edward Partridge at times used the back of old consecration affidavits for his writing, affidavits being perhaps the most important documents for a bishop.

⁵ William Partridge, diaries, Feb. 20, 1810. A transcription of the diaries prepared by L. Tom Perry Special Collections Archivist and Department Chair, Russ Taylor, provides additional information about Grosvenor, among other items.

⁶ While no extant records explicitly indicate that Partridge made fur hats as opposed to other types of hats, the probability is high, particularly in light of his trip to Mackinaw, which was a center of fur trading. Ida Amanda Johnson, *The Michigan Fur Trade* (Grand Rapids: Black Letter Press, 1971), 129.

⁷ John Kilbourn, *The Ohio gazetteer, or, Topographical dictionary: containing a description of the several counties, towns, villages, settlements, roads, rivers, lakes, springs, mines, &c. in the state of Ohio : alphabetically arranged* (Columbus: J. Kilbourn, 1826), 158-59.

traveling routes, coupled with its proximity to Canada also made it a stop on the Underground Railroad as early as the 1820s.⁸

Such accessibility to waterways facilitated the establishment of several businesses. In 1826, less than a decade after Partridge's arrival in the town, Painesville boasted "a post office, six stores, a saw and grist mill, a fulling mill sundry carding machines, a carding machine factory, a very extensive tannery, a distillery three blacksmiths' shops, one tinner, three physicians, one lawyer, two taverns, with sundry mechanics not here mentioned."⁹ That same gazetteer described Painesville as "the most populous and flourishing of any in the county."¹⁰ The "heavily timbered" and "good" soil was interspersed with "extensive beds of ore," which led to the establishment of a furnace in Painesville and two others nearby.¹¹ By 1830, Painesville boasted approximately 1500 inhabitants, or one-tenth of the total population of Geauga County.¹²

Although Partridge had originally traveled to Painesville about 1817 to establish a branch of the business he shared with Marvin, he soon bought out Marvin's interest, and carried on the business himself. The following year, Partridge took a trip to Mackinaw, Michigan, from April 25 to July 31, 1818, during which he kept a diary.

⁸ Some of the names of those known to have participated in the Underground Railroad in Painesville, as mentioned in Wilbur Henry Siebert's *The Underground Railroad: From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), are found on the same elector lists of Painesville Poll Books as Edward Partridge in the 1820s. Painesville Poll Books, Lake County Historical Society, Microfilm at Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

⁹ Kilbourn, *The Ohio Gazetteer . . . Alphabetically Arranged*, 158-59.

¹⁰ Kilbourn, *The Ohio Gazetteer . . . Alphabetically Arranged*, 158.

¹¹ *The Ohio Gazetteer, or Topographical Dictionary: Being a Continuation of the Work Originally Compiled by the Late John Kilbourn* (Columbus: Scott and Wright, 1833), 215, 358.

¹² *The Ohio Gazetteer . . . a Continuation*, 215, 359. Painesville was part of Geauga County until 1840, when it became part of the newly created Lake County.

A trip to Mackinaw was potentially dangerous as well as lucrative. Less than six years before Partridge's trip, the British had captured Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island, an endeavor largely aided by Native Americans.¹³ Two years later, the British repelled an American attack on the island. The following year, 1815, saw the return of the fort to the United States in July as part of the peace treaty stipulation concluding the War of 1812. In 1816, just two years before Partridge traveled through the area, the United States saw a need to build additional military forts to protect those participating in the fur trade from Native American attacks.¹⁴ Knowledge of the preceding conflicts between British, Native Americans, and American settlers makes two lines from Partridge's journal especially meaningful. On June 18, Partridge noted in his diary the arrival of "upwards of 60 canoe loads of Indians." The following day, he commented, "they all got drunk."¹⁵ While a few years earlier that might have resulted in armed conflict, by the late 1810s, thousands of traders and Native Americans were gathering each summer to trade.¹⁶

Partridge joined the throngs of traders that summer, most likely to buy beaver pelts to supply his newly established factory and store. However, his initial business ventures there did not go well. He noted in his journal on June 29, 1818, almost two weeks after he had arrived in Mackinaw, "I opened shop with very unfavorable prospects." A few days later he wrote, "July 4th was a high day in the fort but I did not enjoy it as I heretofore have done owing to prospects

¹³ Native Americans made up 75 percent of the British force in the engagement. Helen Hornbeck Tanner and Adele Hast, eds., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 108.

¹⁴ Tanner and Hast, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, 108, 114-15, 121.

¹⁵ Edward Partridge, *Diary*, June 18 and 19, 1818, folder 1, EPP.

¹⁶ Johnson, *Michigan Fur Trade*, 126.

in business.” He remained in Mackinaw until July 22 when he set sail for home.¹⁷ No other surviving records refer to Mackinaw, so this may have been an exploratory mission, a one-time trip to supply his business, or perhaps a trip to establish trading relationships.

Despite “unfavorable prospects” in Mackinaw, Partridge’s business succeeded in Painesville. Partridge’s son later reported that Partridge prospered, “employing several hands in making hats and [keeping] a [h]at store.”¹⁸ In 1822, Partridge advertised in the *Painesville Telegraph* for an apprentice, stipulating that he be “A boy 13 or 14 years of age, who can come well recommended.”¹⁹ In addition to expanding his workforce, Partridge was also learning the intricacies of the credit networks of the antebellum period. In his study of rural capitalism in Massachusetts at this time period, historian Christopher Clark found that only a small percent of transactions used cash. Many of the payments were in produce. Additionally, once a transaction occurred, debtors often took months to pay their full share.²⁰ In her study of nineteenth-century Midwest community, historian Susan Sessions Rugh reported that into the 1840s farmers were still typically paying for store goods with farm produce.²¹

In the same advertisement for an apprentice, Partridge also issued a call for those indebted to him to pay their debts: “The subscriber calls loudly on all those indebted to him, to

¹⁷ Edward Partridge Diary, June 29, 1818, July 4 and 22, 1818, folder 1, EPP.

¹⁸ Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 2.

¹⁹ *Painesville Telegraph*, November 13, 1822.

²⁰ Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1990), 164-65.

²¹ Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 85.

make immediate payment. Those neglecting this call, must not be disappointed, if they have a louder one after the first day of January next, as greater lenity cannot consistently be given.”²²

Partridge needed the money to buy “seasonably caught Hatting and Shipping Furs” for the hats he made.²³

In his business, Partridge functioned as both a creditor and a debtor. In 1827, Partridge traveled to New York City on business. He later wrote of that time: “I purchased a lot of goods in my line of business which I paid for, and ^I became so acquainted with a number of merchants there that I made arrangements ^{with them} to obtain what goods I might want in future on a credit of six months.”²⁴ Partridge’s experience with credit networks in his hatting business helped prepare him for later credit transactions on behalf of the church.

While establishing his hatting business, Partridge also started a family. The summer after his trip to Mackinaw, on August 22, 1819, he married Lydia Clisbee. She was the daughter of Joseph Clisbee and Miriam Howe of Marlboro, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.²⁵ The Partridge family grew rapidly. Ultimately seven children were born to Edward and Lydia Partridge: Eliza Maria, born 20 April 1820; Harriet Pamela, born 1 Jan. 1822; Emily Dow, born 28 February 1824; Caroline Ely, born 8 January 1827; a baby boy, who died at birth; Lydia, born

²² *Painesville Telegraph*, November 13, 1822.

²³ *Painesville Telegraph*, November 13, 1822.

²⁴ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT. Partridge’s insertions by caret are included here in superscript.

²⁵ Record of Marriages in the County of Geauga, Probate Court, Geauga County Courthouse, book A, 113, microfilm in HBLL; See also Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 2; Lucretia Lyman Ranney, “My Children’s American Ancestry,” (n.p., 1959), 6.

8 May 1830; and Edward, Jr., born 25 June 1833.²⁶ Family ties are readily apparent in the naming of Partridge's children. Of the six children that lived long enough to receive a name, the first three were named after Partridge's and Lydia's sisters: Eliza Maria, Harriet Pamela, and Emily Dow. A daughter, Caroline, and then an unnamed infant son arrived before Partridge and his wife named their final two children after themselves: Lydia and Edward. Good feelings between Partridge and Lydia's families appear to have been mutual, for Lewis Clisbee, Lydia's brother who at least for a time lived in nearby Cleveland, Ohio, named his first son, "Edward Partridge Clisbee."²⁷

By 1820, Partridge was the head of a household of six which included himself, his wife, and their first child. In addition, a free white male and female, both aged 16-26, and a free white female under the age of 10 also lived in their home.²⁸ By 1830, Partridge's household had grown to include not only himself and his wife, but also five daughters, in addition to a 10-15 year old free white male and a free white female between 20 and 30 years old.²⁹ Partridge was prospering and the future must have looked bright.

During his time in Painesville, Partridge became not only the head of a household, but a leader in the community as well. He was elected treasurer of Painesville twice, and also served as

²⁶ Partridge, "Genealogical Record," 64.

²⁷ Edward Partridge, Notebook, 1835-6, folder 4, EPP.

²⁸ Since according to the census two people in the household were engaged in manufacturing, perhaps the other male was an associate of Partridge's, a journeyman, possibly, with a wife and child. Partridge's son later noted that Partridge's journeyman George D. Lee married Partridge's wife's sister (Phebe), so perhaps this was the couple. United States, Bureau of Census, *Population Schedules, 4th Census, 1820, Ohio* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1820), microfilm at Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

²⁹ United States, Bureau of Census, *Population Schedules, 5th Census, 1830, Ohio* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1830), microfilm at Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

a road supervisor. His potential for influence in the community was compounded by his reputation for honesty. In addition, he was an independent thinker, who, though willing to follow direction and counsel from leaders, also relied heavily on his own good judgment. Partridge's experience in buying and managing land most likely served to elevate his standing in the community, in addition to preparing him for the large number of land transactions he would engage in later for the Church.

On Oct. 13, 1818, the clerk of the Poll Book of Painesville Township recorded Edward Partridge for the first time as a voter in Painesville.³⁰ Partridge's participation in that election was the beginning of a habit that would continue throughout his time in Painesville. For the next seven years, with the exception of one election in which only 18 men participated, Partridge voted in every election. In 1825, he missed the October election (elections were usually held 2-3 times a year), which he also did in 1827 and 1828. The last recorded instance of Partridge voting in Painesville occurred on April 5, 1830.³¹

His participation in town politics did not end at the polling place. His townsmen indicated their respect and trust in Partridge by voting him into various positions over the years. In 1822, about five years after Partridge had moved to Painesville, he was unanimously voted as township treasurer.³² That fall, he received more than a dozen votes for Justice of the Peace, though

³⁰ Painesville, Ohio, Poll Book, Oct. 13, 1818, microfilm at Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

³¹ Painesville Poll Book, April 5, 1830.

³² Painesville Poll Book, April 1, 1822. There are no other names listed, so it is possible that he was the only one running. However, he still received 78 of 119 votes, which indicates that the men still made an effort to indicate that they were pleased with Partridge's running.

another man won.³³ When Partridge's time as treasurer was up the following April, he was again voted in unanimously as treasurer.³⁴ The following year, Abijah Merrill, the judge of several previous elections, and a man over fifteen years Partridge's senior, challenged Partridge for the office of treasurer. Partridge won handily: 97 to 23.³⁵ While any elected position to some degree requires trust, to be elected to the position of treasurer is an indication of townspeople's faith in Partridge's honesty.

On April 4, 1825, Partridge received 17 votes for position of trustee, though he did not receive the majority. However, the following year, he was a much stronger contestant, receiving 61 votes for trustee, only a few votes behind the top two contestants. That fall, on Oct. 10, 1826, Partridge served as one of the judges of the election.³⁶ In addition to the positions already mentioned, dates on road tax receipts indicate that Partridge was serving as a road supervisor of district number one at least during August 1827.³⁷ Partridge's election to various town offices is a mark of his townspeople's respect for him.

In addition to formal elections and indications of trust, Partridge may have served as an unofficial leader in the community. An Oct. 27, 1829, notice in the *Painesville Telegraph* informed the "householders of School District No. 6, in Painesville . . . to meet at the Hat Store

³³ Painesville Poll Book, Oct. 8, 1822.

³⁴ Painesville Poll Book, April 7, 1823.

³⁵ Painesville, Ohio, Poll Book, April 5, 1824. In addition, Partridge received a vote for supervisor of the 2nd district.

³⁶ Painesville Poll Book, April 4, 1825, Oct. 10, 1826.

³⁷ Painesville, Ohio, Road Tax Receipts, 1827, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

of E. Partridge on Monday the 2nd of November at 7 o'clock pm for the purpose of devising ways and means for purchasing a site and erecting a School House thereon and doing other school business."³⁸ This notice seems to indicate that Partridge's hat store was a community gathering place, thereby giving Partridge another opportunity to extend his influence to his neighbors. It also provides evidence of his support for public education long before it was state mandated.

Partridge's preparation for his calling as bishop is in part due to his experience in land purchasing and management. As a hatter, his business did not require land other than a lot for a factory, store, and house. His additional lands may have been used to grow a few crops for his family. They may also have been a means of consolidating his wealth. Land records indicate that Partridge purchased several properties, beginning in 1817 at the age of 24. He first bought approximately one-half acre on Main Street in Painesville (then called Champion).³⁹ Less than three years after his original purchase, he bought another half acre in town.⁴⁰ That same year, 1820, Partridge purchased from his wife's brother and sister-in-law Lewis and Hannah Clisbee 112.5 acres in Harpersfield in neighboring Ashtabula County.⁴¹ In January 1824, Partridge bought at auction another prime piece of real estate – again on Main Street and also bounded by the public square. Partridge's final land purchase in Painesville was for a plot of land nearly 20

³⁸ *Painesville Telegraph*, October 27, 1829.

³⁹ Geauga County Deed Record Books, Originals at County Courthouse at Chardon, Ohio, Vol. 6:237-38; microfilm at HBLL.

⁴⁰ Geauga County Deed Record Books, 7:373.

⁴¹ Ashtabula County Deed Records, Book C, microfilm at Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 529.

acres in size, purchased in 1828.⁴² Partridge sold only one town plat during that time period, and that was to the Presbyterian Church in 1825.⁴³ Partridge owned a total of three plots on Main Street, in addition over 130 acres in two different parcels of land. Owning five different properties provided him with experience in managing land.

Religious Background and Conversion

In the fall of 1830, four missionaries called at Partridge's hat shop. Lydia later recorded that her husband "told them he did not believe what they said, but believed them to be imposters. Oliver Cowdery said he was thankful there was a God in Heaven who knew the hearts of all men. After the men were gone my husband sent a man to follow them and get one of their books."⁴⁴ The missionaries preached a gospel of restoration of authority and organization from New Testament times. Their leader was a man by the name of Joseph Smith, who had seen a vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ in 1820. Ten years later, he organized The Church of Christ, later named The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Fayette, New York. Within a few months, he sent four men to the western borders of the United States to preach to

⁴² Geauga County Deed Record Books, Originals at County Courthouse at Chardon, Ohio, Vol. 9:407, 410; 12:349, microfilm at HBLL. Emily Dow Partridge Young, Partridge's daughter, later wrote that her parents also purchased a home in Kirtland, but "they never had the privilege of living there." "Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young," *Woman's Exponent*, December 1, 1884, 102.

⁴³ Geauga County Deed Record Books, Originals at County Courthouse at Chardon, Ohio, Vol. 10:249-50, microfilm at HBLL.

⁴⁴ "Genealogical Record," 5. The four men were Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson, who had been sent on a mission to the Lamanites. Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., ed. Brigham Henry Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), 1:118.

the Native Americans located there.⁴⁵ Along the way, these missionaries stopped in the Painesville area.

Parley P. Pratt, one of the four, described in his autobiography several decades later the general effect of their arrival in the Kirtland and Painesville area: “The news of our coming was soon noised abroad, and the news of the discovery of the Book of Mormon and the marvelous events connected with it. The interest and excitement now became general in Kirtland, and in all the region round about. . . . In two or three weeks from arrival in the neighborhood with the news, we had baptized one hundred and twenty-seven souls, and this number soon increased to one thousand.⁴⁶ Since the missionaries were given the privilege of preaching to local preacher Sidney Rigdon’s congregation, it is likely that the Partridges (who were affiliated with Rigdon’s congregation) heard some of the missionaries’ message in that setting also.⁴⁷ Lydia soon believed the message and was baptized, but Partridge resolved to meet Joseph Smith before being baptized.⁴⁸ The missionaries continued on their way to Missouri, after designating some residents to continue shepherding the flock.⁴⁹

Edward and Lydia Partridge had been involved in other churches previously. The subject of religion had been of interest to Partridge from young adulthood. Despite his ministerial

⁴⁵ Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 168-69, 173.

⁴⁶ Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, rev. ed., ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2000), 52.

⁴⁷ Bushman notes that many of Rigdon’s followers were converted, and their conversion – along with Rigdon’s – caused no small stir in the area; Bushman, 173, 179-80.

⁴⁸ Lydia Partridge, *Memoirs*, “Genealogical Record,” 5.

⁴⁹ Pratt, *Autobiography*, 52. Although Pratt mentions ordaining Partridge before leaving Kirtland, Pratt is mistaken, since Partridge was not even baptized until after he had made the trip to New York to meet Joseph.

heritage, by the age of twenty Partridge “had become disgusted with the religious world,” and “saw no beauty, comeliness, or loveliness in the character of God as represented by the teaching of the various religious sects.”⁵⁰ Though unaffiliated with a church in his youth, it was later recorded that “the Spirit of the Lord strove with him a number of times, insomuch that his heart was made tender, and he went and wept; and sometimes he went silently and poured the effusions of his soul to God in prayer.”⁵¹ At some point in time before joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he “heard a Universal Restorationer preach upon the love of God,” and the “sermon gave him exalted opinions of God.” He must have been familiar with the Bible, for after hearing the sermon, “he concluded that Universal Restoration was right according to the Bible.”⁵² A letter to his brother in 1839 confirms Partridge’s early knowledge of Biblical conditions of religion. He wrote, “The authority of the priesthood is a subject that I did not look into untill some time after I was convinced that there was not a true church, according to the Bible, among all the churches of my acquaintance; And when I discovered that they all were without authority from God, I was doubly confirmed in my opinion.”⁵³ Partridge sought a church with stronger claims to authority.

In 1828, he and Lydia were attracted to the teachings of Alexander Campbell, and were baptized by Sidney Rigdon (of neighboring Mentor) into the Church of Christ (Campbellite).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:129.

⁵¹ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:129.

⁵² Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:129.

⁵³ Edward Partridge to [unspecified] brother, May 26, 1839, folder 7, EPP.

⁵⁴ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:129; Lydia Partridge, *Memoirs*, “Genealogical Record,” 5.

Despite his baptism, Partridge was not fully convinced that the Church of Christ (Campbellite) was operating with authority from God. Within a year or two of baptism, as he later wrote, Partridge concluded that all the ministers with whom he had associated “were without authority from God,” and that it was “absolutely necessary that God should again reveal himself to man and confer authority upon some one, or more, before his church could be built up in the last days.”⁵⁵ Hoping that this Joseph Smith might be one who had authority from God, Partridge set out to meet him, since, as he once commented about his method of finding truth, “I place no great confidence in rumors.”⁵⁶

Despite the onset of winter, Partridge and Rigdon traveled to New York, arriving at the end of the year. Once in Manchester, they found the Smith farm, and observed the condition and upkeep of it before traveling to Joseph Smith’s parents’ home in Waterloo, where Joseph was preaching in a meeting. After Joseph finished speaking, he invited any who wished to make remarks to do so. Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph’s mother, reported in her history of her son’s life that Partridge stood and made some comments. The substance of his comments, as reported by Lucy Mack Smith, was that he had been to Manchester in order to “ascertain the truth of what [the Church] preached.”⁵⁷ A landowner himself, Partridge had not just spoken with the Smiths’ neighbors. He had also examined the Smiths’ farm to ascertain the work habits of their private lives. He reportedly noted the “neatness,” “order,” and “industry” of the farm and its upkeep, and was impressed to see what the Smiths “had sacr[i]ficed for the truth’s sake.” Once again,

⁵⁵ Edward Partridge to [unspecified] brother, May 26, 1839, folder 7, EPP.

⁵⁶ Genealogical Record, 11.

⁵⁷ Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 504.

Partridge's experience and interest in land is seen. Partridge also noted that he had learned from the Smiths' neighbors that "no one could say ought against the [Smiths]" before Joseph claimed to have received gold plates, indicating that the Smiths in general were respectable, and had only come into conflict with their neighbors on the matter of religion.⁵⁸

Partridge then asked Joseph, "will you baptize me[?]" Joseph expressed concern that Partridge was "[m]uch fatigued" and postponed the baptism until the following day, Dec. 11, 1830.⁵⁹ On Dec. 15, Partridge was given the Melchizedek Priesthood (power to officiate in the church) and ordained an elder by Sidney Rigdon.⁶⁰

Shortly after his baptism, Joseph called Partridge to go on a mission before returning home to Ohio. Partridge traveled to Massachusetts to share his newly found religion with his parents, siblings, and others. Though Partridge's father noted his son's arrival in his diary, he made no mention of its purpose. His entry for Dec. 23, 1830, read simply, "Edward came here." His entry for the third of January read, "Edward and Cotton [Edward's brother] went to Tyringham" and on the fifth simply, "[They] return'd."⁶¹ William makes no mention of his reaction to the message that Partridge brought, but overall, his family did not accept Partridge's new religion. Only Partridge's brother, James Harvey, joined. Partridge later recorded that his father "never was bitter

⁵⁸ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 504.

⁵⁹ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 504-05.

⁶⁰ Edward Partridge Elders License, 15 Dec. 1830, EPP.

⁶¹ William Partridge, Diaries, Dec. 23, 1830, Jan. 3 & 5, 1831, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBLL.

towards the book of Mormon as I know of though he did not receive it.”⁶² Instead, “he appeared to esteem it as a good book, but not equal to the Bible.”⁶³

Partridge later described his understanding of his family’s feelings at that time in a draft of a letter that he wrote to his parents and siblings in 1834: “When I was ^{last} at Mass. ~~last~~, almost four years ago some of my relatives as I have been informed thought me somewhat deluded, and for aught I know think the same of me yet.”⁶⁴ He was obviously somewhat hurt by his family’s rejection, and in that same letter wrote, “But this is what surprises me, ~~that is~~, that ^{you} my own dear relations do not place more confidence in what I say and write to ~~them~~ you.” He had also written, then crossed out, “I have declared the truth of this work to ^{most of} you ~~both~~ by mouth, and by letter ^{to some} in the most solemn manner, and yet as near as I can learn it is all like an idle tale ~~to you~~[.] Edward is deceived say you, and therefore we cannot give heed to what he says.”⁶⁵

Despite his family’s general disapproval, Partridge remained steadfast in his conviction.

While Partridge had been in Massachusetts, Joseph Smith had instructed all the saints in New York and Pennsylvania to move to Ohio. This move was in part because of the large number of converts in the Kirtland area (twelve miles from Painesville), and in part because of the persecution mounting against the church members in New York and Pennsylvania. Joseph moved to Ohio himself, bringing the church headquarters to

⁶² Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁶³ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁶⁴ Edward Partridge to his family (draft), 22 Oct. 1834, folder 6, EPP, 1.

⁶⁵ Edward Partridge to his family (draft), 22 Oct. 1834, folder 6, EPP, 7-8.

Kirtland, Ohio. Partridge returned from Massachusetts to New York in time to accompany Joseph and his wife Emma, as well as Sidney Rigdon, to Kirtland.⁶⁶ It is possible that Partridge's brother Harvey also accompanied this party to Ohio.⁶⁷

After an absence of several weeks, Partridge was no doubt anxious to report to his family and friends. After arriving home, he found out that his wife had been baptized in his absence.⁶⁸ She described her feelings in doing so: "I was induced to believe for the reason that I saw the Gospel in its plainness as it was in the New Testament, and I also knew that none of the sects of the day taught these things."⁶⁹

As newly baptized members of the Church, Partridge and his wife soon became hosts to a large number of saints moving to Ohio from New York. The trade routes which had previously brought furs and other supplies to the Partridges in Painesville now also brought newly baptized converts. Lucy Mack Smith noted that upon arriving in Ohio, Joseph took her and several other saints to the home of Edward Partridge, where, she wrote, "we found an excellent supper prepared for us."⁷⁰ While one such supper might

⁶⁶ Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 506.

⁶⁷ Partridge's brother James Harvey Partridge was called both "James" and "Harvey" by family members. Partridge indicated that his brother James Harvey also joined the church, and as of 1835 still held membership in the church. Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT. Edward Partridge, Junior, also claimed (in 1878) that Harvey had joined the church, but also that he later left it.

⁶⁸ Emily D. P. Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl," Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 5.

⁶⁹ Lydia Partridge, *Memoirs*, "Genealogical Record," 5. While some sources imply that Lydia was baptized in Partridge's absence, in her memoirs she wrote that she had been baptized by Parley P. Pratt, apparently before her husband left for New York.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 538. Lucy Mack Smith's group was one of the many that came through Fairport Harbor. See Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism*, 176.

only inconvenience the Partridges for a day, hosting saints constantly passing through must have exacted a toll on the Partridges, especially Lydia.

In the wake of their conversion to the church, the Partridge family's way of life had changed dramatically. Such changes were only the beginning of what was to come. Partridge was to receive the most challenging assignment of his life, but it was one for which he had unknowingly been preparing.

CHAPTER TWO

“ALL HIS TIME IN THE LABOURS OF THE CHURCH”:

PARTRIDGE AS FIRST BISHOP

Less than two months after Partridge’s baptism, on February 4, 1831, Joseph Smith received a revelation that called him to become the first bishop of the Church. Partridge was instructed to “leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labours of the Church,” and to “see to all things as it shall be appointed u[n]to him in my Laws in the day that I shall give them.”¹ Only five days later, an additional revelation contained warnings for Partridge. The revelation directed Partridge to “stand in the office wherewith I have appointed him,” and warned “it shall come to pass that if he transgress another shall be appointed in his stead.”² The position to which Joseph had appointed Partridge was one of great significance, as evidenced by the threats of dismissal upon failure.

The revelation calling Partridge to be bishop states that Partridge is a man whose “heart is pure before me” and “in whome there is no guile.”³ Seven months later, Joseph received a revelation commanding Partridge to repent of “unbelief and blindness of heart,” and warned, “let him take heed lest he fall.” These two extremes would play out throughout his assignment as

¹ Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 94-95. (These and other revelations received by Joseph Smith were later compiled into a book, now called *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. For convenience, the references in the 1986 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* are also included in this thesis, with the abbreviation “D&C” for *Doctrine and Covenants*, with the chapter and verse number following, separated by a colon, in standard Biblical citation; D&C 41:9. *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986].)

² Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 96-97; D&C 42:10.

³ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 94-95 (misspelling in original); D&C 41:11.

bishop and in his relationship with Joseph. Joseph was over ten years younger than Partridge and had never managed a business or led a large group of people before organizing the church. Partridge had been working in his trade for nearly two decades. For over a decade he had run his own business. In addition, he had had some experience serving in elected positions in Painesville. Yet both men shared a passion for building Zion, and both were anxious to see it come to pass. Joseph focused on the vision of the future reality of Zion, while Partridge was put in charge of the immediate, practical details of bringing that to pass. In the conflict between “seeing” the vision and administering the practical details, the men would inevitably clash at times. In addition, there was tension within Partridge as he struggled with seeing the vision and the reality of his job simultaneously.

Partridge served as the only bishop of the church for nearly a year, until December 1831, when Joseph called Newel K. Whitney to also be a bishop.⁴ Whitney also was a merchant. Joseph called men as bishops who were skilled at “managing” businesses. Joseph received a revelation in 1830 in which he learned, “in temporal labors thou shalt not have strength for this is not thy calling.”⁵ Thus, Joseph called others to manage the “temporal” (non-ecclesiastical) affairs, in order to enable him to fulfill his calling as “a seer a translater a prophet an apostle of Jesus Christ an elder of the church.”⁶

While the importance of the office was clear, the exact nature of the calling was slightly more vague. These bishops eventually “managed such Church temporal matters as paying bills,

⁴ By then, Partridge had moved to Missouri and he and Whitney initially fulfilled their responsibilities only in their own states. William G. Hartley, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1:119.

⁵ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 36-37; D&C 24:9.

⁶ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 26-27; D&C 21:1.

buying and selling lands and goods, helping with construction projects, printing, and assisting the poor.” As part of the attempt to live the law of consecration while in Missouri, Partridge also “signed consecration deeds, received donations into a Bishop’s storehouse, and deeded back donated and purchased properties based on members’ needs.”⁷ Though Partridge’s duties were primarily temporal, he also spent time instructing the saints on religious matters, and was later called on a mission with both temporal and spiritual aims.⁸

Yet at the time of Partridge’s call as bishop, both Partridge and Joseph had a limited understanding of everything the assignment would entail. Partridge learned piece by piece what his duties were. Basically, Partridge was to be responsible for anything Joseph asked him to do, but specifically at this point in time, his primary duty was to administer the law of consecration. The law of consecration has been much misunderstood by scholars of Mormon history. The basic tenets of the law were explained in the revelations received in February 1831. Essentially, the saints were to consecrate all their properties to the Lord through the bishop and his counselors “with a covenant & a deed which cannot be Broken.” The individual consecrating properties would then receive a stewardship back from the bishop, “as much as it shall be sufficient for himself & family.” Any property remaining in the hands of the bishop was kept to be used for “administer[ing] to the poor & needy,” “purchaseing lands,” and “building up . . . the New [Jerusalem].”⁹

⁷ Hartley, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:119. Though the office would later carry with it more ecclesiastical duties, in Partridge’s time, “bishops were concerned primarily with the temporal needs of the Church, and spiritual needs were left to the Prophet.” Since the prophet resided in Kirtland though, at least for a time Partridge was recognized as spiritual as well as temporal leader in Missouri. See Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1983), 65.

⁸ See, for example, *Far West Record*, 13.

⁹ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 98-101; D&C 42:34-35.

Partridge did not have to wait long for his first major attempt at implementing the law of consecration. In April 1831, a group of saints from Colesville, New York, had left their homes, traveling as commanded by revelation to Ohio. Partridge's first task was to provide a place for the saints to live once they arrived in Ohio in May. Church member Lemman Copley stepped forward and proposed that the saints settle on a portion of his property in nearby Thompson. With the land problem solved, Partridge now turned to his second-most pressing issue: the specific organization of the saints on Copley's land and the general administration of church property. Partridge might have figured out a plan himself, or turned to other communal societies' structures for an answer. Instead, he turned to the young prophet and seer Joseph for direction. This act signifies Partridge's humility and willingness to trust someone much younger than himself, one who had much less experience in management of groups of people, products, and land.

Joseph, in his role of seer (one who "sees"), presented Partridge with a revelation which answered Partridge's questions.¹⁰ The revelation reflected a consciousness of civil law as well as a spiritual aspect. It included the directive to "let my Servent Edward Patrage & those whom he has chosen in whom I am well pleased appoint unto this People their portion every man alike according to their families according to their wants & their needs." Not only was Partridge to "appoint . . . their portion," but it was directed "when he shall appoint a man his portion give unto him a writing that shall secure unto him his portion."¹¹ This writing ensured that if "the stewards [those possessing the deeded property] should be excommunicated, they would keep

¹⁰ Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine & Covenants: A Guided Tour Through Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 181.

¹¹ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 144-45; D&C 51:3-4.

the property the bishop had deeded to them.”¹² However, any property that they had already consecrated which had *not* been deeded back, donors could no longer legally claim. With time, church leaders made changes to the system to account for those that committed and then backed out. The system eventually accounted for the possibility that some members initially willing to participate would eventually back out.

One such individual was described in *The Evening and Morning Star* in the July 1833 edition. The article reported that “One Bates from New-London, Ohio, who subscribed fifty dollars for the purpose of purchasing lands, and the necessaries for the saints, after his arrival here [in Missouri], sued Edward Partridge and obtained a judgment for the same.”¹³ Apparently some in the early church felt that their “donations” were instead payments for guaranteed pieces of property or other tangible goods.

In order to prevent further confusion, the church leaders in Missouri clarified that once money or property was donated to the church, it could not be reclaimed: “No man that has consecrated property to the Lord, for the benefit of the poor and the needy, by a deed of gift according to the laws of the land, has thought of suing for it, any more than the men of the world, who give, or donate to build meeting houses, and colleges.”¹⁴ The article further noted that “Bates shortly after denied the faith and run away on Sunday, leaving debts unpaid.”¹⁵

¹² Harper, *Making Sense*, 183.

¹³ “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, In Love, Greeting,” *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833.

¹⁴ “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, In Love, Greeting,” *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833.

¹⁵ “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, In Love, Greeting,” *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833.

The question of personal property was also addressed by revelation. Partridge was directed to “appoint a storehouse unto this Church & let all things both in money & in meat which is more than is needful for the want of this People be kept in the hands of the Bishop.”¹⁶ A final provision solved Partridge’s probable question of how he would provide for his family if he left his business. He was counseled to “reserve unto himself for his own wants & for the wants of his family [from the consecrated properties] as he shall be employed in doing this Business.”¹⁷ While this could have sowed seeds of later criticism, since he would have power to reserve for his family’s needs any amount of property that he deemed “necessary,” no surviving records include any accusations that Partridge held back more than was needful for his family.

Such a system seemed ideal. It might have worked, had not Copley suffered some misgivings about his offer. When Partridge, according to the revelation, approached Copley to obtain a deed for the portion of the land that the Colesville saints were settling on, Copley chose not to grant the deed. Instead, he rescinded his offer entirely and evicted the saints from his land. Furthermore, instead of compensating the saints for the improvements they had made while living there, Copley charged them money for “damages,” which Colesville saint Joseph Knight noted included “putting up [Copley’s] houses and planting [Copley’s] ground.”¹⁸ After this event, Joseph Smith received a revelation directing the Colesville saints to move to Missouri, the place where all the church would eventually build “Zion.” The stalwart Colesville saints turned their faces and wagons westward for the second time that year and headed towards Missouri.

¹⁶ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 144-47; D&C 51:13.

¹⁷ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 144-47; D&C 51:14.

¹⁸ Harper, *Making Sense*, 184, 192.

They became some of the first saints to settle there, arriving at the end of July.¹⁹ While Partridge must have been frustrated at Copley's decision to withdraw his offer, it was only the beginning of frustrations in dealing with those who struggled to live the law of consecration—some before and some after committing themselves. Partridge would soon be called to sacrifice even more than his time, his business and his land: he would next be asked to give up the company of his family and a society in which he was well respected.

Missouri

On June 7, 1831, at a conference of the church approximately six months after Partridge's baptism, Joseph received a revelation calling Partridge to leave Painesville and his family, and travel to Missouri with other early Church leaders.²⁰ Some might have said that the timing couldn't have been worse. In previously hosting traveling saints, Partridge had also exposed his family to whatever diseases the travelers brought with them. Later accounts indicate that the Partridge children were exposed to and caught the measles from one group of visitors around this time, and were still recovering from them at the time of Partridge's call to Missouri. In addition, Eliza, the oldest child, was sick with "lung fever."²¹ Though his neighbors pronounced him crazy for leaving, Partridge nonetheless trusted that God would watch over his family, and departed on his assigned journey to Missouri.²² Partridge probably felt tension as he saw with his own eyes

¹⁹ Dean C. Jessee, ed., "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 38-39.

²⁰ Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 146-49; D&C 52:24.

²¹ Partridge, "Genealogical Record," 6. Lung fever was an earlier name for pneumonia.

²² Partridge, "Genealogical Record," 6.

his family's sickly condition, yet he heeded Joseph's call to leave them in God's care. He must have fervently hoped and believed that Joseph was seeing God's will correctly.

Partridge left with Joseph Smith and a few others on June 19, 1831, for what Partridge anticipated would be a trip of a few months. They arrived in Independence in the middle of July.²³ In Independence, Missouri, they met some of the same missionaries that had converted Partridge several months earlier and then had continued on their way to their assigned mission to Missouri, arriving in January 1831. These missionaries had begun preaching to the local Shawnee and Delaware tribes, as well as some of the white settlers, where they found some success.²⁴

While in Missouri, Joseph designated Jackson County as the place the Lord intended the saints to build Zion.²⁵ Partridge's efforts to administer the law of consecration were key in the saints' attempt to establish "Zion," – defined in their scripture as a place where the people live God's commandments and "there [are] no poor among them."²⁶ Joseph also selected the location on which the church members planned to build a temple as part of their Zion society. Joseph then returned to Ohio, leaving Partridge in charge of preparing the way in Missouri by purchasing land. Partridge had less than three weeks to prepare for the arrival of the Colesville travelers. They arrived before he could secure land for them to settle on, so they "all crowded into two

²³ Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed., ed. Brigham Henry Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), 1:188.

²⁴ Leland H. Gentry, "Light on the 'Mission to the Lamanites,'" *BYU Studies* 36, no. 2 (1996-97), 229; Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:185.

²⁵ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:182-83.

²⁶ Moses 7:18. The book entitled Moses is scripture similar to the Bible, but it was translated by Joseph Smith and later included in the canon of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

small log houses.”²⁷ Though the physical facilities were not adequate, the land itself would prove to be.

An early church member, perhaps Sidney Rigdon, wrote that “The soil is rich and fertile; from three to ten feet deep, and generally composed of a rich black mould, intermingled with clay and sand. It yields in abundance, wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, cotton and many other common agricultural products.”²⁸ Perhaps viewing the land with the eye of one who believed that this would be a “land of milk and honey,” he also wrote, “Horses, cattle and hogs . . . are tolerably plentiful and seem nearly to raise themselves by grazing in the vast prairie range in summer, and feeding upon the bottoms in winter. . . . Buffalo, elk, deer, bear, wolves, beaver and many smaller animals here roam at pleasure. Turkeys, geese, swans, ducks . . . are among the rich abundance that grace the delightful regions of this goodly land.”²⁹ Though this description was likely boosterism, others traveling in the region also admired the beauties of the land. Of Independence itself, early Church member Ezra Booth related that “It is a new town, containing a court-house built of brick, two or three merchant’s stores, and 15 or 20 dwelling houses, built mostly of logs hewed on both sides; and is situated on a handsome rise of ground.”³⁰ In 1830, Independence had a population of 2,822, including 193 slaves.³¹

²⁷ Edward Partridge to Lydia Partridge, Aug. 5, 1831, “Genealogical Record,” 7.

²⁸ Smith et al., *History of the Church* 1:197-98. Rigdon had been commanded in a revelation to write a description of the land. Jensen, Woodford, and Harper, *Joseph Smith Papers*, 166-67; D&C 58:50.

²⁹ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 1:197-98.

³⁰ Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: E.D. Howe, 1834), 196.

³¹ Lyle Wesley Dorsett, “Slaveholding in Jackson County, Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 20, no. 1 (October 1963): 26.

Partridge began purchasing land only a few weeks after he arrived in Missouri. His name first appears in Jackson County records with a purchase of property in the town of Independence in August 1831.³² Though Partridge was able to immediately purchase land in the town of Independence, he had to wait until the federal land sales in December to purchase some of the desired property outside the village itself.³³ Partridge's desire to return to his home and family in Painesville that fall was not to be realized.

Instead, he had to content himself with writing a letter to Lydia with his news that he wasn't returning that fall and that Lydia and the girls were to join him in Missouri. Perhaps anxious to soften the blow, Partridge points out that it was by revelation that this assignment had come, and therefore felt it was the will of God.³⁴ Though this—and other separations—undoubtedly posed hardships to Partridge and his family, the letters he wrote while away are invaluable to us as they provide a window into Partridge's thoughts. (Unfortunately, no letters written to Partridge from his wife or children are known to survive, though he refers to their letters in his own writings.)

Perhaps overwhelmed, Partridge wrote of his charge in a letter dated August 5 & 6, 1831, to his wife Lydia: "You will perceive by the commandments recd here (which our brethren will carry home) that Brothers Morley, Corral & Phelps and myself are to plant ourselves and our families here as soon as consistant." After noting that Sidney Gilbert would be leaving Missouri

³² For information about Partridge's land purchases, see the following sources: Twylia Brand, *Jackson County, Mo. Deeds* (Independence, MO: Jackson County Genealogical Society, 2001); Gregory A. Boyd, *Family Maps of Jackson County, Missouri: With Homesteads, Roads, Waterways, Towns, Cemeteries, Railroads, and More* (Norman, OK: Arphax Pub. Co., 2005); Rollin J. Britton, "Mormon Land Titles: A Story of Jackson County Real Estate," *Missouri Valley Historical Society Publication* 1 no. 2 (December 1922):145-53.

³³ Edward Partridge to Lydia Partridge, Aug. 5, 1831, "Genealogical Record," 6.

³⁴ Edward Partridge to Lydia Partridge, Aug. 5, 1831, "Genealogical Record," 6.

temporarily, Partridge pointed out that “As bro. Gilbert or I must be here to attend the sales in Dec. & not knowing that he can get back by that time I have thought it advisable to stay here for the present, contrary to my expectations.” He suggested that perhaps Lydia travel with Gilbert and Phelps and their families on their return journey to Missouri that fall, but left it, as he wrote, “to your discretion and the advice of friends.” To these friends and to others in the area—including Lydia’s relatives—Partridge wished to return and bid goodbye, realizing that he might never come back to Painesville. He wrote, “I feel a great desire to return once more, and bid your connexion and my friends & acquaintances an eternal farewell.”³⁵ Partridge wouldn’t return to Painesville for another four years, and then only for a few months.³⁶

In a mixture perhaps of humility and self-doubt, Partridge wrote in his final lines: “You know that I stand in an important station, and as I am occasionally chastened I sometimes feel as though I must fall, not to give up the cause, but I fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father.” To his ever-faithful Lydia, who would follow him and the church through countless moves for the rest of her life, he added a final plea: “Pray for me that I may not fall.”³⁷ His letter reflects his sense of intimidation and his risk of failure—undoubtedly a new sensation for a man who had not seemed to fail at anything. Yet, the diligence that had propelled him to success in earlier endeavors also is apparent in the letter.

Lydia decided to travel that fall, setting out with her five young daughters, Eliza (age 11), Harriet (nine), Emily (seven), Caroline (four), and Lydia (one), in company with Isaac Morley’s wife, Lucy, and their children, as well as Gilbert (a Kirtland merchant and convert) and W.W.

³⁵ Edward Partridge to Lydia Partridge, Aug. 5, 1831, “Genealogical Record,” 7.

³⁶ Partridge visited Painesville in between his two missions in 1835, and then spent the winter of 1835-36 in Kirtland, leaving him close enough to visit as needed. Edward Partridge Diary, folder 2, EPP.

³⁷ Edward Partridge to Lydia Partridge, Aug. 5, 1831, “Genealogical Record,” 6-7.

Phelps (another convert).³⁸ Lydia left behind the grave of her only son, who had died shortly after birth in 1829, in addition to their established home and property, perhaps sensing that she would never see them again. Additionally, Lydia left behind family members in Ohio.

While Lydia and the girls were traveling to Missouri, Partridge was preparing a place for the saints to settle by buying land on a larger scale than he ever had before. Having arrived mid-July, Partridge lost no time, and by July 26, 1831, he had purchased four tracts of land about twelve miles southwest of Independence in Kaw township.³⁹ Less than two weeks later, Partridge had purchased two lots in Independence (ironically located on Liberty Street), one of which included a brick structure that was used for a printing house. Over the course of the next several months, Partridge purchased approximately twelve hundred acres, expending \$8,449.90 for it and other necessary resources.⁴⁰ According to his May 15, 1839 affidavit, by the time he was forced out of Jackson County in November 1833, he held title on behalf of the church to 2,136 acres of land, as well as two village lots in Independence.⁴¹

Once he bought the land, Partridge was faced with the task of dividing it amongst hundreds of saints. Those whose primary occupation was farming usually received between 20 and 30 acres to farm to support themselves and their families.⁴² In addition to dividing the land

³⁸ Lydia Partridge, *Memoirs*, quoted in “Genealogical Record,” 8; Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl,” Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT, 13.

³⁹ Max H. Parkin, “Joseph Smith and the United Firm: The Growth and Decline of the Church’s First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834,” Online Version (Definitive) *BYU Studies* 46, no. 3 (2007), 24, <http://byustudies.byu.edu/dailypdfs/46.3ParkinONLINE.pdf> (accessed Nov. 29, 2008).

⁴⁰ Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith, Jan. 28, 1832, as quoted in Cannon and Cook, eds., *Far West Record*, 233, 236-37.

⁴¹ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP.

⁴² Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 24.

and preparing consecration deeds, Partridge was also key in establishing the entire society. Less than a year after he arrived, at a meeting held in January 1832, those assembled agreed that “the Bishop be instructed to request the Churches in the east to send to this land a blacksmith, two shoemakers, a carpenter” There followed a list of eight other occupations needed, including “one hatter.” Partridge was too busy to attend to making hats, and no doubt felt the weight of governing a society that lacked these essential occupations, though it is possible that the saints were able to find these services in Independence for the time being.

As soon as—or faster than—Partridge could buy land, saints arrived to occupy it. They began moving to Zion in throngs. The new settlers built homes and began raising crops on the land that Partridge had purchased. Within two years, these Mormon converts constituted one-third of Jackson County’s population, or about 1,200 settlers.⁴³ Most of them settled on farms outside of Independence. They quickly set up a printing press and began printing their own newspaper, the *Evening and Morning Star*, in 1832.⁴⁴ The gathering saints initially included some of Lydia’s family. In Partridge’s later writings, though the reference is vague, he seems to indicate that he was speaking of Lydia’s brother and sister-in-law, Lyman and Hannah Clisbee, when he wrote “They afterwards embraced the ^{fulness of the} gospel of Christ and started to journey to Mo. but were taken sick in Springfield Ill. and died after about 4 weeks sickness within about 3 days of each other”⁴⁵

⁴³ “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, In Love, Greeting,” *Evening and Morning Star*, July 1833; T. Edgar Lyon, “Independence, Missouri, and the Mormons, 1827-1833,” *BYU Studies* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1972): 4.

⁴⁴ *Evening and Morning Star*, June 1832.

⁴⁵ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

In addition to the trials of organizing properties in Missouri, Partridge perhaps still worried about his Ohio properties, left in the care of his agents Titus Billings and D. H. Redfield, which had not yet sold. On November 8, 1831, five months after Partridge had left Ohio, D. H. Redfield wrote him a letter, which included some updates on the property. While the Harpersfield property had sold, it had sold for only “a horse, Saddle and bridle.” Partridge’s wood lot and orchard had not yet sold. Redfield wrote that he planned to close the shop early in 1832 and that he was still trying to collect Partridge’s debts.⁴⁶

Six months later, land transactions were still being made on Partridge’s behalf in Ohio. Titus Billings, Partridge’s “true and lawful attorney,” who had been authorized to sell the Partridges’ properties, made a deed for the sale of land to George Williams on March 6, 1832.⁴⁷ For some reason, though the sale had been “attempted to be conveyed” in March, there were legal difficulties. Despite the power of attorney recorded earlier, Billings was apparently unable to sell the land without the Partridges’ written consent. Partridge was required to send a deed signed by himself and Lydia from Missouri. The March transaction was rerecorded in the Geauga County deed record books a few months later from a deed that had actually been signed by the Partridges themselves and sent from Missouri. Perhaps hoping to avoid further delays, Partridge and Lydia actually signed at least five different notarized deeds on May 2, 1832, in

⁴⁶ D. H. Redfield to Edward Partridge, Nov. 8, 1831, folder 5, EPP.

⁴⁷ Though Redfield wrote Partridge concerning the sale of Partridge’s properties, according to county records, Partridge only gave Titus Billings power of attorney. Geauga County Deed Record Books, originals at County Courthouse at Chardon, Ohio, Vol.14:427, 15:331, microfilm at HBL.

Missouri, authorizing the sale of various properties in Ohio, including the one to George Williams.⁴⁸

Partridge faced difficulties not only in the realm of land management in his formal church assignment and personal affairs, but also in other areas of his assignment and personal life. Yet Partridge's experiences in business, community leadership, land dealings, and personal relationships had prepared him for such a calling. He brought with him experience managing money, people, and property. In a blessing given him a few years later, he was fittingly told, "Thou shalt stand in thy office untill thou art weary of it and shall desire to resign it that thou mayest rest for a little season."⁴⁹ Despite the challenges, Partridge refused to resign his calling, making the best of an extremely trying situation.

Conflicts Within

Unfortunately, in addition to land troubles, Partridge was also having personal conflicts in his calling. It is possible that the determination or stubbornness that led him to persevere in his calling also led to personal conflicts. By January 1832, the pressing issue came to the attention of a conference of the Church held in Missouri:

Brother Partridge brought forward certain letters written by Brother Sidney Rigdon, one addressed to himself, bearing the date of Kirtland, September 10th 1831, and another addressed to John Corrill and Isaac Morley, dated Hiram, Portage Co., Ohio, November 4, 1831.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Geauga County Deed Record Books, Originals at County Courthouse at Chardon, Ohio, Vol. 15:331, Vol. 16:15, 249, 321, 351; microfilm at HBLL; Ashtabula County Deed Records, Books L:407-08; M:328-30, microfilm at Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁴⁹ Edward Partridge, copy of patriarchal blessing, May 4, 1835, folder 10, EPP. A patriarchal blessing is a personalized, individual blessing given to a member of the church by one specially designated to pronounce such blessings. The words of the blessing are usually recorded.

⁵⁰ D. Brent Collette, "In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed Through the Life of Edward Partridge" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977), 50.

After sharing the letters with the conference, the men noted that “Rigdon has preferred certain charges against the said Bishop (Edward Partridge) detrimental to his character and standing as a Bishop in the Church of Christ.” However, since the men gathered in the conference felt it unfair to hold a trial in Rigdon’s absence, they recommended “that the Elders stationed in this land converse with the said Sidney Rigdon a friendly letter, advising that this difficulty be settled.” It is insightful to note that they felt it was not simply a personal conflict, but was a “wound in the Church.”⁵¹

The exact nature of the conflict remains a mystery. According to one source, the disagreement may have been over ultimate authority, but instead of expressing itself solely between Partridge and Joseph, the conflict arose primarily between Partridge and Rigdon.⁵² That these two men from neighboring Painesville and Mentor would clash is not surprising. Both Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge were straightforward – to the point of being tactless. Yet they had enjoyed a close association for some time: Rigdon had baptized Partridge into his church and they had traveled over two hundred miles together to meet Joseph Smith in the early winter of 1830.⁵³ Born the same year, they married within a year of each other, and they had both

⁵¹ Collette, 50-51.

⁵² The account in *History of the Church* seems to indicate this, since it records that Partridge formally extended the “right hand of fellowship” to Joseph, but then also felt a need to settle differences with Rigdon in between meetings. (Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:267). An additional reference to the possible nature of this conflict comes from an address given by Apostle John Taylor, delivered in 1879. Taylor noted that at one time, Partridge “thought he ought to manage some things irrespective of Joseph, which caused Joseph to speak rather sharply to him. Joseph said, I wish you to understand that I am President of this Church, and I am your President, and I preside over you and all your affairs.” John Taylor, “All Temporal Concerns Need the Attention of the Saints,” April 9, 1879, in *Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F.D. and S.W. Richards, 1854-86), 21:36.

⁵³ In a short biographical sketch about Sidney Rigdon, Roy Cheville noted that Rigdon was a frontier preacher in two respects: “He lived on the geographical frontier. He spoke on the doctrinal frontier.” Roy Cheville, *They Made a Difference* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1970), 72.

moved to Geauga County by 1825. Both were leaders in the community—Partridge a civic and influential leader, Rigdon a church leader. Prior to 1830, in matters of religion, Rigdon had always been the leader. Since the church had been organized only in 1830, the hierarchy of church leadership was not well understood. It is possible that Partridge viewed himself as the ultimate authority in Missouri, refusing to obey counsel from leaders in Kirtland or perhaps he was simply exercising what he felt was a democratic prerogative.

This may have been the prompting motive for a conference held in April of that year. Joseph traveled from Ohio to be there personally. In the conference, Partridge offered “the right hand of fellowship” to Joseph in a scene “solemn, impressive and delightful.” Outside of the meetings themselves, the “difficulty or hardness which had existed between Bishop Partridge and Elder Rigdon, was amicably settled.”⁵⁴ This appears to have been the end of the conflict.⁵⁵

Despite these difficulties, Partridge was spending most of his time administering the law of consecration. His background and experience proved invaluable. He was familiar with land purchasing, and as a hatter was familiar with the intricate credit networks of the antebellum United States.⁵⁶ He also had experience in going to a new frontier and beginning an enterprise

⁵⁴ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:267.

⁵⁵ Some scholars disagree. D. Brent Collette claims that Partridge continued to rebel against authority, leading to a controversial and much misunderstood revelation given through Joseph on November 27, 1832. Recorded in the form of a letter to W.W. Phelps, then in Missouri, it warns that “that man who was called of God and appointed that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God [overstep his authority in the Church], shall fall by the shaft of death.” (See Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed., [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002], 286, 90.) Many scholars and church leaders have felt that this may have been referring to Edward Partridge. However, in a letter to Oliver Cowdery, Joseph later clarified that the prophecy “‘does not mean that any had’ steadied the ark ‘at that time, but it was given as a caution to those in high standing to beware, lest they should fall by the vivid shaft of death as the Lord had said.’” Oliver Cowdery to John Whitmer, January 1, 1834, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, as quoted in Harper, *Making Sense*, 305. See also Collette, 50-55; for a summary of these arguments, see Bill Shepard, “‘To Set in Order the House of God’: The Search for the Elusive ‘One Mighty and Strong’” *Dialogue* 39, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 18-45.

⁵⁶ See Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism; Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1990).

(he had traveled twice to new areas to establish a branch of his hatting business in both Painesville and in Mackinaw). In Painesville, he was originally there under the umbrella of his associate, Asa Marvin, and so he had at least some experience in establishing a branch of the business far from the “headquarters” as it were. Perhaps his experience in buying out Marvin’s interest in Ohio led to his feeling that perhaps he knew better than the leaders in Kirtland.

Additionally, Partridge’s lifetime experience and reputation of gaining people’s trust surely proved useful. Events such as his selection as one who could honestly evaluate this new religion based in New York indicate a level of trust not present in every person. The saints’ time in Missouri was one period when he needed desperately to be trusted by the saints in his administration of their inheritances, his use of their money to purchase land for the common good, and his leadership in a new community governed by rules which were constantly changing.

Partridge needed the trust of the people as he administered stewardships. He had to determine how specific to be in determining stewardships. Perhaps prompted by a request from Partridge, Joseph Smith counseled Partridge to not “condescend to very great particulars in taking inventories.” He continued, “A man is bound by the law of the Church, to consecrate to the Bishop, before he can be considered a legal heir to the kingdom of Zion; and this, too, without constraint; and unless he does this, he cannot be acknowledged before the Lord on the Church Book.”⁵⁷ It was the responsibility of the individual church members to bring their consecrations forward, and not Partridge’s responsibility to seek out the minutiae of their property.

⁵⁷ Joseph Smith to Edward Partridge, June 25, 1833, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

Never More to Part

In addition to the conflicts within the church, there were also rumblings of a far larger conflict coming from outside of the church. The large influx of Mormon settlers soon caused the non-Mormon residents to become concerned. Missourians began to fear—with reason—that saints were settling in such large numbers that they would soon control the local government. Control of the local government by any other denomination would not have concerned the Missourians as much as domination by the Mormon settlers. The Missourians viewed the Mormon settlers as religious eccentrics who believed in a prophet and blindly followed him. Some saints added to the conflict by tactlessly informing the local residents that God had chosen the saints to inherit the land of Jackson County and those who failed to conform to the practices of the Mormon belief system would be “cut off.”⁵⁸ Along with these wide religious differences, the original settlers of Jackson County were primarily from the southern states, and had a dissimilar culture, political temperament, economic practices, and beliefs about slavery.⁵⁹

The population, though at times friendly, was considered somewhat uncivilized by some of their contemporaries. Robert Wilson, the first county clerk of Jackson County, was so “unfavorably impressed with what he regarded the rough exterior and uncultivated manners of the people, and the unfavorable prospects of ultimate civilization and refinement, that he gave up his position in disgust.”⁶⁰ These rough men often came to Jackson County—and Independence specifically—because of its proximity to the United States’ border, and the ease of escaping

⁵⁸ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 1:396.

⁵⁹ For a further treatment of the causes of conflict between the Mormon settlers and the original settlers, see Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987).

⁶⁰ Parkin, “Joseph Smith and the United Firm,” 10.

federal law when needed.⁶¹ Missourian Joseph McGee, of a neighboring county, characterized those living around him as “a rough, uneducated class, delighting in fighting and quarreling,” but also pointed out that many were “in the main hospitable.”⁶²

As more and more Mormon newcomers settled, one of the local residents called the Mormon people a “*tribe of locusts* that . . . threaten[ed] to scorch and wither the herbage of a fair and goodly portion of Missouri.”⁶³ Name calling was not one sided. In one of his early letters from Independence, Oliver Cowdery had referred to at least some of the residents as “scorpions.”⁶⁴ Tensions soon boiled over into acts of violence on both sides, but primarily towards the saints.

As the conflict escalated, Missourians began targeting church leaders like Bishop Partridge. As mentioned, on July 20, 1833, Partridge was tarred and feathered in Independence. Though the tarring and feathering was not intended to kill him, others threatened to do so. Partridge later wrote:

My life was threatened by ^{one of} the head men of the mob, saying that if he lived till the next tuesday night I should die. (that was the day the mob had set for their next meeting.) Teusday came and while I waited for the mob to come and take me, (for I waited till about noon) I had many disagreeable sensations running through my mind. ~~I~~ I waited till about noon, in the mean time 2 or 3 of the mob rode past my house but said nothing to me.⁶⁵

⁶¹ William Wines Phelps, who in 1836 spoke so positively of the settlers in the northern areas of Missouri, after a month’s residence in the Independence area wrote of the inhabitants of Independence, “The people are proverbially idle or lazy, and mostly ignorant.” Parkin, “Joseph Smith and the United Firm,” 10.

⁶² LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 19.

⁶³ Warren A. Jennings, “Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1967): 63.

⁶⁴ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 1:182-83.

⁶⁵ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

Partridge's courage in remaining with his beloved saints is admirable. Partridge was then summoned to a council of the church leaders in Independence. Hoping to appease the Missourians, Partridge and five other men offered themselves as a ransom for the church, "being willing to be scourged or to die if that would appease the anger of the mob against the Saints," but their offer was refused.⁶⁶ The leaders of the church requested three months to consult with the leaders of the church in Ohio as to their best course of action. Their request was denied. They then requested ten days. They were again denied. Instead, the delegation of Missourians gave them fifteen minutes.⁶⁷ The delegation from the mob forced the saints to agree to leave the county: half of them by Jan. 1, 1834, and the other half by April 1, 1834.⁶⁸

The original stipulations of the July 23 agreement stated that if Partridge and W.W. Phelps moved their families by Jan. 1, 1834, "they themselves will be allowed to go and come, in order to transact and wind up their business."⁶⁹ However, in November the Jackson County mobs came again against the saints, resulting in the forced evacuation earlier than the original terms of settlement. Partridge's permission to travel freely was apparently similarly ignored, as he recorded in his affidavit on May 15, 1839: "Such have been the threats of the people of that county that I have never to this day dared to go on to, much less settle upon, my lands there, though I still own some there yet."⁷⁰ Since it was unsafe for Partridge to travel to Jackson County

⁶⁶ Smith, et al., *History of the Church* 1:394. The other men were Isaac Morley, Sidney Gilbert, William W. Phelps, John Whitmer and John Corrill.

⁶⁷ B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century 1*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1: 332.

⁶⁸ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:394.

⁶⁹ Smith et al., *History of the Church*, 1:394.

⁷⁰ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP.

personally, he gave a power of attorney to an agent, David Rogers, to return in 1838 and pay the accumulated taxes and sell the lands.⁷¹

In his few years of residence, Partridge had obtained on behalf of the church over two thousand acres of land for the saints.⁷² Only a few lots were purchased in the town of Independence itself; the majority were outside the town, providing farmland for the incoming saints. A typical purchase was 80 or 160 acres in size. Aside from a few purchases recorded in 1831 and 1832, the majority of his purchases were recorded after he left the county.

In November 1833, Partridge moved his family from Jackson County across the Missouri river to the north into Clay County, where they would live until the fall of 1836.⁷³ According to a state tax list, Partridge didn't own any property in Clay County as of 1836.⁷⁴ If he purchased any, he had sold it before he moved. A little over a year after their move there, Partridge left on the first of two missions within a year. The first was en route from Missouri to Kirtland with companion Thomas B. Marsh from Jan. 27, 1835 to April 29, 1835, and included traveling by foot in the bitter cold most of the way. Partridge remarked in one entry: "we were told that early

⁷¹ Rogers's courage in accepting this assignment is remarkable. Though he had recently arrived from New York City and was personally unknown to the Missourians, once he registered his power of attorney from Partridge and began selling Mormon lands, he was quickly identified as a Mormon representative. In a statement prepared a few months after his return, Rogers recounted his experiences. After the sale of the first piece of land (the day after his arrival in Jackson County) he wrote that he "met a Posse of about 40 men who on coming up to us opened to the right and left and formed a hollow square, with ourselves inside on looking around I saw the people on every side coming until the crowd would have numbered some three hundred." Though the posse demanded that he "deliver up to them the money and property for which I had sold the land" and "leave the county before sun set" or they would kill him, he reported that when given the chance to speak, he managed to disperse the mob without violence, allowing him to successfully sell "all the land [he] was authorized to sell except six acres," gaining \$2700.00 to help the saints resettle. The money was sorely needed to help purchase land and supplies for survival. David White Rogers, "Statement 1 Feb. 1839," Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁷² Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP.

⁷³ Edward Partridge to Joseph Smith, Jr., November 1833.

⁷⁴ Annette W. Curtis, ed., *1836 Clay County, Missouri State Tax List* (Independence, MO: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 2003), 36.

in the morning the thermometer stood 22 deg. below Zero . . . last teusday morn it was said to stand at 12 below which was about as cold as we could bear & travel through the praries.”⁷⁵

Along the way, Partridge and his companion depended upon the generosity of the members and on what they could earn from working.⁷⁶

After arriving in Painesville, Partridge “went forth to see to some temporal business” (presumably left over from his unexpected departure in 1831), visit his relatives, and preach in Painesville and the surrounding area.⁷⁷ One can only wonder what the reaction of his former neighbors was as they heard him preach. He soon recorded that according to “the decision of a council,” he and Isaac Morley (his former counselor) were assigned to “visit the churches in the east and obtain donations for the poor saints, and also . . . counsel the br[ethren].”⁷⁸ They left Kirtland on June 2, 1835, and stayed the first night in Unionville with Partridge’s brother-in-law, George Lee. They then traveled all the way to Massachusetts, where Partridge visited his family—including an uncle and in-laws as well as immediate family members.

Since he had last visited them, Partridge had not given up hoping that his family members would see the church the way that he saw it. In a draft of a letter he wrote in 1834, he concluded by writing, “I hope you will not be offended at me, for my zeal in trying to convince you of the truth of the religion I profess. . . . I shall at present indulge the pleasing hope, that at least some of you will yet see as I do; and if you will have your hearts open to conviction, and should be permitted to live a few years, I trust the most of you will. . . . I remain in the bonds of love your

⁷⁵ Edward Partridge, Diary, February 7, 1835, folder 2, EPP.

⁷⁶ See Edward Partridge, Diary, February 1, 1835 and August 18, 1835, folder 2, EPP.

⁷⁷ Edward Partridge, Diary, May 1835, EPP.

⁷⁸ Edward Partridge, Diary, undated entry, EPP.

Edward Partridge.”⁷⁹ Despite their differences, Partridges still cared for his family and yearned to share what he felt was the truth.

He worked alongside some of his brothers, helping them with their harvests and earning a few dollars. However, his sister Emily offered no such acceptance. A breach had formed between Partridge and his sister Emily Dow (for whom Partridge’s second child had been named) when Partridge joined the church, and it was still present. He stayed one night with her in October 1835, but the rift was not healed. By then a widow, she still wanted no part of Partridge’s religion, and Partridge later wrote to her of “the coldness and indifference yea the insulting manner with which you treated me.” Undoubtedly frustrated after his two missionary visits to his family and the intervening years of unresponsiveness on the subject of religion, he bluntly pointed out to his sister Emily that “he that hateth his brother is a murderer.”⁸⁰ He then chastised his family for not at least keeping contact with him: “Although my brothers, and sisters, and blood relations are numerous, yet for near seven past, I have not received a letter from any of them, save my brother James H.: by this neglect, I learn in some degree the regard they have for me; for did they love me, and believe as they profess to, that I was deluded, led away, and had embraced a false religion, they certainly would try to reclaim me, by showing me my error or at least trying.”⁸¹ Such direct comments indicate both a depth of his desire to help his family members receive the highest blessings possible from God, as well as a possible tendency to alienate those who did not agree with him.

⁷⁹ Edward Partridge, draft of letter, 22 Oct. 1834, folder 6, EPP.

⁸⁰ Edward Partridge, “‘What Crime Have I Been Guilty Of?’: Edward Partridge’s Letter to an Estranged Sister,” ed. Warren A. Jennings, *BYU Studies* 18, no. 4 (Summer 1978): 522. The original is located in the Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁸¹ Partridge, “‘What Crime Have I Been Guilty Of?’” 527.

Partridge sensed that unless his family was willing to travel with the church members wherever they could to find peace, he might not see them again—soon or ever. His entry for Oct. 7, 1835, read, “bid farewell to my father & Mother probably to see them no more before the resurrection.” While he made no comments at the time in his journal of their (or his other family members’) reactions to his message, a later manuscript indicated that only his brother James Harvey joined the church.⁸² In 1837, when in Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, Partridge wrote hopefully to his brother, “I have reserved a lot or two for you [if you] want them. I hope that you will come up here, as soon as convenient, and see us, if you cannot make it convenient to tarry here.”⁸³

During his 1835 missionary journey, Partridge kept a small notebook in which he recorded specific donations from the various church members. Members donated both to a general fund as well as for their own pieces of land in Missouri. In at least one instance, money was given to Partridge to buy the giver land in Jackson County.⁸⁴ Even though the saints had been driven out, the early members of the church remained hopeful that they would one day return and claim their inheritances, and members who had not had the chance to live there yet did not want to be left out.

Again, the separation of Partridge and his family in two different parts of the country allows a glimpse into his thoughts through his surviving letters. Perhaps one of the most poignant letters to survive is one which he wrote to his thirteen-year-old daughter Harriet in November 1835. The letter illuminates the softer side of Partridge’s personality and highlights his caring

⁸² Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁸³ Partridge, “What Crime Have I Been Guilty Of?” 521. This portion of the letter was directed to his brother, James Harvey.

⁸⁴ Edward Partridge, Notebook, 1835, folder 4, EPP.

nature. The letter reflects both a concern for individuals as well as a faith in God. He wrote, “Harriet, my Daughter, It rejoices me to have you write me that you are determined to keep the commandments of God. . . . You say you shall be glad to see me, I also should be glad to see all of you, and I trust that I shall see you in the spring, if our lives are spared. . . . I hope you will be patient until it is the will of the Lord that I should return. I . . . was sorry to hear that any [of the children] were sick. I remain your loving Father.”⁸⁵ That Partridge would take the time to write his daughter individually testifies to his concern for the individual, and perhaps gives an indication as to the caring nature that would inspire saints to trust his decisions, knowing he had their interests at heart.

In another letter to his wife and children, Partridge expressed his feelings in a poem: “This word; to one and all, I say,/You’re *near me*, though you’re far away;/And notwithstanding this’s the case,/Ere long I hope to see your face . . . Untill you hear from me again,/Your loving husband I remain:/And also loving father too,/And thus I bid you all adieu.”⁸⁶ His loving and caring concern for his family may have translated in similar loving and caring concern for the many saints over whom he had stewardship.⁸⁷

Partridge wrote poetry not only for his family but also to express his feelings about the saints’ attempts to build Zion. One of his poems is still sung today as a hymn in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “Let Zion in her beauty rise/Her light begins to shine,/Ere long her King will rend the skies,/Majestic and divine. . . . That glorious rest will then

⁸⁵ Edward Partridge to Harriet Partridge, Nov. 2, 1835, typescript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁸⁶ Edward Partridge Papers, Folder 7, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁸⁷ Partridge’s son, Edward, provides an insight into Partridge’s concern for those less fortunate in the introduction to his “Genealogical Record”: “there was one man who said to me some years ago that my father gave him a terrible lashing which he did not deserve, but upon asking him the circumstances I found it was for taking the advantage of a poor widdow.” Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

commence,/Which prophets did foretell,/When Christ will reign with saints on earth,/And in their presence dwell/A thousand years: O glorious day!/Dear Lord prepare my heart,/To stand with thee on Zion's mount,/And never more to part.”⁸⁸ Partridge industriously worked to do his part to spread the message in which he believed so earnestly. By the time Partridge returned to Ohio from the East Coast, he estimated that he had traveled about 2,000 miles. He further recorded that that he had held 50 meetings, preached 32 sermons, “gave some ½ doz n exhortations,” and visited about 700 members in 25 or 26 branches. He and Morley had also baptized three individuals.

Upon returning to Kirtland on Oct. 29, 1835, at the completion of his second mission, Partridge received a revelation through Joseph Smith instructing him to remain there for the winter and study at the School of the Prophets.⁸⁹ One week later, Partridge noted in his journal, “commenced going to school to learn Grammer,” and “Having gotten a tolerable knowledge of the English Grammer, I this day commence on the Hebrew.”⁹⁰ Partridge’s letters and journals generally reflected an unusually high proficiency in both spelling and grammar. When the Hebrew class was divided after a few days, Partridge was taken into the advanced class. He also spent his time preaching, in addition to studying. While in Kirtland, Partridge participated in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in the spring. His diary entries about the ordinances performed in the Kirtland Temple are among the most detailed and complete records available.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Edward Partridge, in *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Europe* (Manchester: W.R. Thomas, Spring Gardens, 1840), 195-97. Though the words are not attributed to Partridge in this edition, they are attributed in later editions of the church’s hymnbook.

⁸⁹ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 2:302–3.

⁹⁰ Edward Partridge, Diary, Nov. 5, 1835, folder 2, EPP.

⁹¹ Scholars have relied heavily upon his diary. See, for example, Milton V. Backman, Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 431-33.

Apparently, as bishop, he was responsible for record keeping as well as administering to the needs of the poor. Many of the letters from Joseph Smith and other church leaders in Kirtland were preserved simply because Edward Partridge copied them for his own records. Thus, ironically, the Kirtland era is documented through Partridge's actions in Missouri.⁹²

Partridge studied through the winter and participated in the Kirtland Temple dedication in the spring. He then traveled back to Missouri to rejoin his family in Clay County, arriving on May 6, 1836, where he "found them well."⁹³ He described in his journal his feelings about his reunion with them: "I think I felt as thankful as ever I did in being permitted to again rejoin . . . my family."⁹⁴ He had been gone for over fifteen months.

Though the residents of Clay County had initially been hospitable to the exiled saints, with time the Missourians began to fear that the increasing Mormon influence and presence would cause problems similar to those that had arisen in Jackson County. In 1836, hoping to avoid an escalation of conflicts like those that occurred in Jackson County, the residents of Clay County requested that the saints leave their county. Most of the saints moved to the newly created Caldwell and Daviess Counties, which were portioned off of Ray County as part of an effort to provide the saints with their own county: Caldwell.⁹⁵ Partridge continued to act as an agent for the church in purchasing

⁹² For this insight I am indebted to Christy Best of the Church History Library. It is perhaps enlightening to remember that Partridge's father, William Partridge, kept a diary for over fifty years. One can only guess at the degree to which William Partridge's diary entries influenced Edward Partridge to keep a journal in addition to his other writings, including copying letters and other documents dealing with his calling as bishop.

⁹³ Edward Partridge, Diary, May 6, 1836, folder 2, EPP.

⁹⁴ Edward Partridge, Diary, May 6, 1836, folder 2, EPP.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey N. Walker, "Mormon Land Rights in Caldwell and Daviess Counties and the Mormon Conflict of 1838: New Findings and New Understandings," *BYU Studies* 47 no. 1 (2008): 23.

land. Fortunately, because it was unsurveyed, this land was open for settlement before payment was necessary.

When Partridge was forced to leave in 1838, he “held the title to forty acres of land in Clay Co. and more than four fifths of the lots in the town of Far West, Caldwell Co.” Additionally, he had “five houses and one barn in the town,” and “also held eight hundred and sixty eight acres of land in Caldwell county.”⁹⁶ A recently published index of land records only includes reference to 360 acres of land purchased by Partridge, but a fire in 1860 destroyed many local records.⁹⁷ Additionally, scholar Jeffrey Walker noted that during the Civil War, many land records in Caldwell and Daviess Counties, Missouri were destroyed. It is interesting to note here that Partridge’s name was on much of the land purchased in Missouri, instead of the name of the Church, leaving him legally responsible for them if the Church could not pay.

The peace and long-term prosperity planned for with the creation of the two new counties specifically for the Mormon settlers would not last. Though the saints attempted in many ways to use proper channels to reclaim their property in Jackson County, it was all to no avail. Partridge was responsible for engaging lawyers on more than one occasion. Though he was the bishop, he still needed to approve many of his expenditures with other church leaders. Indicative of the approval Partridge needed was an appeal he made for funds in 1837. At a council meeting on Dec. 6, 1837, Partridge petitioned to use

⁹⁶ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP; Clark V. Johnson and Ronald E. Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records* (Independence, MO: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 2002), iv, 141; Walker, 6.

⁹⁷ It is of course possible that an “8” was mistaken for a “3.”

some of the church's properties to pay a lawyer's debt of \$600 as well as other fees amounting to \$300.⁹⁸

However, despite the new location (or perhaps because of it), the Missourians still attempted to remove the Mormon settlers from the state, and mob violence soon escalated.⁹⁹ Church leaders were once again targeted. Partridge signed his name to a bond on September 7, 1838, in which he pledged to the sum of \$250 to ensure that Joseph and Lyman Wight would appear at the next convening of the Daviess Circuit Court.¹⁰⁰ Even when the Missourians weren't targeting Partridge specifically, he was apparently still burdened with legal issues. As tensions mounted, the Missouri militia eventually forced the Mormon residents at Far West to surrender their arms. The militia also took several church leaders and landowners prisoner, Partridge among them.¹⁰¹ One of his fellow prisoners, Ebenezer Robinson, later recorded that as he joined the line of men being taken prisoner, he "noticed Bishop E. Partridge, Isaac Morley, and several others considered some of the best brethren in the Church," which "encouraged [me], feeling assured they would prove good companions in tribulation."¹⁰² On May 15, 1839, Partridge summarized his injustices: "Last fall I was taken from my home in Far West Mo. by Genl Clark without any civil process, and driven off to Richmond Ray Co. thirty miles, and

⁹⁸ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 2:527.

⁹⁹ For a fascinating discussion of the dispute over land connected to the 1838 Mormon expulsion, see Walker, "Mormon Land Rights," 4-55.

¹⁰⁰ Daviess County, Missouri, Courts, "Bond, 1838," L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBLL.

¹⁰¹ Alexander L. Baugh, *A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri* (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), 149-54.

¹⁰² Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 153.

kept a prisoner between three and four weeks before I was liberated, for which I think the State of Missouri ought to pay me a round sum.”¹⁰³ In another document, Partridge described some his experience in prison: “We were confined, in a large open room, where the cold northern blast penetrated freely; our fires were small, and our allowance for wood, and for food, scanty; they gave us, not even, a blanket to lie upon; our beds were the cold floor . . . the vilest, of the vile, did guard us, and treat us like dogs.”¹⁰⁴ Partridge was released on Nov. 28, 1838.¹⁰⁵ Joseph Smith and others were taken to Liberty Jail, there to suffer confinement until the spring of 1839.¹⁰⁶

Yet Partridge later wrote that even in these difficult circumstances, he felt the protective presence of God supporting them: “In the midst of our oppression, we did call upon thy name, O Lord, and thou didst hear us; and deliver us, in some degree, from the hand of oppression.”¹⁰⁷ Partridge saw the persecution of the Mormon settlers as evidence of the truthfulness of their religion. In a letter to his brother in May 1839, he wrote that “all the persecution that is heaped upon us, only goes to prove that we are not of the world.”¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, Partridge expressed in his prayer that “the enemy doth still threaten us, and would fain destroy us, from the face of the earth; but we are in thy hands, O Lord,

¹⁰³ Edward Partridge, Affidavit, 15 May 1839, folder 18, EPP; Walker, “Mormon Land Rights,” 37.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Partridge, Prayer, January 1839, folder 9, EPP.

¹⁰⁵ Susan Easton Black, *Who’s Who in the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1997), 215.

¹⁰⁶ Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 162.

¹⁰⁷ Edward Partridge, Prayer, January 1839, folder 9, EPP.

¹⁰⁸ Edward Partridge to his [unnamed] brother, May 26, 1839, Edward Partridge Papers, Folder 7, Church History Library.

and we know, that the enemy can go no further, in oppressing us, than thou dost permit.”¹⁰⁹ Even in his hardships, Partridge saw the hand of God.

Though released, Partridge found that his life was still in danger. Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, had issued an order a month previously, in October 1838, stating that all Mormons must be driven from the state or exterminated. As a known church leader, Partridge’s life was in more danger than his family’s and as his daughters later recalled, he arranged for a fellow church member, King Follett, to help them leave Missouri while he fled ahead of them to Illinois.¹¹⁰ Some criticism has been leveled at Partridge for an exchange that took place before he left Missouri. Future Church president Brigham Young, by then an apostle and leader in the church, asked Partridge what he planned to do to help the poor leave Missouri. Partridge reportedly responded, “The poor may take care of themselves, and I will take care of myself.” Young then responded, “If you will not help them out, I will.”¹¹¹ Young then stepped in to help care for the poor.

Partridge then fled Missouri, fearing for his life. As bishop, his job was specifically to care for the poor, and therefore he could have been criticized for failing to ensure that the poor were helped from the state. However, this doesn’t seem to have been a charge much discussed in his day, or at least commonly known. This conclusion comes from the fact that his daughter, Emily, later wrote in her memoirs that “I have always thought that my father was still in prison when we left Far West, until quite lately. But

¹⁰⁹ Edward Partridge, Prayer, January 1839, folder 9, EPP.

¹¹⁰ Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl,” Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 167; Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Journal, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 11.

¹¹¹ Smith, et al., *History of the Church*, 3:247.

my oldest sister says, he was released from prison but had to flee the state because of trouble with false brethren.”¹¹² If during her lifetime individuals had been repeatedly charging Partridge with failing to fulfill his responsibilities, it is likely that she would have been aware of it, and would not have been under the impression that her father was in prison at that time.

Nauvoo

By the end of May 1839, Partridge had moved from Pike County (where he had been living in Illinois) to Quincy in Adams County.¹¹³ Once in Illinois, Partridge continued to be involved in land purchasing. He traveled to Commerce along with Rigdon and others to see some property offered for sale to the saints by Isaac Galland.¹¹⁴ Having walked away from hundreds of unsold acres in Missouri, the saints—and especially Partridge—might have found Galland’s offer of 20,000 acres “for no money down and long years to pay” very appealing.¹¹⁵ Yet, the memory of the persecution that inevitably arose when the saints gathered was also very vivid. After the saints’ initial refusal of Galland’s offer, Joseph escaped from prison and made his way to Illinois,

¹¹² Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl,” Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 167.

¹¹³ Edward Partridge to his [unnamed] brother, May 26, 1839, Edward Partridge Papers, Folder 7, Church History Library.

¹¹⁴ That Partridge was still considered by Joseph (then still incarcerated in Missouri) an agent for land buying is indicated in a letter from Joseph to Isaac Galland, in which Joseph indicated interest in the Galland properties: “If Bishop Partridge, or if the Church had not made a purchase of your land, . . . we will purchase it.” *Times and Seasons*, Feb. 1840, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?NCMP1820-1846,9244>, (accessed September 29, 2009), 56. Once purchases were made, however, it was in other men’s names and not Partridge’s. Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 25-37.

¹¹⁵ Flanders, 34.

where under his direction, the Galland property was acquired.¹¹⁶ Despite concerns that it might not be wise to gather, many of the saints had been living in the Quincy area.

Partridge, who at that time was living in Quincy, wrote of the situation there, “It is quite sickly.” His health had declined, and he was without means himself. He wrote in a letter to Joseph:

I have not at this time two dollars in this world, one dollar and forty-five cents is all. I owe for my rent, and for making clothes for some of the poor, and some other things . . . what is best for me to do, I hardly know. Hard labor I cannot perform; light labor I can, but I know of no chance to earn anything, at anything I can stand to do.¹¹⁷

That he provided clothes for the poor despite his lack of funds indicates that Partridge was still attempting to care for the poor as best he could—whether or not he had consecrated money, goods or property. Partridge’s eldest daughter, Eliza, moved to nearby Lima to teach school in order to earn money to help support the family.¹¹⁸

The Partridges moved to Nauvoo and rented rooms in a boarding house while Partridge yet again built the family a new home. In addition to providing for his family, Partridge was maintaining church responsibilities. Nauvoo was split into three wards and a bishop appointed to each ward. Partridge was appointed bishop of the upper ward.¹¹⁹

While he attempted to build a home for his family, he struggled to find the strength to do so. He eventually moved to the site of the new home, living in the structure which was to

¹¹⁶ Flanders, 34-36.

¹¹⁷ Collette, 123-24.

¹¹⁸ Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Journal, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 11-12.

¹¹⁹ Flanders, 44.

become the stable. He left his family behind in their rented quarters so that he would be spared the labor of walking to the site each day.

Unfortunately, in May 1840, tragedy struck the Partridges twice within two weeks. Eliza later recalled that two weeks before her school term ended a messenger came for her in the middle of the night, informing her that her eighteen-year-old sister Harriet was dying. Eliza rode through the night and arrived shortly before Harriet passed away on May 16.¹²⁰ Her father then fell ill.

Ten days later, on May 27, 1840, Partridge succumbed to his illness and passed away. Eliza later wrote that she had also become sick and was unable to attend the funeral.¹²¹ Partridge was forty-six years old when he died, leaving Lydia a widow with five children ranging in age from six to twenty years. Partridge had been bishop of the Church for slightly more than nine years. In that time period, he had bought and distributed hundreds of acres of land to thousands of saints. He had moved his family several times on behalf of his assignment, often leaving behind property or goods or both when they left their various homes. He had died while trying to build yet another home.

In a touching tribute, W.W. Phelps wrote the following, printed in the *Times and Seasons* about Partridge: “few will be able to wear his mantle with such simple dignity. He was an honest man, and I loved him.”¹²² His obituary spoke of the trust placed in him to fulfill his calling as bishop:

¹²⁰ Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Journal, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 12; “Obituary,” *Times and Seasons*, June 1840, 128.

¹²¹ “Obituary,” *Times and Seasons*, June 1840, 127; Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Journal, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 12.

¹²² “Extract of a Letter from W.W. Phelps,” *Times and Seasons*, October 1840, 190.

No man had the confidence of the church more than he. His station was highly responsible; large quantities of property ever entrusted to his care. Deeds and conveyances of lands, to a large amount, were put into his hands, for the benefit of the poor, and for church purposes; for all of which, the directest account was rendered, to the fullest satisfaction of all concerned.¹²³

Despite plentiful opportunities to satisfy any potential covetous desires, Partridge had taken little or nothing from the consecrations to provide for his family, leaving them at this time “in very ordinary circumstances.” While “He lost his life in consequence of the Missouri persecutions, . . . [he] rests where persecutors can assail him no more.”¹²⁴

While visiting Kirtland in 1835, Partridge recorded: “Mr. Bell of Painesville paid me cash for my burying ground in Painesville \$3.00.”¹²⁵ A seemingly small and insignificant entry, it nonetheless signifies that Edward Partridge was willing to give up everything for the sake of his newfound religion: even his final resting place. Though ironically he would purchase thousands of acres after he left Painesville, when he died in 1840, Partridge most likely didn’t have his own “plot” of land for a burial spot. His body was interred in a common cemetery with those of other early saints. Though his wife and children lived in the city where he was buried for another six years, they either failed to erect a marker, or it was destroyed with time. Thus, his grave was unmarked for over a century.

¹²³ “Obituary,” *Times and Seasons*, June 1840, 128.

¹²⁴ “Obituary,” *Times and Seasons*, June 1840, 128.

¹²⁵ Edward Partridge, Notebook, 1835, folder 4, EPP.

CHAPTER THREE

“I WILL HAVE TO BOTTLE MY THOUGHTS”: THE WRITINGS OF PARTRIDGE’S CHILDREN

Over thirty years after Partridge’s death, three of his four surviving children began writing extensively about their lives and their father’s life.¹ We may never know what provoked Edward and his sisters to take up their pens, but how one is remembered has almost as much weight as who one actually was. Historians are not only interested in how things happened in the past, but also in how the past is remembered. No past can be fully recreated, but it can be remembered. Since Partridge’s children were no more than twenty years old at his death in 1840, their memories may have substantially changed by the time they wrote their accounts. Since Edward was not quite seven years old when his father died, he particularly would have changed the way that he thought of the world most dramatically.²

Eliza, Emily and Edward drew upon both their own recollections as well as primary sources written by others. One of the dominant themes of their writing was their father’s fulfillment of his Church assignment as bishop. They desired that not only their lives and sacrifices be remembered, but also those of their father. While neither of the sisters explicitly so state, they were anxious not only that people remember him, but also that they remember that he

¹ Lydia Partridge Lyman died in 1875, leaving only Eliza, Emily, Caroline and Edward. They would die in 1885, 1899, 1908, and 1900, respectively. Emily Dow Partridge Young, *Diary*, January 16, 1875, microfilm of typescript, Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter EDPY, *Diary*.)

² For sake of clarity, Edward Partridge, Senior, is referred to throughout the thesis as “Partridge,” while his son Edward Partridge, Junior, is referred to as “Edward.”

was an honest and dedicated man. Conversely, Edward explicitly wanted to clear his father's name.

Any historian would rightly question the accuracy of memoirs written forty years after the events being described. Memories are subject to distortion over time. Thus, the question of accuracy must be briefly addressed in passing, specifically, whether or not the children's personal memories of their father are accurate. Cognitive psychologist Craig Barclay asserts that "people are generally accurate when reflecting on broad outlines of their past lives."³ Furthermore, he believes that "There is a fundamental integrity to one's autobiographical recollections."⁴ If there are errors, they are usually in the details. This is seen in Eliza's recounting that her mother remarried after a year or two, while in reality it was after only a few months.⁵ Yet some details, such as a description Eliza gives at the beginning of her journal of her grandfather's home in Massachusetts seems fairly accurate, despite her young age when observing it.⁶

Yet accuracy is not the essential question at stake in this chapter. This chapter attempts to analyze Partridge's children's memories of him and their early lives. In this chapter, I will analyze the life histories of the children's writings not explicitly for their accuracy, but for how they illuminate the children's perception of Partridge's life. My inquiry will entail discussions of

³ Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind and the Past* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 212.

⁴ Schacter, *Searching for Memory*, 95.

⁵ Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, *Journal*, Church History Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter EMPL, *Journal*), 13.

⁶ EMPL, *Journal*, 7.

how the children perceived their own lives and the world around them. As Daniel Schacter wrote, “the complex mixtures of personal knowledge that we retain about the past are woven together to form life stories and personal myths. These are the biographies of self that provide narrative continuity between past and future—a set of memories that form the core of personal identity.”⁷ In reading the Partridge children’s accounts of their father, we learn how important it was to the Partridge children to preserve that continuity between past and future. We also learn that the way in which history is written can depend greatly upon the author’s situations when he or she is writing it.

Sisters, Sister Wives

If it were not for a historical question involving polygamy (which was openly acknowledged by the church in 1852), the Partridge sisters’ memoirs might have never been written.⁸ One of the most critical accusations by outsiders was whether Joseph Smith himself had practiced – or even taught – polygamy or whether it was implemented later by Brigham Young. In response, church leaders issued a call for all people with personal knowledge of Joseph’s teaching and practice of plural marriage to give their testimonies in sworn depositions. In response, Eliza and Emily both gave depositions in 1869 affirming their plural marriages to Joseph Smith in 1843.⁹ In addition to these more formal statements, the theme of plural marriage

⁷ Schacter, *Searching for Memory*, 93.

⁸ For a discussion of political implications of the practice of polygamy, see Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in 19th Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

⁹ H. Michael Marquardt, “Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young on the Witness Stand: Recollections of a Plural Wife” *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 125. An affidavit from each sister was printed in

is subtly woven into the sisters' journals. For each sister, her marriage to Joseph was the formative event of her young adulthood.¹⁰

Eliza Maria and Emily Dow Partridge were born in Painesville, Ohio, on 20 April 1820, and 28 February 1824, the first and third children of Edward and Lydia Partridge. With their mother and three sisters, they moved to Missouri in 1831 to rejoin their father, who had traveled there some months earlier. While in Missouri they lived in Jackson, Clay and Caldwell counties. Their family was driven from the state along with the general membership of the Church in the winter of 1838-39. They soon thereafter moved to Nauvoo, where their sister Harriet and father died within two weeks of each other in spring 1840, leaving the family without a male provider. A few months later, in August 1840, their mother, Lydia Clisbee Partridge married widower William Huntington.

Eliza and Emily moved into the home of Joseph and Emma Smith, where they helped the family in return for board and room. They were about twenty and sixteen years old. Both of them remembered their first few years there as a happy time.¹¹ While there, they learned of the

“Joseph the Seer’s Plural Marriages,” *The Deseret News*, October 22, 1879, 12. However, Marquardt noted that Emily had given two affidavits: “The first affidavit concerns her first sealing on March 4, 1843, and the second affidavit concerns the repeated ceremony in May 1843.” Only one was printed in the newspaper.

¹⁰ In addition to works about Edward Partridge, there are numerous references to his daughters. Some of the survey works that make mention of the daughters (most often Eliza or Emily, since they were the most prolific writers) include the following: James H. Crockwell, *Pictures and Biographies of Brigham Young and His Wives* (Salt Lake City, UT: J.H.Crockwell, Press of George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1887); *Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith, 2004); Kate B. Carter, comp., “Brigham Young—His Wives and Family,” *Our Pioneer Heritage* 1 (1958):409-56; Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1997); Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., *Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1982); and Julie Hemming Savage, ““Yes I Must Submit’: Mormon Women’s Perspective on Death and Dying, 1847-1900” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1995).

¹¹ Since the girls were initially hired to help Emma upon the birth of Joseph and Emma’s son Don Carlos Smith, the Partridge sisters would have moved into the Smith home sometime after June 1840. Don Carlos died

principle of plural marriage when Joseph Smith asked each one privately to become a plural wife. The secrecy was so great that neither sister knew at first that her sister was also married to Joseph Smith.¹² Such secrecy might have put a tremendous strain on the sisters' relationship. Each sister was also married to him without Emma present and without Emma's knowledge, since she was understandably initially and thereafter intermittently opposed to the practice.

During one of her periods of acceptance, Emma became reconciled to the principle and agreed to give Joseph two additional wives as long as she got to choose them herself. Not knowing that Eliza and Emily had secretly been married to him already, Emma chose the Partridge sisters for his wives. For Emma's benefit, the marriage ceremonies were then repeated on May 11, 1843, as if they had never previously occurred.¹³ It must have been a relief to both sisters when they were finally able to share that part of their lives with each other.

Emily wrote years later that soon after the second ceremony, Emma began making life difficult for Eliza and Emily.¹⁴ Eliza also recorded decades later that though she and Emily lived in the Smith home for about three years, by June 27, 1844, the day Joseph was martyred, both sisters had moved elsewhere.¹⁵ Thus within fourteen months of their marriages, Eliza and Emily

fourteen months later on August 15, 1841. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2005), 405, 425.

¹² Compton, 409.

¹³ "Joseph the Seer's Plural Marriages," *The Deseret News*, October 22, 1879, 12. H. Michael Marquardt disputed this date, suggested that Emily's memory was faulty in claiming May 11, since the man that married them that day, James Adams, "did not arrive in Nauvoo from Springfield until May 21." Marquardt, "Recollections of a Plural Wife," 121n37. Marquardt unfortunately gave no source for his assertion.

¹⁴ Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent*, August 1, 1885, 38. Emily's "Autobiography" is discussed later in the chapter.

¹⁵ EMPL, Journal, 13.

were left widows – private though their suffering was, for few knew of their plural marriage to Joseph.

After Joseph’s murder, their paths split when Eliza married Apostle Amasa Lyman, who eventually apostatized and left the Church, and Emily married Brigham Young, who became Joseph’s successor as president of the church. However, both because of their close ties and because both of their husbands were busy caring for the saints in general, Eliza and Emily still often found themselves in each others’ company, as well as the company of their other sisters, brother and mother. Family bonds thickened when two other sisters also married Amasa Lyman, Caroline before the move to Utah and Lydia after arriving in Utah.¹⁶

Eliza: “The Hardships We Endured”

Eliza wrote to preserve the memory of her father and the hardships in Missouri. Her husband, Amasa Lyman, was often away on missions or with his other wives so he left much of the care of the children to Eliza and her Partridge relatives. When he left the church in 1870, she left him.¹⁷ He died in 1877, shortly after Eliza’s eldest grandchild died, and a few months before her brother-in-law, Brigham Young, died.

Perhaps the deaths raised a consciousness of her own mortality. It is perhaps even more likely that once he had died, she realized that she might never be known as more than the wife of an apostate if she did not leave her own record of her life. In 1877, she wrote a nine-page life

¹⁶ EMPL, Journal, 15, and February 7, 1854, 59.

¹⁷ Ronald Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Social and Religious Protest of the Godbeites against Brigham Young* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2009), 347. Walker notes that only Lyman’s first wife, Maria Louisa Tanner, stayed with him, while the other six of his seven living plural wives left.

history of her early life before Utah. She then proceeded to *copy* thirty years of journal entries into that same book before continuing her journal in it. At the beginning of the book, she noted, “It will not perhaps be very interesting to anyone but myself, but it shows more particularly how we were situated and the hardships we endured in accomplishing the journey.”¹⁸ She seemed anxious that she be remembered not only as a faithful pioneer, but that also her family’s – particularly her father’s – sacrifices be remembered. Much of her early life history focuses on her father’s church service.

Our understanding of her situation in life confirms her sense that she did endure hardships in the journey. On April 9, 1846, she noted one night being caught in the cold with very little bedding after a rainstorm: “I do not know why I did not freeze . . . It must be that there was no room in the wagon for the frost to get in, it was so full of folks.”¹⁹ Eliza gave birth to her two eldest sons in wagons along the way to Utah, and the older of the two would also die along the way.²⁰ Two days after given birth to her second son, she described crossing the Platte River (after which she named her newborn son) in her journal: “The rocks in the bottom are so large that it seemed sometimes as if they would tip the wagon over. I held fast [to] the baby and sister Caroline held fast to me so that I was not thrown *quite* out of bed.”²¹ When Eliza arrived in the Salt Lake valley, her initial impression was not favorable, noting wryly in her journal: “I do

¹⁸ EMPL, Journal, 9.

¹⁹ EMPL, Journal, April 9, 1846, 26-27.

²⁰ EMPL, Journal, July 14, 1846, 32, and December 12, 1846, 35.

²¹ EMPL, Journal, August 21, 1848, 44, emphasis added.

not think our enemies need envy us this locality or ever come here to disturb us.”²² Eliza eventually had five children by Amasa Lyman: Don Carlos (who died as an infant), Platte De Alton, Caroline Eliza (Carlie), Joseph Alvin, and Lucy Zina.²³ She spent much of her life in Oak City and Fillmore, Utah.

The first few years after they each remarried, Eliza’s and Emily’s lives paralleled each other. As widows of Joseph Smith and plural wives of high-ranking church officials, the Partridge sisters became part of two of the most prominent families in the church. Nevertheless, they were on the edges of the web of socially prominent women. Though they were part of the circle, they were not at the center. Many of Joseph’s widows married either Brigham Young or Heber C. Kimball, connecting all three families in an intricate web. Though Eliza’s husband, Amasa Lyman, eventually apostatized and left the church, Eliza remained a part of the circle. Since some positions in church leadership were held by Joseph’s close relatives, she was still connected through the network of the wives, but also through the ties to surviving members of the Smith family.

Both sisters were part of the same prominent social network, but Eliza’s life played out differently than Emily’s. Eliza’s husband rarely provided financial support, and instead she relied on her own ingenuity and the support of close family. At times Emily was well enough off to send money or provisions to Eliza, but Eliza doesn’t seem to have been able to send much, if anything, to Emily. As a plural wife of a prominent Church leader, a large part of the

²² EMPL, Journal, October 17, 1848, 45.

²³ EMPL, Journal, July 14, 1846, 32; August 20, 1848, 44; August 1, 1851, 57; December 13, 1856, 65; August 26, 1860, 66. Both Emily and Eliza used the name “Don Carlos” for one of their sons, most likely in remembrance of Don Carlos Smith, whom they had tended in the Joseph Smith home.

responsibility for providing for herself and her children fell upon her shoulders. Her journal entries of April 8 and 13 are perhaps telling of some of her hardships:

April 8th 1849 Cooked the last of our flour to day and have no prospect of getting any more untill after harvest.

13th Br. Lyman started for California in company with O.P. Rockwell and others. May the Lord bless and prosper them . . . Br. L- has left us that is Paulina Caroline and I without any thing to make bread, it not being in his power to get any.²⁴

Whether this was a widespread shortage and her husband was simply unable to procure flour before he left, or he was simply unwilling to do so, Eliza suffered from a lack of provisions.

A decade later, at the birth of her daughter, Lucy, Eliza and her family were yet again in a similar situation, except at this time, not only was Eliza recovering from childbirth, but her sister (and sister wife) Caroline and *her* baby were sick in the next room. Eliza noted, “We had to have watchers every night for them and girls to do the work and not even flour in the house to eat We were at last reduced to the necessity of calling on the Missionary Fund for help to take us through our sickness. This is always very trying to me. To ask help is far from being pleasant to me.”²⁵ Despite her husband’s lack of support, Eliza had been accustomed to making do through her own efforts and those of her family. To rely upon church funds was perhaps an unpleasant reminder of when her father had used church funds to provide for the poor of the church.

Lyman’s return from church travel away from Utah, however, didn’t completely solve the problem. In fact, his return only compounded her trials. In the early 1850s, he had begun learning about spiritualism, participating in his first séance in California in 1853. By the end of his

²⁴ EMPL, Journal, April 8, 1849, 45.

²⁵ EMPL, Journal, August 26, 1860, 66.

mission to England, in March 1862, Lyman suggested in a sermon that “Jesus Christ did not atone for sins but was instead a great religious teacher and human being,” doctrines completely opposed to the fundamental beliefs of his church. He was influenced by the works of Andrew Jackson Davis, a well-known spiritualist of the time. Five years after returning from his European mission, Lyman was still preaching unorthodox teachings. In 1867, Church leaders took away his position as apostle and his priesthood authority and disfellowshipped him. After a brief period in which he temporarily helped to provide more material assistance than usual to his families, he became involved with a spiritualist and universalist movement led by William Godbe. Lyman was excommunicated on May 12, 1870.²⁶ What little support Lyman provided essentially disappeared as he left the Church and Eliza (and her sisters) left him.²⁷

Nearly all of Eliza’s time in Utah was spent in caring for her family, raising not only her own children, but also helping to raise two of her sister Lydia’s daughters after Lydia’s death in 1875.²⁸ Eliza also raised an infant grandson after her daughter Carlie passed away shortly giving birth to her first child.²⁹ Eliza continued to live with various members of her family until her death in 1886, though she was constantly visiting and writing family members living far away. She also was engaged in both church and civic activities. In her final page of journal entries (encompassing seven months), she mentions some of these activities: her invitation to be the leader of the organization for children in Oak Creek; visits to or from her son, daughter-in-law,

²⁶ Compton, 442-44.

²⁷ Walker, *Wayward Saints*, 347.

²⁸ EDPY, Diary, January 16, 1875.

²⁹ See EMPL, Journal, December 28, 1876, 73, and March 14 and 23, 1879, 106-9.

brother and sister, a grandson's birth, and attendance at a "Ladies Conference."³⁰ The entries are typical of the entire journal, reflecting her contributions to both the Church and the community, but primarily focusing on her family. She died on March 2, 1886, leaving behind three children and several grandchildren.³¹

Frequently in her diary Eliza mentions sending and receiving letters. However, although she was a prolific writer (composing hundreds of letters to family and friends over the course of her life), in addition to keeping a journal for nearly forty years, little of her writing remains.³² That which does remain is a rich record. Her nine-page life history she recorded in 1877 in the beginning of "a ledger ruled book 28x16 cm. with a mottle colored cover" with "corners and . . . back . . . of yellow leather."³³ At the conclusion of the history, she wrote "I will [now] go back to the time that I left Nauvoo on the 9th of Feb and write from my private journal." She then

³⁰ EMPL, Journal, May 23, 1885 to Dec. 23, 1885, 143.

³¹ Partridge, "Genealogical Record," 64.

³² Some family history sources claim that Eliza destroyed her earlier diary. See Lucretia Lyman Ranney, "My Children's American Ancestry," Part II: "American Ancestry of Edward Partridge" (unpublished, 1959), 10.

³³ Description found at the beginning of the typescript of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, "Autobiography and Diary." A transcription of the journal has also been published with footnotes containing the vital information for each person Eliza mentioned in her diary: see Eliza Maria Partridge, *Eliza Maria Partridge Journal*, ed. Scott Partridge (Provo, UT: Grandin Book Co., 2003). The journal is cataloged at the Church History Library under the name "Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman." Though she was apparently never officially divorced from Amasa Lyman, in his edited version of her journal, Scott H. Partridge drops the name "Lyman" at the end and published the journal as the *Eliza Maria Partridge Journal*. Tellingly, the heading Eliza herself gave the journal was "Life and Journal of E.M.P.L.S. [Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman *Smith*]," a reference to her first marriage to Joseph Smith (emphasis added). The placement of Smith as the final surname perhaps to give honor to Joseph Smith is reflected in her sister Emily's diary, as well. On March 11, 1892, Emily visited the office of the president of the Church, and while there discussing other business, mentioned that there had been "a difference of opinion" as to her children's surnames. Though Brigham Young was their father, because of Emily's previous marriage (and sealing for eternity) to Joseph Smith, church president Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, Woodruff's counselor, indicated that her children's surnames were actually "Young Smith." EDPY, Diary, March 11, 1892. Eliza seems to have felt that this was the case with her name also, hence "E.M. P. L. S." For greater clarity, I have included the dates of the journal entries in addition to the page numbers, while references to the broader autobiographical sketch at the beginning of her "Life and Journal" include of necessity page number only; all entries' designations have been shortened to "Journal."

proceeded to copy approximately 60 pages of journal entries from her original (or “private”) journal. Once her entries reached 1877 (the year in which she wrote the history and began copying the earlier journal entries), the entries become far more regular.³⁴ Either she suddenly became much more interested in record-keeping and preserving a history of her life, and therefore simply started making more frequent entries after 1877, or she edited or left out the majority of the entries written earlier. She left enough to allow others to know “how [they] were situated” and “the hardships [they] endured.”

Perhaps Eliza learned from her father, Edward Partridge, the importance of keeping records, and that is why she began to keep a journal in 1846, at the age of 25.³⁵ Perhaps she was influenced by Joseph Smith, as he began keeping records for the church intermingled with his own personal history. Although she was alive when her brother Edward and sister Emily were copying records from their father, she records none of the documents in her journal.³⁶ Perhaps they were recorded in another journal, or perhaps she felt that her brother’s and sister’s records would suffice.

Eliza’s history of her early life focuses mainly on the time period after her family joined the Church in 1830. Interestingly, in the few pages that she devotes to her life before her father’s death, she refers almost constantly to her father. She mentions her mother a few times, and her siblings briefly. It is almost as if she is giving a dual history of both her life and that of her

³⁴ In fact, the final nine years of entries (1877-1885, inclusive) cover 70 pages, while the copied entries from 1846-1876 (30 years) cover only 60 pages.

³⁵ It is possible that the diary that she was copying from had additional entries before 1846 which she chose to simply summarize rather than include.

³⁶ Edward copied several documents from his father’s life into the biography he wrote of his father, and Emily copied the same documents into her journal.

father. Unfortunately, she usually doesn't spend much time expressing her feelings; the history is mostly factual narrative. Though she remembers being "much frightened" when her father was tarred and feathered, the overall tone of the narrative is matter of fact. Perhaps her emotions had been tempered in the thirty-nine-year interim. When she describes in her history leaving Jackson County in the winter, she wrote: "Very cold and uncomfortable was it moving at that time of the year . . . our land and orchards and improvements of every kind left to benefit those who had driven us away."³⁷ Words such as "uncomfortable" provide hints as to the degree of her understatement of her situation.

Her diary entries until 1877 sometimes reflect two layers of meaning: how she felt on the day she first recorded the entry and how she felt on the day that she copied the entry. Thus, there are also two layers of memory. Occasionally as she copied she included editorial comments not in the original version of the entries. For instance, sometime in the spring of 1871 she mentioned leaving the employment of a store. With hindsight of six years when she copied that entry, she added to the original entry, "When I left the store I did not see how I was to get a living but I have always had something to go on with." Sometimes the intervening years had not served to soften a memory. By the time she copied the entry for her grandson Platte De Alton Lyman's birth in her newer diary, he had passed away. Poignantly, she added to her original entry, "We always called him Alton."³⁸

Even in the entries written without the benefit of hindsight, Eliza was able to distance herself sufficiently from her circumstances in order to evaluate them. At times, her entries reflect

³⁷ EMPL, Journal, 9.

³⁸ EMPL, Journal, August 10, 1872, 69.

raw emotions. In December 1875, Eliza recorded the birth of her son Platte's third child, and her third grandchild. Since Platte was on a mission, his wife Adelia didn't feel capable of caring for all three of her children alone, and Eliza recorded that Adelia gave her own daughter Eliza "to me to raise as my own."³⁹ However, right before Christmas a year later, Eliza records that the younger Eliza "has left me and gone to live with her parents. It is hard for me to let her go, for I had thought to keep her as her mother proposed and had suffered myself to love her as my own child. It is hard but perhaps right."⁴⁰ By then, Eliza was fifty-five years old, and was often lonely.

But she was not wrapped up in her own troubles, and occasionally commented on the harsh realities of other people's lives, noting on Thanksgiving Day in 1878, "The poor have not much enjoyment on such days. Hard work and poor fare the same as any other day. . . . Here is Sister Rogers for instance . . . and to day which is a grand holiday for the rich she is out cleaning house No rest for her."⁴¹ Occasionally, her wry sense of humor also shows through. On that same Thanksgiving Day, she also noted, "Staid at home with my sister and four of her grandchildren and sister Sarah Gibbons to feast on oyster soup which I despise (the soup I mean)."⁴²

As the crusade against polygamy intensified, the memory of her father's sacrifices were vivid in her mind. Half a century after his abuse at the hands of a Jackson County mob, she referred to it in a meeting of the women in Fillmore to protest the actions of an anti-polygamous

³⁹ EMPL, Journal, December 12, 1875, 70.

⁴⁰ EMPL, Journal, December 22, 1876, 72.

⁴¹ EMPL, Journal, November 28, 1878, 99.

⁴² EMPL, Journal, November 28, 1878, 99.

society.⁴³ Arguing that polygamy was not the sole cause of the saints' persecution in the 1870s, she reminded her listeners that the saints had been persecuted before they had begun practicing polygamy. Pointing to a specific incident with which she was well acquainted, she poignantly asked, "Was it Polygamy that caused a body of armed men to go to my Father's house, in Independence, Jackson Co. Missouri and take him to the public square and cover him with tar and feather? Was it because the Lord had revealed *this* holy order of marriage, that the exterminating order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs was issued, and the Latter Day Saints driven en masse from the State?"⁴⁴ Eliza reminded others of the sacrifices that the early saints made in Missouri and Illinois, perhaps to remind the rising generation that they would prevail over their enemies. She was a memory keeper; she wanted others to know "how [they] were situated" and "the hardships [they] endured." Eliza left a rich record of her early life and a testimony of her father's persecution.

Emily: "I Hope They Will Not Be in a Hurry to Bury Us"

After marrying apostle and future Church president Brigham Young, Emily moved with him and his household to Utah, where she settled in Salt Lake City. Emily eventually had seven children by Brigham Young: Edward Partridge, Emily Augusta, Caroline, Don Carlos, Miriam, Josephine, and Laura.⁴⁵ Emily traveled with Young across the plains to Utah in 1848 with her family following close behind. She settled in Salt Lake City and lived there the rest of her life.

⁴³ EMPL, Journal, January 18, 1879, 103.

⁴⁴ EMPL, Journal, January 18, 1879, 103.

⁴⁵ Partridge, "Genealogical Record," 65.

Living far from her mother and siblings, she was able to see them only occasionally, though they corresponded often when apart. Fortunately, her own children and grandchildren were usually nearby, and she often lived with them.

Since her husband was both the religious and civic leader and had multiple wives, she did not see him as frequently as she wanted to, and as her children grew up and left home, often she felt lonely. She poured out her sorrows into a diary that she kept from 1874 until her death in 1899. In 1880, she received from her brother Edward an assorted collection of their father's papers, which she copied into her diary during 1881 and 1882. In the middle of copying her father's documents, she also wrote her own life history. The first two versions of her early life history were entitled "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl" and "What I Remember."⁴⁶ Another version similar to the first two, but slightly more formal, was published in the Utah periodical *Woman's Exponent* under the title, "Autobiography."⁴⁷

Perhaps the few papers that remained to document her father's life inspired Emily to record her own life history before her life was forgotten. Yet despite having lived more than thirty years in Utah, she wrote primarily of her life before Utah. Furthermore, she did not give

⁴⁶ Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents in the Life of a Mormon Girl," [1881], microfilm of manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Emily Dow Partridge Young, "What I Remember," 1884, partial microfilm of manuscript, microfilm of typescript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Todd Compton dates "Incidents" to December 1876. See Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 730. However, near the end of the manuscript, Emily notes that she was writing in 1881, indicating that at least part of the manuscript was written that year. See EDPY, "Incidents," 168.

⁴⁷ Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent*, December 1, 1884, 102-3; December 15, 1884, 105-6; January 1, 1885, 114; January 15, 1885, 122; February 1, 1885, 129-30; February 15, 1885, 138; March 1, 1885, 145-46; March 15, 1885, 154; April 1, 1885, 166-67; April 15, 1885, 169-70; May 15, 1885, 187; June 1, 1885, 3; June 15, 1885, 10; July 1, 1885, 17-18; July 15, 1885, 26; August 1, 1885, 137-38; August 15, 1885, 43. The *Woman's Exponent* was a periodical published in Salt Lake City from 1872 to 1914 for women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

equal weight to the time periods in her life before Utah. She focused primarily on her time in Missouri – the time period in which her father was a prominent church leader. In remembering Missouri, she was not just remembering her own life; she was also remembering and recording experiences with her father.

Emily's marriage to her husband presents a paradox. She was sealed to Young as well as Joseph, but she was sealed to Young for time only, while she was sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity.⁴⁸ Though at times fond of Young, Emily's heart seems to have been with Joseph Smith, for she frequently mentions the anniversary of her sealing to him, while she rarely if ever mentions the anniversary of her marriage to Young.⁴⁹ She may have idealized the fourteen-month marriage in which there were relatively few practical concerns. She spent little time with him after leaving his house, she had no children by Joseph to care for, and she lived in relatively comfortable circumstances in Nauvoo the entire time. However, in a letter to Young in 1850, she wrote that lest he be concerned that she cared only for Joseph, she reassured him that she also cared deeply for him. Her tender emotions for Young seem to have conflicted at times with the practical realities of caring for a large family primarily by herself. Yet despite her feelings of loneliness, Emily always staunchly defended the practice of polygamy in public.

While she was provided for in large part by Young's estate, she frequently bemoaned in her journal the sad state of her affairs, and broadly hinted that he had not taken care of her as well as he had some of the other wives. While her more discouraged entries might not be

⁴⁸ Compton, 397. Mormon beliefs include the concept of marriage even after death. Mormon marriages, or "sealings," for eternity do not include the words "until death do you part," with the understanding that the marriage can last into the afterlife.

⁴⁹ EDPY, Diary, March 6, 1874. See Compton, 416.

reflective of her usual opinion, often she was obviously frustrated. She appears to have struggled for much of the marriage, for in 1853 she wrote Young a letter suggesting that he end the marriage and give her to another man who had more time.⁵⁰ Two decades later, on February 1, 1875, she wrote “I feel rather dispirited and a good cry might do me good.” She then explained why: “I feel quite ashamed to be known as a wife of the richest man in the territory [*sic*], and yet we are so poor. I do not know why he is so loth to provide for me. My children are his children.” Apparent inequalities served to only heighten her frustration, as she next protested, “He provides sumptuously for some of his family. If he was a poor man it would [be] different. I think my family might be made more comfortable and not impoverish him or his family.”⁵¹ Emily felt she was being shortchanged.

However, occasionally Eliza recorded that Emily had sent her some money or provisions, so at least sometimes, Emily had enough and to spare. Additionally, on her birthday and at Christmas, Emily recorded the presents she received from her children and grandchildren, and they were rarely “necessities” of life, such as food or basic clothing, likely indicating that she already possessed those. Yet even when she was not lacking in physical necessities, she still often felt emotionally impoverished.

Notwithstanding her somewhat frequent complaints at the lack of sufficient provisions, at his death, she remembered Brigham Young as a great and good and fair man, commenting that he was generous and remembered his “proxy” wives the same as the others, and was a noble man

⁵⁰ Emily Dow Partridge Young to Brigham Young, February 24, 1853; as quoted in Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, 416-17.

⁵¹ EDPY, Diary, February 1, 1875.

to the last.⁵² This did not preclude her having troubles with obtaining money from his estate for her living afterwards, however, a theme that occurs more than once in her diary. Emily's perception of the estate representatives' opinion of her is perhaps best characterized by an 1884 diary entry. Representatives of Young's estate came to each of Young's widows to find out where they would like to be buried – with Young or elsewhere. After describing their visit she wrote, "I hope they will not be in a hurry to bury us."⁵³

Some days her frustration at a perceived lack of financial support was compounded by a lack of emotional support. On one such day she wrote poignantly, "I feel very loanly [*sic*] tonight. I hope I do not sin in my feelings."⁵⁴ Life as a plural wife *was* lonely for Emily. Though she always publicly defended it, she nonetheless dealt with the harsh realities of the divided time of her husband, especially as he split his time not only between his many wives, but also between his Church – and civic – duties. One of her first journal entries mentions that her daughters had "invited a few of their associates to spend the evening. They are sometimes rather noisy, but I have spent so many lonely hours or, years, myself, that I maybe [*sic*] a little over indulgent to my children."⁵⁵

Fortunately, she was always able to live near many of her children, and spend a great deal of time with them. She mentions them frequently in her diary, at times commenting on her feelings about them. For example, she wrote on one occasion, "I think I have got the best

⁵² EDPY, Diary, September 28, 1877.

⁵³ EDPY, Diary, January 7, 1884.

⁵⁴ EDPY, Diary, February 1, 1875.

⁵⁵ EDPY, Diary, December 28, 1874.

children in the world.”⁵⁶ Describing Christmas 1879, she wrote, “my little grandchildren always remember me. The Lord bless the little darlings.”⁵⁷ She was surrounded by her family until the day she passed away in 1899, at the age of seventy-five – fifty-five years after Joseph was killed, and twenty-two after her second husband, Brigham Young, had died.⁵⁸

As she dealt with many challenges and struggles throughout her life, Emily found release in writing in her diary. On Sept. 7, 1877, she wrote, “As [B]enjamin Franklin bottled the lightning so I will have to bottle my thoughts by writing them down. For when I stand up to speak, they fly away like so many frightened birds and I will have to use pen ink and paper as a trap, to hold them, untill they can be used.”⁵⁹ Emily found in her diary a means of organizing her thoughts in order to more effectively communicate them. The diary was kept on a semi-regular basis for a quarter century, and in it she recorded her everyday activities, as well as her thoughts about the subjects that intrigued her. She was a woman whose interests were not confined to her immediate world and she commented on subjects such as women’s rights and a new scientific discovery then called “animalcules.”⁶⁰ She was brutally honest about her feelings towards those around her, and highlighted her perceptions of both their good and bad character traits. She was very receptive to praise, and seemed to appreciate the thoughtful attention of her children and grandchildren, among others.

⁵⁶ EDPY, Diary, June 9, 1896.

⁵⁷ EDPY, Diary, December 26, 1879.

⁵⁸ “Wife of Brigham Dead,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 10, 1899, 5.

⁵⁹ EDPY, Diary, September 7, 1877.

⁶⁰ See EDPY, Diary, November 7, 1877, for animalcules (spelling from transcript); December 4, 1878, for fighting the anti polygamous women in Utah; and January 23 and August 22, 1880, for general comments on women’s rights and husband-wife relationships respectively.

Emily showed her desire to preserve not only memories of the Missouri persecutions, but also her father's place in that time period by copying several of her father's documents into her diary. On Dec. 12, 1880, Emily wrote, "Receive[d] some papers of fathers from Edward."⁶¹ Then, on Feb. 15, 1881, Emily wrote, "I will now copy some of my fathers writings."⁶² The selection of documents that she copied into her journal included prayers, poems, and journal entries among other things, in no apparent order – or at least not chronological order. Although the order is confusing, Emily was copying documents that highlighted significant events in her father's life. Additionally, she copied those that illustrated in a few words who he was: his letter to his wife with the fervent plea, "Pray for me that I may not fall"; his prayer that the Lord "look down in mercy upon thy people, who are afflicted [*sic*] and oppressed"⁶³

Emily started her personal collection of Edward Partridge papers with a prayer that her father had written while in Far West at the beginning of 1839, shortly before he fled the state, pleading for mercy for the saints – including his family. This was followed by a song composed by her father, which reflected the devotion that he felt: "Come let us all unite and sing/Before we bow in prayre/And praise the Lord our heavenly king/And thus our hearts prepare."⁶⁴ One can sense the yearning Partridge felt for unity among the saints.

Emily copied two revelations directed towards Partridge next, in which he was blessed and praised for his work. She then turned to the Kirtland time period and copied entries from his

⁶¹ EDPY, Diary, December 12, 1880.

⁶² EDPY, Diary, February 15, 1881.

⁶³ EDPY, Diary, February 15, 1881.

⁶⁴ EDPY, Diary, March 18, 1881.

stay in Kirtland in January 1836, as well as the words of a blessing he was given. Following the blessing she copied a speech that General John B. Clark gave to prisoners, among whom was her father, in Burks Tavern in November 1838. In the speech, Clark criticized the Mormon settlers for their lack of morality. After these religious documents, Emily next copied the 1831 letter her father wrote to her mother, informing Lydia that he was staying in Missouri for land sales and wouldn't be home that fall.

Before resuming copying of her father's letters, Emily inserted some of her own diary entries. Interestingly, she noted in these few entries that she and her brother went to the St. George, Utah, Temple and received sacred ordinances by proxy for their relatives – including their father. Before resuming copying her father's documents, she includes a copy of an acrostic poem that her mother wrote for her brother Edward.⁶⁵

Nearly a year passed before Emily copied three more documents in her diary: an extract of an 1834 letter that Partridge wrote his parents and siblings expressing his desire for them to receive a heavenly reward; an 1836 letter he wrote exhorting members of the church to attend to familial duties; and the 1839 affidavit describing his tarring and feathering and the amount of property that he lost in Missouri. Again, his personality is highlighted. His letter to his family expresses concern for his family members' welfare: "I want you to be saved in the third heaven or Celestial Kingdom of God. This kingdom is reserved for the church of the first born; even those who have come . . . to spend eternity in his presence."⁶⁶ Partridge sincerely believed in the

⁶⁵ EDPY, Diary, December 26, 1881.

⁶⁶ EDPY, Diary, January 15, 1882.

religion he had espoused, and he wanted his family to enjoy the blessings that he anticipated would come to its faithful believers.

In no apparent order, Emily's selection of documents serves to highlight Partridge's life in a positive light. Though Partridge was reprimanded in published revelations from Joseph on more than one occasion, none of these documents appear in her diary. There are a few different reasons that this might be the case: her father may not have kept his own personal copy of those revelations, her brother (who gave her the documents) may have not have passed those along, or Emily herself may have chosen not to copy them. Instead, she chose to preserve those parts of his memory that were either most flattering or perhaps simply revealed who she thought he truly was.

Ultimately, it appears that Emily attempted to capture Partridge's inner feelings. Through his verses of poetry and his written prayer, he revealed some of the yearnings of his heart. Emily wanted others to remember her father as the man praised in revelations who worked tirelessly to assist the poor and who traveled hundreds of miles on two missions. She chose to highlight his modest, yet somewhat triumphant account of his tarring and feathering, written at the request of church leaders.

In total, Emily copied fifteen different documents word for word into her diary, presumably so that others – her descendants or other church members – might know the man that she had known and loved during her life. She wanted them to understand his personality, and not just remember a negative comment or two that might have been made about him. Understanding that others might question her bias, she left her own personal recollections in her

“Autobiography” and “Incidents,” and she quoted from other sources left by those who had known Partridge.

In addition to her diary, Emily left behind her life histories. Her desire to preserve the memories of Missouri comes through forcefully in her “Autobiography.” Surprisingly, though her time in Missouri with the saints in the 1830s represented less than eight years (slightly more than one-tenth) of her life, she spent most of her autobiography describing the events that occurred in Missouri. One reason for recording her memories may have been as a response to a request from Church headquarters. In 1879, John Taylor, on behalf of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, issued a call for saints to record their memories of the Missouri persecutions, and to submit their accounts to Salt Lake City to A.M. Musser, a clerk of the Church Historian.⁶⁷ Another reason that Emily may have been so intent on preserving the memory of the saints’ ultimate triumph in Missouri is reflected in a comment made by church leader Franklin D. Richards in 1885 during the Raid. He taught that the “Lord has borne us off in troubles and in tribulations while in Ohio, in Missouri, and in Illinois, and the God that has been with us through these troubles will not forsake us at the present time.”⁶⁸

Emily was interested in preserving a record of this safeguarding – perhaps in an attempt to remember that the Lord could still deliver her from her troubles. But she was not uninterested

⁶⁷ James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:320-21. Some of the letters received by at church headquarters refer to the message’s distribution as a circular in the *Deseret News* in the March 11, 1879 edition.

⁶⁸ Franklin D. Richards, “Present Conditions,” April 4-5, 1885, in *Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F.D. and S.W. Richards, 1854-86), 26:167.

in the punishment coming to those that had opposed the saints. She noted near the end of her autobiography:

And now, in 1885, nearly all of the Saints that were living then have passed away, and the few that are living now are those that were children then, and they are becoming advanced in years, and it will not be very long and there will be none left living upon the earth to bear witness against the horrid deeds of the Missouri mob. But the record of their wicked deeds will remain and condemn them; they will yet have to foot the bill with interest.⁶⁹

By preserving the record, she still hoped the “Missouri mob” would be held accountable for their actions.

Emily’s emphasis about her father in her autobiography is not upon his virtues or his failings, but rather the difficulty of the task he undertook. While she did not exaggerate his virtues, neither did she ignore his fatigue and weariness. She also did not accuse him of any failings in his position as bishop. Instead, she expressed admiration for his courage in fulfilling his calling and claimed, “I sometimes think that Bishops in these days know but little what the office of Bishop was in the early days of the Church—in the days of its poverty and inexperience.”⁷⁰ She was intent on fostering a healthy respect for the office that her father had held and the difficulty which he had in fulfilling it. She bore witness to her father’s faithfulness to the prophet Joseph Smith, especially when many others in higher Church positions were apostatizing. At the end of his life, he died in good standing in the church.

Nevertheless, she mentioned more than once that change in circumstances the family experienced in joining and staying with the Church. They sacrificed nearly all their property and

⁶⁹ Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, July 15, 1885, 26.

⁷⁰ Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, February 15, 1885, 138.

possessions in order to follow the saints from place to place. Some of the family details she included show what the family sacrificed so that he might fulfill his calling. Whether she mentioned that to show the sacrifice that her family had made for the church, or whether she simply includes it as part of her history, the effect is the same: it illustrates the extent that her father and mother (and she) were willing to sacrifice.⁷¹

Like her father, Emily wrote poetry that reflected her feelings. Near the end of a lengthy poem entitled “Relics of Church History” that Emily wrote to her surviving siblings in 1899, she hinted that their participation in the church’s early days was significant:

Now we are getting aged
But why should we care
Our children will read history
And know that we were there.⁷²

She was anxious that her children “know that we were there,” and could testify to the validity of now-disputed events in the church’s past. Not only did Joseph Smith teach and practice polygamy, but she had been sealed to him as a plural wife. She and her family could attest to the horrific nature of the mob persecutions in Missouri, and to her father’s faithful fulfillment of his duties in Missouri. She herself was a relic of the past and she wanted to preserve her memories before it was too late.

⁷¹ For instance, she quotes a letter from her uncle criticizing her father for leaving his property to be sold for such paltry returns as a fifteen-year-old horse. See Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent*, December 1, 1884, 102.

⁷² Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Relics of Church History,” microfilm of photocopy of typescript, folder 6, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 6.

Edward: “Reflecting Somewhat on the Character and Integrity of My Father”

Only six when his father died, and thirteen when his stepfather died, Edward grew to adulthood mostly under the care of his mother and older sisters. Like his sisters, in the late 1870s he began reflecting on the life of his father. In 1878, Edward wrote, “I had never, from my earliest recollections, heard any one say one word about [my father] that was anything but commendatory.”⁷³ However, he further wrote, “there has been, of late years, some things said and written, reflecting somewhat on the character and integrity of my father, which caused me some unpleasant feelings to say the least.”⁷⁴ Believing such comments to be unjustified, Edward felt the need to write a biography of his father in order to clear his father’s name. Edward compiled a sixty-page biography in which he wrote few of his own words but primarily copied various documents from his father’s lifetime. Due to the extensive lists of Partridge genealogical information following the biography in the same notebook, the notebook – including his attempt to illustrate his father’s good character – is referred to as “Genealogical Record.”⁷⁵

Born on 25 June 1833, only three weeks before his father was tarred and feathered by a mob in Jackson County, Edward was the only surviving son of Edward and Lydia Partridge. Thus, he not only bore his father’s full name, he was also the only son able to carry on the family name. A babe in arms when the family was driven from Jackson County, he had no personal recollections of that event. According to his obituary, however, some of his earliest memories

⁷³ Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

⁷⁴ Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

⁷⁵ Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

were of later mobbings in Missouri.⁷⁶ During the final exodus from Missouri he was only five years old, and was not quite seven years old when his father died. He traveled to Utah with his mother and sisters in 1848. After arriving in Utah, Edward served as a missionary in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) from 1854-57. After his return, he married Sarah Lucretia Clayton, on Feb. 4, 1858. Four years later, he married Elizabeth Buxton on Feb. 15, 1862, as a plural wife. In total, his wives bore him seventeen children. He managed his brother-in-law Amasa Lyman's farm in Farmington before moving to Fillmore in 1864. Accompanied by part of his family, he returned to the Sandwich Islands in 1882, this time as the president of the mission. He remained there until 1885, when he returned to Utah. He spent the final years of his life in Provo.⁷⁷

In addition to providing for his own wives and children, Edward also helped support his sisters and widowed mother, filling in where his sisters' husband, Amasa Lyman, could or would not, until his nieces and nephews were old enough to help fulfill the role of provider.⁷⁸ When Edward was called on a mission to Hawaii in 1854, not only did Eliza miss him as a brother, but she also missed his support. She wrote in her journal on one occasion, "My br[other] E. Partridge called to go on a mission to the Sandwicks islands, which will leave us without man or boy to do anything, but it is all right."⁷⁹ At times, Edward's support for his sisters was combined with his formal employment, such as when he managed Amasa Lyman's farm in Farmington.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ "Pres. Edward Partridge Dead," *Deseret Evening News*, November 17, 1900, 5.

⁷⁷ "Pres. Edward Partridge Dead," 5.

⁷⁸ This is with the exception of Emily, who lived much of the time far from the rest of the family.

⁷⁹ EMPL, Journal, April 7, 1854, 60.

⁸⁰ "Pres. Edward Partridge Dead," 5.

Edward, like his father, was in the public eye. He served in prominent Church positions for many years in Utah and in Hawaii. In 1864, his first year in Fillmore, he became the bishop of Fillmore. In his journal, Edward recorded his feelings about the calling: “This is something that I have always had an instinctive dread of since I have had understanding sufficient to know what the office of a Bishop was.”⁸¹ Though he was very young when his father was bishop, he most likely heard stories throughout his life about his father’s dedication. Despite his fears, Edward served in his calling for a number of years so he must have performed his duties competently. Edward was later called as a counselor in the stake presidencies of both Millard and Provo. In 1895, he was called as stake president of the Provo stake, a position that he held for the last five years of his life.⁸²

Not only did he serve in the church like his father, Edward symbolically took the place of his deceased father at the Salt Lake Temple dedication. There he “sat in the bishops stand to represent my father,” as Edward’s sister Emily wrote.⁸³ This honor is even more notable when we recall that Partridge had died over fifty years previously and other bishops had been called. It is indicative of the esteem in which Church leaders still held Edward Partridge, Senior, and his son that he would be thus honored so long after his death.

Like his father, Edward also served in a variety of civic positions. He was a probate judge in Millard County, member of the territorial legislature, and member of the state constitutional

⁸¹ Edward Partridge, Diary, March 9, 1869.

⁸² “Pres. Edward Partridge Dead,” 5.

⁸³ EDPY, Diary, April 6, 1893.

convention in 1895.⁸⁴ He died in 1900 after suffering from both pleurisy and then typhoid fever.⁸⁵ His obituary memorialized him as a “quiet, unobtrusive, sensitive man,” one whose “upright character had won for him the friendship of all the people.” He was extensively praised for his example as one “whose whole life has been devoted to the furtherance of the work of God . . . an example of unselfish devotion to the Gospel,” and one whose “course in life [was] worthy of emulation by all Latter-day Saints.”⁸⁶ “[E]arnest and sincere in all his undertakings,” he both “merited and enjoyed the respect of the community.”⁸⁷

In the obituary, Edward was praised for his record-keeping: “He has been very diligent during his life in keeping his journal and genealogy, and much valuable historical data and reminiscences of prominent men and events connected with the Church are recorded in the former.” Like his sisters, Edward had kept a journal for several years, in which he often noted his church and community actions. Edward’s wry sense of humor helped him deal with the practicalities of leadership and poverty. At one point, he noted in his journal that there was a standing bill of over \$400.00, commenting, “We find it is easier to contract debts in working on the temple than it is to raise the money to pay them.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ “Pres. Edward Partridge Dead,” 5. See also Edward Partridge, *Diary*, February 22, 1878.

⁸⁵ “Pres. Edward Partridge Dead,” 5.

⁸⁶ “Pres. Edward Partridge Dead,” 5.

⁸⁷ “Pres. Edward Partridge Dead,” 5.

⁸⁸ Edward Partridge, *Diary*, November 30, 1877. This would refer to the Salt Lake, Manti or St. George Temple, all of which were either being constructed or had just been completed at the time.

In addition to his ultimately nine volumes of journals, in 1878 he began writing his “Genealogical Record” in a blank book of 430 lined pages.⁸⁹ When completed, the first sixty pages contained a biography of Edward’s father, Edward Partridge. The biography consists primarily of copies in Edward’s handwriting of documents of his father’s. He apparently had possession of these documents, since he gave them to his sister almost three years after he began the biography.⁹⁰ Edward then carefully recorded several dozen pages of genealogical information (names, birthdates, family groups, marriages and dates, etc.) of his extended family over the course of several generations. Following the genealogical information, he recorded information about completed temple ordinances for many of these individuals. The final inclusion is his mother’s testimony, either dictated to him or written previously.

Edward, Junior, presents a slightly different case history of memory studies because he was much younger than his writing sisters (who were approximately 19 and 14 when they left Missouri and he was five). He was named for his father, and as the only son, was the only one to carry on the family name. Nearly everything he wrote came from other sources – he had few personal reflections of his father. The problem of sources he noted when he stated, “I also propose to write a few items and acts with regard to the life of my father; upon forming this resolution I find on making research that I can get but very little that pertains to the Biography of

⁸⁹ Many of the middle pages were left blank.

⁹⁰ Sometime after she copied them into her diary, some of them made their way to the Church archives, where they are today.

my father, and I can only regret that it was not more customary for men to write journals.”⁹¹

Edward corrected that own oversight in his own life through his nine volumes of journals.

Most significantly, his primary reason for writing was to clear his father’s name. He became interested in writing a biography of his father because “there has been, of late years, some things said and written, reflecting somewhat on the character and integrity of my father, which caused me some unpleasant feelings to say the least, from the simple fact, that I had never, from my earliest recollections, heard any one say one word about him that was anything but commendatory.”⁹² To clear his father’s name, Edward draws nearly entirely upon documents written from the time period, though he adds a few other facts obtained from other sources. Recognizing that hearsay forty years later would not be the most reliable source, he draws very heavily on the primary sources from Edward’s life, explaining, “Some of my reasons for not believing those things to which I have alluded above . . . will be made apparent in the following pages, or copies of papers, etc.”⁹³

He also wanted to preserve a record of the history of the “early times.” On Feb. 1, 1878, he wrote:

I spend considerable part of my time writing up my fathers History the most I have is letters and papers to copy such as have a general interest for the church which I think have not been published I copy that they may be preserved, such as letters from the prophet and revelations not published

⁹¹ Edward Partridge, Senior, apparently only kept a diary when he was traveling: in 1818, and in 1835-36. Edward, Junior, kept a diary that expanded into several volumes over the course of his life.

⁹² Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

⁹³ Partridge, “Genealogical Record,” 1.

as well as any documents having a bearing on the history of those early times.⁹⁴

While his “introduction” indicates that he was interested in “clearing the name” of his father, this entry indicates that he was also interested in recording general history of the Church.

The mystery lies in Edward’s reference to negative comments that were being made about his father. While certainly some criticisms – even by Joseph Smith – during Partridge’s lifetime were understandable, they had been forgotten for a period of several years. A careful examination of the literature of the time period reveals few comments about Bishop Partridge at all, let alone negative comments. Only two negative comments in published sermons or newspapers have been found.

In 1874, the *Deseret News* reported a discourse that Brigham Young had recently given. Young taught that God directed his people in both “spiritual and temporal things.” Many were reluctant to accept direction from spiritual leaders in temporal matters. He acknowledged that this was a concern of some of the early members of the church:

The first two Bishops in the Church—Edward Partridge was the first, I was well acquainted with him, and Newel K. Whitney was the second—questioned the propriety of Joseph having anything to do with temporal things. Joseph would argue the case with them a little, and tell them how things were, and bring up scripture to show them that it could not be otherwise, that it was impossible for the Lord to dictate people unless he dictated them in temporal affairs.⁹⁵

Though perhaps not harsh criticism, it might still have been offensive enough to lead Edward to feel the need to write a biography of his father.

⁹⁴ Edward Partridge, Junior, Diary, photocopy of original, February 1, 1878, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBL.

⁹⁵ "Discourse by President Brigham Young, June 21, 1874," *Deseret News*, July 1, 1874, 340-41.

The other somewhat negative comment was made by John Taylor. In a discourse given at the Semi-Annual Conference in April 1879, John Taylor reportedly said,

I remember a remark made on one occasion by Joseph Smith, in speaking with Bishop Partridge, who was then Bishop. He was a splendid good man, as Bishop Hunter is. But he got some crooked ideas into his head; he thought he ought to manage some things irrespective of Joseph, which caused Joseph to speak rather sharply to him. Joseph said, I wish you to understand that I am President of this Church, and I am your president, and I preside over you and all your affairs. Is that correct doctrine? Yes. It was true then and it is true to-day.⁹⁶

Though this sounds critical of Partridge, he was not the only one strongly reprimanded by Joseph. Others were also chastised harshly on more than one occasion. These comments also provide two examples of church leaders using memory to teach their people.

Though the comments that propelled Edward to write this biography might perhaps never be discovered, the record that remains is certainly indicative of Edward's reaction to the comments. Into the biography, Edward copied a remarkable number of primary sources. He often comments briefly on the sources, before or after quoting them. As he writes, he acknowledges the humanity of his father, noting that Partridge felt inadequate at times. If Edward wanted to paint a rosy picture of his father, he probably wouldn't have included a letter dated Aug. 5-6, 1831, in which Partridge expresses his grave concerns over his ability to fulfill his calling. However, it is possible that Edward included that to show his father's humility.

Edward claims he wants to "clear" his father's name, but he did not record the specific accusations. Perhaps he felt that by simply presenting the facts, the interested reader would

⁹⁶ John Taylor, "All Temporal Concerns Need the Attention of the Saints," April 9, 1879, in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:36. Problematically, Taylor made that comment in 1879, the year *after* Edward began writing the biography of his father. However, it is included here because perhaps it may be indicative of the comments that were being made at the time.

discern for himself the true nature of the case. Alternately, perhaps Edward realized that most accusations disappear, and by recording and refuting them in his biography, he would be preserving them for generations to come. However, some unanswered questions remain. Did Edward not copy letters or revelations in which his father was rebuked because he was trying to preserve a good image of his father? Or did he simply not have them? We might never know.

Edward's biography of his father was never published but it has survived to ensure that his children – and countless others – are not as devoid of information about Edward Partridge, Senior, as they might have been otherwise.

Edward did not neglect the memory of his mother, either. After Lydia's death, he wrote a letter to the *Deseret News* containing a short account of her life. When it failed to appear, he let his feelings be known in a letter to the editors. He noted in his journal that perhaps his letter "may have been a little sharp." But he felt somewhat justified, for "Mother was one of a very few who embraced the Gospel at a very early day, and passed through all the hardships endured by the saints, and was the widdow of one of the prominent men of the Church - the first Bishop, and being widely known I thought it not out of place or unreasonable to expect that a short article would be published."⁹⁷ The satisfying conclusion to this incident came a week later when he recorded in his journal that the editors decided to publish his article, perhaps as a result of his letter.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Edward Partridge, Junior, Diary, June 19, 1878.

⁹⁸ Edward Partridge, Junior, Diary, June 26, 1878.

Partridge's children's writings contain an undercurrent of determined survival and a desire to live up to the legacy of their father who continued to serve until his death. Their memories of him as one who persevered were idealized, yet appear to be in accordance with the extant records of the time. His children's writings not only illuminate his life, but also their own. Eliza recorded her memories so that others would remember her connections to both her father and to her first husband Joseph and not just those to a man who had died an apostate. She also hoped that others would remember her as one who had suffered for the gospel's sake in the early days of the church and had continued faithful until the end of her life. Though her husband remained prominent to the end of his life, her sister Emily did not want her memory solely tied to Young's, since she had felt somewhat forsaken and unappreciated in her dealings with him and his estate. So Emily wrote to reestablish her place as one who had passed through trials in Missouri and persevered. Additionally, she also emphasized her close connection to the first bishop that her importance might not solely depend on her relationship with Brigham Young or his estate after his death. Edward, the youngest and sole namesake of his father, wrote to clear Partridge's name of unsubstantiated charges. It was also a personal quest to ascertain whether the family lore that he had heard all his life could be verified with actual documents from his father's lifetime. Edward did not need to assert his importance, since he had served in a variety of prominent positions both in the church and in the community throughout his life. Perhaps this is why he left mostly journals and genealogical records, and not more of an autobiographical nature.

Life writings chronicle ordinary events, but mere words on paper can be wrought with meaning. It is perhaps fitting that since her father's calling as bishop led him to leave his land in

Ohio, to purchase hundreds of acres in Missouri, to sell those lands, and then to buy more land in Illinois, Eliza's final diary entry should be about land. Two days before Christmas 1885 and a few months before her death, she wrote: "Dec. 23rd Bought some land (6 by 11 rods) to build on."⁹⁹

⁹⁹ EMPL, Journal, December 23, 1885, 143.

CHAPTER FOUR

“A MODICUM OF THE RECOGNITION HE DESERVED”:

MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF PARTRIDGE

BY HIS DESCENDANTS

August 30, 1997, was a day of intermittent periods of heavy rain in Nauvoo, Illinois. Unpleasant weather notwithstanding, leaders and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – among them descendants of Edward Partridge – gathered to dedicate a monument to Partridge in the Old Pioneer Cemetery. President James E. Faust, one of the highest-ranking ecclesiastical leaders in the Church and a descendant himself, acknowledged Partridge to be “a man of intelligence and character, [who accepted] baptism only after making inquiries as to the doctrine and character of those who had accepted the restored gospel.”¹ Indeed Partridge did investigate the doctrine and character of those who had joined the newly founded religion before baptism. Once he had established the truth of a matter to his satisfaction, however, he was willing to die for the truth.

Not all of his later descendants have found it so essential to stick to the facts. Three of Edward Partridge’s many descendants have published books about him and his family. *Other Drums*, by Ruth Louise Partridge, was published in 1974, and was followed nearly 20 years later by Melvin Lyman’s novel, *Lydia: Partridge Family Saga*, in 1993.² The third full-length book about the Partridges, entitled *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ*

¹ Don and Betty Ulmer, “Pres. Faust Dedicates Monument in Nauvoo to Bishop Partridge,” *Church News*, Sept. 6, 1997. James E. Faust was one of two counselors of church president Gordon B. Hinckley at the time and as such had the title “president,” though he was not the president of the church.

² Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums* (Provo, Utah: R.L. Partridge, 1974); Melvin A. Lyman, *Lydia: Partridge Family Saga* (Roswell, GA: Old Rugged Cross Press, 1993).

of *Latter-day Saints*, by Hartt Wixom, was published a few years later in 1998 as a nonfiction biography.³

Though I am primarily a historian, in this final chapter I will analyze each of the three works not only for its historical merits, but also for its literary merits. In particular, I will evaluate its portrayal of Partridge's calling as bishop. In the final analysis, I will show that none of the books accurately portrays Partridge, neither historically, literarily, or in the scope of his service. Perhaps most intriguing is the realization that the descendants make an effort to clear Partridge's name of specific charges of negligence and disunity – charges of which most people today are unaware. Like an echo from Edward, Junior's writing, this theme of "clearing his name" emerges in each of the descendants' works, illustrating yet again the importance of how one is remembered in the past as well as in the present.

Mormon Historical Fiction

Once published, *Other Drums* and *Lydia* joined the field of Mormon historical fiction. A brief overview of this field provides a framework for further discussion of these books. Historical fiction has been a tradition among the Mormon people for over a century. According to Lavina Fielding Anderson, the field of Mormon historical fiction first "developed in tandem with the home literature movement, which was the brainchild of Orson F. Whitney, later an apostle, who . . . urg[ed] Mormons to produce their own literature."⁴ Mormon authors responded,

³ Hartt Wixom, *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 1998).

⁴ Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Fictional Pasts: Mormon Historical Novels" in *Excavating Mormon Pasts: The New Historiography of the Last Half Century*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2004), 369. Anderson notes that this essay by Whitney was first published in *The Contributor* 9 (June 1888): 297-302. For a reprint of the essay, see Orson F. Whitney, "Home Literature," in *A*

from Susan Young Gates, with her 1909 novel, *John Stevens' Courtship: A Romance of the Echo Canyon War*, to Gerald Lund's extremely popular nine-volume series, *The Work and the Glory*, published from 1990-1998. Although far in excess of the number of copies typically sold of a work of Mormon historical fiction, Lund's figure of nearly three million copies of his books sold is indicative of the interest in this field.⁵

As in any field of historical fiction, authors in Mormon historical fiction should strive for not only literary achievement, but also for basic historical accuracy. Literary critic and English professor emeritus at Brigham Young University Richard Cracroft writes, "In retelling history, the historical novelist is of necessity bounded and limited by historical fact, a condition that wields a historical tyranny that insists, both to author and reader, 'This far, and no further!'"⁶ While this historical tyranny appears in historical fiction in general, readers of Mormon historical fiction are especially sensitive to an author's consideration of limits in historical accuracy. Cracroft notes that the most popular Mormon fiction writer to date, Gerald Lund, is successful in part because "Lund assumes that his audience traces in the history of their beginnings the moving finger of the Lord, seeing it as a sacred myth, a burning bush that must be approached with shoes removed."⁷ Since parts of this "sacred myth" also provide the framework for a good story, both R. L. Partridge and Melvin Lyman use it as the basic structure for their novels. The framework of the Partridge's story is one of the few similarities between the books.

Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints, ed. Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 129-33.

⁵ Deseret Book, "Gerald N. Lund," http://deseretbook.com/auth/19/Gerald_N_Lund, (accessed Sept. 2, 2009).

⁶ Richard Cracroft, "Telling the Restoration Story: Gerald N. Lund's *The Work and the Glory* Saga," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 243-44.

⁷ Cracroft, "Telling the Restoration Story," 249.

Both novels about Partridge were published by Mormon authors, and they represent two of the different genres of Mormon historical fiction. The first, into which *Other Drums* fits best (if uncomfortably) is “insider/outsider” fiction. In “insider/outsider” fiction, Mormon authors write their books “with an insider’s knowledge but not with an insider’s stance, to audiences both within and outside of Mormonism.”⁸ R. L. Partridge’s novel best fits here, since her discussion of many of the aspects important to Mormon readers are left out: the revelations explaining the will of God to Partridge and other saints, the nature of spiritual experiences leading to continued conversion, and the sustaining power of faith that many Mormon contemporaries of Partridge claimed supported them through their trials.⁹ *Other Drums* is a secular version of a spiritual story. To be fair, the novel ill fits this category because it is weak in the literary merits that would make it appeal to a national audience.

Lydia, however, fits nicely into another of the categories of Mormon novels: “insider/insider” fiction. In this genre, Mormon authors tell a story about Mormon pasts, in which the “whole world is encompassed by Mormon myths, premises and conclusions.”¹⁰ In *Lydia*, not only is “the whole world encompassed by Mormon myths, premises and conclusions,” but the majority of the dialogue is as well. Not all “insider/insider” books are so didactic, however, as Lund’s popular series shows. The third book, *Edward Partridge*, is an attempt at a nonfiction examination of Partridge’s life, but it too ultimately falls short in meeting the

⁸ Anderson, 374.

⁹ Compare, for example, the description of Partridge’s call to be bishop: see R.L. Partridge, 45-46, and Lyman, *Lydia*, 75-78, 106-07. For other examples of Lyman’s treatment of spiritual matters largely ignored by R.L. Partridge, see Lyman, *Lydia*, 110-11, 116-17, 120-23, 147-55.

¹⁰ Anderson, 370. The final of the three categories Anderson uses is called “outsider/outsider” fiction, and as there are no examples in this category dealing with Partridge, it will not be discussed here.

requirements of good history and biography. Furthermore, each of the three books fails to convey a feeling of the broad scope of Partridge's church service.

Marching to Her Own Beat: Other Drums

In 1967, Ruth Louise Partridge's manuscript *Other Drums* won the \$1,000 prize from the Utah Institute of Fine Arts for the best novel manuscript of the year. Interestingly, though it was based on the lives of Edward Partridge's family, in that version she didn't identify them by name.¹¹ However, by the time she self-published this novel seven years later, she included their real names. In 377 pages, R. L. Partridge told the story of Edward Partridge and his wife, Lydia, and their six surviving children. She began enigmatically with an epigraph from Henry David Thoreau (which presumably gave rise to the book's title): "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."¹² R. L. Partridge seemed to be suggesting that Edward Partridge and his family were willing to change their lives and leave their comfortable home because they "heard the beat of a different drum."

The novel begins in 1830 as the character Edward Partridge returns from a trip to Painesville, Ohio, and learns that representatives of a new religion have arrived in town. The Partridges investigate, are baptized, and Partridge travels to Massachusetts to share his new religion with his parents and siblings, and then, shortly after his return to Ohio, is called as bishop. His attempts to fulfill his calling as bishop are mixed with his family's struggles to deal with the challenges that their new lifestyle has brought them. The novel carries the storyline

¹¹ Samuel W. Taylor, review of *Other Drums*, by R. L. Partridge, *Dialogue* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 79.

¹² Partridge, *Other Drums*, iii.

through to the exodus from Nauvoo – four years after Partridge’s death. The novel’s portrayal of Partridge as bishop is sketchy at best. Literarily, the novel does somewhat better, creating an interesting read.

While many of the specific historical events mentioned in the novel actually took place, R. L. Partridge takes creative license in the creation or exclusion of other historical events for dramatic effect. One of the most extensive creations is the author’s description of the journey to Missouri undertaken by Lydia Partridge and her young daughters. Though what little is known about their trip to Missouri comes from the children’s later writings, their accounts nonetheless provide at least a few major details. Additionally, Eliza and Emily’s accounts corroborate one another’s.¹³ While all other known accounts indicate that the Partridge women traveled in a group with several other converts most of the way, and the Morley family the entire way, R.L. Partridge instead portrays the Partridge women as traveling alone. One mother and five young daughters making their way through the rough environment of public transportation is certainly more dramatic than a group of church members with male protectors. R. L. Partridge’s very imaginative story occupies nearly forty pages.¹⁴

There are other historical inaccuracies. In the novel, after Partridge visits his family in 1830-31, he never saw his family again.¹⁵ In reality, he returned four years later on another mission. Again, the story becomes at once less complicated and his departure more dramatic

¹³ It is possible that R. L. Partridge was unaware of these manuscripts, though she did travel to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in search of information about Partridge, and perhaps sought other resources as well. In addition, at least one manuscript was accessible in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections section of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, the university in the city in which she lived while she was writing this book.

¹⁴ Partridge, *Other Drums*, 80-116.

¹⁵ Partridge, *Other Drums*, 39-40. It is also possible that R. L. Partridge was unaware also of these diaries, or perhaps they were inaccessible to her.

when his actual second visit is excluded. In addition to creation or exclusion, some aspects of the story have most likely been greatly exaggerated, such as events during Partridge's visit to his family during the winter of 1830-31. While there, the family members talk almost incessantly of the American Revolution and their former Tory sympathies. This exaggerated emphasis on the Partridges' willingness to differ from their neighbors in an unpopular way allows the author to make her point that the Partridges were a family that thought for themselves rather than followed the crowd. Thus, though some of the aspects of the novel are accurate, they are much overdone.

As a work of fiction, *Other Drums*, stands up slightly better to the test. At times the characterization brings the Partridges and others to life. Her descriptions could sometimes be accurate historically. For instance, she portrayed Partridge as a man overworked in fulfilling his calling: a "thin, hollow-eyed man working from daylight until late at night, who could never be sure his sleep wouldn't be broken by the importuning of some Saint."¹⁶ As one reviewer noted, "If *Other Drums* has flaws, they spring from the tendency to accept historical stereotypes: devout Saints are without flaw."¹⁷ A more nuanced view of all participants would provide a more realistic background in which to situate Partridge.

Such problems of historical realism are evident also when R. L. Partridge describes Partridge's family life. Upon returning from his business trip at the beginning of the novel, Partridge expresses his contentment at arriving home: "I doubt if ever a man lived who takes more pleasure in his home and family than I."¹⁸ However, once the family moves to Missouri,

¹⁶ R.L. Partridge, 118.

¹⁷ Taylor, 79-80. Taylor humorously noted, "This attitude is reflected in the dialogue. All Mormons speak perfect English, regardless of national origin and limited education," while the typical Missourian "talks some of the thickest po'-white-trash dialect ever committed to paper. (I was anxiously awaiting the conversion of just one of them, to see what it did to his language, but the author didn't provide an example.)"

¹⁸ Partridge, *Other Drums*, 3.

the harmony at home dissipates. The character Lydia's comments to her children are typically curt and demeaning and the children fight frequently amongst themselves.¹⁹ Perhaps the author was intent on portraying the trials of the Partridges in Missouri in stark contrast to their comfortable life in Ohio. Unfortunately, while the author is intent on realistically describing how difficult the lives of the early members of the church actually were, she fails to make the characters human by showing both the hardships and the manner in which they overcame them. Instead, the characters simply struggle, and yet somehow press forward. Thus, she falters fictionally as well.²⁰

Though the author's discussion of Partridge's fulfillment of his calling was perhaps not her main focus, it is readily apparent that it is not even a secondary focus, as she simply skips over the most critical period of his service in the church: 1831 to 1833. Her larger interest in his calling seemed to be defending him against charges made against him. She does include an account of one of the reprimands that Partridge received from other church leaders, as well as his reaction to it. In doing so, she attempts to show the relative greatness of Partridge compared to fellow church member Sidney Rigdon. After Partridge is publicly and sternly rebuked in a revelation, she describes a scene in which Rigdon attempts to speak condescendingly about Partridge. Rigdon remarks to Joseph Smith, "Brother Edward needs but the chastening fire," though "at heart he is a good man." Joseph then turns towards Rigdon, and "in a voice crisp with rebuke" reminds Rigdon "No need for you to tell me that he is a good man – and an honest

¹⁹ Partridge, *Other Drums*, 195.

²⁰ It is possible that later twentieth-century writings about Partridge were in part a reaction to the inaccuracies and negative light in which she portrayed the family in the novel. In addition to the later novel and biography, a thesis about both Partridge and the law of consecration appeared a short three years later. Since it was not written by a descendent of Partridge, it will not be discussed here, though its timing fits the quarter century under consideration. D. Brent Collette, "In Search of Zion: A Description of Early Mormon Millennial Utopianism as Revealed Through the Life of Edward Partridge" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977).

one which is rare indeed. He is a choice spirit, capable of a devotion you with all your rich words will never know.”²¹ This desire to make Partridge look good in comparison to Sidney Rigdon continues throughout the other two published works.

In all fairness, it must be stated that R. L. Partridge makes no explicit claims to historical accuracy. There is no preface suggesting that she has attempted to stick to the historical facts as best she knew them, nor does she reference any sources to indicate from where she got her information. The story simply begins without introduction. However, by including the name and the story of the Partridges, she has implicitly included herself in the realm of Mormon historical fiction, and as such, may be judged by the standards of Mormon historical fiction. It is very possible that she relied on stories handed down as family traditions. She may also have referenced some published books about early Mormon history. The newspaper *The Berkshire County Eagle* in Massachusetts gives another clue. It reported on Oct. 4, 1939 that R. L. Partridge was visiting Pittsfield (Partridge’s birthplace and family home) “in quest of local color on the subject of ‘Partridge.’”²² Apparently, what she couldn’t find, she simply made up. Thus, *Other Drums*, while a brave attempt to write about this legendary man, fails in its historical accuracies, falls short in creating a great work of literature, and leaves the reader unfulfilled regarding Partridge’s actions as first bishop of the church. Yet, one of its redeeming qualities – and perhaps the one R.L. Partridge was most interested in – is that it contains a good story.

²¹ Partridge, *Other Drums*, 75.

²² “Mormon Visits City to Get Local Color for Book on Members of Partridge Family,” *The Berkshire County Eagle*, Wednesday, Oct. 4, 1939, page 6, copy of the article in box 1, folder 1, Ruth Louise Partridge Papers in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBL. The article noted that her first contact in Pittsfield misunderstood her interest in “Partridges” for the interest in the birds “partridges” and directed her to someone who would know about the fowls.

A Course in Doctrine – Analyzing Lydia: Partridge Family Saga

It was nearly two decades after R. L. Partridge's book was self-published that another work of historical fiction about the Partridge family appeared. Melvin A. Lyman's novel *Lydia: Partridge Family Saga*, made its appearance in 1993. As implied in the title, the focus of the novel is technically Partridge's wife, Lydia. Despite its title, however, Lyman apparently wanted to write a novel about the doctrine of the church to which Partridge belonged, and chose to do so by attempting to use Partridge's wife's perspective. The back cover claims that "*Lydia* is a *must read* for anyone interested in the early history of the Church of the Latter Day Saints [*sic*]."²³ Perhaps it should have read, "*Lydia* is a must read for anyone interested in a discussion of the doctrines of the church to which Lydia belonged!" The book is a mixture of poorly written novel and sermon. The chapter titles hint that the ultimate subject of the novel is not actually Lydia; it is the first principles and ordinances of the gospel that Lydia believed, as well as her husband's fulfillment of his calling, as related to her second hand. Chapter titles include "Death Gives Hope," "Frontier Life and God," "Love," "Faith," "Repentance," "Consecration and Stewardship," "Baptism and the Holy Ghost," "Shaft of Lightning," "Persecution," "Illinois and New Light," and "Posterity, Religion and Tradition." Since the discussions of doctrine are not essential to the storyline, their purpose in the book is confusing to the reader.

Even were the "sermon" sections to be removed from the novel, fiction writing is not Lyman's strong point. At times, the characters engage in discussions of religious principles for pages at a time with only a few non-doctrinal lines of dialogue. Even then, the dialogue sounds very stilted. Very little of the novel treats Lydia as a person with emotions or independent actions. The novel fails to even consistently focus on Lydia's or even the Partridges' reactions to

²³ Lyman, *Lydia*, back cover, emphasis in original.

the key events in church history, since the dialogue doesn't reveal actual emotions and feelings. Unlike other historical works, such as Lund's, with "scenes and characters that dramatize the immediate and personal impact of the events of . . . early Mormon history," *Lydia* fails to show impact in individuals' lives.²⁴ A typical description of Lydia's feelings comes in the two-word sentence following Partridge's relation of the resolution of one portion of his difficulties with Sidney Rigdon: "Lydia rejoiced."²⁵ The narrative then returns to actual events from history.

Author Melvin Lyman's willingness to at least footnote major historical facts is much appreciated. While the book doesn't stray much from the known historical facts, it is mostly because there are not many historical facts included in the book. The actual historical events included are not seen by the reader. Instead, the reader finds out about them through the conversations that Partridge and Lydia have about them afterwards. For instance, at one point, instead of describing to the reader what actually occurred at a conference, Partridge and Lydia engage in several pages of conversation in which Partridge *relates* what occurred at that conference over which he presided. Lest the reader forget who the "focus" of the novel is, Lyman includes three lines about Lydia before returning to general descriptions of a few key events in church history: "Lydia indicated that she was pleased with him and let him know that she had faith, like the Prophet had, that he would do his work in a pleasing manner before God. She spent the rest of the spring caring for and teaching the children. She and the older girls also planted a garden."²⁶ Actual interactions between Lydia and her family members are rarely portrayed.

²⁴ Cracroft, "Telling the Restoration Story," 250.

²⁵ Lyman, *Lydia*, 119.

²⁶ Lyman, *Lydia*, 118.

In the overall category of familial relationships, this book is at the opposite end of the spectrum from *Other Drums*. Trite and often overdone expressions of care and concern between family members characterize the relationships. For instance, in one conversation between Partridge and his wife, Lydia asks him if he knew where the \$500 had gone that she had given W. W. Phelps to care for on their trip to Missouri. The conversation reads in part as follows, beginning with Partridge's pointing out the futility of answering the question:

“Oh, sweet Lydia, what would we do with \$500.00? We are living off the consecrations as commanded.”

“Well, I would like to have a little something in reserve, but I guess we have given everything to the Lord.”

“That's right, my wonderful, so we'll just have to consider the \$500.00 as a donation to Brother Phelps' new printing establishment. . . .”

Lydia responded, “Well, I guess we did learn in our studies that we must forgive everyone.”²⁷

Since there is limited or no struggle inside the characters, there is also no growth.

Character development is perhaps not the most important issue to Lyman. Instead, his literature is reminiscent of some of the Mormon literature from the early twentieth century, in which the author includes “mini-lectures on principles and correct practices.”²⁸ Cracroft described this type of literature as “faithful fiction,” a type of fiction “intended primarily to instruct and inspire the youth of the Church.”²⁹ Though it may also have entertained, its primary motive was to “instruct and inspire” youth to be good. Richard Cracroft notes that nearly all

²⁷ Lyman, *Lydia*, 120.

²⁸ Anderson, 369.

²⁹ Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 2:838.

early Mormon fiction “carried a muted or philosophical message. At the heart of them all was a conversion, a pattern of change from being inactive, fallen, [or] a non-member.”³⁰

One of *Lydia*’s redeeming qualities is a slightly more thorough overview of Partridge’s actions as bishop. In *Lydia*, Partridge is portrayed as a man who is diligently striving to overcome his human failings in order to fulfill his calling to the best of his ability. Yet oddly, one of Lyman’s focuses seems to be “clearing Partridge’s name.” One way in which Lyman does this is in inventing a conversation between A. Sidney Gilbert, an actual participant in early Mormon history, and Lydia. Gilbert reports to Lydia what occurred on Partridge’s first trip to Missouri: “On the way [to Missouri, Edward] spent much time talking with the Prophet [Joseph Smith], and I sensed some jealousy in Sidney Rigdon, who of course was very close to the Prophet, and also his scribe.”³¹ Gilbert then added that when Partridge was left as presiding officer in Zion, Partridge “had differences with Rigdon. I think Rigdon felt he was assuming too much authority in Zion. Anyway, the Prophet was not worried about it.”³² Lyman has his character Partridge himself report to his wife at one point, “Brother Rigdon did not always approve of the way I dispatched these duties, and he may have been jealous of my position in Zion, as he does not have any official capacity.”³³ These statements may be true, and Lyman acknowledges actual difficulties between Rigdon and Partridge, but Lyman oversimplifies both the causes and solutions, in part by not allowing Rigdon’s perspective to be seen.

³⁰ Carma Wadley, “LDS Fiction Gaining Popularity Among Readers and Publishers,” *Deseret News*, June 25, 2004, www.deseretnews.com (accessed June 23, 2009).

³¹ Lyman, *Lydia*, 95.

³² Lyman, *Lydia*, 96.

³³ Lyman, *Lydia*, 104.

Lyman also acknowledges times when Partridge was at fault. For instance, in that same conversation between Gilbert and Lydia, Gilbert reported, “Edward was then told that he must repent from unbelief and blindness of heart, and he was appointed to be a judge and not to think he is a ruler, but to judge according to the laws of the Prophets.”³⁴

Despite being a short book, Lyman makes space to acknowledge and refute another accusation against Partridge’s character which stems from an incident in early 1839 when the Mormon settlers were fleeing from Missouri into Illinois. After mentioning that Partridge was weakened by a stay in jail, and had had his life threatened, Lyman includes the following interchange between Partridge and Brigham Young. Upon being asked by Brigham Young what Partridge planned to do for the poor saints left behind in Missouri, Partridge reportedly responded, “The poor may take care of themselves, and I will take care of myself.” The following paragraph reads, “Soon after this Lydia encouraged Edward to leave to save his life. Edward made arrangements for his friend, King Follet, to care for his family and help them move. Edward then fled to Quincy, Illinois.”³⁵ Lyman’s justification comes in the next paragraph, however: “Perhaps Edward did show weakness in his report to Young, but Young had never been in jail for the cause and quite driven from place to place as Edward had. Anyway, weren’t they all poor?” Lyman then points out that Young did do a great work in helping to remove the poor, but also that “Edward’s indignation at Young was far from turning against the Church, as he kept in close contact with the Prophet.”³⁶ It is puzzling that modern-day

³⁴ Lyman, *Lydia*, 96.

³⁵ Lyman, *Lydia*, 144; misspelling in original.

³⁶ Lyman, *Lydia*, 144.

descendents seem anxious to clear Partridge's name of a charge that most people don't even know exists.

Ultimately, *Lydia* reads like a family history, a genre in which Lyman had previously published.³⁷ In addition to typographical errors in several places, Lyman inserts didactic commentary. After describing the Partridge women's weeklong stay in the second room of a "Negro family's cabin," Lyman editorializes, "Can we imagine, in our home comforts, the discomforts they had?"³⁸ The historical facts mentioned are relatively accurate, if only a part of the full story. As to its literary merits, the story itself is trite and disjointed. Some of Partridge's experiences as bishop are portrayed, though not to the fullest extent possible in a work of this length.

"Apples of Gold": Analyzing Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Just a few years later, another book attempted to tell the story of Edward Partridge and his family, but this time, there was to be nothing fictional about it. In 1998, author Hartt Wixom self-published the first full-length ostensibly nonfiction work about Edward Partridge. Entitled simply, *Edward Partridge: The First Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, this represents the third and final known full-length book by a descendent of Partridge. Like the other two, it represents an interpretation of Partridge's life by a modern-day descendent.

However, unlike the other two, it is not a novel. Additionally, unlike the other two, Wixom states

³⁷ Melvin A. Lyman, *Amasa Mason Lyman Family History*, 2 vols. (Delta, UT: Amasa Mason Lyman Family Association, 1969).

³⁸ Lyman, *Lydia*, 102.

in his preface his intentions in writing the book, namely his interest in giving Partridge the recognition that “he deserves”: “Edward Partridge, for whatever reason, has only recently begun to receive a modicum of the recognition he deserved during his life span of 46 years.”³⁹

Wixom mentions briefly in the preface some of the concerns that people have raised about Partridge’s behavior in his calling. However, also in the front matter, he claims that “lengthy research indicates that Edward and Lydia, as well as their children, despite a few human foibles, were devout Christians and Latter-day Saints. Descendents have a reason to be profoundly proud of the entire family.”⁴⁰ Proud though descendants may be, this does not excuse them from good scholarship when attempting to chronicle in published format their esteemed ancestor’s life.

In addition to struggling with historical accuracy, Wixom fails to present Partridge and his family as real people. In a sense, Wixom’s work is similar to Lyman’s work – it reads often like a family history, editorial comments included. Wixom’s description of Partridge’s role as bishop is the most complete of the three, but it still examines Partridge apart from his environment. Finally, much of Wixom’s focus also seems to be to “clear Partridge’s name.”

Historically, one of the largest problems is the lack of sources to back up Wixom’s assertions. For instance, while Partridge did serve well and faithfully for many years in the church, Wixom fails to use appropriate and balanced sources to prove this point. In the first few pages, Wixom claims that Joseph had “no higher praise than for Edward Partridge. . . . Some church members would be elevated to high stations, such as Rigdon, yet few seemed closer to the

³⁹ Wixom, ix.

⁴⁰ Wixom, v; misspelling in original.

prophet's heart throughout his lifetime than Partridge.”⁴¹ Though this may have been true (Partridge was certainly appreciated and well-respected by Joseph), Wixom's support for such an assertion lies in the statement, “This can be seen from the continued trust placed in Edward to hold the saints' money and disperse property to them fairly.”⁴² While the two statements are not mutually exclusive, the latter does not prove the former. Wixom seems to be grasping at straws in order to prove his points. Ironically, most or all of them could have held their own weight had Wixom simply found the appropriate support.

There are several small factual errors in the text, which usually do not involve Partridge or key events. For instance, Wixom claims that Edward, Junior, “left his family in Great Salt Lake City for a time to go back to Missouri” at the age of 14.⁴³ Edward, Junior's family did not even cross the United States to Utah until after he had turned 15, and there are no sources indicating that he traveled back from Utah as a young man to Missouri. In another instance, Wixom indirectly claims that John Corrill's family would remain faithful to the church, while in fact Corrill was excommunicated in 1839, even before Partridge passed away.⁴⁴

Literarily, Wixom's book also struggles. As one author pointed out, a biography should contain “empathetic understanding of a complex and interesting individual, depiction of a life intimately involved with important historical events, well-informed research, and graceful

⁴¹ Wixom, 5.

⁴² Wixom, 5.

⁴³ Wixom, 130. Though there is no specific source cited for this fact, Wixom indicates in the text that this information was obtained from family histories.

⁴⁴ Wixom, 69; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:284.

writing.”⁴⁵ The author must situate the subject of the biography in the subject’s own culture. Not only does Wixom fall short in historical accuracy, but his ability to situate Partridge in the environment of his day is also a weakness. Partridge is examined apart from his surroundings, as one might do so in a family history record, and not in a scholarly biography.

Additionally, Wixom’s book fails to develop Partridge’s character. For instance, it contains little description of Partridge’s relationships with his family, though Partridge’s writings indicate that he was deeply attached to both his wife and children and his siblings and parents. What facts Wixom does include are often unsubstantiated. For example, Wixom claims that Lydia joined the church before her husband, though, “She and Edward were in the habit of making important decisions together. In this matter, she must have thought her husband would soon follow.”⁴⁶ While perhaps true, this fact is unsubstantiated by contemporary literature. Another obscure reference to family relationships, an attempted explanation of Lydia’s relationships with her children, is confusing at best: “Family unity was strong among the Clisbees [Lydia’s father’s family] Lydia’s dedication to family ties showed strongly in the Restored Church she had just joined, remaining close to daughters and a son even decades after her husband died.”⁴⁷ While the connection between her family ties and the church are unclear, the implication that she wouldn’t have had a vested interest in her children once her husband passed away is even more obscure. Partridge’s caring nature and interest in his family, as evidenced by his letters to his family, are not illuminated.

⁴⁵ John Howe, review of *John Adams*, by David McCullough, *Journal of American History* 90, no 1 (June 2003): 210.

⁴⁶ Wixom, 3.

⁴⁷ Wixom, 8.

In addition to a lack of support for claims made by Wixom, Wixom struggles to reveal Partridge's failures and success in his calling. Wixom focuses primarily on "clearing Partridge's name" instead of providing a balanced overview of Partridge's actions as bishop. What facts he does include don't present the entire picture. For instance, when describing Partridge's decision to remain in Missouri in 1831, while some of the other church leaders traveled home, Wixom fails to mention that Partridge was staying to prepare for the arrival of the Colesville saints less than two weeks later and to attend to the land sales. Instead, Wixom writes simply that Partridge felt a "heavy burden" and didn't want to return home.⁴⁸ Though Wixom's statements are not necessarily inaccurate, they fail to portray the full situation of Partridge's fulfillment of his calling as bishop. Therefore while they are "the truth," they are not "the whole truth."

Perhaps most unbalanced is Wixom's pronounced bias which emerges throughout the book. After describing Partridge's actions when confronted by the mob that tarred and feathered him, Wixom wrote, "Should he have fought back against the mob which tarred and feathered him? Or submitted meekly as Christ did before Pilate?"⁴⁹ One can only guess which way Wixom leans.

Thus, while Wixom gives the most information about Partridge's activities as bishop, the reader is almost worse off than before, having been presented only part of the picture. Wixom fails to illustrate Partridge as one who exerted great effort to fulfill an assignment that stretched him to the limit of his capacities. Wixom studies Partridge apart from his surroundings, which excludes nuances of meaning. Ultimately, the writing itself lacks fluidity and abruptly shifts

⁴⁸ Wixom, 30.

⁴⁹ Wixom, 51.

from one point to another without logical transitions. A true scholarly biography of Partridge has yet to be written.

Sacred History and Myth

The most profound irony arises not in the novels themselves, but in the purposes for which they have been used. Despite the generally good research he includes in other parts of the article, descendent and business professor Scott H. Partridge oddly cites *Other Drums* amongst his scholarly sources in an article published by *BYU Studies* entitled “Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio.”⁵⁰ While at times he uses *Other Drums* in connection with other sources, over 10 percent of his footnotes cite only the novel. Generally the facts he provides from *Other Drums* are not central to the life of Partridge, and instead provide imaginary dialogue or vignettes that give color to the account of Partridge’s life. S.H. Partridge does note in the first reference to *Other Drums* that “This book, while not a scholarly history, provides interesting comments and stories that were passed down as family tradition.”⁵¹ This explanation is unfortunately buried in the footnotes. Additionally, it is unclear from R. L. Partridge’s novel which parts were perhaps family tradition and which parts were simply completely fictional.

It is important to know that credence can at times be given to family stories passed down through the generations, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich pointed out in a lecture at the Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series on Oct. 23, 2003. Ulrich had earlier become intrigued with the story of one of her ancestors, and she pieced the record together from sources contemporary to the ancestor’s life. However, after learning from a fellow descendent of a

⁵⁰ Scott H. Partridge, “Edward Partridge in Painesville, Ohio,” *BYU Studies* 42, no. 1 (2003):50-73.

⁵¹ Scott H. Partridge, “Painesville,” 71.

“factually incorrect” version of that ancestor’s story, Ulrich noted, “I realized that this [“factually incorrect”] story conveyed a psychological truth that may have been more important than the facts.”⁵² Unfortunately, while such stories passed down may provide insights, since R.L. Partridge doesn’t footnote her book, it becomes rather difficult to determine which stories were passed down in family histories, which come from contemporary sources, and which are purely fiction. Neither of the novels appears to have been written for the purpose of supplying historical information about the Partridges. Yet the first, *Other Drums*, has been cited in footnotes in scholarly sources not only by S.H. Partridge, but also by Wixom. Wixom quoted a passage from *Other Drums* and then noted in *his* footnote, “While this is fiction and does not represent documented history, it does indicate a perception of Edward’s dilemma as bishop by a Partridge descendant.”⁵³ Therein lies the irony: it is fiction. Perception of descendant, yes, but still fiction. As such, it has no place in a scholarly work about Partridge’s life. In a family history it would be most appropriate, but not in a scholarly work. There is a difference between fact, fiction, and family tradition.

And yet, good historical fiction, too, has its place in Mormon libraries. As Lavina Fielding Anderson wrote, “Mormon historical novels have no small task before them.” They can “create fictional pasts that do what literature was created to do and what it alone can do best—to reveal the human heart.”⁵⁴ Good fiction can teach us about ourselves through others’ lives.⁵⁵

⁵² Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “Rachel’s Death: How Memory Challenges History (lecture, Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series, Logan , UT, Oct. 23, 2003).

⁵³ Wixom, 22, footnote 11.

⁵⁴ Anderson, 394.

⁵⁵ Coincidentally, as I finish this thesis, the latest release of popular Mormon fiction writer Gerald Lund, *The Undaunted*, chronicles a group of pioneers sent to settle the lands between Mormon settlements and the Four Corners area. Gerald N. Lund, *The Undaunted* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2009). This group included some

With varying degrees of strict historical accuracy, though none quite reaching the bar, each of the books basically describes Partridge as a dedicated bishop, which contemporary records indicate that he was. However, the books are weak at portraying Partridge as a real person with struggles, failures, emotions, and successes. His evident concern not only for his wife and children, but also for his parents and siblings is not fully expressed, nor are the strong ties that bind them together. What little there is of positive family relationships – or any family relationships – in the books is also a mixture of fact, fiction, and family tradition, leaving the reader unclear as to who Partridge actually was. And so, we return to the place from where we began: the problems of historical fiction, a problem that existed from before Partridge was even born.

Responding to this problem in 1701, historian Pierre Bayle proposed that novelists who desired to include history in their works should “annotate themselves in such a manner that the invented arts could be clearly distinguished from the historical ones.”⁵⁶ Three centuries later, David Woolley, a popular modern-day Mormon fiction writer, noted that some readers of Mormon historical fiction still struggle with the mixture of fact and fiction in their reading since

of Partridge’s descendants, one of whom, Platte D. Lyman, Partridge’s grandson, was a prominent participant. See Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman Diary, Oct. 21, 1879. In a review of the book, *The Undaunted*, one descendant of Platte D. Lyman’s (and therefore also of Edward Partridge) wrote the following: “I am a great great grandson of Platte D Lyman, who was one of the leaders of the San Juan Mission . . . I knew the story before I read the book, but . . . I couldn’t keep myself from picking up a copy . . . couldn’t keep myself from devouring it either. . . . In this story, however, he also sets out to correct the sentiment of many historians and others familiar with the San Juan Mission who consider it to have been a failure at worst and a mistake at best. . . . [T]hose few hundred courageous pioneers have inspired thousands upon thousands of descendants and admirers to face their own treacherous [trials] through life. Now . . . Lund has made their story available in a more personal way than ever before and I hope that it will be able to touch many, many thousands more.” Adam [last name not included], “The Undaunted: The Miracle of the Hole in the Rock Pioneers,” customer review posted Aug. 14, 2009, [http://deseretbook.com/item/5025241/The Undaunted The Miracle of the Hole in the Rock Pioneers #description](http://deseretbook.com/item/5025241/The_Undaunted_The_Miracle_of_the_Hole_in_the_Rock_Pioneers_#description), (accessed Sept. 3, 2009).

⁵⁶ Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991), 34-35.

“Fiction is really the art of telling lies. And to mix fiction with LDS doctrine is like mixing oil and water. Most members don't want their sacred history mixed with myth, for fear that it will all become myth.”⁵⁷ Ironically, in the case of *Other Drums*, it all became history.

⁵⁷ Wadley, “LDS Fiction Gaining Popularity Among Readers and Publishers,” www.deseretnews.com.

CONCLUSION

“ONE OF THE HONORABLE OF THE EARTH”:

PARTRIDGE’S OWN REMEMBRANCES

Shortly before I completed this thesis, I learned of another Edward Partridge manuscript that had been previously unavailable to the public.¹ I received permission to examine it while it was yet unprocessed in the Church History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.² I eagerly turned the loose, fragile pages of Partridge’s writing. He recounted various experiences in his life away from Painesville: a boyhood experience in Massachusetts; a trip back east in 1827 with his wife and two daughters; events from his time in Missouri; and reworded daily accounts of his mission experiences in 1835-36. I noticed that pages were missing from the manuscript, since Partridge’s numbered pages were not consecutive. After reading through some of the pages, I realized that Partridge himself was interested in how he would be remembered. Not only was he interested in how he would be remembered, but also in how his family would be remembered. I was struck particularly by his 1835-36 mission diary entries and his mention of his family members; both components shed light on his children’s later actions. My discovery and examination of this manuscript actually brought my study of how Partridge was remembered full circle.

As I read through some of the entries about Partridge’s missions in 1835-36, I felt a subtle dissonance. Then I realized that it was because Partridge had not copied his daily entries from his bound diary into this later account on manuscript pages, but had actually reworded

¹ I acknowledge Russ Taylor for making me aware of this manuscript and for helping me to gain access to it.

² As of the completion of this thesis, this manuscript is unprocessed at the Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT.

many of the entries.³ Suddenly, I saw Eliza's sixty pages of copied journal entries in a new light. Her father had done it before her. She was doing something that she had seen her father do. By rewording his diary entries as he copied, Partridge showed an interest in memory, how the past is preserved. His interest in how *his* life would be remembered was a legacy he bestowed upon his children who, because of his early death, had precious few memories of their own.

One of my other primary discoveries from this manuscript was Partridge's specific details about his family's reaction to his newfound religion. While previously I had only Partridge's letters to his family to rely upon, this new manuscript opened up a new world of insights. Partridge wrote that his father "was one of the honorable of the earth," and though he did not accept the Book of Mormon as scripture equal to the Bible, felt that it was a "good book."⁴ As Partridge's son Edward had indicated, Partridge's brother James Harvey had joined Partridge in his new religion shortly after Partridge himself had joined, though James Harvey never traveled to Missouri. This illuminates Partridge's comment to his brother James Harvey in a letter from Missouri: "I have reserved a lot or two for you [if you] want them. I hope that you will come up here, as soon as convenient, and see us, if you cannot make it convenient to tarry here."⁵ It now makes sense that Partridge hoped that his brother might join them, since his brother was the only baptized member of the same church in Partridge's immediate family. It is intriguing to ponder the effect of the Missourians' treatment of Partridge on his younger brother's reluctance to travel to Missouri to join the rest of the church.

³ While in the brief assessment that I was able to make of the manuscript, I did not have time to study it extensively, it appeared that he did not make many substantive changes: he primarily reworded the entries.

⁴ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁵ Edward Partridge, "What Crime Have I Been Guilty Of?": Edward Partridge's Letter to an Estranged Sister," ed. Warren A. Jennings, *BYU Studies* 18 no. 4 (Summer 1978): 521. This portion of the letter was directed to his brother, James Harvey.

Sustaining and repairing family relationships was important to Partridge. He adds information in this newly found manuscript about his reconciliation with his brother Oliver over matters of religion. When he had returned to Massachusetts in 1835, Partridge noted that “My relations appeared in a measure glad to see me with the exception of my br. Oliver . . . and my sister Emily These both treated me with a great deal of coldness, but my br. Oliver I so far got an understanding with as to leave as I think upon friendly terms.” He then noted, “I wish that I could say as much in favor of my sister Emily.”⁶ He was interested in how his family was remembered in his life’s account. Such an interest was transmitted to his children, as they sought to preserve their father’s memory.

Finally, the discovery of this manuscript reinforces my argument that recent fictional interpretations of his life are distorted. The portrayal in *Other Drums* of his harsh treatment by parents and siblings has even less credibility than it had before the examination of this manuscript.⁷ While there may have been a period of disbelief, lack of acceptance, or even shunning before accepting his decision, no final, dramatic parting from family during Partridge’s 1830-31 visit to Massachusetts occurred. A deeper study of this new manuscript could reveal other connections and nuances of relationships not possible to discover in my brief examination.

What I saw persuades me that memory and history were even more ingrained in the Edward Partridge story than I had previously thought. True, Edward Partridge’s children and later descendants were interested in preserving his memory, but so was Partridge. Hopefully this manuscript will shed more light on the elusive question, how did Partridge remember himself?

⁶ Edward Partridge, unprocessed manuscript, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.

⁷ Ruth Louise Partridge, *Other Drums* (Provo, Utah: R.L. Partridge, 1974), 39-40.

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